

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Problem Background

The conceptualization of God has been a psychological approach to explore the meaning of existence and creation. He has become the root of growth in human consciousness. God is the primary idea with whom man is concerned for his existence. The primitive human mind cannot find any reason behind the mystery of creation.¹ It looks at occurrences in nature with a sense of awe and cannot justify the growth of plants, the birth of men and animals, the motion of the Earth, Sun and the stars. Man therefore concluded the presence of some mysterious power acting behind such miracles. He wanted to define the phenomenal changes observable in nature and man. He discovered and realized a powerful life force that shapes all things and events on the Earth. He became keen to see the invisible through the visible and the unreal through the real. He became visionary by nature and pondered over all such mysterious happenings in creation.²

To solve this overwhelming mystery of creation, many nations have developed their own ideology, or, most commonly, accepted revealed scriptures and made them their religion or living culture. The Encarta Concise Dictionary defines

1. Narendra Nath Bhattacharya (1974), *History of the Sakta Religion*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, p. 188.

2. Rabiprasad Mishra (2000), *Theory of Incarnation: Its Origin and Development in the Light of Vedic and Puranic References*. New Delhi: Pratibha Prakashan, p. 267.

religion as people's belief and opinion concerning the existence, nature, worship of God, a God, or Gods and divine involvement in the universe and human life.³ It is also believed, being religious is part of human nature. This natural phenomenon helps or motivates human beings to ask and investigate the existence of a creator, the nature of living beings and the next journey after death. Some have raised the Sun, fire, all manner of idols and creatures to the level of deity, and creator. Due to abounding and varying perceptions of the existence and nature of a creator, and his commands, some of which are seen to be wrong, the concept of a messenger has been accepted in all major religions as a source of historical knowledge and moral instruction.

Considering all this, the researcher chooses to examine the definition of a messenger in two different categories of religion namely Semitic and Non-Semitic Religion. The word "Semitic" is an adjective derived from Shem, one of the three sons of Noah in the Christian Bible.⁴ The term "Semite" means a member of any of various ancient and modern peoples originating in southwestern Asia, including Acadians, Canaanites, Phoenicians, Hebrews, Arabs and Ethiopian Semites. The word Non-Semitic is used to address all peoples other than the descendants of Shem.

Islam is an example of a Semitic religion while Hinduism is Non-Semitic. Islam has been chosen because it is believed by Muslims around the world to be the last revealed sky religion (*al-samawiyyah*) in the same lineage of prominent prophets of Judaism and Christianity. Although the last revealed religion, Muslims also believe

3. Rooney Kathy (2003), *Encarta Student Dictionary*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, p. 1226.

4. Robert Carroll & Stephen Prickett (1998), *The Bible: Authorized King James Version*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 12.

Islam to be the oldest religion on earth, since they see the first man Prophet Adam as a Muslim. Furthermore, Muslims all over the world accept only Islam as the true religion acknowledged by *Allah*. Hinduism has been selected from among other non-Semitic Religions on the basis of its long history and survival till this day. Hinduism is believed to have started millions of years ago, without specific founder. At that time, it was called *Sanathana Dharma* (Eternal Truth).

To justify the choice of this research topic, both Hinduism and Islam have tenet belief on their messengers. Nonetheless, the concept and definition of messenger in both religions differs considerably. Detailed description of these concepts can be seen in chapters two and three. Recently, a book was published internationally and internally in Malaysia on “comparative religion.” The book, titled “*Muhammad in the Hindu Scriptures*”⁵ references many facts and figures taken directly from Hindu scripture without rectification or review by Hindu or Islamic authority. Without a clear understanding of the content diversion of the book “*Muhammad in the Hindu Scriptures*,” this title can be misleading and confusing for the reader, Hindu or Muslim. In order to check and compare both perspectives, the writer uses a comparative method to bring out the similarities and differences in the concept of messenger in both religions. This can assist and safeguard the belief both groups of religious adherents and ensure free practice of religion in Malaysia.

5. Dr. Ved Prakash Upadhyay (1998), *Muhammad in the Hindu Scriptures*. Kuala Lumpur: A.S. Noordeen Publications, p.3.

1.2 Problem Statement

As the topics on religion are normally vast and philosophically orientated, the researcher has lined up a few questions to give guide and focus to the research, and ensure the achievement of the research goal. Some of the research questions to be answered are as below:

1. How and who do the Hindus describe as messenger?
2. How and who do the Muslims describe as messenger?

1.3 Objective of Study

Generally, the influence of religious education plays a major role in shaping a child's development and his future journey. History proves most of the successful people in life are among the people who strongly understand and practice their religion. In reference to that, this research starts up by outlining a few objectives, which can help to facilitate the process of "understanding" the religion. Below is a listing of the said objectives:

- i) to describe the concept of messenger in Hinduism.
- ii) to describe the concept of messenger in Islam.
- iii) to examine the similarities and differences between the concept of messenger in Hinduism and Islam.

1.4 Title Definition

Choosing a suitable title is a very important step in writing and presenting any academic paper. This must be given special attention in order to avoid confusion and misunderstanding by readers, and to help them estimate the scope of the research. Accordingly, the researcher have taken initiative to define the meaning of some particular words used in this thesis. The selected title for this research is ***The Concept of Messenger in Hinduism and Islam: A Comparative Study***. According to the Cambridge Learner's Dictionary, the words that make up this title are defined as follows:

- a) **Concept** is defined as “*a principle or idea*”⁶
- b) **Messenger** is defined as “*someone who takes a message or documents from one person to another*”⁷
- c) **Hinduism** is defined as “*an ancient religion with Indian origins whose characteristics include the worship of many Gods and Goddesses and the belief that when a person or creature dies, their spirit returns to life in another body*”⁸. Also known as *Sanathana Dharma (eternal religion)*.⁹
- d) **Islam** is defined as “*to submit to Allah in His Oneness (Tahwid) to be subservient to Him in obedience, and to shun associating any partners, rivals,*

6. University Press Cambridge (2004), *Cambridge Learner's Dictionary*. United Kingdom: Klett Publishing Plc, p.128.

7. *Ibid.* p. 205.

8. *Ibid.*

9. Swami Sivananda (1996), *The Divine Life*. Batu Caves: The Divine Life Society Trust, p.75.

and intercessors with Him”. It is a religion of tolerance and ease. Beside the above definition, Islam can otherwise be defined as:

- *a religion through which one would be spiritually contented and would have peace of heart.¹⁰*
- *a religion which has no confusion or ambiguity associated with it.¹¹*
- *a religion for all, for it is a call directed to mankind at large, not to a specific race or people.¹²*
- *a complete and perfect religion which abrogated all revelations and it is the last religion.¹³*

d) **Comparative** is defined as “*the form of an adjective or adverb that expresses a difference in amount, in number, in degree or quality*”¹⁴

e) **Study** is defined as “*to examine something very carefully*”¹⁵

Therefore, the title, “The Concept of Messenger in Islam and Hinduism: a comparative study” can be simplified as “a very careful examination of the principle or idea of someone who takes a divine message and delivers it to others, according to

¹⁰. Abdul Rahman al-Sheha (2001), *The Key to Understanding Islam*. Riyadh: World organization for presenting Islam, p. 2.

¹¹. *Ibid.*

¹². *Ibid.*

¹³. *Ibid.*

¹⁴. University Press Cambridge (2004), *op.cit.*, p. 102.

¹⁵. *Ibid.* p. 204.

Hinduism and Muslims; to establish differences and similarities in the form of adjectives or adverbs of amount, number, degree or quality.”

Based on the title definition, this study will examine and compare the general concept of messenger in two major world religions namely Hinduism and Islam.

1.5 Significance of Studies

As a country comprising three major ethnicities – Malay, Chinese and Indian, Malaysia is an ideal society that demonstrates the possibility of multiple ethnicities and religious conviction living in harmony and peace. By educating this multi-ethnic and multi-religious society to understand their ancestors’ beliefs, rituals, mythology and philosophy behind each religion, it is the researcher’s belief that the entire Asian continent once again will flourish especially in spirituality and this will lead to the emergence of a vibrant regional economy with strong social values, stable politics, living arts and harmony. A case in point to support this claim is the emergence and booming of the Chinese and Indian economies. Buddhism being a branch of Hinduism, the two religious practices rife in these two countries offers knowledge on basic life truths that when deeply understood and put into practice, can lead to the kind of economic boom that is seen in India and China.

Similarly, for Malaysia to become a world power one day, the society should be harmonious, integrated, with one purpose, one thinking and one perspective

towards the nation. By grasping the true concept of messenger in Semitic and non Semitic religions, Malaysians will get a clear and detailed understanding of the fundamentals of multi-religion instead of just following their ancestors' faith without a clear understanding of it. By giving explanation and educating the future generation, the research is confident this will make the coming generation live more understandingly, peacefully and harmoniously.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

Due to the fact that religion is a very vast subject for research, the researcher has limited the study to the following areas:

- 1) Presenting general literature on Hinduism and detailing out the scriptures describing the concept of messenger.
- 2) Explaining the concept of messenger in Hinduism.
- 3) Presenting general literature on Islam and detailing out the scriptures describing the messenger.
- 4) Explaining the messenger concept in Islam.
- 5) Discussing in detail the history and timeline of Hinduism and Islam. This research will focus more on the general concept of messenger as assembled from existing literature.

1.7 Literature Review

In accordance with the objectives of this research, the writer aims to understand existing literature on the messenger concept from Hindu and Islamic scholars. From the available literature, history and theological points of view, the writer will be able to summarize the current level of progress on the subject. The writer has divided the literature review into three sections. The first speaks of the concept of messenger in Hinduism; the second, the concept of messenger in Islam; and the third, the concept of messenger according to other doctrines.

Before delving into the thick of the literature review, a few quick definitions: in Hinduism, a messenger is known as an *avatar*. *Avatar* is a Sanskrit term where 'Av' means 'down' and 'tr' means 'passover'. Thus, *Avatar* means to descend or to come down. The meaning of 'Avatar' in the *oxford Dictionary* is, "(In Hindu Mythology) the descent of a deity or released soul to earth in bodily form".¹⁶ In simple words, *Avatar* according to common Hindus means Almighty God coming down to earth in bodily form. This word will be used subsequently in this thesis without further definition.

¹⁶. Elizabeth Knowles (2006), *The Oxford Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*. New York: Oxford University Press. Encyclopedia.com, 4 Jan 2010.

1.7.1 Hinduism Literature

According to Mahinder N. Gulati in her book “*Comparative Religions and Philosophies: Anthropomorphism and Divinity*”, the concept of *avatar* from the *Vedic* philosophy is the goal of the soul in “*evolution*” to merge into the divine of the innerself (*Theory of spiritual evolution*). This brings about freedom from the cycle of rebirth. To see ourselves in all beings and all beings in ourselves is the essence of life. Each soul has to grow for itself and must be free to gain the experience it needs. Any human soul can turn around and move to the truth.¹⁷

Rabiprasad Mishra, in his book “*Theory of Incarnation (Its Origin and Development in the Light of Vedic and Puranic references)*”, summarized the *Dasavatara* (ten incarnations) theory in Hinduism into the fundamental idea of the evolution of the soul. The fish emerged out of the early Palaeozoic seas, followed by the tortoise and the boar in the Mesozoic period. Next came the man lion and the dwarf in the period of Cavemen and Bushmen. *Parasurama* represents the nomadic or hunter stage, and *Rama* and *Krsna*, the fully civilized stage of city life.¹⁸ The tenth *avatara Kalki* is yet to emerge. It has remained a symbolic visionary prophecy to be fulfilled in the future.¹⁹ He concludes that incarnation began with the *Vedic* age in a

17. Mahinder N. Gulati (2008), *Comparative Religions and Philosophies: Anthropomorphism and Divinity*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, p.13.

18. A. D Pusalker (1955), *Studies in the Epic and Puranas*. Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, p. intro 1xi.

19. Rabiprasad Mishra (2000), *op. cit.*

rudimentary form, and its concrete form is seen in the *Bhagavad Gita*. This has been widened and expanded to a larger form in the *Bhagavata Purana*.²⁰

Referring to the verse below from *Bhagavad Gita*, Swami Sivananda in his commentary argues that clinging to carnal desires is the cause of rebirth; man has to take assume a body to enjoy them. If actions are done for the sake of God, without any fleshly inclinations, one is released from the cycle of birth and death and attains immortal bliss.²¹

कर्मजं बुद्धियुक्ता हि फलं त्यक्त्वा मनीषिणः।

जन्मबन्धविनिर्मुक्ताः पदं गच्छन्त्यनामयम् ॥ 2.51 ॥

*Karmajam buddhiyuktaa hi phalam tyaktwaa maneeshinah;
Janmabandha vinirmuktaah padam gacchantyanaamayam.
[Bhagavad Gita 2:51]*

*The wise, possessed of knowledge, having abandoned the fruits of their actions, and being freed from the fetters of birth, go to the place which is beyond all evil.*²²

According to Sri Ramakrishna, “an *Avatara* is a human messenger of God”, who is sent to guard virtue and foster its growth on earth. *Avatars* are born with

20. *Ibid.* p.19.

21. Sri Swami Sivananda (2000), *Bhagavad Gita by Swami Sivananda*. Uttar Pradesh: The Divine Life Society, p. 26.

22. *Ibid.*

divine powers and divine qualities. They can go into and stay in any state of realization from the highest to the lowest” (animals).²³

The famous saint Sri Sankaracarya, who was well known in south India as *Advaita*, or monistic philosopher,²⁴ subscribed to the theory of incarnation, though in his view the theory of incarnation and worship of God are covered in falsehood or *maya*.²⁵

Another famous author, Veerasamy Krishnaraj, in his commentary on *Bhagavad Gita*, explains that the individual soul is susceptible to rebirth in a body, be it an animal or human body. The *Jivatma* (individual soul) goes through this cycle of birth and rebirth based on ignorance and *karma* (fruit of good and bad deeds). *Jivatma* (individual soul) by itself has a life of its own it goes to throw the bodies as an incarnation or can achieve *Moksa* (liberation) and attain *Brahman* (God).²⁶

According to famous Tamil saint Manickavasagar, who composed a song titled *Thiruvasaki SivaPuranam*, the theory of spiritual evolution is as follows:

*Pullaki pudai puzuvai maramaki
pulvirukamaki paravaiyai pambaki
kallai manidarai peyai kanangalai*

23. Sri Ramakrishna (1987), *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna*. Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, p.189.

24. N. V. Isaeva (1993), *Shankara and Indian Philosophy*. SUNY Press, p. 2.

25. Rabiprasad Mishra (2000), *op. cit*, p.10.

26. Veeraswamy Krishnaraj (2002), *The Bhagavad-Gita: Translation and Commentary*. Los Angeles: iUniverse, p.23.

*vallacurarai munivarai devarai
cella nindra ittavara cangamattul*

*Became grass, as tubers, as worms, became trees, Became many
species, as birds, became snakes, As stones, as humans, as ghosts, as
ganas, Became brave asuras, as munis and as devas, Stood in All,
Everywhere, spreading on earth. [Thiruvacakam SivaPuranam]²⁷*

Commenters of *Bhagavad Gita* like Ramananda, Ramanuja, Madhva, Nimbarka, Kabir, Vallabha, Caitanya, Tulasidasa, and other prominent Hindu theologians including the *Alvars* from the South India have accepted the theory of incarnation depicting either *Rama* or *Krsna* as the Supreme Being. They have also left a good number of followers of the sect propounded by them, who still have strong belief in the theory of incarnation. Their theories form the underlying principle of the theory of spiritual evolution of an *avatar* in *Bhagavad Gita* and *Puranas*.

The theory of incarnation has long been documented in medieval Sanskrit literature. In his *Dasavataracarit*, Ksemendra mentioned all ten *avatar* in whom the influence of *Vaishnava* is clearly visible. Jayadeva, a follower of the Ramachandra sect, described these ten *avatar* in further detail, wrapping up with a verse praising all of them, in his world famous and melodious *Gitagovinda*.

²⁷. Swami Saraswati Pranavananda (2008), *Bhajananjali*. Batu Caves: The Divine Life Society, p. 40.

Swami Prabhupada, the founder of the International Society for Krishna-Consciousness, in his translated *Srimad Bhagavatam* scripture, writes, “at the end of *Kali-Yuga*, when there exist no topics on the subject of God, even at the residences of so-called saints and respected gentlemen of the three higher castes, and when the power of government is transferred to the hands of ministers elected from the lowborn *sudra* class or those less than them, and when nothing is known of the techniques of sacrifice, even by word, at that time the Lord will appear as the Supreme Chastiser.”²⁸

The symptoms of the worst conditions of the material world, at the last stage of this life, called *Kali-Yuga*, are stated herein. The sum and substance of such conditions is godlessness. Even the so-called saints and higher castes of the social orders generally known as the *dvija-janas*, or the twice-born, will become atheists. As such, all of them will practically forget even the holy name of the Lord, and what to speak of his activities.²⁹

The higher caste of society, namely the intelligent class of men guiding the law and order of the society and the productive class of men guiding the economic development of the society, must all be properly versed in knowledge of the Supreme Lord, knowing factually his name, quality, pastimes, entourage, paraphernalia and personalities. The saints and the higher castes or orders of the society are judged by

28. Sri Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasadeva (1972), *Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 2*. Metro Manila: The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, p. 64.

29. *Ibid.* p. 65.

their proportion of knowledge in the science of God, or *tattva-Jnana*, and not by any kind of birthright or bodily designations.³⁰

Such designations, without any knowledge of the science of God and practical knowledge of devotional service, are considered decorations of the dead bodies. In addition, when there is too much inflation of these decorated dead bodies in society, they develop so many anomalies in the progressive, peaceful life of a human being. Lacking training or culture in the upper section of the social orders, they are no more to be designated as the *dvija-janas*, or twice-born. The significance of being twice-born has been explained in many instances in this literature, and again one is reminded herewith that birth, executed by the sex life of the father and mother, is called animal birth. But such animal birth and progress of life on the animal principles of eating, sleeping, fearing and mating (without any scientific culture of spiritual life) is called the *sudra* life, or, to be more explicit, the uncultured life of the lower class of men. It is stated herein that government in the *Kali-Yuga* will be passed over to the uncultured, godless laborer classes of men, and thus the *nrdevas* (or the ministers of the government) will be the *vrshalas*, or the uncultured lower-class of society. The symptoms of such uncultured social animals are already in vogue, and it is the duty of the leaders of men to take note of it and try to reform the social order by introducing the principles of twice-born men trained in the science of God-

30. *Ibid.*

consciousness. In the degraded condition of human society, the Lord incarnates as the *Kalki avatara* and kills all the demonic without mercy."³¹

Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia (1998) describes an *avatar* or messenger as the incarnation or manifestation of a God, especially of *Vishnu*. The doctrine of *avatars* first appeared in the *Bhagavad Gita*; portrayals of the various *avatars* are found in the *Puranas* and other epics of India. Krishna is one of the most popular incarnations of *Vishnu*. Hindu legend says that *Vishnu* has already assumed nine *avatars*, with a tenth *Kalki*, due to appear to usher in a golden age.³² The *Kalki-avatara* is described in two varieties: one two-armed, the other four-armed. In the *dasavatara* slabs we usually find the two-armed variety described in the *Vishnudharmottara Purana* as a powerful man in an angry mood, riding on horseback with a sword in his raised hand".³³

1.7.2 Islamic Literature

Most Muslim scholars who have commented on the theory of reincarnation and its connection to the concept of messenger have written based on their points of view as inspired by the *Holy Qur'an* and *Hadith*.

31. *Ibid.*

32. Kathy T. Harwood Marianne Saccardi (2001), *Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia: Teacher's Guide*. Washington: Grolier Scholastic, p. 132.

33. Klaus K. Klostermaier (2000), *Hinduism: A Short History*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, p. 28.

Commentary written by Ibn Kathir states that the *Holy Qur'an* rejects the belief and the logic in the theory of reincarnation. The Holy Qur'an implicitly informs that there is no reincarnation. Three famous verses from the *Holy Qur'an*, which mention reincarnation, are quoted below:

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ ﴿٩٩﴾ لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ كَلَّا إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَائِلُهَا وَمِن وَرَائِهِم بَرْزَخٌ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

(in falsehood will They be) until, when death comes to one of them, He says: "O My Lord! send me back (to life). "In order that I may work righteousness In the things I neglected." - "By no means! it is but a word He says."- Before them is a Partition till the Day They are raised up.
[23:99 - 100]³⁴

This verse claims that there is no return of evil doers to the material world, and hence humans cannot come back to the earth in the form of any other being.

كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنْتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

How can we reject the Faith In Allah.- seeing that we were without life, and He gave you life; then will He cause you to die, and will again bring you to life; and again to Him will ye return.[2:28]³⁵

34. Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2000), *The Holy Quran, in Abdullah Yusuf Ali (Translated by)*. United Kingdom: Wordsworth Editions.

35. *Ibid.*

This verse asserts the forward direction of the soul's journey from the world to the Barzakh to the hereafter and eventually to God with no possibility of return in any form of incarnation.

إِن هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَبْعُوثِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

*"There is nothing but our life in this world! We shall die and we live!
But we shall never be raised up again! [23:37]"³⁶*

This summarizes the Islamic standpoint on the cycle of reincarnation. Ibnu Kathir opines, "In their ignorance, they believed that they would come back to this world as they had been before, but *Allah* refutes their false belief."³⁷

Imam Al-Ghazali, in his famous book *Ihya Ulum Id Din* Vol IV, rejects the theory of incarnation, while making mention of the vast diversity of public opinion about death. Different people hold different opinions about death. Some say that death destroys everything and that there is no final destruction of the world and no resurrection, and the death of man is better than that of birds and beast, plants and trees.³⁸ This is the opinion of the so-called unbelievers. Another school of thought says that death destroys man, and that between the grave and resurrection there is no reward or punishment. Yet another school of thought hold the opinion that the human

³⁶. *Ibid.*

³⁷. Shaykh Safiur-Rahman al-Mubarakpuri (2001), *Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Volume 8)*, Riyadh Darussalam: Publication. p. 215.

³⁸. Imam Ghazali (1993), *Revival of Religious learning (Ihya Ulum Id Din)*. Karachi: Darul Ishaat, p. 410.

soul does not die and that punishment or reward will be metted on the soul and not the body, and that there will be no physical resurrection.

“These are all void opinions, far from the truth”, he claims. He clearly explains the meaning of death from verses of the *Holy Qur’an* and *Hadith*. Knowledge gained by experience shows that death means change of condition, that when the soul is separated from the body, it receives reward or punishment, and that the separation of soul from body means the loss of power of the former over the latter; the separation of soul from body is by means of instruments of soul. A soul without these things can know the relation of everything. For this reason, the soul suffers sorrows and enjoys happiness.³⁹ From this explanation, Imam al-Ghazali affirms that there is a resurrection day death.

The famous Muslim scholar Al Biruni describes the Hindu view of reincarnation as particularly interesting. He explains that until it reaches the highest state of consciousness, the soul is not able to experience all things at once, as if there were no space or time. Therefore, it has to experience the universe piecemeal, one thing at a time, until it has been through all possible experiences.⁴⁰

An awful lot of experiences are possible, so this process takes a very long time. So immortal souls range through the universe in mortal bodies, which have

39. *Ibid.*

40. Linda Johnsen (2002), *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Hinduism*. Indiana Polis: Alpha Books, p. 40-41.

good or bad experiences depending on whether their behavior has been virtuous or evil.⁴¹ The purpose of experiencing heavenly states in the time between physical incarnations is so that the soul learns what is truly good, and wants to become as good as possible. The purpose of experiencing hellish states in the time between lives is so that the soul learns what evil is, and determines to avoid it altogether.⁴²

The process of reincarnation begins at very low levels of consciousness, like minerals, plants or animals and slowly winds its way upward toward very elevated states of awareness.⁴³ The process ends when the soul no longer desires to explore new worlds, but gains insight into the sublime nature of its own being, and rests content in itself. At that point the soul turns away from matter, and its links with physical existence are broken. It returns to its true home, carrying with it the knowledge it has gained during its many journeys. Having closely studied all their systems, Al Biruni noted that the Greek, Indian and Sufi mystics taught essentially the same doctrine.⁴⁴ From the Islamic view, he rejects this theory.

Another view on Indian religion is offered by al-Shahrastani; he treats Hinduism in his *kitab al-Milal wa'l-Nihal* in the chapter of the *Ara al-Hind*, which deals in successive sections with six groups. These are the Sabians, the Brahima, the three groups of *ashab al-ruhaniyyat* (proponent of spiritual beings), ‘*abadat al-*

41. *Ibid.*

42. Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Biruni (2001), *Alberuni's India: an account of the religion, philosophy, literature, geography, chronology, astronomy, customs, laws and astrology of India about A.D. 1030: Volume 1* By Edward C. Sachau. London: Routledge, pp. 212 - 215.

43 Linda Johnsen (2002), *op.cit.*

44 *Ibid.*

kawakib' (star worshipers) and *'abadat al-asnam'* (idol worshipers), and finally the Indian philosophers. Al-Sharastani grades them according to degrees of idol worship. In his work, he judges the Hindus in the same way as his judgement of the Sabians. The *Vaishnavas* and *Shaivas* are the like Sabians *ashab ar-ruhaniyyat*. They venerate *Vishnu* and *Shiva* as spiritual beings that were incarnated and brought the laws.⁴⁵ Here, he mentions the word incarnate, which means to come down in human form.⁴⁶

Harun Yahya, in his book *"Evolution deceit : The Scientific Collapse of Darwinism and Its Ideological Background"*, after considering much information and presenting background study, concludes that the theory of evolution has no specific basis, and that, on the contrary, evolutionist claims conflict with scientific facts. In other words, the force that perhaps keeps evolution alive is not science.⁴⁷

In answering a question on reincarnation, Dr. Muzammil H. Siddiqi (former President of the Islamic Society of North America), states the following:

"Reincarnation (tanasukh) is an un-Islamic idea. It has no place in the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah. In Islam we believe in resurrection, not reincarnation. Thus, there is no such thing as past lives according to Islam. Allah created us from nothing and gave us existence. We have only one life on this earth. After death we will be raised up again on the Day of Judgment. There is no return to this life before the Day of Judgment. People have all kinds of imagination. Sometimes people imagine and dream things. That does not mean that this actually

⁴⁵. Shahrestani. (2005), *Kitab Al-Milal Wa Al-Nihal (The Book of Sects and Creeds)*, in Mohammad Fathallah Badran (Translated by). Beirut: Al-Maktaba Al-Asriya, p. 325.

⁴⁶. Bruce B. Lawrence (1973), *Shahrastani on Indian Idol Worship-Studia Islamica*. Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, pp. 61-73.

⁴⁷. Harun Yahya (2001), *The Evolution Deceit: The Scientific Collapse Of Darwinism And Its Ideological Background*. Istanbul: Kultur Publishing, p. 48.

happened to them. Our mind works in so many different ways. The so-called recollections of lives before this life are nothing but hallucinations."⁴⁸

Similarly, Muhammad Saed Abdul-Rahman argues that Islam rejects the theory of reincarnation. He describes reincarnation as the transmigration of the soul; that is, when the bodies dies, the soul moves to another new born body where it will be happy or miserable as a result of its previous actions, and thus constantly moves from one body to another. This is one of the falsest beliefs and one of the worst forms of kufur or disbelieve in *Allah*, His books and His messenger.⁴⁹ For belief in the hereafter, the reckoning, paradise and hell are among the things that are well known in the teaching of the messengers and in the words of the books which were revealed to them. Belief in reincarnation is tantamount to disbelief in all of that. The Islamic understanding of the resurrection is stated clearly in the book of *Allah* and the *Sunnah* of his messenger.⁵⁰ For example, *Allah* says in the Holy Quran:

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

*Every soul shall have a taste of death in the end to Us shall ye be brought back.[29:57]*⁵¹

48. Dr. Muzammil H. Siddiqi (2003), *Reincarnation: Do Muslims Believe in It*. Egypt: IslamOnline.net, 11 October 2009.

49. Muhammad Saed Abdul-Rahman (2004), *Islam: Questions and Answers-Jurisprudence and Islamic Rulings: Transactions - Part 4*. London: MSA Publication Limited.

50. *Ibid*, p. 483.

51. Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2000), *op.cit*.

إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا^ط وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ حَقًّا^ع إِنَّهُ يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ
 ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ بِالْقِسْطِ^ع وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ شَرَابٌ مِّنْ حَمِيمٍ وَعَذَابٌ
 أَلِيمٌ^ع بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

To Him will be your return of all of you. The promise of Allah is true and sure. It is He Who beginneth the process of creation, and repeated it, that He may reward with justice those who believe and work righteousness; but those who reject Him will have draughts of boiling fluids, and a penalty grievous, because they did reject Him .[10:4]⁵²

يَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ الْمُتَّقِينَ إِلَى الرَّحْمَنِ وَفَدًا^{٨٥} وَنَسُوقُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ وَرَدًا^{٨٦}

The day We shall gather the righteous to ((Allah)) Most Gracious, like a band presented before a king for honors, And We shall drive the sinners to Hell, like thirsty cattle driven down to water.[19:85-86]⁵³

لَقَدْ أَحْصَاهُمْ وَعَدَّهُمْ عَدًّا^{٩٤} وَكُلُّهُمْ ءَاتِيهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَرْدًا^{٩٥}

He does take an account of them (all), and hath numbered them (all) exactly. And everyone of them will come to Him singly on the Day of Judgment. [19:94-95]⁵⁴

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid.

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ لِيَجْمَعَنَّكُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ

حَدِيثًا

Allah, There is no God but He: of a surety He will gather you together against the Day of Judgment, about which there is no doubt. And whose word can be truer than Allah.s? [4:87]⁵⁵

زَعَمَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنْ لَنْ يُبْعَثُوا قُلْ بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّي لَتُبْعَثُنَّ ثُمَّ لَتُنَبَّؤُنَّ بِمَا عَمِلْتُمْ وَذَلِكَ

عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ

The Unbelievers think that they will not be raised up (for Judgment). Say: "Yea, By my Lord, Ye shall surely be raised up: then shall ye be told (the truth) of all that ye did. And that is easy for Allah." [64:7]⁵⁶

Dr. Zakir Naik, referring to *Holy Qur'an* chapter 49 verses 13, commented as follows:

يَتَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَنُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and Tribes, that ye may know Each other (Not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the Most honored of you In the sight of Allah is (He who is) the Most righteous of you.

55. *Ibid.*

56. *Ibid.*

*And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).
[49:13]⁵⁷*

This verse of the glorified *Holy Qur'an* says that “*O mankind, we have created you from a single pair of male and female*”, describing the whole human race as hailing from a single pair of male and female. All human beings in the world have a common ancestor. In addition, *Allah* says that we have divided the human race into nations and tribes, so that they shall recognize each other, not that they shall despise and fight amongst themselves.⁵⁸

1.7.3 Literature review summary

Hindu scripture (*Bhagavad Gita* and *Purana*) with prominent scholars' commentaries shows a significant belief in the *theory of spiritual evolution*. The concept needs to be elaborated in detail in order to understand the actual meaning of *avatara*, which has been a tenet among Hindus in the past and present. This theory is different to the biological theory of evolution.

Muslim scripture (*Holy Qur'an* and *Hadith*) with prominent scholars' commentaries shows a significant degree of rejection of the theory of evolution or reincarnation. This rejection needs to be elaborated and analyzed in detail in order to

57. Abdullah Yusuf Ali. (2000), *op. cit.*

58 Mohammed Talib. (2005). *Universal Peace: To Unite a Universal Brotherhood*. North Carolina, Universal Peace Publications, pg.76

understand the actual meaning. Contrary to reincarnation, Islam believes in the sending of prophets, which has been a tenet among Muslims in the past and present.

1.8 Research Methodology

In general, the methodology used for this research can be described fundamentally as a qualitative study. For literature on Hinduism, the researcher will focus on one main theological doctrine namely *Vaishnavism*. The references for this will be *Bhagavad Gita* and *Srimad Bhagavatam*. For Islam, the primary references will be the *Holy Qur'an* and *Saheh Hadith*. This work is conducted solely in the manner of a library research. A detailed explanation of the research methodology is presented below.

1.8.1 Data Collection Method

The researcher's main means of data collection was library research, for which the following libraries are referenced:

- i) The Main library of the University of Malaya
- ii) The Zaaba Memorial Library of the University of Malaya
- iii) The Public Library of the Islamic Centre
- iv) The Library of the Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya.
- v) The National Library.

For the data collection process, a few methods are employed as guideline

i. Historical Method

Data collection through historical methods entails looking at historical facts and the root of information with the aim of answering some of the research questions. The researcher uses this method to compare the beliefs and practices of current adherents to Hinduism and Islam.

ii. Documentation Method

The researcher uses this method to explain the knowledge structure of Hindu scriptures, using these scriptures, such as *Srimad Bhagavatam*, *Maha Puranas*, *Bhagavad-Gita* and *Mahabharata* to pursue a discourse on the Hindu concept of a messenger,. Also, the writer will explain the knowledge structure of Islamic scriptures, the *Holy Qur'an* and *Hadith*, and use them to present a discourse on the Islamic concept of a messenger.

1.8.2 Data Analysis Method

After all the necessary information has been gathered, the writer will process and analyze the data and facts by using the methods outlined below:

i) Inductive Method

This method is a tool to analyze data by reasoning. This process demands the acquisition of evidence leading from small details to general facts and patterns, including such aspects as:

- a) Background of problems in chapter one.
- b) The fundamental theory in chapter two and three.
- c) Analyzing data in chapter four.
- d) The summary and conclusion of the concept of a messenger in chapter five.

The in-depth examination of the research background, introduced in Chapter One, shall be done using inductive reasoning to elicit the problem, detailing and describing why it is important for both Muslims and Hindus to understand the separate concepts of a messenger in both religions.

i) Deductive Method

Deduction is a method of reasoning that uses general facts to prove specific matters.⁵⁹

59. *Ibid.*

ii) Comparative Method

This method is commonly used to summarize or conclude two or more theories by comparing them during analysis. The complete data and facts need to be collected before any comparison can be done. The researcher uses this method to compare the concepts of a messenger in Hinduism and in Islam in chapter four.

1.9 Organization of Writing

This dissertation is divided into five chapters titled in such a manner as to indicate continuity. A few of these chapters have been dedicated to the achievement of the research objectives, while establishing a fluid pattern of discourse.

Chapter 1 will be a platform to highlight the overall research introduction. This chapter consists of the background of the problem, problem statement, objectives of study, significance of study, limitation of study, literature review, research methodology and organization of writings.

Chapter 2 will be a study of the concept of a messenger as presented in authoritative Hindu scriptures. In this chapter, the writer will highlight the history of Hinduism, the overall literature of Hinduism, the timeline of the Hindu calendar, as well as identify and describe in some detail, Hindu scriptural authority.

Chapter 3 will be a study of the concept of messenger from Islamic scriptures. In this chapter, the researcher will highlight the history of Islam and classification, the overall literature of Islam, the timeline of the Muslim Calendar, identifying and describing Islamic scriptural authority.

Chapter 4 will be the focal point of the research. This Chapter will discuss a detailed comparative process of the concept of a messenger in the two religions under study. It will be the peak in which both outstanding and subtle differences and similarities between the concepts in the two religions shall be highlighted.

Chapter 5 will be the final chapter encompassing a conclusion and closing remarks on all matters discussed in the entire research. It closes with a few suggestions and recommendations for furthering the work in the future.

CHAPTER 2

THE CONCEPT OF A MESSENGER IN THE HINDU PERSPECTIVE

2.1 Introduction of Hinduism

Religion has become a common tool for great thinkers to explore the mystery behind their existence. They try to understand their own fundamental religious principles which were laid down and passed down by their ancestors. Before going in-depth on Hindu beliefs and practices, a basic understanding of the classification of existing world religions is necessary. The major religions of the world can be broadly classified as Semitic religions and non-Semitic religions. The Semitic religions are religions that originated from among the Semites. Who are the Semites? According to *Genesis*, the first book of the *Bible*, chapters five through eleven, the Prophet Noah had a son called Shem. The Descendents of Shem are known as Semites.⁶⁰ Therefore, Semitic religions are the religions that originated from among the Jews, Arabs, Assyrians and Phoenicians.⁶¹ The major Semitic religions are Judaism, Christianity and Islam. They are also known as prophetic religions. Non-Semitic religions are further divided into *Aryan* and non *Aryan* religions.⁶² *Aryan* religions are the religions that originated from among the *Aryans*, a powerful group of Indo-European speaking

60. Zondervan Publishing Staff (2002), *Study Bible-NIV: New International Version*. Michigan: Zondervan Publishing, pp.12-24.

61. Bennett Patrick William Wright (1890), *Lectures on the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages*. New Jersey: Cambridge University Press, p. 4.

62. Dr. Zakir Naik (2001), *Concept of God in Major Religions*. Mumbai India: Adam Publishers & Distributors, p. 3.

people that spread through Iran and Northern India in the 1st half of the 2nd millennium B.C (2000 B.C to 1500 B.C).⁶³

They are further subdivided into *Vedic* and *Non-Vedic* religions.⁶⁴ A *Vedic* religion is given the misnomer of Hinduism or *Brahmanism*. The word “*Hindu*” or “*Hindoo*” is derived from the Sanskrit root word “*Sindhu*”, and used by Persians, ancient Greeks and many foreigners to denote the people who lived beyond the River Indus. During the medieval period, Islamic scholars and Muslim travelers referred to the Indian subcontinent as *Hindustan* or the land of the *Hindus*. The word stuck for several centuries and throughout the Islamic Caliphate. During the British rule, the word Hindu was used to distinguish the native Indians who were neither Christian, nor Muslim, nor Sikhs, nor Jains, nor Buddhist. The word Hinduism was coined in the 1830’s by British scholars to denote the religious tradition of the native Indians to distinguish them from other recognized religions. While they are now popular all over the world under the generic name Hinduism, for generations Hindus recognized the religious tradition as aspects of one eternal Truth that went by the name “*Sanathana Dharma*” or Eternal Law.⁶⁵ Some *Non-Vedic* Religions are Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism. Almost all *Aryan* religions are non-prophetic.⁶⁶

Non-*Aryan* religions have diverse origins. Confucianism and Taoism are of Chinese origin while Shintoism is of Japanese origin. However, most of these

63. *Ibid.*

64. *Ibid.*

65. Swami Sivananda (1996), *op. cit.*, p.75.

66. Dr. Zakir Naik (2001), *op.cit.*

Religions do not have a concept of God. They are better referred to as ethical systems rather than religions.⁶⁷ Figure 2.1 below summarizes all the the subdivision of world religions.⁶⁸

⁶⁷. *Ibid.*

⁶⁸. *Ibid.*

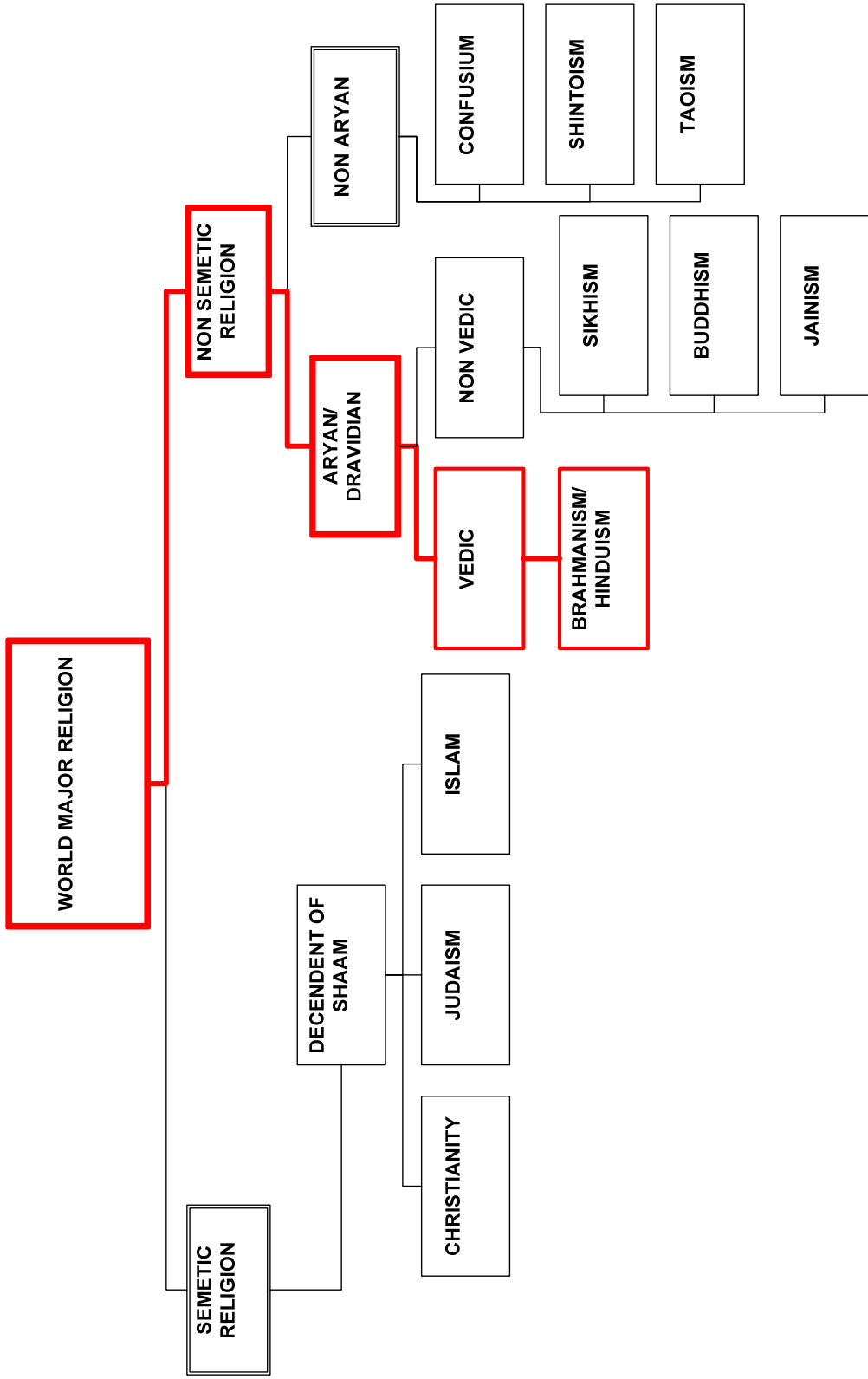


Figure 2.1: Hinduism Religion Segmentation

The main emphasis in this chapter is the description of the concept of a messenger in one of the *Vedic* religions, namely Hinduism. Literature on this concept is acquired through the method of library research.

Hindu religion and philosophy have had an extremely long and complex development; much more complex than many realize, and probably a longer history of continuous development than any other philosophical tradition. While the historical perspective is undoubtedly of immense importance in the study of such a tradition, it is impossible to present an exact historical survey of this development. Because of the Indians' lack of concern for chronology, many details of the chronological sequence of the writings are either lost or no record of them was kept.⁶⁹ Moreover, so unhistorical, or perhaps so deeply philosophical, was the nature of the ancient Indians that much more is known about the philosophies than about the philosophers. Relatively few of the great philosophers of ancient Indian thought are known and some of the most famous names to which history attributes certain philosophical doctrines or systems are now admitted to be legendary. In general, Hinduism is built on five pillars (*Panca Crada*):⁷⁰

- a) Belief in *Brahman* - The one and only God
- b) Belief in the Soul (*Atma*)

69. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore (1957), *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, p. xvii.

70. Jean Jacques Waardenburg (1999), *Muslim Perceptions Of Other Religions: A Historical Survey*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 288.

- c) Fruits of Action (*Karma Phala*) – Man receives reward for all his good and bad deeds in the life hereafter.
- d) Belief in Reincarnation (*Punarbhawa*)
- e) Belief in Liberation (*Moksha*) – The return of an individual’s soul to his lord.

2.2 Early History and Scriptural Development

In broad outline from the time accepted by many historians, the Hindu religion has four major periods of development up to the time of its serious decline in about 1700 C.E.⁷¹ This development is traced in figure 2.2 below:

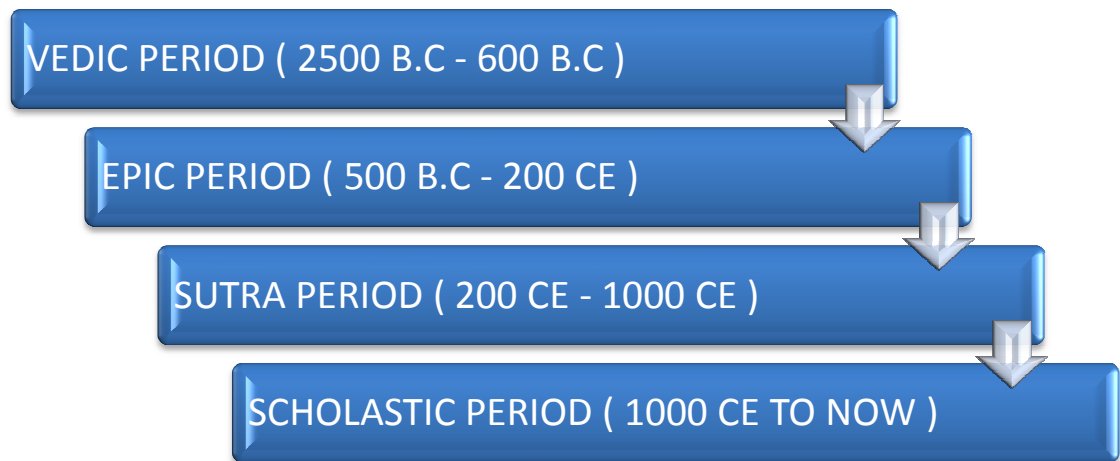


Figure 2.2: Scriptures Development

71. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore (1957), *op.cit.*

2.2.1 The Vedic Period

The *Vedic* period is dimmed by obscurity, but it may have been approximately between 2500 B.C and 600 B.C.⁷² This is the belief period during which the *Aryans*, having come down into India from Central Asia, settled their new homeland and gradually expanded and developed their *Aryan* culture and civilization. The literature of this period consists of the four *Vedas* (*RigVeda*, *YajurVeda*, *SamaVeda* and *AtharvaVeda*) called *Srutis*.⁷³ Hindus received their religion through revelation, the *Vedas*. These are direct intuitional revelations and are held to be *Apaurusheya* or entirely superhuman, without any author in particular. The *Veda* is the glorious pride of the Hindus. The term *Veda* comes from the root “*vid*”, to know. The word *Veda* means knowledge. When applied to scripture, it signifies a book of knowledge. The *Vedas* are the foundational or primary scriptures of Hindus. The *Vedas* is the source of the other five sets of scriptures even of the secular and the materialistic. The *Veda* is the storehouse of Indian wisdom and is a memorable glory, which Hindus can never forget till eternity.⁷⁴

According to Hindus, the *Vedas* are the eternal truths revealed by God to the great ancient *Rishis* of India. The word *Rishi* means seer. He is the *Manthra-Drashta*, a seer of mantra or thought. The thought was not his own. The *Rishis* saw the truths or heard them. Therefore, the *Vedas* are the truths that were heard (*Sruti*). The *Rishi*

72. *Ibid.*

73. *Ibid.*

74. Swami Sivananda (1996), *op. cit*, p. 27.

did not write the *Vedas*. He did not create it out of his mind. He was a seer of thoughts which existed already. He was only the spiritual discoverer of those thoughts. There is none so called the inventor of the *Veda*.⁷⁵

Lord Brahma (One of the trinity of Gods), the creator, imparted the divine knowledge to the *Rishis* or seers; the *Rishis* disseminated the knowledge. The *Vedic Rishis* were great release persons who had direct intuitive perception of *Brahman* or the truth. They were inspired writers. The most well known compiler of *Veda* (Knowledge) is Dwapayana Vyasa. They built a simple grand and perfect system of religion and philosophy. The *Vedas* are the fountainhead of the Hindu religion. The *Vedas* are the ultimate source to which all Hindu religious knowledge can be traced.⁷⁶

As earlier mentioned, the *Vedas* is divided into four great books namely the *Rig Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sama Veda* and *Atharva Veda*. The *Rig Veda* is divided into twenty-one (21) sections; the *Yajur Veda* into one hundred and nine (109) sections; the *Sama Veda* into one thousand (1000) sections; and the *Atharva Veda* into fifty (50) sections. In all, the whole *Veda* is thus divided into one thousand one hundred and eighty (1180) sections.⁷⁷

Each *Veda* consists of four parts known as *Manthras*, *Brahmanas*, *Aranyakas* and *Upanishads*. The *Manthras* (hymns), especially the later one in the *Rig Veda*,

75. *Ibid.*

76. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

77. *Ibid.*

constitutes the actual beginning of Indian philosophy. The *Brahmanas* are chiefly the religious documents, including ritualistic precepts and sacrificial duties. The *Aranyakas* and the *Upanishads* constitute the concluding parts of the *Brahmanas* and here the philosophical ideas are discussed. The *Brahmanas* specify rituals to be observed by the house holders, but when the latter have reached old age, they resort to the forest and need a substitute for the rituals they have known as house holders. The *Aranyakas*, which comes between the *Brahmanas* and *Upanishads*, fulfill this need by encouraging meditation for those who live in the forest. The *Aranyakas* form the transition link between the ritual of the *Brahmans* and the philosophy of the *Upanishads*. Generally, the four divisions of *Vedas* are to suit the four stages of a human life.⁷⁸

The subject matter of the whole *Veda* is divided into *Karma Kanda*, *Upasana Kanda* and *Jnana Kanda*. The *Karma Kanda* or Ritualistic Section deals with various sacrifices and rituals. The *Upasana Kanda* or Worship Section deals with various kinds of worship or meditation. The *Jnana Kanda* or Knowledge Section deals with the highest knowledge of *Nirguna Brahman* (Formless God). The *Mantras* and the *Brahmanas* constitute *Karma Kanda*; *Aranyakas* constitute *Upasana Kanda*; and *Upanishads* constitute *Jnana Kanda*.⁷⁹ The *Vedas* and their sub-divisions are given in the figure 2.3 below:⁸⁰

78. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore (1957), *op. cit.*, p. xvii.

79. Swami Sivananda (1996), *op. cit.*, p. 29.

⁸⁰. *Ibid.*

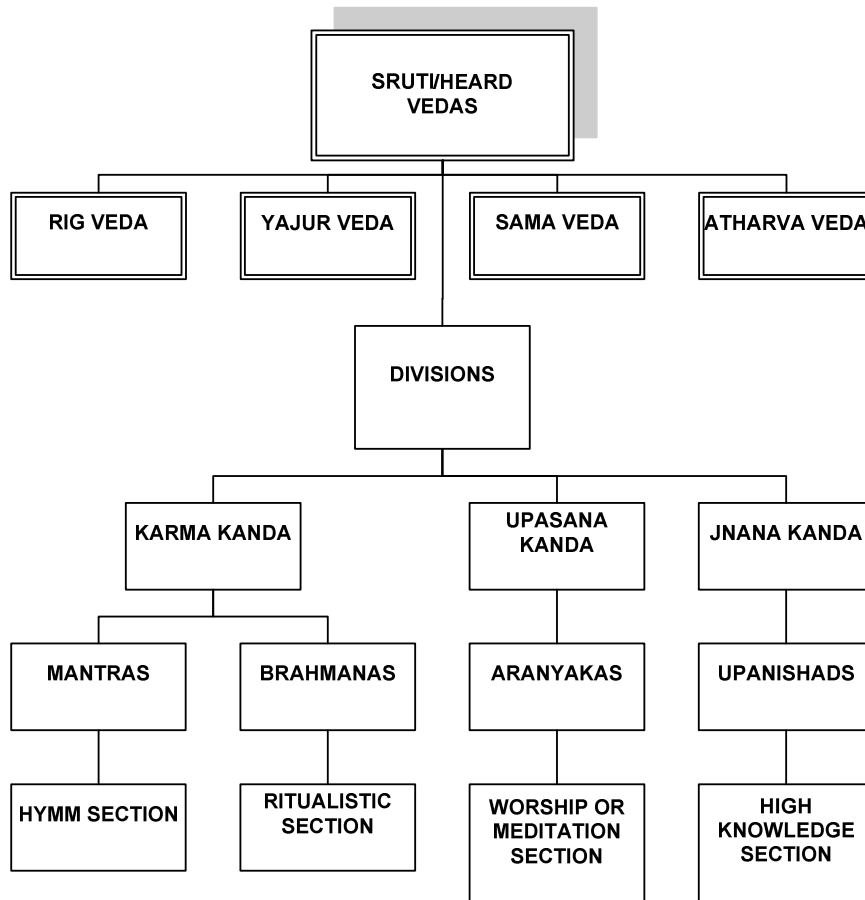


Figure 2.3 : Vedas Organization Chart

2.2.2 The Epic Period

The second period of philosophical development is the Epic Period, dating approximately from 500 or 600 B.C to 200 C.E. This period is characterized by the indirect presentation of philosophical doctrines through a medium of non-systematic and non-technical literature, especially the great epics, the *Ramayana* and the

Mahabharata.⁸¹ However, this period also includes the rise and development of Buddhism, Jainism, *Saivism*, and *Vaishnavism*. The *Bhagavad Gita*, which is part of the *Mahabharata*, ranks as one of the three most authoritative texts (*Prasthan Trayya*) in Indian philosophical literature.⁸²

It was also during this period that many of the *dharmasastras* or *manu* (treatise on the ethical and social law code) were compiled. These, like the rest of the philosophical text of the period, are classed as *Smritis*, that is, traditional text, as contrasted with the literature of the *Vedic* period, which is known as *sruti*, revealed scripture or authoritative text. The *dharmasastras* are systematic treatises concerning the conduct of life among the Hindus, describing their social organization and their ethical and religious functions and obligations.⁸³ Besides *Manu* (Law Code) and *Ithisas* (Philosophical Doctrines), the Epic Period also sees the time when all Mahapuranas and Upapuranas were compiled. These scriptures mostly allude to three main Hindu Gods known as Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva. The Epic Period and summary of the sub-periods thereof are given in the figure 2.4 below:⁸⁴

81. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore (1957), *op.cit*, pp. xviii-xix.

82. *Ibid*, p. 56.

83. *Ibid*.

84. Swami Sivananda (1996), *op. cit*, pp. 36-56.

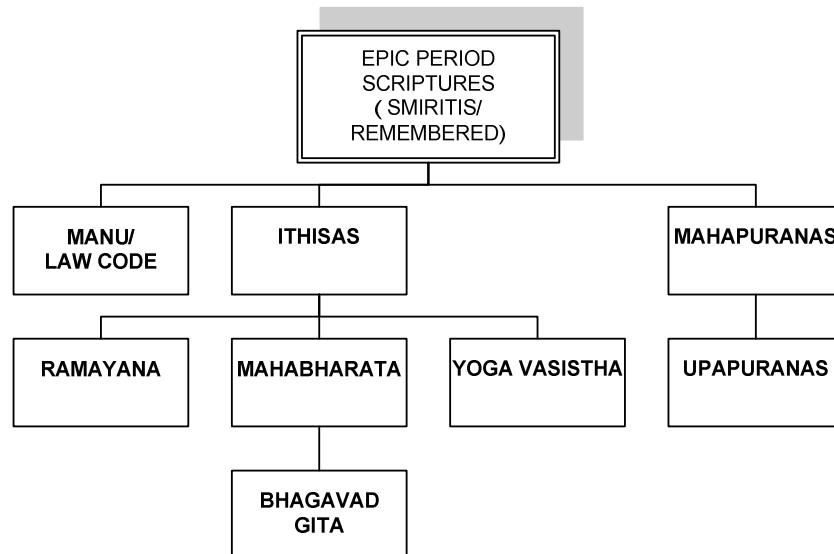


Figure 2.4 : Epic Period Scriptures Chart

2.2.3 The Sutra Period

The third period is the *Sutra* Period, which dates approximately from the early years of the Christian era (2 A.D).⁸⁵ In this period the systematic treatises of the various schools were written and each system assumed and preserved its own basic form from then on. The doctrines of each system were presented in orderly, systematic and logically developed sets of aphorisms, extremely brief, sometimes enigmatic, statements which, according to some interpretation, are merely reminders for the initiated to enable them to recall the details of philosophical systems to which they belonged.⁸⁶

85. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore (1957), *op. cit*, p. xix.

86. *Ibid*, p. xx.

The six Hindu systems introduced during the *Sutra* Period are the *Nyaya* or Logical Realism, the *Vaisesika* or Realistic Pluralism, the *Samkhya* or Evolutionary Dualism, the *Yoga* or Disciplined Meditation, the *Purva Mimamsa* or earlier interpretive investigations of the *Vedas* relating to conduct and the *Uttara Mimamsa* or later *Vedanta*, the ‘end of the *Vedas*’.⁸⁷

Besides the *Darshanas* scriptures, another class of popular scriptures was known as *Agamas*. The *Agamas* are theological treatises and practical manuals of divine worship. The *Agamas* include the *Tantras*, *Mantras* and *Yantras*. These are treatises explaining the external worship of God, idols, temples, etc. The main issues treated in the *Agamas* are:

- i) *Jnana* or Knowledge
- ii) *Yoga* or Concentrations
- iii) *Kriya* or Esoteric Ritual
- iv) *Charya* or Exoteric Worship.

They also give elaborate details on ontology, cosmology, liberation, devotion, meditation, philosophies of *Mantras*, mystic diagrams, charms, spells, temple building, image making, domestic observances, social rules, public festivals and many more.⁸⁸

87. *Ibid.*

88. Swami Sivananda (1996), *op. cit.*, p. 27.

2.2.3.1 Division of Agamas

The *Agamas* are divided into three sections: the *Vaishnava*, the *Saiva* and the *Sakta*. The three chief sects of Hinduism, namely *Vaishnavism*, *Saivism* and *Saktism* are based on their doctrine and dogmas of their respective *Agamas*. The *Vasihnavas* or *Pancharatra Agamas* glorify God as *Vishnu*. The *Saiva Agamas* glorify Lord *Shiva*, and have given rise to an important school of philosophy known as *Saiva Siddhanta*, which prevails in South India, particularly in the districts of Thirunelveli and Madurai. The *Sakta Agamas* or *Tantra* glorifies God as the mother of the universe, under one of the many names of *Devi*.⁸⁹

The *Agamas* do not derive their authority from the *Vedas*, but are not antagonistic to them either. They are all *Vedic* in spirit and character. That is the reason why they are regarded as authoritative. All these *Agamas* were restructured by a South Indian Saint named AdiSankarar (788 CE).⁹⁰

a) *Vaishnava Agamas*

The *Vaishnava Agamas* are of four kinds: the *Vaikhanasa*, *Pancharatra*, *Pratishthasara* and *Vijnanalalita*. The *Brahma*, *Saiva*, *Kaumara*, *Vasishtha*, *Kapila*, *Gautamiya* and the *Naradiya* are the seven groups of the *Pancharatras*. The *Naradiya*

89. *Ibid*, p. 59.

90. *Ibid*.

section of the Santi-Parva of the *Mahabharata* is the earliest source of information about the *Pancharatras*.⁹¹

Lord Vishnu is the supreme Lord in the *Pancharatra Agamas*. The *Vaishnavas* regard the *Pancharatra Agamas* as the most authoritative. They believe that these *Agamas* were revealed by *Lord Vishnu* himself. *Narada- Pancharatra* says, “Everything from *Brahman* to a blade of grass is *Lord Krishna*.” This corresponds to the Upanishadic declaration, “All this is verily *Brahman* (*Sarva Khalvidam Brahma*).”⁹²

There are also two hundred and fifteen of these *Vaishnava* texts. *Isvara*, *Ahribudhnya*, *Paushkara*, *Parama*, *Sattvata*, *Brihad- Brahma* and *Jnanamritasara Samhitas* are among the most important ones.⁹³

b) *Saiva Agamas*

The *Saiva* recognizes twenty-eight *Agamas*, of which the chief is *Kamika*. The *Agamas* are also the basis of *Kashmir Saivism*, known as the *Pratyabhijna* system. The latter works of the *Pratyabhijna* system shows a distinct leaning to *Advaitism*. The Southern *Saivism* (*Saiva Siddhanta*) and the *Kashmir Saivism* regard these *Agamas* as their authority, besides the *Vedas*. Each *Agamas* has *Upa Agamas*. Of

91. *Ibid*.

92. *Ibid*, p. 27.

93. *Ibid*, p. 59.

these, only fragmentary texts of twenty are extant. *Lord Shiva* is the central God in the *Saiva Agamas*. They are suitable for this age, *Kali yuga*.⁹⁴

c) ***Sakta Agamas***

The third group of scriptures known as the *Tantras*. These *Agamas* will not be discussed at length because they do not describe the concept of messenger. They belong to the *Sakta* cult. They glorify *Sakti* as the world-Mother. They dwell on the *Sakti* (energy) aspect of God and prescribe numerous courses of ritualistic worship of the divine mother in various forms. There are seventy-seven *Sakta Agamas*. These are very much like the *Puranas* in some respects. The texts are usually in the form of dialogues between *Lord Shiva* and *Lord Parvati*. In some of these, *Lord Shiva* answers the question put forth by *Lord Parvati*, and in others, *Lord Parvati* answers *Lord Shiva*. Mahanirvana, Kularnava, Kulasara, Todala and Panchatantra are some important works on this group of *Agamas*. The *Agamas* teach several occult practices. *Sakti* is the creative power of *Lord Shiva*. *Saktism* is really a supplement to *Saivism*.⁹⁵

Among the existing books on the *Agamas*, the most famous are the *Isvara-Samhita*, *Ahimbudhnya-Samhita*, *Sanatkumara-Samhita*, *Narada-Pancharatra*, *Panda*

94. *Ibid*, p. 60.

95. *Ibid*.

Pradipika and Mahanirvana Tantra.⁹⁶ The *Sutra* period and the development of its literature are summarized in the following figure 2.5:⁹⁷

⁹⁶. *Ibid.*

⁹⁷. *Ibid.* pp. 59-64.

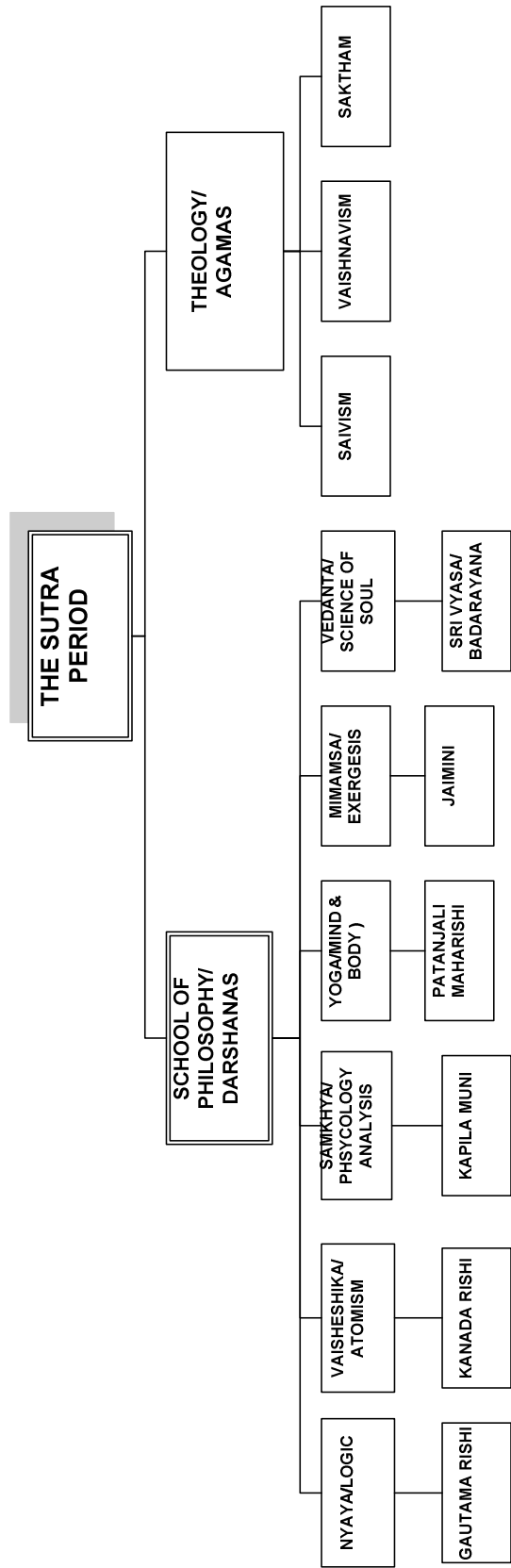


Figure 2.5 : Sutras Organization Chart

2.2.4 The Scholastic Period

The fourth period, the Scholastic Period is that in which commentaries were written on the *Sutras* in order to explain them. Without elaboration and explanation, the *Sutras* are almost unintelligible. Not only were commentaries written on the *Sutras*, but also commentaries, and commentaries upon these, almost without limit.⁹⁸

The Scholastic Period is one of explanations of the original *Sutras*. It brought forth some of the greatest of all Indian philosophers. Among these were Sankara, Kumarila, Sridhara, Ramanuja, Madhava, Vacaspati, Udayana, Bkaskara, Jayanta, Vijnanabhiksu and Raghunatha. These great thinkers were much more than just commentators on ancient systems, although in their modesty, they have claimed to be no more.⁹⁹

For example, the three major forms of *Vedanta*, those developed by Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva are distinct and elaborate systems, even though all of them came from the same *Vedanta Sutra* of Badarayana. In a sense, the Scholastic Period is still in progress until now, since interpretation of ancient ideas and systems are still being written. Dr. Radhakrishnan, a contemporary philosopher, mentioned in his book that Indian philosophy lost its dynamic spirit in about the sixteenth century

98. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore (1957), *op. cit.*, p. xx.

99. *Ibid.*

when India became the victim of foreign influence.¹⁰⁰ The development of literature in the Scholastic Period is traced in the figure 2.6 below:¹⁰¹

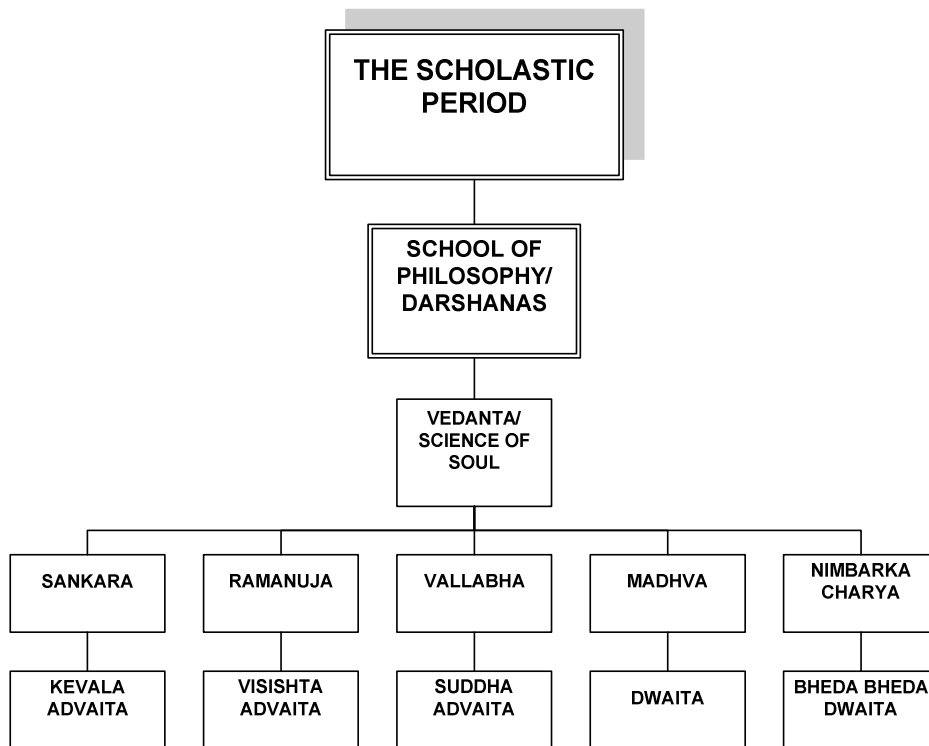


Figure 2.6 : Scholastic Period Organization Chart

¹⁰⁰. *Ibid*, p. xxi.

¹⁰¹. Swami Sivananda (1996), *op. cit*, pp. 65-70.

2.3 Hindu Literature

After tracing the evolution of Hindu knowledge and practices through the four developmental periods, Hindu literature can be classified under six orthodox heads and four secular heads. The six orthodox sections characterize the authorities of Hindu scriptures. The four secular sections distinguish later developments in classical Sanskrit literature. The six scriptures are *Srutis*, *Smritis*, *Itihasas*, *Puranas*, *Agamas* and *Darsanas* – the first four (*Srutis*, *Smritis*, *Itihasas* and *Puranas*) are institutional in nature; *Agamas* are Emotional or Inspirational; while *Darshanas* as Intellectual.¹⁰² The four secular writings are Subhashitas, Kavyas, Natakas and Alankaras. The organizational figure 2.7 below captures a clear description of writings.

¹⁰² *Ibid*.pg.27

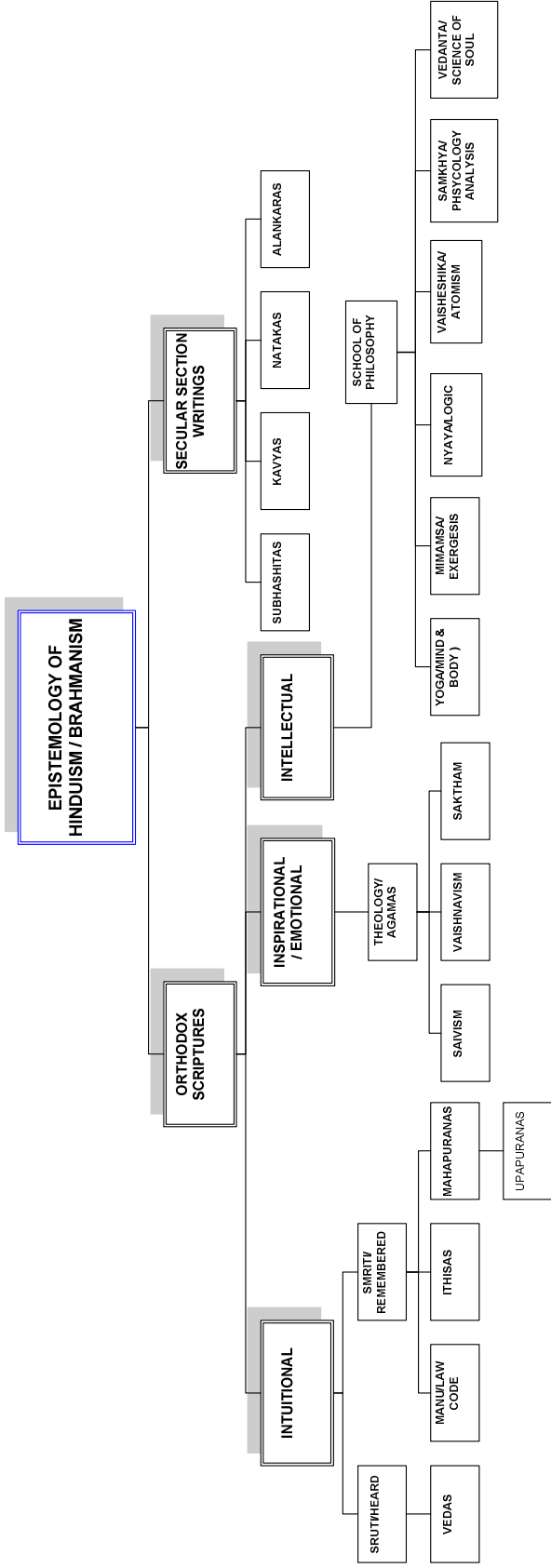


Figure 2.7 : Hindu Literature

Before delving into any details on the appearance and the manifestation of a Hindu messenger, it is appropriate to trace and understand the historical timeline according to Hinduism. This understanding can assist the reader in pinpointing the exact time of appearance of messengers on earth.

2.4 Cyclical Time in Hinduism

Time is seen in South Asia is an ominous being, always moving forward and stronger than any force. Unlike the Western concept of linear time, the Hindus, Buddhists and Jains believe time to be cyclical, with neither a beginning nor an end.¹⁰³ The Hindu system is based on four main time cycles call *Yugas* (periods of *dharma*), *manvantaras* (periods of man), *kalpas* (periods of the universe), and lives of *Lord Brahma* (periods of the supreme universe). The Buddhist notion of time is based on a similar sequence of *Antarakalpas*, *Aasaukhyeyakalpas* and *Mahakalpas*. Slightly different from these two is the Jaini idea of a wheel of time, each marking a period of increasing or decreasing happiness.

For many centuries, Hindu *Vedic* ritual began with chanting of the *sankalpam* verses. The *Sankalpam* is an introduction to any ritual. All rituals, performed by a Hindu, auspicious as well as inauspicious, must have the following as an introduction:

103. Dr Hiro G. Badlani (2008), *Hinduism: Path of the Ancient Wisdom*. Indiana: iUniverse, p. 3.

- Identification of the exact moment of the ritual by acknowledgment of the position of the planets.
- Identification of the object of the ritual; for instance, what worship he is about to perform.

Rituals always start with a definition of the exact location where the ritual is performed, the precise time, the star, the day, the *Thithi*, the fortnight, the month, the season, the *Ayanam* or half year, the year, as well as the quarter of the *yuga*, the name of the *yuga* , the name of the cycle, the *Manvantara*, and the *Kalpa*. Below is the sample of such chant:

Asya SrI-bhagavata: Maha purushasya vishNor AgnayA pravartamAnasya aadhya Brahmana: Dviteeya parardhe (In the second half of Brahma's life, i.e., the 51st year). Svetavaraha Kalpe (In the Kalpa of Sveta Varaha) Vaivaswatha Manvantare (In the reign of Vaivaswatha) Manu Ashta Vimsati me (within the 28th cycle, i.e., the 28th Mahayuga) Kali Yuge (In the Kali yuga) Prathame Pade (In the first quarter of this Yuga Jambu Dweepa (India being part of Jambu Dweepam) Asmin Varthamane Vyavaharike (In the current running period) Prabavadi Shashti Samvatsaranam Madye (Among the cycle of 60 years starting from Prabhava year) Nama Samvatsare (in the year named) Dakshinayane (in the Southern of the Sun Vasantha Ritu: in the Vasantha season) Mesham Mase (in the month of Mesham) Krishna Pakshe (in the fortnight before) Amavasya Navami Asyaam Punya Thithou (on this 9th holy day) Sthira Vasara uktayam (on the day of Saturday) Ashiwini Nakshatra uktayam (the predominant star of the day) SrI-Vishnu-Yoga, SrI-Vishnu-karaNa.....Subha-Yoga.....Subha-karaNaYevam...guNaviSeshaNa..... viSishTAyAmasyAm.....AsyAm Subha-tithou SrI-Bhagavad-Ajnay A Sri Bhagavat-kainkarya-roopam.....Karishye.

[Sankalpam Example]¹⁰⁴

104. Vaishnavadasa (2009), *Sankalpam*. Vadodara: Oriental Institute of Vadodara. p 3.

According to the chant above, the span of time described by these systems is vast, from periods as short as ten years to oceans of time lasting billions of years. Very precise procedures are given in the texts to calculate these durations; specifically, the calculations needed to find the durations of the different levels of ages. By comparing the numbers for different levels, it is possible to draw conclusions on how they are related to each other during their development. Once the lengths of these different ages are calculated, it is then possible to find how much time has elapsed within the given system.

This can be done by finding the starting point of a *Yuga* in the Gupta period through astronomy. Here, the writer presents two systems of time calculation. One is the Gupta Period calculation, and the other is the approach of modern astrologers from the *YoGoda Satsanga Society* in India. Lastly, once all these calculations are done, an interesting pattern emerges when these numbers are compared to the appearance of *Avatars*. The first step in doing this is exploring the core system of time. The Hindu system of time is very detailed and contains many levels. What will be discussed in this area are mainly the *Ithisas* and *Purana* concepts, specifically what is described in the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Vishnu Purana*:

सहस्रयुगपर्यन्तमहर्षद्ब्रह्मणो विदुः ।
रात्रिं युगसहस्रान्तां तेऽहोरात्रविदो जनाः ॥ १७ ॥

*SahasrayugapAryantam aharyad Brahmano viduh;
Raatrim Yugasahasraantaam te'horaatravido janaah.*

Those who know the day of Brahma, which is of a duration of a thousand Yugas (ages), and the night, which is also of a thousand Yugas duration, they know day and night.

[Bhagavad Gita Ch 8:17]¹⁰⁵

Twelve thousand divine years, each composed of (three hundred and sixty) suchdays, constitute the period of the four Yugas, or ages. They are thus distributed: the Krita age has four thousand; the Treta age three thousand; the Dvapara age two thousand; and the Kali age one thousand: so those acquainted with antiquity have declared. The period that precedes a Yuga is called a Sandhya, and it is of as many hundred years as there are thousands in the Yuga.

[Vishnu Purana Book 1 : Chap. 3].¹⁰⁶

Hindu Time is divided into four different *Yugas* (ages). The names of these *Yugas* come from a dice game popular in the *Vedic* period. These *Yugas* are known as *Krita Yuga*, *Treta Yuga*, *Dvapara Yuga* and *Kali Yuga*. The *Krita Yuga* is named after the best roll and the *Kali Yuga* after the worst. The current age, *Kali Yuga*, defines the worst one. The length of each *Yuga* is based on its dice roll. In other words, the lengths of the *Krita*, *Treta*, *Dvapara*, and *Kali Yugas* are in the ratio 4:3:2:1. Each *Yuga* contains a small time period before and after the *Yuga* known as *sandhi*. These periods are also in the ratio of 4:3:2:1.

105. Sri Swami Sivananda (2000), *op. cit.*, p. 69.

106. H. H. Wilson (1840), *The Vishnu Purana: A System of Hindu Mythology And Tradition*. Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, p. 49.

2.4.1 Gupta Period Astronomy

Years will now be ascribed to the ratios listed in the previous subsection. Traditionally the *Kali Yuga* is 1,000 years plus two *sandhi* periods of 100 years each, giving an age of 1200 years. Applying the 4:3:2:1 ratio, the lengths of the various *yugas* are 4800 (*Krita*), 3600 (*Treta*), 2400 (*Dvapara*), and 1200 (*Kali*). The four *Yugas* together make a *mahayuga* (great age). The length of the *mahayuga* is therefore 12000 years. For reasons discussed later, it was decided that these years are not mortal years, but divine years. A divine year or a year of the Gods is equivalent to 360 mortal years. Thus, the above numbers must be multiply by 360, to get *Yugas* lasting 1,728,000 (*Krita*), 1,296,000 (*Treta*), 864,000 (*Dvapara*), and 432,000 (*Kali*) years, adding up to a *mahayuga* of 4,320,000 years. These numbers are summarized in the table 2.1 below:¹⁰⁷

Yuga	Divine Years			Mortal Years		
	Life Span	Length Sandhi	Total	Length Sandhi	Total	
Krita	400	4,000	400	4,800	1,440,000	144,000
Treta	300	3,000	300	3,600	1,080,000	108,000
Dvapara	200	2,000	200	2,400	720,000	72,000
Kali	100	1,000	100	1,200	360,000	36,000
	Mahayuga	12,000			Mahayuga	4,320,000

Table 2.1 : Summarized years

It is important to take a step back and note the importance of several numbers. The first is the *yuga* ratio of 4:3:2:1. If this ratio is applied, a *mahayuga* will have a length of 10 (4+3+2+1) with respect to the duration of the *Kali Yuga*. This is

¹⁰⁷. Siegfried Lienhard (1996), *Lucky Numbers in Ancient Indian Literature "Langue, style et structure dans le monde indien By Nalini Balbir, Georges-Jean Pinault, Jean Fezas, Louis Renou"*. Paris: Editions Champion, pp. 523-536.

symbolic because the number 10 is often used to represent perfection.¹⁰⁸ The length of the *mahayuga* in divine years is, 12,000, is also of interest. Twelve is often a desirable number because it represents the number of months in a year.

Spurring curiosity is the use of 360 for the length of the year. During the late *Vedic* period, it was known that the solar year had a length of 365 and a fraction of a day.¹⁰⁹ This can be seen in the *Krsna Yajurveda* (Taittiriya Samhita sections 7.2.6 and 7.1.10). The latter reads, “5 days more were required over the Savana year of 360 days in order to complete the seasons, adding that 4 days are too short and 6 days being too long.”¹¹⁰

The next level of time is the *Kalpa*. While the *Yugas* mark the rise and fall of *dharma*, the *kalpas* mark the creation and destruction of the worlds.¹¹¹ It is said that 1,000 *Mahayugas* form a *Kalpa* (or a day of Brahma).¹¹² A day of Brahma can also be subdivided into *manvantaras*, as the following passage from the *Vishnu Purana* illustrates:

Seven Rishis, certain (secondary) divinities, Indra, Manu, and the kings' sons, are created and perish in one period; and the interval, called a Manvantara, is equal to seventy-one times the number of years contained in the four Yugas, with some additional years: this is the duration of Manu, the (attendant) divinities, and the rest, which is equal to 852,000 divine years, or to 306,720,000 years of mortal,

¹⁰⁸ . *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹. Sastry (1985), *Vedanga Jyotisa of Lagadha*. New Delhi: Indian National Science Academy, p.11.

¹¹⁰. *Ibid.* p. 45.

¹¹¹. Louis Gonzales Reimann (1988), *op. cit.*, p. 216.

¹¹². H. H. Wilson (1840), *op. cit.*

independent of the additional period. Fourteen times this period constitutes a Brahma day.

[Vishnu Purana Book 1 : Chap. 3]¹¹³

A *Manvantara* is a period of Manu. Seventy-one *Mahayugas* make up a *Manvantara*. Fourteen *manvantaras* make up a *Kalpa*. By simple multiplication, a possible inconsistency is exposed: a *Kalpa* contains 994 *Mahayugas* (71 x 14). However, considering the fact that 1,000 *Mahayugas* make up a *Kalpa*, as mentioned above, there is a difference of six *Mahayugas*. To justify the difference, it is said that each *Manvantara* ends with one *sandhi* period equal in length to the *Krta Yuga* (1,728,000 years). In addition to this, another *sandhi* period (also equal in length to the *Krta Yuga*) is added at the beginning of the *Kalpa*. This is a total addition of fifteen *Krta Yugas* (15 x 4 x 432,000). Without additional *sandhi* periods, the length of a *Kalpa* would be 4,294,080,000 years.

Using the method with additional *sandhi* periods, the length of a *Kalpa* is 4,320,000,000 years, which is consistent with the previous calculations.

<i>Without additional sandhi</i>	
<i>Mahayuga</i> Length	4,320,000
<i>Manvantara</i> Length (<i>mahayuga</i> x 71)	306,720,000
<i>Kalpa</i> Length (<i>Manvantara</i> x 14)	4,294,080,000

<i>With additional sandhi</i>	
<i>Mahayuga</i> Length	4,320,000
<i>Manvantara</i> Length (<i>mahayuga</i> x 71 + <i>Krta Yuga</i>)	308,448,000
<i>Kalpa</i> Length (<i>Manvantara</i> x 14 + <i>Krta Yuga</i>)	4,320,000,000

113. *Ibid*, p. 50.

The addition of a *sandhi* period shows another example of two traditions meeting. There clearly was a tradition of *kalpas* being based on 1,000 *Mahayugas* and a tradition of *kalpas* being based on 14 *manvantaras*. In an attempt to reconcile the differences between the two, the addition of a *sandhi* period was agreed upon.

The next level of time above the *Kalpa* is lives of Brahma. One *Kalpa* is a day of Brahma. A day and night for Brahma is therefore two *kalpas*. Brahma's life is understood to last for 100 years. Hence, a life of Brahma must be $4,320,000 \times 1000 \times 2 \times 360 \times 100$ or 3.1104×10^{14} or 311.04 trillion mortal years. It is interesting to note that a life of Brahma lasts for 100 years. It is said that the lifespan of men varies according to the *yuga*. The life span is proportional to the dice roll of the *yuga* multiplied by 100 (which is also equal to the *sandhi* period of the *yuga*). According to this system, Brahma's lifespan is as though he were living in a *Kali Yuga* (keeping in mind 100 years for him is still a vast ocean of time). In *Vedic* times, before the Puranic concepts of *Yugas* developed, life spans of men were said to reach one hundred years.

For man has a life of a hundred (years)¹¹⁴ It weighs a hundred (grains), for man has a life of a hundred (years), and a hundred energies¹¹⁵ Only a hundred autumns are before us, O Gods, wherein you have allotted the Aging of our bodies, wherein our sons become

114. Julius Eggeling ([1882-1900] 1963), *The Satapatha Brahmana According to the text of the Madhyandina school*. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, Vol. 5 p. 313.

115. *Ibid*, p. 357.

*fathers*¹¹⁶. *May I attain a hundred winters, O Rudra, through the most comforting remedies given by you!*¹¹⁷

It can therefore be assumed that if men lived for 100 of their years, Brahma would live for 100 of his.¹¹⁸ As the Puranic ideas of time were forming and the idea of a *Kalpa* being a day of Brahma was being conceived, the *Vedic* idea of Brahma living 100 years was a logical assumption. For detail, please refer below detail for the Division of the cosmic time and the Earth time:¹¹⁹

i) Divisions of Cosmic Time

Name of the Division	Duration in human years	Remarks
<i>Artha Kalpa</i>	4.32 trillion years	A day or night of Brahma
<i>Kalpa</i>	8.64 trillion years	A complete day of Brahma
<i>Mahayuga</i>	4.32 million years	A great epoch consisting of 4 <i>Yugas</i> or epochs
<i>Krita yuga</i>	1.728 million years	Golden age or age of truth
<i>Treta yuga</i>	1.296 million years	
<i>Dvapara yuga</i>	864000 years	
<i>Kali yuga</i>	432000 years	The current epoch is Kaliyuga, the age of darkness.

116. Walter H. Maurer (1986), *Pinnacles of India's past: Selections from the Rgveda*. Philadelphia: John Benjamin, p. 236.

117. *Ibid*, p. 124.

118. Louis Gonzales Reimann (1988), *op. cit*, p. 122.

119. Jayaram V (2009), *The Concept of Kala or Time in Hinduism*. New Delhi: Tunga Prakashan, p. 125.

<i>Manvantara</i>	308 million years	Manu is the progenitor of the human race.
<i>A year of Brahma</i>	3.1104^{15} years	360 <i>Kalpas</i>
<i>Mahakalpa</i>	3.1104^{17} years	100 years in Brahma's time and space

ii) Divisions of Earth Time

Name of the Division	Duration in human years	Remarks
<i>Kastha</i>	15 twinkles of an eye	
<i>Kala</i>	30 kasthas	
<i>Muhurtha</i>	30 kalas	roughly 45 – 50 minutes
<i>Ahoratra</i>	30 muhurtas	Day and Night
<i>Masa</i>	30 days	one lunar month
<i>Paksha</i>	15 days	One-half of a lunar month
<i>Ayana</i>	6 months or half a year	Uttarayana is the day of the Gods and daskhinayana is their night
Divine Year	360 years	One year of Gods

iii) Hindu Months

Month	Corresponding Zodiac Sign
<i>Chaitra</i>	Mesha
<i>Vaishakha</i>	Vrishabha
<i>Jyeshtha</i>	Mithuna
<i>Ashadha</i>	Karka
<i>Sravana</i>	Simha
<i>Bhadra</i>	Kanya
<i>Ashvin</i>	Thula
<i>Kartik</i>	Vrshchika
<i>Agrahyana</i>	Dhanush
<i>Paushta</i>	Makara
<i>Magha</i>	Magha
<i>Phalguna</i>	Meena

iv) Hindu Seasons

Season	Corresponding Months
<i>Vasanta</i> (Spring)	Chaita and Vaishakha
<i>Greeshma</i> (Summer)	Jyeshtha and Ashadha
<i>Varsha</i> (Rainy Season)	Sravana and Bhadra
<i>Sharad</i> (Autumn)	Ashvin and Karthik
<i>Hemant</i> (Winter)	Magha and Phalguna

v) **60 Year Cycles**

Hindus also follow a 60-year cycle, in which each year is given a specific name which repeats after every 60 years.

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Prabhava | 9. Yuvan |
| 2. Vibhava | 10. Dhātri |
| 3. Shukla | 11. Īshvara |
| 4. Pramoda | 12. Bahudhānya |
| 5. Prajāpati | 13. Pramāthin |
| 6. Āngirasa | 14. Vikrama |
| 7. Shrīmukha | 15. Vrisha |
| 8. Bhāva | |
| 16. Chitrabhānu | 32. Vilambin |
| 17. Svabhānu | 33. Vikārin |
| 18. Tārana | 34. Shārvari |
| 19. Pārthiva | 35. Plava |
| 20. Vyaya | 36. Shubhakrit |
| 21. Sarvajit AD/CE) | 37. Shobhana |
| 22. Sarvadhārin | 38. Krodhin |
| 23. Virodhin | 39. Vishvāvasu |
| 24. Vikrita | 40. Parābhava |
| 25. Khara | 41. Plavanga |
| 26. Nandana | 42. Kīlaka |
| 27. Vijaya | 43. Saumya |
| 28. Jaya | 44. Sādhārana |
| 29. Manmatha | 45. Virodhikrit |
| 30. Durmukha | 46. Paritāpin |
| 31. Hemalambin | 47. Pramādin |
| | 48. Ānanda |

49. *Rākshasa*

50. *Anala*

51. *Pingala*

52. *Kālayukti*

53. *Siddhārthin*

54. *Raudra*

55. *Durmati*

56. *Dundubhi*

57. *Rudhirodgārin*

58. *Raktāksha*

59. *Krodhana*

60. *Akshaya*

vi) **Nakshatras or Daily Stars**

According to Hindu mythology, there are 27 stars or *nakshatras* who are the daughters of either Daksha or Kashyapa, but wives of Chandra, the moon God. The moon God spends each night with one particular star, with whom he appears in the sky. According to Hindu astronomy, the sky is divided into 27 divisions. During its monthly cycle, the moon passes through each division roughly once per day. According to another tradition, the 27 nakshatras are associated with the nine planets or navagrahas, with each planetary deity ruling over three particular stars. During the 27-day lunar cycle, the planetary Gods enter into their respective star mansions and spend nine days with each of their three stars. The names of the 27 stars along with their controlling planets are listed below.

Name	Controlling Planet
1 <i>Ashvinī</i>	<i>Ketu</i>
2 <i>Bharanī</i>	<i>Shukra (Venus)</i>
3 <i>Krittikā</i>	<i>Ravi (Sun)</i>
4 <i>Rohini</i>	<i>Chandra (Moon)</i>

5 <i>Mrigashīrsha</i>	<i>Mangala (Mars)</i>
6 <i>Ārdrā</i>	<i>Rahu</i>
7 <i>Punarvasu</i>	<i>Guru (Jupiter)</i>
8 <i>Pushya</i>	<i>Shani (Saturn)</i>
9 <i>Āshleshā</i>	<i>Budh (Mercury)</i>
10 <i>Maghā</i>	<i>Ketu (south lunar node)</i>
11 <i>Pūrva or Pūrva halgunī</i>	<i>Shukra (Venus)</i>
12 <i>Uttara or Uttara Phalgunī</i>	<i>Surya (Sun)</i>
13 <i>Hasta</i>	<i>Chandra (Moon)</i>
14 <i>Chitrā</i>	<i>Mangala (Mars)</i>
15 <i>Svātī</i>	<i>Rahu</i>
16 <i>Vishākhā</i>	<i>Guru (Jupiter)</i>
17 <i>Anurādhā</i>	<i>Shani (Saturn)</i>
18 <i>Jyeshtha</i>	<i>Budh (Mercury)</i>
19 <i>Mūla</i>	<i>Ketu</i>
20 <i>Pūrva Ashādhā</i>	<i>Shukra (Venus)</i>
21 <i>Uttara Ashādhā</i>	<i>Surya (Sun)</i>
22 <i>Shravana</i>	<i>Chandra (Moon)</i>
23 <i>Dhanishta</i>	<i>Mangala (Mars)</i>
24 <i>Shatabhishā</i>	<i>Rahu</i>
25 <i>Pūrva Bhādrapadā</i>	<i>Guru (Jupiter)</i>
26 <i>Uttara Bhādrapadā</i>	<i>Shani (Saturn)</i>
27 <i>Revatī</i>	<i>Budh (Mercury)</i>

From the above explanation and given table, we now know the lengths of *Yugas* (durations of *dharma*), *manvantaras* (periods of manu), *kalpas* (periods of partial destruction and creation), and lives of *Lord Brahma* (periods of total destruction and creation). It would be interesting to find out where we are in the scheme of things. Because these numbers are so vast, of particular interest is to

discover how much time is left until yuganta, a partial destruction at the end of a *mahayuga* which marks the coming of a new *Krita Yuga* (Golden age). If we could date the start of this *Kali Yuga*, it would be trivial to find how long until yuganta. This is precisely what Gupta period astronomers did.

There are five main periods of Astronomy according to Indian tradition.¹²⁰ They are: (1) *Vedic* (lasting from ca. 1000 BCE to 400 BCE); (2) Babylonian (lasting from ca. 400 BCE to 200 CE); (3) Greco-Babylonian (lasting from ca. 200 CE to 400 CE); (4) Greek (lasting from ca. 400 CE to 1600 CE); and (4) Islamic (lasting from ca. 1600 CE to 1800). Of particular importance to this discourse are the *Vedic*, Greco-Babylonian, and Greek periods. The first provides astronomers a basis for their theories and the latter two coincide with the development of the *Vishnu Purana* and the rise the Gupta Empire (fourth century CE).¹²¹

During the *Vedic* period, ideas were formed which would be greatly exploited during the Gupta period. One such idea was the significance of the conjunction of celestial bodies. The following is a passage from the Jyotisa Vedanga:

*Svar ekramete somerkau yade sekan savesavau
Syet tadedi yugam meghao tapao Uuklo yanam hy udak*

*When the Sun and the Moon occupy the same region of the odiaac
together with the asterism Eraviuoha, at that time begins the yuga,*

120. David Pingree (1981), *History of Mathematical Astronomy in India: Dictionary of Scientific Biography*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, pp. 533-633.

121. Louis Gonzales Reimann (1988), *op. cit.*, p. 128.

and the (synodic) month of Megha, the (solar seasonal) month called Tapas, the bright fortnight (of the synodic month, here Megha), and their northward course (uttaram ayanam).

[R-VJ 5; Y-VJ 6]¹²²

In this *Vedic* passage, only a simple conjunction of two celestial bodies, the Sun and the Moon, are required to mark the start of a new *Yuga*. A short discussion is necessary on the history of the term *yuga*. The term evolved through four main stages namely: (1) early *Vedic*, (2) middle *Vedic*, (3) late *Vedic*, and (4) *Puranic*. During the early *Vedic* period, the term *yuga* was originally used to mean one human lifespan.¹²³ In the middle *Vedic* period, this idea was re-formulated to being just a period of two, three, four, five or six years. As the late *Vedic* period approached, it became more common for the term *Yuga* to be a “five-year, soli-lunar intercalation cycle.”¹²⁴ So in the *Jyotisa Vedanga*, the term *yuga* referred to this five-year cycle, not the *Krita*, *Treta*, *Dvapara*, *Kali*, or *Mahayugas* of the *Puranas*. However, this text does show a basis for later more complex ideas of conjunctions of planets marking beginnings of *Yugas*.

The idea of the conjunction of planets and its significance was very popular in the Mediterranean. This came down to India during the Greek period of influence (early fifth century), mixed with the *Vedic* ideas described above.¹²⁵ The theory, in its original form, was quite elaborate. Then, it was believed that the beginnings and

122. Sastry (1985), *op. cit.*, p. 45.

123. Louis Gonzales Reimann (1988), *op. cit.*, p. 6.

124. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

125. David Pingree (1981), *op. cit.*, p. 555.

ends of *Kalpas* were marked by a conjunction of planets at the beginning of Aries. This was later simplified so that the beginnings and ends of *mahayugas* were marked by a mean conjunction of the seven planets.¹²⁶ The last such conjunction was at 6 AM on February 18, -3101 Julian (3102 BCE).¹²⁷ This is believed to be the start of the current *Kali Yuga*.

Knowing the start of the *Kali Yuga* allows for some interesting calculations. The four that will be examined here are: (1) the age of the current *mahayuga* / how long until yuganta, (2) the age of the current *Manvantara*, (3) the age of the current day of Brahma, and (4) the age of the life of *Lord Brahma*.

For the first set of calculations, divine years shall be counted as years of men. The *Kali Yuga*, including both *sandhi* periods, has a length of 1,200 years. This, added to the start of the *Kali Yuga*, 3102 BCE, yields 1902 BCE. This marks (1) yuganta, (2) the end of the *mahayuga* and (3) the start of the *Krita Yuga*. In the early fifth century when Gupta-Period astronomers made these very same calculations, they must have discovered something very odd. According to these numbers, a *Krita Yuga* had started approximately twenty-three centuries prior to them. This clearly could not be the case because it was firmly established that “this” was the *Kali Yuga*.¹²⁸ Where could there be an error? The text could not be incorrect and neither were the

126. *Ibid.*

127. *Ibid.*

128. Louis Gonzales Reimann (1988), *op. cit.*, p. 168.

calculations, so the only possible source of error was the interpretation of the text. Here is the point where modern astrological interpretation comes in.

This was one of the reasons why the use of divine years was popularized in the Gupta period. Using divine years, the length of the *Kali Yuga* is 432,000, and this, added to 3102 BCE yields 428,899 CE. Applying this new interpretation, it was shown that the present time is a new *Krita Yuga*, but still just the *sandhi* period of the current *Kali Yuga* (this *sandhi* period lasts until 32,899 CE). Assuming that today is February 18, 2003, this *Kali Yuga* has an age of 5,104 years with 426,896 years remaining. While this could be depressing because it shows there is a long way to go until the next *Krita Yuga*, it is an easier figure to assimilate because it proves yuganta has yet to take place.

Knowing the start of the *Kali Yuga*, it is possible to find the age of the current *mahayuga*:

$$k = 432,000$$

Age of the *mahayuga*

$$= (4 + 3 + 2) \times k + 5104$$

$$= 9k + 5104$$

$$= 3,893,104 \text{ or approximately } \mathbf{3.9 \text{ million years}}$$

Knowing the age of the current *mahayuga*, it is simple to find the age of the current *Manvantara*. Twenty-seven complete *Mahayugas* have already taken place during the current Vaivasvata *Manvantara*.¹²⁹ In addition to this is the partial *mahayuga* calculated above.

$$k = 432,000$$

Age of the Vaivasvata *Manvantara*

$$= (27 \times 10 \times k) + [(4+3+2 \times k) + 5104]$$

$$= 279k + 5104$$

$$= 120,533,104 \text{ or approximately } \mathbf{120 \text{ million years}}$$

The next calculation aims to find the age of the current day of Brahma. Of the fourteen *manvantaras* that constitute a day of Brahma, we are in the Vaivasvata *Manvantara* (or the seventh *Manvantara*).¹³⁰ Of the Vaivasvata *Manvantara*, we are in the 28th *mahayuga*. Of the current *mahayuga*, we are in the *Kali Yuga*. Of the current *Kali Yuga*, 5,104 years have already passed. A simple addition of these numbers will provide the age of current day of Brahma:

$$k = 432,000$$

6 *Manvantaras*

$$= 6 \times 71 \times 10 \times k$$

129. *Ibid*, p. 125.

130. H. Jacobi. ([1908] 1964). *Ages of the World (Indian) : Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*. Edinburgh, T & T Clark, pg. 200-202

$$= 4260k$$

7 *Manvantara* Sandhis

$$= 7 \times 4 \times k$$

$$= 28k$$

27 *Mahayugas*

$$= 27 \times 10 \times k$$

$$= 270k$$

Krita Yuga + Treta Yuga + Dvapara Yuga

$$= (4 + 3 + 2) \times k$$

$$= 9k$$

Current Day of Brahma

$$= (4260 + 28 + 270 + 9) \times k$$

$$= 4,567k + 5104$$

$$= 1,972,949,104 \text{ or approximately } \mathbf{1.9 \text{ billion years}}^{131}$$

It is interesting to point out that the current day of Brahma, not including the *Kali Yuga* is 4,567 times the length of the *Kali Yuga*. As noted earlier, symbolic numbers occur often in these texts and this re-current sequence is further proof of the importance of such numbers. The final calculation aims find our location in time with respect to Brahma's life. It is said that one-half of Brahma's life has already passed.

131. David Pingree (1981), *op. cit.*, p. 14.

We are living in the first day (the *Varaha Kalpa*) of Brahma's second fifty-year period:

$$k = 432,000$$

50 Years of Brahma

$$= 2 \times 10 \times k \times 1000 \times 360 \text{ Days} \times 50 \text{ Years}$$

$$= 360,000,000k$$

Age of Brahma

$$= 50 \text{ Years of } \textit{Lord Brahma} + \text{Current Day of Brahma}$$

$$= 360,000,000k + (4,567k + 5104)$$

$$= 360,004,567k + 5104$$

So the total time elapsed since current *Lord Brahma* is

$$= 155,521,972,949,104 \text{ or approximately } \mathbf{155.52 \text{ trillion years}}$$

From the calculations and results obtained, a summary timeline as postulated by Hindu tradition, showing the times and the current age, has been put together. Due to limitation of the scope of the research to the concept of a messenger, the researcher deems it unnecessary to elaborate the timeline. See figure 2.8 below:

LIFE OF BRAHMA

311.04 Trillion Years (36,000 kalpas [days of Brahma] and an equal number of nights

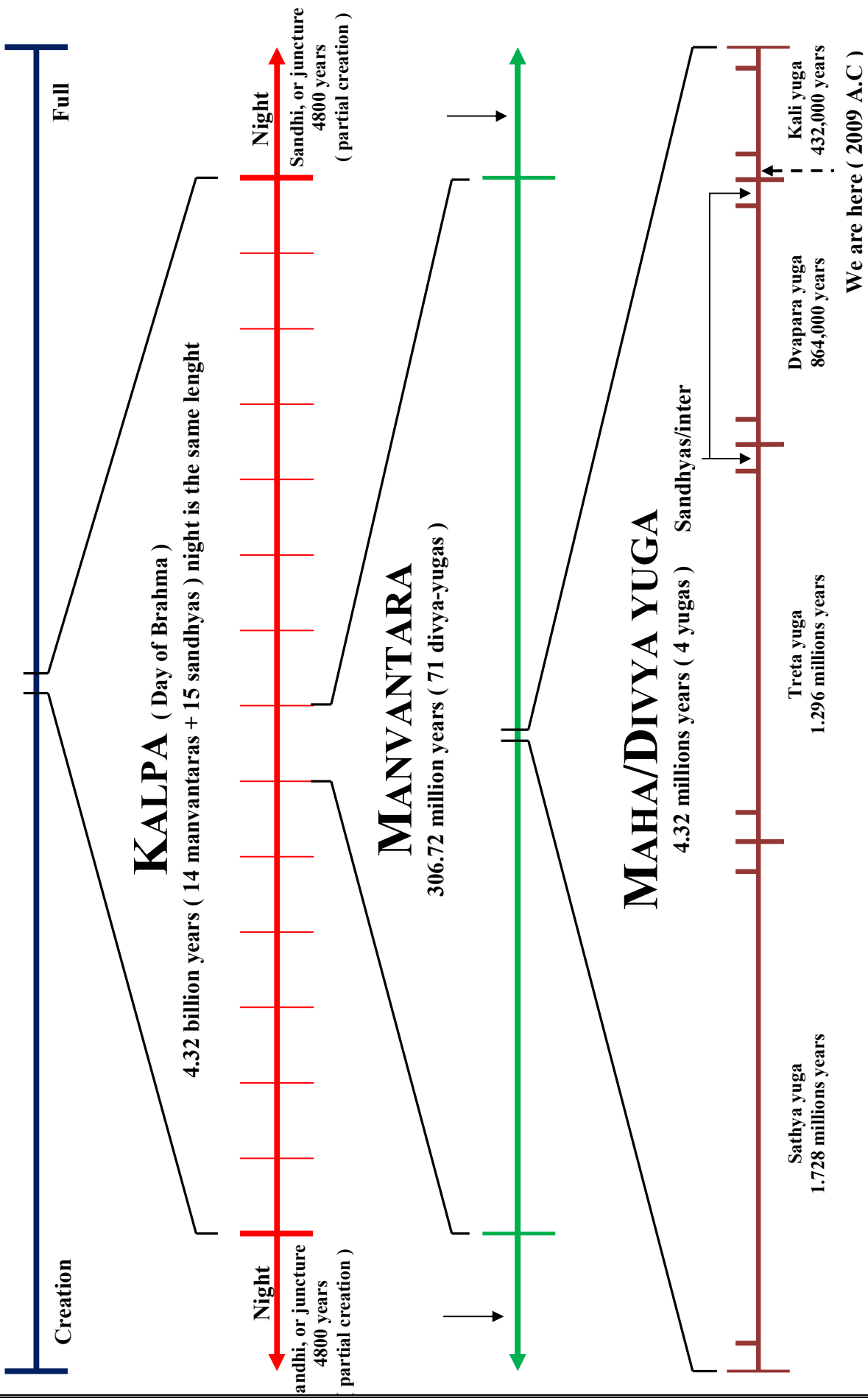


Figure 2.8 : Timeline of Hindu Tradition

2.4.2 Modern Hindu Astronomy Calculation

However, few modern Hindu astrologers have mentioned the disparities in current accepted calendar. One of the most prominent among them, Swami Sri Yukteswarar from the *Yogada Satsanga Society of India*, pointed out an error therein.

In his book "*The Holy Science*", Sri Yukteswar explained that the descending phase of *Kriya Yuga* lasts 4800 years, the *Treta Yuga* 3600 years, the *Dwapara Yuga* 2400 years, and the *Kali Yuga* 1200 years. This is followed by the ascending phase of the *Kali Yuga*, also lasting 1200 years. The ascending phase of the *Kali Yuga* began in September of 499 AD. September 1699 marked the start of the ascending phase of the *Dwapara Yuga*, according to Sri Yukteswar. He wrote that the traditional or long-count view is based on a misunderstanding. He says that at the end of the last descending *Dvapara Yuga* (about 700 BC), "Maharaja Yudhisthira, noticing the appearance of the dark *Kali Yuga*, made over his throne to his grandson and, together with all of his wise men, retired to the Himalaya Mountains. Thus there was none in the court who could understand the principle of correctly accounting the ages of the several *Yugas*." ¹³²

According to Sri Yukteswar, nobody wanted to announce the bad news of the beginning of the ascending *Kali Yuga*, years were constantly added to the *Dvapara* date (at that time 2400 *Dvapara*) only retitling the epoch to *Kali*. As the *Kali* began to

132. Swami Sri Yukteswar (1949), *The Holy Science*. Los Angeles: Motilal Banarsidass, pp. 9-24.

ascend again, scholars of the time recognized that there was a mistake in the date (then called 3600+ *Kali*, even their texts said *Kali* had only 1200 years). "By way of reconciliation, they fancied that 1200 years, the real age of *Kali*, were not the ordinary years of our earth, but were so many *daiva* (or *deva*) years ("years of the Gods"), consisting of 12 *daiva* months of 30 *daiva* days each, with each *daiva* day being equal to one ordinary solar year of our earth. Hence according to these men, 1200 years of *Kali Yuga* must be equal to 432,000 years of our earth."¹³³

Sri Yukteswar explained that just as the cycle of day and night is caused by a celestial motion (the earth spinning on its axis in relation to the sun), and just as the cycle of the seasons is caused by a celestial motion (the earth with tilted axis orbiting the sun), so too is the *yuga* cycle (seen as the precession of the equinox) caused by a celestial motion. He explained this celestial motion as the movement of the whole solar system around another star. As our sun moves through its orbit, it takes the solar system (and earth) closer to and then further from a point in space known as the "grand centre" also called '*Vishmunabhi*', which is the seat of the creative power, *Lord Brahma*, which regulates the mental virtue of the internal world." He implied that it is the proximity of the earth and sun to this grand centre that determines which season of man or *yuga* it is.¹³⁴

133. *Ibid.*

134. *Ibid.*

Quoting from *The Holy Science*, Sri Yukteswar states that our sun revolves round a grand center called Vishnunabhi, which is the seat of the creative power, the universal magnetism. *Lord Brahma* regulates *dharma*, the mental virtue of the internal world. Sri Yukteswar states: “the sun, with its planets and their moons, takes some star for its dual and revolves round it in about 24,000 years of our earth. Essentially, when the sun in its revolution round its dual comes to the place nearest to this grand center, the seat of Brahma (the mental virtue) becomes so much developed that man can easily comprehend all, even the mysteries of Spirit.” Further, when the sun reaches that place in its orbit which is farthest from Brahma, the grand center comes to such a reduced state that man cannot grasp anything beyond the gross material creation. Paramahansa Yogananda, devotee of Sri Yukteswar, dates his forward in the book to 249 *Dwapara* (1949 AD). The period of 2400 years during which the sun passes through the 2/20th portion of its orbit is called *Dwapara Yuga*. *Dharma*, the mental virtue, is then in its second stage of development and is but half complete; the human intellect can then comprehend the fine matters of electricity and their attributes which are the creating principles of the external world.¹³⁵

According to his astronomical and astrological calculation, he defines the current age as Ascending *Dwapara Yuga*. The cyclical figure 2.9 below shows the autumnal equinox point.¹³⁶

135. *Ibid.*

136. *Ibid.*

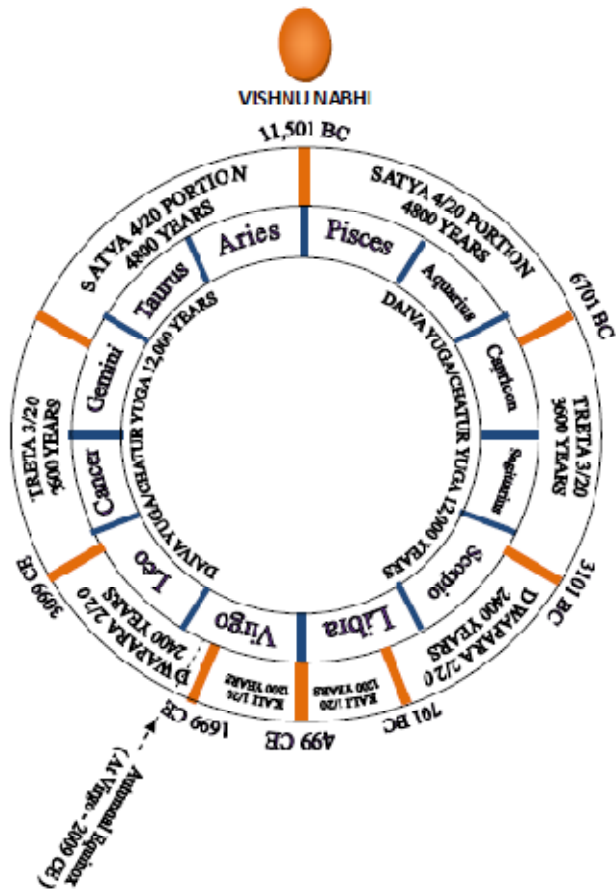


Figure 2.9 : The Autumnal equinox point

Knowing the start of the *Kali Yuga*, it is possible to find the age of the *mahayuga*:

$$k = 1200$$

Age of the *mahayuga*

$$= (0 + 0 + 0) \times k + 1504$$

$$= 0k + 1504$$

$$= 1504 \text{ or approximately } \mathbf{1500 \text{ years}}$$

Knowing the age of the current *mahayuga*, it is simple to find the age of the current *Manvantara*. Twenty-eight complete *Daiva Mahayugas* have already taken place during the current *Vaivasvata Manvantara*. In addition to this is the partial *mahayuga* calculated above.

$$k = 1200$$

Age of the *Vaivasvata Manvantara*

$$= (28 \times 10 \times k) + (1504)$$

$$= 280k + 1504$$

$$= 336000 \text{ or approximately } \mathbf{336,000 \text{ years}}$$

The next calculation will find the age of the current day of *Lord Brahma*. Of the fourteen *manvantaras* that constitute a day of *Lord Brahma*, we are in the *Vaivasvata Manvantara* (or the seventh *Manvantara*). In the *Vaivasvata Manvantara*, we are in the 29th *mahayuga*, this due to the fact that the 28th *mahayuga* just elapsed last 499 CE, according to Swami Yukteswarar's calculation. In the current *mahayuga*, we are in the *Kali Yuga*. In the current *Kali Yuga*, 1504 years have already passed. A

simple addition of these numbers will provide the age of the current day of *Lord*

Brahma :

$$k = 1200$$

6 Manvantaras

$$= 6 \times 71 \times 10 \times k$$

$$= 4260k$$

7 Manvantara Sandhis

$$= 7 \times 4 \times k$$

$$= 28k$$

28 Mahayugas

$$= 28 \times 10 \times k$$

$$= 280k$$

Ascending Kali Yuga

$$= 1504$$

Current Day of *Lord Brahma*

$$= (4260 + 28 + 280) \times k + 1504$$

$$= 4,568k + 1504$$

$$= 5,481,600 \text{ or approximately } \mathbf{5.48 \text{ Million years}}$$

The last calculation, shown below, aims to find our location in time with respect to *Lord Brahma* life. It is said that one-half of *Lord Brahma*'s life has already passed. We are living in the first day (the *Varaha Kalpa*) of *Lord Brahma*'s second fifty-year period:

$$k = 1200$$

50 Years of *Lord Brahma*

$$= 2 \times 10 \times k \times 1000 \times 360 \text{ Days} \times 50 \text{ Years}$$

$$= 360,000,000k$$

Age of *Lord Brahma*

$$= 50 \text{ Years of } \textit{Lord Brahma} + \text{Current Day of } \textit{Lord Brahma}$$

$$= 360,000,000k + (4,568k + 1504)$$

$$= 360,004,568k + 1504$$

$$= 432,005,481,600 \text{ or approximately } \mathbf{432 \text{ Billion years}}^{137}$$

From the calculations and results obtained, a modified summary timeline as postulated by Hindu tradition, and according to modern Hindu scholars, showing the times and the current age, has been put together. As before, due to limitation of the scope of the research to the concept of a messenger, the researcher deems it unnecessary to elaborate the timeline. See figure 2.10 below:

137. *Ibid.*

LIFE OF BRAHMA

432 Billion Years (36,000 kalpas [days of Brahma] and an equal number of nights)

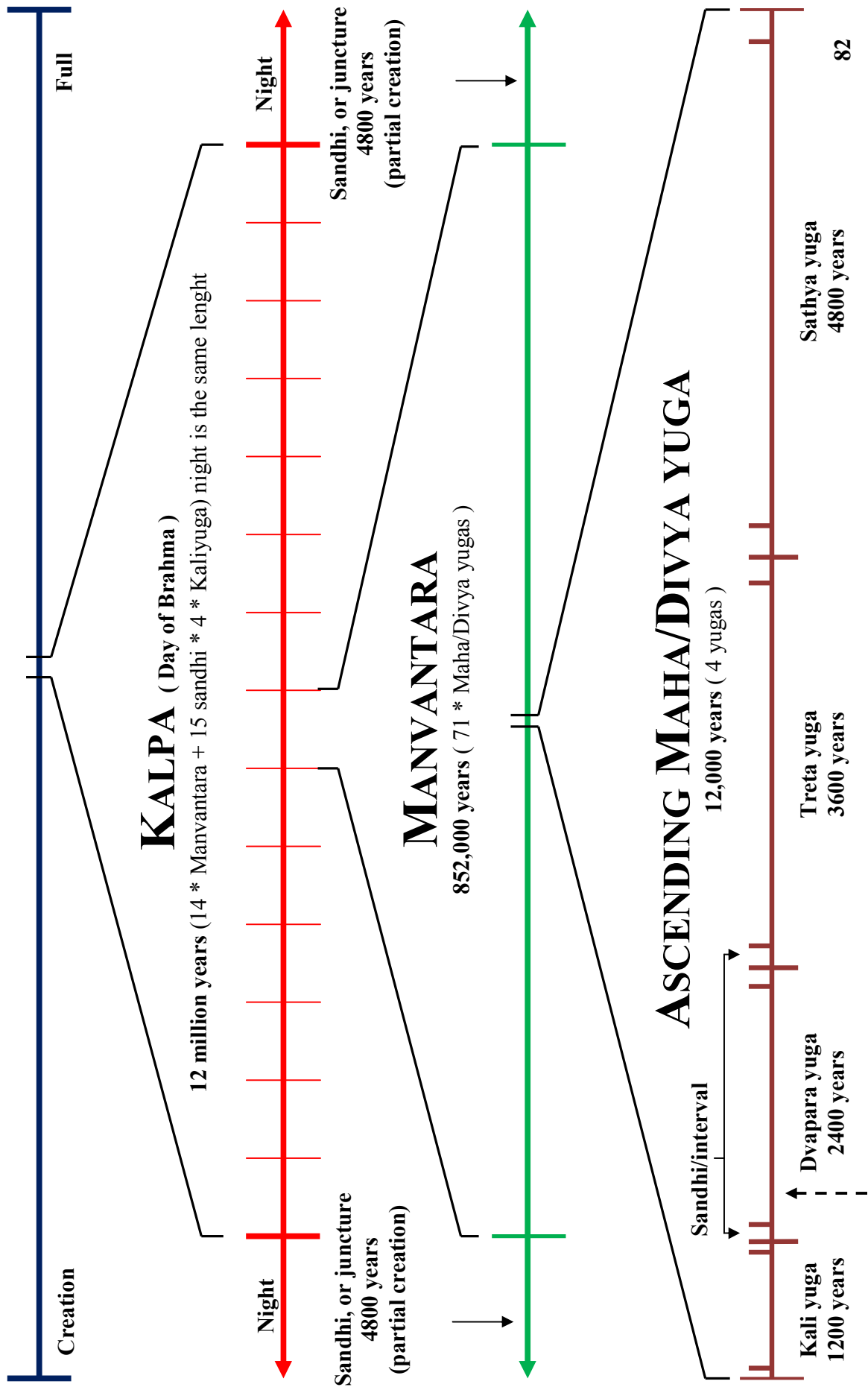


Figure 2.10 : Timeline of Hindu tradition according to modern Scholars

Ancient scholar Aryabhata (500 CE), and modern scholar Swami Yukteswarar (1890 CE) were two prominent champions of the two timelines shown. These differences occur due to differences in method of interpretation and the scientific and technological gap between the two periods, and thus their ability to understand outer space. For now, the majority of Hindus stick with the method propounded by Aryabhata, which yields 4.32 million years as one *Maha/Daiva Yuga*.

2.5 Scriptures describing the Messenger Concept

After presenting a detailed description of the Hindu calendar and associated literature, the researcher now examines all scriptures and discusses those dealing in detail with the messenger concept. Scriptures focusing on this concept are categorized under *Smriti*, two very important ones of which are *Bhagavad Gita (Ithisas)* and *Srimad Bhagavatam (18 MahaPurana)*. Figure 2.11 below highlights the discourse in these two scriptures.

- ***Bhagavad Gita (Ithisas)*** - The most important part of the *Mahabharata* is the *Bhagavad-Gita*. It is a marvellous dialogue between *Lord Krishna* and Arjuna on the battlefield, before the commencement of the Great War. Bhagavan Sri Krishna became the charioteer of Arjuna. Sri Krishna explained the essentials of the Hindu religion to Arjuna. Just as the *Upanishads* contain the cream of the *Vedas*, so does the *Gita* contain the cream of the *Upanishads*. The *Upanishads* are the cows. *Lord Krishna* is the cowherd. Arjuna is the calf. The

Gita is the milk. The wise men are those who drink the milk of the Gita. The Gita is the most precious jewel of Hindu literature. It is a universal gospel. The Gita teaches the *Yoga* of Synthesis. It ranks high in the religious literature of the world. Arjuna saw before him his dear relatives and teachers in the battlefield. He fainted and refused to fight against them. Then *Lord Krishna* imparted knowledge of the Self to Arjuna and convinced him that it was his duty to fight regardless of the consequences. Afterwards Arjuna gave up his *Moha*, or delusion. All his doubts were cleared. He fought against the Kauravas and achieved victory.¹³⁸

- ***Srimad Bhagavatam (18 MahaPurana)*** – The *Puranas* are of the same class as the *Itihasas*. They have five characteristics (*Pancha-Lakshana*) viz., history, cosmology (with various symbolical illustrations of philosophical principles), secondary creation, and genealogy of kings and of *Manvantaras*. All the *Puranas* belong to the class of *Suhrit-Samhitas*. Vyasa is the compiler of the *Puranas* from age to age; and for this age, he is *Krishnadvaipayana*, the son of *Parasara*. The aim of the *Puranas* is to impress on the minds of the masses the teachings of the *Vedas* and to generate in them devotion to God, through concrete examples, myths, stories, legends, lives of saints, kings and great men, allegories and chronicles of great historical events. The sages made use of these things to illustrate the eternal principles of religion. The *Puranas* were meant not for the scholars, but for the ordinary people who could not

138. Swami Sivananda (1997), *op. cit*, p. 15.

understand high philosophy and who could not study the *Vedas*. There are eighteen main *Puranas* and an equal number of subsidiary *Puranas* or *Upa-Puranas*. The best among the *Puranas* are the *Srimad Bhagavata* and the *Vishnu Purana*. The most popular is the *Srimad Bhagavata Purana*. The *Srimad Bhagavata Purana* is a chronicle of the various *Avatars* of *Lord Vishnu*. There are ten *vataras* of *Vishnu*. The aim of every *Avatara* is to save the world from some great danger, to destroy the wicked and protect the virtuous.¹³⁹

139. *Ibid*, pp. 15-16.

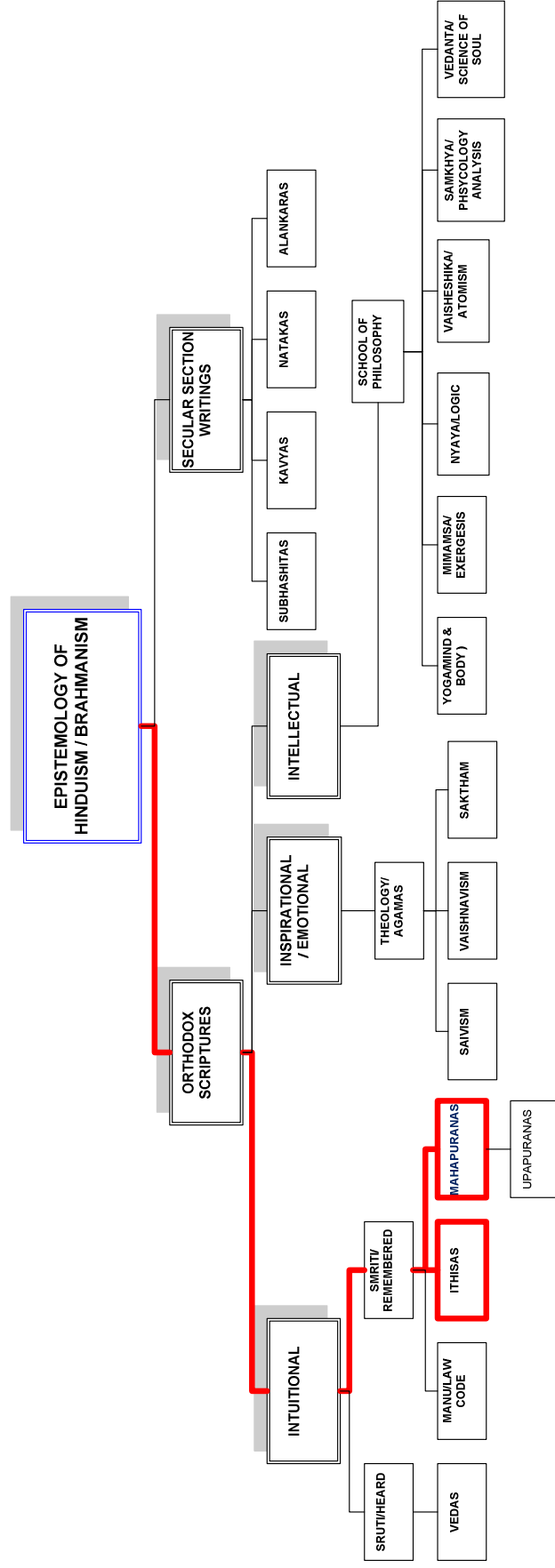


Figure 2.11 : Scriptures describing the Messenger concept

2.5.1 The Chain of Knowledge

In Hinduism, scriptural knowledge was transmitted through the “*Parampara*” tradition. *Parampara* denotes a succession of teachers and disciples in traditional Indian culture. It is also known as guru-shishya paramparā, succession from guru to disciple. In the paramparā system, knowledge (in any field) is passed down (undiluted) through successive generations. This has been reconfirmed by *Lord Krishna* in *Bhagavad Gita* as follows:

*Evam parampara-praptam
imam rajarsayo viduh
sa kaleneha mahata
yogo nastah parantapa*

"This supreme science was thus received through the chain of disciplic succession and the saintly kings understood it in that way. But in course of time the succession was broken, and therefore the science as it is appears to be lost."

[Bhagavad Gita Chapter 4, Verse 2]¹⁴⁰

Lord Krishna discloses to Arjuna that *Bhagavad-Gita* is a system of *Yoga* that was first spoken by the Lord to the Sun God (Vivasvan). The Sun God explained it to Manu, and Manu explained it to Ikshvaku. In that way, by disciplic succession, one

140. A.C. Swami Prabhupada (1972), *Bhagavad Gita As It Is*. Mumbai: The Baktivedanta Book Trust, p.193.

speaker after another, this system of *Yoga* has been handed down since time immemorial.¹⁴¹

In contrast, a particular guru lineage is called *Parampara*, and by receiving an initiation (*diksha*) from a *Parampara* of a living guru, one belongs to its proper *sampradaya*. The concept of *sampradaya* therefore is closely tied to the concrete reality of *guru-parampara* (the lineage of spiritual masters who are both carriers and transmitters of the tradition). By tradition, there are four *sampradayas*, distinguishable by subtle differences in the philosophical systems they follow regarding the relationship between the soul (*jiva*) and God, although the majority of other core beliefs are identical. The four *sampradayas* are:

- a) *Lakshmi-Sampradaya* following the philosophy of *Vishishtadvaita* ("qualified nondualism") espoused by Ramanujacharya.¹⁴²
- b) *Lord Brahma Sampradaya* following the philosophy of *Dvaita* ("dualism") espoused by Madhvacharya.¹⁴³
- c) *Rudra sampradaya* following the philosophy of *Shuddhadvaita* ("pure nondualism") espoused by Vishnuswami and Vallabhacharya.¹⁴⁴
- d) *Kumara-sampradaya* following the philosophy of *Dvaitadvaita* ("duality in unity") espoused by Nimbarka.¹⁴⁵

141. *Ibid*, p. 191.

142. Swami Sivananda (1996), *op. cit*, pp. 65-70.

143. *Ibid*.

144. *Ibid*.

145. *Ibid*.

In *Saivism*, all *Sitthars* were among the greatest disciples of *Lord Shiva* and are considered equal in their power and devotion to the supreme God. Lord Nandi, principal disciple of *Lord Shiva*, is believed to be the beginning of discipic succession in *Saivism*. Shaivites believe *Lord Shiva* himself transmits divine knowledge.

Tirumular was a Tamil Shaivite mystic and writer, considered one of the sixty-three *Nayanars* and one of the 18 *Sitthars*. His main work, the *Tirumantiram*, which consists of over 3000 verses, forms a part of the key text of the Tamil *Shaiva Siddhanta* (Tirumurai).

Another famous Hindu *Parampara* was Adi Shankara *sampradaya*. He founded four *Mathas* to guide the Hindu religion. These are at Sringeri in Karnataka (South India), Dwaraka in Gujarat (West India), Puri in Orissa (East India) and Jyotirmath in Uttarkand (North India). Hindu tradition states that he put his four main disciples Sureshwaracharya, Hastamalakacharya, Padmapadacharya and Totakacharya respectively in charge of these *mathas*. The heads of the *mathas* trace their authority back to these figures. Each of the heads of these four *mathas* takes the title of Shankaracharya ("the learned Shankara") after the first Shankaracharya. The table 2.2 below gives an overview of the four *Mathas* founded by Adi Shankara and their details.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶. Varanasi Raj Gopal Sharma (1987), *Kanchi Kamakoti Math, a Myth*. New Delhi: Ganga-Tunga Prakashan, p. 67.

Followers (Sisya)	Maṭha	Mahavakya	Veda	Sampradaya
Hastamalakacarya	Govardhana Pitham	PraJnanambrahma (<i>Brahmanis Knowledge</i>)	<i>Rig Veda</i>	Bhogavala
Suresvaracarya	Sarada Pitham	Aham brahmasmi (<i>I am Brahman</i>)	<i>Yajur Veda</i>	Bhūrivala
Padmapadacarya	Dvaraka Pitham	Tattvamasi (<i>That thou art</i>)	<i>Sama Veda</i>	Kitavala
Toṭakacarya	Jyotirmatha Pitham	Ayamatma brahma (<i>This Atman is Brahman</i>)	<i>Atharva Veda</i>	Nandavala

Table 2.2 : Four Sects (*Mathas*) founded by Adi Shankara

2.6 Description of Messengers

As explained before, in Hinduism an *avatar* or *avatara* is the incarnation (bodily manifestation) of an Immortal Being of the Ultimate Supreme Being. It is derived from the Sanskrit word *avatāra*, which means "descent" and usually implies a deliberate descent into mortal realms for special purposes. The term is used primarily in Hinduism for incarnations of *Lord Vishnu* (the preserver), whom many Hindus worship as God. Hindus believe that God takes a special (including human) form whenever there is a decline of righteousness (*dharma*) and rise of evil.

2.6.1 Description of Messenger in Bhagavad Gita

There are many verses mentioning the concept of a messenger in *Bhagavad Gita*; below are two famous of such verses:

*yada yada hi dharmasya
glanir bhavati bharata
abhyutthanam adharmasya
tadatmanam srijamy aham*

*Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice, O
Descendant of Bharata, and a predominant rise of irreligion--at that time
I descend myself.*

[Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 4, verse 7]¹⁴⁷

*paritranaya sadhunam
vinasaya ca duskrtam
dharma-samsthapanarthaya
sambhavami yuge yuge*

*In order to deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as
to reestablish the principles of religion, I advent Myself millennium after
millennium.*

[Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 4, verse 8]¹⁴⁸

According to Paramahansa Yogananda, in his commentary on the verses above, from *Bhagavad Gita*, this earth is a stage where a divine drama evolves.

147. A.C. Swami Prabhupada (1972), *op. cit.*, p. 201.

148. *Ibid.*, p. 203.

Whenever the majority of human actors misuse their God-given freedom, and by the perpetuation of evil bring suffering, and upset the divine plans concerning their fellow beings' and their own destiny (plans intended to be carried out through man's free will), then God (cosmic director) appears on the stage in human form (an *avatar*) to instruct the amateur thespians in the proper art of living. God thus teaches man, made in his image, how to evolve by using free will, manifesting the divine nature inherent in him.¹⁴⁹

However, *Bhagavad Gita* does not mention the specific *avatar* or messengers by name, place or time period. Detailed description of messengers is only given in *Bhagavata Purana (Srimad Bhagavatam)*.

2.6.2 Description of Messenger in Srimad Bhagavatam

The *Srimad Bhagavatam* is a very popular *Puranas* among the *Vaishnavas* denomination. According to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu from *Madhava Sampradaya*, commenting on *Srimad Bhagavatam*, the expansions of *Lord Krsna*, who come to the material creation, are called *avatar*. The word '*avatara*' means 'one who descends' (from Sanskrit *avatarati*) and in this case the word specifically refers to one who descends from the spiritual sky. In the spiritual sky, there are innumerable *Vaikuntha* planets (upper planets) and from these planets, the expansions of the Supreme Personality of Godhead come into this universe.

149. Paramahansa Yogananda (2006), *God Talks with Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita*-edited by Yogananda Paramahansa. Kolkata: Yogoda Satsanga society, p. 439.

The Lord descends from His abode to this world and therefore He is called *avatāra*, which means "one who descends." Sometimes *avatāra* is understood to refer to an incarnation who assumes a material form of flesh and bone, but actually *avatāra* refers to one who descends from higher places. The Lord's abode is situated far above this material sky and He descends from that higher place, thus He is called *avatara*.¹⁵⁰

Sometimes the word 'incarnation' (one who entered flesh and accepts a material body) is used. *Srimad Bhagavatam* describes the body of the Lord as *durvibhavya* (materially inconceivable), since it may sometimes seem to be material or the Lord may manifest a material body for some purpose. This type of body should not be considered as a usual human body. In addition, humans and other "jivas" cannot manifest themselves as *avatar* (if they are endowed with a specific potency, they are called *saktyavesa-avatar*).¹⁵¹

There are six kinds of incarnations:

- 1) The *Purusa avatar*
- 2) The *Lila avatar*
- 3) The *Guna avatar*
- 4) The *Manvantara avatar*
- 5) The *Yuga avatar*
- 6) The *Saktyavesa avatar*

150. A.C. Swami Prabhupada (1972), *op. cit.*, p. 82.

151. *Ibid*, pp. 222-223.

These conclusions are also confirmed in Srimad-Bhagavatam.¹⁵² There it is said that there is no limit to the incarnations of the Supreme Lord just as there is no limit to the waves of the ocean.¹⁵³

Saktyavesa avatar is a category of *avatar* who is not a *Vishnu tattva* (Godly being) but a *Jiva tattva* (jivas or living beings empowered for a special mission). The system categorization of *avatara* is quite complex and some *avatar* belongs to more than one category. *Dasavataras* are practically all as *lila avatar*. *Sri Rama* is a famous *lila-avatara*, who also was listed among those in 25 as in *Bhagavata Purana*. His *lila* is described in the epic of *Ramayana*.

2.6.2.1 Purusa Avatar and their expansions

Krsna (Supreme *Brahman*) first incarnates as the three *purusa-avatar*, namely the *Maha-Vishnu* or *Karanodakasayi avatara*, the *Garbhodakasayi avatara*, and the *Ksirodakasayi avatara*¹⁵⁴. This is confirmed in the *Satvata-Tantra* scripture as follows:

*visnos tu trini rupani
purusakhyany atho viduh
ekam tu mahatah srastr
dvitiyam tv anda-samsthitam
trtiyam sarva-bhuta-stham
tani jnatva vimucyate*

152. *Ibid.*

153. *Ibid*, p. 393.

154. *Ibid*, p. 326.

For material creation, Lord Krsna's plenary expansion assumes three Vishnus. The first one, Maha Vishnu creates the total material energy, known as the mahat-tattva. The second Garbhodakasayi Vishnu enters into all the universes to create diversities in each of them. The third Ksirodakasayi Vishnu diffused as the all-pervading Super soul in all the universes and is known as Paramatma. He presents even within the atoms. Anyone who knows these three Vishnus can be liberated from the material entanglement."

[Satvata-Tantra]¹⁵⁵

Krsna is the original Personality of the Godhead. His expansion is *Balarama*, who expands the original *catur vyuha* or quadruple expansions.

- 1) Vasudeva
- 2) Sankarsana
- 3) Pradyumna
- 4) Aniruddha

These original *catur vyuha* expansions reside in *Mathura and Dvaraka*.¹⁵⁶ They expand from them twenty-four forms of Vishnu. They are named differently according to the arrangement of the conch, disc, lotus and club in their hands. All of these twenty-four forms reside in each *Vaikuntha planet* with the predominating Deity of that planet. From the original *catur vyuha* the second *catur vyuha* expands.

155. *Ibid.*

156. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura (1985), *Sri Brahma-Samhita*. Los Angeles: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust International, pp.8 BS 5.

In this second *catur vyuha* the form of *Sankarsana* is also called Maha Sankarsana. It is from Maha Sankarsana that *Maha Vishnu* becomes manifested.¹⁵⁷

PARABRAHMAN

Original Personality of Godhead

|

BALARAMA

First expansion

|

ORIGINAL CATUR VYUHA

Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Pradyumna, Aniruddha

|

SECOND CATUR VYUHA

Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Pradyumna, Aniruddha

(each expand into three and then another two expansions)

|

(*Maha Sankarsana*)|

|

MAHA VISHNU

Maha Vishnu lies on the Causal Ocean, which appears in one corner of the spiritual world. He manifests the *mahat tattva* (or the sum total of material energy). It is into this *Maha tattva* that He exhales all the seed-like universes through the pores

157. A.C. Swami Prabhupada (1972). *op. cit.*, pp. 156-165.

of His skin. These seed-like universes then expand as the different material elements form coverings around them. Each of the coverings is ten times thicker than the previous covering, and forms a shell-like covering. When *Maha Vishnu* impregnates the living entities with His glance into material nature, it begins to manifest its various energies.¹⁵⁸

When the universes have thus developed in the womb of material nature, *Maha Vishnu* expands as *Garbhodkasayi Vishnu*, who enters into each universe with the living entities of that particular universe and thus activates each universe by His presence. He lies down on *Ananta Sesa*, who in turn lies on the *Garbha* Ocean, which is the perspiration from the Lord's body and half fills the universe. From His navel comes a lotus bud, which is the total form of the living entities' fruitive activity. The lotus grows dissipating the darkness of the universe. On top of the lotus *Lord Brahma*, the first living being appears. Situated on the lotus, *Lord Brahma* does not understand anything. He began to enter the stem and climbed down to find its origin. He did not find anything. *Lord Brahma* returned to the top of the lotus where he heard the word ta-pa (austerity). Hearing the sound, *He* undergoes a penance for one thousand celestial years; (6x30x12x1000 earthly years). Being very pleased with *Lord Brahma*'s *tapasya*, the Lord manifests the *Vaikuntha planets* to him.¹⁵⁹

To maintain the universe *Garbhodakasayi Vishnu* expands as *Ksirodakasayi Vishnu*, who is the all-pervading Supersoul (Paramatma). By His entering into every

158. *Ibid.*

159. *Ibid.*

atom, He maintains the whole universe. His abode is *Svetadvipa*, an island in the ocean of milk. *Krsna's* energies can be divided into three classes: energy of thinking, feeling and acting. When he exhibits his thinking energy, he is the Supreme Lord. When he exhibits his feeling energy, he is *Lord Vasudeva*. When he exhibits his acting energy, he is *Sankarsana Balarama*. Without his thinking, feeling and acting, there would be no possibility of spiritual and material creation. In either case, however, both the spiritual and material worlds are manifestations of the energy of acting in which *Krsna* acts in the form of Sankarsana and Balarama.¹⁶⁰

2.6.2.2 Lila Avatar (pastime avatars)

During a *Lord Brahma* day, there are twenty-five *lila-avatars*, also known as *Kalpa avatar*, because they appear in every *Kalpa*. Out of these, the incarnation of Hamsa and Mohini is not permanent, but Kapila, Dattatreya, Rsabha, Dhanvantari and Vyasa are five eternal forms, and they are more celebrated. The incarnations of the tortoise (Kurma), the fish (Matsya), Nara-narayana, Varaha (boar), Hayasirsa, Prsnigarbha, and Balarama are considered to be *vaibhava-avatars*.

160. Vyasadeva, S. K. D (1972), *Srimad Bhagavatam*. Srimad Bhagavatam. S. Prabupadha. Metro Manila, The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. SB 1.3.1-5, 2.9.4-9, 3.8.11-21, 10.46.31.

1) The four Kumaras, sons of Lord Brahma

They appear at the beginning of creation and are specifically empowered to distribute transcendental knowledge. They are empowered by *Lord Jnana-Sakti*, also known as *saktyavesa-avatar*.¹⁶¹

2) Varahadeva - Sukara or the Boar incarnation

The Boar incarnation appeared in two different millenniums. During the period of Svayambhuva Manu, the earthly planet remained submerged in the water of devastation, so the Lord appeared as a white boar and lifted the earth and set it properly. During the period of Caksusa Manu (see table in section 2.5.4), Lord Boar was in red and killed the demon Hiranyaksa.¹⁶²

3) Narada Muni - The son of Lord Brahma

He is empowered by Lord's bhakti-*Sakti* and *saktyavesa-avatara*.¹⁶³

4) Nara Narayana - The twin sons of King *Dharma* and Murti

They are a partial expansion of *Krsna* and Arjuna. Nara and Narayana Rsis exhibits the Lord's renunciation.¹⁶⁴

161. A.C. Swami Prabhupada. (1972). *op. cit*, p. 167.

162. *Ibid*, p. 168.

163. *Ibid*, p. 169.

164. *Ibid*, p. 177.

5) Kapiladeva - The son of Kardama Muni and Devahuti

He explains the original (personal) Sankhya philosophy. Kapiladeva exhibits the Lord's transcendental knowledge.¹⁶⁵

6) Dattatreya - The son of Atri Muni and Anasuya

He is a combined incarnation of Lord *Vishnu*, *Lord Brahma* and *Shiva*. He speaks on the subject of transcendence to Alarka, Prahlada, Yadu, etc.¹⁶⁶

7) Yajna - The son of Prajapati Ruci and Akuti

During the period of Svayambhuva Manu, there was no qualified Indra. Therefore, the Lord appeared as the Yajna and took the position.¹⁶⁷

8) Rsabha - The son of King Nabhi and Merudevi

His oldest son was Bharata Maharaja, after whom the earth was named Bharatvarsa. He instructed his sons to follow the path of perfection by tapasya (asceticism).¹⁶⁸

165. *Ibid*, p. 172.

166. *Ibid*, p. 173.

167. *Ibid*, p. 174.

168. *Ibid*, p. 175.

9) Prthu - The incarnation of the Lord's ruling force

Due to the demonic nature of King Vena, the sages killed him by a curse.

They prayed for the Lord to appear and churn the two arms of his dead body in a specific manner, and the Lord appeared as Prthu.¹⁶⁹

10) Matsya - The Fish incarnation

He appeared to show a special mercy to Satyavrata Muni. After the period of Caksusa Manu when there was a partial inundation, he protected the Satyavrata Muni (who later became Vaivasvata Manu) by keeping him safe on a boat.¹⁷⁰

11) Kurma - The Tortoise incarnation

He appeared to become the resting place of the Mandara Hill, used as a churning rod by the demons and demigods to produce nectar.¹⁷¹

12) Dhanvantari - The father of Ayurveda

He appeared from the ocean of milk with the pot of nectar.¹⁷²

13) Mohini - The Lord's form of a beautiful woman

169. *Ibid*, p. 177.

170. *Ibid*, p. 171.

171. *Ibid*, p. 179.

172. *Ibid*, p. 180.

The Lord tricked the demons by appearing in the form of a beautiful woman, asked the demons for some nectar and distributed it to the demiGods.¹⁷³

14) Nrsimhadeva - The half-man half-lion incarnation

He appeared to protect Prahlada by killing his demoniac father Hiranyakasipu.¹⁷⁴

15) Vamanadeva - The dwarf incarnation, son of Kasyapa Muni and Aditi

Assuming the form of a dwarf, brahmachari, the Lord visited the fire sacrifice of Bali Maharaja. He begged three steps of land and with those steps He took the whole universe. He is the son of Kasyapa and Aditi.¹⁷⁵

16) Parasurama - Bhrgupati, the son of Jamadagni Muni and Renuka

He annihilated the *ksatriyas* twenty-one times because of their rebellion against the *Brahmanas*.¹⁷⁶

17) Vyasadeva - The son of Parasara Muni and Satyawati

He divided the one *Veda* into several branches and sub-branches, seeing as people in general were becoming less intelligent.¹⁷⁷

173. *Ibid*, p. 181.

174. *Ibid*.

175. *Ibid*.

176. *Ibid*, p. 182.

177. *Ibid*, p. 183.

18) Raghavendra - Lord Ramacandra son of King Dasaratha and Kausalya

He performs pleasing work for the demiGods, protects His devotees and kills Ravana and his followers. The Lord assumes the form of a human being and exhibits superhuman powers by controlling the Indian Ocean. He was Princes of Ayodhya and ruled for 11,000 years.¹⁷⁸

*sri-bhagavan uvaca
imam vivasvate yogam
proktavan aham avyayam
vivasvan manave praha
manur iksvakave bravit*

The Blessed Lord said: I instructed this imperishable science of Yoga to the sun-God, Vivasvan, and Vivasvan instructed it to Manu, the father of mankind, and Manu in turn instructed it to Ikshvaku.

[SB 4:1]

Lists of kings of the Ikṣvaku or Aikṣvaka dynasty were found in the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, *Harivamsha* and the *Puranas*. Nevertheless, the two lists found in the *Ramayana* vary with all the other lists. The *Raghuvamsha* of Kalidasa also mentions the names of some of the kings of this dynasty. The genealogy of the Ikshvaku dynasty, as mentioned in the *Ramayana*, start from *Lord Brahma* upto

178. *Ibid*, p. 184.

Raghuvamsa, followed by *Rama* and ends at Brihadbala, the son of Vishrutavant. However, the Nepalese and Buddhists continue the dynasty further.¹⁷⁹

19) Lord Balarama - The first plenary expansion of the Lord

He acts as Lord *Krsna*'s older brother in their pastimes in Vrndavana.¹⁸⁰

20) Lord *Krsna* – The civilized human

Both Balarama and *Krsna* appeared in the family of Vrsni (Yadu dynasty) and in doing so, they removed the burdens of the world.¹⁸¹

21) Buddha - The son of Anjana

He appeared in the province of Gaya in the beginning of *Kali-Yuga* to delude those who were inimical to the faithful. He also appeared to stop animal slaughter in the name of *Vedic* sacrifices by preaching non-violence and by not entertaining *Vedic* authorities. There is also a Buddha incarnation mentioned in another *Kali-Yuga*, when the Lord appeared to be wilder to the demons that were destroying the inhabitants of other planets, by flying unseen in space ships made by the demon Maya.¹⁸²

179. R.T. Vyas (1992), *Valmiki Ramayana: Text as Constituted in its Critical Edition*. Vadodara: Oriental Institute of Vadodara, pp. 255-256.

180. A.C. Swami Prabhupada (1972), *op. cit.*, p. 186.

181. *Ibid.*

182. *Ibid.*, p. 187.

22) Kalki - The son of Brahmana Vishnu-yasa

He appeared in the village of Sambhala at the end of *Kali-Yuga*. Mounted on a horse (Devadatta), and with a sword, he will kill millions upon millions of degraded barbarian humans. He also commences the *Satya-yuga*.¹⁸³

Rabiprasad Mishra, in his book “*Theory of Reincarnation*”, alludes to confusion arising over the appearance of the avatars of Krisna, Buddha and *Kalki*. This is due to similarities in their. The *Puranas* have confused these *avatars* with one another.¹⁸⁴ In the words of O’Flaherty, “After *Lord Vishnu* becomes incarnate as Krisna to kill his own race of God men, he becomes incarnate as the Buddha to corrupt other mortal men: then, at the end of the *Kali* age, he becomes incarnate as *Kalkin* to kill all these evil mortals. The similar function of these last three *avatars* (in spite of the supposedly benevolent intentions of Krisna) caused the *Puranas* to confuse Krisna with both the Buddha and *Kalkin*”.¹⁸⁵

Rabiprasad Mishra, in his assessment on the concept of *Kalki*, asserts that the tradition then, of the last and the future incarnations of *Vishnu*, enrooted in the *Vedic* Rudra, may have been inspired by the Buddhist doctrine of Maitreya, probably

183. *Ibid*, p. 191.

184. Rabiprasad Mishra (2000), *Theory of Incarnation: Its Origin and Development in the Light of Vedic and Puranic References*. New Delhi: Pratibha Prakashan, p. 262.

185. Wendy Doniger O’Flaherty (1988), *The Origins Of Evil In Hindu Mythology*. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publisher, p. 269.

derived from Zoroastrian doctrines, and perhaps brought to India by these same invaders. This assertion is attested by some such political references.¹⁸⁶

The *Dasavatara* (ten incarnations) theory in Hinduism suggests the idea of an evolutionary process of soul development. The fish emerges out of the early Palaeozoic seas, followed by the tortoise and the boar in the Mesozoic period. Next came the man lion and dwarf in the period of cavemen and bushmen. Parasurama represents the nomadic or hunter stage, and *Rama* and *Krsna*, the fully civilized stage of city life. The tenth *avatara Kalki* is yet to emerge. It has remained as symbolic visionary prophecy to be fulfilled in the future. Thus, the theory of incarnation began in the *Vedic* age in a rudimentary form, and its concrete form is seen in the *Bhagavad Gita*, where it was broadened and expanded into the *Bhagavata Purana*.¹⁸⁷

2.6.2.3 Guna Avatar (incarnations of the qualitative modes of nature)

They are *Lord Brahma* (*rajoguna* – mode of passion), *Lord Vishnu* (*sattvaguna* – mode of goodness) and *Lord Shiva* (*tamoguna* – mode of ignorance). *Lord Brahma* is one of the living entities, but due to his devotional service he is very powerful. This primal living entity, master of the mode of material passion, is directly empowered by the *Garbhodakasayi Vishnu* to create innumerable living entities. In *Brahma-samhita* (5.49) *Lord Brahma* is likened to valuable jewels brightened by the

¹⁸⁶. Rabiprasad Mishra (2000), *op. cit*, p. 262.

¹⁸⁷. *Ibid*, p. 267.

rays of the sun, and the sun is likened to the Supreme Lord Garbhodakasayi *Vishnu*. If in some *Kalpa*, there are no suitable living entities capable of acting in *Lord Brahma's* capacity, Garbhodakasayi *Vishnu* Himself manifests as *Lord Brahma* and acts accordingly.

Similarly, by expanding Himself as Lord *Shiva*, the Supreme Lord is engaged when there is need to annihilate the universe. Lord *Shiva*, in association with *maya*, has many forms, which generally sum up to eleven. They are not, technically speaking, *avatars*, since this term is used only for Sri *Vishnu's* manifestations. Hanuman could be called an expansion of *Shiva*, *Shiva-amsa* or so. He is not a *jiva*. Lord *Shiva* is not one of the living entities, he is a transformation of *Krsna* Himself. The example of milk and yogurt is often given in this regard - yogurt is a preparation of milk, but still yogurt cannot be used as milk. Similarly, Lord *Shiva* is an expansion of *Krsna*, but he cannot act as *Krsna*, nor can we derive the spiritual restoration from Lord *Shiva* that we derive from *Krsna*. The essential difference is that Lord *Shiva* has a connection with material nature, but *Vishnu* or Lord *Krsna* has nothing to do with material nature. In Srimad-Bhagavatam, it is stated that *Lord Shiva* is a combination of three kinds of transformed consciousness known as *vaikarika*, *tajjasa* and *tamasa*.¹⁸⁸

The *Vishnu* incarnation, although master of the modes of goodness within each universe, is in no way in touch with the influence of material nature. Although *Vishnu* is equal to *Krsna*, *Krsna* is the original source. *Vishnu* is a part, but *Krsna* is

¹⁸⁸ . A.C. Swami Prabhupada (1972), *op. cit*, p. 243.

the whole. This is the version given by *Vedic* literatures. In *Brahma-samhita*, the example is given of an original candle which lights a second candle. Although both candles have equal power, one is accepted as the original, and the other is said to be kindled from the original. The *Vishnu* expansion is like the second candle. He is as powerful as *Krsna*, but the original *Vishnu* is *Krsna*. *Lord Brahma* and *Lord Shiva* are obedient servants of the Supreme Lord, and the Supreme Lord as *Vishnu* is an expansion of *Krsna*.

2.6.2.4 Manvantara Avatar

There are fourteen *Manvantara-avatars* who appear during the fourteen ruling periods of Manus (*manvantaras*) in one day of *Lord Brahma* (*Kalpa*). They are unlimited in numbers. Each *Manvantara* is presided over by different Indra. Refer table 2.3 for detail.

Manu	Father	Avatara	Indra
1. Svayambhuva	Brahma	Yajna	Yajna
2. Svarocisa	Agni	Vibhu	Rocana
3. Uttama	Priyavrata	Satyasena	Satyajit
4. Tamasa	Priyavrata	Hari	Trisikha
5. Raivata	Priyavrata	Vaikuntha	Vibhu
6. Caksusa	Caksu	Ajita	Mantradruma
7. Vaivasvata (Sradhdhadeva)	Vivasvan	Vamana	Purandara

8. Savarni	Vivasvan	Sarvabhauma	Bali
9. Daksa Savarni	Varuna	Rsabha	Adbhuta
10. Brahma Savarni	Upasloka	Visvaksena	Sambhu
11. <i>Dharma</i> Savarni	Upasloka	<i>Dharmasetu</i>	Vaidhrta
12. Rudra Savarni	Upasloka	Svadhama	Rtadhama
13. Deva Savarni	Upasloka	Yogesvara	Divaspati
14. Indra Savarni	Upasloka	Brhadbhanu	Suci

Table 2.3 : There are fourteen Manvantara-avatars (period of man)

Of these fourteen *Manvantara-avatars*, Yajna and Vamana are also *lila-avatars*. These fourteen *Manvantara-avatars* are also known as *vaibhava-avatars*. During each *Manvantara*, in the *Dvapara-yuga* of each *divya-yuga (Maha-yuga)*, different sages accept the position of Vyasa or the compiler of the *Vedas* and *Puranas*. In the *Vaivasvata Manvantara* there have been, until now, 28 Vyasas. The detail listing is as follows:¹⁸⁹

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| 1) Lord Brahma | 15) Trayyaruna |
| 2) Prajapati or Manu | 16) Dhananjaya |
| 3) Usana, Sukracarya | 17) Krtanjaya |
| 4) Brhaspati | 18) Rina |
| 5) Savitri | 19) Bharadvaja |
| 6) Yamaraja | 20) Gautama |
| 7) Indra | 21) Uttama |

189. Ganesh Vasudeo Tagare (1976), *The Vishnu Purana*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, Ch. 3.3 - 3.4.5 p. 419.

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| 8) Vasistha | 22) Vena |
| 9) Sarasvata | 23) Somasusmapana |
| 10) Tridhama | 24) Riksa or Valmiki |
| 11) Trivisana | 25) Sakti, father of Parasara |
| 12) Bharadhvaja | Muni |
| 13) Antariksa | 26) Parasara Muni |
| 14) Vapra | 27) Jaratkaru |
| | 28) <i>Krsna</i> Dvaipayana Vyasa) |

In the next *Dvapara-yuga*, the Vyasa will be Asvatthama, the son of Drona.¹⁹⁰

2.6.2.5 Yuga Avatar

The four *yuga-avatars* are also described in Srimad-Bhagavatam. In the *Satya-yuga*, the incarnation of God is white; in the *Treta-yuga*, He is red; in the *Dvapara-yuga* and *Kaliyuga*, He is blackish. Sometimes, in a special *Kali-Yuga*, His color is yellowish.

This particular incarnation of the Supreme Personality of the Godhead is foretold in Srimad-Bhagavatam:¹⁹¹

*Krsna-varnam tvisakrsnam
sangopangastra-parsadam
yajnaih sankirtana-prayair
yajanti hi sumedhasah*

"In the age of Kali the Lord incarnates as a devotee, yellowish in color and always chanting Hare Krsna and Hare Rama. Although He is Krsna, His complexion is not blackish like Krsna's in Dvapara-yuga

190. *Ibid.*

191. A.C. Swami Prabhupada (1972), *op. cit.*, p. 262.

*but is golden. It is in Kali-Yuga that the Lord engages in preaching love of Godhead through the sankirtana movement, and those living entities who are intelligent adopt this process of self-realization."*¹⁹²

2.6.2.6 Saktyavesa Avatar

There is no limit to the *saktyavesa-avatar*. The *saktyavesa* incarnations are of two kinds - direct and indirect. When the Lord Himself comes, He is called the *saksat* or a direct *saktyavesa-avatara*, and when He empowers some living entity to represent Him, that living entity is called an indirect or *avesa* incarnation.¹⁹³ Examples of direct or *saksad-avatars* are the Sesa incarnation and the Ananta incarnation. In Ananta is invested the power to sustain all planets, and in the Sesa incarnation the power to serve the Supreme Lord.

Examples of indirect *avatars* are the four Kumaras, Narada, Prthu and Parasurama. These are actually living entities, but there is a specific power given to them by the Supreme Personality of the Godhead. When a specific opulence of the Supreme Lord is invested in specific entities, they are called *avesa-avatars*. The four Kumaras specifically represent the Supreme Lord's opulence of knowledge. Narada represents the devotional service of the Supreme Lord. Devotional service is also represented by Lord Caitanya, who is considered to be the full representation of devotional service. In *Lord Brahma* is invested the opulence of creative power, and in King Prthu, the power to maintain living entities. Similarly, in Parasurama is invested

192. *Ibid.*

193. *Ibid.*

the power to kill evil elements.¹⁹⁴ Figure 2.12 shows the overall picture of the concept of *avatars*.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁴. *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵. A.C. Swami Prabhupada (1972), *op. cit.*, p. 243.

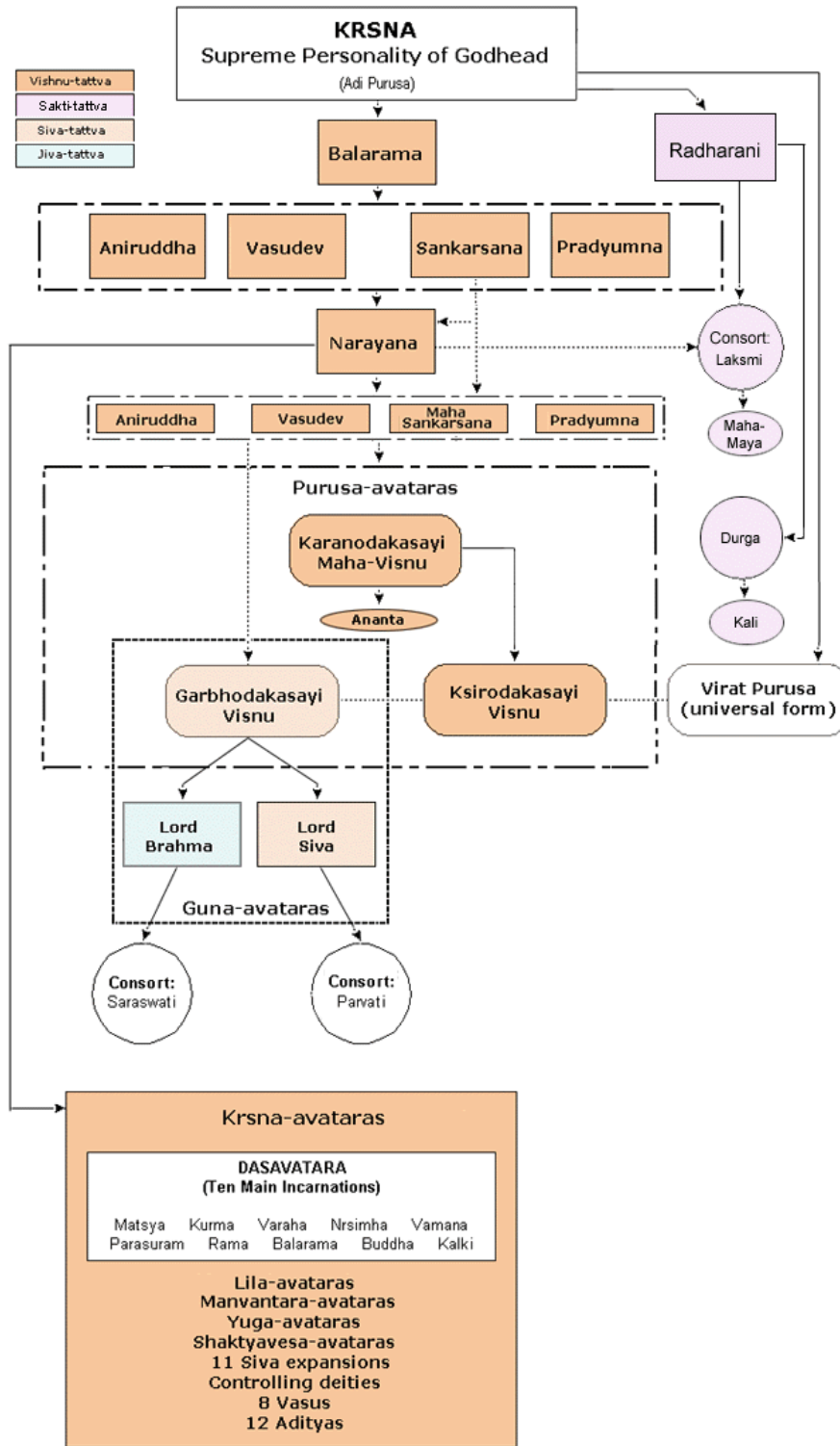


Figure 2.12 : Overall Concept of Avatars in Hinduism

2.6.3 Hindu Scholars' view

According to commentary by Swami Sivananda on *Avatara*, the law governing the Lord's descent upon the earth is the same at all times and everywhere. There is the descent of God for the ascent of man. The aim of every *Avatara* is to save the world from some great danger, to destroy the wicked and protect the virtuous.

When unrighteousness grows and righteousness is on the wane, when the forces of indivinity seem to be stronger than the divine forces, when the word of God or the Commandments of His Messengers are forgotten or disobeyed, when religious fanaticism follows the letter of the scriptures, killing their spirit, it is then that the Lord incarnates Himself on the earth, to save man, to save righteousness. He takes human form when He comes down on the physical plane. He is called an *Avatara*.¹⁹⁶

2.6.3.1 Difference between a Jivanmukta and an Avatara

A simple Jivanmukta is like a star that glitters at night. He only throws a little light. Some way or another, he has crossed to the other shore through some Tapas and Sadhana. He cannot elevate a large number of people. Just as the waters of a small spring can quench the thirst of a few pilgrims only, so also, this Kevala-jnani can bring peace to a few persons only where an *Avatara* would know no limits. He

¹⁹⁶. Swami Sivananda (1964), *Bliss divine: a book of spiritual essays on the lofty purpose of human life and the means to its achievement*. Rishikesh, India: Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy, Divine Life Society, pp. 25-32.

removes the veil of ignorance of thousands of men and women, and takes them to the land of eternal rest, bliss and sublime.¹⁹⁷

The *Avatar* is one with the Supreme. They are not His parts like individual souls. *Avatar* or Incarnations are rays of the Lord. When the work of Loka-sangraha is over, they disappear from the world. *Avatars* are of various kinds. There are Purna-*avatars*, full of Kalas or rays, and there are Amsa-*avatars* or partial incarnations. There are also Lila-*avatars*.¹⁹⁸

Lord Krishna was a Purna-*avatara*. Sri Sankaracharya was an Amsa-*avatara*. Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana, *Rama* and others were Lila-*avatars*. Krishna and *Rama* were the *Avatars* of *Lord Vishnu*. Dakshinamurthy is an incarnation of *Lord Shiva*. Dattatreya is the *Avatar* of the Trimurtis (*Lord Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Shiva* are three aspects of God). *Lord Brahma* is the creative aspect, *Vishnu* is the preservative aspect and *Shiva* is the destructive aspect. There is no polytheism in the Hindu religion. *Shiva*, *Vishnu*, *Lord Brahma* and *Sakti* are different aspects of the one Lord.

The *Bhagavata Purana* is a chronicle of the various *Avatars* of *Lord Vishnu*. There are ten prominent *avatars* of *Lord Vishnu*. There are Matsya (the Fish), Kurma (the Tortoise), Varaha (the Boar), Narasimha (the Man-lion), Vamana (the Dwarf),

¹⁹⁷ . *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ . *Ibid.*

Parasurama (*Rama* with the Axe), Ramachandra (the hero of the *Ramayana*), Sri Krishna, Buddha (the prince-ascetic founder of Buddhism) and *Kalki* (the Hero on a white Horse who come at the end of the *Kali Yuga*).¹⁹⁹

The purpose of the *Matsya Avatara* was to save Vaivasvata Manu from destruction by a deluge. The purpose of the *Kurma Avatara* was to enable the world to recover some precious things that were lost in the deluge. The tortoise retained the churning-rod when the Gods and the Asuras churned the Ocean of milk. The purpose of the *Varaha Avatara* was to rescue the earth from the waters, which had been dragged down by a demon named Hiranyaksha. The purpose of *Narasimha Avatara*, half-lion and half-man, was to free the world from the oppression of Hiranyakasipu, a demon, the father of Bhakta Prahlada. The purpose of *Vamana Avatara* was to restore the power of the Gods, which had been eclipsed by the penance and devotion of King Bali. The object of *Parasurama Avatara* was to deliver the country from the oppression of the Kshatriya rulers. Parasurama destroyed the Kshatriya race twenty one times. The object of *Rama Avatara* was to destroy the wicked Ravana. The object of *Sri Krishna Avatara* was to destroy Kamsa and other demons, to deliver His wonderful message of the Gita, and to become the centre of the Bhakti Schools of India. The object of *Buddha Avatara* was to prohibit animal sacrifices. The object of *Kalki Avatara*, who will appear before the end of the *Kali Yuga*, is the destruction of the wicked and the re-establishment of virtue.

¹⁹⁹ . *Ibid.*

2.6.3.2 Degree of the Lord's Manifestation in Different Avatars

The *Rishis* of yore have expounded the doctrine that the Lord of the universe exists in sixteen expanding Kalas or digits of manifestation. One digit of manifestation of His life is in the vegetable kingdom, two in the animal, and from five to eight in the human, according as we pass from the savage at one end of the scale to the highest evolved state at the other. The Lord's manifestation in His *Avatar* ranges from nine to sixteen digits or rays. The full or *Purna Avatar* are those in whom all sixteen rays are present. *Lord Krishna* was a *Purna-Avatara*, with sixteen rays. *Lord Rama* was an *Avatara* of fourteen rays. Theosophists also talk of seven rays and above, when they describe the stages of spiritual development of their Masters and Adepts.²⁰⁰

²⁰⁰ . *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 3
THE CONCEPT OF MESSENGER ACCORDING TO ISLAMIC THE
PERSPECTIVE

3.1 Introduction to Islam

The literal meaning of Islam is peace; surrender of one's will for the sake of God and surrendering one's own pleasure for the pleasure of God.²⁰¹ The religion of Islam is the acceptance of and obedience to the teaching of God as He revealed to his last prophet, Muhammad.²⁰² The message of Islam was revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings on him) 1,400 years ago. It was revealed through angel Gabriel (on whom be peace) and was thus preserved in the *Holy Qur'an*. The *Holy Qur'an* carries a divine guarantee of safeguard from interpolation and it claims that it combines the best features of the earlier scriptures.

The prime message of Islam is the unity of God, that the Creator of the world *Allah* is one and he alone is worthy of worship. A true Muslim must accept 6 tenets of Islam namely belief in *Allah*, *Allah's* angels, all revealed scriptures, *Allah's* Prophets – where Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is his last messenger sent to mankind, day of judgment and indeed the decree of God.²⁰³ A follower of this belief

201. Rooney Kathy (2003), *Encarta Student Dictionary*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, p.763.

202. I. A. Ibrahim (1997), *A brief illustrated guide to understanding Islam*. Houston: Darussalam Publication, p. 48.

203. Abdul Rahman al-Sheha (2001), *The Key to Understanding Islam*. Riyadh: World organization for presenting Islam, pp. 12-16.

is called Muslim. After accepting these beliefs, a Muslim has five main duties to perform, namely bearing witness to the unity of God and Muhammad (peace be upon him) as His last Messenger, observing the prescribed prayer, payment of *Zakat* (donation), keeping the fasts on *Ramadhan*, and performing the pilgrimage to Mecca.²⁰⁴

Islam believes that each person is born pure. The *Holy Qur'an* teaches that God has given human beings a choice between good and evil, and urges to seek God's pleasure through faith, prayer and charity. Islam also proclaims that God created mankind in his image and by imbuing the attributes of God on a human level mankind can attain nearness to Him. Islam's main message is to worship God and to treat all of God's creation with kindness and compassion. The rights of parents in their old age, orphans and the needy are particularly stressed. Women's rights were safeguarded 1,400 years ago when the rest of the world was believed to be in total darkness about emancipation. Islamic teachings encompass every imaginable situation, and its rules and principles are truly universal, and have stood the test of time.²⁰⁵

In Islam virtue does not connote forsaking the bounties of nature that are lawful. On the contrary one is encouraged to lead a healthy, active life with the qualities of kindness, chastity, honesty, mercy, courage, patience and politeness. In

204. *Ibid*, p. 5-10.

205. Ruqaiyyah Waris Maqsood (1995), *Islam*. London: Heinemann Publication, p. 44.

short, Islam has a perfect and complete code for the guidance of individuals and communities alike. As the entire message of Islam is derived from the *Holy Qur'an* as well as the *Sunnah* and *Hadith* (the traditions and practices of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him)), it is immutable in the face of change in time and place.²⁰⁶ It may appear rigid to the casual eye but in fact it is the most certain and adaptable way of a life regardless of human changes.

Islam teaches that the path to spiritual development is open to all. Any individual who searches the One Creator can seek nearness to God through sincere and earnest worship. It is a central tool to establish a relationship with the Almighty. This positive message for humanity fills the heart with hope and courage.

There are over 1.5 billion Muslims worldwide. They make up 25% of the world's population. There are thirty-five nations with a population over 50% Muslim, and another twenty-one (21) have significant Muslim proportions. Nineteen (19) nations have declared Islam in their respective constitutions. Islamic law is the principle source of law in Iran and Saudi Arabia.²⁰⁷ Today Islam is the fastest growing faith in the world. Islam falls under the category of Semitic religions. See figure 3.1 below for a categorization of world religions.²⁰⁸

206. *Ibid*, p. 46.

207. Thomas M. Leonard (2006), *Encyclopedia of the developing world, Volume 2*. London: Taylor & Francis Publication, p. 955.

208. Dr. Zakir Naik (2001), *op. cit*, p. 3.

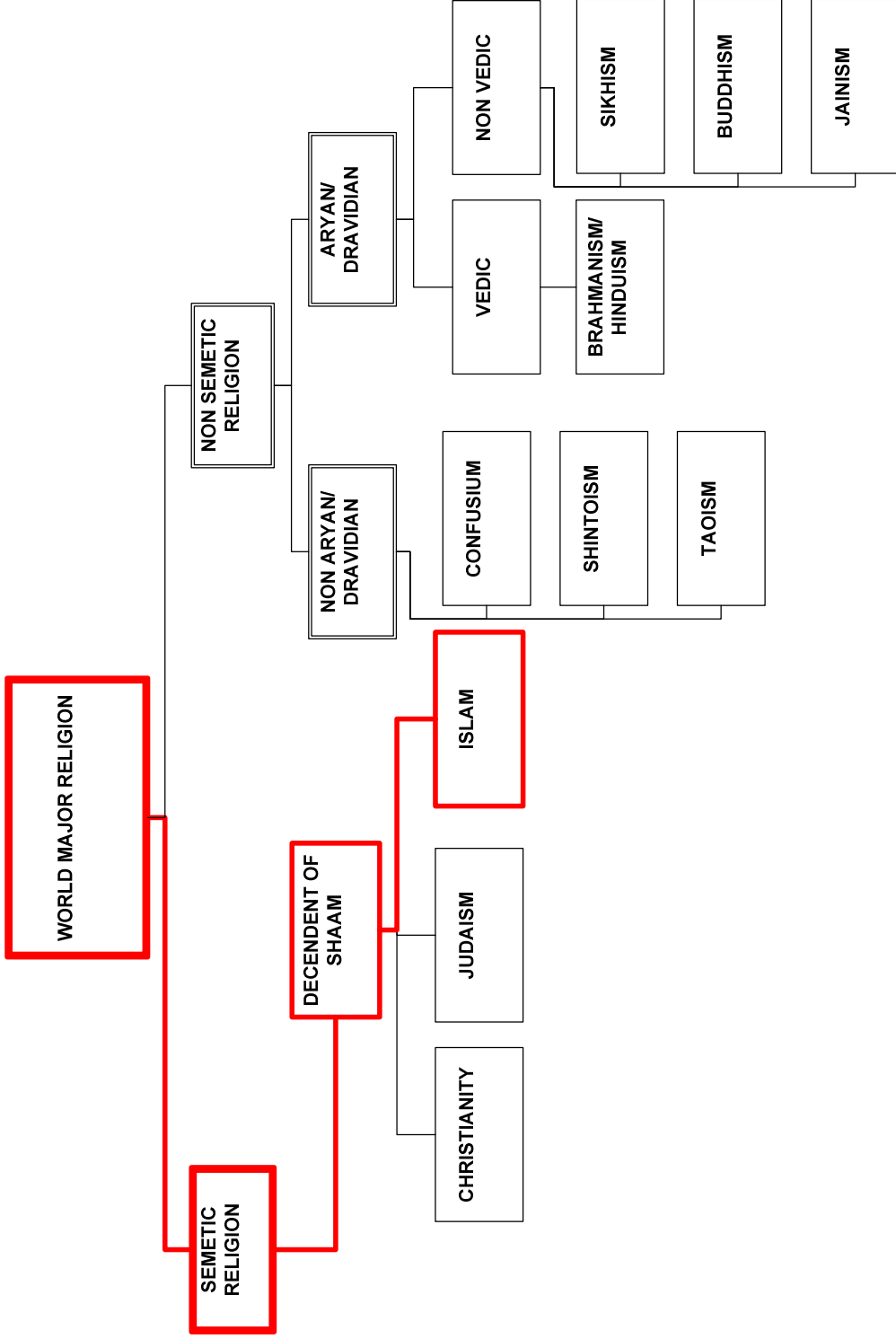


Figure 3.1 : Islam Religion Segmentation

For a person to be a Muslim, they are expected to have a firm foundation in the fundamentals of the religion. They are normally introduced to the Articles of Faith (Rukun Iman) at a very early age. Once they have sufficiently grasped these basic concepts, they move on to practical implementation of the pillars of Islamic faith (*Rukun Islam*).²⁰⁹ The verse below from the *Holy Qur'an* summarizes these Pillars:

ءَامَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ ۚ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلُّ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ
وَكُتُبِهِ ۚ وَرُسُلِهِ ۚ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّن رُّسُلِهِ ۚ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا ۚ غُفْرَانَكَ
رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٢٨٥﴾

The Messenger believes in what had been revealed to Him from His Lord, As do the men of Faith. Each one (of them) believes In Allah, His angels, His books, and His apostles. "We make no distinction (They say) between one and another of His apostles." and They say: "We hear, and we obey: (We seek) Thy forgiveness, Our Lord, and to Thee is the end of all journeys." [2:285]²¹⁰

From the above verse, Muslim creedal acts of worship, also called the Pillars of Faith (*Iman*), can be distinguished as:

209. Emir Fethi Caner (2002), *Unveiling Islam: an insider's look at Muslim life and beliefs*. Michigan: Kregel Publications, p. 120.

210. Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2000), *op. cit.*

i) Belief in Allah

Belief in *Allah* entails belief in his existence; that He is the only One who deserves to be worshipped; and that he has no partners, equals or rivals in his *Ruboobiyah*, *Uloohiyah* and his beautiful names and attributes. He is the creator of this existence, its proprietor and the one who disposes of all its affairs. Only that which he wishes comes to pass, and he is the only one who deserves to be worshipped.²¹¹ The *Holy Qur'an* verse below bears this witness:

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ۝ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ۝ وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ كُفُوًا
أَحَدٌ ۝

Say: He is Allah, the one and Only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him.
[112:1-4]²¹²

The above verse maintains that no one has the right to be invoked, supplicated, prayed to, or shown any act of worship but God alone.²¹³

211. I. A. Ibrahim (1997), *op. cit.*, p. 48.

212. Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2000), *op. cit.*

213. I. A. Ibrahim (1997), *op. cit.*

ii) Belief in Allah's Angels

This is to believe that the angels exist.²¹⁴ No one knows their exact number except him (*Allah*). He created them to worship Him. Refer to the *Holy Qur'an* verse below:

لَنْ يَسْتَنْكِفَ الْمَسِيحُ أَنْ يَكُونَ عَبْدًا لِلَّهِ وَلَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ وَمَنْ يَسْتَنْكِفْ
عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَيَسْتَكْبِرْ فَسَيَحْشُرُهُمْ إِلَيْهِ جَمِيعًا ﴿١٧٢﴾

*Christ disdained nor to serve and worship Allah, nor do the angels, those nearest (to Allah: those who Disdain His worship and are arrogant,-He will gather them all together unto Himself to (answer).[4:172]*²¹⁵

The angels do not share any of *Allah's* specific qualities, nor are they his children. Rather, *Allah* created them to perform certain tasks, as the *Holy Qur'an* verses below shows:

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَلَدًا سُبْحٰنَهُ ۗ بَلْ عِبَادٌ مُّكْرَمُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ لَا يَسْبِقُونَهُ
بِالْقَوْلِ وَهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

And they say: "((Allah)) Most gracious has begotten offspring." glory to Him! They are (but) servants raised to honor. They speak

214. *Ibid.*

215. Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2000), *op. cit.*

*not before He speaks, and They act (in all things) by His command.[21:26-27]*²¹⁶

iii) Belief in Allah's Books

Muslims believe that God revealed books to his messengers as proof for humankind and as guidance for them.²¹⁷ *Allah* revealed divine books to his messenger, which they were to convey to mankind in turn. These books contained nothing but the truth at the time of revelation, calling people to the oneness of *Allah*. He is the creator, proprietor, and owner, and to him belong all beautiful names and attributes. Some of these books include:

- a) The *Suhuf* (Scriptures of Abraham) - The *suhuf* is the sacred scripture which was revealed to Prophet Abraham.²¹⁸
- b) The *Torah* - The *Torah* is the sacred book which was revealed to Prophet Moses.²¹⁹
- c) The *Zaboor* (Psalm) - The *Zaboor* is the sacred book which was revealed to Prophet David.²²⁰
- d) The *Injeel* (Gospel) - The *injeel* is the sacred book which was revealed to Prophet Jesus.²²¹

216. *Ibid.*

217. I. A. Ibrahim (1997), *op. cit.*

218. Abdul Rahman al-Sheha (2001), *The Key to Understanding Islam*. Riyadh: World Organization for Presenting Islam, p.13.

219. *Ibid.*

220. *Ibid.*

221. *Ibid.*

e) The Noble *Holy Qur'an* - One must believe that the *Holy Qur'an* is the speech of *Allah* which Angel Gabriel brought to Muhammad, and that it is the last of the divine books which abrogated all previous books.²²²

iv) Belief in the Messengers of Allah

It is to believe that *Allah* choose the finest amongst mankind to be messengers whom he sent to be his creation with specific legislation.²²³ *Allah* ordered his Messengers to convey the message to people so that they do not have any proof against Him after he sends them. See the *Holy Qur'an* verse below:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ إِلَّا رِجَالًا نُوْحِي إِلَيْهِمْ ۖ فَسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧﴾

*Before thee, also, the apostles we sent were but men, to whom we granted inspiration: if ye realize This not, ask of those who possess the Message.[21:7]*²²⁴

v) Belief in the Last Day

It is to believe that the life of this world will come to an end,²²⁵ As proclaimed in the *Holy Qur'an* verses:

222. *Ibid.*

223. I. A. Ibrahim (1997), *op. cit.*

224. Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2000), *op. cit.*

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَيَبْقَىٰ وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ ﴿٥٦﴾

All that is on earth will perish: But will abide (for ever) the face of Thy Lord,- full of Majesty, bounty and honor. [55:26-27]²²⁶

According to this verse, *Allah* will resurrect all creation, take into account, and reward, their righteous deeds, belief and adherence to their prophets and messengers with an everlasting life in *Jannah* (The Heavenly Garden). He will punish evildoers, the unbelieving, and those disobedient to His messengers.

vi) Belief in Qada and Qadar (Predestination)

It is to believe that *Allah* knew everything before it came into being, and what will happen to it afterwards.²²⁷ He then brought them into existence, all in accordance to his knowledge and measure.

From these six Articles of Faith, summarized in the verse quoted below, the researcher chooses to focus on two: Belief in the books of *Allah* and Belief in *Allah's* messengers, as the scope of the research.

225. I. A. Ibrahim (1997), *op. cit.*

226. Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2000), *op. cit.*

227. *Ibid.*

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ءَامِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ءَ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ ءَ
 وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِن قَبْلُ ءَ وَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ءَ وَالْيَوْمِ
 الْآخِرِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴿١٣٦﴾

O ye who believe! Believe In Allah and His Messenger, and the Scripture which He hath sent to His Messenger and the Scripture which He sent to those before (him). Any who denied Allah, His angels, His books, His Messenger, and the Day of Judgment, hath gone far, far astray. [Holy Qur'an 4: 136]²²⁸

In this chapter, the concept of messengers as it runs from ancient times right up to the last messenger Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), as recorded in the *Holy Qur'an* and *Sunnah*, will be traced.

3.2 Early History and Scriptural Development

In broad terms, the Islamic religion can be said to have undergone two major periods of scriptural development. Muslims believe that Islam existed from the time of first prophet (Prophet Adam). The scriptures which were revealed to Prophets Ibrahim, Musa, Daud and Isa carry the same spirit as the last revealed scripture. It is all in the teaching of Islam. Due to the ignorance and corruption of men in the time of Ibrahim, Musa, Daud and Isa, Almighty *Allah* revealed the necessary information, just like He did the *Holy Qur'an* and *Hadith* through His last prophet, Prophet

228. Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2000), *op. cit.*

Muhammad (Peace be upon him) to the people of this day. Figure 3.2 below show the times of recording of the *Holy Qur'an* and the *Hadith*

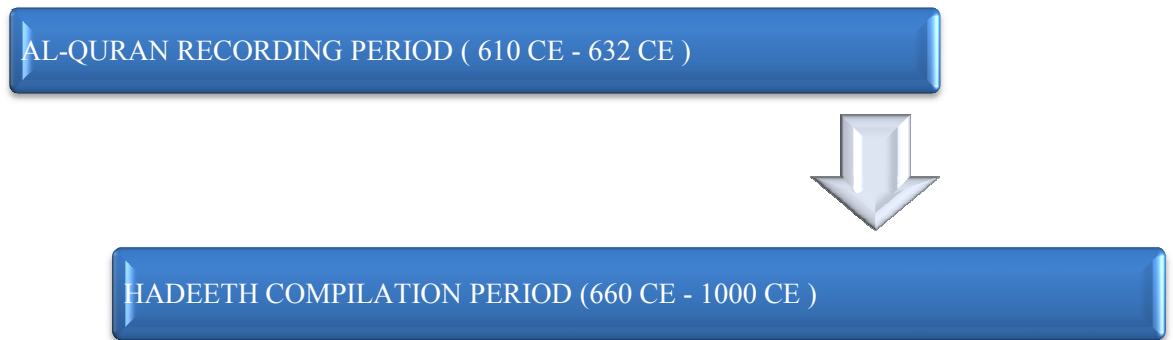


Figure 3.2 : Time of recording of scriptures.

3.2.1 The Last Messenger and the revelation of the Holy Qur'an

During the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) (570-632 CE), he would recite the *Holy Qur'an* before angel Gabriel once every Ramadan; however, he recited it twice (in the same order Muslims do today) in the last Ramadhan before his death. The Angel taught the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) seven modes of recitation.²²⁹ Prophet Muhammad was to recite each verse along with its location in the *Holy Qur'an* in relation to other verses and surahs.

229. Bukhari, I. (2001), *Sahih Al-Bukhari (Arabic-English)* by Muhsin Khan. Riyadh: Darussalam, p. 4.455.

In general, there are two primary scriptures namely the *Holy Qur'an* and the *Hadith*. The major difference between them is that the former records words which were conveyed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) when in a state of trance by Gabriel from *Allah*, and is held sacred by all Muslims, while the latter records words which the prophet spoke when no physical changes was apparent in him.²³⁰ The *Holy Qur'an* means "The Reading," the reading of the man who knew not how to read. The prophet's own words of preaching or sayings are called *Hadith*.²³¹ The *Holy Qur'an* is thus the first primary source, while the *Hadith* is the second primary source of instruction.

The verses were written on objects such as leaves of trees, pieces of wood, parchments or leather, flat stones and shoulder blades, by scribes selected by the Prophet. Some of these Scribes include Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Mu'awiyah Ibn Abi Sufyan, Ubay Ibn Ka'ab, and Zaid Ibn Thabit.²³² Some of the companions wrote the *Holy Qur'an* for their own use and several hundred companions memorized the *Holy Qur'an* by heart.

During the caliphate of Abu Bakr (632-634 CE), Umar Ibn Al-Khattab urged Abu Bakar to preserve and compile the *Holy Qur'an*. This was prompted after the battle of Yamamah, where heavy casualties were suffered among the reciters who had

230. Muhammad Farooq i Azam Malik (2005), *The meaning of Al Quran*. Texas: The Institute of Islamic Knowledge, p. 25.

231. *Ibid*.

232. Daniel A. Madigan (2001), *The Qur'an's self image: writing and authority in Islam's scripture*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, p. 25.

memorized the *Holy Qur'an*. Abu Bakr entrusted Zaid Ibn Thabit with the task of collecting the *Holy Qur'an*. Zaid, who was present during the last recitation of the *Holy Qur'an* by the Prophet to Angel Gabriel, and with the help of the companions, who had also memorized and written verses of the *Holy Qur'an*, accomplished the task and handed Abu Bakr the first authenticated copy of the *Holy Qur'an*. The copy was kept in the residence of Hafsa, daughter of Umar and wife of the Prophet.²³³

During the caliphate of Uthman (644-656 CE), he ordered Zaid Ibn Thabit, Abdullah Ibn Al-Zubair, Saeed Ibn Al-Aas, and Abdur Rahman Ibn Harith Ibn Hisham to make perfect copies of the authenticated copy kept with Hafsa. This was due to the rapid expansion of the Islamic state and concern over differences in recitation. Copies were sent to various parts of the Muslim world. The original copy was returned to Hafsa and a copy was kept in Madinah.

During the time of Mu'awiyah Ibn Abi Sufian (661-680 CE), a three-level diacritization dotting system was used by Abu Al-Aswad Al Doaly as syntactical marks. During the time of Abdul Malik Ibn Marawan (685-705 CE), letters were represented with a different dotting system by Nasr Ibn Asem and Hayy ibn Ya'amor. Later on, a completely new system of diacritical marks (*damma, fataha, kasra*) was invented by Al-Khaleel Ibn Ahmad Al-Faraheedy (d. 786 CE).²³⁴

233. *Ibid.*

234. Bukhari, I. (2001), *op. cit.* p. 6:507.

Muslims believe that the advent of the last messenger in the Mecca was the seal of all the prophets sent by *Allah* to mankind from the time of Prophet Adam and Eve. Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) time of birth has been recorded in many books, albeit with slight disparities. Nevertheless, many scholars agree on 12 Rabiul awal, year of the elephant, when Abraha attempted to demolish the Kaaba.²³⁵

The *Holy Qur'an* confirms this incident as follows:

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ ﴿١﴾ أَلَمْ تَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِي تَضَلُّلٍ ﴿٢﴾
 وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ ﴿٣﴾ تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّن سِجِّيلٍ ﴿٤﴾ فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ
 مَّأْكُولٍ ﴿٥﴾

*See Thou not how Thy Lord dealt with the companions of the Elephant? Did He not make their treacherous plan go astray? And He sent against them flights of birds, striking them with stones of baked clay. Then did He make them like an empty field of stalks and straw, (of which the corn) has been eaten up. [105:1-5].*²³⁶

In the Georgian calendar format, a number of dates has been proposed, such as 22 April 571 C.E.²³⁷ and 30 August 571 or 570 C.E.,²³⁸ as Prophet Muhammad's birthday (peace be upon him). These days vary because nobody knew that he was to become the last prophet for Muslims before he had received his first revelation in a cave called Hira. During 23 years of his prophethood, from age 40 to 63, he has recited 114 surahs, believed to have been inspired by Angel Gabriel.

235. Abu Khalil Dr. Shawqi (2003), *Atlas on The Prophet's Biography*. Riyadh: Darussalam Publication, p. 62.

236. Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2000), *op. cit.*

237. Muhammad Farooq i Azam Malik (2005), *op. cit.*, p. 23.

238. Abu Khalil Dr. Shawqi (2003), *op. cit.*, p. 49.

These 114 surahs fall under two main categories: 86 are the Meccan revelations and 28, the Medinan revelations.²³⁹ His revelations, and efforts to share them, were rejected by most of his fellow Meccans in the early years of his prophethood, including his uncle Abu Talib. After 8 years in Mecca, he planned to migrate to Medina, and this time is referred to as the beginning of the Islamic Calendar even till this day. He was warmly welcomed by the people of Medina, including Arab Jews, even though they were aware of his origin and prophethood. After making Medina the capital of the new Islamic administration for 5 years, he began planning a return to Mecca. He went on to face resistance on his return, in a war that was known as the Badar war.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) married 11 wives,²⁴⁰ the first of whom was Khadija binti Khuwalid to Maimunah binti Alharity. He died on 12th Rabi-ul-Awal, 11 A.H (634 AC).²⁴¹ Figure 3.3 below shows the revelations in Mecca and Medina.²⁴²

239. Muhammad Farooq i Azam Malik (2005), *op. cit*, p. 38.

240. Ali Careraga (1992), *The Wife of Messenger of Allah*. Egypt: Dar Al-Ghadd Al Ghadeed, pp. i-iii.

241. Muhammad Farooq i Azam Malik (2005), *op. cit*, p. 37.

242. *Ibid*, p. 38.

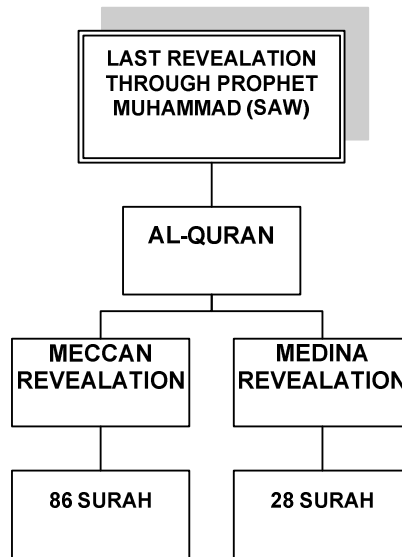


Figure 3.3 : Meccan and Medinan revelation

3.2.2 The Hadith Period

Two major activities defined the *Hadith* period, namely the recording and the collection of the *Hadith*. The Arabic word *Hadith* literally means communication, story, or conversation, historical or recent. The word *Hadith* appears 23 times in the *Holy Qur'an*.²⁴³ The recording of the *Hadith* started during the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him), as he personally instructed his scribes, who numbered about 45, to record his preachings. He dictated some *Hadith* to them.²⁴⁴ This notwithstanding, in the very early days of Islam, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was opposed to the

243. Muḥammad Muṣṭafa al-A'zami (1978), *Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature*. Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, p. 3.

244. *Ibid*, p. 15.

recording so as to avoid any confusion with the *Holy Qur'an*. He only permitted it in the latter part.

As concerns the collection of the *Hadith*, its beginnings may be dated back to the second century after the Hijra, in the days of the Caliph `Umar ibn `Abdul-Aziz. He ordered collection because of threats to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, the second primary source of Islam. `Umar ibn `Abdul-Aziz sent to Abu Bakr ibn Hazm saying, “Write down the *Hadith* of the Prophet because I fear that knowledge will disappear after the death of scholars.”

Upon this instruction, great efforts began and, the leading figure of all these activities was Imam Ibn Shihab Az-Zuhari (d. AH 124). He collected the *Hadiths* of the Prophet together with the sayings of his Companions. As time wore on, collection efforts became more professional and accurate.

Compilation and writing became the order of the day. Imam Malik compiled his *Muwatta'*, which was classified according to the chapters of *fiqh*. Juraig wrote down *Hadiths* in Makkah. Then the *Sahih* of Imam Al-Bukhari (AH 194–256/ 810 – 870 CE) and the *Sahih* Imam Muslim (b. AH 204/ 820 CE) appeared, as well as other authentic books including *Sunan* of Abu Dawud, *Sunan* of An-Nasa'i, *Sunan* of Ibn Majah, and *Musnad* of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal. All compilation of the *Hadith* followed strict rules called the science of *Hadith*.

The Science of *Hadith* is a procedure by which Muslim scholars evaluate *Hadith*, utilizing *Hadith* terminology. It has been described by one *Hadith* specialist, Jalal al-Din Abd al-al-Rahman al-Suyuti, as the science of the principles by which the conditions of both the *sanad*, the chain of narration, and the *matn*, the text of the *Hadith*, are known. This science is concerned with the sanad and the matn with its objective being distinguishing the *sahih*, authentic, from other forms. Ibn Hajar said the preferred definition is knowledge of the principles by which the condition of the narrator and the narrated are determined.²⁴⁵ A *Hadith* comprises two parts:

- a) **The Matn (text)**
- b) **The Isnad (chain of reporters)**

A text may seem to be logical and reasonable but it needs an authentic *isnad* with reliable reporters to be acceptable; 'Abdullah b. al-Mubarak (d. 181 AH) is reported to have said, "The *isnad* is part of the religion: had it not been for the *isnad*, whoever wished to would have said whatever he liked." During the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and after his death, his Companions (*Sahabah*) used to refer to him when quoting his sayings. The Successors (*Tabi'un*) followed suit, some of them used to quote the Prophet (peace be upon him) through the Companions while others would omit the intermediate authority – such a *Hadith* was known as *mursal* (loose). It was found that the missing link between the Successor and the Prophet (peace be upon him) might be one person, i.e. a Companion, or two persons,

²⁴⁵. *Ibid*, p. 1.

the extra person being an older Successor who heard the *Hadith* from the Companion. This is an example of how the need for the verification of each *isnad* arose. Malik (d. 179) said, "The first one to utilise the *isnad* was Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri" (d. 124 AH).

3.2.2.1 The Classification of Hadith (According to the reliability and memory of the reporters)

Under this classification falls the final verdict on a *Hadith*, being one of the following as below. Among the early traditionists, mostly of the first two centuries, *Hadith* were classified into two categories only as sahih and da'if. Al-Tirmidhi was to be the first to distinguish hasan from da'if. The detail differences between these four important classes of *Hadith* as follows:²⁴⁶

- a) *Saheeh* (sound)
- b) *Hasan* (agreeable)
- c) *Da'eef* (weak)
- d) *Maudoo'* (fabricated)

246. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Aḏami (1978), *op. cit.*, p. 1.

i) Saheeh (sound)²⁴⁷

Al-Shafi'i states the following requirement in order for a *Hadith*, which is not *mutawatir*, to be acceptable: each reporter should be trustworthy in his religion. He should be known to be truthful in his narrating, to understand what he narrates, and to know how a different expression can alter the meaning, and report the wording of the *Hadith* verbatim, not only its meaning. This is because if he does not know how a different expression can change the whole meaning, he will not know if he has changed what is lawful into what is prohibited. Hence, if he reports the *Hadith* according to its wording, no change of meaning is found at all. Moreover, he should be a good memoriser if he happens to report from his memory or a good preserver of his book if he happens to report from it. He should agree with the narrations of the *huffaz*, if he reports something that they also do. He should not be a *mudallis*, who narrates from someone he met something he did not hear, nor should he report from the Prophet contrary to what reliable sources have reported from him. In addition, the one who is above him (in the *isnad*) should be of the same quality until the *Hadith* goes back uninterrupted to the Prophet or any authority below him."

Ibn al-Salah however defines, a *sahih Hadith* more precisely by saying: "A *sahih Hadith* is the one which has a continuous *isnad*, made up of reporters of trustworthy preservers from similar authorities, and which is found to be clear

247. *Ibid*, p. 3.

from shudhudh and any defects." By the above definition, no room is left for any weak *Hadith*, whether, for example, it is munqati', mu'dal, mudtarib, maqlub, shadhhdh, munkar, ma'lul, or contains a mudallis. The definition also excludes hasan *Hadith*, as will be discussed under the next sub-heading.

Of all the collectors of *Hadith*, al-Bukhari and Muslim were greatly admired because of their tireless attempt to collect sahih *Hadith* only. It is generally understood that the more trustworthy and of good memory the reporters, the more authentic the *Hadith*. The *isnad*: al-Shafi'i ---Malik --- Nafi' ---'Abdullah b. 'Umar --- The Prophet, is called a "golden *isnad*" because of its renowned reporters. Some traditionists prefer Sahih al-Bukhari to Sahih Muslim because al-Bukhari always looked for those reporters who have either accompanied or met each other, even if only once in their lifetime. On the other hand, Muslim would accept a reporter who is simply found to be contemporary to his immediate authority in reporting. The following grading is used for sahih *Hadith*:²⁴⁸

- those which are transmitted by both al-Bukhari and Muslim;
- those which are transmitted by al-Bukhari only;
- those which are transmitted by Muslim only;
- those which agree with the requirements of both al-Bukhari and Muslim but are not found in their collections;
- those which agree with the requirements of al-Bukhari only;

248. *Ibid* p. 2.

- those which agree with the requirements of Muslim only; and
- Those declared sahih by other traditionists.

ii) **Hasan (agreeable)**²⁴⁹

Al-Tirmidhi means by *Hadith* hasan, a *Hadith* which is not *shadhdh*, which does not contain a disparaged reporter in its *isnad*, and which is reported through more than one route of narration.

Al-Khattabi (d. 388) states a very concise definition, "It is the one where its source is known and its reporters are prominent." By this he means that the *Hadith* should not be of an ambiguous nature like the *mursal* or *munqati'* *Hadith*, or one containing a mudallis.

Ibn al-Salah classifies hasan into two categories:

- one with an *isnad* containing a reporter who is mastur (i.e., no prominent person reported from him) but is not totally careless in his reporting, provided that a similar text is reported through another *isnad* as well;

249. *Ibid*, p. 4.

- (ii) one with an *isnad* containing a reporter who is known to be truthful and reliable, but is a degreeless in his preservation of *Hadith* in comparison to the reporters of sahih *Hadith*.

iii) Da'eef (weak)²⁵⁰

Hadith that fails to reach the status of hasan is da'if. Usually, the weakness is one of discontinuity in the *isnad*, in which case the *Hadith* could be *mursal*, *mu'allaq*, *mudallas*, *munqati'* or *mu'dal*. The precise nature of the discontinuity could be due to the reporter's disparaged character, such as lies telling, excessive mistakes, opposition to the narration of more reliable sources, involvement in innovation and ambiguity surrounding his personality.

The smaller the number and importance of defects, the less severe the weakness. The more numerous and severe the defects, the closer the *Hadith* will be to being fabricated. Some *Hadith*, according to the variation in the nature of the weakness associated with its reporters, rank at the bottom of the hasan grade or the top of the da'if grade. Reporters such as 'Abdullah b. Lahi'a, 'Abd al-Rahman b. Zaid b. Aslam, Abu Bakr b. Abi Maryamal-Himsi, Faraj b. Fadala, Rishdin b. Sa'd and the like, attract such types of varying ranks as they were neither extremely good preservers nor totally abandoned.

250. *Ibid*, p. 5.

iv) Maudoo' (fabricated)²⁵¹

Al-Dhahabi defines Maudoo' as a *Hadith*, the text of which goes against established norms, or whose reporters include a liar, e.g. the forty *Hadith* known as Wad'aniyya or the copy of 'Ali al-Rida which was fabricated against him. A number of traditionists have collected fabricated *Hadith* separately in order to distinguish them from other *Hadith*.

All the above-mentioned classification of *Hadith* plays a vital role in ascertaining the authenticity of a particular *Hadith*. This imperishable Science of *Hadith* brought a very important foundation and confidence for Muslims to rely on the information given and requested in Islam. Thus, Muslims reject any collections that are not robust in withstanding the tests of authenticity per the standards of the Science of *Hadith*. Six of the most famous Sunni collections (*Al-Sihah al-Sittah*) of the *Hadith* are:²⁵²

- a) Sahih al-Bukhari
- b) Sahih Muslim
- c) Sunan an-Nasa'i al-Sughra
- d) Sunan Abu Dawood
- e) Sunan al-Tirmidhi
- f) Sunan Ibn Maja

251. *Ibid*, p. 6.

252. *Ibid*, p. 8.

Beside these, Sunni Muslims also believe and accept the following additional

Hadiths:²⁵³

- Al-Muwatta
- Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal
- Sunan al-Darimi
- Sahih Ibn Khuzaymah
- Sahih Ibn Hibbaan
- Al-Mustadrak alaa al-Sahihain
- Mawdu'at al-Kubra
- Riyadh as-Saaliheen
- Mishkat al-Masabih
- Talkhis al-Mustadrak
- Majma al-Zawa'id
- Bulugh al-Maram
- Kanz al-Ummal

See figure 3.4 below for a summary of all literature on the *Saheh Hadith*.

253. *Ibid*, p. 9.

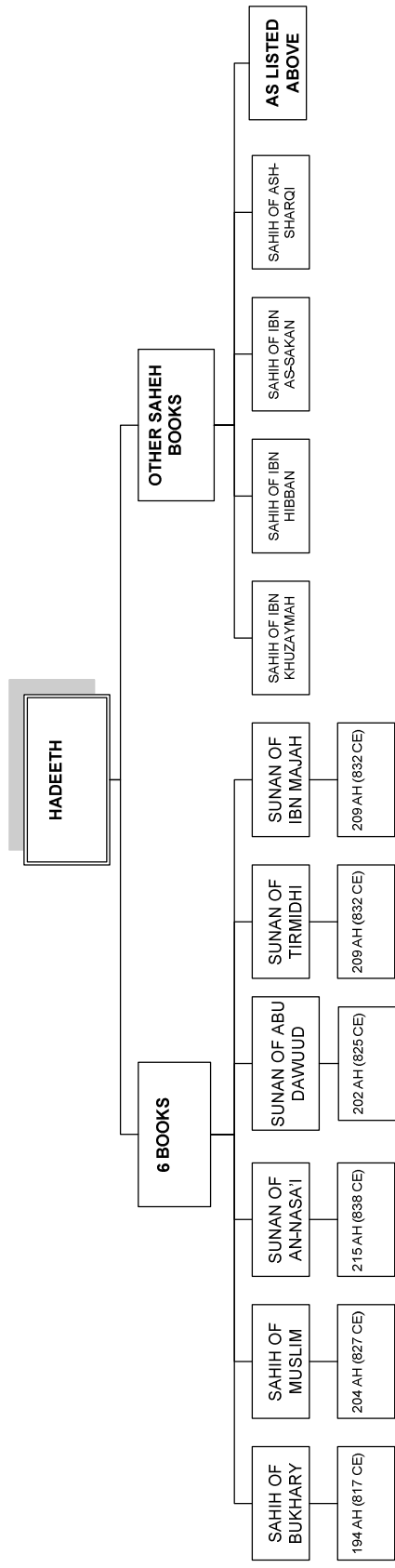


Figure 3.4 : Literature of Saheh Hadith

3.3 The Literature of Islam

After tracing the history and evolution of knowledge during the two major periods, the researcher now delves into classifying the literature that makes up Islamic scripture – two primary sources, the *Holy Qur'an* and the *Hadith*, and other secondary sources, such as *Ijma*, *Qiyas*, *Istishab*, *Istislah*, *Ilham* and many more,²⁵⁴ make up this literature. See figure 3.5 below:²⁵⁵

²⁵⁴. Thomas M. Leonard, (2006), *Encyclopedia of the developing world, Volume 2*. London: Taylor & Francis Publication, p. 955.

²⁵⁵. *Ibid.*

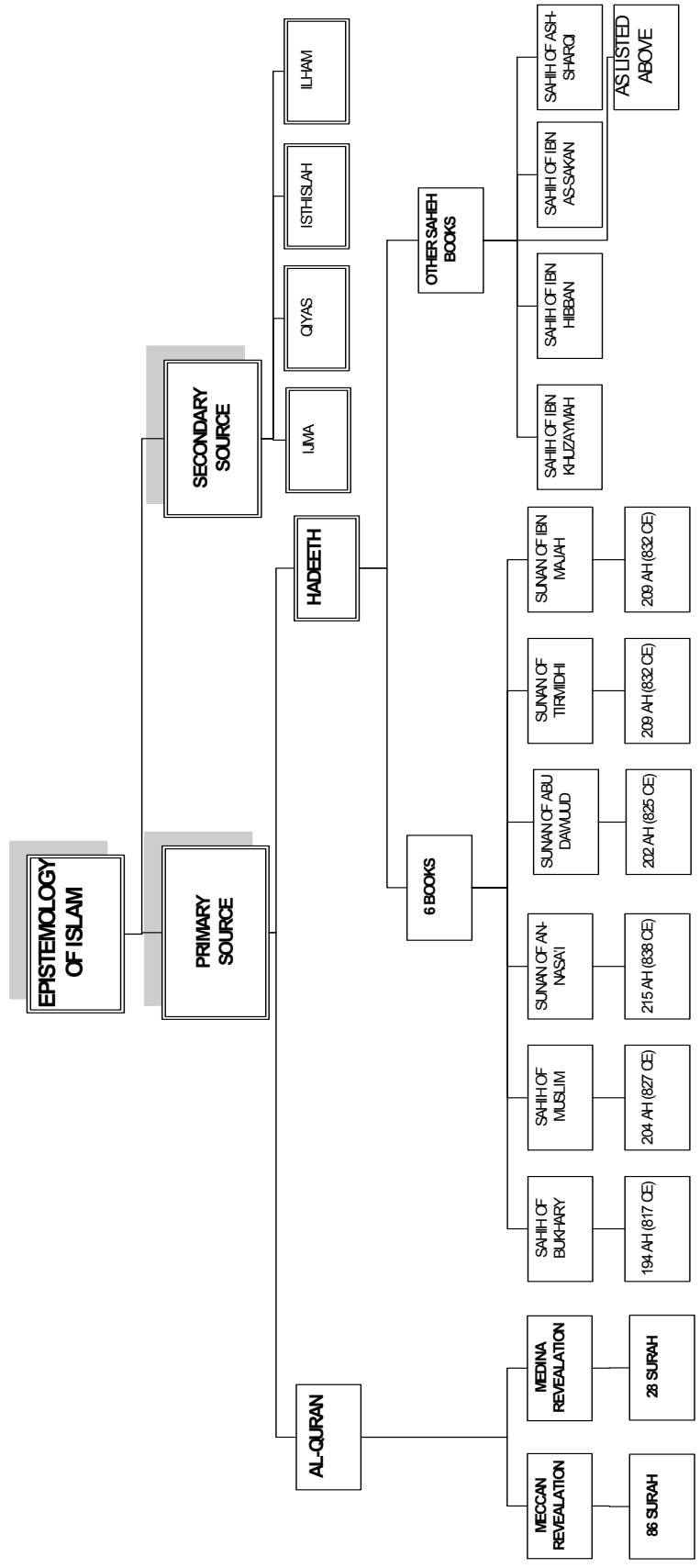


Figure 3.5 : Literature of Islam

3.4 Linear Time in Islam

Before getting into a detailed discourse on messengers as presented by both the *Holy Qur'an* and the *Hadith*, it is appropriate to get the overall Islamic time theory, which will assist the approximate location in time, of the appearance of each messenger. The Islamic era dates from 16 July 622, which was the beginning of the Arab year in which the Hijra (migration) of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) from Mecca to Medina took place.²⁵⁶ The Islamic or Hijri calendar is Lunar, each year having 354 or 355 days, the extra day being intercalated 11 times every 30 years. Accordingly, the beginning of the Hijri year occurs earlier in the Gregorian calendar by a few days each year.²⁵⁷

According to the *Holy Qur'an*:

﴿ يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهْلِ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ ۗ وَلَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَنْ تَأْتُوا
الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنِ اتَّقَى ۗ وَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا ۗ وَاتَّقُوا
اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴾

"They ask thee about the new moons. Say, these are means for measuring time for people's affairs and for the Pilgrimage".

[Holy Qur'an 2:189]²⁵⁸

256. Vartan Gregorian (2004), *Islam: A Mosaic, Not a Monolith*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press, p. 12.

257. Eur (2002), *Far East and Australasia 2003*. Kentucky: Routledge, p. 1954.

258. Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2000), *op. cit.*

Muslims make use of both the lunar and solar systems to measure time. This determines when worship is to be performed in different parts of the day. The solar system of reckoning time is used in all the five daily prayers and to mark the beginning or breaking of the fast. It is also used for worship, to be completed within a particular month or part thereof. The lunar system is used for the determination of the month of fasting or fixing the time of Hajj or other festivals.

To calculate conversions from one calendar year to others, the following formula is used:

$$G = H - ((3 * H) / 100) + 622$$

$$H = G + ((G - 622) / 32) - 622$$

Where G = Gregorian year (CE)

H = Hijra year (AH)

Thus 2000 CE is 1421 AH

The Islamic calendar consists of twelve lunar months. Each month may be of 29 or 30 days depending on the sighting of the new moon. A lunar year has on average 355 days. This is 10 days less than the solar year. Hence, an Islamic year is moved ahead 10 days each year in solar calendar year.

The *Holy Qur'an* states:

إِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُورِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرْمٌ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ فَلَا تَظْلِمُوا فِيهِنَّ أَنْفُسَكُمْ
وَقَاتِلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ كَافَّةً كَمَا يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ كَافَّةً وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ
الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٩﴾

"The number of months with Allah has been twelve months by Allah's ordinance since the day He created the heavens and the earth. Of these four are known as sacred" Muharram, Rajab, Dhul Qadah and Dhul Hijja are considered to be sacred months. Fighting during these sacred months is considered to be a sin. [Holy Qur'an 9:36]²⁵⁹

3.4.1 List of the Islamic months²⁶⁰

1. Muharram	30 days
2. Safar	29 days
3. Rabia 1	30 days
4. Rabia 11	29 days
5. Jurmada 1	30 days
6. Jurmada 11	29 days
7. Rajab	30 daysn
8. Shaaban	29 days

259. *Ibid.*

260. Huston Smith Cyril Glasse (2003), *The new encyclopedia of Islam*. Lanham: Rowman Altamira, p. 98.

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 9. Ramadhan | 30 days |
| 10. Shawwal | 29 days |
| 11. Dhu'l Qada | 30 days |
| 12. Dhu'l Hijja | 29 or 30 days |

The Hijri calendar is used for religious purposes throughout the Islamic world and is the official calendar in Saudi Arabia. In most Arab countries it is used in conjunction with the Gregorian calendar for official purposes.²⁶¹

3.5 Scripture Describing the Messengers

Using the general literature and timeline of Islam listed above, the researcher now highlights all scriptures from the *Holy Qur'an* and the *Hadith* discussing and describing the Islamic concept of a messenger. These sources shall be treated in this research as first and second primary source when referencing any information regarding messengers. See selected scriptures in figure 3.6 below.²⁶²

²⁶¹. Eur (2002), *op. cit.*

²⁶². Muḥammad Muṣṭafa al-A'zami (1978), *op. cit.*, pp. 111-147.

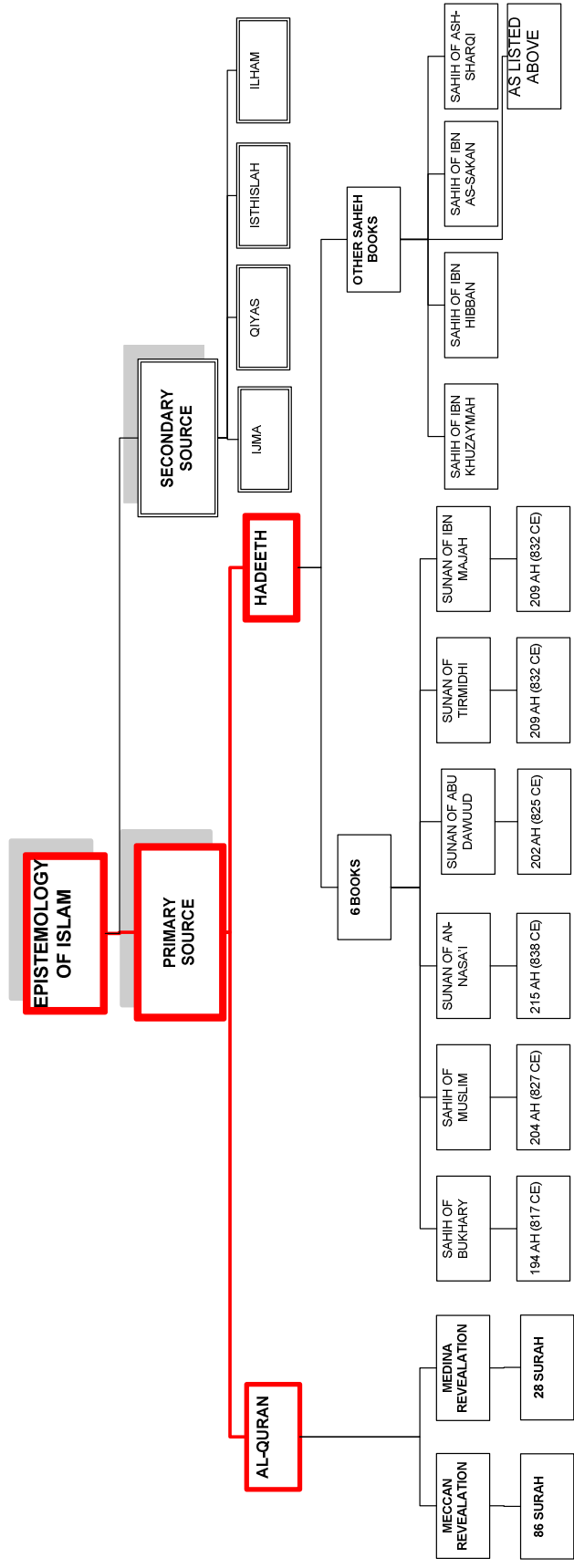


Figure 3.6 : Islamic scripture describing a Messenger

3.6 Description on Prophets and Messengers

This section will detail out the concept given in the *Holy Qur'an* and *Sunnah* about messengers from ancient times up to the last messenger (Prophet Muhammad - peace be upon him).

It is easy to think that the words Prophet and Messenger mean the same thing. In Islam, but this is not the case in Islam. The *Holy Qur'an* and *Hadith* clearly differentiate these terms.

i) Definition of a Nabi (Prophet)²⁶³

Prophethood is not an unknown to a heavenly revealed religion such as Judaism and Christianity. However, in Islam it has a special status and significance. In Arabic, the word *Nabi* (Prophet) is derived from the root word *naba*, which mean news. *Allah* (SWT) says:

عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿١﴾ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢﴾

Concerning what are they disputing? Concerning the great news.

[(Holy Qur'an 78:1-2)]²⁶⁴

²⁶³ . Ibn Manzoor (1970), *Lisaan al-Arab*, in Yusuf Khayyat and Nadeem Mar'ashli (Ed. by). Beirut: Daar Lisan al-Arab, pp. 3/561, 573.

²⁶⁴. Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2000), *op. cit.*

A prophet is called *Nabi* in Arabic because he was told to do so. *Allah* tells him and reveals to him:

وَإِذْ أَسْرَأَ النَّبِيُّ إِلَى بَعْضِ أَزْوَاجِهِ حَدِيثًا فَلَمَّا نَبَّأَتْ بِهِ وَأَظْهَرَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ عَرَفَ
بَعْضَهُ وَأَعْرَضَ عَنْ بَعْضٍ فَلَمَّا نَبَّأَهَا بِهِ قَالَتْ مَنْ أَنْبَأَكَ هَذَا قَالَ نَبَّأَنِيَ
الْعَلِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ ﴿٦٥﴾

When the prophet disclosed a matter In confidence to one of His consorts, and she then divulged it (to another), and Allah made it known to him, He confirmed part thereof and repudiated a part. Then when He told Her thereof, she said, "Who told Thee this? "He said, "He told me who knows and is well-acquainted (with all things)."[Holy Qur'an 66:3]²⁶⁵

He tells what *Allah* commands him and reveals to him:

﴿٤٩﴾ نَبِّئْ عِبَادِي أَنِّي أَنَا الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٥١﴾ وَنَبِّئُهُمْ عَنِ ضَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ﴿٥١﴾

*Tell My servants that I am indeed the Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful;
Tell them about the guests of Abraham. [Holy Qur'an 15:49-51]²⁶⁶*

It is said that the word *nubuwwah* (Prophethood) is derived from the word *nabwah*, which means a raised portion of a land. The Arabs use the word *Nabi* to refer to a landmark which could be used as reference for navigation. This Semitic

265. *Ibid.*

266. *Ibid.*

denotation befits the word *Nabi* because according to Muslims, a Prophet is one who has a high status in this world and in the hereafter.²⁶⁷ Prophets are the most noble of creation, the signposts by whom people are guided and reformed in this world and in the hereafter.

ii) Definition of Rasool (Messenger)²⁶⁸

In Arabic, a person sent on a mission is known as *Rasool* (Messenger). The *Holy Qur'an* reports what the queen of Saba' (Sheba) said:

وَإِنِّي مُرْسَلَةٌ إِلَيْهِمْ بِهَدِيَّةٍ فَنَظِرَةٌ بِمَ يَرْجِعُ الْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

"But I am going to send Him a present, and (wait) to see with what (answer) return (my) ambassadors." [Holy Qur'an 27:35]²⁶⁹

The word *rasool* may also refer to a person who follows (lives by) the news of the one who sent him.²⁷⁰ Therefore, messengers are referred to as *Rasool* because they receive direction from *Allah*:

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁸ Fuyoomi (1996), *al-Misbaah al-Muneer*. Cairo: Daar al-Ma'arif.

²⁶⁹ Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2000), *op. cit.*

²⁷⁰ . Ibn Manzoor (1970), *op. cit.*, pp. 2/1166-1167.

ثُمَّ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا تَتْرًا ^ط كُلَّ مَا جَاءَ أُمَّةً رَّسُولُهَا كَذَّبُوهُ ^ج فَاتَّبَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ بَعْضًا
وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَحَادِيثَ ^ج فَبُعْدًا لِقَوْمٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

*Then sent we Our apostles in succession: every time there came to a people their apostle, They accused Him of falsehood: so we made them follow Each other (in punishment): we made them As a tale (That is told): so away with a people that will not believe! [Holy Qur'an 23:44]*²⁷¹

Thus, they are sent with a specific message and enjoined to convey it and to follow it.

3.6.1 The Difference between Prophet and Messenger

There are differences in numbers and tasks between a Messenger (*Rasool*) and Prophet (*Nabi*). The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) mentioned that the number of Prophets was 124,000 and the number of Messengers was 315.²⁷² These differences are also indicated by the conjunction used in the *Holy Qur'an* to connect prophets to Messengers:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ وَلَا نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا إِذَا تَمَنَّى أَلْقَى الشَّيْطَانُ فِي أُمْنِيَّتِهِ
فَيَنْسَخُ اللَّهُ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ ثُمَّ يُحْكِمُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ ^ط وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٥١﴾

271. Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2000), *op. cit.*

272. Musnad Imam Ahmad (1995), *Saheh hadith, in Ahmad in his Musnad (narrated by)*. Beirut: Tasweer al-Makthab al-Islami.

*Never did we send an apostle or a prophet before thee, But, when He framed a desire, Satan threw some (vanity) into His desire: but Allah will cancel anything (vain) that Satan throws in, and Allah will confirm (and establish) His Signs: for Allah is full of knowledge and Wisdom:
[Holy Qur'an 22:52]²⁷³*

Allah describes some of his messengers as being both Prophets (*Nabi*) and Messengers (*Rasool*), which indicates that being a Messenger is something additional to being a Prophet, as when he says concerning Moosa (peace be upon him):

وَأَذْكُرُ فِي الْكِتَابِ مُوسَىٰ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مُخْلَصًا وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَّبِيًّا ﴿٥١﴾

Also mention In the Book (the story of) Moses: for He was specially chosen, and He was an apostle (and) a prophet.

[Holy Qur'an 19:51]²⁷⁴

The commonly held view among scholars is that a Messenger (*Rasool*) is generally more than a Prophet (*Nabi*). A Messenger (*Rasool*) is the one to whom laws (shari'ah) are revealed and he is commanded to convey them, whereas a prophet (*Nabi*) is the one who receives revelation but he is not commanded to convey it. On this basis, every Messenger is a Prophet, but not every Prophet is a Messenger.²⁷⁵

273. Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2000), *op. cit.*

274. *Ibid.*

275. Ibn Abi al'Iz Al-Hanafi (1999), *Sharh al-'Aqeedah at-Tahaawiyah*. Beirut: Al-Maktab al-Islami.

3.6.2 Belief in Prophets (Nabi) and Messengers (Rasool) is one of the basic principles of faith

Belief in Messengers is one of the basic principles of Islamic faith. The *Holy Qur'an* says:

قُلْ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَالنَّبِيُّونَ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾

Say: "We believe In Allah, and In what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and In (the Books) given to Moses, Jesus, and the prophets, from their Lord: we make no distinction between one and another among them, and to Allah do we bow Our will (in Islam)."

[*Holy Qur'an* 3 : 84]²⁷⁶

Whosoever does not believe in the messengers has gone astray and is a loser:

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ءَامِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ءَ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ ءَ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلُ ءَ وَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ ءَ وَكُتُبِهِ ءَ وَرُسُلِهِ ءَ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴿١٣٠﴾

O ye who believe! Believe In Allah and His Messenger, and the Scripture which He hath sent to His Messenger and the Scripture

276. Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2000), *op. cit.*

which He sent to those before (him). Any who denied Allah, His angels, His books, His Messenger, and the Day of Judgment, hath gone far, far astray. [Holy Qur'an 4: 136]²⁷⁷

3.6.3 The Connection between belief in Allah, His Messengers and their Message

Those who claim to believe in *Allah* but disbelieve His Messengers and Books are not considered to have fulfilled the requirement:

وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ إِذْ قَالُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيَّ بَشَرًا مِّنْ شَيْءٍ قُلْ مَنْ أَنْزَلَ
الْكِتَابَ الَّذِي جَاءَ بِهِ مُوسَى نُورًا وَهُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ تَجْعَلُونَهُ قَرَاطِيسَ تُبْدُونَهَا
وَتُخْفُونَ كَثِيرًا وَعُلِّمْتُمْ مَا لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا أَنْتُمْ وَلَا آبَاؤُكُمْ قُلِ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ ذَرْهُمْ فِي
خَوْضِهِمْ يَلْعَبُونَ ﴿٩١﴾

No just estimate of Allah do They make when They say: "Nothing doth Allah send down to man (by way of revelation)" say: "Who then sent down the Book which Moses brought?- a light and guidance to man: but ye make it into (separate) sheets for show, while ye conceal much (of its contents): therein were ye taught that which ye knew not- neither ye nor your fathers." say: "(Allah) (sent it down)": then leave them to plunge In vain discourse and trifling.

[Holy Qur'an 6:91]²⁷⁸

Allah did not create this universe in vain:

277. *Ibid.*

278. *Ibid.*

أَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ يُتْرَكَ سُدًى ﴿٧٥﴾

*Does man think that He will be left uncontrolled, (without purpose)?
[Holy Qur'an 75:36]²⁷⁹*

Whosoever disbelieves the messengers whilst claiming to believe in *Allah* is a *kafir* (unbeliever) in the sight of *Allah* and his belief will not avail him in anything.

The Holy Qur'an states:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ اللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ
وَيَقُولُونَ نُؤْمِنُ بِبَعْضٍ وَنَكْفُرُ بِبَعْضٍ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَتَّخِذُوا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ
سَبِيلًا ﴿١٥٠﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ حَقًّا وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا ﴿١٥١﴾

Those who deny Allah and His apostles, and (Those who) wish to separate Allah from His apostles, saying: "We believe In some but reject others": and (Those who) wish to take a course midway,- They are In truth (equally) Unbelievers; and we have prepared for unbelievers a humiliating punishment.[Holy Qur'an 4:150-151]²⁸⁰

The verse states that anyone who claims to believe in *Allah*, but disbelieves His messengers is an unbeliever (*kafir*): “wish to separate Allah from His apostles”. *Al-Qurtubi* said concerning this *ayah* “*Allah* states that making a distinction between *Allah* and his messengers is ignorance (*kufir*).” This is ignorance (*kufir*) because *Allah* has enjoined all to worship him in the manner which He has prescribed through his

279. *Ibid.*

280. *Ibid.*

messengers. If they deny the messengers, then they deny the teachings. Thus they fail to achieve true servitude to *Allah* which is enjoined upon them.²⁸¹

The wisdom of *Allah* dictated that he would send a warner to each of the nations before the ummah. His justice dictated that he would not punish anyone until after proof had been established against them:

مَنْ أَهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ ۗ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا ۗ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ
وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ۗ وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا ﴿١٥﴾

*Who received guidance, receives it for His own benefit: who get astray doth so to His own loss: no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another: nor would we visit with Our wrath until we had sent an apostle (to give warning). [Holy Qur'an 17:15]*²⁸²

Hence the number of messengers and prophets who have come throughout human history is immense. Holy Qur'an says:

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا ۚ وَإِن مِّنْ أُمَّةٍ إِلَّا خَلَا فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ ﴿٢٤﴾

Verily we have sent Thee In truth, As a bearer of glad tidings, and As a warner: and there never was a people, without a warner having lived among them (in the past).

*[Holy Qur'an 35:24]*²⁸³

281. Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Qurtūbi (2003), *Tafsir Al-Qurtubi: Classical Commentary of the Holy Quran*. Medina: Dar al-Taḳwa.

282. Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2000), *op. cit.*

283. *Ibid.*

The messengers of *Allah* informs the number of prophets and messengers. It is narrated that Abu Dharr stated:” I said, “O” Messengers of *Allah*, how many messengers were there? He said, three hundred and fifteen (315) a large number.” According to the report of Abu Umaamah, Abu Dhar stated: I said, O messenger of *Allah*, what is the complete number of Prophets (*Nabi*)? He said,” 124 000, among whom the messengers (*Rasool*) were around three hundred and fifteen, a large number.²⁸⁴

3.6.4 Prophets and messenger mentioned in the *Holy Qur’an*

Allah mentions twenty-five prophets and messengers in His book. In various places he mentions Adam, Hood, Saalih, Shu’ayb, Ismaa’eel (Ishmael), Idrees (Enoch), Dhu’l-Kifl and Muhammad. The *Holy Qur’an* reveals:

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ آدَمَ وَنُوحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَآلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴾

*Allah did choose Adam and Noah, the family of Abraham, and the family of 'Imran above all people. [Holy Qur’an 3:33]*²⁸⁵

﴿ وَإِلَىٰ عَادٍ أَخَاهُمْ هُودًا ۚ قَالَ يَنْقُومِ رَبُّكُمُ اللَّهُ مِمَّا لَكُمْ مِنَ إِلَهِ غَيْرُهُ ۚ إِنَّكُمْ لَأَنْتُمْ

﴿ إِلَّا مُفْتَرُونَ ﴾

²⁸⁴. Musnad Imam Ahmad. (1995). *op. cit.*

²⁸⁵. Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2000), *op. cit.*

To the 'Ad people (We sent) Hud, one of their own brethren. He said:
"O My people! Worship Allah. ye have no other God but Him. (Your
other Gods) ye do nothing but invent!

[Holy Qur'an 11:50]²⁸⁶

﴿ وَإِلَى ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ هُوَ
أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ ثُمَّ تَوْبُوا إِلَيْهِ إِنَّ رَبِّي قَرِيبٌ
مُجِيبٌ ﴾

To the Thamud people (We sent) Salih, one of their own brethren. He
said: "O My people! worship Allah. ye have no other God but Him. it
is He who hath produced you from the earth and settled you therein:
then ask forgiveness of him, and turn to Him (in repentance): for My
Lord is (always) near, ready to answer."

[Holy Qur'an 11:61]²⁸⁷

﴿ وَإِلَى مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ وَلَا
تَنْقُصُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ إِنِّي أَرَبُّكُمْ بَخِيلٌ وَإِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ
يَوْمٍ مُحِيطٍ ﴾

To the Madyan people (We sent) Shu'aib, one of their own brethren:
He said: "O My people! Worship Allah. ye have no other God but
Him. and give not short measure or weight: I see you In prosperity,
but I fear for you the penalty of a Day that will compass (you) all
round.

[Holy Qur'an 11:84]²⁸⁸

286. Ibid.

287. Ibid.

288. Ibid.

وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِدْرِيسَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ ^ط كُلٌّ مِّنَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾

And (remember) Isma'il, Idris, and Zul-kifl, all (men) of constancy and patience;

[Holy Qur'an 21:85]²⁸⁹

مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ^ع وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ ^ط تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا
سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا ^ط سِيمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِّنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُودِ ^ع
ذَلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ ^ع وَمَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ كَرَزَعٍ أُخْرِجَ شَطْرَهُ فَفَازَرَهُ
فَاسْتَغْلَظَ فَاسْتَوَىٰ عَلَىٰ سَوْقِهِ ^ع يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ لِيَغِيظَ ^ط بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ ^ع وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ
الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٨٥﴾

Muhammad is the apostle of Allah. and those who are with Him are strong against Unbelievers, (but) compassionate amongst Each other. Thou wilt see them bow and prostrate themselves (in prayer), seeking Grace from Allah and (His) good Pleasure. on their faces are their marks, (Being) the traces of their prostration. This is their similitude In the Taurat; and their similitude In the Gospel is: like a seed which Sends forth its blade, then makes it strong; it then becomes thick, and it stands on its own stem, (filling) the sowers with wonder and Delight. As a result, it fills the unbelievers with rage at them. Allah has promised those among them who believe and do righteous deeds forgiveness, and a great reward.

[Holy Qur'an 48:29]²⁹⁰

The *Holy Qur'an* mentions eighteen of them in one place as follows:

289. *Ibid.*

290 *Ibid.*

وَتِلْكَ حُجَّتُنَا آتَيْنَاهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ ۚ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مِّنْ نَّشَاءٍ ۗ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ
 حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ ۚ كُلًّا هَدَيْنَا ۚ وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا
 مِن قَبْلُ ۗ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِهِ دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ وَمُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ ۚ
 وَكَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَزَكَرِيَّا وَيَحْيَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَإِلْيَاسَ ۗ كُلٌّ مِّن
 الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيُونُسَ وَلُوطًا ۗ وَكُلًّا فَضَّلْنَا عَلَى
 الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾

That was the reasoning about us, which we gave to Abraham (to use) against His people: we raise whom we will, degree after degree: for Thy Lord is full of wisdom and knowledge. We gave Him Isaac and Jacob: all (three) guided: and before him, we guided Noah, and among His progeny, David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron: Thus do we reward those who do good: And Zakariya and John, and Jesus and Elias: all In the ranks of the righteous: And Isma'il and Elisha, and Jonas, and Lot: and to all we gave favor above the nations:

[Holy Qur'an 6:83-86]²⁹¹

3.6.5 Four from among the Arabs

Among these twenty-five *Rasool*, four were Arabs. The *Hadith* of Abu Dharr says, in reference to Prophets and Messengers of Arab origin:

O' Abu Dharr "Among them four were from the Arabs: Hood, Saalih, Shu'ayb and your prophet"²⁹²

291. *Ibid.*

292. Ibn Katheer (1977), *Al-Bidaayah wan-Nihaayah*. Beirut: Maktabah al-M'aarif, Vol.1 p. 120.

The Arabs who existed before the time of Ismaa'eel are known as Al Arab Al Aarabah (original Arab). The "Arabized Arabs" (Al-Arab al-Musta'ribah) are the descendants of Ismaa'eel ibn Ibraahem al-Khaleel. Hood and Saalih were from among the original Arabs.

3.6.5.1 The Sons of Ya'qoob

The Prophets mentioned above are those who are named in the *Holy Qur'an* – there are also Prophets whom the *Holy Qur'an* refers to, but does not know their names. One of the prophets clearly named in the Holy Qur'an is Prophet Yusuf. The *Holy Qur'an* does not describe the other eleven, but it does testify that *Allah* has sent revelation to them as well.

قُولُوا ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ
وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَا أُوتِيَ النَّبِيُّونَ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ لَا
نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ وَخَنَّا لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

Say ye: "We believe In Allah, and the Revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to (all) prophets from their Lord: we make no difference between one and another of them: and we bow to Allah (in Islam)."

[*Holy Qur'an* 2:136]²⁹³

293. Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2000), *op. cit.*

أَمْ تَقُولُونَ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطَ كَانُوا هُودًا
 أَوْ نَصَارَىٰ ۗ قُلْ ۖ إِنَّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ أَمْرَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ كَتَمَ شَهَادَةً عِنْدَهُ مِنَ
 اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِيلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٠﴾

Or do ye say that Abraham, Isma'il Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes were Jews or Christians? say: do ye know better than Allah. Ah! Who is more unjust than those who conceal the testimony they have from Allah. But Allah is not unmindful of what ye do!

[Holy Qur'an 2:140]²⁹⁴

3.6.5.2 Prophets mentioned in the Sunnah

Some of the Prophets can be traced from the *Sunnah*, although their names are not mentioned in the *Holy Qur'an*. A few of them are:

i) Sheeth

Ibn Katheer said: “He was a prophet according to the marfoo’ *Hadith* narrated by Ibn Hibban in his saheeh from Abu Dharr, which says that fifty lines of revelation was revealed to him”²⁹⁵

ii) Yoosha’ ibn Noon (Joshua the son of Nun)

Abu Hurayrah recounted that this messenger of *Allah* said:

294. *Ibid.*

295. Ibn Katheer (1995), *op. cit.*, p. 1/99.

*“One of the prophets set out on a military campaign, and he said to his people, ‘No man should follow me who is on the verge of consummating marriage or who has raised a building but has not yet put a roof on it, or who has bought sheep or other livestock and is waiting for them to give birth.’ He attacked a feddan of the village at the time of ‘Asr, then he said to the sun, ‘you are subject to the divine command and I am subject to the divine command; O’ Allah, do not let it set on me for a while”*²⁹⁶

The evidence that this prophet was Yoosha’ is the fact that the prophet said:

*“The sun was prevented from setting on Yoosha’ when he marched to Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem).”*²⁹⁷

3.6.6 Prophets whose stories are not mentioned in the Holy Qur’an

A huge number of prophets and Messengers remain unknown to many Muslims. The *Holy Qur’an* states this clearly in one place:

وَرُسُلًا قَدْ قَصَصْنَاهُمْ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَرُسُلًا لَمْ نَقْصُصْهُمْ عَلَيْكَ ۗ وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَىٰ تَكْلِيمًا ﴿١٦٤﴾

Of some apostles we have already told Thee the story; of others we have not;- and to Moses Allah spoke direct;-

*[Holy Qur’an 4:164]*²⁹⁸

²⁹⁶ . Ibid, p. 1/323.

²⁹⁷ . Ibid.

²⁹⁸ . Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2000), *op. cit.*

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِّن قَبْلِكَ مِنْهُمْ مَّن قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن لَّمْ نَقْصُصْ
عَلَيْكَ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِآيَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۚ فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ فُضِيَ
بِالْحَقِّ وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾

We did aforetime send apostles before thee: of them there are some whose story we have related to thee, and some whose story we have not related to thee. it was not (possible) for any apostle to bring a Sign except by the leave of Allah. but when the command of Allah issued, the matter was decided In truth and justice, and there perished, there and then those who stood on falsehoods.

[Holy Qur'an 40:78]²⁹⁹

It is not permissible for Muslims to disbelieve in those whose names have been told by *Allah* in the *Holy Qur'an* or by his messengers. At the same time Muslims believe that *Allah* has other Messengers and Prophets whom they know nothing about.

3.6.7 Righteous people who may or may not have been prophets

i) Dhu'l-Qarnayn

Allah tells the story of Dhul Qarnayn at the end of the Soorah al Khaf (The 18th chapter of the *Holy Qur'an*). One of the things that he tells Muslims is that He spoke to Dhul Qarnayn:

299. *Ibid.*

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَغْرِبَ الشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا تَغْرُبُ فِي عَيْنٍ حَمِئَةٍ وَوَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا
 قَوْمًا قُلْنَا يَبْنَؤُا الْقَرْيَةَ إِمَّا أَنْ نَتَّخِذَ فِيهِمْ حُسْنًا ﴿١٨﴾

Until, when He reached the setting of the sun, He it set In a spring of murky water: near it He found a people: we said: "O (thou hast authority,) either to punish them, or to treat them with.

[Holy Qur'an 18:86]³⁰⁰

Al Fakhr ar Raazi was sure that he was a Prophet.³⁰¹ Ibn Hajar said, “This is narrated from Abdullah ibn Amr and it is the apparent meaning of the *Holy Qur'an* verses.” Those who denied that he was a Prophet include Ali ibn Abi Taalib.³⁰²

ii) Al-Khidr

Al-Khidr was a righteous slave of *Allah* to whom Moosa (Moses) travelled in order to seek knowledge. The *Holy Qur'an* narrates their story in *soorah* Al-Khaf. The story indicates that he was a prophet for several reasons.³⁰³

فَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِّنْ عِبَادِنَا آتَيْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِمَّنْ لَّدُنَّا عِلْمًا ﴿١٥﴾

So They found one of Our servants, on whom we had Mercy from ourselves and whom we had taught knowledge from Our own.

[Holy Qur'an 18:65]³⁰⁴

300. *Ibid.*

301. Asqalani (1995), *Fath al-bari*. Cairo: Al-Matba'a al-Bahiya al-Misriya, p. 6/382.

302. *Ibid.*

303. Ibn Katheer (1995), *Ahmad and Muslim. Al-Bidaayah wan-Nihaayah*. Beirut: Maktabah al-M'aarif, p. 1/326.

304. Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2000), *op. cit.*

The apparent meaning is that this mercy was the mercy to Prophethood.

Knowledge was revealed to him. On this matter the *Holy Qur'an* says:

قَالَ لَهُ مُوسَىٰ هَلْ أَتَّبِعُكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُعَلِّمَنِ مِمَّا عَلَّمْتَٰ رُشْدًا ﴿١١﴾ قَالَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ
تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلَىٰ مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ خُبْرًا ﴿١٣﴾ قَالَ
سَتَجِدُنِي إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ صَابِرًا وَلَا أَعْصِي لَكَ أَمْرًا ﴿١٤﴾ قَالَ فَإِنِ اتَّبَعْتَنِي فَلَا
تَسْأَلْنِي عَنْ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ أُحَدِّثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا ﴿١٥﴾

Moses said to him: "May I follow thee, on the that Thou teach me something of the (Higher) truth which Thou hast been (the other) said: "Verily Thou wilt not be able to patience with me!" "And how can Thou have patience about things which Thy understanding is not complete?" Moses said: "Thou wilt find me, if Allah so will, patient: nor shall I disobey Thee In aught." The other said: "If than Thou wouldst follow me, me no questions about anything until I Myself speak to Thee concerning it." [Holy Qur'an 18:66-70]³⁰⁵

3.6.8 Disbelieving in one Messenger is like disbelieving in all the Messengers

Disbelieving one of the messengers is like disbelieving all of the Messengers.

The *Holy Qur'an* clarifies this by saying:

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٠٥﴾

The people of Noah rejected the apostles. [Holy Qur'an 26:105]

305. *Ibid.*

كَذَّبَتْ عَادُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

The 'Ad (people) rejected the apostles. [Holy Qur'an 26:123]³⁰⁶

كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٤١﴾

The Thamud (people) rejected the apostles. [Holy Qur'an 26:141]³⁰⁷

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ لُوطٍ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٦٠﴾

The people of Lut rejected the apostles. [Holy Qur'an 26:160]³⁰⁸

It is reported that every nation disbelieved its appointed messenger, but disbelief in one of the messenger is counted as disbelief in all the Messengers. That is because the Messengers are bearers of one message who call to one religion, and the One who sends them is the same. They are as one, with the earlier ones foretelling the coming of the later one, and the later ones confirming the message of the earlier ones.

Therefore, to believe in some of the messengers and not in the others constitutes disbelief in all of them. *Allah* has described the one who does this as being an unbeliever (*kafir*).

306. *Ibid.*

307. *Ibid.*

308. *Ibid.*

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ اللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ
 وَيَقُولُونَ نُؤْمِنُ بِبَعْضٍ وَنَكْفُرُ بِبَعْضٍ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَتَّخِذُوا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا
 أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ حَقًّا وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا ﴿١٥١﴾

Those who deny Allah and His apostles, and (Those who) wish to separate Allah from His apostles, saying: "We believe In some but reject others": and (Those who) wish to take a course midway, They are In truth (equally) Unbelievers; and we have prepared for unbelievers a humiliating punishment.

[Holy Qur'an 4:150-151]³⁰⁹

Allah has commanded Muslims not to make any distinction between the messengers, but to believe in them all:

قُولُوا ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ
 وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَا أُوتِيَ النَّبِيُّونَ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ
 أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٦﴾

Say ye: "We believe In Allah, and the Revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to (all) prophets from their Lord: we make no difference between one and another of them: and we bow to Allah (in Islam)."

[Holy Qur'an 2:136]³¹⁰

The one who goes against that has gone astray and is misguided:

309. *Ibid.*

310. *Ibid.*

فَإِنْ ءَامَنُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا ءَامَنْتُمْ بِهِ فَقَدْ ءَاهَتَدُوا وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا هُمْ فِي شِقَاقٍ
 فَسَيَكْفِيكَهُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ ٱلْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٣٧﴾

So if They believe As ye believe, They are indeed on the right path; but if They turn back, it is They who are In schism; but Allah will suffice Thee As against them, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.

[Holy Qur'an 2:137]³¹¹

Allah praised the Messenger of this Ummah and the believers who followed him for their belief and for not making any distinction between the messengers. The Holy Qur'an says:

ءَامَنَ ٱلرَّسُولُ بِمَا ءُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِن رَّبِّهِ ۚ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ ۗ كُلٌّ ءَامَنَ بِٱللَّهِ وَمَلَٰئِكَتِهِ
 وَكُتُبِهِ ۚ وَرُسُلِهِ ۚ لَآ نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّن رُّسُلِهِ ۚ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا ۚ غُفْرَانَكَ
 رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ ٱلْمَصِيرُ ﴿٢٨٥﴾

The Messenger believeth In what hath been revealed to Him from His Lord, As do the men of Faith. Each one (of them) believeth In Allah, His angels, His books, and His apostles. "We make no distinction (They say) between one and another of His apostles." and they say: "We hear, and we obey: (We seek) Thy forgiveness, Our Lord, and to Thee is the end of all journeys."

[Holy Qur'an 2:285]³¹²

311. *Ibid.*

312. *Ibid.*

Allah promises a great reward to those who do not make any distinction between his Messengers:

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِۦٓ وَلَمْ يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ أُولَٰئِكَ سَوْفَ يُؤْتِيهِمْ
أُجُورَهُمْ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿١٥٢﴾

To those who believe In Allah and His apostles and make no distinction between any of the apostles, we shall soon give their (due) rewards: for Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

[Holy Qur'an 4:152]³¹³

The Holy Qur'an condemned the People of the book for believing some of the prophets and disbelieving others:

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ ءَامِنُوا بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا نُوْمِنُ بِمَا أَنزَلَ عَلَيْنَا وَيَكْفُرُونَ بِمَا
وَرَاءَهُ ۗ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ ۗ قُلْ فَلِمَ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنْبِيَاءَ اللَّهِ مِن قَبْلُ إِن كُنْتُمْ
مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩١﴾

When it is said to them, "Believe In what Allah hath sent down, "they say, "We believe In what was sent down to us:" yet They reject all besides, Even if it be truth confirming what is with them. say: "Why then have ye slain the prophets of Allah In times gone by, if ye did indeed believe?" [Holy Qur'an 2:91]³¹⁴

The Jews do not believe in Eesa (Jesus) and in Muhammad (peace be upon him) as their last messenger. The Jews are still waiting for the advent of their last

313. *Ibid.*

314. *Ibid.*

messenger. The Christians do not believe in Muhammad (peace be upon him) because they believe and accept Eesa (Jesus) as their last messenger.

3.6.9 Islam rejects any prophet without Evidence

Scholars, in commentaries and biographies on the *tafseer*, have listed certain prophets whose names feature in Jewish scriptures, or in other unfounded views whose authenticity cannot be verified. If these reports contradict anything that is proven from the Book of *Allah (the Holy Al Qur'an)* or the *Sunnah (Hadeeth)* of His messenger, Muslims reject it.

With regard to the report transmitted from the children of Israel, which names some of the prophets for whom there is no evidence in the *Holy Qur'an* or *Sunnah*, Muslims neither reject them nor believe in them, because they may be true or false.

3.6.10 Task and Mission of the Messengers

The *Holy Qur'an* and *Sunnah* explain the mission and the task of the messengers as follows.³¹⁵

³¹⁵. S. Al-Ashar Umar (1990), *The Messengers and The Messages (In the light of the Quran and Sunnah)*. Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, pp. 69-88.

i) **Conveying the Message Clearly**

The messengers are *Allah's* ambassadors to his slaves, the bearers of his revelation. Their primary mission is to convey this trust to the slaves of *Allah*. To quote the *Holy Qur'an*:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴾

O Messenger. Proclaim the (message) which have been sent to Thee from Thy Lord. if Thou Didst not, Thou wouldst not have fulfilled and proclaimed His mission. In addition, Allah will defend Thee from men (Who mean mischief). For Allah guide not those who reject Faith.
[Holy Qur'an 5:67]³¹⁶

Conveying the message needs a lot of courage but no fear from people when the message goes against their beliefs, telling them to do things that they find unacceptable and forbidding them to do things that they like and are used to:

﴿ الَّذِينَ يُبَلِّغُونَ رِسَالَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَخْشَوْنَهُ وَلَا يَخْشَوْنَ أَحَدًا إِلَّا اللَّهَ ۗ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ حَسِيبًا ﴾

(it is the practice of those) who preach the messages of Allah, and fear him, and fear none but Allah. and Enough is Allah to call (men) to account.

[Holy Qur'an 33:39]³¹⁷

316. Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2000), *op. cit.*

Conveying the message may mean reciting the texts which *Allah* has revealed, without adding anything to, or removing anything from it.:

أَتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ ۖ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ
الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾

Recite what is sent of the Book by inspiration to thee, and establish regular prayer: for prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds; and remembrance of Allah is the greatest (thing In life) without doubt. And Allah knows the (Deeds) that ye do.

[Holy Qur'an 29:45]³¹⁸

كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا مِّنكُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾

A similar (favor have ye already received) In that we have sent among you a Messenger of your own, rehearsing to you Our Signs, and sanctifying you, and instructing you In Scripture and Wisdom, and In new knowledge.

[Holy Qur'an 2:151]³¹⁹

If what is revealed is not a text that can be recited, then conveying the message means explaining the commands, prohibition, ideas and knowledge revealed by *Allah* without altering or changing anything.

317. *Ibid.*

318. *Ibid.*

319. *Ibid.*

Conveying the message also means that the messenger explains the revelation which *Allah* has sent down to his slaves, because he has been enabled above anyone else to explain its meaning and objectives, and he knows better than others what *Allah* meant by his revelation. Concerning this *Allah* said to his messenger:

بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ ۗ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ
يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

(We sent them) with Clear Signs and Books of dark prophecies; and we have sent down unto Thee (also) the Message; that Thou must explain clearly to men what is sent for them, and that They may give thought.

[Holy Qur'an 16:44]³²⁰

The messenger's explanation of divine revelation may take the form of words. The messenger explained many matters which his companions found hard to understand, as when he explains the meaning of the word *Zulm* in the *aayah* (verse),

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

"It is those who believe and confuse not their beliefs with wrong - that are (truly) In security, for They are on (right) Guidance."

[Holy Qur'an 6:82]³²¹

320. *Ibid.*

321. *Ibid.*

Just like the explanation may take the form of words, it may also take the form of actions. The actions of the messenger in prayer, charity, hajj, and other things explained the words of the *Holy Qur'anic* texts.

If people turn away from the call of the messenger and ignore it, the messengers are not able to do more than convey the message:

فَإِنْ حَاجُّوكَ فَقُلْ أَسَلَّمْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّهِ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِ ۚ وَقُلْ لِلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ
وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِسْلَمْتُمْ ۚ فَإِنْ أَسْلَمُوا فَقَدِ اهْتَدَوْا ۗ وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلَاغُ
وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ۝

So if They dispute with thee, say: "I have submitted My whole self to Allah and so have those who follow me." and say to the people of the Book and to those who are unlearned: "Do ye (also) submit yourselves?" if They do, They are In right guidance, but if They turn back, Thy duty is to convey the Message; and In Allah's sight are (all) His servants.

[*Holy Qur'an* 3:20]³²²

ii) Calling People to Allah (God)

The role of messengers is not limited only to explaining the truth and conveying the message. They also have to invite people to follow their call and respond to it, strive to apply it to themselves in belief, word and deed. In this regard, they all set out from the same starting point. They all tell people, "you are the slaves of

³²² *Ibid.*

Allah and Allah is your God. Allah has sent us to teach you how to worship him because we are the messengers of Allah sent by him and so you have to obey us and follow us.”

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الصَّغُورَ ۚ فَمِنْهُمْ
 مَن هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَن حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلَالَةُ ۚ فَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا
 كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكذِبِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

For we Assuredly sent amongst every people an apostle, (with the Command), & quot; Serve Allah, and eschew Evil & quot;;: of the people were some whom Allah guided, and some on whom Error became inevitably (established). so travel through the earth, and see what was the end of those who denied (the truth).

[Holy Qur'an 16:36]³²³

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِيَ إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ ﴿٢٥﴾

Not an apostle did we send before Thee without This inspiration sent by us to him: that there is no God but I; Therefore worship and serve Me.

[Holy Qur'an 21:25]³²⁴

Every messenger said to his people:

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا ۙ ﴿١٨﴾

"So fear Allah, and obey Me"

[Holy Qur'an 26:108,110,126,131,144,150,163,179]³²⁵

323 Ibid.
 324. Ibid.

The messengers strive their utmost to call people to *Allah*. Surah Nooh alone is sufficient to understand the efforts which Prophet Nooh (peace be upon him) made for nine hundred and fifty years, calling them day and night in secret and openly, using all methods of encouragement and giving warnings, promises and threats; trying to open their hearts to see the signs that exist in the universe, but unfortunately they turned away:

قَالَ نُوحٌ رَبِّ إِنَّهُمْ عَصَوْنِي وَاتَّبَعُوا مَنْ لَمْ يَزِدْهُ مَالُهُ وَوَلَدُهُ إِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴿٦٦﴾

Noah said: "O My Lord! They have disobeyed me, but they follow (men) whose wealth and Children give them no increase but only loss.

[Holy Qur'an 71:21]³²⁶

iii) Bringing Glad Tidings and Warnings

The call of the messengers to *Allah* is always accompanied by glad tidings and warnings because there is a very strong connection between the call to *Allah* and glad tidings and warnings. Therefore the *Holy Qur'an* limits the mission of the bearers of these messages in some verses:

وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ ۚ وَتُجَادِلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوا بِهِ الْحَقَّ وَاتَّخَذُوا آيَاتِي وَمَا أُنذِرُوا هُزُوًا ﴿٥٦﴾

325. *Ibid.*

326. *Ibid.*

We only send the apostles to give glad tidings and give warnings: but the unbelievers dispute with vain argument, In order to weaken the truth, and They treat My Signs As a jest, As also the that They are warned!

[Holy Qur'an 18:56]³²⁷

Below is the figure of the genealogy of the prophets from Prophet Adam up to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him):³²⁸

³²⁷. *Ibid.*

³²⁸. S. al-Ashar Umar (1990), *op. cit*, p. 39.

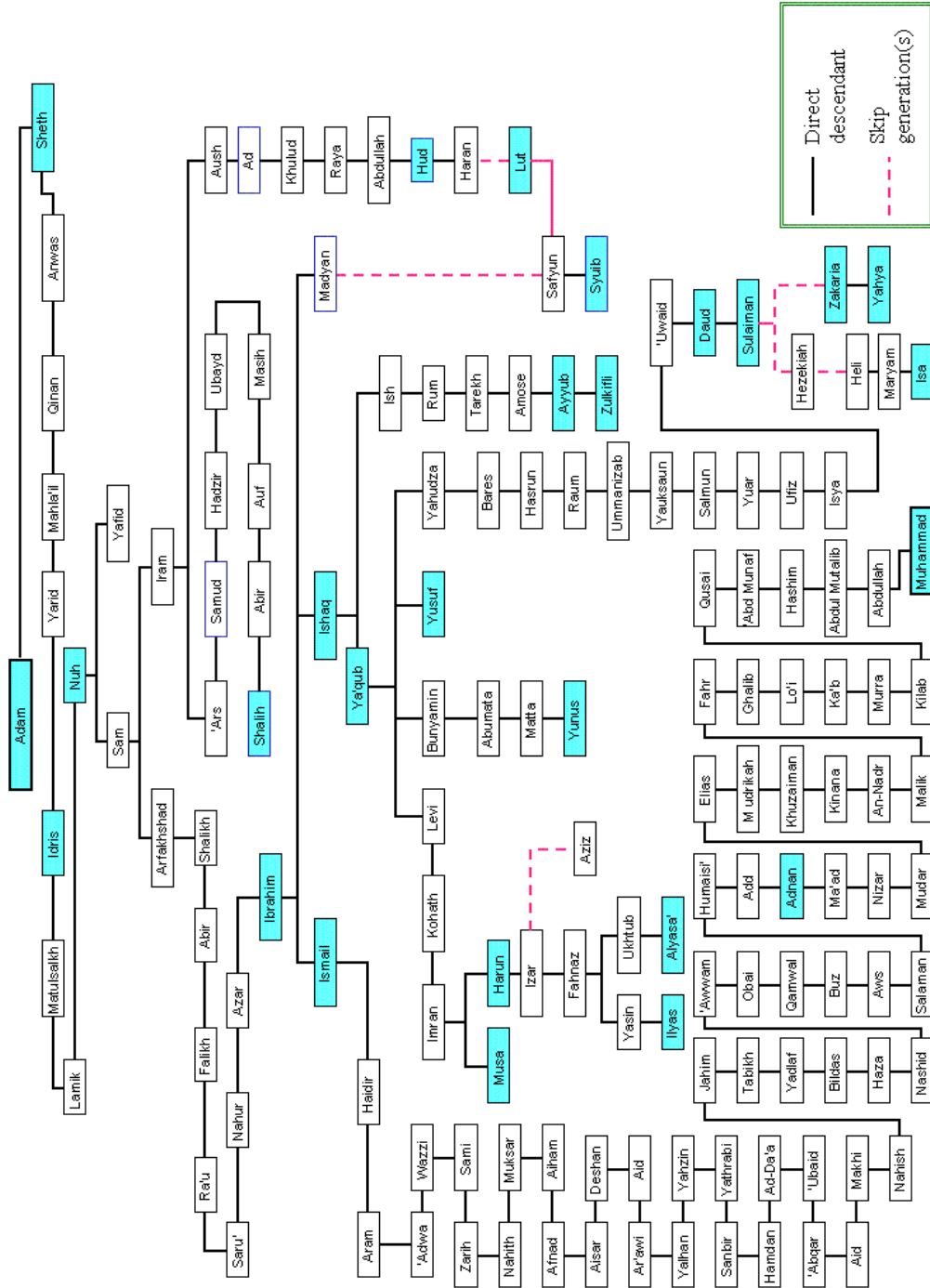


Figure 3.7 : Genealogy of Prophets in Islam

CHAPTER 4

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BOTH CONCEPTS

4.1 Introduction

After separately discussing the basic concept of messengers according to two major religions namely Hinduism and Islam, the researcher now points out the similarities and differences in both religions in the context of the concept of messengers. This chapter focuses on listing these differences, which, as shall be seen, are quite numerous.

The Islamic concept of *Tawhid* is a defining concept of Islam, by which only authentic sources which bear significant criticism of both *matn* (text) and *isnad* (chain of reporters) are accepted. It declares *absolute monotheism* on the unity and uniqueness of God as creator and sustainer of the universe,³²⁹ unlike Hinduism, which proclaims *monotheism* (oneness). Hindus believe in the oneness not merely of all human life, but in the oneness of all that lives. Belief in transmigration (reincarnation) is a direct consequence of the belief of oneness.³³⁰ Authentication of sources of information in Hinduism only focuses on the *Matn* (text), and ignores the *isnad*

329. John L. Esposito (2004), *The Oxford dictionary of Islam*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 317.

330. K.L. Seshagiri Rao (1990), *Mahatma Gandhi and comparative religion*. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publisher, p.18.

(chain of reporters), due to the fact that these texts were handed down from the time immemorial.³³¹

Another important difference is that Islam's last messenger Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) came from Semitic roots, while the Hindu counterpart (*Lord Rama* or *Lord Krishna*)³³² came from non Semitic roots.³³³ Furthermore, according to a book written by Umar S al-Ashqar, Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) descended from Sam (Son of Prophet Noah) whereas Indian prophets came from the descendants of Ham (Son of Prophet Noah).³³⁴ While Islam has the six Articles of Faith, which form the foundational tenets of the religion, Hinduism has no such defining standards. However, Hindu belief is built on five pillars (*panca crada*).

One of the manifestations of personal liberty is the freedom of the individual to profess the religion of his or her choice without compulsion. Everyone must also have the freedom to observe and to practice their faith without fear of, or interference from, others. On freedom of religion, Hindus normally enjoy freedom of thought in seeking and seeing the truth from many perspectives before coming to one higher conclusion.

331. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore (1957), *op. cit*, p. xvii.

332. Paramahansa Yogananda (1995), *The Bhagavad Gita: God talks with Arjuna: royal science of God realization*. Kolkata: Yogoda Satsanga society, pp. xx-xxi.

333. S. al-Ashar Umar (1990), *op. cit*, p. 39.

334. *Ibid*.

Freedom of religion in the Islamic context implies that non-Muslims are not compelled to convert to Islam, nor are they hindered from practicing their own religious rites. Both Muslims and non-Muslims are entitled to propagate the religion of their following, as well as to defend it against attack or seditious provocation (fitnah), regardless of whether such action is launched by their co-religionists or by others.³³⁵

Freedom of religion acquires special significance in the Shari ah, a system of law which recognizes no clear division between legal and religious norms. Since the creed of Islam lies at the root of many a doctrine and institution of the Shariah, the freedom of whether or not to embrace and practice Islam is the most sensitive and controversial area of all individual liberties.³³⁶ However, this alone should not necessarily change the basic meaning and character of the freedom of belief. It should matter little, therefore, whether one speaks of the freedom of belief in the context of Islam or of any other legal system, for the basic idea of freedom defies impositions of any kind on an individual's personal choice. Freedom of belief, like all other freedoms, operates as a safeguard against the possible menace of oppression from superior sources of power.³³⁷

It is not permissible to compel a disbeliever into professing Islam. If, for example, a non-Muslim citizen (dhimmi) or a person of protected status (musta'man)

335. Mohammad Hashim Kamali (1997), *Freedom of expression in Islam*. Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, p. 265.

336. *Ibid.*

337. *Ibid.*

is forced to accept Islam, he is not considered a Muslim unless it is established that his confession is a result of his own choosing. If the person concerned dies before his consent is known, he will be considered a disbeliever. The reason for the prohibition of duress here are the words of God Most High that there shall be 'no compulsion in religion' as follows:³³⁸

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمَرْ بِاللَّهِ

فَقَدْ آسَمَّسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

Let there be no compulsion in religion: truth stands out Clear from error: Whoever rejects evil and believes In Allah hath grasped the most trustworthy handhold that never breaks. And Allah hear and know all things.

[Holy Qur'an 2:256]³³⁹

In chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis, the researcher described in detail the concepts of messengers as per Islam and Hinduisms. For more details on the similarities and differences between these concepts, therefore, a step-by-step comparison of all six subtopics of both chapters will be done, so as to achieve the research objectives.

338. *Ibid*, p. 266.

339. Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2000), *op. cit.*

4.2 Early History and Scriptural Development

i) Similarities

a) Both religions in the early days were handed down orally from their spiritual teachers.

- In Hinduism, this oral transmission came under *Parampara*. *Parampara* denotes a succession of teachers and disciples in traditional Indian culture. It is also known as guru-shishya *Parampara* (succession from guru to disciple). In the *Parampara* system, knowledge (in any field) is passed down (undiluted) through successive generation.
- In Islam, the central traditions of Islam are twofold: the *Holy Qur'an*, which Muslims accept in its entirety as the revealed word of God, and the Sunna, which includes the inspired sayings, acts, and tacit approvals of the Prophet Muhammad. The *Holy Qur'an* was first transmitted orally. However, it was written down in its entirety during the Prophet's lifetime and was gathered into a single collected work (known as the mushaf) after his death. The Sunna was transmitted orally and was written down haphazardly by the first two generations of Muslims. Approximately 70 years later, the process of systematically collecting the sayings, acts, and

approvals of the prophet began and continued well into the third century of Islamic history.³⁴⁰

- b) Both Hindus and Muslims believe that they received their religion through revelation. These are direct intuitional revelation and are held entirely superhuman without any particular author. Only the mode of revelation differs for both religions. Specifically in Islam, the words were conveyed to the Prophet when in a state of trance by Gabriel from *Allah*, are regarded as sacred by all Muslims, and are never confounded with those which the prophet spoke when no physical change was apparent in him. The former constitute the sacred book, called The Qur'an, which means "The Reading," the reading of the man who knew not how to read; the latter, the prophets own words of preaching or sayings, are call *Hadith*.³⁴¹

ii) Differences

- a) The two religions state different persons to whom God gave revelations
- In Hinduism, the most prominent and well known receivers of this knowledge (*Bhagavad Gita*) are Vivasvan (the Sun God) and Arjuna

340. Vincent J. Cornell (2007), *Voices of Islam: Voices of tradition*. California: Greenwood Publishing Group, p. 126.

341. Muhammad Farooq i Azam Malik (2005), *op. cit*, p. 25.

(Human being). According to the *Bhagavad Gita* received by Arjuna, God mentioned that he has revealed the same knowledge to Vivasvan (the Sun God) in the past.³⁴² It was first revealed it in the beginning of the 7th *Manvantara*, and for the second time, God revealed the same knowledge through Arjuna to mankind.

- In Islam, the *Holy Qur'an* maintains that God revealed the same supreme knowledge through a lineage of prophets starting from Prophet Abraham, followed by Prophet Moses, Prophet David, Prophet Jesus and lastly to Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him).

b) The compilation in written form for both religions took place in different eras.

- In Hinduism, the compilation of scriptures (Sruthi and Smiriti) started from the time of *Mahabharata*. Dr. E. Vedavyas studied the writings of 120 scholars over the past hundred years: sixty-one of them fixed the Kurukshetra war as having occurred between 3000 and 3200 B.C., while another forty agreed on between 1000 and 1500 B.C. to have been the date of occurrence of the war.³⁴³

342. A.C.Swami Prabhupada (1972), *op. cit.*

343. ParamahansaYogananda (2006), *op. cit.*, p. xxi.

- In Islam, the compilation of scriptures (*Holy Qur'an* and *Hadith*) started from the time of Prophet Muhammad himself (Peace be upon him) around 610 C.E.³⁴⁴ Even though this was the commencement of writing of the Qu'ran and *Hadith*, Muslims believe they had been receiving divine revelation from *Allah* even from the time of Prophet Adam. Abu Dhar relates from the prophet,

*“Allah sent down one hundred and four scriptures, of them were fifty upon Seth”*³⁴⁵

Beside revelation to Prophet Adam and his son Seth, the *Holy Qur'an* also reveals that God did reveal divine knowledge to Prophet Abraham (Suhuf Ibrahim),³⁴⁶ Prophet Moses(Torah),³⁴⁷ Prophet David (Zaboor),³⁴⁸ Prophet Jesus (Injil)³⁴⁹ and finally to Prophet Muhammad (*Holy Qur'an*).³⁵⁰ Unfortunately, the exact timing of Prophet Adam's lifetime was not explicitly given in the *Holy Qur'an* or any Sahih *Hadith*. Many scholars agree that he lived around 5000 B.C.³⁵¹

344. Abu Khalil Dr.Shawqi (2003), *op. cit*, p. 62.

³⁴⁵. Ibn Katheer (1995), *op. cit*, p. 53.

346. Abdul Rahman al-Sheha (2001), *op. cit*, p. 13.

347. *Ibid*.

348. *Ibid*.

349. *Ibid*.

350. *Ibid*.

351. S. al-Ashar Umar (1990), *op. cit*, p. 39.

c) The daily practices and living examples of the messengers differ.

- In Hinduism, there is no specific *Hadith* or *Sunnah* from one prophet. The prominent persons whom Hindus consider living example are *Lord Rama* and *Lord Krishna*. Some Hindus even take their spiritual teachers as their life ideal. *Bhagavad Gita* states that whenever and wherever there is trouble in the world, God will descend in human form to protect the livings from evil acts.³⁵² In specific, Hindus do not believe on the Day of Judgment or eternal life; every soul revolves in repetitive cycles until it gains perfection and ultimately unites with the supreme soul.
- In Islam, the *Holy Qur'an* declares Prophet Muhammad as the seal of the Prophets sent to all mankind until the day of final judgment.³⁵³ Thus, he is taken as life ideal by the entire Muslim community all over the world. His words and action, known as *Sunnah*, well preserved in *Hadith*. Muslims believe that the present life is only a preparation for the next realm of existence. This life is a test for each individual before the life after death. A day will come when the whole universe will be destroyed and the dead will be resurrected for judgment by God. That day will be the beginning of a life that will never end. It is known as the Day of Judgment.³⁵⁴

352. A.C.Swami Prabhupada (1972), *op. cit.*

353. Muhammad Zafrulla Khan (1980), *Muhammad, seal of the prophets*. Kentucky Routledge, p. 26.

354. I. A. Ibrahim (1997), *op. cit.*, p. 50.

d) The mode of receiving the revelation differs in both religions.

- According to Hinduism, unless there is an absolute self-purification, nobody can achieve a realization of God. Without complete change of consciousness, it is impossible to realize God and vice versa. It is compulsory for Hindu saints to undergo a self-purifying process before receiving the revelation through intuition. The manual for this purification has been given in the *Bhagavad Gita*.³⁵⁵
- In Islam, Muslims believe the last messenger Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) received the last revelation through the angel Gabriel. The very first verse was given in the cave of Hira on 6th August 610 C.E.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁵ Suresh Chandra (1998), *Encyclopaedia of Hindu gods and goddesses*. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, p. 42.

³⁵⁶ Abu Khalil Dr. Shawqi (2003), *op. cit*, p. 62.

4.3 Literature on Hinduism and Islam

i) Similarities

- a) Both religions own a revealed holy scripture.

ii) Differences

- a) The main source of knowledge in each religion can generally be divided into two.

- In Hinduism, the primary knowledge source is *Vedas* (Sruthi/heard) and the second primary source is Manu, *Ithisas* and *Puranas* (*Smriti*/remembered).
- In Islam, the first primary knowledge source is the *Holy Qur'an* and the second primary knowledge source is the *Hadith*. Beside the primary reference, there are a few secondary references for Muslims, such as *ijma* (consensus), *aql* (reason), *qiyas* (analogy), *istihsan*,

*masalih mursalah, istislah, sadd al-dhara'i`, fath al-dhara'i; madhhab al-sahabi, shari`at al-salaf, `urf, istidlal, and so on.*³⁵⁷

b) Information on, or description of historical persons in primary religious scripture.

- In the primary Hindu scripture, *Vedas*, not one section of the scriptures alludes to any living or historical person.
- In the main Islamic scripture, the *Holy Qur'an*, many verses discuss historical figures ranging from the first prophet Adam to the last Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

c) The ways in which each group of religious adherents received the scriptures differ markedly.

- In Hinduism, there is no information or proof given as to who was the first person to receive the *Vedas*. Hindus believe it was there since time immemorial. Through tradition called *Parampara* (dispic succession), the Hindus handed down this information.

³⁵⁷. Thomas M. Leonard (2006), *Encyclopedia of the developing world, Volume 2*. London: Taylor & Francis Publication, p. 955.

- In Islam, the *Holy Qur'an* was only revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). That makes him the last messenger to receive the last revelation and disseminated it to all mankind.

4.4 Time in Hinduism and Islam

i) Similarities

- a) Both the Hindu and Muslim calendars use the Solar and Lunar systems. The main difference is in the precision of measurement and the applications.
- b) Both Calendars consist of 12 months.

ii) Differences

- a) The two Religions have contrasting concepts of time.
 - Hinduism believes in cyclical time where each cycle runs for over millions of years from the *Lord Brahma* (Demigod).
 - Islam believes in linear time beginning from the appearance of the 1st prophet on the earth, around 6000 years ago.

b) The two calendars date back to different beginnings.

- The Hindu religious calendar dates back as far as the 1st Swambhuya *Manvantara*, which is about 120 million years ago. Before performing any *Vedic* ritual, the age must be recited in its entirety.
- The Islamic era dates from 16 July 622, which was the beginning of the Arab year in which the Hijra (migration) of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina took place.³⁵⁸ The Islamic or Hijri calendar is Lunar, each year having 354 or 355 days, the extra day being intercalated 11 times every 30 years. Accordingly, the beginning of the Hijri year occurs earlier in the Gregorian calendar by a few days each year.³⁵⁹

4.5 Islamic and Hindu Scriptures Describing Messengers

i) Similarities

- a) Generally, both religions accept the existence of messengers and their role as bearers of messages from God unto all humanity.

358. Vartan Gregorian (2004), *Islam: A Mosaic, Not a Monolith*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press, p. 12.

359. Eur (2002), *op. cit*, p. 1954.

ii) Differences

- a) There is no similarity between the messengers mentioned in Islamic scriptures, on the one hand, and those mentioned in Hindu scriptures on the other. There are differences both in their names, as well as in their times of existence. The *Bhagavad Gita* and *Srimad Bhagavatam* name Hindu messengers; the Qu'ran and *Hadith* name Muslim ones.
- b) Muslims believe that Hindus messengers are among the 124,000 prophets sent to the earth by God from the time of Prophet Adam.

4.6 The Description of Messengers in Hinduism and Islam

i) Similarities

- a) Both religions agree on the basic concept of a messenger.
- b) Messengers in both religions were only sent at those times when humanity most needed emancipation, such as when they had degraded values, no proper system of life and no belief in the existence of God.

ii) Differences

a) Both religions agree on the coming of a last messenger, but the timing differs.

- For Hindus, the last messenger is yet to come, and is prophesied to appear at the end of the world. Hindus call him *Kalki*. The *Srimad Bhagavatam* gives a few details on him and his mission, one that is similar to the concept of Imam Mahdi in Islam and Messiah in Judeo-Cristianity.
- For Muslims, the last and the seal of all prophets is Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). He is the last messenger to all human beings until the Day of Judgment.

b) Living beings categorized as messengers

- In Hinduism, angels and human are both used by God as messengers. Messengers here fall into many categories and levels.
- In Islam, only human beings are used as messenger (Prophet or *Rasool*).

c) The first man in both religions differs.

- In Hinduism, the first man appeared on this earth is Swambhuva Manu. His appearance dates back millions of years (See chapter 2). For the current age, the father of humanity according to Hindus is Vaivasistha Manu, the son of Marichi. He is the father of this age.
- In Islam, the first man to appear on earth was Prophet Adam. He is believed to be the father of the human race.

d) Methods of worship differ.

- For Hindus, there are many ways prescribed by the saints to worship the Almighty. However, these methods of worship should not oppose the principles laid down in the *Vedas*.
- For Muslims, there is only one way to worship, as prescribed and taught by Prophet Muhammad. This prescription is clearly stated in the *Holy Qur'an* and the *Hadith*.

e) The Day of judgement.

- For Hindus, there is no such day as the Day of Judgment. They believe the outer world is eternal.

- Muslims believe and are promised in the *Holy Qur'an* that this existing world will come to an end on a day known as Day of Judgment.

4.7 Summary

In general, there are many similarities and differences between Islam and Hinduism. However, Islam which has its roots in the Semitic tradition as well as the larger family of Semitic religions, is admitted by the almighty *Allah* in the Holy Qur'an as the last religion, the ultimate truth and the al-Deen. Hinduism on the other hand, with roots in the non-Semitic tradition cling unto the belief that many more messengers will come to uphold the eternal law of life. These two religions, and the civilizations they have come with, have undoubtedly brought commendable achievement and progression in human history. Even though there are differences, both religions accept and practice their belief in the name of religious tolerance as recommended in their respective scriptures and the national constitution.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The first two research objectives, to describe the general concepts of a messenger in two famous world religions, Hinduism and Islam, have been realized in chapters two and three respectively. To achieve this, four major characteristic areas of this concept well explored, namely early history and scriptural development, literature, concept of time, scriptures describing messengers along with the content of those scriptures. Chapter four accomplishes the third research objective by examining the similarities and differences between the two concepts.

In this last chapter, chapter five, in order to achieve the last objective of this research, the researcher will propose and analyze a means of creating harmony and understanding among the different Malaysian ethnicities and religious groups, especially among Muslims and Hindus, on the concept of messengers. This will be done by identifying some common religious ground in the context of these concepts.

In Islam, Messengers or Prophets are persons chosen by almighty God to communicate his message to the people. The *Holy Qur'an* confirms as follows:

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولٌ فَإِذَا جَاءَ رَسُولُهُمْ قُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ

To every people (was sent) an apostle: when their apostle comes (before them), the matter will be judged between them with justice, and they will not be wronged.

[Holy Qur'an 10:47]

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولًا أَنْ أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ فَمِنْهُمْ
مَنْ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلَالَةُ فَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا
كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكذِبِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

For we Assuredly sent amongst every people an apostle, (with the Command), "Serve Allah, and eschew Evil": of the people were some whom Allah guided, and some on whom Error became inevitably (established). so travel through the earth, and see what was the end of those who denied (the truth).

[Holy Qur'an 16:36]

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنذِرٌ وَلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ

هَادٍ ﴿٧﴾

And the unbelievers say: "Why is not a Sign sent down to Him from His Lord?" but Thou art truly a Warner, and to every people a guide.

[Holy Qur'an 13:7]

There are twenty-five prophets mentioned by name in the Glorious *Holy Qur'an*. Some of such prophets are Prophet Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus,

and Muhammad (peace be upon them all). Only stories of a few prophets are mentioned in the *Holy Qur'an*, as the verses below confirm:

وَرُسُلًا قَدْ قَصَصْنَاهُمْ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَرُسُلًا لَمْ نَقْصُصْهُمْ عَلَيْكَ ۚ وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَىٰ
تَكْوِيمًا ﴿١٦٤﴾

Of some apostles we have already told Thee the story; of others we have not;- and to Moses Allah spoke direct.

[*Holy Qur'an 4:164*]

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِّن قَبْلِكَ مِنْهُمْ مَّن قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن لَّمْ نَقْصُصْ
عَلَيْكَ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِآيَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۚ فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ فُضِيَ
بِالْحَقِّ وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾

We did aforetime send apostles before thee: of them there are some whose story we have related to thee, and some whose story we have not related to thee. it was not (possible) for any apostle to bring a Sign except by the leave of Allah. but when the command of Allah issued, the matter was decided In truth and justice, and there perished, there and then those who stood on falsehoods.

[*Holy Qur'an 40:78*]

According to a sahih *Hadith*, before the almighty God sent his last messenger to humankind, he first sent 124,000 others to all nations.

All prophets that came before Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) were sent only for their people and nation, and the complete message they preached was meant only for that time. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the last and the final messenger according to Holy Qur'an, sent to all mankind.

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلَٰكِن رَّسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ﴿٤٠﴾

Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (He is) the Messenger of Allah, and the seal of the Prophets: and Allah has full knowledge of all things.

[Holy Qur'an 33:40]

Since Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the last and final messenger of Allah, he was not only sent for Muslims or Arabs but he was sent for the whole of humankind. The Qur'an affirms:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢١﴾

We sent Thee not, but As a Mercy for all creatures.

[Holy Qur'an 21:107]

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا ۗ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

*We have not sent Thee but As a universal (Messenger) to men,
giving them glad tidings, and warning them (against sin), but Most
men understand not.*

[Holy Qur'an 34:28]

As for Hinduism, Hindus commonly have the following concept of *Avatar*:
Avatar is a Sanskrit term where 'Av' means 'down' and 'tr' means 'Passover'. Thus,
Avatar means to descend down or to come down. The meaning of '*Avatar*' in the
Oxford Dictionary is, "(In Hindu Mythology) the descent of a deity or released soul to
earth in bodily form". Put simply, *Avatar*, according to Hindus, means Almighty God
coming down to earth in bodily form. It is therefore a common Hindu belief that God
Almighty comes down to the earth in some bodily form to protect religion, to set an
example or to set the rules for human beings. There is no reference of *Avatars*
anywhere in the *Vedas (sruti)*, the foremost and primary Hindu scripture.
Nonetheless, the *smṛti – Itihasas* and the *Puranas* mention *Avatars*.

The following verses from *Bhagavad Gita* and *Srimad Bhagavatam* confirm
this concept of *Avatars*:

*yada yada hi dharmasya
glanir bhavati bhārata
abhyutthanam adharmasya
tadātmānam sṛjāmy aham*

*Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice, O
Descendant of Bharata, and a predominant rise of irreligion--at that
time I descend myself.*

[Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 4, verse 7]

*paritranaya sadhunam
vinasaya ca duskrtam
dharma-samsthapanarthaya
sambhavami yuge yuge*

In order to deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to re-establish the principles of religion, I advent Myself millennium after millennium.

[Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 4, verse 8]

yadā yadā hi dharmasya
kṣayo vṛddhiś ca pāpmanah
tadā tu bhagavān īśa
ātmānam sṛjate hariḥ

Whenever the principles of religion deteriorate and the principles of irreligion increase, the supreme controller, the Personality of Godhead Śrī Hari, appears by His own will.

[Bhagavata Purana 9:24:56]

In general, Islam does not accept that Almighty God takes human form. He chooses a man amongst men and communicates with them on a higher level to deliver his message to human beings. Such individuals are called Messengers of God.

‘Avatar’, as mentioned earlier, is derived from ‘Av’ and ‘tr’, which means to descend down or come down. Hindus believe the *Lord Vishnu* (maintainer of the

universe) comes down to the earth in some bodily form to protect religion, to set an example or to set the rules for human beings. Mention of such chosen beings of God appears in several places in all epics, *Puranas* and later literature. Only two have been celebrated as the full manifestation of God in Indian tradition. They are Lord *Rama* and *Lord Krishna*. Beside them, Hindus believe there are many lower forms taken by *Lord Vishnu* for different people in different parts of the world. This is to bring mankind gradually to a realization of the concept of incarnation, and ultimately to realize God in man and man in God.

5.2 Inputs and Recommendation

From the research findings, the researcher would like to recommend some insights for further study on this subject:

- a) Due to differences in the interpretation and calculation of time by ancient and modern Hindu scholars, the current calendar dating needs to be reviewed. This is in order to get the correct chronology of ancient Hindu tradition and the ancient kingdoms.
- b) The time and place where Prophet Adam descended and was buried still remains a mystery. According to a book by Umar Al-Ashqar, the birth year of the Prophet Noah dates back to 3900 B.C of the solar calendar.

- c) Imam Ibn Kathir in his famous book, “The Stories of the Prophets”, recounts, “it is reported by Ibn Abbas and Abu Hurairah from the Prophet that Prophet Adam’s age was written on a preserved Tablet (Al-Lauh Al-Mahfuz) as one thousand years. This does not contradict the Torah (Taurat) that he lived for nine hundred and thirty years from the solar calendar dating. Using the Lunar calendar, the life span was nine hundred and fifty seven years. Including forty-three years of his stay in paradise, the reported age of one thousand years is gotten. This raises an important issue: Prophet Adam descended to earth from paradise on 4840 B.C of the solar calendar. Concerning the place he descended and was buried, there are many differing opinions. One famous opinion says that he was buried near to the mountain where he descended, in India. In another opinion, he was buried on the mountain of Abu Qabis in Makkah. It is also said that in the time of the flood, Prophet Noah carried him and Eve in a coffin and buried them at Baitul Maqdis in Jerusalem. Seeing as Islam, as well as other Semitic religions, believe Prophet Adam to be the father of the human race, appropriate scientific effort and concern needs to be put into the identification of this location.
- d) The occurrence of the *Smriti Ramayana*, be it myth or historical fact, needs to be reviewed using current available scientific methods. According to a research book on *Ramayana*, Dr. P. V. Vartak estimates that the whole *Ramayana* started from the birth of King *Rama* (4th December 7323 B.C), that and *Rama* returned to Ayodhya on the 6th of December 7272 B.C. A

prominent Hindu saint, Srila Prabhupada, in his commentary on *Bhagavad Gita*, dates the appearance of Lord *Rama* around one million eight hundred years earlier. This time gap between the two claims is too large to ignore.

- e) Similarly, the occurrence of the *Smriti Mahabharata*, be it myth or historical fact, needs to be reviewed using modern scientific methods. According to a research book on *Mahabharata*, Dr.P.V.Vartak estimates that the *Mahabharata* war started on October 16, 5561 B.C. Beside him, Dr. E. Vedavyas surveyed writings done by 120 scholars over the past hundred years: sixty-one of them fixed the *Mahabharata* war as having occurred between 3000 and 3200 B.C. Another forty of these writers estimated the time of occurrence of the war to have been between 1000 and 1500 B.C. However, until now, these dates and places are yet to be supported with substantial archeological evidence or any scientific proof.

- f) Comparative study on the *Ramayana* Epic in the Malay tradition (Hikayat Seri *Rama*) and Valmiki *Ramayana* (Hindu version) needs to be done. This can help identify and establish whether or not there are any outstanding differences or similarities with the original version of Valmiki *Ramayana*. Doing this would give confidence in the knowledge that the epic available today is same as the original version written by Valmiki.

5.3 Conclusion

The two major religions Hinduism and Islam, and their primary scripture, the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Holy Qur'an*, register interesting differences in the concept of messenger, and in their accounts of the origin of the man.

In spite of these differences, however, both religions agree on the existence of messengers with a purpose to elevate humanity from ignorance, to protect righteousness, set an example, and lay down the rules for human beings and many more. The Muslims call such men *Rasool* or *Nabi*, while Hindus call such men *Avatars*.

With these basic differences and similarities in both religions, the researcher comes to a realization of the last research objective. It is hoped at this point that many more knowledge seekers and writers will take up the challenge to venture into this research field, and answer many of the questions left yet unanswered.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1) Holy Scriptures

Islam

Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2000), *The Holy Quran-Translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali*. United Kingdom: Wordsworth Editions.

Muhammad Farooq i Azam Malik (2005), *The meaning of Al Quran*. Texas: The Institute of Islamic Knowledge.

Hinduism

A.C. Swami Prabhupada (1972), *Bhagavad Gita As It Is*. Mumbai, The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.

_____ (1972), *Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 1 by Sri Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasadeva*. Metro Manila: The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.

_____ (1972), *Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 2 by Sri Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasadeva*. Metro Manila: The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.

_____ (1972), *Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 3 Part 2 by Sri Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasadeva*. Metro Manila: The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.

_____ (1972), *Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 5 by Sri Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasadeva*. Metro Manila: The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.

_____ (1972), *Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 9 Part 2 by Sri Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasadeva*. Metro Manila: The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.

_____ (1972), *Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 10 Part 2 by Sri Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasadeva*. Metro Manila: The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.

(1972), *Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 11 by Sri Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasadeva*. Metro Manila: The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.

Paramahansa Yogananda (1995), *The Bhagavad Gita: God talks with Arjuna: royal science of God realization*. Kolkata: Yogoda Satsanga Society.

Sri Swami Sivananda (2000), *Bhagavad Gita by Swami Sivananda*. Uttar Pradesh: The Divine Life Society.

Veeraswamy Krishnaraj (2002), *The Bhagavad-Gita: Translation and Commentary*. Los Angeles: iUniverse.

Christianity

Carroll R. & Prickett S. (1998), *The Bible: Authorized King James Version*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Zondervan Publishing Staff (2002), *Study Bible-NIV: New International Version*. Michigan: Zondervan Publishing.

2) Books

Abdul Rahman al-Sheha (2001), *The Key to Understanding Islam*. Riyadh: World organization for presenting Islam.

Asqalani (1995), *Fath al-bari*. Cairo: Al-Matba'a al-Bahiya al-Misriya.

Badlani H. G. (2008), *Hinduism: Path of the Ancient Wisdom*. Indiana: iUniverse.

Caner E. F. (2002), *Unveiling Islam: an insider's look at Muslim life and beliefs*. Michigan: Kregel Publications.

Careraga A. (1992). *The Wife of Messenger of Allah*. Egypt, Dar Al-Ghadd Al Ghadeed.

- Chandra S. (1998), *Encyclopaedia of Hindu gods and goddesses*. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons.
- Cornell. V. J. (2007), *Voices of Islam: Voices of tradition*. California: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Eggeling J. ([1882-1900] 1963), *The Satapatha Brahmana According to the text of the Madhyandina school*. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Esposito J. L. (2004), *The Oxford dictionary of Islam*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Eur (2002), *Far East and Australasia 2003*. Kentucky: Routledge.
- Ganesh Vasudeo Tagare. (1976). *The Vishnu Purana*. Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass.
- Glasse H. S. C. (2003), *The new encyclopedia of Islam*. Lanham: Rowman Altamira.
- Gregorian V. (2004), *Islam: A Mosaic, Not a Monolith*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press.
- Gulati M. N. (2008), *Comparative Religions and Philosophies: Anthropomorphism and Divinity*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors.
- Harun Yahya (2001), *The evolution deceit: the scientific collapse of Darwinism and its ideological background*. Istanbul: Kultur Publishing.
- Ibn Abi al'Iz Al-Hanafi (1999), *Sharh al-'Aqeedah at-Tahaawiyah*. Beirut: Al-Maktab al-Islami.
- Ibn Katheer (1977), *Al-Bidaayah wan-Nihaayah*. Beirut: Maktabah al-M'arif.
- Ibn Manzoor (1970), *Lisaan al-Arab, in Yusuf Khayyat and Nadeem Mar'ashli (Ed. by)*. Beirut: Daar Lisan al-Arab.
- Ibrahim I. A. (1997), *A brief illustrated guide to understanding Islam*. Riyadh: Darussalam Publications.

- Imaduddin Abul-Fida Ismail Ibn Kathir (1999), *Stories of the Prophets*. Riyadh: Darussalam Publications.
- Imam Bernadib (1982), *Arti dan Metode Sejarah Pendidikan*. Yogyakarta: Yayasan Penerbitan FIP-IKIP.
- Imam Ghazali (1993), *Revival of Religious learning (Ihya Ulum Id Din)*. Karachi: Darul Ishaat.
- Isaeva N. V. (1993), *Shankara and Indian Philosophy*. SUNY Press.
- Jacobi H. ([1908] 1964), *Ages of the World (Indian): Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
- Jayaram V. (2009). *The Concept of Kala or Time in Hinduism*. New Delhi: Tunga Prakashan.
- K. L. Seshagiri Rao (1990), *Mahatma Gandhi and comparative religion*. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publisher.
- Kamali M. H. (1997), *Freedom of expression in Islam*. Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society.
- Kathy R. (2003). *Encarta Student Dictionary*. London, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.
- Klostermaier K. K. (2000), *Hinduism: a short history*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications.
- Knowles E. (2006), *The Oxford Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lawrence B. B. (1973), *Shahrastani on Indian Idol Worship - Studia Islamica*. Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose.
- Lienhard S. (1996), *Lucky Numbers in Ancient Indian Literature "Langue, style et structure dans le monde indien By Nalini Balbir, Georges-Jean Pinault, Jean Fezas, Louis Renou"*. Paris: Editions Champion.

- Linda Johnsen (2002), *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Hinduism*. Indiana Polis: Alpha Books.
- Leonard T. M. (2006), *Encyclopedia of the developing world, Volume 2*. London: Taylor & Francis Publication.
- Madigan A. M. (2001), *The Qur'an's self image: writing and authority in Islam's scripture*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Maurer W. H. (1986), *Pinnacles of India's past: Selections from the Rgveda*. Philadelphia: John Benjamin.
- Mohammed Talib (2005), *Universal Peace: To Unite a Universal Brotherhood*. North Carolina: Universal Peace Publications.
- Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad Biruni (2001), *Alberuni's India: an account of the religion, philosophy, literature, geography, chronology, astronomy, customs, laws and astrology of India about A.D. 1030 : Volume 1 By Edward C. Sachau*. London: Routledge.
- Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad Qurṭubi (2003), *Tafsir Al-Qurtubi: Classical Commentary of the Holy Quran*. Medina: Dar al-Taqwa
- Muḥammad Muṣṭafa al-A'zami (1978), *Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature*. Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust.
- Muhammad Saed Abdul-Rahman (2004), *Islam: Questions and Answers - Jurisprudence and Islamic Rulings: Transactions - Part 4*. London: MSA Publication Limited.
- Musnad Imam Ahmad (1995), *Saheh Hadith narrated by Ahmad in his Musnad*. Beirut: Tasweer al-Makthab al-Islami.
- Muhammad Zafrulla Khan (1980), *Muhammad, seal of the prophets*. Kentucky: Routledge.
- Narendra Nath Bhattacharya (1974), *History of the Sakta Religion*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal.

- O'Flaherty W. D. (1988), *The origins of evil in Hindu mythology*. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publisher.
- Pingree D. (1981). *History of Mathematical Astronomy in India : Dictionary of Scientific Biography*. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Pusalker A. D. (1955), *Studies in the Epic and Puranas*. Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.
- R. T. Vyas (1992), *Valmiki Ramayana: Text as Constituted in its Critical Edition*. Vadodara: Oriental Institute of Vadodara.
- Rabiprasad Mishra (2000), *Theory of Incarnation: Its Origin and Development in the Light of Vedic and Puranic References*. New Delhi: Pratibha Prakashan.
- Reimann L. G. (1988), *Cyclical time and world ages in India: "Tiempo Cíclico y Eras del Mundo en la India"*. Mexico: El Colegio de Mexico.
- Ruqaiyyah Waris Maqsood (1995), *Islam*. London: Heinemann Publication.
- S. Singaravelu (2004), *The Ramayana tradition in Southeast Asia*. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press.
- Saccardi K. T. H. M. (2001), *Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia: Teacher's Guide*. Washington: Grolier Scholastic.
- Sastry (1985), *Vedanga Jyotisa of Lagadha*. New Delhi: Indian National Science Academy.
- Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Moore C. A. (1957), *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Shahrestani (2005), *Kitab Al-Milal Wa Al-Nihal (The Book of Sects and Creeds)- Mohammad Fathallah Badran (Translated by)*. Beirut: Al-Maktaba Al-Asriya.
- Shawqi A. K. (2003), *Atlas on The Prophet's Biography*. Riyadh: Darussalam Publication.

Shaykh Safiur-Rahman al-Mubarakpuri (2001), *Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Volume 8)*. Riyadh: Darussalam Publication.

Siddiqi M. H. (2003), *Reincarnation: Do Muslims Believe in It*. Egypt: IslamOnline.net.

Sri Ramakrishna (1987), *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna*. Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math.

Sri Swami Sivananda (2000), *Bhagavad Gita by Swami Sivananda*. Uttar Pradesh: The Divine Life Society.

_____ (1997), *All About Hinduism*. Uttar Pradesh: The Divine Life Society trust.

_____ (1996), *The Divine Life*. Batu Caves: The Divine Life Society Trust.

_____ (1964), *Bliss divine: a book of spiritual essays on the lofty purpose of human life and the means to its achievement*. Rishikesh, India: Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy, Divine Life Society.

Sri BhaktiSiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura (1985), *Sri Brahma-Samhita*. Los Angeles: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust International.

Swami Saraswati Pranavananda (2008), *Bhajananjali*. Batu Caves: The Divine Life Society.

Swami Sri Yukteswar (1949), *The Holy Science*. Los Angeles: Motilal Banarsidass.

Umar. S. A (1990), *The Messengers and The Messages (In the light of the Quran and Sunnah)*. Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House.

University Press Cambridge (2004), *Cambridge Learner's Dictionary*. United Kingdom: Klett Publishing Plc.

Varanasi Raj Gopal Sharma (1987), *Kanchi Kamakoti Math, a myth*. New Delhi: Ganga-Tunga Prakashan.

- Vaishnavadasa (2009), *Sankalpam*. Vadodara: Oriental Institute of Vadodara.
- Vartak P. V. (1994), *Swayambhu (in Marathi)*. Pune Ved Vidnyana Mandal.
- Ved Prakash Upaddhay. (1998). *Muhammad in the Hindu Scriptures*. Kuala Lumpur: A.S.Noordeen Publications.
- Veeraswamy Krishnaraj. (2002). *The Bhagavad-Gita: Translation and Commentary*. Los Angeles, iUniverse.
- Waardenburg J. J. (1999), *Muslim perceptions of other religions: A historical survey*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wilkinson J. G. (sir.) (1878), *Manners and customs of the ancient Egyptians*. London: A Spottiswoode.
- Wilson H. H. (1840), *The Vishnu Purana: A System of Hindu Mythology And Tradition* Calcutta: Punthi Pustak.
- Wright B. P. W. (1890), *Lectures on the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages*. New Jersey: Cambridge University Press.
- Zakir Naik (2001), *Concept of God in Major Religions*. Mumbai India: Adam Publishers & Distributors.