

Allah — The Unique Name of God

*Research into the names of God in over 150
languages and their meanings*

by

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Preface by the Editors

The contents of this book are taken from the 3-volumed work *Muhammad in World Scriptures* by Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi, published during the years 1966–1975.¹ As the title given to the present compilation indicates, the author has sought to prove, by discussing the meanings of the names of God used among a large number of nations and languages, that the Arabic name *Allah* used in Islam is unique in being the proper name of God, as it reflects all His attributes, rather than one particular aspect, and is applied only to the Divine Being.

In producing this book, it was essential to check for accuracy the vast number of quotations and references provided in the original material, as its printing had regrettably been marred by numerous misprints, misplaced and omitted text, and typographical errors. We, the Editors, were fortunately able to locate almost all the source works, such as encyclopaedias and dictionaries, that had been referenced, and thus make the necessary corrections in references and quotations. We have also provided fuller bibliographical details of the sources, which was lacking in the original book. It was felt advantageous in some cases to extend the quoted extracts from the original sources. At some points in the book, useful comments have been added, marked as *Editor*.

¹ Chapters 1 to 6 of the present book consist of the material in volume 1, pages 1–101, and chapter 7 consists of the material in volume 3, pages 1262–1274 of that edition of *Muhammad in World Scriptures*.

The original material contains some terms and expressions from ancient languages, often Hebrew and Greek, printed in ordinary English characters. We have typeset these, in some cases, in the characters of the original languages, and in other cases used standard diacritical marks to represent the original characters.

When quoting from the Bible, the author had used the classical King James Version (KJV). We have replaced that, except in a few cases, by the New King James Version (NKJV) due to its more modern English language, while it differs least from the version referred to by the author. Where the old version is retained we indicate it by KJV, and if necessary use the abbreviation NKJV to indicate the new version.

Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi had emphasised in an introductory note to this research that it is the basic doctrine of the Divine message of the Holy Quran that prophets were raised among every nation and given guidance in accordance with the requirements of their people and times, culminating in the revelation of the Quran which fulfilled the universal requirements of humanity. All religions were links in a chain held by the same hand. There is one God, the Creator of all, Who has given the means of both physical and spiritual nourishment to the whole creation. This is the underlying outlook that motivated the author's research. One of the conclusions reached by him is that the names of God in various languages are like lamps of different colours, but the source of the light shining through them is the light of Allah which comes from beyond them all.

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Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. The names of God among 155 nations of the world	5
3. A review of Divine names	31
Our Heavenly Father	32
The Name ‘God’	37
God according to the usage of the Bible	39
God’s name, ‘Light’	40
And what is light ?	42
Unity of the Divine Being	45
The term ‘Trinity’	46
4. The name of God in Jewish scriptures	54
Is Yahweh the name of God?	54
The Significance of ‘Jehovah’	57
Moses asks the name of God	61
The Vowels of <i>adonay</i> (Adonai) and letters of <i>yhwh</i> make the name of God	64
Jehovah or Yahweh?	66
American Research on ‘Jehovah’	69

5. Observations on the statements of Jewish and Christian scholars	71
<i>Yahweh</i> is the name of the Coming Lord	77
Name and concept of the Divine Being in Islam	79
6. <i>Allah</i> — the all-embracing compendium of all the names of God	82
7. Beginning in the name of Allah is a miracle	88
Conflict about God’s name in various religions.....	91
God’s name in scriptures	91
God’s name among Jews and Christians	95
Prophet Muhammad told God’s real name	97
“Do you know one that can be named along with Him?”	99

1. Introduction

The Holy Quran does not begin with the genealogy of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, nor does it begin with the geology or creation of the heavens and the earth in a space of six days. A book of God as it is, it very appropriately begins with the name of God:

“In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.”

His attributes *Beneficent* and *Merciful* comprise the embodiment of His greatness and glory, and ascribe to Him the possession of all attributes of perfection. Through His Beneficence evolved the creation of the heavens and the earth and through His mercy do our deeds flower into results. Thus we have, on the one hand, an expression of His perpetual generosity and sustenance and, on the other, an expression of His infinite and vigilant mercy and favour.

The first verse of the Holy Quran tells us that the Creator of this universe is a beneficent God, that He is not the revengeful Nemesis of the Greeks who holds man as a plaything in her hands. The Arabic word for *the Beneficent* is *Ar-Rahman*, for which we have no word in the English language. It denotes that not only His love and mercy are unbounded, but that He blesses us with gifts of untold proportions both for and in spite of meritorious service on our part. He has granted to all of His creation those indispensable provisions necessary for their existence, sustenance, growth and development: space, forces, time, atmosphere, earth, sun, water, law — to name but a few — which comprise an

inconceivably small proportion, all of which, however great or small, are still subservient to His will. We are obliged, therefore, to acquire knowledge of all things, be they in the heavens or on the earth. But in our search for knowledge, we should always be conscious of our Benefactor, to Whom we owe our efforts, to Whom we owe the results of our efforts, and to Whom we look for prototype.

In the Arabic language the proper name of God is Allah, for which again we find no English equivalent and we are forced to interpret it as God. But Allah is the proper name of the Deity and is, at the same time, more definite in its application and more profound in its meaning than the term 'God'. *God*, in the English language, is more often than not applied to other than the One Supreme Being, besides being continuously used in malevolent and abusive oaths. In Webster's English Dictionary we find: ¹

1. A being conceived of as possessing supernatural power, and to be propitiated by sacrifice, worship, etc.; a divinity; a deity; an object of worship; an idol.
2. The Supreme Being; the eternal and infinite Spirit, the Creator, and the Sovereign of the universe; Jehovah.
3. A person or thing deified and honored as the chief good; an object of supreme regard.
4. Figuratively applied to one who wields great or despotic power.

Allah, however, has from time immemorial been applied only to the Supreme Being, the possessor of all attributes of perfection; it has no plural number and no feminine gender.²

The world-renowned late Agha Khan, when asked by a friend, "Is it true that people in India believe you to be God?",

¹ Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary, version published 1913.

² Edward William Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 'Allah'.

humorously replied: “People of India worship cows and calves as gods; it does not matter to them if they believe me to be God”.

Saint Paul writes:

“For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords)”.¹

We also find reference in the Bible that there were stolen gods taken by Rachel:

“Now Laban had gone to shear his sheep, and Rachel had stolen the household idols that were her father’s. ... And Laban said to Jacob: ... but why did you steal my gods?”²

The use of the word ‘god’ in the Bible and in Christian lands is a proof that this term does not apply to the Supreme Being alone.

Allah being the proper name of God, it should not be translated into any other language, futile as the attempt shall be, for we all know that proper names of cities and persons are not translated. Hence Muslims all over the world, regardless of their native languages, refer to the Supreme Being as Allah, and begin their affairs by uttering *Bismillah* — “In the name of Allah”.

There does not seem to have been a period of history when mankind did not believe in a supernatural Author and Ruler of the universe; even the most primitive nations have some idea of God or Supreme Being.³ There is no language or nation on the

¹ 1 Corinthians, 8:5.

² Genesis, 31:19.

³ James Hastings, ed., *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, art. ‘God’, vol. vi, p. 243.

earth which is without the name of God. We have stated that there is no equivalent of *Allah* in the English language nor in any other language of the world. Of course, different languages have different names for the Divine Being, but none of them connotes what the term *Allah* does; while they are general or descriptive of a particular expression of His nature, it is only the proper name Allah that entirely embodies descriptive names, i.e. He Who possesses all the attributes of perfection. We have in the Holy Quran:

“And Allah’s are all the excellent names.”¹

Again, we have:

“Allah — there is no god but He. His are the very best names.”²

We conclude, therefore, that the names of God in all other languages are merely expressions of particular attributes, and this the author intends to prove. It would be useful if we now study the concepts of God among different nations of the world.

¹ The Holy Quran, 7:180.

² *Ibid.*, 20:8.

2. The names of God among 155 nations of the world

1. The **Abipones**, a savage tribe of South America. Their chief deity is *Aharaigichi* or *Queevet*. “He gave us valour and Spaniards riches.” (H., vol. 1, p. 29a)¹
2. The **Abor**, **Abor-Miri**, a people of the northern frontier of Assam. They acknowledge and adore one supreme being, *Jam*, as the father of all, who will judge all men. (H., vol. 1, p. 33a)
3. The **Kaitish aborigines** of South Australia have *Atnatu* as their God. It means ‘one without anus’, or ‘without flaw’. The god who eats and drinks should have an anus. The Quran says: “Say: Shall I take for a protector other than Allah, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, and He feeds and is not fed?” (6:14)

These aborigines also declare that *Atnatu* is prior to the Beginning. He appeared in the sky in a far remote past. He made Himself and gave Himself His name. He is very great, Whose law tribes obey. He established the rule that tribes at a fishing ground should keep peace. His name also means ‘The Great’. (H., vol. 6, p. 243a, lower; vol. 2, p. 889b)

¹ The abbreviation H in this chapter refers to the following reference work: J. Hastings (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, New York, C. Scribner’s Sons, 1908–1926.

4. Some **aborigines** of South Australia say that they believe in *Baiame*. It means maker and father of all. (H., vol. 2, p. 246a; vol. 6, p. 244). They circumcise with a stone knife (H., vol. 1, p. 298a).
5. The **Hamitic tribes of Abyssinia (Ethiopia)** adore *Waq*, pronounced *Waqay*. Originally, it meant 'heaven' (or 'one who is in heaven'). They say there is only one God Who is omnipresent, or everywhere. (H., vol. 1, p. 56b)
6. The ancient **Aegeans**, people of the coast isles of the Aegean sea, said that they believed in *Rhea*, which means the spirit of nature. (H., vol. 1, p. 147a)
7. The **Afrikaaners** say that they have been taught His name as *God*. In their language *godin* is 'goddess' and *godjie* is a little tin god.¹
8. The **Agaos**, High Cushites of East Africa, say their chief god is *Deban* or *Jar*. It means sky or heaven. (H., vol. 6, p. 488b)
9. The **Ahoms**, who belong to the Tai family, extending from the gulf of Thailand to Assam, say that they believe in *Phu-Ra-Ta-Ra*. It means God, the Creator. (H., vol. 1, p. 236a)
10. The **Ainu** are an historic race at one time inhabiting the region extending from Siberia to Japan. Their God is *Kamui*. They were originally monotheists. *Kamui* means 'heaven' and 'above'. It has no plural number. "When speaking of the 'God of gods', the Ainu give Him the

¹ Dr. D. B. Bosman, I. W. van der Merwe and L. W. Hiemstra, *Tweetalige Woordeboek: Engels-Afrikaans, Afrikaans-Engels*, 2 vols, Cape Town, 1931–1936; H. J. Terblanche, *Nuwe Praktiese Woordeboek, Engels-Afrikaans, Afrikaans-Engels: New Practical Dictionary, English-Afrikaans, Afrikaans-English*, Johannesburg, Afrikaanse Pers-Boekhandel, 1966.

name *Pase-Kamui*, ‘Creator and Possessor of heaven’. All the rest are termed *Yaiyan Kamui*.” (H., vol. 1, pp. 239–241)

11. The **Aiyanar** of South India worship *Hari-Hara* or *Vishnushiva*, a Dravidian god recognised by the Aryans. (H., vol. 1, p. 257b)
12. The people of **Akra** (an African tribe) say that they believe in *Jongmaa*, meaning the highest god.¹
13. The **Akwapim** (Africans) believe in *Jankkupong*; it denotes God.²
14. The **Alakhnamis** of Northern India worship *Alakh-Nam*, or the ‘unseeable god’. (H., vol. 1, p. 276a)
15. The **Albanians** of the Balkan peninsula call their god *Hyjni*, which means ‘celestial god’.³
16. The **Aleuts** (of the Aleutian Islands, Alaska) worship *Kugan*. It means ‘the spirit who has power to create’. (H., vol. 1, p. 305)
17. The **Algonquins**, a well-known Algic race of North America, say that they believe in *Kuloskap* or *Kuloskabe*.⁴ It means the god ‘Liar and Deceiver’, not because he deceives or injures man, but because he leads

¹ F. Max Müller, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by the Religions of India: delivered in the Chapter House, Westminster Abbey, in April, May, and June, 1878* (The Hibbert lectures 1878), London, Longmans, Green / Williams and Norgate, 1878, Lecture No. 2, p. 110.

² *Ibid.*, p. 111.

³ Angelo Leotti, *Dizionario Albanese-Italiano*, with preface by Prof. Norbert Jokl, Rome, Istituto per l’Europa Orientale, 1937; Stuart E. Mann, *An English-Albanian Dictionary*, Cambridge University Press, 1957, pp. 92, 105, 158.

⁴ Modern spellings *GlusKap*, *GlusKabe* — Editor.

his enemies astray. He is the creator and friend of man, who named animals and discovered that man was the lord of all. (H., vol. 1, p. 320)

18. The **Andamanese** say that *Puluga*, their chief deity, is the cause of all things, and sins are displeasing to Him. He taught His teachings to Tomo, the first teacher. (H., vol. 1, p. 468*b*, 469*a*)
19. The **Annamese**¹ call their god *Dôc-Cu'ô'c*, i.e., the one-footed god. They praise his merits thus: "The one-footed spirit has only one eye and only one foot, but he is swift as lightning and sees all that happens in the world." (H., vol. 1, p. 539*a*)
20. The **Arabs** call their highest god *Allah*.² He comprises all the attributes of perfection. It is said in the Quran:

"All the most beautiful names are of Allah."³

He is the being Who exists necessarily by Himself. The word *Allah* is not applied to any being except the True God. They never gave this name to an idol or an honoured person. It has no feminine gender, nor a plural number. It is not derived from any root. There is no equivalent for this word in any language of the world. It is a challenge from the All-Knowing Allah:

"(O man!) Do you know one that can be named along with Him?" — The Quran, 19:65.

¹ They belong to what is now Vietnam — *Editor*.

² The *Al* is inseparable from *Allah*. *Al-ilah* is a different word. See E. W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, art. 'Allah'. In Hastings we read: "It may be observed that the retention of the article in the vocative (*ya Allah*) indicates that this form was used as a proper name from an early period" — H., vol. 6, p. 248*b*, art. 'God (Arabian, pre-Islamic)'.

³ The Quran, 7:180; and see 20:8 and 59:24.

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21. The **Arawak** tribes of Brazil worship *Jurupari* or *Juru-para-i*. It means: 'issue from the mouth of a river'. He was born from a virgin who possessed no sex. This river is the river of shoreless time. (H., vol. 2, p. 835*b*)
22. *Tando* is the principal god of the **Ashanti** (negroes of West Africa). He is hostile to *Bobowissi*, because the people of Ashanti were at war with the worshippers of *Bobowissi*. (H., vol. 9, p. 277*b*)
23. The ancient **Armenians'** chief deity was *Aramazd*. He is the father of the gods, the maker of the heavens and the earth. (H., vol. 1, p. 795*a*)
24. The **Assyrians** adored *Baal* or *Bel*.¹ It was considered the chief deity. It means 'owner' or 'possessor'. It was also worshipped by the Israelites. Says the Bible:
- "As their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal."²
25. The **Babylonians** served the god *Anu*, i.e., the god of heaven. It is the Sumerian *ana*, 'heaven'. (H., vol. 2, p. 310*a*)
26. The **Bulgarians** worship *Bora*.³ It has many forms, plural and feminine. It means 'the chief object of worship'.
27. The **Bantu**, an African tribe, name their god *Ambe* or *Nyambe*. It means 'God'.⁴
28. The **Basques**, an ancient people of Spain, worshipped *Jaungoiko*, *Jaun-Goiko*. *Jaun* means 'lord', and *goiko*
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¹ W. Muss-Arnolt, *A Concise Dictionary of the Assyrian Language*, Berlin, [1854]–1905.

² Jeremiah, 23:27.

³ Konstantin Stefanov, *English-Bulgarian Dictionary, Pronouncing and Explanatory*, 2nd ed., Sofia, Khemus, 1944.

⁴ Sir Harry H. Johnston, *A Comparative Study of the Bantu and Semi-Bantu Languages*, Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1919–1922.

means 'height', hence, 'master of the height'. It applied to men as well as to God. They have their own language, distinct from Spanish. Some say *goiko* means 'moon', and so *Jaun-Goiko* means 'lord of the moon'. (H., vol. 2, p. 436b)

29. The **Buddhists** of Burma worship *Nats* and they believe them to be supernatural beings. (H., vol. 3, p. 22b)
30. The **Buddhists** of Nepal serve *Adibuddha*. They are a unitarian and theistic people. *Adibuddha* means 'Buddha from the beginning'. They believe that He exists by Himself and is called *Svayambhu* or *Svayambhulokanatha* or self-existing protector of the world. They believe Him to be pure light. He is worshipped in His temple at Katmandu. (H., vol. 1, p. 94)
31. Some sects of the **Buddhists** worship *Avalokiteshvara*.¹ There are different interpretations of *Avalokiteshvara*. The Tibetans take it to mean 'the Lord Who looks both at the Buddha and at the creatures with compassion'.
32. The **Buriats**,² a branch of the eastern Mongols, called their god *Tengri*, 'one who lives in heaven' (*tangara* means 'heaven'). There are two heavens. For the physical heaven they use *Oktorgoi*. (H., vol. 3, pp. 2-3)
33. Among the islanders of **Buru** (Indonesia) the highest god is called *Opo-geba-snulat*, the lord creator of man. His messenger in very old time was *Nabiata*. Messengers of God who descend to earth are prevalent among all Indonesians. (H., vol. 7, p. 248b)

¹ Sarat Chandra Das, *A Tibetan-English Dictionary with Sanskrit Synonyms*, revised and edited by Graham Sandberg and A. William Heyde, Calcutta, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1902, p. 806.

² Now spelt *Buryats* — Editor.

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34. The **Canaanites** said their god was *El*. In Hebrew it means 'power'. Their other chief deity was *Adon*, from which the Israelites took *Adonai* as a substitute for the name *Yahweh* ('Jehovah'). (H., vol. 3, p. 178b, 179b)
35. The **Caribs** of South America worshipped *Tamu*. It means 'grandfather' or 'old deity of the sky'. (H., vol. 2, p. 836b)
36. The **Chaldeans'** god was *'Illa'a/Illya*, a very old Semitic name of God. It means 'the highest'.¹
37. The **Chibchas**² of Colombia (South America) named their God *Chimizapagua*. It means 'the supreme creator'. Their prophet's name was Bochica, who taught them all they knew. (H., vol. 3, p. 515a)
38. The people of **Chile**³ (South America) invoke their god *Pillan*. It denotes 'the soul' or 'the supreme essence'. (H., vol. 3, p. 547a)
39. The **Chinese** god is *Shang Ti*. *Shên* (spirits) is the plural.⁴ The ancient books express a sort of Supreme Being by *Shang Ti*. Genii of particular places are also expressed by *shên*, as *ho shên*, god of the river, *shan shên*, god of the hill. But they say that all these are inferior to *T'ien* ('heaven' or 'above'), the sovereign. They say: "It is not lawful to use the name *Shang Ti* lightly; therefore, we name Him by His residence, i.e., heaven."

¹ Julius Fuerst, *A Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*, 3rd ed., translated from the German by Samuel Davidson, Leipzig, B. Tauchnitz, London, Williams & Norgate, 1867, p. 1055.

² The Chibchas are now virtually extinct as a separate tribe — *Editor*.

³ This refers to the Araucanians — *Editor*.

⁴ Herbert A. Giles, *A Chinese-English Dictionary*, London, B. Quaritch, 1892; Hastings, vol. 3, p. 550–551.

40. The **Confucians** (China), though considered polytheists, believe *Shên* to be the chief god, living in heaven. He rules and controls all spectres and their actions; no spirit can harm men without authority from Him or His silent consent. (H., vol. 4, p. 13a)
41. The **Coptic Christians** of Egypt call their god *Noute*, used as singular and plural and feminine and masculine.¹
42. In the **Cornish** language (one of the languages of the Celts — inhabitants of Northern and Western Europe) God is called *Dew* (or *Deu*, *Du*, *Dhew*, *Dhyw*, *Theu*, *Thu*, *Thyu*, *Thev*, *Thyw*, all these being different pronunciations). Its plural is *dewow*; *dués* is ‘goddess’.²
43. The ancient **Cretans**, the people of Crete in the Mediterranean Sea, invoked *Theos* (heaven) as in Greek.³
44. In the **Czech** (pronounced ‘Tchek’) language of Bohemia and Moravia⁴ the name of God is *Bůh*; *bohyně* is ‘goddess’.⁵
45. In Danish, the language of the **Danes** of Denmark, God is pronounced *Gud* as in the Norwegian; *gudder* is

¹ W. E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1939. (Coptic is the final stage in the evolution of the Ancient Egyptian language. *Noute* corresponds to the hieroglyphic *ntr*, ‘god’, for which see below, no. 50, ‘The Ancient Egyptians’. Coptic is written with vowels as its alphabet is based on the Greek alphabet, but we can only make informed guesses at the vowels for the earlier forms of the language, hence the convention of adding dummy vowels when reading or transliterating Ancient Egyptian, as in ‘netjer’ or ‘neter’ for *ntr* or *ntr*. — Editor.)

² Fred W. P. Jago, *An English-Cornish Dictionary*, London, Simpkin and Marshall, 1887.

³ See below no. 64, the Greek name of God, *Theos*.

⁴ The modern Czech Republic — Editor.

⁵ Prof. F. Krupicka, *Anglicko-Český Česko-Anglický Slovník*, Prague, Československá Akademie Ved.

plural, i.e., gods; *gudeverden* means 'world of the gods'; *gudinde* is the word for a goddess.¹

46. The **Dene**² (North American) tribes are a most important aboriginal group. Their chief god is *Yuttære*, 'That which is on high', or, among the eastern Dene *Inkfwin-Wetay*, which means, 'He who sits on the zenith'. He is creator as well as ruler of the universe. (H., vol. 4, p. 639b)
47. The **Dinka** are an independent tribe of Africa, 300 miles away from Khartoum. They are a deeply religious people and worship a high god whose name is *Dengdit*, literally meaning 'Great Rain', or *Nyalich*, meaning 'Who is above or in the above'. He sends rain. He created the world. (H., vol. 4, p. 707a)
48. The chief deity of the **Dutch** of Holland is *God*, *godheid*; *godin* is the feminine and *goden* is the plural.³

¹ J. McLaughlin, *McLaughlin's Danish-Norwegian-English Dictionary*, in two parts, Danish-Norwegian-English, English-Danish-Norwegian, Philadelphia, David McKay company [1941]; John Brynildsen, *A Dictionary of the English and Dano-Norwegian Languages*, Copenhagen, Gyldendal, 2 vols, 1902–1907. (McLaughlin's and Brynildsen's dictionaries are based on the Dano-Norwegian language, which is essentially Danish and is distinct from the modern Norwegian language — Editor.)

Gyldendal's English-Norwegian & Norwegian-English Dictionary, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1941 (comprising *Gyldendals Ordbøker: Engelsk-Norsk*, ved B. Berulfsen, Oslo, Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1938 and *Gyldendal's Ordbøker: Norsk-Engelsk*, ved H. Scavenius, Oslo, Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1933).

² The Dene live in Alaska and Canada. — Editor.

³ I. M. Calisch, *Nieuw Volledig Engelsch-Nederlandschen Nederlandsch-Engelsch Woordenboek = New Complete Dictionary of the English and Dutch Languages*, Tiel, Campagne, 1890–1892; *Cassell's English-Dutch, Dutch-English Dictionary* compiled by Dr. F. P. H. Prick Van Wely, London, Cassell, [1951].

49. The **Ediyahs** of Fernando Po¹ call their Supreme Being *Rupi*.²
50. The Ancient **Egyptians** called their god *Neter*, *Nether*.³ It denotes God or a god. *Netrit* is ‘goddess’. *Hunu*⁴ means a youthful god; as the Quran says: “Every moment He is in a state of glory” (55:29).
51. Another **Egyptian** hieroglyphic name of God is *Khem-ren-f*, ‘He whose name is unknown’.⁵ Compare it with the Vedic deity *Ka* (*deva*), or ‘Who?’ *Ka* is the god of Chapter 10, Section 121 of the Rig Veda. The whole section is ascribed in the name of *Ka Deva*, or the ‘unknown god’.

¹ An island off the West African coast, now called Bioko — *Editor*.

² F. Max Müller, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by the Religions of India: delivered in the Chapter House, Westminster Abbey, in April, May, and June, 1878* (The Hibbert lectures 1878), London, Longmans, Green / Williams and Norgate, 1878, Lecture No. 2, p. 109.

³ Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, *An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary*, London, Murray, 1920, pp. 401. (Budge’s *neter*, *nether* is *ntr*, *ntr* in the modern Egyptological transliteration system, conventionally pronounced as ‘neter’ and ‘netjer’ respectively — *Editor*.)

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 471. (See also *ibid.*, p. 401, *ḥunu neteri*, ‘divine youth’; *Ḥunu* and *ḥunu neteri* are *Ḥwnw* and *ḥwnw ntry* in modern transliteration — *Editor*.)

⁵ Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, *An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary*, London, Murray, 1920, p. 546. (Budge’s *Dictionary* lists several phrases compounded with the verb *khem*, ‘not to know’, including this one, but does not transliterate them. Budge’s practice is to transliterate each key word and follow it by any phrases in which it occurs without the transliteration, in order to save space. The hieroglyphs are as shown below. In the modern Egyptological transliteration system they read *ḥm-rn.f*. — *Editor*.)



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- 52.** In **English** the Deity is *God*,¹ plural *gods*; feminine *goddess*. It will be discussed separately.
- 53.** The **Eskimos** (it means ‘eaters of raw flesh’): their main habitat is the Arctic coast of America. They speak an agglutinative language. In their language the name of God is *Torngarsuk*. *Torngak* means ‘spirit’ and *suk* means ‘great’, hence ‘the great spirit’.²
- 54.** The **Estonians**: their god is *Jumal*, ‘lord’; *jumalanna* is ‘goddess’.³
- 55.** The **Fijians** (people of the Fiji islands of the South Pacific) name their God *Kalou-Vu* (any superbeing); it originally implies wonder or esteem. (H., vol. 6, p. 14a)
- 56.** The **Fijians** of Rakiraki say God’s name is *Ndengei*. It is a highly honoured god; the term means ‘the creator of mankind’. They say “Ndengei is the true God, and, if Jehovah is also the true God, then Jehovah of the Bible is another name of Ndengei.” So believe the aborigines of the Fiji islands. (H., vol. 6, p. 14b)
- 57.** The **Finns** (of Finland) call their God *Jumala*; *jumalatar* is ‘goddess’; *Jumalainen* denotes heavenly beauty.⁴
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¹ *God* is probably from the Indo-European root *GHEDYŌ* appearing in Sanskrit *hū*, to call upon, to invoke, *Webster’s International Dictionary of the English Language*, London and Springfield, Massachusetts, 1907, pp. xlvii, 636.

² H., vol. 1, p. 257a; vol. 2, p. 682a; vol. 5, p. 394a; vol. 9, p. 178b; Christian Wilhelm Schultz-Lorentzen, *Dictionary of the West Greenland Eskimo Language*, Copenhagen, C. A. Reitzel, 1927; Arthur Thibert, *English-Eskimo, Eskimo-English Dictionary*, revised edition, University of Ottawa, 1958.

³ J. Silvet, *Eesti-Inglise Sonaraamat (Estonian-English Dictionary)*, Toronto, Orto, 1964.

⁴ Aune Tuomikoski, *Englantilais-Suomalainen Sanakirja (English-Finnish Dictionary)*, edited by Aune Tuomikoski and Anna Sloor,

- 58.** In **Formosa** (i.e., Taiwan — *Editor*) the aboriginal people adore their god *Tamagisangak*. His wife is *Tekarpada*. It is said that thunder is heard when she scolds her husband for not sending sufficient rain on earth, which, however, he immediately does on hearing her voice. God is supposed to beautify men. Both (husband and wife) are worshipped by devotees most zealously. (H., vol. 6, p. 84b)
- 59.** The **French** call their God *Dieu*. It means a god or idol; *déesse* is ‘goddess’.¹
- 60.** In the **Gaelic** language of Scotland the name of God is *Dia*, pronounced ‘jia’; the plural is *dee*; *ban-dia* is ‘goddess’.²
- 61.** In Manx, the **Gaelic** language of the Isle of Man, *Jee* is ‘God’, plural *ghyn*; *jallu* means ‘idol’; *ben-jee* is ‘goddess’; *Jee-an* or *Jeeman* is the moon-god.³
- 62.** The **German** name of God is *Gott*; *der Götze* is an idol; *Göttin* is ‘goddess’.⁴

Helsinki, Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1973; Aino Wuolle, *Finnish-English Dictionary*, 3rd ed., Helsinki, W. Söderström, [1947].

¹ Jules Giraud, *Dictionnaire Anglais-Français*, Paris.

² Malcolm MacLennan, D.D., *A Pronouncing and Etymological Dictionary of the Gaelic Language: Gaelic-English, English-Gaelic*, Edinburgh, J. Grant, 1925.

³ John Kelly (Juan y Kelly), *The Manx Dictionary in Two Parts* (Part 1, *Fockleyr Manninagh as Baarlagh* by John Kelly, Part 2, *An English and Manx Dictionary prepared from Dr. Kelly's Triglot Dictionary ... by the Rev. W. Gill ... and the Rev. J. T. Clarke, etc.*), Douglas, [Isle of Man], Manx Society, 1866, pp. 107, 286, 298.

⁴ A. Pinloche, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache*, Paris, Larousse, 1922; Karl Breul, *A New German and English Dictionary*, New York, London, Funk & Wagnalls Company (= *Cassell's New German Dictionary: German-English and English-German*), [1909?].

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- 63.** The **Gold Coast** (West Africa) negro tribes: in their language the name of God is *Bobowissi*. They think He appointed all local gods and has control over all elements and all things. (H., vol. 9, p. 277b, para i (a))
- 64.** The **Greek** name of God is *Theos* (Θεός); *to theion* (τὸ θεῖον) is ‘Providence’, ‘Godhead’; *theothen* (θεόθεν) is ‘by the will or help of the gods’.¹
- 65.** The Quiche Indians of **Guatemala** have a book named *Popol Vuh*. It means ‘the book of bark’ (i.e., written on the bark of a tree). In it, the creation of the world is narrated first. God’s name is *Hurakan*.² It means ‘the one-legged god’. He is not two-legged like man. He is the creator of all. (H., vol. 10, p. 115a)
- 66.** The **Hausa** (Northern Nigeria, Africa) say: “Allah is the name of our God.” But in their language *alloli* is the plural of *illah*, which are the heathen gods.³
- 67.** The **Hawaiians** (of Hawaii in the Pacific Ocean) serve *Akua*. It means ‘chief god’.⁴
- 68.** In **Hebrew**, the language of the Jews (also called Israelites), *Yehowah* or *Yahweh* is God’s name. A comprehensive discussion will follow on it in this book.
- 69.** The **Hindus** are an ancient people of India. In Bengal they call God *Hari*, or Forgiver. In other provinces, they prefer to adore *Rama* (‘the joyful’). The highest name
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¹ S. C. Woodhouse, *English-Greek Dictionary: a Vocabulary of the Attic Language*, 2nd Impression with a Supplement, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1932, p. 365.

² This name is the origin of the English word ‘hurricane’ — *Editor*.

³ Charles Henry Robinson, *Dictionary of the Hausa Language*, 2 vols, Cambridge University Press, 1913–1914.

⁴ Henry P. Judd, *The Hawaiian Language*, Honolulu, Hawaii, Honolulu Star-Bulletin, Ltd., 1939.

according to the scriptures is *Om*. The origin of this word is uncertain. It has been traced to a pronominal base *Aw*, but then it should be *Awm*, not *Om*. However, *Aw* means to protect; hence *Om* means protector or guardian.

- 70.** The **Hungarian** name for God is *Isten*; *istenin* means ‘dear me’; *istennő* is ‘goddess’.¹
- 71.** The **Icelanders** say *Guð*. *Gyðja* is ‘goddess’. *Guðdómur* is ‘deity’.²
- 72.** The **Incas** of Peru³ (South America) called God *Viracocha*. It means ‘dweller in space’. They said He was the supreme creator.
- 73.** The old **Indo-Germanic** nation called their god **Dyēus* (‘Sky’); **deivōs* is ‘heavenly ones’ (i.e., ‘gods’). (H., vol. 2, pp. 33, 35; * indicates reconstructed text)
- 74.** The **Indonesians**, different tribes: one of them, the Moluccans, believe in their God *Upu-lero*, the creator and chief god. (H., vol. 7, p. 248b)
- 75.** The **Irish** name of God is *Dia*. It means ‘heaven’ or ‘one who lives in heaven’. It is related to the Latin word *deus*. The plural is *dée*, or *déite*.⁴

¹ Arthur B. Yolland, *A Dictionary of the Hungarian and English Languages*, Budapest, Franklin-Tarsulat, 1924; L. Országh, *Angol-Magyar Kéziszótár (A Concise Dictionary of the English and Hungarian Languages)*, Budapest, Franklin-Tarsulat, 1950; L. Országh, *Magyar-Angol Szótár (Hungarian-English Dictionary)*, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1953.

² G. J. Zoëga, *Ensk-Íslenzk Orðabók*, Reykjavík, Bókaverzlun Sigurdar Kristjánssonar, 3rd ed. 1932, reprinted 1951. (The letter ð is pronounced ‘th’ as in ‘with’, or ‘that’ — Editor.)

³ H., vol. 1, p. 470a. *Inca* means ‘people of the sun’, H., vol. 9, p. 803b.

⁴ Tomás Bhaldraithe, *English-Irish Dictionary*, Baile Atha Cliath [Dublin], Oifig an tSoláthair, 1959; Patrick S. Dinneen, *A Concise*

76. The **Italian** name for God is *Dio* (heaven); *dia* is 'goddess'.¹
77. The **Japanese** call God *Kami*. It means 'above' or 'heaven'; *Kamigee* is a god-tree. *Kami* denotes also honorific rulers and spirits.²
78. The **Javanese**: some of them believe in the god *danghyang*. It means a supernatural power. (H., vol. 8, p. 346b)
79. The **Kols** (a Dravidian tribe of India) have no priests or idols. They have no idea of heaven, hell or sin, but they acknowledge the existence of God whom they style *Ko*, a realistic title. They erected to His honour a temple which they called *Ko-il* or God's house. *Ko* is the same *Ka Deva* copied by the Aryans. (H., vol. 5, p. 1b, art. 'Dravidians'; vol. 7, p. 755a)
80. The **Koreans**: they have *ha-na-nim* (God), but *sīn* is 'god' and *yō-sīn* is 'goddess'.³
81. **Latin** refers to the people and language of Latium. They say that, until the seventeenth century, this language was practically the universal language of learning and

English-Irish Dictionary for the Use of Schools, Dublin, M. H. Gill & Son Ltd., 1945.

¹ Arthur Enenkel, *A New Dictionary of the English and Italian Language*, revised and corrected by J. McLaughlin, Paris, Garnier Brothers, [1908].

² Sir Ernest Mason Satow, *An English-Japanese Dictionary of the Spoken Language*, 4th ed., Tokyo, Sanseido, 1936; Takenobu Yoshitaro (ed.), *Kenkyusha's New Japanese-English Dictionary*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1942.

³ Hyungki J. Lew (ed.), *New Life Korean-English Dictionary*, Washington D.C., Educational Services, 1952. (Cf. Joan V. Underwood, *Concise English-Korean Dictionary*, Rutland, Vermont, and Tokyo, Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1954, frequently reprinted — Editor.)

diplomacy throughout Western Europe. Many languages developed from it. In this language the name of God is *Deus*. It means 'heaven'; *di* is its plural form, i.e., 'gods'. It has been used frequently in ancient literature. The root of *Deus*, they say, is in Sanskrit *dî*, *div-*, 'to gleam'.¹

- 82.** The **Lingayats**, the people of South India: they believe in one god *Shiva*, a creative and destructive force. (H., vol. 8, p. 69b)
- 83.** The **Lithuanians**, the people of Lithuania: the name of their god is *Dievas*; *dieve* is 'goddess'.²
- 84.** **Madagascar**, an island in the Indian Ocean on the east coast of Africa: people here adore *Zanahary*. It means 'the creator of all things'. They believe in one God. (H., vol. 8, p. 230a)
- 85.** In the **Malay** language God is called *Tuhan*. It means 'master' or 'lord'.³
- 86.** The **Mandeans**, a Parsi sect still extant in Western Persia and Southern Iraq, have their own language,

¹ E. A. Andrews (ed.), *Harper's Latin Dictionary: a new Latin dictionary founded on the translation of Freund's Latin-German Lexicon*, edition revised, enlarged and in great part rewritten by Charlton T. Lewis, and Charles Short, New York, Cincinnati [etc.], American Book Company, [1907]; Sir William Smith, *An English-Latin Dictionary Based upon the Works of Forcellini and Freund with Tables of the Roman Calendar, Measures, Weights, and Money*, 13th ed., London, Murray, 1875.

² Anthony Lalis, *A Dictionary of the Lithuanian and English Languages: Part 1, Lietuviškos ir angliškos kalbų* (Lithuanian-English) and *Part 2, Angliškos ir lietuviškos kalbų* (English-Lithuanian), 3rd revised and enlarged edition, Chicago, Lietuva, 2 vols, 1915.

³ Edward Tregear, *The Maori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary*, Lambton Quay, Wellington, New Zealand, Lyon and Blair, 1891.

religion and sacred literature. They are a branch of the Semitic stock. Their moral code says, "I say unto you, all who give heed to the name of God: in your standing and your sitting, in your going, coming, eating, drinking, resting, lying — in all your doings name and glorify the name of the lofty king of light." Their God is *Alaha* (not Allah). According to al-Mas'udi, these are the Sabians, mentioned in the Quran (2:62). They turn their faces in prayer to the North or to the Pole Star. (H., vol. 8, p. 384a)

- 87.** The **Masai** are a negro tribe of East Equatorial Africa. They believe in a far-reaching divine power emanating from the sky, high above the earth. They pray to Him with real earnestness. His name is *Eñ-ai*. It means: the black benign God of rain who takes a real, though far-off, interest in humanity. (H., vol. 8, p. 481a)
- 88.** The **Melanesians** (of the South Pacific Ocean near Fiji Isles) believe that their life and actions are carried on in the presence and under the influence of *Mana*, a power superior to that of living men. (H., vol. 8, p. 530a)
- 89.** The **Mikirs** (a Tibeto-Burman race of Assam) name their God *Arnarn*, 'divine being, mighty and terrible'. (H., vol. 8, p. 629a)
- 90.** The **Mongols** name their God *Khormosda*. They have in their language *Jarlik* and other names for idols and false gods.¹
- 91.** The **Mordvins** (a Finno-Ugrian race) have two tribes, the Erzä (or Erzya — *Editor*) and the Moksha. Among the Erzä the deity of the sky is called *Vere-pas*; i.e., 'the god who is above'. (H., vol. 8, p. 844a)

¹ Folke Boberg, *Mongolian-English Dictionary*, 3 vols, Stockholm, Forlaget Filadelfia / Copenhagen, Ejnar Munksgaard, 1954–1955.

92. The **Mundas** (a tribe of Northern India) believe in many deities, but at the head of the divine pantheon stands *Singbonga*, the high, identified with the sun or the spirit residing in the sun. It means 'beneficent'. (H., vol. 9, p. 2a)
93. The **Nabataeans** (a people of North Arabia) worshipped *Dushara*. His wife was *Allat*, i.e., the mother of the gods. *Dushara* means 'owner of Sirius'. (H., vol. 9, p. 122a)
94. The **Nagas** of Bundelkhand (India) have a nameless god. (H., vol. 9, p. 124a)
95. The **Natchez** (an American Indian tribe) have *Coyocochill*. It means 'the great spirit', and under Him, they believe, are a multitude of lesser spirits, His servants. (H., vol. 9, p. 190b)
96. The **Norwegians** say *Gud* instead of God; *guder* means 'gods'; *gudinne* and also *gydje* are feminine gender; *den stærke Gud* (Dano-Norwegian — *Editor*) means 'the Lord God of gods'.¹
97. The **Nuba** may be regarded as the negro or negroid aborigines of the Kordofan region of Africa. Their high God is described as otiose, i.e., not having any function. Some of them believe in *Kalo* who created all things and in whose house (the sky) are the sun and the moon. (H., vol. 9, p. 403a)

¹ John Brynildsen, *A Dictionary of the English and Dano-Norwegian Languages*, Copenhagen, Gyldendal, 2 vols, 1902–1907; *Gyldendal's English-Norwegian & Norwegian-English Dictionary*, Oxford, Printed for the Shakespeare Head Press and sold for the Press by Basil Blackwell, 1941 (comprising *Gyldendals Ordbøger: Engelsk-Norsk*, ved B. Berulfsen, Oslo, Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1938 and *Gyldendal's Ordbøger: Norsk-Engelsk*, ved H. Scavenius, Oslo, Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1933). See vol. 1, 1902, p. 403.

- 98.** The **Nyanjas** of Nyasaland (now Malawi): their God is *Mulungu*, which means ‘Supreme Being’, and is the only designation in use. (H., vol. 9, pp. 419–420)
- 99.** The **Odjis** or Ashantis, natives of Ashanti in West Africa, a vigorous and warlike race of negroes, name their supreme deity by the sky, but they say: “He created all things and is giver of all good things. He is omniscient, knowing even the thoughts of men.”¹
- 100.** The **Ossetes**, a people prevailing half-way along the main range of the Caucasus: their God’s name is *Khutsau*, the super divinity, God of gods. He is regarded as too high. They believe Muhammad to be the son of the Sun or *Khori fyrt*. They are not Muslims but Parsis. (H., vol. 9, pp. 573–574)
- 101.** The **Ostyaks** of the Yenisei, or Yeniseians, a people of Siberia, name their God *Ess*. They say: “No one ever saw him, for he lives above the seventh sky.” (H., vol. 9, p. 578b)
- 102.** The **Persian** name of God is *Khudā* (*khudā* means ‘self-existent’); *khudāyān* is the plural. It means ‘owner’; *khudāvand* is a prince or king.²
- 103.** The ancient **Peruvians** called their God *Pachacamac*, the Universal Spirit, *Pacharurac*, the Creator God, or *Pachayachachic*, the ruling or directing god. (H., vol. 9, p. 803b)

¹ F. Max Müller, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by the Religions of India: delivered in the Chapter House, Westminster Abbey, in April, May, and June, 1878* (The Hibbert lectures 1878), London, Longmans, Green / Williams and Norgate, 1878, Lecture No. 2, pp. 108–109.

² F. Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, London, K. Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1930.

- 104.** The **Phoenicians** (an ancient nation of the Lebanon): their God was *Allon*, ‘Tree’, i.e., worthy of worship. (H., vol. 9, p. 890a)
- 105.** The **Plains Indians** of North America believe in *Wakonda* and they say that all experiences of life are directed by *Wakonda*. (H., vol. 10, p. 54a)
- 106.** The **Poles**: in the Polish language God’s name is *Bóg*. It means rich and wealthy or opulent; *bogini* is ‘goddess’; *bożek* or *bostwo* is its plural, i.e., gods.¹
- 107.** The **Polynesians**: in the Pacific Ocean there are many tribes. The common name of God is *Atua*, meaning god or master, but *Atua-kikito* is a demon.²
- 108.** The **Polynesian Samoans** also adore *Etua*.
- 109.** The **Polynesian Tahitians** call Him *Atua*.
- 110.** The **Polynesian Mangrevans** call Him *Etua*.
- 111.** The **Polynesian Tongans** pronounce the word *Otua*.³
- 112.** The **Portuguese** say the name of God is *Deus* (which means ‘heaven’); *deusa* is ‘goddess’.⁴
- 113.** The **Rumanians** (now normally spelled *Romanians* — *Editor*) serve God by the name of *Dumnezeu* (heaven); *zeita* is its feminine form (goddess).⁵

¹ Kazimierz Bulas and Francis J. Whitfield, *The Kosciuszko Foundation Dictionary*, vol. 1, *English-Polish*, The Hague, Mouton, 1959.

² Edward Tregear, *The Maori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary*, Lambton Quay, Wellington, New Zealand, Lyon and Blair, 1891.

³ For references to Polynesians in nos. 108–111, see Tregear in last note.

⁴ Julio Albino Ferreira, *Portuguese-English Dictionary (Dicionário Português-Inglês)*, Boavista, Portugal.

⁵ Marcel Schönkron, *Rumanian-English and English-Rumanian Dictionary*, revised edition, New York, F. Ungar, [1952]. (*Dumnezeu* is derived from Latin *Dominus Deus*, ‘the Lord God’; for Latin *deus* see above under no. 81 — *Editor*.)

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- 114.** The **Russian** name for God is *Bog*. It means ‘rich’ or opulent; *boginya* is ‘goddess’.¹
- 115.** The **Samoyed** tribe of Russia (it means ‘self-eaters’ or ‘alone’ in Russian): the highest God worshipped by the Yurak Samoyed is called *Numkympoi*. It means ‘one who watches man from above’. (H., vol. 11, p. 175a)
- 116.** The **Santals** of India (Bhagalpur Division) worship *Thakur* (lord) and regard him as a good god. They worship him every fifth year with goat sacrifices. (H., vol. 11, pp. 193–194)
- 117.** The **scarab** (dung-beetle) cult of Ancient Egypt: its God was *Khepera* or *Kheperi*. It means ‘self-begetting’, as the scarab beetle, they surmised, begets itself. This name is from the Egyptian hieroglyphic. (H., vol. 11, p. 224b).²
- 118.** The ancient **Scythians** (a nomadic tribe to the north of the Black Sea) revered *Tabiti*. They raised no statues of her. There are so many references in the Bible to them. Some think of them as Gog and Magog. They were worshippers of fire and believed that *Tabiti* was a goddess of fire. (H., vol. 11, p. 277b)
- 119.** The **Seminoles** (a people of the southern portion of the state of Florida, America): they believe in a Supreme Being who lives above the clouds. He is the giver and taker of life. His name is *E-shock-e-tom-e-see*. (H., vol. 11, p. 376b)
- 120.** The **Semites** (an early Arabian race, descendants of Shem, son of Noah): their God was *Ashtoreth* or *Ishtar*.
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¹ Louis Segal, *New Complete Russian-English Dictionary*, London, Lund Humphries, 1942.

² I.e., *Hprrr*, *Hpri*, *Hpry* in modern transliteration, which is rendered as *Khopri* (see R. O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, Oxford, Griffith Institute, 1999, p. 189) — *Editor*.

They believed that she gave date-palms and children, and increase of camels, goats and sheep. (H., vol. 11, p. 382a)

- 121.** The **Shilluk**, on the west bank of the Nile (Egypt). Their high god is *Juok*. "He is formless and invisible and, like the air, is everywhere at once". They believe in their prophet Nyakang. (H., vol. 11, p. 459a)
- 122.** **Shintoism** is the royal religion of Japan. *Kami* is the highest heavenly deity. (H., vol. 11, p. 463a)
- 123.** The **Siberians** (of Russia) name God as *Kutqi* or *Kutq* ('supreme god'). (H., vol. 11, p. 496a)
- 124.** The people of **Siau** island (Indonesia): their highest god is *Duata*. (H., vol. 7, p. 248b, lower)
- 125.** The **Siouans** (American Indians): they hold the idea of a supernatural power *wakonda* or *wakan-tanká*. They address Him as the power that moves. (H., vol. 11, p. 576a)
- 126.** The **Slavonic** languages are used by Russians, Serbs and Bulgarians. The name of God in the Serbo-Croat language is *Bog*. It means 'rich'. *Bog ljubavi* is the god of love; *bog dana* is the god of the day; *bog* is 'idol'; *boginja* is 'goddess'.¹
- 127.** In **Somaliland**² people call God *Abba*, father or protector. (H., vol. 6, pp. 488–489, art. 'Hamites and East Africa')
- 128.** The **Spanish** name of God is *Dios*. It means 'heaven', as also used in Latin.³

¹ Svetomir Ristic and Zivojin Simic, *Englesko-Srpskohrvatski Recnik (An English-Serbo-croatian Dictionary)*, Beograd, Prosveta, 1959.

² In East Africa, roughly corresponding to the state established in 1960 as the United Republic of Somalia — *Editor*.

³ Louis Tolhausen, *Neues Spanisch-Deutsches und Deutsch-Spanisches Wörterbuch (Nuevo Diccionario Español-Alemán)*, Leipzig,

- 129.** The **Sumerian** name of God was *ilu*, whom they served. (H., vol. 12, p. 41a, lower)
- 130.** The **Swahilis** (Africa): in their language the name of God is *Mungu* or *Mola*; *mkana Mungu* is an atheist (godless man); *Mungu* is used to describe anything unaccountable or unexpected.¹
- 131.** In the **Swedish** language, the name of God is *Gud*; *gudinna* is 'goddess'.²
- 132.** The ancient **Syrians** or Aramaeans: their God was *Hadad*. In Hebrew it means 'powerful and mighty'. He was venerated as the greatest and the highest of gods. It also signifies 'the One'.³ Some say He was the god of lightning and thunder. He is beneficent when He sends the rain. (H., vol. 12, p. 165b)
- 133.** One tribe of Tati, Bushmen of Southern Africa (inhabiting a region of what is now Botswana — *Editor*), believe in *Thora*, another in *!Kang* and *//Kaggen*.⁴
- 134.** The **Teutonic** *Guth* is 'god'. The term *god* as used to denote anthropomorphic (representation of the Deity or

B. Tauchnitz, 1897; Edgar Allison Peers *et al.* (eds.), *Cassell's Spanish-English, English-Spanish Dictionary*, London, Cassell, 1970.

¹ Inter-Territorial Language Committee for the East African Dependencies (under the direction of the late Frederick Johnson), *A Standard Swahili-English Dictionary* (founded on Madan's *Swahili-English Dictionary*), London, Oxford University Press, 1939.

² J. E. Wessely, *Wessely's Swedish-English Dictionary*, Philadelphia, D. McKay Co., [1941].

³ W. Gesenius, *Scripturae linguaeque phoeniciae monumenta quotquot supersunt edita et inedita ad autographorum optimorumque exemplorum fidem edidit additisque de scriptura et lingua phoenicum commentariis illustravit Guil. Gesenius*, Leipzig, F. C. G. Vogel, 1837, p. 385.

⁴ H., vol. 12, p. 206b, lower. The *!* and *//* represent two different 'click' sounds in the Bushman and related languages — *Editor*.

of a polytheistic deity under a human form or with human attributes and affections) beings of higher order is found in all the Teutonic languages. (H., vol. 6, p. 302*b*, lower)

- 135.** The **Tibetan** name for God is *Spayan-rasgzigs* (pronounced 'Chenresi' — *Editor*). It means a god who looks on every side, or the lord who looks both at the Buddha and at the creation with compassion. (H., vol. 2, p. 257*a*, footnote)
- 136.** The **Todas** of Nilgiri Hills, India, believe in one who created them and their buffaloes. (H., vol. 12, p. 354*b*)
- 137.** **Tonga** is a group of islands in the Western Pacific, lying to the north of New Zealand. *Tonga* means 'Friendly Islands'. There are three groups of Tongan gods. The great gods are the *Tangaloa* and the *Maui*. The Tangaloa include *Tangaloa 'Eiki*, meaning 'Lord Tangaloa' or 'Tangaloa the Elder'. There are other gods of older origin. (H., vol. 12, 376*b*; circumcision is practised for spiritual purity, H., vol. 3, p. 665*b*, lower)
- 138.** The second group of **Tongan** gods, the *Maui* (pronounced 'mowy'), include *Maui Motu'a*, 'Old Man', or 'Maui the Father'. (H., vol. 12, p. 376*b*)
- 139.** The **Tongans** also say the name of God is '*Alo'alo*'. (H., vol. 12, p. 377*a*, upper)
- 140.** The **Tungus** of Eastern China are pastoralists and farmers. Their chief god is *Havaki* ('living in the sun'). (H., vol. 12, p. 476*a*, upper)
- 141.** The **Turks**, before their conversion to Islam, believed in the highest god *Yulgen*. It means 'sky' or 'one who lives in the seventh sky'. (H., vol. 12, p. 482*a*)

- 142.** Another **Turkish** tribe invoke their god *Tanrı*. It means ‘glorious god’.¹
- 143.** The **Tushes** (now termed ‘Tushians’ — *Editor*) of the Caucasus: their god’s name is *Kati*. He is a celestial god. (H., vol. 12, p. 484a)
- 144.** The people of **Uganda** (Africa) call God *Mukasa*. It means ‘benign’. (H., vol. 6, p. 247a)
- 145.** The **Welsh** people call god *Duw*. *Duwies* is ‘goddess’; *duw* also denotes a false god or idol.²
- 146.** The **Yiddish** language is used by German Jews (hence called Judaeo-German) and written in Hebrew characters. The name for God is *Got* (גאָט), plural *getter* (געטער); *gothayt* (גאָטהייט) is for ‘godhead’, ‘deity’.³
- 147.** The **Yoruba** are a Negro tribe of the African slave coast, between Dahomey and the lower Niger.⁴ They are

¹ H. C. Hony, *A Turkish-English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1957.

² H. Meurig Evans, *Y Geiriadur Mawr: the Complete Welsh-English, English-Welsh Dictionary*, 5th ed., Llandysul, Gwasg Gomer, 1971; Rev. D. Silvan Evans, *Welsh-English Dictionary*, London; Daniel Silvan Evans, *An English and Welsh Dictionary, adapted to the present state of science and literature; in which the English words are deduced from their originals, and explained by their synonyms in the Welsh language*, 2 vols, Denbigh, Thomas Gee / London, Simpkin and Marshall, 1852–1858, vol. 1, pp. 826–827.

³ Alexander Harkavy, *Yidish-English-Hebreisher Verterbuch (Yiddish-English-Hebrew Dictionary)*, 2nd edition, New York, Hebrew Pub. Co., 1928.

⁴ F. Max Müller, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by the Religions of India: delivered in the Chapter House, Westminster Abbey, in April, May, and June, 1878* (The Hibbert lectures 1878), London, Longmans, Green / Williams and Norgate, 1878, Lecture No. 2, p. 109.

mostly pagan, yet they believe in their god *Olorun*, i.e., the Lord of Heaven.

- 148.** The **Zoroastrians** are originally natives of Iran. They believe that many prophets were raised in their country, the most famous among them being Zoroaster. Their sacred languages are Zendi and Pahlavi. In the *Zend Avesta* the highest name of God is *Ahura Mazda* or *Ormuzd*. It means 'the light'. (H., vol. 12, p. 864*b*)
- 149.** The **Zulus**, natives of Natal (South Africa), are one of the great Bantu tribes. They are mostly Christians. They are the tallest people in the world, intelligent and strong. In their language the name of God is *Unkulunkulu*. It means an 'old, old one'. (H., vol. 2, p. 364*a*, upper)
- 150. – 155.** There are some tribes who believe in a nameless god, like Australian *Mungan-ngaur*, Pawnee *Ti-ra-wa*, Huichol *Tatevali*, Bahnar *Bōk Glaih*, Guiana *Wacinaci*, Ifilici *Wacinaci*. All these names mean 'our father', 'father-spirit', 'grandfather'. (H., vol. 9, p. 178*b*, upper, art. 'Nameless Gods')

3. A review of Divine names

From a study of the concept of God prevalent in different nations of the world it can be realised that, since the dawn of creation, man has ever dedicated his sublime aspiration to the ideal of a Supreme Being. Every religion, as borne out by its teachings, points to this natural truth in coherence. It is, therefore, evident that the conception of a Supreme Being lies deep in the core of the human heart. Every nation on this earth has its own name of God, even if it is deemed the lowest of the low in the scale of civilization. It is strange to see:

*Ethiop gods have Ethiop lips
Bronze cheeks and woolly hair;
The Grecian gods are like the Greeks
As keen-eyed, old and fair.*

But along with this they have a noble and sublime conception of the true deity. For example, the Quran speaks of an Ethiopian Prophet, Luqman, whose teachings are quoted as specially laying stress that there were:

*Ethiop lips with such sweetness in their honeyed deeps
As fills the rose in which a fairy sleeps.*

With the exception of one or two, almost all the 155 names of the chief deity are the best names or aspects of the Divine Being. Every nation, in its own language, has an exalted name for its chief God, but it has its number and gender, and is derived from some root.

It is true that most of the nations believe in many gods or sons of gods, but it is also true that these gods are under the supremacy of one Supreme Being.

An analysis of the 155 names of God will show that:

1. In more than forty languages, the name given to the Supreme Being is *Heaven* or equivalent to it.
2. Almost 26 languages have 'God'.
3. Eighteen nations call Him *Master*.
4. In fifteen languages He is called *The Light, Emphyreal, Celestial Being* or, analogous to it, the *Sun*.
5. Fourteen nations invoke Him as their Creator.
6. Six of the nations consider Him *Benign* or *Compassionate*.
7. He is called *Glorious* in five languages.
8. Almost five tribes say He is *Omniscient*.
9. Four declare Him *Father* of all.
10. He is *Spirit* or *High Spirit* or, analogous to it, *Soul* or *Mind*, for seven tribes.
11. Three assert He is *Almighty, All-Powerful*.
12. For some He is *Omnipresent, Eternal, Sustainer*, and others adore a nameless God — *Ka Deva* among Hindus, *Khem-ren-f* of the people of the Pharaoh and *Ko* of the Koils of Bundelkhand. All these words mean 'Who?' Strangely enough, *Yehowah* (of the Jews and Christians) is also a *Ka Deva* for it means, 'I am that I am'.

Our Heavenly Father

At a religious meeting held in Boston a Christian minister quoted some passages from the Gospels and laid the claim that these could not be matched in the sacred Books of any other religion. At this, Ralph Waldo Emerson rose and said: "The

gentleman's remark only proves how narrowly he has read." ¹ There is not a single aspect of God believed in by the so-called highly civilized nations that is not believed in and adored by the savages and negro tribes. Forty nations believe that God is in heaven and call Him 'Our Heavenly Father'.

The word *heaven* is *heuen* (i.e., *heven*) in Mediaeval English; *heofon* in Anglo-Saxon; *heban* in Old Saxon; Low German *heben* (i.e., *heven*); and is of uncertain origin. It means the expanse of space surrounding the earth, especially that which seems to be over the earth like a great arched dome; the firmament empyrian, the place where the sun, moon and stars appear; the reign of the clouds and winds and flying birds; now chiefly in the plural. ²

In early cosmography the space around the earth was divided into a series of heavens (varying in number from seven to eleven). The belief in the plurality of heavens, usually regarded as the abode of deities or spirits, prevailed among many ancient peoples, and is widespread in apocalyptic and rabbinic literature: the dwelling-place of the Deity; the celestial abode of bliss; the place of the blessed dead. That it is the dwelling-place of God is substantiated by the Old and New Testaments: ³

1. "Then the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain ..." (Exodus, 19:20)
2. "... the Lord is God in heaven above..." (Deut., 4:39)

¹ Robert O. Ballou, (ed.), *The Bible of the World*, in collaboration with Friedrich Spiegelberg and with the assistance and advice of Horace L. Friess, New York, The Viking Press, 1939, p. xvi.

² Noah Webster, *Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language*, 2nd ed., Springfield, Mass., G. & C. Merriam Co. / London, G. Bell, 1934.

³ Alexander Cruden, *Cruden's Complete Concordance to the Old and New Testaments*, art. 'Heaven'.

3. God's dwelling-place is in heaven (1 Kings, 8:30, 32, 34, 36, 39).
4. "O Lord, God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven?" (2 Chronicles, 20:6)
5. "... the Lord's throne is in heaven ..." (Psalms, 11:4)
6. "... but there is a God in heaven ..." (Daniel, 2:28)
7. "... that they may ... glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew, 5:16)
8. "... that you may be sons of your Father in heaven ..." (*Ibid.*, 5:45)
9. "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect." (*Ibid.*, 5:48)
10. "In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven..." (*Ibid.*, 6:9)
11. "Thick clouds cover Him, so that He cannot see, and He walks above the circle of heaven." (Job, 22:14)
12. "For God is in heaven, and you on earth; therefore let your words be few." (Ecclesiastes, 5:2)
13. "Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven." (Matthew, 23:9)
14. "No one has ascended to heaven but he who came down from heaven, the Son of man." (John, 3:13)

According to the Old and the New Testaments, God is in heaven. Compare this with the Chinese sacred books of old. The Chinese sacred books are characteristically ideographic, where God is depicted as the great one who is above or in heaven. In these books, no distinction is made between God and heaven¹ (Shu Ching, 2.1.3, 4.2.2, 4.3.2, 3, 4.4.2, 4.4.4,

¹ James Legge (trans.), *The Sacred Books of China: the texts of Confucianism, Part I, The Shû King, the religious portions of the Shih King, the Hsiâo King* (F. Max Müller (ed.), *The Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 3), Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1879, pp. xxii-xxv, 476. (Wade-Giles transliterations have been adopted in the text above in

4.5.2.1, 4.5.3.1, 5.1.1–3, 5.7.3, 5.8.5, 5.9.1; Hsiao Ching, 9)¹:

1. The seat of Ti² (God) is in heaven (I Ching, Appendix 1, 10:3).³
2. The kings appointed by Ti (God) are correlates of God (Shu Ching, 5.27.6; Shih Ching, Sacrificial Odes of Chou, 1.7, Major Odes, 1.1; Hsiao Ching, 9).⁴
3. Heaven employs T'ang to punish the wicked Chieh, a terrible king⁵ (Shu Ching, 4.1, 4.2.2, 4.3.2, 5.1.2, 5.14.2).⁶
4. A virtuous king is the fellow of God (heaven) (Shu Ching, 4.5.3.1).⁷

preference to the Chinese transliteration system used in *The Sacred Books of the East*. Subsequent references to these volumes will be the abbreviated according to the format 'SBE, vol. n' after their first occurrence — *Editor*.)

¹ SBE, vol. 3, pp. 39, 86–87, 89–91, 93, 95, 98–99, 125–130, 159–161, 166, 476–477.

² 'Ti' in the Chinese transliteration system of *The Sacred Books of the East* — *Editor*.

³ James Legge (trans.), *The Sacred Books of China: the texts of Confucianism, Part 2, The Yi King* (F. Max Müller (ed.), *The Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 16), Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1882, pp. 222–223. ('I Ching' is 'Yi King' in the Chinese transliteration system of *The Sacred Books of the East* — *Editor*.)

⁴ James Legge (trans.), *The Sacred Books of China: the texts of Confucianism, Part 1, The Shû King, the religious portions of the Shih King, the Hsiâo King* (F. Max Müller (ed.), *The Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 3), Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1879, pp. 264, 317, 379, 476–478.

⁵ SBE., vol. 3, p. 84.

⁶ SBE, vol. 3, pp. 85–87, 89–90, 127–128, 197. ('T'ang' and 'Chieh' are 'Thang' and 'Kieh' in the Chinese transliteration system of *The Sacred Books of the East*; Chieh was king of Hsia — *Editor*.)

⁷ SBE, vol. 3, p. 99.

5. Heaven curses the wicked king (Shu Ching, 5. 1.3).¹
6. The king is the great son and vicegerent of heaven (Shu Ching, 5.12.2).²
7. King Wên (the righteous king) ascends into heaven on the left and right of God (Shih Ching, Major Odes, 1.1).³
8. Heaven speaks to king Wên (the righteous king) (Shih Ching, Major Odes, 1.7).⁴
9. Sacrifices are offered by kings to heaven (Shu Ching, 2.1.3, 5.1.1).⁵
10. The spiritual sovereign is in the high heavens (Shu Ching, 4.3.2).⁶
11. A commandment is given to worship God who dwells in the great Heaven (Li Chi, 4.2.3.8).⁷
12. Summer sacrifices for rain are made to heaven (*ibid.*, 4.2.2.8).⁸

The Chinese say that it is not lawful to use the name Shang-ti lightly; therefore, they name Him by His residence, i.e., heaven. In brief, the heaven, the heaven of heavens, or the

¹ *SBE*, vol. 3, p. 130.

² *SBE*, vol. 3, p. 184.

³ *SBE*, vol. 3, pp. 377–378. (‘Wên’ is ‘Wän’ in the Chinese transliteration system of *The Sacred Books of the East — Editor.*)

⁴ *SBE*, vol. 3, p. 391–392.

⁵ *SBE*, vol. 3, p. 39.

⁶ *SBE*, vol. 3, p. 90.

⁷ James Legge (trans.), *The Sacred Books of China: the texts of Confucianism, Part 3, The Li Kí, 1–10* (F. Max Müller (ed.), *The Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 27), Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1879, pp. 277–278. (‘Li Chi’ is ‘Lî Kî’ in the Chinese transliteration system of *The Sacred Books of the East — Editor.*)

⁸ *SBE*, vol. 27, pp. 273–274.

highest heaven is the abode of God and the most exalted spirits; it is a place of supreme bliss. More than two score nations of the world, including Jews, Christians, Chinese, Abyssinians (Ethiopians), negroes of Africa, barbarians of Siberia, the Buryat of Mongolia, peoples of Greece, France, Spain, Old Germany, Ireland and the Aryans, all believe that God is heaven or that He dwells in heaven.

In the Old and even in the New Testaments, heaven is also stated to be the abode of the redeemed after death and the second resurrection. It is sometimes used for air, as 'birds and fowls of heaven', and for the sky, wherein the sun, moon and stars are placed. In Hebrew it is *shamayim* (Arabic *samā*'). In the Greek Bible it is *ouranos*.

The Hindus speak of God as *Dyaus pitar*, 'our Father Heaven', and of their revealed books as *Akash Bani*.

It is now clear that 'heaven' is not a personal or proper name of the Divine Being; it only designates One who is above. But the Muslim is told in the Quran:

"And when My servants ask thee concerning Me, surely I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me, so they should hear My call and believe in Me, that they may walk in the right way."
(2:186)

"Surely my Lord is Nigh, Answering." (11:61)

"And We are nearer to him than his life-vein." (50:16)

The Name 'God'

After 'heaven', another important name of the Divine Being is 'God.' The word *god* is common in Old English, Old Frisian, Old Saxon, and Dutch. In Old High German and Middle High German it is *Got*, in modern German *Gott*, in Gothic *Guth*, in Old Norse *Godh* and *Guth*. The Teutonic term *god*, used to

denote anthropomorphic¹ beings of a higher order, is found in all the Teutonic languages but in no other branch of the Indo-Germanic family of languages. After the conversion of the Teutons to Christianity, the word came to imply also the Christian deity. During the heathen period, it was neuter in gender; in Christian times it took the masculine form. Its etymology and original meaning are obscure and have been much debated; but as Norse *Godh* signified 'image of a deity' and as the word is philologically connected with German *Götze* (idol), its original meaning was perhaps 'image' (figure). The higher being was believed to be present in the image, and so the term was transferred from the latter to the former. In all the European languages the word *god* is used for false gods and demigods: Zeus (Jupiter), the Father of the Gods; Ares², the god of war; Apollo, the god of prophecy; Aphrodite the goddess of love; Dionysus, the god of wine; Tyche, the god of chance or luck; Pan, the shepherds' god; Nike, goddess of victory (Victoria); the Moirai, goddesses of destiny.

The term god is defined in the following different forms.

1. A being possessing more attributes and powers than human beings, especially a superhuman person conceived as dominating Nature or some province of Nature, and to whom worship is due and acceptable; a deity, especially a male deity (or goddess). Not all gods, even of the higher orders, are thought of by their believers as objects of worship, but among the beings worshipped by pagans and savages, ordinarily only those of the higher order are called gods, those of the

¹ Referring to the representation of the Deity or of a polytheistic deity under a human form or with human attributes and affections.

² Not to be confused with the Zodiac sign Aries (the Ram); Ares was identified with the planet Mars — *Editor*.

- lower order being termed demigods, demons, godlings, heroes, etc.
2. Any object (whether artificial, as a carved idol or image, or natural, as a meteor, an animal, or a tree) which is thought to be the seat of divine powers, the expression of a divine personality, or itself of supernatural or divine agency: "... he makes a god and worships it ..." (Isaiah, 44:15)
 3. The Supreme Being; the eternal and infinite; spirit; creator and sovereign of the universe; Jehovah: "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John, 4:24)
 4. The ruler and sovereign embodiment of some aspect, attribute, or department of reality — as the god of love, of Nature. Also a supreme being conceived as the dominant or ultimate principle of the universe or as a world soul — as the pantheistic god.
 5. A person or a thing deified and honoured as a god: "... whose god is their belly ..." (Philippians, 3:19)
 6. One who wields great or despotic power.
 7. One of the occupants of the gallery of a theatre: "One young god between the acts favoured the public with a song."¹

God according to the usage of the Bible

1. 'God' referring to man: "...and you [Moses] shall be to him [Aaron] as God ..." (Hebrew *we-attah tihyeh-llo lelohim*). (Exodus, 4:16)
2. "And the Lord said to Moses, 'See, I have made you as God to Pharaoh ...' " (*wayyomer y(e)h(o)w(a)h el-mosheh re'eh nethattikha elohim le-phar'oh*). (*Ibid.*, 7:1)

¹ W. M. Thackeray, *Satan, God of this World*.

3. ‘God’ for an idol: “... and [Israel] made Baal-Berith their god.” (Judges, 8:33)
4. ‘God’ referring to Satan: “whose minds the god of this age [Satan] has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.” (2 Corinthians, 4:4)
5. Gods of other nations declared ‘foreign’ gods (King James Version uses ‘strange’ gods): “there was no foreign god with him” (Deut., 32:12); “There shall be no foreign god among you; nor shall you worship any foreign god” (Psalms, 81:9); “with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge” (Dan., 11:39).
6. “Truly your God is God of gods ...” (Daniel, 2:47).
7. “There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods.” (*Ibid.*, 5:11; King James Version)
8. “... light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him ...” (*Ibid.*, 5:11).
9. “... but why did you [Jacob] steal my gods?” (Genesis, 31:30)

In brief, ‘God’ is not a personal name of the Divine Being. Originally, it is neuter in gender, it signifies idol, image, figure, Satan (god of this world), honoured person, bestial gods and false objects of worship. The Jews argued with Jesus that “ ‘... you, being a man, make yourself God.’ Jesus answered them, ‘Is it not written in your law, “I said, you are gods”? If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and Scripture cannot be broken) ...’ ” (John, 10:33–35).

God’s name, ‘Light’

To the ancient mind, light was a holy thing and the scriptures associated it with God. In the Vedas, Dyaus-pitar (‘Celestial Father’), Suryah (sun), Agni (fire) are considered gods and worshipped as gods. Agni was the god of the earth and Suryah

the god of heaven; again, Agni was the god of Brahmans, Indra the god of Kshatriyas and Vishve Deva the god of Vaishyas. It says in the Bible: "... who cover Yourself with light as with a garment" (Psalms, 104:2); "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John, 1:5); "Lord, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us" (Psalms 4:6); "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." (John, 1:4-5)

'Light' in the Hebrew is *esh* and *or*. Originally it meant 'fire'. No material phenomenon seemed to primitive man to be so plainly divine as fire. Hence in the Zoroastrian Scriptures it is stated as an object of worship. In the Bible it says:

"And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night ..."¹

There was a flaming sword at the gate of Paradise.² Fire is often used as a symbol of god: "For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God."³ And it is said that Jesus will appear in the midst of fire, at his second coming.⁴ The word of God is also compared to fire.⁵ "The fire of God fell from heaven ..."⁶ Yahweh is a devouring fire against those who provoke him.⁷ He is a cheering light to those who obey Him.¹

¹ Exodus, 13:21. Cf. also *ibid.*, 40:38; Numbers, 9:15, 10:34, 14:14; Deuteronomy, 1:33; Nehemiah, 9:12, 19; Psalms, 78:14, 99:7, 105:39; Isaiah, 4:5; 1 Corinthians, 10:1.

² Genesis, 3:24.

³ Deuteronomy, 4:24.

⁴ 2 Thessalonians, 1:7-8. Cf. also Malachi, 3:2, 4:1; Matthew, 3:10-12; Hebrews, 10:27; 2 Peter, 3:7; Revelation, 21:8.

⁵ Jeremiah, 23:29.

⁶ Job, 1:16.

⁷ Deuteronomy, 4:24. Cf. also 2 Kings, 1:9-12; Isaiah, 30:27; Hebrews, 12:29, "for our God is a consuming fire."

These two aspects of God's nature are combined in Isaiah, 10:17: "So the Light of Israel will be for a fire, and his Holy One a flame". Isaiah 33:14 states: "Who among us can dwell with the devouring fire", the 'devouring fire' being 'the avenging god'. Compare it with Exodus, 3:2: God was in a bush which burned "but the bush was not consumed", divine fire being necessarily eternal.

According to the Old Testament, fire, however, was not merely a destroying agent. In the hand of a refiner it separated the pure metal from the dross — a type of God's purifying judgement; but the effect was not produced: "Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction" (Isaiah, 48:10).

And what is light ?

Those things which now seem frivolous and slight will be of serious consequence to you when they will have once made you ridiculous. Almost all the religious Scriptures say: "God is light", but what is light? It is the essential condition of vision; the opposite of darkness. It is written in the Bible: "Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light" (Genesis, 1:3). In Hebrew this passage runs thus: *wa-yomer elohim yehi or wa-yehi-or*.

The word equivalent to 'light' is *or*, which originally means 'fire'. We know fire as an object of perception: flames give light, we see the sun's light. It is that form of energy which by its action upon the organs of vision enables them to perform their function of sight. According to the undulatory or wave theory of light accepted today, light is transmitted from luminous bodies to the eye. The velocity of its transmission is about 186,300 miles a second. Before creating this light, "darkness was on the face of the deep" (Genesis, 1:2). He "called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night" (*ibid.*,

¹ Psalms, 4:6, 27:1; Isaiah, 2:5.

1:5). It is not stated here that prior to the light darkness was created.

At first glance it appears that light is all colour and there are scores of light colours, a large number of light characters, and numerous movements and effects. In the Quran, Allah has been stated to be the Creator of darkness and light, while some religions suggest there are two gods, one the creator of light and the other the creator of darkness.

Darkness is the absence of natural light, as black is the absence of colour, but it is visible by the light; so we make darkness visible by any small light, as, when we light a match in a cellar, it merely makes darkness visible. On the one hand, it is said that God is light; on the other, God is stated to live in thick darkness.¹

Christopher Morley writes:

“Of all the gifts to earth, the first and greatest was darkness. Darkness preceded light, you will remember in Genesis. Perhaps that is why darkness seems to man natural and universal. It requires no explanation and no cause. We postulate. Whereas light, being to our minds merely the cleansing vibration that dispels the black, requires some origin, some lamp whence to shine. From the appalling torch of the sun down to the pale belly of the glow-worm we deem light a derivative miracle, proceeding from some conceivable source. We conceive darkness without thought of light; but we cannot conceive light without darkness. City streets at night are the most fascinating work of man. Like all handouts of Nature, man has taken darkness and made it agreeable, trimmed and refined and made it acceptable for the very nicest people, poring over the

¹ Exodus, 20:21. Cf. Deuteronomy, 5:22; Psalms, 18:11, 97:2; 1 Kings, 8:12; 2 Chronicles, 6:1.

glowing shelves of shop windows and rejoicing in the rich patterns of light wherewith man has made night lovely. So they are bereft of reason who think that darkness is created by evil. They hold a candle to the devil, like the old woman who lit one candle to St. Michael and another to the devil, so that whether she went to Heaven or Hell she would have a friend.

“Light that makes some things visible makes some other things invisible; we never see by day the worlds of light shown by darkness. It is more productive of sublime ideas than light. Someone has said, ‘Come, blessed darkness, come and bring thy balm, for eyes grown weary of garish day. Come with thy soft, slow, steps, thy garments gray. The veiling shadows, bring in thy palm. The poppy seeds of slumber deep and calm.’ ”¹

Light, according to the Quran, is of two kinds, physical and spiritual. The first creation of God, in the works of the days, was the light of the senses; the last was the light of reason, which is the most noble part of His work. Hence His word is a light to the path of the faithful. The following verses of the Quran are notable. Light manifests hidden things; therefore it has been said in 24:35:

“Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth”

because He has manifested them and brought them into existence. Islam is repeatedly spoken of as Divine Light:

“They desire to put out the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will allow nothing but the perfection of His light.” (The Quran, 9:32, 61:8)

¹ The American author Christopher Morley wrote many books and essays. It has not been possible to trace the source of this quotation — *Editor*.

“O people of the Book, indeed Our Messenger has come to you, making clear to you much of what you concealed of the Book and passing over much. Indeed there has come to you, from Allah, a light and a clear Book.” (*Ibid.*, 5:15)

Two things are here spoken of as having come from Allah: a Light and a Clear Book. The light is the Prophet, and the Book, the Quran. The Prophet is the greatest spiritual light that ever dawned upon the earth; hence he is called a light-giving sun:

“O Prophet, surely We have sent you as a witness, and a bearer of good news and a warner, and as one inviting to Allah by His permission and as a light-giving sun.” (The Quran, 33:45–46)

Unity of the Divine Being

The unity of the Divine Being is the point on which Islam has laid the greatest emphasis. Unification is the true basis of human civilisation, the civilisation not of one nation of the world or of one country, but of humanity as a whole. There is only one God. The world shows endless diversity, variety and multiplicity; creation is manifold but the Creator is one. It is an accepted assumption of the scientists that we live in a *universe* and not in a *multiverse*. The cooperation of the entire universe is involved in the growth of a single blade of grass. This concept of the unity of existence of the Divine Being, according to the Quran, is corroborated by every prophet of the world. And this doctrine was the original basis of all religions. In the Old Testament a special name and scores of attributive names of the Supreme Being have been given. But the Jewish conception of God is called henotheism, which means “Our God is One”:

“You shall have no other gods before Me”;¹

¹ Exodus, 20:3. Cf. Deuteronomy, 5:7.

“do not go after other gods to serve and worship them”.¹

Pondering over all such verses of the Old Testament, scholars have come to the conclusion that these verses do not negate the existence of another god; rather, they contain an admission of the fact that there are other gods for other nations. They looked upon and held the Most High God to be their Father, and themselves they considered His sons. This conception gave rise to another perverted principle that the son is the image of the father, hence the Israelites asserted that they were God’s firstborn, and that their image is on the palms of His hand (Isaiah, 49:16). The Hindus believe themselves to be *Ishvar-putraha*:² *Aryasya aptam iti arya*, “Aryans are the sons of God”. Islam has done a great good to the world by eradicating the faulty and wrong conception of henotheism and giving, instead, the most perfect monotheistic conception of Divine unity: there is no other God save the One True God, the Creator of the universe, the Sustainer and Lord of all the nations of the world.

The term ‘Trinity’

The unity of God is the common basis of all revealed religions. This has been rejected by the later builders of Christianity, but this belief shall, in the long last, prove to be the edifice of religion. Having proved the unity of Godhead, it is useless and futile to enter upon a discussion on the doctrine of Trinity. Trinity, or rather the Holy Trinity of the Christians, is only an intellectual deception and fraud. It is contended that the triad of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost can be deduced, though not severally, from the collective evidence of Matthew (3:11, 16–17, 11:27, 16:16), John (20:28), the Acts (5:3–4) and the Epistles of the Apostles. There is, however, no

¹ Jeremiah, 25:6. Cf. *ibid.*, 35:15; Deuteronomy, 6:14.

² I.e., ‘sons of the Lord’.

saying of Jesus which can be adduced in proof of the Trinity of God.

It is in Hastings' *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*:

'The term 'Trinity' (from Lat. *trinitas*) appears to have been first used by Tertullian, while the corresponding Greek term 'Triad' (*τριάς*) appears to have been first used by Theophilus the Christian apologist, an older contemporary of Tertullian. In Tertullian, as in the subsequent usage, the term designates the Christian doctrine of God as Father, Son, and Spirit.

... In Indian religion, *e.g.*, we meet with the trinitarian group of Brahmā, Śiva, and Viṣṇu, and in Egyptian religion with the trinitarian group of Osiris, Isis, and Horus, constituting a divine family, like the Father, Mother, and Son in mediaeval Christian pictures ...

... As Augustine said, if in the books of the Platonists it was to be found that 'in the beginning was the Word,' it was not found there that 'the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.' ...

... The *Old Testament* could hardly be expected to furnish the doctrine of the Trinity, if belief in the Trinity is grounded ... upon belief in the incarnation of God in Christ and upon the experience of spiritual redemption and renewal through Christ ...

... In the *New Testament*, we do not find the doctrine of the Trinity in anything like its developed form, not even in the Pauline and Johannine theology ... If the passage [2 Corinthians, 13:14 — *Editor*] contains no formulated expression of the Trinity, it is yet of great significance as showing that, less than thirty years after the death of Christ, His name and the name of the Holy

Spirit could be employed in conjunction with the name of God Himself.’¹

And it is written in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*:

‘The Christian doctrine of the Trinity can be best expressed in the words “The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, and yet they are not three Gods but one God ... for like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by himself (*singillatim*) to be God and Lord, so we are forbidden by the Catholic religion to say that there be three Gods or three Lords” (*Quicumque vult*).

... “The Creed”— it has been suggested (see *Hibbert Journal*, xxiv. No. 1)—“means that there is only one being that can, with strict theological correctness, be called ‘God’, viz., the Trinity as a whole; but each of the three persons can be called ‘God’ in a looser sense.” This suggestion is offered as a short method of “rendering consistent” the statements of the Creed. But the paradox is not thus lightly to be got rid of. Plainly the Church did not regard itself as lowering the conception of the Father, so that He should become merely one Component of a Divine Whole. “The Father,” says St. Thomas Aquinas, “is as great as the whole Trinity,” and explains that in such matters “greatness signifies perfection of nature and pertains to essence” (*Summa Theol.* i., xxx. I, xlii. 4).

... This conception of the Trinity is systematically developed by theologians, Greek, Latin and Protestant. “The whole perfection of the Divine nature is in each of the persons. The essence and dignity of the Father

¹ Hastings, vol. 12, p. 458.

and the Son is the same, but is in the Father according to the relation of Giver, in the Son according to the relation of Receiver” (*S.T.* i., xlii. 4). Writers in the 4th and 5th centuries had compared the relation of the Father to the Son with the relation of the “flame to its light,” of the “spring to the stream,” of the “seal to its impress.” “Think,” says St. Augustine (*Sermo ad Catechumenos*, sec. 8) “of fire as a father, light as a son. See: we have found coevals: and it is easy to see which begets which.” The meaning of these comparisons is plain. They teach that the whole Divine nature or essence is in each of the Three Persons ...

Thus, side by side with language declaring that the Father and Son are each in the full sense God, there is other language—not *intended* to be inconsistent with the former—which implies that the Son is “necessary to the completeness of the Godhead.” The Son, we are told, is not “external” to the Father (Athan., *Discourse I.*, ch. v.) does not “accrue” to the Father from without, but is “of the Substance of the Father.” If the Son, it is argued, were not eternal, the Father would not always be Father, and this absence of fatherhood, it is implied, would be a defect ...’¹

The Christians, however, believe all the three persons of the Trinity to be everlasting and eternal, holy and true God, omnipresent and omnipotent, having knowledge of the unseen, purifying and possessing power to forgive sins.

It is unfortunate that the unity of Godhead is examined and discussed with reference to arithmetical numbers. Divine unity, from the viewpoint of Islam and philosophers, does not mean one unit of God, but Trinity surely denotes three units of

¹ *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Fourteenth Edition, 1932, vol. 22, pp. 479–480, art. ‘Trinity’.

God (just parallel to the United Kingdom or the United States of America). It is true the oneness of the Divine Being has nothing to do with arithmetical numbers. The Quran has defined the unity of Godhead as *huwa Allāhu aḥad*, i.e., in all His attributes and actions, the Most High God is without a partner or associate. There is no other being to share His attributes, and to perform deeds like unto Him.

In mathematics, which is an exact and precise science, one is used neither for more nor for less than one. In mathematics, 1 can never be equal to $1+1+1$ nor equal to $\frac{1}{3}$ and three or more can never be equal to one. Excepting one, all numbers are different names for the additions of one. The number three is in reality one added to itself three times and nothing else. It is the lowest of the cardinal numbers, the number of a single thing without any more, and to which the addition of another makes two.

The relation between one and three is that of addition and subtraction, but the Divine Being is above and beyond addition and subtraction. The trinitarians, therefore, notwithstanding their reposing faith in the *three personalities*, believe them to be equal and alike in their attributes. Just as three and one are not alike mathematically, in the same way the three personalities cannot be equal and without difference in respect of attributes and actions. If the Father is equal and alike to the Son in all respects, it will be wrong and incorrect to call one Father, and the other Son. The Father creates and the Son is created, and the Holy Ghost is the product of both.

The First Person, i.e., the Father, is the Creator and the Destroyer; the Second Person, i.e., the Son, is the Deliverer and the Liberator, and the Third Person, the Holy Ghost, is the Restorer of life. Every Person, it is thus evidently clear, has special attributes of his own which are not to be found in the others. And it is on account of these particular attributes that there is an order of priority among the three persons; first

comes God the Father, then God the Son, and last of all God the Holy Ghost. Their rank is also determined in the same order; and to utter their names in a different order is considered to be a great heresy. Nobody can say that the Holy Ghost is the First Person, the Father the Second, the Son the Third, or “in the name of the Holy Ghost, the Son and the Father”. If the three Persons composing the Divine Being are equal and alike in all respects, why should there be a particular order of superiority in uttering their names?

The Second Person is the Word of the First Person. He incarnates and dies upon the cursed cross in order to fulfil the justice of the Father; and the resurrection is finally perfected by the Third Person. It is an admitted truth that God is present everywhere. Is it, then, possible that all the three Persons are present in all places at the same time? Where one will be, the others will not be.

Again, are all the three united and combined in the execution of every deed that is done on this earth? Or, is the creation of each separate and distinct? Both these conditions are logically wrong and absurd. If all the three perform it unitedly, then imperfect is their power which is made perfect and faultless with mutual help and cooperation. And if their creation is separate and distinct, then equality and likeness is impossible among them; and all the three cannot, therefore, be compounded into one.

God, according to the doctrine of the Trinity, is an amalgam of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. What was He (God) before these three united to form this amalgam?

The meaning of the statement “I and the Father are one” will be that the Son is similar to and like his Father in all respects, as like as two peas; but Father is the cause and Son the effect, and the cause and the effect, according to the statement, are one. This is an absurdity; cause and effect cannot be one.

If Father and Son are one and the same, can we say that the Father was born of the Son?

The Holy Ghost came into being with the union of the Father and the Son. If they had not united, the Holy Ghost would not have come into existence, and if the emergence of the Holy Ghost was possible without their union, then the union which is said to have caused the existence of the Holy Ghost becomes useless and futile.

It is evident that the Father had not depended for His existence on the Son, but the Son did rely in His manifestation on the Father. The needy and the dependent cannot be self-existent; therefore, the Son was not God.

The Son is an amalgamation of humanity and godhead, but God the Father never was and never would be an amalgamation of such anti-beings; hence Father and Son are not alike and species of one godhead.

The only reference in support of the Trinity is the First Epistle of John. It runs thus: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." (1 John, 5:7–8; King James Version)

In these two verses the text "*in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth*" is an addition made after the fifteenth century. In the Greek version there is a footnote on it, which Luther omitted from his German edition.¹

¹ In the New King James Version there is a footnote on these verses saying that the Alexandrian type of texts (NU-text) and the Majority text (M-text) "omit the words from *in heaven* (verse 7) through *on earth* (verse 8). Only four or five very late manuscripts contain these words in Greek." — *Editor*.

Now, to revert to our main theme: with the exception of the Arabic name *Allah*, the names Maker, Creator, Without Flaw, Highest, Gracious, the Old One, Sovereign, Object of Worship, Great Spirit, Leader, Self-Existing, the Light, Who Looks on Every Side, Benign, Sacred Staff, are the adjectives or attributes of some person. This significantly suggests that God was first called by adjectival words describing Him or His functions before He was assigned a personal name. These epithets frequently become the personal names of God, if philologically studied. A personal name is a word of which the meanings are forgotten in course of time. The Jews say that it is probably innate among the folk to describe a man by his peculiarity rather than by his personal name. If this is the case even where personal names exist, much more would be true of a time when the personal names of God had not been evolved. He is often called by other names, while the personal name tends to become sacred. It is used only on particular occasions. We thus find that in the sense of a proper or personal name, there is no proper name of God in all the scriptures and languages, except Allah, the Arabic name.

4. The name of God in Jewish scriptures

Is Yahweh the name of God?

As shocking as it may seem, the answer is not a simple, clear “Yes”. God, the Creator of all things, is the Supreme Ruler of the universe. The usual name given to God by the Hebrews was what has been rendered into English as ‘Jehovah’ in the American Standard Version of the Bible (1901), whereas the older King James Version has the word ‘Lord’ or ‘God’ printed in capitals in its place. The name of God was so revered that it was not generally pronounced, its place being taken by *adonay*, ‘Lord’, and *elohim*, ‘God’, both of which are, as a matter of fact, expressions for the attributes of God. As it is said, the name ‘Jehovah’ revealed to Moses at Horeb is the name of the God of Israel. Its real pronunciation, they say, approximates to ‘Yahweh’, but the name might not, according to rabbinical teaching, be pronounced; hence it was written with the vowel points of *adonay* (‘Lord’) which was substituted for it in reading. The name itself was not pronounced ‘Jehovah’ before the sixteenth century.¹

¹ On the other hand, *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Charles G. Herbermann and others, New York, 1913, art ‘Jehovah’, pp. 329–332, traces the written form ‘Jehovah’ back to the 13th century CE and suggests that it may be even older, but it clearly was not in common use before the 16th century CE — *Editor*.

This alternative or substituted name of God came under discussion among the Jews at a time when the correct pronunciation had long been corrupted and vitiated. It is certainly no matter of surprise, for in the Eastern countries it is common to call a man not by his personal name but by the name which has been given to him on account of his profession or some distinctive quality. If such a practice were in vogue in places where personal names also existed, one of God's attributive names was taken to be His personal name, more so because no personal name had yet been given to God. Although one particular name was regarded as the most excellent, He was more usually invoked through other attributive names; the supposed excellent name having been regarded as highly sacred, to be uttered only by particular persons on special occasions and at special places. Other people could utter it only under the penalty of having their tongues cut off or molten lead poured in their ears, or their hearts torn out or death as among the Hindus.¹

In Judaism and Christianity the most excellent name of God is 'Jehovah', which occurs 156 times in the book of Genesis and 6,000 times in the whole of the Bible. But both the Jewish and the Christian scholars agree that its pronunciation is not known to anyone for a certainty. When the Bible was first written in Hebrew, the script was free of vowel-points, much in the same way as the Arabic script, the reason being that the people of the tongue did not need them. But, when the question of the propagation of the Holy Quran among non-Arabic-speaking people arose, it was found that they could not read it correctly without accent marks. It was then that the Muslim scholars devised these accents. The Jews similarly thought of devising vowel marks for the Hebrew script. But since the Hebrew language in those days had fallen into disuse among the Jews, differences arose in putting these marks in the case of

¹ *Gautama Smriti*, 12.1; *Purva Mimamsa*, 1.3.38, 6.1.33.

many a word. Thus difficulty arose in the way of their writing down the name of God: how could they put it down in a book when they held the belief that it was strictly forbidden for people to utter it except by a Chief Rabbi? Therefore, instead of 'Yehowah' four letters *y-h-w-h* were written down without accent marks, and preceding them, or in the margin, was noted down the term *adonay* to mean that the four letters *y-h-w-h* together with the vowel points of *adonay* should be read instead of 'Yehowah'. It never occurred in the Bible even at a single place without *adonay* or *elohim*, so that on reaching the term *adonay*, it should be immediately understood that the next word is not to be read. This prohibition is not just an ordinary affair: it imposes the penalty of death on one who dares to utter the name of God. Even the Jewish scholars and savants, who are bitterly opposed to the higher criticism of the Bible, take not the name of God, but write 'Adonai' in its place.¹

The Jewish and the Christian scholars have divided the discussion pertaining to the name 'Jehovah' into three parts. The first part of the discussion relates to the pronunciation of this term. Since 1520 AD it had been written as *yehowah* but read 'Jehovah', but now it has become more popular. Before this, different pronunciations existed in different periods of history: (1) 'Jao'; (2) 'Jaoth'; (3) 'Jaou'; (4) 'Jeuo'; (5) 'Ja'; (6) 'Jabe'; (7) 'Jaho'; (8) 'Jehjeh'; and (9) the Samaritans pronounced it *yabe*.² In the Biblical list of smaller prophets, Joel is the name of the prophet, which means 'Jo' is God.

¹ J. H. Hertz (Chief Rabbi), *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs*, Oxford University Press, 5 vols, 1929–1936, with reference to Exodus, 6:2, 6, etc.

² *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, edited by Charles G. Herbermann and others, New York, 1913, art. 'Jehovah', pp. 329–32. (The eight names spelled with initial 'J' come from Greek and Latin sources. The 'j' in these names is a spelling convention and stands for an original y sound in Latin, Greek and Hebrew. — *Editor*.)

The Significance of 'Jehovah'

The next discussion is on the meaning of 'Jehovah'. According to some scholars, it is in the nominative case, while others say it is an absolute verb. In its meaning also there is a lot of difference. In the nominative case it has been translated as 'the Creator' or 'the Sustainer'. But this meaning is merely imaginary and fanciful, without any rational explanation. It is also inconsistent with what has been stated in Exodus, 3:13–14 and 6:2–3. Moses asked God the Most High: "When I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" (Exodus, 3:13). And God disclosed His name to him, saying: *ehyeh asher ehyeh*, is my name, i.e., 'I am who I am'. But Exodus 6:3 has it as: *y-h-w-h*, 'He who is'; and this translation is according to the Greek translation of the Bible: 'He Who Is has sent me' and not 'I Am has sent me'. Thus the name which God revealed to Moses, the third time, was *yahweh*, 'He That Is'. This translation, however, has been brought under heavy fire. It is wrong for the reason that this term might have been coined from the Hebrew *yihyeh*, and its meaning should therefore be 'He will be'. The second form, 'Jehu', which is concise and brief, has been derived from a different root. And the third meaning is said to be 'the Coming One', indicating prophecy. This significance is, of course, the most suitable and befitting and in conformity with the rules of Hebrew grammar.

The Jews say that 'Jehovah' is a wrong pronunciation which has been invented by the Christian theologians and it has never been accepted and acknowledged by them. This term is in reality a word of four letters, *y-h-w-h*, and is unpronounceable; in other words, its reading or writing is disallowed and forbidden. The pronunciation proposed by the Christian scholars is wrong and incorrect according to the rules of the Hebraic language. Adonai (*adonay*) is its substitute; and, whenever this term will be used as the name of God, Adonai

will be used instead of it. In the ancient Greek manuscript not this term but *kurios* has been used, which gives the same meaning as *adonay*. It is written in the *Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia*:

“**JEHOVAH**, An erroneous pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton, or four-lettered name of God, made up of the Hebrew letters Yod He Vav He (יהוה). According to Bible scholars, the proper pronunciation of this name was Jahveh. As early as Bible times, however, in obedience to the provision of the Third Commandment that forbids taking the name of God in vain, this name was never pronounced except once a year by the high priest on the Day of Atonement in the Temple at Jerusalem. The people, however, never spoke the name at any time; the term Adonai (אֲדֹנָי), meaning Lord, was consistently substituted for Yahveh.”¹

In another Jewish encyclopaedia we read:

“**JEHOVAH:** A mispronunciation (introduced by Christian theologians, but almost entirely disregarded by the Jews) of the Hebrew ‘YHWH,’ the (ineffable) name of God (the TETRAGRAMMATON or ‘Shem ha-Meforash’). This pronunciation is grammatically impossible; it arose through pronouncing the vowels of the ‘*kere*’ (marginal reading of the Masorites: אֲדֹנָי = ‘Adonay’) with the consonants of the ‘ketib’ (text-reading: יהוה = ‘YHWH’) — ‘Adonay’ (the Lord) being substituted with one exception, wherever ‘YHWH’ occurs in the Biblical and liturgical books.”²

¹ Isaac Landman (ed.), *The Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia*, New York, Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia Co. Inc., [c. 1948], vol. 6, pp. 54–55.

² Isidore Singer (ed.), *The Jewish Encyclopedia: a descriptive record of the history, religion, literature, and customs of the Jewish people from*

The well-known Jewish divine Philo has written many a time that this name is unpronounceable, and only such person can hear and utter it within the sacred precincts whose ears and tongue have been purified with divine wisdom, and that any other person who dares to utter it in contravention of these conditions should be prepared to undergo the death penalty, and that one who pronounces it in its real letters shall be at a great loss in the next world. Some Christian padres have tried to articulate it; but their efforts have borne no fruit, for since long its correct pronunciation is unknown. With regard to the truth of this name and its accurate significance, there is a vast difference of opinion, and it is not an easy task to tell its meaning with exactness and precision. The languages of the East have their own mysterious manner, which is incomprehensible and unintelligible to the Western mind. Some take it to be a derivative of the Hebrew root *hawah* (*h-w-y*), which means 'to fall', as if something has fallen from the sky. Some define its root to be *wa*, which they interpret to mean 'to breathe' and 'to blow', and thereby the wind or the god of gales. Yet others are of the opinion that its meaning is 'to be', and call it, therefore, the instrumental case. They have probably adopted the right course. It is written in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*:

“I. PRONUNCIATION OF JEHOVAH. — The Fathers and the Rabbinic writers agree in representing Jehovah as an ineffable name. As to the Fathers, we only need draw attention to the following expressions: *ὄνομα ἄρρήτον, ἄφραστον, ἄλεκτον, ἀφθεγκτον, ἀνεκφώνητον, ἀπόρρητον καὶ ῥηθῆναι μὴ δυνάμενον, μύστικον*. Leusden could not induce a certain Jew, in spite of his poverty, to pronounce the real name of God, though he held out the most alluring

the earliest times to the present day, prepared ... under the direction of Cyrus Adler *et al.*, vol. 7, New York and London, Funk & Wagnalls, [c. 1916], p. 87.

promises. The Jew's compliance with Leusden's wishes would not indeed have been of any real advantage to the latter; for the modern Jews are as uncertain of the real pronunciation of the Sacred name as their Christian contemporaries. According to a Rabbinic tradition the real pronunciation of Jehovah ceased to be used at the time of Simeon the Just, who was, according to Maimonides, a contemporary of Alexander the Great. At any rate, it appears that the name was no longer pronounced after the destruction of the Temple. The Mishna refers to our question more than once: Berachoth, ix, 5, allows the use of the Divine name by way of salutation; in Sanhedrin, x, 1, Abba Shaul refuses any share in the future world to those who pronounce it as it is written; according to Thamid, vii, 2, the priests in the Temple (or perhaps in Jerusalem) might employ the true Divine name, while the priests in the country (outside Jerusalem) had to be contented with the name Adonai; according to Maimonides ('More Neb.', i, 61, and 'Yad chasaka', xiv, 10) the true Divine name was used only by the priests in the sanctuary who imparted the blessing, and by the high-priest on the Day of Atonement. Philo ['De mut. nom.', n. 2 (ed. Marg., i, 580); 'Vita Mos.', iii, 25 (ii, 166)] seems to maintain that even on these occasions the priests had to speak in a low voice. Thus far we have followed the post-Christian Jewish tradition concerning the attitude of the Jews before Simeon the Just."¹

Noting that 'Jehovah' was mistakenly thought to be the correct pronunciation by Christian scholars until relatively

¹ *The Catholic Encyclopedia* as cited above. (The Greek expressions of the Fathers all signify that the name is not to be uttered, at least outside a given context — *Editor.*)

recent times, *The Catholic Encyclopedia* summarises as follows the arguments that were used to explain the form ‘Jehovah’ and the reasons why they are not valid:

“(a) Jehovah is composed of the abbreviated forms of the imperfect, the participle, and the perfect of the Hebrew verb ‘to be’ (*ye=yehî*,¹; *hō=howêh*; *wa=hāwâh*). According to this explanation, the meaning of Jehovah would be ‘he who will be, is, and has been’. But such a word-formation has no analogy in the Hebrew language. (b) The abbreviated form *Jehô* supposes the full form Jehovah. But the form Jehovah cannot account for the abbreviations *Jāhû* and *Jāh*, while the abbreviation *Jehô* may be derived from another word. (c) The Divine name is said to be paraphrased in Apoc., i, 4, and iv, 8, by the expression *ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος*, in which *ὁ ἐρχόμενος* is regarded as equivalent to *ὁ ἐσόμενος*, ‘the one that will be’; but it really means ‘the coming one’, so that after the coming of the Lord, Apoc., xi, 17, retains only *ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν*. (d) The comparison of Jehovah with the Latin *Jupiter*, *Jovis*. But it wholly neglects the fuller forms of the Latin names *Diespiter*, *Diovis*. Any connection of Jehovah with the Egyptian Divine name consisting of the seven vowels *ι ε η ω ο υ α*, has been rejected by Hengstenberg (*Beiträge zur Einleitung ins Alte Testament*, II, 204 sqq.) and Tholuck (*Vermischte Schriften*, I, 349 sqq.).”²

Moses asks the name of God

The Catholic Encyclopedia discusses the Divine name further as follows, on the basis of the forms that are found in Greek and Latin sources and in the Samaritan tradition:

¹ The superfluous comma appears in the original — *Editor*.

² *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, edited by Charles G. Herbermann and others, New York, 1913, art. ‘Jehovah’, pp. 329–32.

“The judicious reader will perceive that the Samaritan pronunciation *Jabe* probably approaches the real sound of the Divine name closest; the other early writers transmit only abbreviations or corruptions of the sacred name. Inserting the vowels of *Jabe* into the original Hebrew consonant text, we obtain the form *Jahveh* (*Yahweh*), which has been generally accepted by modern scholars as the true pronunciation of the Divine name. It is not merely closely connected with the pronunciation of the ancient synagogue by means of the Samaritan tradition, but it also allows the legitimate derivation of all the abbreviations of the sacred name in the Old Testament.

“II. MEANING OF THE DIVINE NAME. — *Jahveh* (*Yahweh*) is one of the archaic Hebrew nouns, such as *Jacob*, *Joseph*, *Israel*, etc. (cf. Ewald, *Lehrbuch der hebr. Sprache*, 7th ed., 1863, p. 664), derived from the third person imperfect in such a way as to attribute to a person or a thing the action of the quality expressed by the verb after the manner of a verbal adjective or a participle. Fürst has collected most of these nouns, and calls the form *forma participialis imperfectiva*. As the Divine name is an imperfect form of the archaic Hebrew verb ‘to be’, *Jahveh* means ‘He Who is’, Whose characteristic note consists in being, or *The Being* simply.

“Here we are confronted with the question, whether *Jahveh* is the imperfect hiphil or the imperfect qal. Calmet and Le Clerc believe that the Divine name is a hiphil form; hence it signifies, according to Schrader (*Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*, 2nd ed., p. 25), He Who brings into existence, the Creator; and according to Lagarde (*Psalterium Hieronymi*, 153), He Who causes to arrive, Who realizes His promises, the God of Providence. But this opinion is not in keeping

with Ex., iii, 14, nor is there any trace in Hebrew of a hiphil form of the verb meaning 'to be'; moreover, this hiphil form is supplied in the cognate languages by the pi'el form, except in Syriac where the hiphil is rare and of late occurrence.

“On the other hand, Jahveh may be an imperfect qal from a grammatical point of view, and the traditional exegesis of Ex., iii, 6–16, seems to necessitate the form Jahveh. Moses asks God: ‘If they should say to me: What is his [God’s] name? What shall I say to them?’ In reply, God returns three several times to the determination of His name. First, He uses the first person imperfect of the Hebrew verb ‘to be’; here the Vulgate, the Septuagint, Aquila, Theodotion, and the Arabic version suppose that God uses the imperfect qal; only the Targums of Jonathan and of Jerusalem imply the imperfect hiphil. Hence we have the renderings: ‘I am who am’ (Vulg.), ‘I am who is’ (Sept.), ‘I shall be [who] shall be’ (Aquila, Theodotion), ‘the Eternal who does not cease’ (Ar.); only the above-mentioned Targums see any reference to the creation of the world. The second time, God uses again the first person imperfect of the Hebrew verb ‘to be’; here the Syriac, the Samaritan, the Persian versions, and the Targums of Onkelos and Jerusalem retain the Hebrew word, so that one cannot tell whether they regard the imperfect as a qal or a hiphil form; the Arabic version omits the whole clause; but the Septuagint, the Vulgate, and the Targum of Jonathan suppose here the imperfect qal: ‘He Who Is, hath sent me to you’ instead of ‘I Am, hath sent me to you’ (Vulg.); ‘ὁ ὢν sent me to you’ (Sept.); ‘I am who am, and who shall be, hath sent me to you’ (Targ. Jon.). Finally, the third time, God uses the third person of the imperfect, or the form of the sacred name itself; here

the Samaritan version and the Targum of Onkelos retain the Hebrew form; the Septuagint, the Vulgate, and the Syriac version render 'Lord', though, according to the analogy of the former two passages, they should have translated, 'He Is, the God of your fathers ... hath sent me to you'; the Arabic version substitutes 'God'. Classical exegesis, therefore, regards Jahveh as the imperfect qal of the Hebrew verb 'to be'.¹

The Vowels of *adonay* (Adonai) and letters of *yhwh* make the name of God

We read in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*:

“(a) The pronunciation ‘Jehovah’ has no pretence to be right. The word יהוה² acquired such a sacredness that, in reading, the name ’*ādōnāi*, ‘lord,’ was substituted for it; hence in MSS and prints the vowels of ’*ādōnāi* were attached to the letters יהוה, and ‘Jehovah’ (יהוה) is a conflate form with the consonants of one word and the vowels of the other. It is not older in date than the time of the Reformation (1520). (b) The contracted forms in which the name appears suggest that the original form of the word was יהוה *yahweh* or *yahve* (a Greek transliteration is *ιαβέ*). (c) The occurrence of this name or a similar one in Assyr. cannot be regarded as certain. Hommel believes he has discovered in western Shemitic a divine name *i*, *ai*, or *ya* (e.g. I-zebel, Jezebel), which he considers the original form of the name, the Heb. יהוה being a more modern expansion. The last part of his conjecture at any rate cannot be considered probable. (d) The word being prehistoric, its derivation must remain uncertain. It has been connected with Arab. *hawa* ‘to blow’ or

¹ *The Catholic Encyclopedia* as cited above.

² Hebrew *yhwh* — *Editor*.

‘breathe,’ J” being the god who is heard in the tempest — the storm-god; or with the *hawa*, ‘to fall’ (Job 37:6)¹, in the causative meaning ‘the prostrator’ — again the lightning-god; or with Heb. *hayah* (old form *hawah*), ‘to be’ in causative (‘make to be’), *i.e.* ‘the creator,’ or fulfiller of his promises; and so on. (*e*) In Heb. writing of the historical period the name is connected with Heb. *hayah* ‘to be,’ in the imperf. Now with regard to this verb, *first*, it does not mean ‘to be’ essentially or ontologically, but phenomenally; and *secondly*, the impf. has not the sense of a present (‘am’) but of a fut. (‘will be’). In Ex. 3:10 ff, when Moses demurred to go to Egypt, God assured him, saying, כִּי אֶהְיֶה עִמָּךְ (‘EHYEH *immāk*) ‘I will be with thee.’² When he asked how he should name the God of their fathers to the people, he was told, אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה (‘EHYEH *’āsher* ‘EHYEH). Again he was bidden say, ‘אֶהְיֶה ‘EHYEH hath sent me unto you’; and finally, יְהוָה YAHWEH, the God of your fathers, has sent me unto you.’ From all this it seems evident that in the view of the writer *’ehyeh* and *yahweh* are the same: that God is *’ehyeh*, ‘I will be,’ when speaking of Himself, and *yahweh*, ‘he will be,’ when spoken of by others. What He will be is left unexpressed — He will be with them, helper, strengthener, deliverer.”³

¹ Job, 37:6, “For he saith to the snow, Be thou *on* [i.e., ‘fall on’] the earth, likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength” [KJV]. (NKJV translates the first part as: “For He says to the snow, ‘Fall on the earth’” — *Editor*.)

² “Then the Lord said to him [Moses], ‘... Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.’ But he [Moses] said: ‘Oh, my Lord, send, I pray, some other person.’ Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses ...” (Exodus, 4:12–14).

³ James Hastings, (ed.), *A Dictionary of the Bible*, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, New York, C. Scribner’s Sons, 1906, vol. 2, p. 199. (According

Jehovah or Yahweh?

Jehovah's Witnesses attest as follows. In the Foreword to the *New World Translation of the Hebrew Scriptures* it is stated:

“The greatest indignity that modern translators render to the divine Author of the Holy Scriptures is the omission or the hiding of his peculiar name when it plainly occurs in the Hebrew text thousands of times in the four-letter word (יהוה = YHWH), generally called the ‘tetragrammaton’. Far be it from us, therefore, to return to the practice of the Jewish synagogue after traditional Judaism and sectarianism and superstition had developed in it, or back to the style of the Latin *Vulgate*, which for a thousand years was the dominant translation of the Bible in western Europe. It followed the synagogue practice of substituting the titles ‘Lord’, ‘the Lord,’ ‘Adonai,’ and ‘God’ for the divine name represented by the tetragrammaton.

“We follow the example of the first translators of the Greek *Septuagint*, who rendered the sacred name as a name, as shown by the Fouad Inventory No. 266 papyrus fragments of the 2nd century B.C., of the Greek *Septuagint* on the Book of Deuteronomy ...

“Therefore we render the divine name in every case where the four-letter name or tetragrammaton occurs, using the most familiar English form ‘Jehovah’, for the reasons offered in the Foreword of our translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures, pages 10–25. In this rendering we have followed the vowel-pointing of the tetragrammaton as found in Ginsburg’s edition of the Hebrew text rather than that of Kittel, who vowel-points the tetragrammaton to read Yehwáh. Especially in the

to *The Catholic Encyclopedia* the form ‘Jehovah’ is, in fact, found in sources dating from before 1520, though not widely adopted until the Reformation: see *The Catholic Encyclopedia* cited above — *Editor*.)

English-speaking world it is the practice in recent decades of this century to hide that outstanding name and to confuse the reader with a substitute title.”¹

Quite contrary to the above statement a noticeable number of European translators render the Divine name ‘Yahweh’ as follows:²

1. The French translation made under the direction of l’Ecole Biblique de Jérusalem uses the form ‘Yahvé’ (1948–).³
2. The French translation by A. Crampon uses ‘Yahweh’ (1939).⁴
3. The French translation by Cardinal Liénart uses ‘Yahweh’ (1951).⁵
4. The French translation by Edouard Dhorme (le Père Paul Dhorme des Frères Prêcheurs) uses ‘Iahve’ (1910–1946).¹

¹ *New World Translation of the Hebrew Scriptures*, 5 vols, Brooklyn, N.Y., Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1953–1960, Foreword, pp. 20–21.

² The original source for this list (reproduced here with some amendments) is *New World Translation of the Hebrew Scriptures* as cited above and Footnote on Genesis, 2:4. The references in the following footnotes are supplied by the Editors of the present text — *Editor*.

³ *La Sainte Bible: traduite en français sous la direction de L’Ecole Biblique de Jérusalem*, Paris, Les Editions du Cerf, 1955.

⁴ A. Crampon (trans.), *La Sainte Bible* (revised 1923 and 1939 by Jules P. N. Touzard et al.), Paris, Tournai [etc.], Société de S. Jean l’Evangéliste, Desclée et cie, 2 vols. in 1, 1939.

⁵ *La Sainte Bible: nouvelle édition publié sous le patronage de la Ligue catholique de l’Evangile, et la direction de Cardinal Liénart, avec le concours de Henri Renard*, Paris, Société Civile d’Etudes et de Publications non Commerciales, 1951.

5. The French translation by the monks of Maredsous uses 'Yahweh' (1949).²
6. The Spanish translation by Bover and Cantera Burgos uses 'Yahveh' (1947).³
7. The Spanish translation by Nácar Fuster and Colunga uses 'Yave' (1944).⁴
8. The English Westminster Version of the Sacred Scriptures by C. Lattey, S.J., uses 'Jehovah' (1934-).⁵
9. The Holy Bible translated by Monsignor Ronald A. Knox (1949) uses 'Javé' many times, as at Exodus, 33:19; Psalms, 67:5, 21; 73:18; 82:19; Isaiah, 42:8; 45:5, 6; etc.⁶
10. The seventh edition of the Hebrew text by Rudolf Kittel (1951)⁷ vowel-points it to read 'Yehwáh', as this way of writing the Divine Name is supported by

¹ See *L'Ancien Testament: édition publiée sous la direction d'Edouard Dhorme*, 2 vols, [Paris], Gallimard, 1956–1959.

² *La Sainte Bible: version complète d'après les textes originaux par les moines de Maredsous* [Maredsous, Belgium], Editions de Maredsous, 1950.

³ *Sagrada Biblia: versión crítica sobre los textos hebreo y griego*, Tomo 1, *Génesis a sabiduría*, translated by José María Bover and Francisco Cantera Burgos, Madrid, Editorial Católica, 1947.

⁴ *Sagrada Biblia: versión directa de las lenguas originales*, translated by Eloíno Nácar Fuster and P. Alberto Colunga, Madrid, 1944.

⁵ Cuthbert Lattey, S.J., *The Old Testament [Westminster Version of the Sacred Scriptures]*, London & New York, Longmans, Green, 1934.

⁶ *The Holy Bible: a translation from the Latin Vulgate in the light of the Hebrew and Greek originals, authorized by the Hierarchy of England and Wales and the Hierarchy of Scotland*, translated by Mgr. R. A. Knox, Definitive Edition, London, Burns & Oates, 1955.

⁷ Rudolf Kittel, *Biblia Hebraica*, 7th ed., Stuttgart, Württembergische Bibelanstalt, [1951].

the Leningrad Hebrew Codex (B 19^A), the Cairo Hebrew codex of the Prophets, and also many of the oldest Hebrew manuscripts. These point יהוה with the vowels of *Y^eYa*.¹

American Research on ‘Jehovah’

Its substitute ‘Adonai’ was a heathen god. It is written in *The Oxford Cyclopedic Concordance*:

“**Jehovah**, the name revealed to Moses at Horeb, is *the* Name of the God of Israel. Its real pronunciation is approximately *Yahweh*, but this Name might not, according to Rabbinical teaching, be pronounced: hence it was written with the vowel points of *Adonai* (Lord), which was substituted for it in reading. The Name itself was not pronounced Jehovah before the 16th century. The *meaning* of JHVH, as it was written, is probably not ‘I am,’ but ‘I will become;’ thus it appears to contain the promise of a gradual revelation. It is frequently found in composition with proper names, as e.g., Yehô-shua (Joshua), Yehonathan (Jonathan), Eli-yahu (Elijah), Hizki-yahu (Hezekiah) ...

“... **Adonai** is an intensive plural of *Adon* (= lord), and occurs not seldom in prophecy and poetry as a substitute for JHVH. It was applied by heathen nations to their gods (thus the Phoenician Tammuz has the title Adonis) and is found compounded with JHVH as a proper name (Adoni-yahu = Adonijah).”²

¹ *New World Translation of the Hebrew Scriptures*, 5 vols, Brooklyn, N.Y., Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1953–1960, Footnote on Genesis, 2:4.

² *The Oxford Cyclopedic Concordance*, New York and London, Oxford University Press, [c. 1903], p. 133.

The *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Religions* says about ‘Jehovah’, the name given to God in the Old Testament:

“... In the Authorised Version it is often translated ‘Lord.’ It consists of the consonants JHVH or JHWH; and amongst the ancient Hebrews it was regarded as ineffable and was not pronounced, so that when they read it in the scriptures they said instead *Adonai*, ‘lord.’ The vowels from this word — the first A becoming an indistinct E — were inserted by the Hebrew scribes, but what they were originally, and how the word was pronounced, are unknown. Modern scholars incline to the view that it was Jahweh (pronounced Yahweh).”¹

¹ E. Royston Pike, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Religions*, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1951, p. 207.

5. Observations on the statements of Jewish and Christian scholars

1. The sum and substance of what the Jewish and Christian scholars have investigated is that the name of their God has since long been ‘Jehovah’, which is said to be the word of God, and which has been used in the Bible.

2. It was in the last century that, after thousands of years, this name was disputed and declared to be wrong, followed by a quest for the correct name.

3. This research has been more difficult than finding out the correct position of the north and south magnetic poles. During this research ancient annals and inscriptions, religious traditions and the oldest manuscripts of the Bible were studied and scanned. As a result many important things came to light. The net outcome of all this toilsome labour and strain was that the real name of God had since long been lost and that whatever name be proposed, it ill becomes and ill befits.

4. It was quite a new discovery that the real name of God was not known to anyone even before the time of Moses.¹

5. The name is said to possess greatness and grandeur of such a high order that a mere lip-profession of it earns a man

¹ Exodus, 6:3.

all the blessings of this world. But when asked about the name, it is said that it is not known to anyone.

6. A study of the sacred history of the Jews and the Christians disclosed the fact that in every age there had been a vain quest after the name. A new name was, therefore, proposed which, later on, turned out to be wrong and incorrect. If every word is a frozen picture and its meaning is life and charm, then the word 'Jehovah' is a lifeless word; it had been born and reborn in ever new garbs, it grew old and died.

7. Differences arose because of changes to its pronunciation and the matter became doubtful and dubious; as a result its true significance is not known.

8. The Jewish charge that the Christian divines have misstated and mistaught the name of God as Jehovah, is unjustifiable and baseless. When it did not exist in the Bible in its correct form, nor was it permissible to utter it correctly, it is useless to wax hot against the Christian scholars because they did the same thing as the Jews wanted and desired; it was not allowed to utter the real and correct name of God and it constituted a grave offence, liable to be punished with death in this world and damnation and disgrace in the Hereafter.

9. If the Jews knew this name in its correct form, how and why did the dispute arise as to its correct pronunciation?

10. Do the Jewish priests sincerely wish (of course against their own doctrine) that the correct name of God be known to the world and be on the lips of every person; or do they want it ever to remain a sealed secret? If its correct pronunciation were disclosed to the world, the possibility of its being uttered by the tongue will obviously become greater; it seems the Jews wished the smaller the knowledge, the better.

11. Where in the Bible has it been commanded that Adonai, or some other name, should be recited instead of the real name of God?

12. Let us suppose that the ‘Most High God’ has two names, ‘Jehovah’ and ‘Adonai’. Since both the names are His, there seems to be no reason why He should be pleased by one and so much displeased on hearing the other that He should command the utterer thereof to be executed.

13. When God has a dislike for His own name and wants not be invoked by it, then why should He reveal it at all? A man having an aversion for a name does not even care to mention it. If God too, had likewise not disclosed His name, or only whispered it in the ear of Moses forbidding him to divulge it to anyone, the question whether or not it should be uttered by the tongue would not have arisen.

14. The Jews called it a sealed secret; the most exalted personal name, etc., but it is of no earthly use, for the reason that its utterer has to lay down and lose his life.

15. To repeat the name of one’s dear one over and over again has a charm of its own, and the more a lover will recite and remember the name of his beloved, the more proved will be his love and adoration. It is written in the Book of Numbers: “So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them”¹; and in the Psalms: “that men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth.”²

16. The value and worth of a name are according to its meaning and significance; and if its meaning is not known, its value and worth are nothing. It is, therefore, unreasonable to look upon and regard Jehovah as the Mighty, Sacred and Blessed Name.

17. A personal name is that which encompasses all the attributes of the named one. It is thus incorrect to define

¹ Numbers, 6:27.

² Psalms, 83:18; King James Version.

Jehovah as a personal name. At the most, it expresses only one attribute of the Divine Being, that *He is*, as the Jews themselves say in commentaries. Jehovah, therefore, is an attributive, not a personal name.

18. It appears from Deuteronomy that it is a “fearful” name.¹ And Jacob said: “For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved”;² “Thou shalt not be affrighted at them: for the Lord thy God is among you, a mighty God and terrible.”;³ “For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible”;⁴ “And I said, I beseech thee, O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God”.⁵

The conception of the fearful and terrible Lord Jehovah cannot be called the most exalted name. If He had had more of love and kindness in him, He would not have prescribed the penalty of death for uttering His name.

19. The rabbis of the Jews, who claim to know the Hebrew language and to have the best understanding of the Bible, propose Adonai as a substitute for Jehovah. They must have considered Adonai better than Jehovah; otherwise there could be no sense in replacing a superior name by an inferior one.

20. There are three kinds of signposts on the roads in cities: (1) road closed; (2) a red signal to warn that the road is dangerous, and (3) a green light, indicating peace and safety. In the Book of Genesis, one comes across this sign of danger at 156 places, and there are as many as 6,823 points in the whole of the Bible according to the careful computation of scholars.

¹ Deut., 28:58; KJV. In NKJV it has “awesome” for “fearful” or “terrible” here and in the references below — *Editor*.

² Genesis, 32:30 ; KJV.

³ Deut., 7:21; KJV.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 10:17; KJV.

⁵ Nehemiah, 1:5; KJV.

The reader is confronted with two kinds of dangers: (1) that the name of God is doubtful and dubious, and (2) what should be read and what not. In other words, the road is closed, and positive danger of life lies ahead; that is to say, even if you pronounce it correctly, your life will not be spared. On the other side of it, there is the green light of Adonai directing: "Give up the upper road and adopt the lower one." It is, therefore, obviously clear that safety lies in abstaining from reciting the name Jehovah. But it is not understood why these four letters *y-h-w-h* or the four-lettered word, which is so deadly and dangerous that a mere repetition of it throws one into grave peril in this world and, according to Philo, into the flames of hell in the next, should have been recorded in the Bible as many as 6,000 times. Why should not a conference of the Jewish priests and the Christian padres be convened to expurgate it from the Bible?

21. In the Ten Commandments of the Bible the Third Commandment strictly forbids the recitation of this name. Should one suggest that it be obliterated from the Bible and replaced with 'Allah' in order to save people from the penalty of death in this world and the fire in the Hereafter?

22. It is written in the Book of Numbers: "So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them."¹ But when the name of God itself got lost, all the blessing and grace must have vanished and gone from the nation. Why not, therefore, put the name of Allah upon the Children of Israel? He will bless them.

23. The attributive quality of God's name 'Jehovah' is said to be that it expresses His existence in all the three tenses, in Hebrew *yihweh* is in the future tense, *howeh* the present and *hawah* the past. It was by the fusion and coalescence of one letter from each of the four letters *y-h-w-h*, that 'Jehovah' came

¹ Numbers, 6:27.

to be formed. It is indeed a childish hotchpotch; and it suffers from a grave defect. Even if this arrangement be altered and changed, the meaning will remain the same, although 'Jehovah' will be shattered to pieces and broken. For example *h-y-w-h*, *h-w-h-y*, *w-h-h-y*, *h-h-y-w*, *w-y-h-h*, etc., etc., will all have the same meaning which *Yehowah* has, for the letters are the same. The meaning will be same, because it is said: "Every letter of *Yehowah* has individual sense."

24. That the name *Yehowah* is wrong according to grammatical rules of the language has now been accepted unanimously by both the Jewish and Christian scholars. It is now stated to be *Yahweh*, which is the future tense, that means 'The coming One'.

25. In this connection our Christian friends may well be asked a question. When both the Jews and Christians are agreed on this point that God's name should not be uttered by human mouth, why should not this interdiction be imposed on the name of Jesus, whom the Christians believe to be one of the Trinity? It is really strange that whereas the taking of the name of God the Father is strictly forbidden, the name of God the Son has not been placed under this ban, especially in view of the fact that the Gospels prohibit the taking of the name of the Messiah. Read Luke, 9:20–21 and Matthew, 16:15–20:

"He [Jesus] said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered and said, 'The Christ of God.' And He strictly warned and commanded them to tell this to no one ..." ¹

It is indeed a matter of great surprise that the Christians do not obey the explicit command of their Lord. They do not enunciate the name of the Father, but bow their heads at the name of the son.

¹ Luke, 9:20–21.

Yahweh is the name of the Coming Lord

The frequency and force, together with strong incontrovertible arguments, with which the oneness and unity of God have been stated and stressed in the Holy Quran are surely not to be found with regard to this Great Truth in any other revealed book. Besides, the explicitness and clarity with which it was announced over and over again through the Prophet's own mouth that he was only a human being is undoubtedly not to be found in respect of any other prophet in his own Scripture.

Krishna, Ramachandra, Buddha and Jesus are reported to have claimed divinity for themselves; this is on account of the fact that there is dubiousness and doubt in their books as now available. There certainly was not any doubt and ambiguity in the actual words spoken by them, but the statements which have come down to us through the centuries do contain complexity and confusion.

The Quran has worked a wonder in the matter of inducing belief in the unity of God and adducing perfect arguments in support of it, and disclosing the Holy Prophet Muhammad's human nature to the clearest degree.

In the ancient scriptures the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad is prophesied as the advent of God Himself according to Deuteronomy, 33:2; the General Epistle of Jude, 1:14, etc. Let no one slip into the error of thinking that, like the Hindus, the Buddhists, and the Christians, we also wish to prove that the Holy Prophet Muhammad is God's incarnation or His son or (God forbid!) even God. The Muslims earnestly cherish an utmost jealousy for the Unity of God, and can never be induced to believe their Prophet to be God or His incarnation or son.

The significance of the coming of God Himself is, according to our belief, one's complete knowledge of His person and perfect attributes, the manifestation of His almightiness and perfect power, and the fulfilment of His

promises held out to the prophets, and the coming of the victory and triumph of Truth.

It is true that God is inconceivable, but His existence is proved through His attributes and manifested by His works. All His attributes are exhibited in the creation and all natural processes: He is *al-Mubdī'*, the Author of life; He is *al-Zāhir*, the Manifest, He to Whose existence every created thing clearly points; He is *Al-Qābid*, the Controller, He Who keeps all things within limits; He is *Al-Khāfid*, the Depressor, He Who brings low the proud; He is *Al-Muqīt*, the Preserver, He Who preserves the faculties of all created things. These are but a few of His wonderful attributes mentioned in the Quran:

“His knowledge extends over the heavens and the earth.”¹

“And thou art not engaged in anything, and thou recitest not from Him any portion of the Quran, and you do no work, but We are witnesses of you when you are engrossed therein. And there is not hidden from thy Lord even an atom’s weight in the earth or in heaven. And there is nothing smaller than that or greater, but it is recorded in a clear Book.”²

By personal name, a person, place or thing is recognised and distinguished from others. Pondering over the 150 names of God or personal names found in the basic languages of different nations of the world, it appears that all of them with only one exception, are attributive names.

It is a matter of fact that the pre-Islamic religions, as we have found them, are not universal in their principles. They were undoubtedly enough to meet the needs of their respective times. All the same they were true. The personal name of God

¹ The Quran, 2:255.

² *Ibid.*, 10:61.

was not revealed to the Jews. Only a hint was thrown at it; that He or His perfect manifestation would appear at some future time. So the Jews kept on calling the attributive name as His personal name; and later on threw it also into oblivion. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad came, he disclosed the personal name of God, threw perfect light on it, and taught the ways of its knowledge and wisdom. It was for this reason that the Holy Prophet's coming had been foretold as the Coming of God Himself, meaning thereby that the world will get Divine knowledge and wisdom through his intermediation.

Name and concept of the Divine Being in Islam

Prior to the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, stones and trees, cows and calves, the sun and the moon, the planets and the stars, were worshipped and adored as Divine Beings.

Against the children of Israel the prophets had to complain that they always began to worship the idols of other nations. Even mortal men, born of humble and helpless mothers, who stood in need of eating and drinking, who slept and had to be awakened, who wept and cried, had been raised to Divine heights by the people and worshipped. But it was the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him) who taught that the personal name of the Most High God is Allah and that He is neither born, nor eats nor drinks, nor sleeps nor stands in need of rest on the seventh day, being tired; He takes no walk in the cool of the garden, nor is He afraid of the people who began to build the tower in Babylon; He climbed not down from the clouds to wrestle with Jacob nor did He ever feel aggrieved at His own deeds; into the mother's womb He never entered, nor was He ever an infant in swaddling clothes, neither a young man full of hot blood. On hearing His name uttered He falls not into a rage; nor ever killed a man for touching his cup or utensils.¹ He is the Lord,

¹ Numbers, 4:15.

not only of the children of Israel but of all the nations of the world. His holy name is Allah, for he is the possessor of all the perfect attributes; any kind of imperfection whatsoever is not to be found in Him; He is the Almighty, All-Powerful, the All-Wise, and the All-Knowing. He created not the world to fulfil the ends of His justice, but for the purpose of manifesting His Love and Benevolence to His creatures. In his *Arabic-English Lexicon*, E.W. Lane thus gives the meaning of the name Allah: 'Comprising all the attributes of perfection'.

1. There is in Him not only one excellent quality, but all the sublime attributes to the most perfect degree. If *Yehowah* was the name of the particular God of Israel, then Hari, Om, was the name of the Hindu God and Yazdan that of the Parsees. God, Lord, Theos, Shang-ti and Kamui are all His names. But Allah exclusively is one such name which encloses and includes all other names and expresses and indicates all the excellent attributes.

2. The Holy Quran has thrown a challenge to all the nations and religions of the world, saying: bring forth as against this name Allah another name or term, if you can, which has the comprehensive meaning: 'Comprising all the attributes of perfection'.

3. It contains all power and beauties and negates all evil and weakness as we see in human beings.

4. Allah has neither any dual nor any plural number, for He is neither two nor three, but the one true God.

5. His Unity is not the number one's unity, because one has its fractions, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, and so on to the unlimited number. Allah's unity, or unity in Islamic theology, means His uniqueness in all his attributes.

6. Unlike *Yehowah*, Om, Deus and Theos, etc., God's name has not been derived from any root, for God Himself has not been born.

7. Unlike Yehowah and Om, this name Allah is not an amalgam or compound of fractions and fragments, for the Most High God Himself is unsullied from fragments.

8. There is no feminine gender of Allah in Arabic like 'goddess' or *deva* and *devi*, the reason being that it is pure and free from the hotchpotch of God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost and the Mother of God.

9. Not only after Islam but in the pre-Islamic time, this name had never been used for any idol, the sun or the moon, a star or a planet, nor for anything else save the one true God.

6. *Allah* — the all-embracing compendium of all the names of God

Ponder over the names of God in the different languages and you will realise that most of them are mysterious and wrapped in camouflage. The Babylonians, the Chinese, the Ancient Egyptians, the Cretans, the French, the Italians, the Celts, the Greeks, the Irish, the Japanese, the Romans,¹ the Portuguese, the Spaniards, all of them name God ‘Heaven’, and we hear in England and America, “Heaven knows (this and that).” Heaven is not an attribute of God. It is symbolically an abode of God. As we read in the Bible:

“(may You) ... Hear in heaven Your dwelling place”²

“He who sits in the heavens shall laugh”³

¹ Latin *Deus* (singular), *di*, *dei* and *dii* (plural) is frequently found in manuscripts. Its root in Sanskrit is *dī*, *div-* (*dyu*) to gleam, as in *deva*, a god, *dyāus*, heaven (Greek, *Zeus*, genitive case *Dios*, Heaven, a deity). In Latin we say: *ita me di ament*, ‘so help me the gods!’; *per deos immortales*, ‘by the immortal gods!’; *cum dis volentibus*, ‘by the gods’ help’; *si dis placet*, ‘if it please the gods’. It is used of highly distinguished or fortunate persons. E. A. Andrews (ed.), *Harper’s Latin Dictionary: a new Latin dictionary founded on the translation of Freund’s Latin-German Lexicon*, revised by Charlton T. Lewis, and Charles Short, New York, American Book Company [1907].

² 1 Kings, 8:30.

³ Psalms, 2:4.

“But our God is in heaven”¹

“O You who dwell in the heavens”²

“In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name”³.

‘Heaven’ in Anglo-Saxon is *heofon*, meaning the sky, firmament, expanse of space surrounding the earth.⁴ There are seven heavens and above all is the heaven of heavens in which God abides. All these nations name God by His residence. They have, it seems, no proper name for Him. The Chinese say:

“It is not lawful to use the name *Shang-ti* lightly. Therefore, we name Him by His residence, which is *T’ien* or heaven.”

They say:

“Heaven is most high, yet listens to the lowliest.”

Heaven is man’s origin and, when oppressed by poverty, he recalls his origin. For when men are overwrought and worn out, who is there that does not cry to Heaven? The Japanese say His name is *Kami*, which is an abbreviation of *kangami*, meaning to look at, to judge. Others say it is a form of *kimi*, ‘lord’, while still others give *kabi* as its origin, modern *kamui*, ‘who or that which covers or shades’. In reality, the name of

¹ *Ibid.*, 115:3.

² *Ibid.*, 123:1.

³ Matthew, 6:9.

⁴ As in Genesis, 1:1, 8; Psalms, 19:6; Isaiah, 40:22. The term ‘god’ is found in all the Teutonic languages (Old High German *got*, Gothic *gub* [i.e., ‘guth’, the letter *þ* standing for ‘th’ as in ‘think’ — *Editor*], etc.) but, as in Norse sources ‘god’ signifies the image of a deity, and as the word is connected with *Götze*, ‘idol’, the higher being was believed to be present in the image.

God in Japanese is *Kami* which means ‘above’, as they say heaven is *Kami*, earth is *shimo*.¹

In the Slavonic languages the word for God is *Bog*. *Bogaty* means ‘rich’ and *ubog* signifies ‘poor’. Compare it with Sanskrit *bhaga* and *bhagwan*.²

Out of the 155 names of God stated above, God (with slight variations), the most popular name, is in the Dutch, Danish, German, Norwegian,³ Swedish, Icelandic and English languages. It is an Anglo-Saxon word. Germans pronounce it *Gott*, Icelanders *Godh*, *Goth* and *Guth*. Lexicographers say its root⁴ appears in Sanskrit *hū*, ‘call upon’ or ‘invoke’. Its verb is ‘godded’ and ‘goddling’, i.e., to make into a god, deify, idolise. ‘Godchild’, ‘goddaughter’ are also used. ‘Goddess’ is a female god or deity, hence a woman of extraordinary or stately beauty. ‘Godfather’, ‘godmother’, etc. — all these phrases are used. ‘Godling’ is a little god, a minor or petty deity. So, having its root, plural form, feminine gender, sons, daughters and wives, it is not the proper name of the Divine Being. A proper name is

¹ The meanings of the Japanese *Kami* in modern dictionaries are: (1) a spirit, which is thought to exist invisibly with unlimited supernatural power of good or evil to punish crime or reward virtue in human beings, an object of trust or fear; (2) the honorific given to rulers previous to the reign of Jimmu; (3) the name applied to spirits enshrined in Shinto Shrines; (4) the Christian God. F. Brinkley, *An Unabridged Japanese-English Dictionary*, Tokyo, Sanseido, 1896.

² Hastings, vol. 6, p. 302b.

³ *Gud* (God), *avgud* (idol), *gudbarn* (godchild), *gudinne* and *gydje* (goddess), *guddommelig* (godlike). *Gyldendal's English-Norwegian & Norwegian-English Dictionary*, Oxford, Printed for the Shakespeare Head Press and sold for the Press by Basil Blackwell, 1941 (comprising *Gyldendal's Ordbøker: Engelsk-Norsk*, ved B. Berulfsen, Oslo, Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1938 and *Gyldendal's Ordbøker: Norsk-Engelsk*, ved H. Scavenius, Oslo, Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1933).

⁴ I.e., the Indo-European root *GHEDYŌ* — *Editor*.

a particular person's name, written with capitals and usually without 'the' or 'a'. Every religious scripture, no doubt, has a pre-eminent name of God, but really an attributive name of Almighty God. Though the language may be unfamiliar, the reality is not ambiguous to us. If we know the meanings of these names, we shall realise that most of them are the best attributes of our God. The names are at variance in various languages, but it is just like flowers of fine distinct colours. It seems to me that God may be better glorified by the very variety of flowers that blossom in the garden. Honen, the Japanese teacher (1132–1212), taught the worship of Amida and the Persian Zoroaster named God as Mazda. Both words are synonyms and with a very slight difference homonyms also. Both mean 'The Light'. The Holy Quran says:

“Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth. A likeness of His light is as a pillar on which is a lamp — the lamp is in a glass, the glass is, as it were, a brightly shining star — lit from a blessed olive tree, neither eastern nor western, the oil whereof gives light, though fire touches it not, light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He pleases, and sets forth parables for men, and Allah is Knower of all the things.”¹

This parable declares that the Divine Name in every nation, language and scripture is a lamp of subtle distinct colour, but light is the same. It comes from beyond and shines through it. If you keep looking at the lamp you are lost, for thence arises disparity. Jehovah is the Lord God of the Israelites, *Om* is the deity of the Hindus, Yazdan is the god of the Zoroastrians, Shang-ti is the heaven of the Chinese, Kamui or Amida is the saviour of the Japanese, and so on and so forth for the rest. But peep into the light (Allah) which shines through all those distinct lamps of distinct colours and you will be delivered

¹ The Quran, 24:35.

from henotheism to the monotheism of Islam, the religion of no particular race, tribe, colour, caste or country but of all humanity.

All the names of God are good and excellent. In Greek it is *Theos*, in Sanskrit it is *Om*, in Buddhism it is 'Buddha', in Hebrew it is 'Jehovah', etc. We may say Allah is Jehovah, Allah is Adonai, Allah is *Om*, Allah is Elohim, Allah is Paramatma, Allah is Shang-ti, Kamui, Amida and Ahuramazda. But we cannot say Jehovah is Allah, Adonai is Allah, *Om* is Allah, Shang-ti, Kamui, etc., is Allah. The reason is, we may say Darwin was a good scientist but we will be wrong to say a scientist is a good Darwin. So Allah's are all the 200 names of different languages of the world. All these names from the East and the West are attributes of Allah. His personal and proper name is only one name, that is, Allah, comprising all the attributes of perfection. Personal and proper names should not be translated, but all other names are subject to translation, just as the word 'god' is used for other objects, objects of honour and dignity. The reason is very simple. These names have dual and plural numbers and feminine gender and are compound words, having their roots and comparatives.

Just as spring brightens the world with flowers of distinct colours and tired eyes revel in it, so will the revelation of the Holy Quran have contracted in its blossom the blossoms of variegated (*par excellence*) names of God of all the scriptures of the world, and have created harmony and a salubrious air in the world of religion. It is a unique wonder of the Holy Quran that it has abridged all the excellent names of God in three short verses and that the highest name of God that every religion of the world has, is confirmed by the Quran:

“He is Allah, besides whom there is no god, the Knower of the invisible and the visible. He is the Beneficent, the Merciful. He is Allah, besides whom there is no god. The Sovereign Lord, the Holy One, the

Author of Peace, the Granter of Security, Guardian over all, the Majestic, the Supreme, the Superb. Glory be to Allah from that which they set up (alongside Him)! He is Allah, the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner. His are the most beautiful (and excellent) names. Whatever is in the heavens and the earth (i.e., angels and all people of all religions and nations and languages) declares His glory; and He is the Mighty the Wise.”¹

Turn back a few pages and you will see that *Allah* is the thesaurus of all the Holy Names, and contains in itself all the names of God which all the nations of the world recite in threescore basic languages, revere, glorify and bow to. Believe in it and your belief will be complete and perfect in the Lord God of all the nations. And you will be an honourable member of the religion of humanity.

¹ The Quran, 59:22–24.

7. Beginning the Quran in the name of Allah is a miracle

“I will set him on high, because he has known My name.”¹

“In that day it shall be — ‘The LORD is one,’ and His name one.”²

A branch of human knowledge is called ethnology, which is concerned with the study of racial groups in their origin, distribution and culture. It does not only cover the details of various branches and tribal groups of these races, but also their relationship to one another and their individual characteristics. The whole of mankind is compared to a tree whose branches have spread all over the earth. The Holy Quran has referred to this basic truth fourteen hundred years ago when it declared:

“Mankind is a single nation.”³

At another place it said:

“Say: O People of the Book, come to an equitable word between us and you, that we shall serve none but Allah and that we shall not associate any with him.”⁴

¹ Psalms, 91:14.

² Zechariah, 14:9.

³ The Quran, 2:213.

⁴ The Quran, 3:64.

An “equitable word”, towards which the Quran has called all the nations of the world, is something which is agreed upon by all. The Quran has itself indicated what that equitable word is. It is belief in God and obedience to Him. There can be nothing greater than this just and equitable statement to create goodwill and unity among nations — that our God and your God is one. This is a great prophecy mentioned in the revealed scriptures of the world in different forms. In other words, the Prophet who knew the truth about the name of God and revealed it to the world was going to appear at a certain stage in history.

The oneness of humanity is a truth on which the Holy Quran lays the greatest stress.¹ They are sometimes told that they have been “created of a single soul”, again that they are all descended from the same parents;² still again, that they are, as it were, dwellers in one home, having the same earth as resting-place and the same heaven as a canopy.³ It thus lays down the principle of the oneness of humanity in the clearest words. All people are but a single nation.⁴ More than that, it emphasises that all the prophets of the world are a single community.⁵

The basic principle of all religions taught by the prophets has been one and the same in all ages and all countries — that Allah is the Lord of all. He alone must be worshipped. Therefore all prophets are here declared to be one community: they all led people to virtue through service of God. But, as the next verse shows, their followers broke off this unity:

¹ *Ibid.*, 1:1.

² *Ibid.*, 4:1; 49:13.

³ *Ibid.*, 2:22.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 10:19; 2:213.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 21:92.

“Surely this your community is a single community, and I am your Lord, so serve Me. And they cut off their affair among them; to Us will all return.”¹

Those who have studied the religious scriptures of the world and their commentaries know that out of hundreds of names of God there is one truly great and excellent Divine name in search of which Hindus, Jews, Christians and Magians have kept themselves constantly busy. There is no language in the world which does not contain a word denoting the name of God. I have already discussed 155 names of God in this book. As God is one, His true name should also be one. The languages of the world are different, but the Creator and Lord of all of us is one. It was the Last Prophet who told mankind the real name of this Great Being. He not only told His real name but also offered rational arguments in support of his claim, and in practice he showed complete reliance on Him and thus achieved all that a human being could possibly achieve in his life. This was a practical demonstration of the truthfulness of the Holy Prophet’s mission. Those who opposed him in the name of other-than-God were completely humiliated in spite of their superiority in number and armaments. Even after the lapse of fourteen centuries the verdict recorded about him in history is that he was “the most successful of all the prophets and religious personalities”.² He was helpless and became the master of his country. But that was not his real success. His real success lay in the fact that there were thousands of his opponents who became his friends and accepted the religion he advocated. This was not something sudden and unexpected; the prophets of yore had foretold his success. The prophet David sang:

¹ The Quran, 21:92–93.

² *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 10th ed., art. ‘Koran’.

“Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name.”¹

Conflict about God’s name in various religions

There is no language in the world which does not contain the name of God. There are, however, some languages which mention Him as one who is without a name. The Chinese say that God’s name is Shang-ti, which means heaven. In their opinion, it is not lawful to use the name of Shang-ti lightly. Therefore, they name Him by His residence, which according to them is heaven. This is, in fact, an admission that they do not know God’s real name. How could it be a matter of slight if they called God by His real name, if in case such a name was conveyed to them by a prophet? If they themselves have given such a name to God, a better name could be chosen for Him any time. They should bear in mind that God’s real name is Allah, which is an indication of His real power and glory. Thus we find in the Quran:

“And He is Allah in the heavens and in the earth.”²

“He is Allah, the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner. His are the most beautiful names. Whatever is in the heavens and the earth declares His glory; and He is the Mighty, the Wise.”³

God’s name in scriptures

Among Hindus in India the name of God differs from province to province. In Bengal they call Him Hari. He is known as Paramatma, Parameshwar, Ishwar, etc. among the common people. In their religious scriptures the names Brahma, Vishnu

¹ Psalms, 91:14.

² The Quran, 6:3.

³ *Ibid.*, 59:24.

and Shiva are frequently used, which indicate His three attributes, namely creation, sustenance and destruction. In the Rig Veda, which is considered most authentic, the name of a hymn is *Ka*.¹ This is an interrogative word which means ‘who?’ or ‘what?’. There are ten mantras in this hymn which are addressed to the god ‘Who?’:

1. He is the Creator of all creation
2. He is the Maker of the heaven and the earth
3. He is the Master of life
4. He is the giver of power and bringer of death
5. He is the only Ruler over the animate and the inanimate, over animals and humans
6. He is the God of all the gods who has no associate
7. Who is He whom we should serve and present our offerings to?
8. Who is He?

The yearning and restlessness of the supplicant can easily be discerned from this hymn. When we hear someone being highly praised we are keen to know who he is. Similarly, we are anxious to know who this benefactor of mankind is who is being praised so much in this hymn. The word *Ka* has been repeated nine times with the result that this *Ka* (‘What?’) has become God’s name. When the Israelites received food from heaven they held it in their hands and asked each other “*Man, man?*”, i.e., “What is this?” In Hebrew *man* is used for inanimate objects as well, thus *man* became the name of food from heaven. Similarly *Ka* (‘Who?’ or ‘What?’) became God’s name among Hindus. Thus it is mentioned:

“The word *Ka* is the Sanskrit interrogative pronoun ‘What’. In later times when this interrogative was

¹ Rig Veda, 10.121.

treated as a proper name, the question became assertion. In later Vedic literature Ka is a synonym for Prajapati, Brahma, Vishnu and other gods. In the Puranas, Ka appears as a recognised god, as supreme god. The Mahabharata mentions Ka with Daksha. Bhagavat Purana applies the term to Kashyapa.”

Again:

“Ka, kaḥ (quis), meaning Who? that is, the Unknown God, has been applied as a name to Prajāpati, and to other Gods, from a forced interpretation of the interrogative pronoun which occurs in the refrain of each verse of the hymn.”¹

Not only in the Rig Veda, but also in the Yajur Veda God has been called *Ka* (see Yajur Veda, 14.20; 20.22). Although the name of the object indicated by *Ka* has been stated differently, or is not stated at all, still the search for this unknowable and unnamed being has been continued in every age. Sometimes He has been called Prajapati, Brahma or Vishnu, at others Shiva, Daksha or Kashyapa. And when on none of these names was agreement reached, He was just known by a question mark. It has been stated in the Rig Veda:

“All the mantras of the Rig Veda are in the high heaven, where all the gods reside. They are condensed and concealed in a single syllable. What good can the Veda do to him who has no knowledge of that syllable, and those who know it are happy and prosperous in this world.” (Rig Veda, 1.164.39)

When we analyse this mantra we come to the following conclusions:

¹ Ralph T. H. Griffith, *The Hymns of the Rigveda, Translated with a Popular Commentary*, 2nd ed., Benares, E. J. Lazarus, 1896–1897, 2 vols.

- a) This mantra is a statement of the Rig Veda itself or its author who is considered to be God.
- b) All the ten thousand mantras in the Rig Veda revolve around the syllable mentioned in this mantra.
- c) That syllable is still in the High Heaven and not revealed yet.
- d) That syllable is still concealed.
- e) He who does not know that syllable cannot be benefited by the Rig Veda.
- f) He who knows it is happy and prosperous in the world.

The commentators of the Vedas explained this mantra in three ways:

1. The mantra under discussion points to the sun and its rays. He who does not know the sun cannot be benefited by its rays.
2. It may refer to the soul that is concealed in the body. A person who does not know the soul cannot derive any benefit from the body.
3. All the mantras are concealed in the word *OM*. What use is the Veda to a person who does not know *OM*? (Nirukt, 3.10)

These three interpretations have been given in the most authentic commentary on the Vedas. Such difference of interpretation about a mantra is itself a proof of the ambiguity of the matter under discussion. Nevertheless the third interpretation is more acceptable because in the Upanishads (considered second to the Vedas in authenticity) the greatness and the superiority of the word *OM* has been mentioned. One is, however, struck by the fact that the word *OM* does not occur in the four Vedas, but still its mention has been made in the Upanishads in such laudable terms. Prof. Griffith's remark on this point is worth quoting:

“The syllable is the *pranava*. The mystic syllable OM is set in the Upanishads as the object of profound religious meditation. The highest spiritual efficacy is attributed to it.”¹

The above discussion shows that although God’s real name is not mentioned in the Vedas, the urge to know it and obtain blessings therefrom is found among the Hindu sages. In the Vedic hymns different gods have been glorified. Agni, Indra, Suraj etc. have been separately praised. Either they should all be considered separate gods or there is One Being who is above them all and is the true object of all praises. That unknown and unnamed Being is Allah. “Who or What is He?”, asks the Veda. The reply is given by the Holy Quran in its very opening verse:

“In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.”

Allah is the real and personal name of God, and the names of all other gods are, in fact, His attributive names. It is only in this way that one can truly understand the concept of the Unity of Godhead and accept the whole of mankind, including Brahmins, Kshatriya, Vaishyas and Shudras, as one family and equal in rank in the sight of God. This is the great fact which has been foretold in the Atharva Veda, Allo Upanishad and Bhavishiya Purana as a great prophecy.

God’s name among Jews and Christians

While discussing God’s names in the Bible, the following passage should be noted:

Then Moses said to God, “Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?” And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you

¹ Ralph T. H. Griffith, *The Hymns of the Rigveda*, cited above.

shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'¹

I AM WHO I AM is rather an ambiguous name. This shows that God's real name was not known to Moses and the Israelites, although the desire to know it was embedded in their hearts.

At another place it is stated:

"But as 'Adonay' I was not known to them."²

The above is the Jewish translation of this verse. The Christian translation runs thus in the King James version:

"but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them."

The reason why "Adonay" has been substituted for "Jehovah" in the Jewish translation is that the Jews considered it a great sin, punishable with death, to mention God by His real name. It is for this reason that they use the term *adonay* instead of Jehovah. A modern Jewish commentator says:

"*Adonay* is the prescribed traditional reading of the Divine Name expressed in the four Hebrew letters Y H W H — which is never pronounced as written."³

It may be noted here that the violation of the sanctity of God's name falls under four categories:

1. Giving the holy name of God to other beings.
2. Calling on God by names of which the meaning is unknown.
3. Giving God names which do not befit Him.
4. Blaspheming His name.

¹ Exodus, 3:13–14.

² Exodus, 6:3.

³ J. H. Hertz (Chief Rabbi), *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs*, Oxford University Press, 5 vols, 1929–1936, vol. 1, pp. 6–7.

The word *adonay*, however, is not expressive of God's greatness and glory. In its plural form, *adonim*, it is even used for objects which are not even worshipped.¹ Thus it is a violation of the sanctity of God's name.

When we come to Christianity we find that even God's name Yahweh was lost five hundred years before Jesus Christ. In the four Gospels, Yahweh has not been mentioned at all. In their translation of the Gospels published by the Jehovah's Witnesses they have substituted the word 'Jehovah' for God. This is not right because in Greek manuscripts 'Jehovah' is not mentioned. Moreover, 'Yahweh' was the correct form and not 'Jehovah', which shows that the very name of their sect is wrong.

Prophet Muhammad told God's real name

Let us find out who was the person who was to convey the real name of God to the world. Let us carefully ponder over the following passages from the Bible:

1. "O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth!"²
2. "And those who know Your name will put their trust in You..."³
3. "I will set him on high, because he has known My name."⁴
4. "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!"⁵

¹ Deuteronomy, 10:17; Psalms, 136:3, etc.

² Psalms, 8:9.

³ *Ibid.*, 9:10.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 91:14.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 118:26. Matthew, 21:9, 23:39.

5. “Both young men and maidens; old men and children. Let them praise the name of the LORD, for His name alone is exalted...”¹
6. “And in that day you will say: ‘Praise the LORD, call upon His name ...’”²
7. “My determination is to gather the nations ...”³
8. “For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, that they all may call on the name of the LORD, to serve Him with one accord.”⁴
9. “And they shall trust in the name of the LORD.”⁵
10. “They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, ‘This is My people’; and each one will say, ‘The LORD is my God.’”⁶
11. “And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be — ‘The LORD is one,’ and His name one.”⁷
12. “... we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever.”⁸
13. “ ‘... And they shall walk up and down in His name,’ says the LORD.”⁹

¹ Psalms, 148:12–13. King James Version reads ‘excellent’ for ‘exalted’.

² Isaiah, 12:4.

³ Zephaniah, 3:8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 3:9.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 3:12.

⁶ Zechariah, 13:9.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 14:9.

⁸ Micah, 4:5.

⁹ Zechariah, 10:12.

14. "I will write on him the name of My God ... And I will write on him My new name."¹

The above references nos. 3, 4, 6–14 indicate that these are prophecies about the future. These references also show that the excellent name of God is one in all the earth (no. 1, 5, 11); those who know His name, i.e., Muslims, will put their trust in Him (nos. 2, 9). He who will know His name will be given a rank of honour (no. 3), i.e., he will be the greatest of all the prophets who will continuously praise God and call upon His name. That Prophet will be blessed and will convey God's name to young men and maidens, old men and children, and will make everyone remember it (nos. 4, 5). He will teach them to start all their undertakings in the name of God (nos., 8, 10), contrary to the teachings of the rabbis, priests and pandits. That Promised Prophet will teach people how to praise God, the Lord of all the worlds (no. 6). God will bring all the nations of the world under one flag and purify them so that they will serve Him with one accord and will call upon Him as their Lord (nos. 8). And in that day, i.e., the time of the advent of Islam, there will be One Lord and His name One, i.e., Allah (no. 11). The followers of Islam will walk in the light of this new name for ever and ever (no. 12). How great are these prophecies which are fulfilled by the Holy Prophet and by his message in the form of Islam!

“Do you know one that can be named along with Him?”²

The Quranic assertion is that in all the languages of the world there is not a word which conveys the full significance of the word 'Allah'. It does not have a plural or a dual or a feminine gender. It is not applied to anyone except God. E. W. Lane, in his classic *Arabic-English Lexicon*, explains it as “comprising

¹ Revelation, 3:12.

² The Quran, 19:65 — *Hal ta'lamu la-hū samiyya.*

all the attributes of perfection”. This most excellent and perfect name was taught by an unlettered Prophet. He did not only teach his people about this Great Name but also laid his complete trust in Him. The Prophet was neither a king nor a king’s son, but only an orphan in his childhood, and became a helpless and friendless person when he claimed to be the saviour of humanity. In spite of these hardships, he was able to weld together the most disunited people in the world. Those degenerate people were set on high as it was foretold by the prophet David centuries before. It was the Prophet Muhammad who was blessed and whom his followers bless all over the world. The Name which was concealed from the world, the Name which was the most precious gift sought after, the knowledge about that Name was given to mankind by the Prophet Muhammad. He taught this Name about which the prophet Zechariah said:

“They will call on My name, and I will answer them.”¹

“And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be — ‘The LORD is one,’ and His name one.”²

This miracle happened among a people who worshipped different gods. However, what was foretold by the prophets Isaiah and David was fulfilled:

“And in that day you will say: ‘Praise the LORD, call upon His name ...’”³

“Both young men and maidens; old men and children. Let them praise the name of the LORD, for His name alone is exalted ...”⁴

¹ Zechariah, 13:9.

² Zechariah, 14:9.

³ Isaiah, 12:4.

⁴ Psalms, 148:12–13.

Jehovah cannot be the real name of God. Firstly, as has been discussed earlier, this name is not correct. Secondly, the punishment of uttering this name was death. Thirdly, in the above references, quoted from the writings of the prophets who appeared after Moses, the mention has been made of a new name of the Lord. And that new name has only been given by the Prophet Muhammad. The first revelation given to the Holy Prophet was:

“Recite in the name of thy Lord Who creates.”¹

In compliance with this injunction, every chapter of the Holy Quran starts with the words:

“In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.”

This also shows the fulfilment of David’s prophecy quoted above: “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!”² The expression “in the name of the Lord” in the Psalms is similar to the first Quranic revelation “recite in the name of thy Lord”.

In the Gospels the same prophecy has been repeated³ which shows that this prophecy was not fulfilled up to the advent of Jesus Christ. And because Jesus did not tell the real name of God (he did not mention ‘Yahweh’ even once in his utterances), therefore this prophecy cannot be said to have been fulfilled in his person.

The prophecy of Zephaniah, “My determination is to gather the nations ... For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, that they all may call on the name of the LORD, to serve Him with one accord”⁴, was also fulfilled by the Holy

¹ The Quran, 96:1.

² Psalms, 118:26.

³ Matthew, 21:9, 23:39; Mark, 11:9; Luke, 19:38, 13:35; John, 12:13.

⁴ Zephaniah, 3:8–9.

Prophet. The Christian missionaries do not gather and baptise people in the name of God but in the name of Jesus Christ.

It should also be borne in mind that the name of God which the Holy Prophet revealed to the world comprises all the attributes of perfection,¹ as stated earlier. Besides the name Allah, all the other Divine names are attributive. This only proves that there is only One Being towards whose real name all the other attributive names refer. Thus it is a great blessing for the world that the Holy Prophet has brought mankind together under one banner which is engraved with the words: *lā-ilāha ill-Allāh*, i.e., there is no god except Allah. And in this name Allah all the other Divine attributive names have also been comprised.

This is not, however, an abstract discussion about the name of God. In previous times, the lands of Asia, Africa and Europe echoed with the shouts of *Allāhu-akbar* ('Allah is the Most Supreme'), thus fulfilling the words of David quoted above that young and old, men and women, will praise the name of God, the most excellent name. The future of mankind will also see that the nations of the world, however strong they become, will one day learn to praise the name of Allah, the Lord of all the worlds.

¹ E. W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*.