



Salim Onbargi

“This book came to be as a result of personal convictions about certain Daheshist teachings. In it, I describe such topics as divine justice, reincarnation, consciousness, the soul, and nature. These thoughts were inspired by my faith in Daheshism, my personal experience with this faith, its followers, and with Dr. Dahesh himself, the founder of this faith.”—Author



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ESSAYS INSPIRED BY DAHESHIST TEACHINGS

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TRANSLATED BY
NAJWA SALAM BRAX



*Death is simply
a shedding of the physical body
like the butterfly shedding its cocoon.*

*It is a transition
to a higher state of consciousness
where you continue to perceive,
to understand, to laugh,
and to be able to grow.*

—Elisabeth Kubler Ross

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Dedication

To the man who renewed my faith in God Almighty,
His Infinite Mercy, His Just Ways and Divine Messages;
To he who rekindled in my soul the torches of consolation
and hope after despair caused by inequity and the cruelty of life;
To the man who steadfastly fought vice,
evil and corruption in all of its forms;
To he who descended to Earth in order to deliver to us
a glorified Divine Message—
a Message for which he struggled and was persecuted.
To the man who lived by
and stood for noble spiritual principles and values.
To Doctor Dahesh I dedicate this book

-Salim Onbargi

Introduction

This book came to be as a result of personal convictions about certain Daheshist teachings. In it I describe such topics as divine justice, reincarnation, consciousness, the soul, nature and its abuse by mankind. These thoughts were inspired by my faith in Daheshism that began in 1963. My opinions arise from being spiritually and psychologically absorbed in everything related to Daheshism. These include many conversations that I had personally with Dr. Dahesh, the founder of this new faith, as well as discussions with other Daheshists. They also include review of Dr. Dahesh's diverse writings, where I had the opportunity to gain insight from spiritual revelations, in addition to personally witnessing the spiritual phenomena or miracles that he performed. To support my thoughts and beliefs, I try to correlate Daheshist concepts with the holy books, mainly the New Testament in the Bible and the Holy Qur'an. I also try to discuss them in light of recent scientific discoveries. However, I do not force my personal beliefs and convictions on others, whether individuals or groups.

Daheshism provides some general principles and tenets that are easy to believe and to understand. On the other hand it introduces other difficult concepts that have not yet been clearly explained. They are either hard to understand or require appropriate intellectual and spiritual capabilities to fully understand them. Therefore, disagreement in interpretation of certain concepts occurs, even among Daheshists, depending on a person's convictions and spiritual readiness.

Since the early Daheshists had varying intellectual capabilities and spiritual readiness, the founder of Daheshism would restrict certain spiritual explanations to certain individuals. Daheshism is not the only faith to withhold some spiritual truths from its believers. The holy books of the Christian and Moslem faiths also contain some matters that are not clearly illustrated and are still subject to different interpretation. Christ, glory to his name, told his disciples, "If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?" (John 3:12). When companions of the great Arab prophet Mohammed insisted he show them the essence of the Spirit, the following holy verse came to him, "And they ask you about the Spirit. Say, "The Spirit is of my Lord's command, and you have not been given but a little knowledge" (The surah of Al-Isra' or The Night Journey. Verse 85). All Heavenly Messages are subject to interpretation. Each believer understands the teachings of his religion through his or her own perspective, conviction and spiritual readiness.

The essays in this book contain many explanations found in other Heavenly Messages such as reward and retribution, which make each individual responsible for his deeds and thoughts. However, new Daheshist concepts are introduced that are not found elsewhere, such as the concept of Spiritual Fluids or Sayyals which are the essence of man's soul and the meaning of which I will greatly elaborate upon in this book. Another concept that Daheshism introduces is the existence of consciousness in all creatures and objects as well as other concepts that the non-Daheshist will find very difficult to understand, which those well versed in Daheshism find simple and obvious.

In my discussion, I admit to some redundancy. The reason is that the overlapping and correlation of Daheshist concepts such as consciousness, spiritual causality and reincarnation lead to repetition either in the discussion of topics or in the conclusions that are drawn. According to the Daheshist faiths, for instance, all creatures are endowed with consciousness, which is mandated, by reincarnation and that governs all creatures. Daheshists believe in reincarnation just as simply as they believe in a Greater Being or God Almighty. If conscious powers known as sayyals or spiritual fluids in Daheshism are transferred from one being to another without exception, then all animals and plants and inanimate objects are endowed, like humans, with consciousness. This truth is firmly confirmed and repeated throughout Doctor Dahesh's books, particularly in his inspired stories. Belief in reincarnation also leads to belief in the immortal nature of the soul.

Moreover, Daheshist teachings state that the laws of reincarnation depend upon the principle of divine justice and retribution, otherwise known as spiritual causality. Once the life of an individual is ended, he who degrades his sayyals by committing sin is reincarnated into an inferior creature of a well-merited physical form. An example of this Daheshist concept can be found in Islam where the results of God's wrath on those individuals who degrade their souls are described in the Qur'an. "Those whom Allah cursed and on whom He poured forth His wrath, transformed them into monkeys and swine..." (The surah of Al-Ma'ida or The Table. Verse 60). The reincarnated individual is subject to divinely controlled spiritual causality. Each being is punished or rewarded according to his deeds and thoughts.

Furthermore, there is a correlation between spiritual causality and the sayyals of all creatures. Causality affects them with special conditions and events whether in one life cycle or consecutive ones, depending on the spiritual level of their sayyals, whether elevated or degraded. These sayyals

remain confined to their miserable earthly prisons until they improve enough spiritually to free themselves from their afflicted reincarnations and return to the non-physical World of Spirits from which they once emanated. If one understands the concept of sayyals, if one can fathom their meaning and how they instantly materialize by way of merit, how they function, move and influence things and events, one will make good progress in comprehending the fundamental Daheshist spiritual teachings. One will discover that the Daheshist tenets are, in reality, an integrated system of logical, correlated and consistent spiritual laws that are beautiful and loved by those who understand them.

Some may criticize my use of imprecise terms such as “consciousness” to indicate the power of man’s mind. Daheshists refer to this consciousness as sayyals, the essence of the soul, which are capable of spiritual elevation or degradation. By means of these sayyals man can evaluate things and distinguish between good and evil, between beneficial and harmful deeds, and they explain desires and events. I use the word “consciousness” after careful examination, hesitation, and consultation because, for me, psychological faculties have roots or origins in the mind. After all, don’t thoughts stimulate feelings and emotions in the soul and produce lowly or noble tendencies, desires and motivations? If not, from where do these tendencies and desires come? How can we define and describe them? By which criterion can we comprehend and control them? Aren’t thoughts the best criterion to define these mind states? Can’t we by thoughts alone control or stir up lowly tendencies within us such as greed, envy, arrogance, dishonesty, theft, slander, or aggressiveness?

Dr. Dahesh himself refers to these conscious thoughts or sayyals that dominate our minds on occasion. In his book, *Humble Supplications*, he prays to God Almighty and pleads:” Keep away from us the lowly thoughts and let them not come near us...” These reflections lead me to conclude that conscious thoughts are the main sayyals in creation. Diverse matters and events are determined according to their elevation or degradation. ¹

I may be criticized for the way I use the word “spiritual” in different parts of the book. This word can have different meanings depending on the context in which it is used. Sometimes it is used to mean Heavenly or lofty, sometimes it refers to Divine Will. I also use it to refer to cultural, intellectual or moral tendencies in a society as well as the psyche of living creatures, mainly man, whether good or bad. When I discuss spiritual

¹ The main sayyals in creatures are conscious. When we refer to them in this book, we mean the spiritual essence of each being in accordance with the spiritual degree of elevation or degradation that it has attained; these sayyals reincarnate according to their merit.

causality, thoughts, or spiritual sayyals, I refer once again, to psychological and intellectual states not only in man but in all living and material things whether elevated or degraded, and whether derived from Divine or human will.

In conclusion, I am deeply grateful for all those fellow Daheshists who read the topics in this book and gave their input.

-Salim Onbargi

What Distinguishes Daheshism From Other Spiritual Messages ²

I congratulate my fellow Daheshists, not only on the occasion of the Daheshist New Year's Day, but also on the inauguration of the Daheshist bookstore, *The Daheshist Heritage*, in New York City, the heartbeat of America. This bookstore will become, God willing, a source of Daheshist Light and a launching pad for our great message, which was not appreciated by the Arab world. This message therefore has turned to America where its holy Voice can be heard, and from there it will propagate, God willing, throughout the whole world. Fellow Daheshists, be delighted in your faith, for God has distinguished it from other spiritual messages. If you had not merited being exposed to Daheshism, it would not have approached and introduced itself to you, so you can appreciate its beauty and perfection.

Some may wonder what distinguishes our message from other Heavenly messages? And what new teachings does it introduce to the world that are lacking in others? I have frequently heard these questions posed to Daheshists. The founder of Daheshism along with some of his disciples would respond this way, "Our doctrine is a message of love, virtue and brotherhood; it urges people to practice good deeds, obey God's commandments, and stay away from what He forbids, really not unlike the basic messages of the other faiths." However, the Daheshist message goes beyond these tenets to assert the unity of religions. It calls on people to strongly believe in their respective religions and faithfully practice their teachings. Daheshism urges Moslems to adhere to the spirit of their religion, encourages Christians to loyally follow the teachings of Christ and his noble Gospel, and calls upon Jews to behave according to Moses' commandments, and tells the followers of other faiths to sincerely adhere to the spirit of their religious teachings. However this response that was deliberately repeated did not illustrate the whole reality and truth of Daheshism. These simplified answers were justified during the lifetime of Dr. Dahesh's life due to the intolerant environment in which he preached and his disciples lived. I refer to the intellectually self-secluded Arab society, which opposes new spiritual ideas and free thought.

There were several circumstances that caused the Daheshists in Lebanon and other Arab countries to be extremely cautious when discussing their message with others, sometimes addressing listeners in indirect ways that suited their state of mind.

² A speech delivered at the Daheshist Publishing House in New York City on the Daheshist New Year's Day, on March 23, 1993.

The first circumstance was the hostility with which the Lebanese authorities and clergymen unjustly attacked Doctor Dahesh and his followers during the presidency of Bechara El-Khoury (1943-1952). The second circumstance was the widespread Christian and Moslem religious fanaticism in Lebanese circles, sustained by religious institutions and groups. The third circumstance was that the Daheshist message brought new spiritual teachings that were unfamiliar to people with pre-existing beliefs and convictions. In addition, it takes a certain intellectual or spiritual disposition and readiness for individuals to understand these spiritual teachings. Doctor Dahesh, who was endowed with unique wisdom and intelligence, advised his disciples to explain Daheshism to others according to their intellectual capabilities and to heed the following quote: "Woe to those who try to teach others more than their minds can comprehend."

For these reasons, it was not easy at first for Daheshists to openly declare that their new message was attested in heaven, introducing new concepts that no former religion had disclosed and was intended for modern times. They tried to advise others to put aside religious nonessential ideas and unworthy rites that ultimately diminish the quintessence of heavenly teachings. It was difficult indeed for Daheshists to tell those interested in Daheshism, whether Christians, Moslems or believers in other faiths, that the previous monotheistic religions, and now Daheshism, represent, in whole or in part, elements of the same Spiritual Truth addressed to different groups of people. Furthermore, this Truth has been revealed gradually and in accordance with prevailing spiritual readiness and merit of those people for whom these messages were intended. The truth was also revealed in ways that would be consistent with and relevant to the psychological and cultural characteristics of people receiving these heavenly messages.

For example, the laws of Moses states "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth..." [Exodus 21: 24] " He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death" [Exodus 21:12]. These precepts of revenge were consistent with the psyche and usage of Moses' people. The concepts of paradise and hell, persecution in the name of God, and of polygamy were, in fact, suitable to the mind state and psychological characteristics of the pre-Islamic Bedouin. Likewise, the teachings of love, mercy, forgiveness and tolerance, which Jesus Christ preached, were close to the psyche of his followers. In spite of their different levels of complexity, whether separated or united, all these spiritual principles and precepts derive from the same universal Truth. This Spiritual Truth is limitless, for it is inherent in God's essence. It has existed ever since the Beginning and shall be forever unchanged.

Just like physical laws have been gradually revealed through scientific progress, this Spiritual Truth has been disclosed little by little in accordance with spiritual progress and merit. Indeed, in our universe, both the physical and spiritual laws are joined like inseparable twins. Just as the laws of nature are the constant determinants of the material aspects of the sayyals, that is the laws related to the physical form of creatures, such as the laws of gravity, motion, or nuclear bonding; similarly the spiritual laws are the constant determinants of the spiritual aspects of the sayyals, that is, the laws that cause change, transformation, diversity, resurrection, extinction and all other events and conditions that affect creatures.

The secrets of both spiritual and physical laws are disclosed only to those who merit comprehending them, either by advanced scientific progress or spiritual promotion. The Daheshist miracles, along with the inspired writings of Doctor Dahesh, assert that knowledge in its diverse levels is not restricted to our Earth but transcends humankind to worlds throughout the universe. The more a planet's inhabitants degrade themselves, the more ignorance, backwardness, misery and suffering that engulfs them. Therefore spiritual knowledge would not be accepted, incomprehensible to these inhabitants. On the contrary, as they improve themselves, their spiritual knowledge increases and becomes more clear; happiness and bliss then dwell on the planet.³

The majority of Daheshist teachings are not restricted to religious rites, duties, and social laws, as in Judaism and Islam; rather, it is a Message of spiritual values, ethics, conviction and knowledge that entails personal responsibility. It is a Message that was revealed to lead its followers to the pathway of spiritual progress and salvation so they might return to the realm of the World of Spirits where eternal felicity, bliss and glory reign. Daheshism provides individuals with tenets that become clearer as each individual's sayyals progress, for clarity comes with increasing spirituality. Spiritual progress, Daheshism tells us, cannot be achieved through meditation alone. Rather it comes from striving against bad desires and tendencies as well as from practicing good deeds and upholding the truth and virtuous values.

By virtue of their dynamism, Daheshist tenets leave their impact on the believer's sayyal, becoming a guiding voice and a living conscience for his soul that can affect and be affected by his or her environment. These

³ Daheshist phenomena definitely assert that the universe is inhabited with innumerable civilizations which are at different levels of scientific development and spiritual progress. Dr. Dahesh's miracles prove the existence of sublime material worlds that transcend ours immensely in both scientific development and spiritual progress.

principles reveal to him in a very profound way that wherever he goes, all that surrounds him is created by God, be it man, animal, plant, or inanimate object. And just like man, all are rational creatures subject to temptations according to the laws that govern their existence. They all deserve mercy and forgiveness although they differ in kind and form, for they share with man their spiritual origin and essence and are subject to the just laws of reincarnation. Once created, they become subject to trials in order to improve their sayyals. Also, their trials and temptations will be repeated in consecutive life rounds where they are free to lower or elevate their sayyals. By successfully transitioning from state to state and improving their sayyals, they ultimately reach the realms of bliss, felicity and deliverance, the Kingdom of God. A true Daheshist lives his life led by the light of these tenets and upholds Daheshist principles in his behavior.

Unlike other religions, the Daheshist doctrine is not derived from philosophical assumptions. It rejects Eastern mystical beliefs such as Sufism, where extremists claim that the mysteries of the universe can be disclosed through pure meditation and sudden spiritual insight in a so-called spontaneous flash, which leads to merging with the universe. Daheshists contend that these pretenders lack the least bit of humility, for they deify themselves while they are still in human form, a condition that is insignificant relative to that of the great cosmos in which we exist where innumerable civilizations abound. In addition, these beliefs contradict the Daheshist principle that spiritual laws and truth are disclosed only to those who merit understanding them through spiritual strife and effort that leads to knowledge and progress.

Second, Daheshists denounce these mystic beliefs because they lack proof, logic, and sharing of personal experience with others. More disturbing, these Eastern beliefs, which have some supporters in the west, are indifferent towards all aspects of evil. They pretend that good and evil are but two sides of one reality. These beliefs often lack spiritual values and teachings that lead to spiritual progress that should be the goal of all men.

In my view, the disclosed Daheshist teachings constitute but a small part of the whole spiritual Truth. This is the reason for which the concepts of Daheshism were not restricted to one book as in the Bible or in the Holy Qur'an. We may gather the fundamental principles of Daheshism by reading the many diverse books written by Doctor Dahesh, the spiritual messages that were revealed to him, and his conversations and statements that were accurately recorded. In addition, much is to be learned from the study of his spiritual, chronicled miracles and what disciples have written about him. Daheshist truths can be clarified and supported by review of the

Holy books as well as books on the subject of natural sciences, in particular modern physics. With this in mind, those whose sayyals are deserving will appreciate Dareshist Truths by contemplating nature and probing world events and the diversity of creation.

In this book I attempt to discuss these principles and concepts. I pray to God Almighty for help in achieving this task and pray that I am up to the challenge. May He bestow upon me wisdom and grant me the ability to think soundly and reflect the truth in my writings.

Doctor Dahesh and His Spiritual Truth

Who is Doctor Dahesh, a man who performed supernatural miracles and brought us new heavenly teachings? Who is this man that lived in our midst in the twentieth century and that we knew to be a spiritual guide and a herald at a time when injustice, self-indulgence, materialism, and every other vice prevails among people? Who is this messenger empowered by heaven to perform tangible miracles witnessed by thousands of people, and who came to Earth to warn us of its imminent destruction, along with its inhabitants, unless man repents to God, obeys His commandments and refrains from sin and evil so that he does not suffer in Hell? Who is that great prophet mentioned in the following Qur'anic verse whose arrival signals the impending Doomsday? "He [Christ] is certainly the sign of the Hour (of change); so do not doubt it and listen to Me. This is the straight path." (The surah of Al-Zukhruf or Adornment. Verse 60). The Holy Gospel also makes mention of this prophet that will arrive at the end of time.

This great messenger is Doctor Dahesh who came to reveal heavenly truths unknown to men. He came to lead them to the pathway of Truth and salvation before God's Judgment, for those who obey God's commandments will not perish but will gain eternal life. If we fail to follow and comply with God's commandments, the commandments of the eternal truth, which all the Heavenly messages reveal, we will not escape the devastation from which Doctor Dahesh attempts to save us. These Messages were made real by God's prophets who exemplified spiritual values, ethics and convictions in their own lives. Moses made real his Message with fortitude, suffering and great sacrifice in order to rescue his people from the tyranny of the Pharaoh and from being swept away into the abyss of evil. Jesus embodied his Message in transcendent love and self-sacrifice for redeeming others. The Arab prophet Mohammed also made real his Message with his morals, virtues and the good example of his own life for his believers to follow, as cited in the following verse: "You have indeed a noble paradigm in the Apostle of God" (The surah of Al-Ahzab or The Confederates. Verse 21).

Likewise, Doctor Dahesh embodied his Message by living spiritual and humane values and lofty convictions. He embodied his Message in his sayings, deeds, feelings and his graciousness and respect toward people and their beliefs. He made real his heavenly Message with his tenderness, kindness, and sympathy towards the poor and deprived, as well as his love for sincerity, loyalty and courage. On the other hand he despised liars, hypocrites, flatterers and greed. He cared not about fame, money, power

or other materialistic values. He was honest in all his deeds, defending human rights, proclaiming the truth, and sustaining whatever sacrifice was required. He was righteous and forgiving even to those who harmed him as well as those who doubted his honesty. Nothing other than serving God and having His consent in the delivery of his Message made him beam with happiness. God was his only Hope and Helper in all he did. His unwavering spiritual goal was to reveal the holy Daheshist Message in order to redeem as many people as possible.

The following excerpt which Doctor Dahesh titled “Vanity of Vanities” reflects the subject of power, money, materialism and sensual pleasures, the source of deceptive happiness for which all people yearn....

Vanity of Vanities

*I lived in towering palaces,
Accumulated considerable wealth;
I treasured glittering gold
And precious stones;
I possessed costly furs, fancy attires
And luxurious perfumes;
I was invited to princes' banquets,
Traveled throughout the world,
From East to West;
Proud and beautiful women
Surrounded me...
Eventually... I realized
All these things will not bring
Happiness to my soul;
They are indeed vanity of vanities.*

Nothing but God, the Almighty

Is Eternal Truth.

Dear fellow Daheshist brothers and sisters; this excerpt from *Vanity of Vanities* reveals that you will not find peace of mind and real happiness unless you approach the Almighty. Then His great laws and deeds will delight you. Furthermore, you cannot comprehend heavenly Knowledge and Truth unless you become justly worthy of them. You cannot grasp Daheshist teachings and have them become an essential part of your being and a basis for your behavior in life unless you raise your sayyals to a high spiritual level. You attain this goal when you earnestly immerse yourselves in the Beloved Prophet's books, statements, biography, and witness to the supernatural miracles he performed, review the spiritual messages revealed to him. All these contain the eternal spiritual Truth as well as lofty human ideals, exemplified by Dr. Dahesh in his own life.

If you adhere to and comply with all these Daheshist spiritual tenets, values, and ideals, you will become immune to lowly human desires and whims, which may seduce and tempt you. If these temptations overcome you, your life's journey dominated by earthly passions will lead you to the worlds of sin and destruction. I appeal to you, fellow Daheshists, to read avidly all that Doctor Dahesh has written as well as what was revealed to him. You will find in them heavenly secrets and tenets that God has not previously disclosed to humans. Look closely, in awe and in reverence, at the greatness of the fascinating miracles and supernatural phenomena, which were achieved through him, and ponder the spiritual messages that were revealed to him. Try to understand these matters with a pure and humble heart, asking for mercy, guidance and God's forgiveness; you will then deserve spiritual knowledge and it will be disclosed to you. Jesus said, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." [Matthew 7:7]

In doing so, you will revel in the great happiness that comes with knowledge. The holy Daheshist Message will reveal to you spiritual Truths no one before has ever disclosed. During a spiritual session with Dr. Dahesh, a message from the late philosopher Plato was revealed: "As for you, to whom the plain Truth has been disclosed, be delighted; how great is your felicity." ⁴ With hope and joy ponder over these spiritual mysteries

⁴ Halim Dammous: *The Astonishing Miracles and Prodigies of Dr. Dahesh*. Beirut: Al-Nar Wal-Nour Publishing, 1983, p. 42].

and teachings, for they will convey happiness and deliver you from your materialistic shackles if you adhere to them and behave accordingly.

Dear fellow Daheshists, there is no salvation for anyone from his or her miserable physical reincarnations except through spiritual progress, which is the goal of each life. We must uphold the Truth by practicing good deeds attempting to return to the springs of virtue and purity, to the Light, to God Almighty and His infinite mercy.

Journey of a Lifetime in the Company of Doctor Dahesh

My life seems to have been a series of journeys throughout the world. However the most enjoyable journey that has left a lasting impression on me is the one that began over thirty-five years ago and has not yet ended. Unlike any other, this journey was into the world of the soul, mind, and spirit, the most important journey of my life in the company of Dr. Dahesh. The date goes back to the summer of 1963, the year I met Doctor Dahesh and started my walk in the shadow of his spiritual Mission.

The first time I met the founder of Daheshism, I had no intention of embracing his Spiritual Message. Neither did I expect the profound changes this meeting would make in all aspects of my life. At first, I was attracted to Doctor Dahesh by my desire to witness firsthand his supernatural phenomena which I had heard about through many people, particularly my late brother, Ali, who urged me to accompany him on one of his visits to Doctor Dahesh. When I finally met him, I found Dr. Dahesh to be unique, sensitive, and kind-hearted individual, qualities that encouraged me to request other opportunities to visit him if circumstances permitted.

In the beginning, neither the purpose of the supernatural phenomena I witnessed nor the Daheshist teachings I was exposed to were as clear as I expected. In addition, I did not put myself into a position to accept, without reservation, some of the Daheshist teachings that I would become familiar with. On one hand, some were difficult for me to believe because they deviated from the familiar, and on the other hand, I lacked sufficient spiritual and psychological readiness. However, in time, and as my visits to the founder of the Daheshist faith became more frequent, almost daily in fact, I began to familiarize myself with his spiritual teachings through conversations with him, reading his many writings, and witnessing his supernatural phenomena. Deep inside me, his spiritual identity became brighter and clearer, so that I knew without a doubt that I was in the company of a supernatural person. I felt that he was a man endowed with spiritual powers from Heaven in order to accomplish a great Spiritual Mission that would one day become evident.

These were the circumstances that led to my acquaintance with Dr. Dahesh and my belief in the Daheshist faith. ⁵ Circumstances developed

⁵ For further reading about Daheshism, the reader can refer to my book, *Born Again with Doctor Dahesh*, published by the Daheshist Publishing in NY, 1993.

later that gave me an opportunity to be blessed with being his travel companion around the world and to benefit from the spring of his love and teachings. For this, I am indebted to him for as long as I live. It is with great pleasure that I write about him in these next few pages.

In the summer of 1970, I began my travels around the globe with Dr. Dahesh when he decided to visit the Arabian Gulf States. This was a region that I traveled to frequently on business as a representative of an American company. At the time, I had no idea this trip would be the first of many in his company. We traveled together to twenty-three countries and over thirty cities throughout the Middle East, Eastern and Western Europe, Africa, and Russia or the former Soviet Union. Our travels exceeded two years of continuous travel, except for occasional returns to Beirut to rest and to prepare for the next trip. It is worth mentioning that all of my travels with Dr. Dahesh, except that to the Soviet Union, included business obligations for me on behalf of the American company that I represented.

I felt honored and privileged to accompany Dr. Dahesh during these trips where I witnessed many of his supernatural and dazzling spiritual phenomena, including his inspired writings. It would take many more pages to fully describe Dr. Dahesh, his person, his teachings, and the impact he has left on my soul. Here I will describe him only briefly.

I observed Dr. Dahesh to be an honorable man of God in every way. With my own eyes I saw him apply righteousness, purity, and charity in words and in action. I witnessed a kind-hearted and good-natured person who respected people regardless of their social class. I sensed in him sympathy for the wretched and the helpless and saw him suffer at the sight of the poor and deprived. I saw him renounce trivial worldly glories. Wealth, power, influence and superficial social and traditional customs meant nothing to him. I knew him to be a genius, an inspired writer and thinker whose eyes, lips, and pen beamed revelation and Truth. The main goal of his work was to seek the truth and call for righteousness, filling volumes of diverse books with refined meanings and spiritual purpose, whether in short stories, inspirational writings, diaries, prayers, travels, or aphorisms. Literature, in his opinion, was not limited to artistic pleasure but should transcend it towards reformative and moral goals. Nevertheless, the goal of spiritual reform merged in his writings with an exceptional literary beauty in the Arabic language, excelling in skill, strength of expression, variety of styles, and wide range of imagination.

This tendency towards virtue and truth came naturally in his writings, free from any pretense. It flowed through his veins and controlled his pen.

These inspired writings took place at an extraordinary speed, a speed that was very difficult for anyone to believe unless they actually witnessed it themselves. I will never forget how he challenged some of his literary friends on a specific subject, and then surpassed them in compositional speed and literary quality. Being the founder of a great spiritual Mission, his sublime teachings, virtue, decency and pure intentions withstood the rigor of doubt and questioning in his writings. His mission shaped his literature imbuing it all with a spiritual character, regardless of the subject matter or literary style.

I knew Dr. Dahesh to possess abundant wisdom, keen intelligence, hunger for knowledge, and love for the fine arts, a love that made him search far and wide to acquire many of its forms. I believe this love for fine art had far-reaching spiritual causes. I knew Dr. Dahesh to be an avid reader and collector of all kinds of books, newspapers, and magazines. He loved to travel, he avoided loud gatherings, and he had a preference for certain foods and certain attire for spiritual reasons unknown to us. According to him, matter and things are not represented simply by their form but by their spiritual characteristics, something that becomes clear only after understanding his spiritual philosophy.

Through Dr. Dahesh I heard the voice of the spirit of guidance and wisdom. I came to realize that we live in a lowly and trivial world when compared to other worlds in which bliss and light predominate. Since Earth abounds with evil, it follows that we would not be here had it not been for sins committed and the punishment that we must endure. I learned that there is no death, annihilation or nonexistence, but transition from one state to another according to spiritual merit, and that change and transformation follow permanent laws of nature that govern all creatures, the laws of divine justice and mercy. Providence has graced us with reincarnation so we can purify ourselves from our transgressions with multiple opportunities, here on earth and hereafter. Our distant past and our remote future do converge at this point in our existence. Whatever misery and unhappiness we face is the result of our deeds because we harvest what we sow. It became clear to me that most things in life are vain and perishable. Yet one can reach the realms of bliss and light by those who know their limits, fear God, and obey His commandments. God alone is our hope and end.

Dr. Dahesh wrote of his travels around the world in a series of twenty-two books titled *Daheshist Travels Around the Globe*. In this series, he wrote about his experiences from scenery to incidents and combined them with his contemplations and impressions. He kept a diary on a regular basis. I strongly believe that this series of books will be a historical witness and a

clear observation of humanity's decadence and spiritual degradation. It is as if Dr. Dahesh wanted to record his observations so that God's wrath, when it befalls Earth, will be justified. Dr. Dahesh writes, "I was a herald and I have warned them." Dr. Dahesh saw and felt things that others could not. He observed things with the eye of an expert and evaluated things for what they were and not what they appeared. He was so thorough that nothing was missed. He wrote about the sins, imperfections, and evil he witnessed during his travels, writing without exaggeration of the facts. He did not dismiss the few noble deeds that he did in fact witness, and he wrote about them with praise, admiration, and appreciation.

Dr. Dahesh was strict in his judgment of people. This judgment, however, was just and full of warnings and condemnation when he deemed necessary. On the other hand, he had mercy and pity for these same people, his only intention being to help them correct their behavior whenever possible. His travels to many countries and his dealings with people from all walks of life confirmed to him that the majority of humans are alike; they are obsessed with materialism and sensual pleasures, they despise the poor, they take advantage of the hopeless and wretched and do not hesitate to resort to lying, deception, violence, theft, and other kinds of evil. They do this out of greed for money or to feed their insatiable appetite with forbidden pleasures. This detrimental behavior and spiritual degradation are widespread throughout all countries and cover all social groups and levels, from soft drink peddlers, to taxi drivers, bankers, business men, or the owners of art galleries in world capitals. This widespread moral degradation that Dr. Dahesh witnessed filled his soul with sorrow. He expressed feelings of sadness, pity, warning, and of condemnation. Perhaps he eventually lost faith and hope in reforming people for he became solitary and enjoyed only the companionship of the Daheshist followers who understood his spiritual teachings.

Dr. Dahesh also enjoyed moments of pleasure. He was especially happy during his visits to museums, art galleries, bookstores, exhibits, and markets where he would check out the local produce, merchandise, and works of art and buy what he liked. I believe, towards the end of his life, his insistence upon searching for and purchasing artistic masterpieces in all the places he visited was due to his realization that he was in a race against time. Before he died, he wanted to enrich the Daheshist Museum with as many works of art as possible.

What I have personally witnessed of Dr. Dahesh, confirmed by fellow Daheshist brothers and sisters who also knew him personally, makes it clear to me that he was a unique individual in his statements, deeds, emotions,

priorities and interests in which God was ever present. This is no wonder, for I believe he is the Messenger of Heaven who descended to us on a holy and merciful mission, the Daheshist Mission, in order to provide salvation to as many people as possible. It is with great pride and honor that I state these facts about Dr. Dahesh. Recalling my days with him, I cannot but bow my head in awe and humbleness and thank the Lord for bestowing upon me this great privilege and honor of accompanying the Beloved Prophet.

For those who have doubts about what I write, I suggest thorough review of Dr. Dahesh's literary work. Although I make an attempt to describe all that I have learned from Dr. Dahesh and introduce the reader to his Divine message, a simple explanation or summary of his spiritual teachings cannot substitute for in depth reading of his own writings. One can read what the Divinely Inspired has written with his own pen. They can read all that has been written about him and about his fascinating miracles, witnessed by thousands of people and reported in many books, newspapers, and magazines whether in Egypt in the early 1930's or in Lebanon since its independence and to the present date. These readings will support the descriptions in this book.

Daheshist Reflections on the Benefits of Heavenly Messages

Some may wonder about the benefits of repeated Heavenly messages on Earth and their prophets. Do we really need a new spiritual mission since all the previous ones have not only failed in uprooting transgressions and evil from people's souls, but have also been unsuccessful at establishing true faith, justice, mercy, goodness, love and peace in the great majority of humankind in order to rescue them from impending punishment? Unfortunately, people have continued to transgress God's laws and commandments. Do they need yet another new religion so that evildoers and hypocrites, who pretend to uphold their religious beliefs, take advantage of them in order to stir up hatred, riots and war? Haven't the most criminal and cruel of wars in man's history been waged in the name of religion?

Instead, each spiritual Mission has come to Earth to a minority of people who adhere to its teachings with different levels of faith, enthusiasm and conviction. These followers often have a certain spiritual readiness that prepares them to accept these teachings. Indeed, this spiritual disposition to accept a certain religion is most likely the outcome of previous reincarnations. Followers of a particular spiritual Mission were believers in it before its advent! It is as if their belief lay dormant within their souls pending the return of their Heavenly Guide. Once they hear his voice, they awaken to his calling with great happiness and hope, just as they had in previous life rounds. In the Bible, Jesus Christ states, "I am the good shepherd; and I know my sheep and am known by my own" (John 10:14). He addresses his followers thus; "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When He, the Spirit of truth, has come He will guide you into all truth" (John 16: 12-13).

The above verses require an explanation. Christ was speaking to his disciples in a spiritual perspective, using symbols and expressions bearing spiritual meanings that are difficult to understand in normal conversations between ordinary people. Christ was not simply addressing his disciples as Peter, John, Jacob, Matthew, Andrew as well as his other disciples. Rather, according to Daheshist interpretation, Christ was addressing the spiritual projections of the disciples' sayyals into the Spiritual world beyond time and space, meaning, "I was your guide in previous life cycles. Now I have come back to you. And since you were with me in previous lives, you know me and have returned to me at the present time. Surely, I will meet with you again in the future to disclose to you many spiritual matters that you

are unable to understand now because of the levels of your spiritual sayyals. However, you will understand and accept them in future reincarnations.”

Thus, the main goal of each of the prophets is the guidance of humankind, as many people as possible, as well as the gathering of his own sayyals, which exist within his disciples, in order to help them progress and save them. These sayyals, which belong to him, indeed merit guidance and salvation by virtue of their faith, good deeds and obedience to God’s commandments. In the Bible Jesus states, “You did not choose me but I chose you” (John 15:16).

Recurrence of Heavenly messengers sent by God to Earth will not cease, and revelations will continue to guide people, both righteous and sinners in order to bring salvation to those who merit it. This is a form of mercy and shows that there is no limit to His love and compassion. As long as there are deserving humans on Earth, He will continue to send His messengers and prophets. God has sent his prophets to Earth at different periods in time, empowering them with the Spirit and Revelation in order to disclose some of these truths and thereby warn people and urge them to walk in the path of light and before the imminent Doomsday, in accordance with the following holy verse, “Your Lord, however, never destroys the cities, unless He first sends to their mother-city a messenger, to recite to them Our revelations.” (The syrah of Al-Quasars or The Storytelling. Verse 58).

God sent Noah to his people before His wrath annihilated them by the Flood. Unfortunately, Noah’s people denied, persecuted, and ridiculed him, and they were destroyed. What we gather from the story of the Great Flood is that it is necessary that people be warned before being punished. God Almighty punishes and rewards people according to just causes, previously warning them and sending them His prophets and messengers. Furthermore, such warnings are not restricted to humankind but go beyond them to encompass all creation. Daheshism states that God’s ways of conveying His commandments are limitless, each according to its world’s system and temptations. How great is the Lord, and how limitless is His mercy that encompasses all creation, both known and unknown to us! How perfect and splendid is our glorious Daheshist Message, which reveals these realities to us.

God sends his prophets to convey specific spiritual truths unknown to people because these truths are beyond their physical senses and understanding and cannot be proven. Some perceive that these truths have little to do with daily human concerns. These include spiritual causality, and the existence of Heaven and Hell, the destiny of the pious and the

sinner, respectively, when death overcomes an individual. In Islam, this is mentioned in the Qur'an in the following verse, "The pious shall, indeed, be in bliss." (The surah Al-Infitar or The Cleaving Asunder. Verse 13). Also in this verse: "He who performs a righteous deed performs it to his own advantage, and he who perpetrates evil perpetrates it to his loss." (The surah of Al-fussilat or Well-expounded. Verse 45).

Humans are free to accept or refuse the divine commandments. The Creator grants them freedom of choice to test their hearts and consequently to punish or reward each soul according to his deeds. However, once given free choice, people become responsible for their acts, are judged accordingly and will face the consequences. The Heavenly Messages progressively unveil more of the hidden truths either because people failed to understand them in the past, or because these truths transcended people's understanding at that particular era due to the inadequacy of their spiritual levels. When intellectual and spiritual levels of man improve, spiritual understanding also progresses along with advancement of civilization and scientific achievement. More previously unknown spiritual truths will then be disclosed to people.

The purpose of the Heavenly Messages remains the same, although the messages may appear different in their interpretations, rites and teachings benefiting the people according to existing psychosocial conditions and spiritual levels. In fact, a person is born into a certain religion depending upon his merit and compatibility with the level of his spiritual sayyals that is transmitted to him at the moment of birth and reincarnation. A person, Daheshism tells us, is born a Christian because the tenets of Christianity are compatible with the level of his spiritual sayyals. That is, his main sayyal, which is latent within him, is in harmony with Christianity. Behaving according to its teachings and commandments, he benefits, uplifts his soul and becomes purer. The same holds true for those who are born Moslem, Jewish, Buddhist and so on.

Moreover, disparities between religions do not affect their common spiritual essence. Religious differences are a necessity and a form of spiritual mercy predetermined by divine wisdom. Each group of people is provided with spiritual laws that benefit them and are acceptable to them in that framework. God's law, according to the different prophets, allowed certain things for some people yet forbade them to others. For example, the Qur'an forbids Muslims to eat pork and drink alcohol, yet the Gospel does not forbid them to Christians. Islam permits polygamy, in Christianity, it is forbidden. Beyond these laws are spiritual reasons that benefit people according to their sociocultural and psychological characteristics. However, beyond these rituals, the main purpose of God's doctrine is the elevation

and discipline of each and every soul in order to raise it through spiritual progress, which is the goal of every being, without exception.

All heavenly Messages come to purify, guide and uplift the human soul, to limit its arrogance and remind it of its lowliness compared to God's greatness, holiness and the loftiness of His laws and secrets. God, through His prophets, reveals only some of his spiritual secrets to mankind. As for complete spiritual knowledge, only God Almighty can possess and probe its complete depth.

Reincarnation in the Daheshist Faith

Does life begin with the cradle and end with the grave? Does it perish with the body? What about the soul that moves the body and makes it talk, eat, feel, touch, think and develop familial and social relationships? Where does this soul go? Does it perish with the body? These questions have obsessed man since ancient times, and from them emanated the concept of reincarnation and the soul's immortality, its independence from the body and return to Earth.

Historically speaking, this is one of man's most ancient beliefs and perhaps a belief that is one of the most geographically widespread among humanity. Prehistoric man might have suspected the concept of the soul's return to life through his primitive and superstitious perspective. He expressed his thoughts through his drawings on cavern and cave walls. The Phoenicians and others also held this belief. Moreover, the ancient Egyptians believed in reincarnation and represented it in their own way. They built huge pyramids as tombs for their kings, believing that the Pharaohs' souls would return to their embalmed bodies in order to restart the journey of life.

However, the concept of the soul's immortality and the recurrence of life in different forms did not become clear and take its deep philosophical course until it emerged from Hinduism and its sacred books, such as the Bhagavad-Gita, Upanishads and others. This philosophy is based on the belief of the soul's spiritual essence, which is independent from the body, and on the necessity that the soul is delivered from its lowly physical shackles through spiritual progress away from life's temptations. This concept of reincarnation moved from India to the Far East through Buddhist philosophy and has become the main part of its teachings. This concept also moved to the Western Europe in the sixth century B.C. through Greek poets and philosophers, such as Orpheus and then Pythagoras. It was also adopted afterwards by some great Greek philosophers, such as Plato [428-347 B.C.] around the fourth century B.C.

The Greek sages and philosophers gave the concept of reincarnation thorough philosophical analysis and established a school of thought for it. Furthermore, they developed it into a mature philosophy based on argument and logic and on profound concepts relevant to the reality of the soul, its immortality and the purpose of its existence. The Encyclopedia Britannica

(11th edition) states, “The real weight and importance of metempsychosis in the West is due to its adoption by Plato.”⁶

In fact, the monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, suggest the concept of the soul’s immortality and the recurrence of life in diverse forms and states. There are various references to reincarnation in the various chapters of the Bible and in various surahs of the Qur’an. Furthermore, this concept has played a great role throughout the history of religions, particularly with early followers of the Jewish and Christian faiths. This concept started to fade away in Judaism, and the Christian Church suppressed its truth for earthly purposes and ends. As for Islam, the concept of reincarnation was adopted by several religious sects within this religion, some which no longer exist and others that still remain.

In this essay we will talk briefly about different concepts of reincarnation that are widespread throughout the world, particularly in the two religions: Hinduism and Buddhism, as well as the Almohades known as Druze, an Islamic sect. I will attempt to point out the existence of different interpretations even within the same religion. I will not discuss other minor groups that are scattered throughout the world with various beliefs and understandings of reincarnation such as the American Indians and the Eskimos of Alaska, and some esoteric sects that still exist in parts of the Middle East, such as the Ismailia, the Yezidis and the Alawis.

In this essay the word reincarnation will be used in the context of its general meaning, that is, the return of the soul to reincarnate and live after being separated from its previous body. We will not use a specific term for each form of reincarnation, such as for humans, animals, or plants.

Elizabeth Clare Prophet states in her book, *Reincarnation: The Missing Link in Christianity*⁷ that there is an increasing interest in reincarnation that is widespread in the developed industrial nations. Millions of American, Canadian and European Christians believe in reincarnation. She also mentions that a 1990 survey shows more than 20 percent of Christians in both America and Canada believe in reincarnation although they know that the Church, including all its divisions, rejects the doctrine. The Church banned it officially during the sixth century by imperial decree sustained by the Ecclesiastical Council. There are two reasons for the interest in reincarnation. First, believers are

⁶ Rosen, Steven. *The Reincarnation Controversy*. Badger, CA: Torchlight Publishing Co., 1997, p 16.

⁷ Prophet, Elizabeth Clare. *Reincarnation: The Missing Link in Christianity*. USA: Summit University, 1997.

convinced that reincarnation can explain many of life's contradictions. It is based on logical arguments, the belief in God's infinite mercy and divine justice and spiritual reward and retribution. Second, reincarnation supports the presence of a merciful God who treats all creatures justly. Otherwise we may wonder, why is a child born sick or poor, while another is sound and healthy? And why is one born in a primitive and ignorant tribe in the jungles of Africa or in the forests of the Amazon, conditions that force such an individual to live in ignorance, backwardness, poverty and disease, whereas another is born in a developed and advanced society where all aspects of civilization and prosperity are at his disposal? Can we believe in God's justice without explaining these disparities and contradictions? Can a fair God grant man on Earth only one life, fill it with trials and earthly temptations, and then severely punish him for what he has committed? This would contradict God's universal mercy. He gives His creation the opportunity of recurrent existences exposing his creatures to repeated trials and temptations until they overcome them. If they succeeds, they progresses spiritually, the purpose of existence.

I personally believe that the increasing interest in the doctrine of reincarnation at present time is due to the dissatisfaction of many people with the materialistic values and ideas that predominate in today's society. Indeed, adopting the concept of reincarnation as a psychological and intellectual substitute for materialistic values grants many people consolation and comfort and conveys to them that at the end of a dark tunnel there is a spiritual truth that is loftier and more permanent than all materialistic, base values.

There are significant differences in the concept of reincarnation between one doctrine and another, in addition to dissimilarities in the concept of reincarnation between one community and another. In Hinduism, for instance, there are three different schools of thought, including the Vedic school. This school maintains that when a materialistic man dies, his soul enters the nether regions where he endures suffering from generation to generation; his hope for salvation from hellish life is attained when one of his children or grandchildren, throughout the generations, help other people with food, water and different services. The caste system, as well as the concept of the untouchables, in which the vast majority of Indians believe, arose from this old Vedic school. Moreover, in the Buddhist philosophy, there are different explanations of the doctrine of reincarnation between southern Buddhism, known as Theravada, and northern Buddhism or Mahayana.

The Theravada, whose followers live in Thailand, Burma, Sri Lanka, Cambodia and Vietnam, do not believe in the independence of the soul from the body. They claim that the existence of man, which consists of five elements: body, senses, feelings, energy and thought, is just an illusion. At the time of death, these elements vanish and merge into nature in the form of a germ or a seed that carries all these elements together, a germ of consciousness. This germ or seed enters a mother's womb to develop into the body of a new soul. The question arises: How does this happen? Is what penetrates the mother's womb material or spiritual? There are no evident answers for these two questions.

The Mahayana, predominant in China, Japan, Korea and Tibet do not agree on these difficult concepts. They also do not support the principle of "no self", the existence of the soul apart from the body, accepted by the Theravada. The Mahayana consider this principle an addition to Buddhist philosophy during its early centuries. Buddha himself refused this principle during his lifetime.

As previously stated, Judaism, Christianity and Islam do not clearly admit rebirth or reincarnation in their doctrines, although it is implied in many passages of their holy books. Accordingly, there is little of interest to discuss in terms of disagreements in reincarnation among some of the esoteric sects that emanated from these religions, such as the Druze, the Ismailia, or the Yezidis, especially in the early stages of their history. All of these sects believe in some form or another of reincarnation.

A Summary of the Principles of Reincarnation In Hinduism, Buddhism and the Druze Doctrines

Hinduism

1- Reincarnation in Hinduism encompasses man, animal and plant but not inanimate objects. Just after death, man is reborn on Earth. His reincarnation recurs thousands of times until he is purified and free from the impurities of matter and temptations. It is only then that he returns to the spiritual realm from which he originally emanated from to join God again.

2- Since souls emanated from God, every soul is a part of God. However, some souls become angelic beings in high physical spheres, but the majority fall to Earth due to the evil deeds that they have committed, and they incarnate into bodies of lower life forms, such as insects, reptiles, beasts and grass, while a small number of souls return to human bodies. For this reason, human beings are fewer in number than all other creatures on Earth.

3- After the soul undergoes many cycles through animal and low-level life forms, it can then reincarnate into a human. At this time, after innumerable reincarnations, it can purify itself from worldly desires and material impurities in order to return to God.

4- Of all creatures, only man can seek God.

5- The next reincarnation is determined by man's tendencies and desires at the moment of death.

6- God Almighty does not interfere in the process of reincarnation; however, He observes it. Accordingly, reincarnation does not come under the divine reward-and-punishment order, but rather it happens spontaneously and is determined by desires and man's spiritual characteristics at the moment of death.

7- Since God is loving and merciful, He sends to human beings gurus or Hindu spiritual mentors to initiate their disciples into the necessities of life and away from materialism in order to save them from recurrent physical and miserable reincarnations.

Buddhism

1- Man's sensual desires and passions bind him to wearisome suffering and sentence him to recurrent reincarnations in the hateful physical worlds.

2- If man wants deliverance from suffering, he has to struggle to get rid of material things, renounce earthly life, and pursue spirituality which leads him eventually to Perfection or Nirvana after thousands of reincarnations and life cycles.

3- Enlightenment or the Buddha state is the highest level of perfection man can ever attain. This state, however, cannot be achieved by one life cycle, but rather through reincarnations that take millennia, not to mention the required psychological and spiritual disposition.

4- Northern Buddhism (Mahayana) believes that if man is righteous at death, he will rise to the realm of gods-and-the-righteous, where he revels in heavenly bliss for an appointed time. On the other hand, if he has been wicked, he will return to life as a degraded creature, such as an insect, a reptile, a beast or a plant, and he will remain in this miserable life according to the evil deeds he has committed. However, if he was in a middle state, that is, neither righteous nor wicked, he will reincarnate once again as a man.

5- Northern Buddhism goes further to say that only man can reach the state of enlightenment and salvation. All other creatures cannot comprehend spiritual matters and uplift themselves.

6- The various forms which man takes during his reincarnations are fluctuating realities, whether he is a righteous being in heaven, or an insect, beast, or man on Earth. They are temporal, physical and illusive states. The absolute reality is Buddha in his spiritual level that transcends the limits of time and space. Buddha does not interfere in the process of reincarnation.⁸

⁸ It is worth noting that the idea of God as it is known in the monotheist religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) does not exist in Buddhism. To the Buddhists, the concept of reincarnation is irrelevant to divine justice, punishment and reward; it occurs spontaneously by reason of desires and mental characteristics inherent in each soul.

The Druze

The Druze are an esoteric sect that split from an Islamic denomination in the eleventh century AC, in the beginning of the Fatimid era, and settled in the Greater Syria (Syria, Lebanon and Palestine).

1- The Druze believe in the immortality of the soul that constantly and immediately reincarnates into bodies. In their view, the soul cannot exist apart from the body. Its reincarnation is never-ending. During this process, it is tested by different human conditions such as poverty, sickness, ignorance, ugliness, or wealth, health, intelligence and beauty until it gets what it merits on the Reckoning Day.

2- In the doctrine of the Druze, reincarnation is restricted only to human beings and does not change gender. Males reincarnate into males and females into females.

3- The human soul does not reincarnate into an animal, a plant or any other form. God's justice and mercy is limited to people who are judged on the Day of Reckoning according to their merit, good or bad. It would be unreasonable for a person to be punished by being metamorphosed into an animal that is unable to understand, perceive, or distinguish between good and evil.

4- One reincarnates in accordance to the faith of origin; a Druze reincarnates a Druze, a Hindu as a Hindu and so forth.

5- The purpose of reincarnation is not the soul's cleansing or its spiritual elevation, but rather trial and experience.

6- All humans reincarnate, yet few of them can remember their past lives, known by the Druze as "Remembrance of past lives".

Reincarnation in Judaism, Christianity and Islam

Judaism

In Judaism, the doctrine of reincarnation is attributed to the Kabbalists, Jewish mystic sects that appeared in the third century B.C. and expanded their belief even at the time of Christ. They then faded away for many centuries, to be renewed by mystic Jewish groups during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

In the Renaissance, Kabbalist scholars distinguished themselves in science, religion, and philosophy. They delved into Jewish teachings and the secrets of their holy books. This helped to revive and propagate the doctrine of reincarnation among Jews. Considering what the Torah implied as a decisive and unquestionable proof of its veracity, Rabbi Menasah Ben Israel who approved these beliefs and lived in the fifteenth century, said, “The belief in the doctrine of transmigration of souls is a firm, infallible dogma accepted by the whole assemblage of our Church with one accord.”⁹

In the beginning, the Kabbalistic sects were influenced by Hindu philosophies that depend on reincarnation. We find their concepts similar to the beliefs of Hindus. The Kabbalists, for example, believe that at death, man reincarnates into a species that is in harmony with his desires and psychological characteristics at the moment of death, that reincarnation is educative not punitive, and that the evildoer returns to Earth as an animal or a plant. In addition, he cannot free himself and get delivered unless one of the saints or prophets intercedes through God for him.¹⁰

The kabbalists are but few in number now are scattered throughout the world. In addition, they do not have an impact upon the general religious trends of mainstream Jews, who do not consider reincarnation a pillar of their faith. The Torah or Old Testament mentions the return of man to Earth and his preexistence here when God addressed the Prophet Jeremiah: “Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, ‘before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations’” (Jeremiah 1: 4-5).

⁹ Rosen, Steven: *The Reincarnation Controversy*. Badger, CA: Torchlight Publishing, 1997, p 61.

¹⁰ Some Kabbalists believed that reincarnation also includes inanimate objects—a soul that has greatly lowered itself may enter a stone.

The main Jewish denomination explains this citation as irrelevant to reincarnation. Like the majority of the Christian and Islamic communities, most Jewish communities that are widely spread throughout the world believe in the Day of Resurrection, the rise of the dead in the same body and soul, in order to be judged before God. Thus, most Jews do not believe in reincarnation. However, unlike the Christian Church, they do not condemn the belief, neither do they repress those who believe in reincarnation. Furthermore, they are not very interested in issues beyond death, but are concerned about the here and now.

Christianity

The New Testament contains clear indications of the doctrine of reincarnation. For instance, when Jesus asked his disciples, “Who do the crowds say that I am?” they answered, “John the Baptist; but others, Elijah; and still others, that one of the ancient prophets has arisen.” (Luke 9: 18-19) Another indication is in the following question concerning a blind man from birth: “The disciples of Jesus asked him, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’” (John 9: 2). And in another statement by St. Paul, “For you reap whatever you sow.” (Galatians 6: 7)

These indications, amongst others, suggest that Jesus and his disciples believed in reincarnation. The disciples and their question about the blind man prove their familiarity with the doctrine of reincarnation and their belief in the concept of reward and punishment. Otherwise, how could they understand the relationship between the affliction of blindness, considered to be a divine punishment, and evil acts committed in a previous life by the blind infant?

In fact, the belief in reincarnation flourished among early Christians. Origen (185-254 A.C.), one of the fathers of the early Christian Church as well as being a prominent philosopher, clearly believed in reincarnation. His opinion on reincarnation was very similar to the concept of reincarnation found in Platonism, Hinduism and Jewish mysticism. However, it stemmed from a deeper spiritual perspective.

The early fathers of the Church believed that the form and condition of reincarnation is related to divine justice by the spiritual principle of punishment and reward. Man reincarnates into the form and condition that he deserves, according to his thoughts and deeds in his previous life. Otherwise, he would not reincarnate on Earth. They also believed that

if man practiced evil deeds, he would degrade himself spiritually and become destined to reincarnate as an animal on Earth. On the other hand, if he committed excessive evil deeds, he would reincarnate into a plant. Furthermore, he would not be saved from being reincarnated again into an animal or a plant unless he atones for his misdeeds. Only then will he gradually rise to the level from which he had fallen originally after many life cycles, reincarnating, once again into a man and eventually is allowed to reach heaven.

This belief in reincarnation was widespread among the early Christians during the first and the second centuries A.D. Nevertheless, the Church started to undermine its importance and contradict interpretations of reincarnation in the New Testament. At the end of the sixth century A.D., the authoritative trends of the Church increased and it started to interfere people's affairs, ultimately leading to the elimination of the doctrine of reincarnation. Before its eradication, the concept of reincarnation, which the early Christians adopted, was related to the concept of divine justice and the direct relationship of man with his Creator. The Church realized that a belief in reincarnation undermined its role among its believers. Therefore it started to conduct itself as the only possible mediator between people and God. What the Church permitted on Earth is also permitted in heaven, and what it forbade on Earth is forbidden there as well. Ultimately, the Church suppressed the idea of reincarnation by persistent persecution of those who adhered to this belief. In the Second Ecclesiastic Council, which was held in Constantinople in 543 A.D., the Church acted in accordance with Emperor Justinian issuing a mandatory ecclesiastic verdict that condemned the doctrine of reincarnation and all that was written about it. Beginning in the fifteenth and continuing into the sixteenth century A.D., the suppression of this belief reached its peak. Persecutors went as far as to bury alive the priest Giordano Bruno (1548-1600 AD), considering him a heretic for many reasons, among them his belief in reincarnation and his refusal to deny its existence.

In modern days, the Christian Church, including most of its divisions, does not believe in reincarnation, but rather in the Day of Judgment, a time when the dead rise from their graves to be judged and sent either to Paradise or Hell. However, despite all the unfair attempts of the Church during the past centuries to suppress the idea of reincarnation in the Western Christian mind, it has not been completely eradicated. Indeed, some Christians remain believers using the references in the New Testament.

Islam

Islam, the third monotheistic religion, does not give merited attention to the philosophical meaning of reincarnation therefore denying it opportunities for success and propagation amongst Moslems. Similarly to Jews and Christians, the overwhelming majority of Moslems, in both Sunni and Shiite denominations, believe in the Day of Resurrection, a day that does not arrive immediately following death, but rather at the end of time when Earth is completely destroyed and its inhabitants are wiped out, according to this holy verse, “When the earth shall quake violently, and the earth shall bring forth its burdens. On that day, men shall emerge in clusters to see their work. Then whoever has done an atom’s weight of good shall find it; and whoever has done an atom’s weight of evil shall find it.” (The surah of Al-Zilzal or The Earthquake. Verse 1-8)

“The trial of the grave” has become a basic concept of the Moslem faith many centuries following the death of the Arab prophet. This notion states that after his death, man will be punished or rewarded for his deeds within his grave until the Day of Resurrection. Before this belief became firm in their hearts, early Moslems considered death a state similar to nonexistence. They interpreted the verses in the Qur’an alluding to reincarnation as relevant to the day of resurrection and judgment. The following verse illustrates this idea: “How can you disbelieve in Allah? You were dead and He brought you back to life; then He will cause you to die and then bring you back to life again; then unto Him you will return.” (The surah of Al-Baqara or The Cow. Verse 27) Death is interpreted here as nonexistence; that is, God Almighty created human beings from nothingness. Then He will return them to nothingness. When the Day of Resurrection arrives, however, God will reward or punish them. There is also a Qur’an verse, revealed to the Arab Prophet that refers to those Moslems who believed that death is a state of nothingness. “And do not think of those who have been killed in the way of Allah as dead; they are rather living with their Lord, well-provided for.” (The surah of Al-‘Imran or The Family of ‘Imran. Verse 169) This suggests that the dead are actually still alive.

The Moslems give these verses an interpretation that precludes reincarnation. Some Islamic esoteric and mystic sects, which appeared in the Middle Ages, were an exception. These sects were influenced by many Western and Eastern sources, among them the Jewish mystics the Kabbalists, in addition to Gnosticism, Christianity, Neo-Platonism and Hinduism. Moslems translated these philosophies and doctrines into both the Arabic and Persian languages. Consequently, some Moslems were influenced by them and came to believe in reincarnation, separating them

from mainstream Islam. Some of these sects include the “Ikhwan-Assapha or Brethren of purity”, the Druze, the Ismailia, Yezidi and the Alawi.

Here are more Qur’an verses that vividly refer to reincarnation:

“He brings the living out of the dead and He brings the dead out of the living. He brings the earth to life after it was dead, and you shall be brought out likewise.” (The surah of Al-Rum or The Greeks. Verse 17)

“They will say, “Our Lord, you have caused us to be dead twice and brought us to life twice, and so we have confessed our sins. Is there now a way out?” (The surah of ‘Ghafer or The Forgiver. Verse 10)

“And that He has created the pairs, both male and female; from a sperm when it is emitted; and that upon Him devolves the second creation.” (The surah of Al-Najm or The Star. Verses 45-47)

“Then, when they disdained arrogantly what they were forbidden, We said to them, “Be miserable monkeys.” (The surah of Al-A’raf or The Ramparts. Verse 165)

“Then we raised you up after you had died, so that you might give thanks.” (The surah of Al-Baqara or The Cow. Verse 55)

“From it We have created you, and unto it We shall return you, and from it We shall raise you a second time.” (The surah of Taha. Verse 54)

“He creates you in your mothers’ wombs, one creation after another.” (The surah of Al-Zumar or The Throngs. Verse 6)

I believe that these holy verses, among others, emphasize the true religion of Islam, which is based essentially and intrinsically on teachings relevant to reincarnation and the immortality of the soul. ¹¹

¹¹ In its verses that talk about man, the holy Qur’an does not point out that the Spirit dwells in him, but rather that man is linked to the soul, with different meanings. Sometimes the soul means the individual in all his bodily and psychological forces, according to the following verse: “He said: ‘O Moses, do you wish to kill me, as you killed another living soul yesterday’” (The surah of *Al-Qasas*, Storytelling. Verse 18). It can also mean only the psychological faculties, as mentioned in the following verse: “We have indeed created man, and We know what his soul insinuates to him” (The surah of *Qaf*. Verse 16). Furthermore, in the Qur’an the Spirit is a sublime and immaculate entity, while the soul is prone to evil. “Surely, the human soul commands evil.” (The surah of *Usuf*, Joseph. Verse 53)

The Concept of Reincarnation in Daheshism

Reincarnation is one of the most significant concepts in the Daheshist doctrine. Only by exploring it in depth, can one fully comprehend the profound spiritual truth it encompasses. The Daheshist tenets dealing with the soul, sayyals, spiritual causality and the fact that all creation is endowed with consciousness are interrelated through the concept of reincarnation. The spiritual sayyals are paramount to understanding these basic Daheshist principles. For this reason, I will focus in this essay on explaining the theory of spiritual sayyals the way that I understand it; how the sayyals function, interact and transmigrate, in order to enable the reader to gradually understand the concept of reincarnation in Daheshism.

Daheshists believe that the essence of man's soul is constituted of diverse spiritual sayyals that provide him with the means for life, including intellect, desires, passions, and the ability to distinguish and choose between right and wrong, good and evil. The soul is also formed of spiritual sayyals specific to the human body and its functions providing it with the capacity for motion, speech, sensation, as well as all else relevant to the nature of being reincarnated into a human being. In Daheshism the Spirit or Spirits are given a special definition. The Spirits live in their blissful non-physical worlds, each of a different spiritual degree. Each individual Spirit is endowed with 600 spiritual sayyals, each of which has a free will and is subject to temptation. The degradation of some of these sayyals caused them to separate from their original source and fall down to merge with sayyals in physical worlds of different spiritual levels as punishment for sins committed. Some of these degraded sayyals fell and merged with Earth's elements or sayyals to form temporal, physical life forms of diverse creatures whose psychological and material characteristics vary according to their spiritual merit. The goal of each Spirit is to gather and bring back all of its own fallen sayyals that have separated from it and to patiently await their elevation until they attain spiritually perfect levels. Only then does it become possible for the Spirit to rise and merge with Heavenly Realms.

Thus, all conscious physical life forms, including man, are extensions of sayyals that once belonged to the World of Spirits. The purpose of man's life on earth, as well as the purpose of any physical existence in the universe, is to return to the non-physical worlds of the Spirits from which they emanated. This process, however, cannot be achieved unless sayyals pass through thousands of reincarnations filled with trials and experiences

until they progress significantly spiritually and rid themselves from material shackles and suffering.

In Daheshist teachings, man ¹² is constituted of two components, a material and temporary one or his physical body, and a psychological, spiritual and immortal one, known as the spiritual sayyals or essence of a man's soul. The body is the vessel or instrument through which the psychological or spiritual component is subject to trials, instincts, desires, tendencies, and human feelings such as generosity, envy, hatred, lust, laziness, and gluttony amongst others. All these reflect the activity of the spiritual sayyals.

These sayyals are tested through life's circumstances and necessities. Whoever overcomes his base tendencies will elevate some or all of his sayyals and therefore enable them to be liberated from his earthly body and pass on to a better physical world where they reincarnate into a new, well merited physical form. A new life cycle is begun where these sayyals are again subject to new trials and experiences relevant to that world. This process is repeated again and again with the ultimate goal of re-entering the non-physical World of the Spirit. However, if a man's spiritual sayyals are degraded significantly, he is reincarnated in base physical worlds that are inferior to Earth and will suffer terribly.

It is worth noting that the soul's spiritual sayyals do not pass to new worlds unless they are elevated or degraded. Sayyals are rational and aware entities endowed with traits manifested in their activity, and each one of them is responsible for its deeds.

Consider an unjust man who realizes that an act that he is about to undertake is evil and will cause harm and misery to the victim. If this man commits his unjust action, he will cause more degradation to his already lowly sayyal and may make it fall to lower worlds. On the other hand, if he refrains from the evil action and controls the lowly sayyal within him that thought of the lowly act in the first place, he will elevate it. In the case that the same sayyal continues to tempt him to commit injustice, and if this individual continues to resist and restrain the temptation, he may eventually change the quality of the sayyal, improving it and driving it to become pure again at which point it merges again with the Spirit from which it had originally emanated.

¹² Man, Daheshism tells us, is not the only rational being among creatures; neither is he the only one subject to the order of reincarnation. However, in order to make this article easier for the reader, we will focus on man.

What applies to a sayyal endowed with an unjust tendency also applies to other sayyals. The process of elevating or degrading sayyals, whether in man or other life forms, is continuous, so neither time nor space can impede it. Sometimes, before death occurs, a specific change may happen to one particular sayyal in an individual. This sayyal may leave the body, without causing death, to reincarnate in another earthly body or another world that has the same corresponding spiritual level. The individual from whom this sayyal has departed remains alive because he has other sayyals that provide him with life and means of existence.

According to Daheshism, each individual is born with a unique and specific number of spiritual sayyals that differ in kind and level. These sayyals correspond, on the whole, to the spiritual level of the Earth and are transmitted to the individual from his previous reincarnations. In addition to the sayyals endowed with the faculties of thought and awareness, man is also endowed with species-specific sayyals corresponding to his physical body, and that provide him with speech and movement, and the five senses responsible for bodily function. These latter sayyals invest the human body with apparent life or the illusion of life.¹³

These sayyals of bodily function and the senses are also essentially spiritual and rational,¹⁴ but their existence depends completely on the presence of the main sayyal as well. They correspond to the temporal physical form of all creatures and therefore vanish when a creature dies. Thus, they disintegrate and merge with elements in nature to reappear in other deserving creatures of the same physical forms. They have no independent existence apart from the kind and nature of the physical forms they take, simply representing vessels through which the main spiritual sayyals can operate and on which they depend.

Let us suppose that a man, for spiritual reasons, is condemned to reincarnate as a dog and allowed to recall his past reincarnation. This man is aware that his sense of smell has increased 400 fold compared to his sense of

¹³ The Daheshist tenets and miracles assert that the sayyal of movement that encompasses speech, breathing and bodily strength is sometimes released for spiritual reasons. Subsequently, the person is considered dead, but in reality, he is aware of what happens around him, the supposed dead hear, sees and thinks. He is, however, breathless and motionless. Those around him think he is dead; he, therefore, is buried. In fact, he is alive. Medicine asserts many cases similar to this. The reader may refer to the chapter titled, "A Dead is Speaking," in Halim Dammous. *The Miracles of the Founder of Daheshism and His Wondrous Prodigies*. Beirut: Annar Wannour Publishing, 1983. pp 72-74.

¹⁴ This rationality is mentioned in the Qur'an in the context of the resurrection of evildoers: "When they reach it, their hearing, sights and skins shall bare witness against them regarding what they used to do." (*Fussilat*, or Well-expounded. Verse 19).

smell in his previous life as a man. Had he been reincarnated into an eagle, he would be aware that the powerful sayyal of smell is completely missing in his new life form, but now the sayyal of vision is extraordinary! However, the sayyals of vision, or sayyals of other bodily species-specific functions, on their own, do not provide the body with the means of life. The main sayyals of thought and consciousness, the essence of the soul, are the only ones capable of sustaining life for an appointed time. Man remains endowed with consciousness, in part or in whole, until the last main spiritual sayyal not related to the physical body is liberated, that is, when real death occurs, the release of the conscious sayyal from his body.¹⁵

The relevant question that arises is what happens to the spiritual sayyals once they are released from the physical body? The main sayyals of consciousness pass, as previously discussed, to worlds that they merit where they incarnate into new bodies. We further explain that there is no independent existence of these bodies apart from their spiritual conscious sayyals. Once the spiritual sayyals are released, the bodies start to disintegrate and vanish. The species-specific sayyals belonging to the body take other physical forms that correspond to the sayyals' kind and level. Simply stated, live bodies embody conscious entities that are reincarnated. These bodies become instruments for trials and experiences and means by which conscious sayyals can elevate or degrade spiritually.

When sayyals are released from bodies, some may stay at the spiritual level of man; thus, they return to life to reincarnate into a man. Some may be at the level of Earth, but inferior to man. This leads to rebirth as an animal, such as a monkey or a pig according to the holy verse already mentioned (Al-Araf, or The Ramparts. Verse 166). If some of these sayyals improve themselves spiritually in level and kind, they would rise to a physical world that transcends Earth's level and take on what they deserve in form and kind.¹⁶ However, if degradation occurs and the sayyals keeps delving into depravity, they will be condemned to descend to the base and hellish worlds to undergo severe punishment.¹⁷

¹⁵ Daheshism does not prohibit cremation, but rather it leaves it up to one's will. Many Daheshists make provisions in their last Wills to be cremated in order for their sayyals to be thoroughly liberated.

¹⁶ Refer to "The descent of one of the Worlds' Inhabitants and his Conversation with us" in Halim Dammous. *The Miracles of the Founder of Dabeshism and his Wondrous Prodigies*. Beirut: Annar Wannour Publishing, 1983. [pp 89-91]

¹⁷ Daheshism's viewpoint is dissimilar to the common idea of the eternal torture in Hell. Suffering can be long lasting, but it is not never-ending. Consequently, salvation is possible even in Hell.

The spiritual sayyals are eternal. The immensely outstretched physical cosmos that encompasses millions of galaxies is a stage for elevation or degradation of these sayyals. All physical creatures in the universe are embodiments, vessels and instruments for experiences, by which the spiritual sayyals are tested until they greatly uplift themselves and are thoroughly cleansed of their materialistic tendencies. Only then can they return to the non-physical Worlds of Spirits from which they emanated.¹⁸

In light of what has already been stated about the spiritual sayyals, their nature and interrelationship, one can summarize the Daheshist concept of reincarnation as follows:

1- Reincarnation is a spiritual rule to which all creatures are subjected physically and spiritually. Just as the law of transformation and change applies to the physical aspect of things, so it applies to the spiritual aspect, and this is what specifically refers to reincarnation.

2- Through the process of reincarnation, each sayyal passes into the form and state that it merits for an appointed period of time. Reincarnation occurs according to the spiritual causality that corresponds to the level of one's sayyals, whether lofty or lowly.

3- Reincarnation is not the release of the soul from a useless body to an independent one, but rather a spiritual process that is concordant with the divine principles of justice and mercy. The rational soul, and each soul is rational, takes a deserved form that reflects its qualities physically. This material body also turns into a means of experience for the soul and a vessel through which it can progress spiritually. Therefore, the body cannot exist independently from the soul, which is the reason for its existence.

4- God's infinite justice and mercy embraces all creatures without exception, for their sayyals are rational and aware of the existence of God Almighty. All creatures know that their Creator has established spiritual systems and rules through good and evil can be determined. Therefore, they glorify him, in accordance to their relevant spiritual rules. They also realize that they cannot uplift themselves and reincarnate into better conditions and worlds unless they can overcome the evils of their present worlds.

¹⁸ The spiritual sayyals that emanated from one Spirit are interrelated and share the same ultimate end despite their various embodiments in diverse levels of physical worlds. Sometimes lofty ideas come to one's mind, then leave him. The interpretation is that these thoughts are inspired by his lofty sayyals belonging to him in high worlds. On the other hand, if bad thoughts come up to his mind, their sources are certainly low sayyals belonging to him in degraded worlds.

In a verse by Dr. Dahesh titled “*Outstretched Desert*”, he addresses the sands of a desert :

“Talk to me about your awful solitude.

I wonder, is your loneliness a punishment

of what you have committed

in the unknown worlds?”¹⁹

In another short story by Dr. Dahesh titled “*A Conversation Between Two Green Onions*”, we read: “Our spiritual Fluids (sayyals) shall transmigrate to a realm where joys and charming warbles are never-ending.”²⁰ In fact, the holy books, particularly the Qur’an and Old Testament, also mention the rationality of all creatures. The following Qur’an verse is an example; “The seven heavens, the earth and what is in them praise Him, and there is nothing which does not celebrate His praise; but you do not understand their praise. He is indeed Clement, All-Forgiving.” (The surah of Al-Isra’ or The Night Journey. Verse 44)

5- Man, in fact, does not have a distinguished status among creatures. He is neither the best creature nor is he the only rational being who can seek God and distinguish between good and evil. In another short story by Dr. Dahesh titled “*The Divided Tree*”, the tree states, “Human beings are mistaken if they think that they alone are torn between good and evil. For, as trees, we possess the same liberty to do good or rush into the temptations of evil.”²¹

6- The transmigration of the spiritual sayyals, to be reincarnated in better or worse embodiments in physical worlds that are justly merited, is not contingent upon death only. Some sayyals may be released during one’s lifetime and reincarnated into a world they justly deserve. Thus, the process of reincarnation is irrelevant to a specific time and may occur anytime during one’s life.

¹⁹ Dr. Dahesh. *Journeys around the World*. Vol. 3. Beirut: Annasr Al-Mohalleq Publishing, 1971, p 91.

²⁰ Dr. Dahesh. *Strange Stories and Wonderful Tales*. Vol. 2. Beirut: Annasr Al-Mohalleq Publishing, 1979, p 92.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp 82-83.

7- Reincarnation does not necessarily take a single course. That is to say, a new life is not simply begun based upon the deeds in one previous life cycle according to merit. Rather, reincarnation in Daheshism is a dynamic order in which various factors interact. The concepts of sayyals, divine justice, punishment and reward intertwine. In other words, the consequences of our good and bad deeds can adhere to us through multiple cycles of reincarnation, and therefore they have a profound impact over us whether during one life cycle or consecutive ones. Furthermore, they are not restricted to us, but go beyond to reach extensions of our sayyals in our children and our grandchildren, as mentioned in the Old Testament: "For I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me." (Exodus 25: 5)

The Daheshist poet Halim Dammous relates a miracle about his cousin who drowned in an accident at sea in Brazil in 1913. It asserts that the consequences of our deeds in previous lives will follow us even over the course of hundreds, if not thousands, of years. Here is a summary of this miracle: One day the Spirit of Salim Tamer Dammous, Halim's cousin, manifested itself through Dr. Dahesh and in Halim's presence, brought forth some water in a strange and miraculous way. When Halim asked his cousin's Spirit about the secret of the water, he answered, "The water I bring you in this spiritual way is from the Parána River in which I drowned. I am the reincarnation of a captain who drowned a thousand people at sea, five hundred years ago, and through faults of my own. I was punished, in turn, to die by drowning, a just punishment."²²

8- Man cannot recall his past lives for spiritual reasons emanating from God's infinite mercy. This ignorance prevents man from becoming greatly confused by his life's affairs, so that despair does not overcome him, and make his life unbearable on Earth. In addition, the soul is not a single independent entity but rather a group of interacting spiritual sayyals that may be released and distributed during one's lifetime or after death. These sayyals that make up the soul can take different physical forms in one or many worlds. A single part of the soul or a sayyal, therefore, cannot remember the events that occur to the collection of sayyals together, or the whole soul, during one life cycle.

9- the entire physical universe is a general stage for the order of reincarnation. This order is not only limited to man or other earthly creatures, but encompasses all creatures in the universe. Transformation and change

²² Haddad, Marie. *The Miracles of Dr. Dahesh and His Wondrous Prodigies*. Beirut: Annar Wa-nnour Publishing, 1983. p 94.

are all inclusive and perpetual in the universe. Elevation and degradation and transmigration of spiritual sayyals from one being to another is the general order of reincarnation in all the physical worlds where creatures move, each according to the spiritual level that has been attained during a specific stage of gradual spiritual progress.

10-Man is endowed with sayyals that may have spiritual projections embodied in physical worlds across the Universe other than Earth. These physical forms may appear in higher or lower worlds and can have an impact on man's soul. For these reasons, noble thoughts sometimes come to man's mind and not only prevent him from committing transgressions, but cause him to do good deeds as well. These thoughts come from his projections of his sayyals reincarnated in lofty worlds. On the contrary, evil thoughts can come from projections of his sayyals in lower base worlds.

11- Daheshists also believe in the great Day of Reckoning just as in other faiths and believe that this arrives at the end of each cycle of genesis on Earth. Each cycle takes tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of years. On that cursed day, as mentioned in the holy Qur'an, Earth with all of its creatures will be destroyed. Elements and matter will vanish and souls will appear before God to be righteously judged. However, the Day of Reckoning does not mean the resurrection of the dead, referred to in the three other monotheistic religions. Death, Daheshism states, is a transformation from one state into another. The Reckoning Day with its great judgment befalls the Earth after a long period of time in which people degrade their sayyals to the lowest possible spiritual levels and evil reaches its peak. Then, spiritual catastrophe will come to humans and consequently Earth will be thoroughly destroyed. A new genesis will begin, and man is thrown back to primitive ages.

The Daheshist poet Halim Dammous stated, "Each cycle of genesis on Earth has a Day of Reckoning. On that cursed day, matter will vanish, elements fade away and souls face God for judgment."²³ Among the secrets disclosed by Daheshism is that a sequence of 761 cycles of genesis have occurred on Earth. The last was that of the prophet Father Noah. It appears that we are now on the threshold of a new cycle because of the prevalence of evil and vice on Earth.

²³ *Addabbour* magazine , issue 1254, July 1949.

I refer to the writings of Dr. Dahesh:

*Pretty soon, the angel of God will trumpet;
and suddenly the mounts will disintegrate,
and their atoms be annihilated;
the towering mountains will be destroyed
and turned to rubble.”²⁴*

In another spiritual message received by the author of this book, Dr. Dahesh writes:

*“Dear kind brother:
The Hour of Judgment
is drawing closer—
That great Hour
of indescribable horror
and of trembling in terror.
For in God’s reckoning,
a thousand years is but a glance.
Woe to the inhabitants of Earth
on that Hour
of tremendous consternation.
Evil has become entrenched,
and everyone has practiced
forbidden lusts*

²⁴ Dr. Dahesh. *A Poet’s Melodies*— from the series of *Paradises of the Goddesses Set with Sacred Lotus*. Annasr Al-Mahalleg Publishing. Beirut: 1980. pp 33-34 [Piece’s titled: *Also to My Brother Salim*”.

*and has indulged
in the swamps of forbidden deeds,
tasting the damned Devil's Wine.
For this reason, all deserve
a terrible end in the infernal worlds.
You have understood the Truth
and have felt
the eternal Power of the Spirit.
Pray to God
that a happy and bright world
will be your reward.
Also remember that everything
will come to naught,
and the eternal Truth
is the spiritual one
that will enable a person
to dwell in a paradisiacal world
of eternal happiness and bliss.*

*ALI*²⁵

²⁵ Ali is a lofty angelic Sayyal who belonged to Ali Ben Abi Taleb, the cousin of the Arab Prophet Mohammed, and prior to him, to Adoum, Peter's son. This Spirit, responsible for Earth (for each planet is ruled by an angel) would descend from its sublime Worlds and perform miracles through Dr. Dahesh providing him and others with spiritual Guidance.

Conclusions on Reincarnation

It now becomes obvious from what has already been discussed that although there are correlations and consistencies between Daheshism and the previous doctrines on the general concept of reincarnation, there are also significant dissimilarities, mainly in light of the introduction of the concept of the sayyals, how they are transferred, how they interact, and how they propagate. There are, however, two fundamental differences irrelevant to the theory of sayyals that should be pointed out.

Unlike the previous religions and beliefs that restricted reincarnation to Earth, the order of reincarnation according to Daheshism encompasses all planets. Undoubtedly, this difference is the result of the previous misconceptions of the cosmos in which Earth was considered the center of the universe, in which the four elements merged, and from which arose the physical creatures that inhabit it. It was previously thought that the components of other planets were similar to “ether”, or nothingness, unlike Earth’s dense matter. Man was unable to picture an image of the universe that contradicted the prevailing one. It was understandable, therefore, for the founders of the previous religions to discuss their principles in a way they could understand, and therefore, restricted the existence of reincarnation to Earth. In modern times, it is easier for man to accept the Daheshist concept that the soul can reincarnate on Earth as well as on other planets. Indeed, modern science does not deny the possibility of extraterrestrial civilizations far from Earth. Some scientists uphold this belief.²⁶

The second difference, and perhaps correlated to the first, is that the previous doctrines gave man precedence over other creatures. This belief that man is the only rational being who can distinguish between good and evil is widespread. In Hinduism, man is a part of God. In Buddhism, Buddha, the man, is the highest level of perfection and enlightenment that can ever be attained. In the Old Testament, God created man in his image, and in the Qur’an, man is honored according to the following verse: “We have honored the Children of Adam and carried them on land and sea, provided them with good things and preferred them greatly over many of those We have created.” (The surah or Al-Isra’ or The Night Journey. Verse 70).

²⁶ Daheshism asserts the existence of extraterrestrial civilizations that are more advanced than the terrestrial ones. For further details about this subject, the reader can refer to Dr. Dahesh’s *Strange Stories and Wonderful Tales* (in its four volumes); they include many stories about these civilizations.

Certainly, this belief that man reigns over all of Earth's other creatures influenced the concept of reincarnation in previous religions and philosophies. Consequently spiritual progress was limited to man, the only rational creature in the Universe. This theory made it inevitable that souls, who had previously dwelled either in either animals or plants, would have to reincarnate first as a human in order to progress spiritually. When souls reincarnate in bodies other than in men, they undergo a period of punishment for an appointed time in which they can neither elevate nor degrade themselves spiritually. Since man was the only rational creature in the universe, it was natural for some faiths, such as the Druze, to deny the sojourn of a human soul in any body other than in man.

The Daheshist doctrine denies man a privileged position in this world. Rather it states that the whole universe is teeming with consciousness, intelligence and emotion. Every creature, whether human, animal, plant or inanimate object and creatures unbeknown to us, has a specific reason for its existence, and a direct relationship to the World of Spirits. These conscious beings are also endowed with rational faculties by which they can distinguish good from evil, each according to the order of their worlds. Therefore, spiritual progress is not restricted to man, and in fact, some animals may rise to spiritual levels that enable them to ascend to a world that is better than Earth without reincarnating first in man.²⁷ This belief is not easy to accept. Nevertheless, a group of scientists has started discussing the existence of consciousness in all creatures and have proven how some animals possess extraordinary intelligence. Other scientists proclaim that plants are endowed with emotion and faculties of awareness.

In summary, the theory of reincarnation in Daheshism is not a repetition of previous doctrines. Rather it encompasses explanations and illustrations that make it uniquely unprecedented. It is a doctrine that discloses truths that have not been revealed in the past for spiritual reasons. Daheshism is a religion that complies with the intellectual capacities of modern man, responding to the many unanswered questions in previous religions, and whose theories are beginning to be backed up by scientific theories and experiments.

²⁷ Daheshism goes even further to say that some animals and plants are spiritually more elevated and less evil than man.

Divine Justice and Spiritual Merit According to Daheshism

God has established laws to administer divine justice. All Heavenly Messages, in one way or another, point this out to mankind. Laws that reward or punish man are stated in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible and in the Qur'an as well. In Deuteronomy, Moses states "You shall show no mercy: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth..." (19:21). In the New Testament we read, "For you reap whatever you sow" (Galatians 6: 7); and in the Qur'an we read, "Whatever calamity might hit you is due to what your hands have earned." (The surah of Al-Shura or The Counsel. Verse 28)

The above verses and many others assert the existence of a spiritual system of justice that God applies to all of His creation with perfection. Therefore, whoever commits evil will be punished spiritually in proportion to the action committed, whereas whoever does good will be justly rewarded. According to the holy verse, "Then whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall find it; and whoever has done an atom's weight of evil shall find it." (The surah of Al-Zilzal or the Earthquake. Verses 7-8) The same principle of justice also applies to societies as a whole. All societies who commit evil and continue in their transgressions will be severely punished or obliterated by God as happened at the time of Noah.

Daheshism, like the previous Heavenly messages, supports and enforces these laws of justice and merit that depend on one's own actions and calls it "spiritual causality". One's current life conditions including situation, intellectual level, psychosocial and socioeconomic conditions into which an individual is born are related to deeds in previous reincarnations based on spiritual causality and divine merit. In addition, sayyals inherent in an individual and acquired in previous reincarnations are also responsible for an individual's innate qualities, abilities, desires and success. We may find, for instance, a man majoring in the Natural Sciences because of his love of the subject since childhood. Ultimately, he becomes a famous physicist. Another person is gifted at music and turns out to be a great musician. However not all those who love music become great musicians. Sayyals from previous reincarnations determine to a great extent an individual's innate aptitudes. Furthermore, current deeds and actions will determine our conditions in future reincarnations. Spiritual causality is an everlasting system that connects the past to the present and the present to the future.

Daheshism introduces two other sources of spiritual causality that for spiritual reasons unknown to us have not been described in previous messages and are more difficult to comprehend. The first is causality based on the testing of faith, by sacrifice and redemption. The second is causality based on the practice of free will by humans as influenced by high or lowly sayyals and their impact on other humans or creatures. These events do not always appear just to the observer or those harmed by adverse events because they are the result of the free will of other men and not divine justice. Examples of these are base sayyals in humans that give rise to murder, robbery or other acts that harm others. The consequences of these acts are related solely to man's actions, in this case, the aggressor, and not because the victim of such acts are deserving of them.

Examples of these theories can be found in the literary works of Dr. Dahesh. The reader finds many inspired writings that condemn these unfair events. In some cases of injustice, an innocent individual is actually denied his spiritual merit.

In an inspired piece titled, *Justice Buried Alive*, Dr. Dahesh writes:

O poles of gallows, how many innocent noble victims you hanged!

How many criminals were not swung by your strong ropes,

And evildoers were not reached by the hand of court's sentences;

The fathers and mothers' tears split the space,

And their deep outcries pierce the clouds... the sky...

*I wish you were not, O sentences! Woe to you, O ridiculous laws!*²⁸

Adverse events happen to undeserving people in the same way that they happened to some prophets and apostles and to some of Jesus' disciples and early Christians. These events appear unjust to us but they are related to trying the faith with strife and sacrifice. Holy books, including the Qur'an, are teeming with stories about the persecution of prophets and apostles and their torture by wicked people. They warn the perpetrators of such unjust persecution: "We made covenant with the Children of Israel and sent forth apostles to them. Whenever an apostle brought them what they did not like, they accused some of lying and killed some." (The surah of Al-Ma'ida,

²⁸ Dr. Dahesh. *Lightnings and Thunders*. Beirut: Rotos Publishing, 1946, p. 12.

The Table. Verse 70) In a spiritual message revealed to Dr. Dahesh, the spirit of Plato states, “Any state that persecutes its geniuses and prophets and hampers their free way, is undoubtedly a tyrannical and miserable state; Warn it of great downfall from which it will not rise again.”²⁹

Consider the case of John the Baptist. The assassin and tyrant Herod ordered John beheaded in order to satisfy Salomé, daughter of Herodias, the wife of his brother. Herod had been seduced by Salomé and was willing to carry out this evil deed, which will never be forgotten. This crime was not the result of spiritual justice and merit on the behalf of John. Rather, it happened for a reason relevant to faith and sacrifice. In a description of John by Jesus, we read, “Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist.” (Matthew 11: 11) John did not commit an act worthy of beheading. He dedicated his life to calling upon his people to restrain from evil deeds and to follow God’s commandments. He publicly condemned the immorality and prostitution that Herod engaged in by living with his dissolute brother’s wife and her licentious daughter. In addition, Herod did not receive his power in accordance with spiritual justice and merit, but for reasons related to previous and consecutive reincarnations of his lowly and degraded sayyals that put him into power during the lifetimes of the prophets so that he could persecute them and try to disrupt their spiritual missions.

Other examples of spiritual causality are natural catastrophes such as devastating earthquakes, destructive floods, famine, and deadly diseases like Aids. These are not unfortunate events in nature. They have spiritual causes determined by divine will based on justice and merit according to deeds of a society on the whole.

Other calamities and adverse events, however, cannot be explained by Divine intervention or Heavenly will; rather they are results of man’s free will. This applies to events such as tyranny, persecution, and attack on civil liberties, injustice, war and other tragedies. We cannot therefore explain all of life’s events to the concept of pure spiritual merit. One must distinguish between events resulting from spiritual merit derived from divine justice on the one hand, and free human will on the other hand. If not, the concept of free will would be contradicted and an individual would be deprived of every expectation and hope of improving himself spiritually and changing his life status for the better. Ultimately, Daheshism asserts that man’s free will, both personally and globally, has a great impact on deciding what

²⁹ Dr. Dahesh. *The Astonishing Miracles of Dr. Dahesh and His Spiritual Manifestations*. Beirut: Al-Nar Wannour Publishing, 1983. p. 43.

happens on life's stage, both on a personal level and in relation to those around us thus rebuking fatalism or determinism.³⁰

It is worth noting that the laws of divine justice and spiritual merit and free will do not apply only to humans, but also to all other creatures. For example, let us consider the case of a mean, bad-tempered and aggressive individual that is condemned to reincarnate as a dog. We may expect this dog to be aggressive, clashing frequently with his mates according to the conditions and trials of his new environment. However not all dogs are aggressive and mean in nature. They can also have noble behaviors, reflecting qualities from previous reincarnations. This is reflected in "*Strange Stories and Wonderful Tales*" by Dr. Dahesh where we see that noble qualities such as loyalty and self-sacrifice in helping others are inherent in both animals as well as humans and are qualities that are ultimately justly rewarded.

His short story, "*The Heroic Dog*", tells the tale of a loyal, kind dog whom a homeless boy fiercely beats. It happens that one day this same abusive youth is on the verge of drowning. The dog rushes towards him and throws himself into the water, swims to the boy, clutches his clothing powerfully with his jaws and pulls him to safety, thus rescuing him.³¹ This event shows the sacrificial quality of the heroic dog despite the abuse suffered at the hand of the same youth.

In another short story, "*Lizard of the Forest*", Dr. Dahesh relates the story of a child who finds a small lizard in the forest. He brings it home where he cares for it well. As time goes on, the boy sets the lizard free so it can return to the forest. However, the lizard chooses to come back to stay beside the boy. One day during the heat of the day, the child falls asleep while leaning against the trunk of a tree where he has been playing with the lizard. A venomous snake creeps towards them. The lizard, aware of the danger, hurries to wake the boy so that he can escape. It then jumps on top of the snake to divert it from the child. In a matter of seconds, the loyal lizard is inside the belly of the hateful snake.³² The noble lizard acted heroically in accordance with its sayyals of loyalty and self-sacrifice in order to save the child with which he shared mutual love not only in this life but perhaps in previous reincarnations as well.

³⁰ Man is not given the capability to remember his previous reincarnations for spiritual reasons. God's mercy prevents him in his new existence from recollecting his [bad] deeds in past life cycles.

³¹ Dr. Dahesh. *Strange Stories and Wonderful Tales*. Vol. 2. Beirut: Al-Nasr Al-Mohalleq Publishing, 1979. p. 156.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 28.

When one accepts that certain events have spiritual origins, God's mercy and justice become undeniable. Without understanding these origins, life's events and conditions may seem unjust and meaningless. If one does not believe in spiritual merit and justice, one may contemplate a child that has been blind since birth and wonder what the child has done to merit being born blind. Where is God's justice and mercy? Why has he been born with this grievous disability although he has not yet committed any act that makes him deserving of such punishment?

The Daheshist explanation for such an event is that for spiritual reasons relevant to divine justice, this child was born blind. His disability befell him in accordance with the principles of reward and retribution that apply to individuals according to their deeds in previous life cycles. This child had undoubtedly committed unworthy acts in a previous life, and since he was not punished during that life cycle, he deserves to be born blind in this reincarnation. Forgiving retribution in one life cycle only to be administered in a subsequent one sometimes manifests God's mercy. Nevertheless, retribution must ultimately be served.

Consider another example that illustrates the diversity of spiritual causes that influence all beings. A person decides to travel by plane to visit a relative living in a different country. While on his way to the airport, a car accident delays his arrival. He is resentful and angry at his seemingly bad luck that makes him miss his plane at the appointed time. Soon after, he learns that the flight he was scheduled on has crashed and the pilots and all the passengers have been killed.

The Daheshist explanation for this event is that spiritual reasons prevented this person from traveling, thus preserving him from death. Providence already had knowledge of the plane's impending crash. For spiritual reasons unknown to us, Providence caused the car accident to prevent him from traveling. This individual's lifespan may have been extended for his good deeds or simply because the moment of his death had not come. Whatever the reasons, certainly this individual was saved from death. No coincidence, luck, or random occurrences happen in life except as a result of causes relevant to Heavenly Will or direct human will.

Spiritual causes related to merit are behind most human conditions and events although the great majority of people believe that these events only happen as a result of direct, natural causes. For example in the case of the congenitally blind child that we discussed previously, the direct cause for the blindness may have been harmful drugs that his mother took during pregnancy. The drugs may have been the direct, natural cause of blindness,

but the real and indirect cause is spiritual. The drugs are but a means of the affliction. The mother of the infant did not willingly take drugs that would harm her fetus. A spiritual reason led her physician to prescribe such drugs to her without himself knowing of their deleterious side effects. This led to the birth of the infant afflicted by disability that in reality is spiritually merited.

The direct natural cause of a patient suffering from high fever and sepsis is the presence of bacteria in the bloodstream that leads to swelling and inflammation of internal organs. If these bacteria are eliminated, the fever subsides and the patient recovers. However, the bacteria are but the means of the illness. The underlying cause of the illness is spiritual. According to Daheshist teachings and the beliefs of some scientific authorities, bacteria are endowed with consciousness and will. Despite their extremely diminished size, they comply with a spiritual will that commands them to afflict those who deserve such diseases for spiritual reasons.³³

Consider another example of a natural or direct versus a spiritual or indirect reason behind an event. A driver loses control of his speeding car and dies in a car crash. Witnesses and police confirm that the inappropriately fast speed is the direct cause of the deadly accident. Daheshists would disagree saying that speed was simply the instrument of death, the real cause being spiritual.

From these examples we deduce that the physical or natural causes of fever, congenital blindness and a car accident are mere means for the affliction. Events in all of the physical worlds that are constituted of material elements, including Earth, must submit to natural causes or direct physical means. However, the real causes are spiritual and unknown to us. In a holy verse from the Qur'an we read "For it may well be that you dislike a thing, although it is good for you; or like something although it is bad for you. Allah knows and you do not." (The surah of Al-Baqara or The Cow. Verse 215)

³³ I still remember that day while accompanying Dr. Dahesh on one of his journeys to Saudi Arabia. We took a taxi to go about Jeddah City in order to see its landmarks. The driver of this taxi caught my attention as he was coughing continuously and spitting up blood-tinged saliva into a tissue. I was concerned and made a remark to Dr. Dahesh in a low voice: "The driver must have tuberculosis. I am worried about catching the disease." The Doctor, overcome by the spirit, smiled at me, and said: "Don't worry. This will not happen at all." Thus, I understood that infections and diseases do not happen randomly. Dr. Dahesh was very cautious, and always advised his followers to use their intelligence and common sense and not expose themselves to danger. In one of his travels, Dr. Dahesh suffered from sunstroke. He was overcome by the Spirit that told his companion that even the Doctor himself should have taken precautions to cover his head while walking in the sun because he too was subject to human laws.

Nature and its Abuse by Mankind

Everywhere we look, we see modern scientific discoveries and advancements that provide man with consumer goods and sensual pleasures that have become his main interest. People talk about the era of indispensable computers and are influenced by rapid communication systems and the spread of information through satellites and other modern achievements and inventions that were inconceivable before now. The qualitative progress in science and technology has impacted people's affairs, their intellectual activities, and their businesses, in such ways that many researchers have started discussing man's limitless possibilities in the domain of scientific development, the discovery of nature's secrets, and the control of its power.

This great optimism in man's capabilities is transmitted from financiers and businessmen, who are the primary beneficiaries of this industrial, technological, and commercial growth, to management, governmental institutions, and college professors in academic institutions. A group of scientists have even begun to discuss the possibility of discovering an inclusive and ultimate theory to explain the physical laws of nature. An eminent American scientist and Nobel Laureate in physics, Steven Weinberg, points out the possibility of this theory in his book *Dreams of a Final Theory: the Scientists' Search for the Ultimate Laws of Nature*. The discovery of such a final theory, according to him, will not stop scientific research, but rather, will put an end to one of its aspects.

Man's attempt to discover an ultimate theory to explain the physical laws of nature is not recent, but dates back more than 50 years. The famous scientist Albert Einstein [1879-1955] attempted to discover such a theory that he named the Unified Field Theory. Although he spent more than 30 years trying to prove it, he failed. The question arises, what prevents man from discovering ultimate scientific truth despite its existence? This issue will be discussed in light of what we know about nature and its laws through the Daheshist tenets.

The relevant question becomes, is nature and its laws the work of God? Did He create the universe for spiritual purposes, as Daheshists believe? Or does nature create itself from nothingness, so that man's scientific inventions and applications, which are based on nature's phenomena, are nothing but man's creation, arranged according to his perceptions, criteria and experiments? If we accept the latter statement, we deduce that neither

God nor spiritual purposes are behind nature and its laws. Logically, it would follow that God and spiritual purposes have nothing to do with all of Earth's creatures, and therefore, one would be allowed to abuse nature, its resources and populations without spiritual consequences. However, if we agree with the Daheshist belief that nature is a living entity created by God and controlled by spiritual laws and physical systems in accordance with spiritual purposes, then abusing nature, its laws and resources for physical interests void of spiritual value is a sin that ultimately brings destruction to man.

Physics can be divided into three categories:

1- Classical physics: Also known as Newtonian Physics and deals with the forces of gravity and motion in medium and big bodies. We need these applications in our daily life, to manufacture cars and trains and to build skyscrapers in addition to other scientific applications that are still taught in institutions and colleges to graduate students, architects, civil and industrial engineers amongst others.

2- Science of Electromagnetic Forces: This deals with electricity and electro-magnetic radiation, including long and short waves. They are specific to radio and X-Rays, as well as to the attraction of elements endowed with negative electro-magnetic charges necessary to form various bodies we see in nature. These forces enable other chemical interactions that are the basis of molecular anatomy.

3- Modern physics: Also known as "High energy physics" or "Quantum physics": This deals with strong nuclear attraction between matter and energy inside subatomic particles and their interactions. It involves the transformation of atomic energy to matter and from matter back to energy. It also involves sciences related to the constituents or origins of matter. When Albert Einstein founded the Special Theory of Relativity and the General Theory of Relativity thus establishing nuclear physics and its applications, man's previous conceptions and persuasions about nature's realities were completely altered. These new realities were thoroughly different from what we had learned through classical physics, whose basics were established by the renowned English scientist Isaac Newton [1642-1727] and upon which man founded his earlier scientific conclusions. Newton looked at material things without considering their spiritual correlations and origins when he discussed the laws of nature. He simply observed the visible forms and bodies with his naked eyes and he used simple scientific devices to describe them as constant, independent and self-existent realities that have their own weights, sizes and specific qualities,

and upon which motion and gravitational forces interact. The British scientist could not even consider, at that time, that what he was observing and demonstrating in his study of rocks, stars, and other bodies were but illusive, ephemeral and transient states of matter that Daheshists believe are mere physical reflections of specific spiritual entities.

Modern physics confirms that the reality of nature is absolutely not as it appears to us, and that our understanding and perception of things are based on illusion and false observations. Measurements, velocity and time are relative standards that are different in one state or another and depend on their starting point. For example, a single minute on some planets that revolve at extraordinarily elevated speeds may equal several years of earthly time. This is a scientific fact asserted by many scientific researchers and experiments.

The theory of relativity also asserts that the bodies we consider self-existent and independent from time actually cannot exist outside of time. It has become certain that time, which we used to consider as an independent dimension, unrelated to physical objects and space, and that moves from the past to the present and then to the future, is nonexistent separate from matter and space. Man describes things the way he perceives them in their three visible dimensions without including the fourth temporal dimension, or time, that is considered independent. The new reality, however, reveals that all things in nature are connected to their four dimensions.

Let us assume that a person carries in his wallet a photograph of one-year-old child that is dear to him, dating back to 1960. Looking at it, we may wonder what has happened to this the child. We refer to the physical appearance of the child, his body and childish traits and his weight that does not exceed a several kilograms. The answer is that *this* child exists no more. The physical shape of the child shown in the photograph from 1960 is completely different from his current physical shape forty years later. What has happened to this child? Just as with all things and bodies in nature, gradual transformation has taken place. Growth and physical changes have occurred in every stage of the child's development, and this physical transformation is organic. Theoretically, this means that the physical form of the child during different stages of growth was evolving with the passage of time. This state of gradual physical change related to time continues in the child/youth/adult/old man until he vanishes and disintegrates during death. The time factor correlated to his changing physical appearance also disappears. What applies to man's body in terms of growth and change is also applicable to all other natural manifestations such as animals, trees,

rocks, mountains and all else without exception. In effect, science tells us no material objects can exist apart from time.

Modern physics also asserts that rocks, metals, and liquids and other elements are neither solid objects nor fluids, but rather, are fields of condensed energy consisting of nuclear elements that are connected to each other by electromagnetic forces. These atoms are constituted of a great vacuum in which subatomic particles exist, such as electrons, protons, neutrons and other very tiny units of particles. United, they occupy the vacuum within an atom and do not exceed one fraction of a billionth of its size. In these atoms, electrons revolve around a nucleus, formed mainly of protons and neutrons, at extraordinary speeds that sometimes reach the speed of light. This great velocity gives the atomic elements their illusive appearance of solidness. Moreover, the varying numbers of electrons, along with the different numbers of protons and neutrons inside the nucleus, give them their different natures or physical forms. Modern physics has shown that subatomic particles cannot be defined and specified physically. Rather they are states of energy with a theoretical and virtual reality. Their real existence depends on these states and their interaction with each other inside the atom. These subatomic particles are in a constant process of transformation and change, annihilation and re-creation. Thus, according to modern physics, we live in a physical world whose absolute reality is illusive. All material manifestations in nature, including all creatures on Earth, are but ephemeral, illusory and changing aspects of energy that disappear in one place only to appear in another. In his book, "Coming of Age in the Milky Way", the American physicist, Timothy Ferris, states: "Quantum physics obliges us to take seriously what had previously been a more purely philosophical consideration: That we do not see things in themselves, but only aspects of things."³⁴

According to the ultimate modern scientific theory, nature emanated from nothingness over 13 billions years ago due to the Big Bang. It was the first genesis of the cosmos whose subatomic elements were then gradually condensed over the course of billions of years until their present physical shape and structure became well established. This is a précis of the modern scientific viewpoint on the universe and its laws. Daheshist doctrine does not contradict these scientific viewpoints. Daheshism, however, goes a step further by uncovering nature's secrets to reveal its spiritual essence.

To my understanding, the Daheshist teachings agree with the scientific view that the laws of nature are universal and interconnected, and that some

³⁴ Ferris, Timothy. *Coming of Age in the Milky Way*. (NY: William Morrow and Company, 1988), p. 289.

of these laws have been discovered by man, while others remain a mystery. In the Daheshist view, the degree of knowledge of these laws is correlated to spiritual causality and the spiritual level achieved by civilizations, not only on Earth, but also across the universe. As a civilization becomes spiritually elevated, more secrets of nature are revealed to him. Thus, we can deduce that man does not merit more knowledge of many aspects of nature that are still concealed from him, for his current spiritual evolution makes him unworthy of this universal knowledge.

Daheshism believes that Earth, as a planet, is a living entity endowed with consciousness and responsibility. It possesses its own spiritual fluids or sayyals that are subject to spiritual laws just as physical phenomena are subject to natural laws. The dual physical and spiritual sayyals are interconnected in all of the physical worlds so that one cannot exist independently from the other. Daheshists believe that all material things, including man's body, are transient forms subject to reincarnation. They take their diverse physical shapes and forms for spiritual reasons and just merit. These physical forms have their own spiritual sayyals whose existence is perpetual and irrelevant to time.

Modern science tells us that natural things are not reduced to nothingness but rather are transformed into energy. Likewise, Daheshism emphasizes the continuous spiritual existence of all things in nature that is timeless and imperishable. Any entity, be it man, animal, tree, plant, rock, mountain, river, bacteria, planet, as well as countless other things, have taken their physical form according to their spiritual merit and level. All things, without exception, possess consciousness and can differentiate good from evil according to the experiences and temptations of their worlds. God's infinite mercy and justice embraces them all, and consequently, they have different spiritual systems relevant to their worlds. Through them they can uplift or lower their spiritual levels, and change the form of their existence through reincarnation, which in its broad concept, encompasses what science calls the law of transformation and change. In Daheshism, all things in nature are subject to the rule of transformation and change, which God has established for all physical creatures. In man, some tissues and cells die in his body only to be replaced with new ones. Likewise, stars in the universe vanish and then new ones appear. Even if their times are prolonged to tens of billions of years, regardless of the lapse of time, like man, they are moving toward transformation and change.

Astrophysics now points out the potential existence of other unknown universes besides our own. The physical laws in these unknown universes may be completely different from our physical laws. The Qur'an states, "Have you

not seen that to Allah all bows down, whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on earth, as well as the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the trees, the beasts and many of people?" (The Surah of Al-Hajj, or The Pilgrimage. Verse 18). This holy verse suggests the existence of consciousness on Earth, on the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains and the trees, as well as in animals and man. Therefore, each entity is endowed with a conscious soul and consequently spiritually responsible for its behavior. However, being a psychological and independent entity does not mean that Earth is completely separate from humans, for there is a common relationship and destiny between Earth and its inhabitants. If men completely abandon high spiritual ideals and degrade themselves, the terrestrial globe, with all its creatures and things will also become negatively affected.

If God wanted to destroy all men, He would also destroy the entire Earth and all of its inhabitants as they have common sayyals that connect them spiritually and physically. Likewise, if individual cells decompose in a body, the whole being is affected. The effects of disasters and calamities that befall a certain group of people for transgressions and evils committed will affect all of humanity in different degrees and unbeknownst to them. This holds true for the abuse of nature by man. Harm and damage that man inflicts on Earth and its resources will ultimately harm him as well as the earth. I quote a statement by Albert Einstein about the relationship of man and nature: "A human being is part of the whole, called by us "Universe"; a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a prison restricting our experience to our personal desires and to care for the few persons closest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening the whole circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole nature of its beauty."³⁵ Thus, all life on Earth is interconnected in spite of our independent will, and our mistaken belief that our self-interest is separate from that of Earth and all its inhabitants.

Modern physical science discusses the interrelationship of all things in the universe both the big and the small, as well as the invisible, constant and parallel codes that govern the cosmos. Beyond all these systems and codes there exists a rational and intelligent Force that science tries to probe and define for it laws and equations. These systems are known as the Principles of Symmetry or Principles of Invariance. However, there continues to exist many secrets in modern physics that elude discovery by man.

³⁵ Quoted in Heinz R. Pagels, *Perfect Symmetry* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1985), p. 381.

I will illustrate how a single law controls both big and small elements in nature, the law known as the Conservation of Energy. This law affirms that no object can be annihilated; rather it changes from state to state, from one form of energy to another, yet it has not been annihilated through transformation. This law governs the world of atoms as well as the suns and galaxies. Probing atoms, nuclear scientists realize that subatomic particles appear and disappear, transform and change. However, they are not annihilated, but remain virtual states of energy no matter how they change, transform, and disintegrate due to the release of heat and nuclear radiation from the atomic nucleus. The law of conservation applies to small and big bodies, to birds and trees, as well as the suns and moons and all else. Man's body consists of diverse tissues and elements that are transformed into other elements when he dies and that merge with earth's elements. However, nothing is annihilated. The energy inside the material body passes into other elements in nature.

A number of scientists have begun to discuss the possibility of psychological life or consciousness and free will that Daheshists believe are found in all things. The great American physicist and Nobel Laureate John Wheeler, to whom the *Black Holes* name is credited,³⁶ states in his book "*Dreams of a Final Theory: The Scientist's Search for the Ultimate Laws of Nature*" that rational life is not only necessary in its manifestation but also in its perpetuity, in order to spread to every part of the universe, for each piece of information about the physical state of the universe has to be observed. Science is like a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it benefits man and gives him progress and comfort if he knows how to use it for cultural, humane and spiritual purposes and for the benefit of humankind and life everywhere. On the other hand, science brings misery to man and degrades his spiritual level and eventually destroys him if used mainly to satisfy his materialistic greed and lowly desires. Regrettably, most scientific discoveries and achievements, including in medicine, have been used for profit, power and trade. For example, the discovery of atomic elements in Uranium has been used to make atomic bombs and other tools of mass destruction and have been the source of unfair bargains and trade between the Russian mafia, certain states and weapon dealers.

In conclusion, the reality of all things in nature lies within their spiritual sayyals. Changing in kind and degree with the passing of time, their material aspects and manifestations also change through reincarnation in order to take new forms suitable to their new spiritual merit. These

³⁶ Steven Weinberg. *Dreams of a Final Theory: The Scientist's Search for the Ultimate Laws of Nature*. P. 251

changes are subject to the factor of time that God merged into all matter when he brought them into existence. In my view, the sayyal of time is a form of divine mercy that gives all creatures an opportunity to spiritually improve themselves.

A Daheshist Synopsis on Fallen Angels and the Creation of Adam

All heavenly religions agree that Adam originated in the Kingdom of Heaven. God almighty created him out of mercy. Through Adam, the father of all other prophets, spiritual guides and reformers would provide spiritual guidance for humankind.

Spiritual Daheshist teachings have come with significant explanations that clarify the spiritual identity of Adam and how he was created. It can be summarized as follows: A great host of angels in various spiritual levels in the Worlds of Paradise, led by the archangel of the 150th World, made an attempt to go beyond their paradisiacal physical worlds in order to learn more about the non-physical World of the Spirits and secrets of the infinite greatness of the Creator.³⁷ God commanded each of them to remain in the paradisiacal worlds at the spiritual level that had been assigned to them before the lapse of a specific period of time.

These angels went against God's command and attempted to fulfill their desires before their appointed time. The sky then grew dark and the wrath of the Omnipotent prevailed sending these angels down to Earth. Once fallen, the sayyals of these angels merged with earthly elements to become one entity in the form of Adam. However one wicked and envious angel who had conspired with the other sayyals did not merge with them. Instead God metamorphosed him into a detestable creeping being, a serpent.

The Story of the Fallen Angels goes on to say: Out of earthly mass God formed a human-like being, then breathed life, a holy living soul, into him; at once the earthly mass became alive. Thus Adam was created, the first man not conceived by a woman as well as the first heavenly–earthly Being. This means that, before Adam, earthly creatures and preexisting humans had not been blessed with heavenly sayyals, as we shall see later.

God endowed Adam with an earthly paradise to revel in. He had access to everything in this paradise, the Garden of Eden, with the exception of one tree. After he had lived almost one thousand years, God created Eve out of his body for companionship. Thus, the heavenly but fallen and conspiring sayyals originally in Adam were now distributed to Eve as well.

³⁷ The angels are lofty spiritual sayyals in charge of the paradisiacal worlds. Their ranks are hierarchal and each one has a task assigned to him by the divine Will. They are distributed across 150 levels of Paradise.

In accordance with other religions, the Daheshist Fall of Angels Story continues to say that the wicked angel, who had been transformed into the serpent, lured Eve to eat from the forbidden tree. She, in turn, seduced Adam and thus both of them committed the same sin. The story shows that having eaten the forbidden fruit, both of them developed sexual desires toward one another, desires that were not previously there.

Since Adam had disobeyed God's command once again, God's wrath prevailed. From then on God deprived Adam from happiness and bliss, and ordered the Earth not to provide him with food unless he toiled until weary.³⁸

In a form of infinite and divine mercy, God allowed the sayyals of the other angels who were united to form Adam to propagate through Adam and Eve. This way, the sayyals of each fallen angel would be given the opportunity to return to the Spiritual World of Paradise from which they had fallen, if they succeeded at overcoming their earthly lowly tendencies and elevate themselves.

This is a précis of the Story of Adam according to Daheshism. Comparing it with what is mentioned in some Qur'an verses, particularly in the surah of Taha, we will find some resemblance.³⁹ In these verses it is stated that after Adam disobeyed God Almighty, the Fall from paradise occurred, and that more than one soul fell. However, God favored Adam after the Fall, had mercy on him and guided him. We also learn from these verses that God promised the fallen souls that they would separate from Adam through his progenies, and that His infinite mercy would embrace them and send to them His Guides, indicating that he who follows God's guidance will not go astray or suffer but will be saved. There is another verse in the Qur'an citing Adam as the first man into which God breathed His Holy Spirit. In this verse we read, "Then He shaped him well and breathed into him of His Spirit." (The Surah of Al-Sajda or The Prostration. Verse 8). This is consistent with Daheshist tenets that state that Adam was given the Holy sayyal of guidance.

³⁸ Daheshism reveals that the paradise of Eden where Adam and Eve reveled before committing sin is still physically present on Earth; however, a special sayyal has veiled it preventing people from seeing it.

³⁹ Refer to the surah of *Taha*. Verses: 113-122.

Prophets and the Propagation of Beneficial Sayyals in Mankind

After Cain killed Abel, God cursed him by making him a fugitive and wanderer. He then took wives of the daughters of humans already living on Earth and left behind an offspring void of the sayyals of guidance and prophecy. For the holy sayyals were transmitted from Adam to his son Seth, and from the latter to the other prophets, guides and reformers, who were born in different nations and periods. The objective was to “instill” in humans lofty sayyals through social relations, marriages, baptisms in water and in spirit, and guidance with heavenly teachings and commandments. In the Qur’an we read, “Allah chose Adam, Noah, the family of Abraham and the family of Imran above all mankind” (The surah of Al-‘Imran or The Family of ‘Imran. Verse 32). When indicating these prophets, guides and reformers, the Qur’an says, “Those are the ones whom Allah has favored from among the prophets of the progeny of Adam, of those We carried with Noah, of the progeny of Abraham and Israel and of those We have guided and elected” (The surah of Miriam or Mary. Verse 57). Thus, the prophetic sayyals of Adam were inherited and transmitted by them.

These lofty sayyals have helped many people. When prophets and messengers descend to Earth endowed with heavenly revelation, inspiration and advice for guiding as many people as possible, they also grant lofty sayyals to those who deserve them to help them progress spiritually. They come to strengthen the faith in the souls of “their own” as well as purify them.⁴⁰ Thus they may invest them with lofty “additional” sayyals, according to Christ’s saying, “For those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but for those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away” (Matthew 13: 12). They help them to overcome their temptations and lower tendencies.

Thus, the soul which the Almighty addressed in the following verse, “O quiescent soul, return unto your Lord well-pleased and well-pleasing; and join the ranks of My servants; and enter My Paradise” (Al-Fajr or The Dawn. Verses: 27-30) is not any soul, but rather the one who originally lived in Paradise and then fell and merged with other fallen sayyals into Adam.

⁴⁰ When I use the term “their own”, I do not refer to a group of believers who belong to a specific community or religion, but rather all those who deserve guidance having earned their spiritual sayyals in past incarnations and are spread throughout Earth’s diverse religions, denominations and groups.

This soul or rather the sayyals that disobeyed God in the beginning have spread in many humans. These sayyals can return to the Kingdom of God or Paradise if they obey the Creator's orders, purify and elevate themselves. Returning to the worlds of Paradise depends on the peace of the soul and obedience of divine commandments, "Return unto your Lord well-pleased and well-pleasing" (Al-Fajr or The Dawn. Verse 28).

The question arises, what do the holy books and the writings of the founder of Daheshism say about the necessity of the advent of the prophets in order to strengthen the faith of "their own" and guide humankind?

In the holy Qur'an, this is what is said about the Arab prophet, "And we have only sent you as a mercy to the whole of mankind" (The surah of Al-Anbya' or The Prophet. Verse 107). In the New Testament, Christ says, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14: 6).⁴¹ He also says, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit" (John 3: 5). He goes on to say, "I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15: 5). According to the above verses, only by voluntary spiritual uplifting can one enter the Kingdom of God, after earning some of the heavenly sayyals that purify, strengthen and qualify him to return to the Worlds of Spirits of the Kingdom of God.

Christ's statements about his disciples when addressing the Almighty confirms our viewpoint: "I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours" (John 17: 9) He addressed his disciples, "You did not choose me but I chose you" (John 15: 16). He also says, "I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me" (John 10: 14).

We conclude from the above verses that the prophets are sent to mankind primarily to guide "their own" who are blessed with some lofty spiritual sayyals that enable them to believe in heavenly Messages. Most likely, "their own" are a small group of people. The majority of people, however, do not believe in the prophets and their Heavenly Messages

⁴¹ According to Daheshism, all the prophets and Guides of God, are indeed sayyals from different spiritual degrees but belonging to one Being who bears various names and comes at different periods of time to convey God's heavenly Messages; i.e. the return to the Kingdom of God can be achieved not only by Jesus, but also by all the prophets and Guides.

while they are amongst them. Rather, nonbelievers persecute them and treat them unjustly.⁴²

When Jesus addressed his disciples about The Advocate or The Comforter, he said, “When the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will testify of me. And you also will bear witness because you have been with Me from the beginning” (John 15: 26-27). The expression “who comes from the Father” does not only mean the messenger sent by God, but he who gets the holy sayyāl or the divine breath. It is worth noting that, by his own will, the Almighty also created Jesus Christ. The Qur’an says, “Jesus in Allah’s sight is like Adam; He created him from dust, then He said to him, “Be”, and he was (The surah of Al-‘Imran, The Family of ‘Imran. Verse 58).

In this light, we quote a passage from Dr. Dahesh’s inspired piece titled, *O My Anxious Soul*:

O My Anxious Soul

*“O holy and divine breath,
you are condemned to be imprisoned
in an earthly body for a short time;
through it you witness –with profound pain–
what has been committed on this planet
of awful evils and horrible sins,
you wish you would not have come down
to the world of filthy deceptions.
You attempt to guide human beings
Who, unfortunately, are fraught with evil
and plunged into sins and utter obscene words...
When the torch of my life is extinguished,*

⁴² Only prophets can grant lofty sayyāls to deserving people. These sayyāls then are transmitted to their children and grandchildren and to their descendants according to just spiritual merit.

*I then will revel in real bliss
and delight in heavenly worlds.*⁴³

Whoever reads the writings of Dr. Dahesh discovers that Heaven blesses some humans with lofty sayyals. In this light, we can better understand the practice of polygamy by many prophets including David and Solomon to name a few. In fact, the purpose is to propagate these lofty sayyals to more people. In *Memoirs of Jesus of Nazareth* Peter asks Jesus:

*“But I pray you, unfold for me the riddle
of the fall into grave error
of prophets such as
David and Solomon the Wise and others
who had unlawful relations with women,
even though they were the Prophets
who laid their hands on truth
through revelation.”*⁴⁴

Jesus responds:

*“... David the Prophet, Solomon the Wise
and other prophets like them, did not err
in their relationships with certain women*

⁴³ Dr. Dahesh. *Anthology of Dr. Dabesh's Works* (1970: Annasr Al-Mohalleq Publishing. 1970), pp. 307-309.

⁴⁴ Dr. Dahesh. *Memoirs of Jesus of Nazareth*. Vol.1 (New York: The Daheshist Publishing Co. 1993). pp. 42-43

*because of spiritual reasons
that can only be understood
by him whose soul has been purified,
whose spirit has been elevated,
and who has attained the level of the prophets.
The hour when these mysteries will be revealed
has not yet come,
but will come after a very long time.”⁴⁵*

The Daheshist poet Halim Dammous explained the idea of Heavenly blessings in his statement, “We are in constant progress by virtue of heavenly blessings that come repeatedly to us from Heaven. This blessing is manifested in the prophets, reformers and guides. This will continue until the foretold Kingdom of God prevails, when good overwhelms evil.”⁴⁶

In the Message of Father Noah that was revealed to Dr. Dahesh, God addressed him saying, “O Noah, go out of the Ark, you and all those with your company. You may propagate for a spiritual reason that must be kept secret for now. It will, however, be revealed in due time.” God also said to him, “Man has a wicked heart. For this reason, he has to propagate on Earth. This way, every righteous being will separate himself from the flock of these lowly humans.”⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Ibid. pp. 121-122.

⁴⁶ Addabbour Magazine. Issue of June 6, 1949.

⁴⁷ Dammous, Halim. *The Astonishing Miracles and prodigies of Dr. Dahesh* (Beirut: Annar Wannour Publishing, 1980), pp. 63-64.

The Soul

My Understanding of the Soul According to Daheshist Principles

Due to its various meanings and attributes, the word “soul” or “nafs” in Arabic is one of the most difficult words to define and explain with general consensus, not only in the Arabic language, but in others as well. The definition of the essence of the soul is a very complex and perplexing task that is hard to resolve because of the attributes, functions, and faculties associated with the soul.

Daheshist teachings unravel some significant secrets about the essence of the soul, that its fundamental quintessence pervades all life forms and inanimate objects, and is constituted of spiritually, conscious sayyals that were once part of the Worlds of Spirits, before being separated from them and falling to the physical worlds as a punishment for the wrong they committed. Since the soul is an integral part of the Spirit, and since the Spirit is under the Lord’s command, according to the holy verse, “And they ask you about the Spirit, say, ‘The Spirit is of my Lord’s command, and you have not been given except a little knowledge’” (The surah of Al-Isra’ or The Night Journey. Verse 85). Likewise, Daheshists do not claim to provide the decisive definition of the essence of the soul. This however does not contradict our belief that Daheshist teachings have introduced unique teachings about the soul, unknown to most people. I will discuss this unique Daheshist view of the soul, as I personally understand it, explaining it comparatively with its meaning in the Arabic and English languages and referencing Daheshist teachings, holy books, and the other resources available to me.⁴⁸

The Meaning of the Word “Soul” in Arabic

The soul has different meanings in the Arabic language. Sometimes it means man in his whole being, both body and soul. This meaning is cited in many holy verses, such as, “O Moses, do you wish to kill me, as you killed another living soul yesterday?” (The surah of Al-Qasas or Storytelling. Verse 18); “And we prescribed to them therein that a soul for a soul, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose...” (The surah of Al-Ma’ida or The Table. Verse 45) It is evident from the above verses that the soul has, in this Qur’an context,

⁴⁸ My beliefs are derived from my interpretation of Daheshist readings and therefore are not infallible. I do not force my views on anyone.

the meaning of a human being that includes his flesh and blood, senses and thought, that is, his spiritual and physical being.

“The soul” in Arabic can also mean an entity independent of the body. The source of consciousness including feelings, desires, whims, thoughts and will and that entails responsibility, knowledge and experiences. The holy Qur’an is filled with verses containing this meaning of the soul: “You know what is in my soul, but I do not know what is in Thine.” (The surah of Al-Ma’ida or The Table. Verse 116); “Joseph kept that to himself, his soul or nafs, and did not reveal it to them.” (The surah of Usuf, Joseph. Verse 77). The above two verses limit the definition of the soul to the psychological faculties of man.

Another definition of the word “soul” in Arabic bears a spiritual significance as demonstrated in the following verse, “O quiescent soul, return unto your Lord well-pleased and well-pleasing; and join the ranks of My servants; and enter my Paradise” (the surah of Al-Fajr, The Dawn. Verses: 27-30). The Islamic interpretation of this verse is that on the Day of Resurrection the soul of a pious and virtuous man returns to God who is a Spirit of Light, so it enters paradise. However, can we say, in light of this verse that the souls of all humans were once a part of the Almighty and that they are able to elevate themselves in purity and return to their original source as some interpretations suggest? Are Hindu views that all human souls were originally a part of God that then splintered from him? Are other interpretations possible? The Daheshist interpretation of the “quiescent soul” in this previous verse from the Qur’an means that the spiritual essence of man, or what Daheshism calls the main spiritual sayyals, after overcoming the trials and experiences of its physical incarnations, are thoroughly liberated from their physical existence and are greatly elevated until they attain sublime tranquility and purity. Yet Daheshist philosophy definitely separates the origin of man from God Himself, the Creator of man and all other souls.

Daheshist teachings do not contradict previous Heavenly Messages that say that God willingly created heaven, Earth and other creatures: “Let it be... and it was”. As cited in the book of Genesis, God Almighty created man and invested him with dominion over the wild animals of Earth. Male and female, He created them. If God willingly “created” all creatures it is not possible that any being emanated directly from His being or is Equal to him.

God blessed his creation, man and woman, and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.” Genesis: 27-28) It also states that

the descendants of Adam married the daughters of men, and that after Cain killed his elder brother Abel, God became dissatisfied with Cain, expelled him and set a mark upon him so that he would not be killed by whomever found him. Does this imply that before God created Adam, humankind already inhabited Earth? If this conclusion is right, we further contradict the theory that all human souls emanated from Adam.

Furthermore Daheshist theory does not spiritually distinguish man from other creatures. When the main spiritual sayyāl leaves man, he will reincarnate into the being that he deserves, whether animal, vegetation, or other matter. This logically denies that man is endowed with a special spiritual status that distinguishes him from other creatures.

Whether or not all progenies of man originated in Adam or the Kingdom of God, the holy books are rich with indications stating that once men began to multiply on Earth, their wickedness spread and their hearts became filled with evil. God was discontented with them and He denied them the blessings and grace of His spirit. In Genesis, God says, "My Spirit shall not abide in mortals forever." (Genesis 6: 3). In one reference Jesus rebukes evildoers, saying to them, "You brood of vipers!" (Matthew 12: 34); In another reference, Jesus states, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world." (John 8: 23)

The Soul According to Arab Philosophers

Arab philosophers attempted to explain the nature of the soul. However, their opinions in defining its essence run into contradiction: Is the soul a spiritual, immortal entity according to Avicenna Ibn Sina [980-1037], or does it perish along with the body in which it dwells until the Day of Reckoning when it is recreated by resurrection as stated by Al-Ghazali [1058-1111].⁴⁹ Avicenna did not believe in reincarnation, but rather believed that the soul had a spiritual and eternal essence. He did not distinguish between the good and bad soul on the Day of Reckoning.

In reality, the Arab philosophers such as Al-Farabi [?-d. 950], Avicenna, El-Ghazali, and Ibn Rushd [1126-1198] discussed the nature of the human soul based on the Islamic principles that do not adopt reincarnation. Consequently, their discussions of the soul were limited and sometimes ran into contradictions or lacked the logical approach that the doctrine of

⁴⁹ Refer to the series of *The Arab Philosophers* by Yuhanna Qumeir (Beirut: Dar Al-Mashriq, 1984 & 1986).

reincarnation would have provided if they had adopted it. They engaged in long arguments about the resurrection of the soul on the Day of Reckoning. The question arises: Is the soul resurrected apart from its body according to Avicenna? Or is it resurrected with the body as Al-Ghazali stated? What is the nature of the soul? Is it imprinted in the body like a picture in a material object, or is it a spiritual essence independent of the body and separable from it?

The Soul or “Consciousness” in the English Language

In the English language, the main interest in the study of the spirit or the soul focuses on the discussion of consciousness and its ramifications on intellectual, perceptual and behavioral phenomena in man.⁵⁰ In fact, the concept of consciousness is so inclusive that it is difficult to define with unanimous agreement. It includes thought, will, sensation, feeling, emotion, sentiment, and memory. Simply stated, it means all of man’s psychological state.

To the British philosopher, John Locke, consciousness is defined as the perception of what passes in a man’s own mind. Some define it as a mental faculty by which man can distinguish and analyze the different aspects of nature. Others define it as the mind, restricting it to the functions of the brain.

Although many scholars have attempted to explain aspects of consciousness and to find out common factors relating it to the soul, the reality and essence of consciousness remains a mystery that is hard for scientists and psychologists to comprehend whether in the East or in the West. This is because scientific research and medical experiments, which focus on psychological aspects of consciousness, still encounter many obstacles when dealing with psychological functions that cannot be subjected to solid scientific experiments.

When psychological studies in the 19th century tried to establish basic or general laws concerning psychological states, they failed because they focused on the activity of mind or brain as well as the various channels through which it functions. Research demonstrated that psychological functions are specific states that differ from one individual to another. However, there are some general scientific laws that can be applied to all psychological functions and states.

⁵⁰ In this section we refer to the Britannica and American Encyclopedias.

In the 1950's, Genomic Science, or the genetic study of DNA, gradually and scientifically proved that sensory and psychological states and functions are specific and peculiar states to each individual. Genomic Science has undermined the building blocks upon which psychology was founded in its early age. Furthermore, people had come to mistrust psychiatrists in resolving their psychological problems. So Genomic Science, which is also related to environmental factors, has become the foundation of modern psychological research in Western society.

The word "Consciousness" is almost completely restricted to man, according to most Westerners. Consciousness in animals is reduced to mechanical and psychological functions, such as perceptive knowledge, feelings of hunger, pain, fear and the like. It was understood that abstract psychological functions relevant to consciousness, like the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil, are found only in humans. Zoologists attribute well-organized communal works of some animals, such as beavers, or insects such as bees and ants to instinct. These creatures spontaneously do their work motivated by instinct without planned perception or thought. Most zoologists agree on this subject.

It is worth noting that the word "mind" does not hold any spiritual meaning, neither does it point to any issues or spiritual causes that could be the source of consciousness. It is the brain that creates consciousness. All the functions of consciousness originate in different regions of the brain; the lower, the middle, the right, the left parts of the brain; for example, a center for memory, another for speech, a third for anger, a fourth for sexual desire, and so forth. Each psychological function is attributed to a specific region of the brain. The brain is a compound of nerve fibers that transmit microvolt electrical impulses to the nervous system in both humans and animals. Through these impulses the nervous system generates the mechanical and psychological functions, such as motion, sensation, smell, taste, pain, hunger and other mechanical functions that are called neurophysiologic mechanisms. When the brain is affected by disease or lesions, the psychological aspects and functions are also affected. Once the brain dies, consciousness passes away and all of the brain's activities come to an end. These are the convictions about consciousness that most people in Western societies agree upon and that are sustained by scientific study and medical research.

I recently had a chance to look at a scientific article that was published in Time Magazine, (special issue, 1997) titled, Research into the Mechanics of the Mind Reveals how the Brain Creates Consciousness. The writer states that scientific research is gradually beginning to discover how the mind or

the brain creates consciousness that in turn creates the soul. This widespread belief that the mind or the brain is the source and seat of consciousness is indeed sustained by scientific and medical references and studies. Some scientists and psychologists, however, question this belief. Science has begun to discover intelligence is not restricted to man, or even animals, but also pervades trees, plants and microbes, all these are rational beings endowed with consciousness, even if they lack nervous centers such as brains.

Daheshism has a different view of the relationship between the brain and the soul. The brain is not the source and essence of the rational soul. It is but an instrument for the soul, which is a spiritual essence independent of the body, the mind or the brain. In man and in animals, the brain is like a television set that receives signals, sound, and color and then broadcasts them back to viewers. However, the brain is not the source and the cause of the existence of the soul. It is the receiving and transmitting device. In the case of any damage or flaw in a television set, whether in the wiring or inside the silicon chips, the scenes, sounds and colors are blurred and may even cease to exist. Just like a television set, the brain is an organ that also malfunctions when inflicted by disease or damage.

The Soul According to Daheshism

The Daheshist concept of the soul is uniquely different from other religious beliefs. We have already discussed the Dahesh view on the role of the brain. Daheshism says that the soul, or consciousness that encompasses emotional, sensual and intellectual faculties, is a common inherent attribute in all creation, animate or inanimate, and all of the elements in nature such as water, air, fire and even dust. Furthermore, it tells us that psychological faculties in all creation, that is the main sayyals, have spiritual roots and relations that are not restricted to the body. Therefore, the spiritual component along with the diversity of sayyals is the cause of the existence of all things in nature.

This Dahesh belief that all of creation is conscious is suggested in previous Heavenly Messages in verses of the Old and New Testaments in the Bible as well as in the Qur'an.

In the book of Exodus, it is mentioned that if a stone falls on a man and kills him, the stone is judged and sentenced to destruction by pounding to dust, then scattering its powder to the wind. In New Testament we read, "Jesus got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead

calm (Matthew 8: 26). In the Qur'an we read, "When the earth shall quake violently, and the earth shall bring forth its burdens; and man shall say: 'What is happening to it?' on that day, it shall relate its tales; that its Lord has inspired it" (The surah of Al-Zilzal or The Earthquake. Verse: 1-5). In another verse, "We said: 'O fire, be coolness and peace upon Abraham'" (the surah of Al-Anbiya' or The Prophets. Verse 69).

One wonders, what do the above verses and events mean? They suggest that the winds and seas are intelligent and obedient and that they comply with the commands of Jesus to be calm. They also suggest that even a stone is aware and is held responsible if it falls on an individual and kills him. To obey God means that earth is a rational being, that fire understands speech; otherwise, God would not command it not to hurt the prophet Abraham.

As previously stated research in plants, particularly trees, and of microbes and cells, firmly assert that these animate objects are rational, conscious and that some are highly intelligent. It has become a known fact that bacteria and viruses resist drugs and antibiotics that attempt to kill them and learn how to build resistances against them to continue to survive. Furthermore, some scientists have found that some trees and grass are characterized by vicious and hostile attributes; they hurt whatever approaches them or stands in their way, such as other trees, insects, plants or animals. When attacked by harmful insects, some trees warn the nearby trees in the forest to thwart such insects.

David Attenborough worked many years to produce a documentary film about plants. The film shows how the urge to survive drives some plants such as vines to kill others that rival them or block their way and threaten their life. The vines choke out the competitors by blocking the sunrays that they receive.

In the field of scientific discoveries, Sherman Russell published an article titled, *Plants Talking* in the April 2002 issue of "Discover" Magazine, an American scientific monthly magazine. The article states that two biologists Ian Baldwin and Jack Schultz made a discovery by virtue of sensors that analyze airborne chemicals emitted by some plants when attacked by caterpillars. As the larvae begin to bite into the leaves or branches of these plants, they emit chemical signals calling out to the caterpillars' enemies for help. When these particular insects detect the emissions of these chemical molecules, they hurry to rescue the plant and kill the caterpillars. Strangely enough, most plants that were subjected to experiments and investigation can differentiate the hostile from the benign caterpillars. Thus, they seek help from the insect to kill its foe. This suggests that a plant has the ability to

release diverse chemical molecules into the surrounding air, each attracting the necessary kind of insect to kill a specific kind of caterpillar. In addition, both Baldwin and Schultz strongly believed that plants converse with each other in specific ways. However, it is still scientifically unknown how such communication happens from tree to tree and from plant to plant. It is expected that more investigation and experiments will provide evidence for this theory.

This truth that consciousness, that includes will, pervades all creation can be found in most of Dr. Dahesh's inspired writings. He firmly asserts that consciousness, which includes perceptions, thoughts, emotion, experiences and conflict between good and evil, exists not only in man, but also in animals, plants, and inanimate objects, and that it is also inherent in water, air and in all other things and elements.

The opinion of Dr. Dahesh in this matter is reflected in the following statement: "We, the Daheshists, strongly believe that animals are responsible for their deeds according to the systems of their worlds. The same holds true for plants, trees and inanimate objects, each according to the laws of its world, just as man is responsible for his life in this world."⁵¹

Dr. Dahesh was also known to quote a scientist, Cleve Backster who wrote: "Plants think and feel exactly as humans do, experience joy and pain, remember, show affection to those who like them, sense impending danger and defend themselves against it."⁵²

In a short story by Dr. Dahesh, *A Conversation Between two Green Onions*, the Messenger or Dr. Dahesh goes into the vegetable garden and plucks a green onion from the bed of onions for his dinner. Meanwhile two green onions have the following conversation, "How great was my longing to kiss his sandals, but he was a few centimeters away... I wish he had picked me and made me his dinner. That would have been my utmost happiness." "So would I..." replies the wilted onion. "I, too, longed, as he passed by, to bend over his feet, but he was a few centimeters away, too far to allow me to kiss them."⁵³

The reader should not consider the conversation of the two onions as fiction. Whoever had the opportunity to be acquainted with Dr. Dahesh

⁵¹ Dr. Dahesh. *Strange Stories and Wonderful Tales*. Vol.2 (Beirut: Annasr Al-Mohalleq Publishing, 1979), p. 263.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

and to witness his miracles and supernatural phenomena is persuaded that the conversation between the two onions is a true incident experienced by Dr. Dahesh, whom God uniquely blessed with supernatural and spiritual forces, including the ability to hear and comprehend the conversations of plants and animals, and to delve into the thoughts of inanimate objects and elements when overtaken by the Spirit.⁵⁴

What are the Constituents of the Soul?

What are the constituents of consciousness or the soul? According to Daheshism, the essence of the physical and psychological aspects of all things in nature are spiritual fluids, called “Spiritual Ssayals”. Things in nature do not have an absolute, ultimate and constant physical existence; rather they are constituted of a spiritual essence at different levels. All that we observe in our physical world, as well as natural events and emotional states is determined by the diverse interaction of these spiritual forces or sayyals.

In fact, the main spiritual sayyals or source of consciousness in all creatures and things, experience the events and conditions to which they are subjected according to their spiritual elevation or degradation. When reincarnated, these sayyals acquire the psychological characteristics and attributes relevant to the state and kind of body in which they dwell. Thus, physical events and states change according to the levels and kinds of the main sayyals that were the cause of their existence.

There are two categories of sayyals: First, the main or general sayyals, or the source of consciousness that are eternal and spiritual and subject to the order of reincarnation. Second, the specific sayyals which are also rational but relevant to a specific form of reincarnation.⁵⁵ These include the five senses in man, the sayyals of motion, shape and strength as well as those of certain animals that enable them to recall past reincarnations; the sayyals by

⁵⁴ On this occasion, it is interesting to mention that during one of my trips to Africa with Dr. Dahesh, we sat in the lobby of one of our hotels for tea. As we conversed, I became aware of a dog standing motionless at the entrance of the hotel, about 30 meters away. The dog looked from a distance at Dr. Dahesh and then came dashing towards us. The dog stood by the Doctor's feet shaking all over, as if he wanted to tell him, “Help me! Bless me!” I was motionless with awe from what I was witnessing. Then, overtaken by the Spirit, the Doctor took some water from a glass and sprinkled the dog with it, saying, “From water We created every living thing” (The surah of *Al-Anbiya'* or The Prophet. Verse 30). A few years later, I realized that this dog had longed to be baptized by Dr. Dahesh's hands, and indeed had been blessed.

⁵⁵ I call them “Specific” “because these sayyals are common and peculiar to one species.

which trees can prompt animals to approach them or stay away, the sayyals of the snakes such as the spotted vipers, that allow them to distinguish between who deserves being bitten, and who does not; and the sayyals by which some objects can store pictures of deeds or record conversations which can bear witness against those who have committed evil on the day of reckoning. These specific sayyals are correlated to particular states of reincarnation but consequently depart when the state or the form of reincarnation changes. Once liberated, these sayyals fuse with the elements of nature and can reappear in other creatures of the same level and kind.⁵⁶

To avoid repetition, I shall not attempt to expand upon the principles of reincarnation here to illustrate the nature of the soul and its fundamental constituents. The just divine order of reincarnation encompasses all creatures that have an independent awareness. When, reincarnated, whether in the world of man, the animal kingdom, or others, and regardless of the duration of the reincarnation, the new creation takes on an independent and aware entity that is not the same exact “soul”, with all its previous constituents, but rather the spiritual and eternal *essence* of the soul. This essence determines the nature and level of the new spiritual entity depending upon its elevation or degradation. It encompasses the main and general sayyals in each creature that provide humans and others creatures with life and consciousness along with an awareness to distinguish between right and wrong deeds, good and evil desires. These sayyals drive the soul and control it. Since they have their own free will, they are therefore ultimately responsible for their spiritual elevation and degradation.

Whether elevated or degraded, the main sayyals of awareness and consciousness transmigrate from one body to another, taking the nature and state of reincarnation that it deserves, according to its spiritual level at the moment of its release.

Consider, for example, a main sayyals of consciousness that reincarnates as a lion. This means this sayyals attains the level of a lion in its spiritual awareness. However, aside from the main sayyals that reincarnates, this lion gets specific attributes and physical traits of other sayyals that correspond to the nature and species of a lion, such as great strength, violence, strong claws, sharp canines, a characteristic roar and so forth. These traits or specific sayyals are not subject to the order of reincarnation as are the main

⁵⁶ So in reality, the specific sayyals and the physical manifestation of reincarnation, do not vanish but rather are preserved in a specific spiritual realm to be kept as witnesses to the soul on the Judgment Day. The following Qur’anic verse confirms this reality, “On the day when their tongues, their hands and their feet shall bear witness against them, regarding what they used to do” (The surah of *Al-Nur* or The Light. Verse 24).

sayyals, but rather disintegrate at the moment of death and then merge with the elements of nature and move on to other creatures that equal the lion in kind and level. These traits, however, are important to the lion's nature and life and significant to its world experiences. The specific attributes and characteristics previously mentioned become part of the psychological constitution of a lion. The same applies to man and all other creatures. Each creature has its main and general sayyals as well as characteristic species-specific sayyals. Both kinds of sayyals make up the psychological constitution of every creature, for the main and general sayyals, once reincarnated, merge into the sayyals of the bodies in which they dwell, to form, for an appointed time, one entity and specific body of consciousness.

To my understanding, what Daheshism illustrates about the constituents and nature of the soul provides the answer to the question that has confused philosophers and thinkers: What is the relationship between the soul and the body? Is the soul inherent to it or separate from it? The body, or the reincarnated physical form, Daheshism tells us, is the deserved form that is equivalent to the conscious faculties that inhabit it. This body cannot exist separately from these conscious faculties, which are the cause of its existence.

Let us consider a man who lowers his main sayyals of consciousness to the level of that of a wild boar, for example. What occurs is that his lowly main general sayyals leave him to reincarnate in the body of a wild boar according to the condition of spiritual merit. The wild boar's voracity and aggressive nature are psychological attributes that conform to the physical characteristics of its body. Furthermore, the specific sayyals that belong to the species of the wild boar, such as curved canines, stiff hair, and repulsive appearance, amongst others are also in harmony with its general constitution. Thus, the body's form is in part defined by the characteristics inherent to the soul.⁵⁷

In the second volume of *Strange Stories and Wonderful Tales*, by Dr. Dahesh, there is a demonstration of how the species and nature of each body are integrated into the conscious or facultative constitution of creatures. The short story, *The Divided Tree*⁵⁸ describes a conflict within the same tree between its righteous or right half, and its evil or left half. God granted this tree, like other trees, with specific sayyals that enable it to direct an invisible

⁵⁷ Modern science has begun to point out correlations between the physical and mental states. For further reading in this matter, refer to our essay, *The Significance of Consciousness in Daheshism*.

⁵⁸ Dr. Dahesh. *Strange Stories and Wonderful Tales*. Vol. 2. (Beirut: Annasr Al-Mohalleq Publishing, 1979), pp. 81-84.

sayyal to the animals that approach it. This sayyal drives the animal to climb the tree or to keep it away.

In this story the evil left side of the tree continuously directs its invisible sayyal towards animals and drives them to climb its branches so that it can cause harm not only to the animal climbing the tree but also to the birds that seek refuge in the tree. The right side is afflicted by the evil that the left side commits. One day a snake approaches the tree, and just as it is about to leave it, the left side directs its invisible sayyal towards the snake driving it to turn back and climb up the trunk of the tree, killing a nesting bird and swallowing the eggs. The right side is revolted by what has happened, and gives a resounding cry of protest, imploring the Almighty to deliver it from its evil half. God answers its plea and the tree is therefore divided into two separate trunks, each becoming responsible for its conduct, tendencies and thoughts. Therefore the right side of the tree is spared from being punished for the evil acts committed by the left side.

This story demonstrates that the specific invisible sayyal which God endowed the trees with form part of its consciousness or awareness to commit good or evil. However, it is but one way by which their conscious essence is put to the test.

In another short story by Dr. Dahesh, *A Conversation Between two Snakes*, there is another demonstration of how God has provided some creatures with specific sayyals to test their conscious behaviors. The viper says to its friend, the non-venomous snake, “We spotted vipers are endowed by God with our lethal venom to punish those who deserve it. We know who deserves our venom. However, people do not recognize that we are gifted with this knowledge or intuition. If they were intelligent, they would understand what this statement in the book of Genesis implies; “Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made” (Genesis 3:1). It means that God has invested us with a powerful intuition that enables us to know in whom we should inject our venom, so that their souls will be released to move to the hellish world where their spiritual torture begins.” We gather that the sayyal of the release of venom that God has endowed spotted vipers with, becomes a component of the spotted vipers’ consciousness and they are responsible for how they use it, appropriately or not. These vipers certainly know that when they bite a man or another animal, the victim will be killed.

In summary, the main constituents of the soul in all creatures include these two categories of sayyals: conscious ones and the specific sayyals that are linked to the needs, state and nature of the physical body. Furthermore,

these sayyals provide each being with its general attributes that are common to its species, besides the psychological characteristics that distinguish him from the other individuals of the same species. Biology attempts to discover the sayyals' physical manifestations through Genomic Science (DNA). The Daheshist teachings, however, assert that this unique sayyals' identity is but a mere temporary aspect relevant only to the kind and nature of embodiment that a creature takes during a life cycle. If this embodiment changes, the kind of DNA accordingly also changes.

Thus, specific sayyals are the instruments or the media by which a creature is exposed to many trials and temptations, whereas the main sayyals consciously distinguish between trials and temptations. If they restrain from committing transgressions and evil deeds, they succeed and elevate themselves; otherwise, the contrary is true. Jesus says, "If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell" (Matthew 5: 29). And in the Qur'an we read, "On the day when their tongues, their hands and their feet shall bear witness against them, regarding what they used to do" (The surah of Al-Nur or The Light. Verse 24).

In addition to the conscious main sayyals and the specific ones, there are "influential sayyals" or many other outside factors that affect the general constitution of the soul. These differ not only between one kind and another, but also between individuals of the same species. For instance, the sayyals of acquired environmental factors, such as knowledge and education, experiences, social customs, habits, laws, religious affiliation, and nutritional preferences, amongst others, all have an impact on the psychological constitution of the individual, interact with it, and are responsible for the differences we see between the psychological traits of a person who lives in the jungles of the Amazon and the psychological traits of a person who lives in New York and works on Wall Street.

There are also health factors that affect the psychological state of an individual. The elements that interact in the soul of a sick or a blind man are unknown to a man endowed with perfect eyesight. There are also differences in the psychological attributes between male and female, not only in the humans but also in the animals. Furthermore, in all creatures, the psychological state is dynamic and ever changing. With all this variability, the faculties of awareness or consciousness that make up an individual become as dissimilar from one individual to another as there are diversity of creatures in the world.

In summary these diverse elements and factors are complex and correlated in such a way that make them difficult to separate, restrict, or evaluate in terms of their influence. Complete knowledge of the nature of the soul is still a deep secret that non other than God himself can unlock ⁵⁹

⁵⁹ For further reading about the nature of the soul and consciousness refer to the Appendix of this book.

Consciousness

Consciousness and Its importance in The Daheshist Faith

Daheshist teachings stress the importance of the intellectual faculties of the mind along with the diverse activities attributed to them, such as tendencies, desires, awareness, responsibility and other psychological attributes.

These conscious intellectual faculties of the mind interact with the basic Daheshist tenets including the principles of reincarnation, justice, spiritual causality, universal consciousness, responsibility, and the diversity of creatures. These interactions are responsible for all that we observe including suffering, misery and evil, as well as love, kindness, goodness, and scientific advancement.

What is consciousness? What is it made of? In Daheshism, the concept of consciousness is based on the psychological activity of sayyals. These include thoughts and feelings of either individuals or groups. They include the total activities of the mind and the senses. Given that consciousness encompasses all intellectual faculties of man, the question arises, from where does consciousness arise in the first place?

I believe that there are two sources of consciousness: The first is environmental, that of scientific advancement, cultural customs, social values and achievements, religious rites by ways of belief in religion, in addition to the requirements of life, sustenance and labor. In summary, all this knowledge and experience conveyed to man by his environment. The second source is more significant, for it springs from man's instincts, temperament, desires, emotions and sensations that are responsible for generating thoughts of love, compassion, charity, justice, loyalty and other good tendencies, as well as thoughts of envy, hatred, arrogance, injustice, deception and other bad inclinations. This is the spiritual side of the mental activity or the sayyal that is aware and responsible. Whatever the facultative activities, whether acquired from a person's environment or emerging from within, they are in constant interaction with each other to give an individual his particular psychological characteristics.

Consider, for example, a person living in a highly developed and civilized society like the United States. This person's intellectual activities are likely to be in sync with the society in which he lives, its technology, scientific achievements, customs, values, and specific systems and laws with which he

is expected to comply. However, this acquired knowledge in turn, interacts with his tendencies, desires, emotions, ambitions and instincts to make up a unique individual with varying psychological and spiritual tendencies. For example, we may see a well-educated person who is brilliant in the field of science and technology, but who is not advanced spiritually because of greed, undesirable whims, passions and unfair social relationships. On the other hand, we may have the example of a simple, illiterate man who lives in a backward and underdeveloped society who is blessed with lofty spiritual tendencies, desires, thoughts and social relationships.

Consider, for instance, Mahatma Gandhi, the great spiritual leader. The Hindu society to which he belonged was underdeveloped and bound by old customs and traditions as well as an unjust social caste system that includes the untouchables. Tyrannical laws set by British colonists subjugated India. Base habits and deceit were spread throughout the caste system of the Hindu society. As this social system was unjust and incompatible with Gandhi's lofty tendencies, convictions, and ideals, he insistently rebelled against it. However, he maintained some Hindu traditions and customs in which he did not see defects or spiritual harm, such as abstaining from eating meat, keeping the simple Hindu attire. He also practiced asceticism, in line with the condition of poverty and misery that most Indians were experiencing. To him, adhering to such habits was to train the soul and body to accept the hardship of living. In brief, although he belonged to an underdeveloped third world Indian society, Gandhi's spiritual values made him one of the most noble and lofty individuals history has known.

In the daily Dahesh Prayer, the founder of Daheshism refers to temptations coming from our environment that drive us to sin. He also states that what befalls us of evil comes from within. He states, "Hold away from us temptations that snare us to the dark abyss of sins... Drive away from us evil thoughts."⁶⁰

Deeds start with thoughts. Lofty spiritual thoughts generate great civilizations, whereas lowly thoughts give rise to decadent societies. Great thoughts accomplish great achievements, enhance science and art, reveal the laws of nature, and establish just civil laws that guarantee basic human rights, such as personal freedom and decent living conditions. Lofty thoughts also bring about deeds of charity, goodness, compassion, and helping the poor and needy. On the contrary, base thoughts generate greed, injustice, exploitation, tyranny, poverty, deprivation, lust and other lowly tendencies that beget transgression, evil, war, and other offensive actions. If acted upon, thoughts, whether spiritually lofty or lowly, will determine the course

⁶⁰ Dr. Dahesh. *Humble Supplications* (Beirut: Annar Wannour Publishing, 1983), p. 86

of spiritual causality and divine justice that is administered to all creation in what they will then merit in terms of punishment or reward. At the time of death or transmigration, the spiritual tendencies of a living creature at this point in time will then determine both the physical condition and spiritual level of its reincarnated form in a new creation whether in the high realms of Paradise or in the lowly hellish worlds.

The Relationship between Consciousness and Sayyals or Spiritual Fluids

Man's mental activities represented by thoughts, instincts, temperament, emotion, desires, and tendencies, are described in Daheshism as "spiritual sayyals". This indicates that the spiritual aspect of the sayyals is rational, responsible, and endowed with awareness and a will. They are unstable and prone to spiritual elevation or degradation. That is why they are named fluids or sayyals.

When Daheshists describes a person's spiritual sayyals as elevated, it means that his psychological attributes on the whole are good; his tendencies, desires, temperaments, emotions, amongst others are lofty and noble. Describing another person's sayyals as lowly, on the other hand, means that his psychological attributes and thought, on the whole, are degraded or base. God Almighty invested us with such sayyals as well as an awareness of them and the will to control them. These sayyals are the only spiritual criterion that will determine a person's spiritual level and merit and for which a person will be accordingly rewarded or punished.

I often heard Dr. Dahesh address his followers in this way, "Try to improve your spiritual sayyals." In other words, he meant, ameliorate your tendencies, your desires, your feelings and your thoughts. Make them righteous, spiritual in value and purpose so that your social, intellectual, and health conditions improve on Earth as well as your spiritual merit in heaven. Furthermore, he decisively asserted that man's activities and tendencies are responsible for what happens to him during one's lifetime in terms of spiritual and material conditions and are under his influence or control. A tyrant, for instance, can better his tyrannical sayyals, if he can overcome his unjust thoughts. An envious person can also ameliorate his sayyals of envy by uprooting the envious thoughts from his soul.

The holy Qur'an points to this spiritual awareness, the good and bad thoughts according to the following verse, "And the soul and Him who

fashioned it well, inspiring it with a conscience to see what is wrong for it and what is right for it.” (The surah of Al-Shams or The Sun. Verses: 7-8).

The Relationship between Consciousness and Objects

Daheshism relies on the principles of divine justice, spiritual causality and merit to explain life events and situations. For example, thinking of an evil act may lead to committing it. Divine Justice will punish whoever commits evil acts, sooner or later and the consequences of this deed may affect his current living and health conditions as well as his psychological state of mind. If this does not occur in one’s lifetime, the consequences will be dealt out in the next life cycle. Similarly, thinking of a noble act and carrying through with it will bring positive consequences in this life or the next.

The principles of divine justice, spiritual causality and merit also determine the physical form of reincarnation that a creature takes after death, conforming to the spiritual level reached by the creature at the moment of death, or departure, a term Daheshists prefer to use. This also applies to all creatures, single cell life forms, animals, vegetation, trees, and even inanimate objects such as rocks and sand, regardless of the length of their existence on Earth. The scientific term, “transformation and change” can be applied to describe the Daheshist principle of reincarnation. All material objects with their different forms and attributes are reincarnations generated by spiritual merit that are determined by spiritual–facultative activities or sayyals that have reached a certain spiritual level. Often, the nature and form of these reincarnations are like mirrors that reflect their relevant spiritual–facultative activities. The Daheshist poet, Halim Dammous, took note of the following quotation revealed to the founder of Daheshism in one of his Spiritual Sessions: “In those ancient times, creatures were spiritually degraded in comparison with present ones, their evil tendencies overwhelming good ones. This condition materialized in their unpleasant and terrifying shapes, such as dinosaurs, and mammoths, that lived on Earth for a long time and were in constant conflict with one another”⁶¹

Over a half a century ago [1942-1944], Dr. Dahesh made reference to what modern physicists are just now beginning to discover and affirm. Physicist Fritzof Capra wrote in his book, *The Tao of Physics: The*

⁶¹ *Addabbour* magazine, issue # 1252, June 20, 1949, p. 63. [See also Iskandar Shaheen. *Dr. Dahesh: The Man of Mysteries* (New York: Daheshist Publishing, Co. 2001), p. 256].

clarification of the concept of order in a field of research where patterns of matter and patterns of mind are increasingly being recognized as reflections of one another promises thus to open fascinating frontiers of knowledge.⁶²

If one reflects over man-made devices, instruments and other inventions, we may wonder how these objects take shape. The answer may be that they originated as a need or desire in the head of the inventor and then were made accordingly. Becoming material things, they reflect the intellectual advancement of those who made them. For example, if we ponder a primitive wooden arrow made by a man in the jungle of Africa to hunt his prey, we see that the arrow's shape and limited efficiency reflects the jungle man's primitive thoughts. Contemplating a modern sophisticated computer, on the other hand, we realize that it also reflects the technologically and scientifically advanced thoughts and skills of today's computer engineer.

If we reflect upon events such as indulgence, permissiveness, evil acts, war, conflicts and well-organized exploitation of foreign natural resources and cheap labor, prevalent the world over, we wonder, aren't all these deeds the result of low moral criteria driven by greed, egoism, lust and so on? On the other hand, charitable deeds such as helping the poor and victims of earthquakes or floods must be the result of noble thought processes. These examples reflect Capra's thoughts of the relationship between patterns of mind and patterns of matter or physical objects.

If this reality concerning man's production of devices and instruments as mere reflections of the intellectual levels of those who have achieved them, can we say that all physical creatures such as man, animals, trees, mountains, galaxies, and stars, in effect, innumerable items, in their ultimate reality, are material reflections of different forms and levels of mental faculties or spiritual sayyals? There is no doubt in my mind that spiritual laws govern all that we see in our physical world.

The laws of motion, gravity and other physical laws apply to man and animal, the way they apply to rocks, airplanes, cars, and ships as well as to all man-made objects. The spiritual order of reincarnation, scientifically named the "Conservation of Energy" or "Law of Transformation and Change" also applies to man, mountains, trees, animals, as well as to devices, and instruments and other man-made objects. Thus, intellectual criteria and the physical standards relevant to it are reflections of each other and do not distinguish between the work of man and nature.

⁶² Capra, Fritjof. *The Tao of Physics* (Berkeley's Shambala, 1975), p. 351.

For further illustration we say that for each species of creatures there are common specific spiritual sayyals relevant to the kind and nature of reincarnation and linked to its world's experiences and temptations. There are, for instance, general psychological traits that are common to all human beings, such as materialism, egoism, and sexual desires amongst others. There are general psychological traits common to all dogs as barking, and the pleasure of gnawing at bones, for example. This holds true for each species of creatures.

There are, however, psychological levels and differences within each species, which entails the distinction between one individual and another. We describe, for example, a person as righteous and endowed with lofty sayyals. We describe another as wicked, dishonest and lacking in faith. This criterion applies to other creatures. We describe a dog as peaceful, another as aggressive. It is noteworthy that one cannot recognize differences between individual rocks, plants and trees, although in Daheshism, these differences also exist. In fact, Daheshist teachings do not bestow upon man a distinguished spiritual status among creatures. Rather, they state that some animals, particularly many species of birds, are spiritually loftier than man.

Do Physical Appearances Reflect The Level of Consciousness or Sayyals?

Modern physics describes our natural world as a physical illusion, and goes even further to state that, in its ultimate reality, our natural world is a world without substance. We published a relevant article in the Dahesh Voice magazine (Vol.1, #4, March, 1999) titled, "Does nature have a physical, ultimate existence or is it a relative phenomena reflecting a spiritual existence?" In that article we demonstrate that modern physics has proven that all natural things, including their atomic constituents, do not have a real existence if they are given time to annihilate. We also demonstrate how modern physics has discovered that, ultimately, matter consists of atomic particles that contain a large vacuum with tiny subatomic particles known as electrons orbiting around these atoms. These nano particles orbit around the nucleus at extraordinary speeds often reaching the speed of light. This extraordinary speed gives the illusion of a solid material. Yet these subatomic particles are mere states of energy without a real existence of their own. They have only a virtual theoretical reality based on the correlation of these particles and their interactions with one another. They are in a state of constant change and transformation, annihilation and reappearance, which asserts that the physical phenomena of their fundamental constituents are illusive states of unstable energy.

In our article we also demonstrate that there are some eminent scientists such as the American physicist John Wheeler that are moving closer to the Daheshist principles which affirm that all creatures possess consciousness. These scientists admit that rational life Werner Heisenberg and consciousness essentially permeate the whole physical universe. I would like to quote the eminent German physicist, Werner Heisenberg, a Nobel laureate; "The laws of life have their origin beyond their mere physical manifestation and compel us to consider their spiritual source".⁶³

In his scientific treatise, *Symmetries and Reflections*, published in 1970, the eminent physicist and Nobel Laureate, E. Wigner, states that we cannot totally stabilize modern laws of physics without considering the mental.⁶⁴ In this same context, Fritjof Capra, the author of the "Tao of Physics" states that consciousness may be one of the most significant and fundamental constituents in this universe. And in the future, the laws relevant to the physical phenomena should include it.⁶⁵

It is worth noting that, on many occasions, the founder of Daheshism revealed to some close followers that there are physical worlds with high spiritual degrees where thoughts can instantly materialize. If a creature, for instance, asks or longs for a specific thing, it promptly materializes. Many Daheshists have witnessed miracles that show how the product of creative thoughts can instantly take on a physical form. In one instance, in the presence of many witnesses, Dr. Dahesh, overcome by the Holy Spirit, reached out to a rose in a painting, an artist's creative thought, and produced a real rose and held it in his hand leaving behind a blank spot on the painting where it once was painted.

Moreover, the Holy Qur'an addresses revelers in Paradise, saying, "You shall have whatever your hearts desire and you shall have therein whatever you call for" (the Surah of Fussilat or Well-expounded. Verse 30). This verse implies that whatsoever the revelers may desire, this desire will instantly materialize in front of them. The Qur'an also refers to the Almighty stating, "His command is indeed such that if He wills a thing, He says to it, "Be," and it comes to be (the Surah of Ya Sin. Verse 81). This means that from

God's thought and command, things materialize. In the book of Genesis, God Almighty says, "Let there be Earth and heaven" ... and they were.

⁶³ Heisenberg, Werner. *Across the Frontiers* (Oxford, 1990), p. XIV.

⁶⁴ Wigner, E. *Scientific Essays*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1970).

⁶⁵ Capra, Fritjof. *The Tao of Physics* (Berkeley's Shambala, 1975), p. 354.

If thoughts can instantly take shape in some of the physical worlds of high spiritual degree or the paradisiacal realms, this potential can be realized, in principle, in other worlds including our own. This process, however, is subject to standards compatible with the nature and spiritual levels of these worlds. The difference between our world and those with higher spiritual levels, where these thoughts can instantly materialize, is that in these lofty worlds, righteous and sublime creatures are spiritually permitted to probe their worlds' natural laws. In contrast, on Earth, since man is created of flesh and dense matter, we depend on the elements in nature and the discovery of the laws of physics in order to turn our thoughts and desires into material things, such as airplanes, rockets, palaces, tools of destruction and so on.

We conclude that all physical phenomena are, in reality, material reflections of different states and levels of consciousness or sayyals, and that they change according to these states and levels.

Do Spiritual-Intellectual Faculties of the Mind Have an Existence Apart from their Physical Embodiments?

If the spiritual-intellectual faculties, or sayyals, are the fundamental realities of all physical phenomena in this universe, does this mean that they have an essentially independent and separate existence from their physical manifestation?

We raise this important question as a response to scientific sources assuming that consciousness begins its experience with the mind or brain and ends it with the death of brain. Lately, this subject emerged in a special issue of Time magazine that has been previously cited (Winter 1997/1998). Three years prior, I had a chance to read an article in the same magazine (issue of June 31, 1995) indicating that the brain is the basis and source of consciousness, and therefore its death entails the death of consciousness. Many neurologists consider that man is the only creature among countless others who possess consciousness. Such assumptions that indirectly deny resurrection and thus, the existence of God Almighty, in reality, contradict more modern scientific studies that suggest that consciousness exists in all creatures and that intelligence and awareness are not limited to the existence of the brain. Science has discovered conscious states in other living creatures, such as cells, microbes, plants and trees even though they do not have brains. Therefore the brain is a tool through which consciousness power manifests in some creatures, such as in man and in animals. It is not, however, the only source for mental or intellectual activity.

The Heavenly Messages with their concept of the soul, as well as Daheshism, with the concept of the sayyals assert that faculties of the mind are entities independent of their temporary embodiments and that reincarnation is a just merit as well as an opportunity for mercy and experience in a new life cycle. In addition, the physical form changes through reincarnation according to the evolving levels of the spiritual and conscious faculties.

In his inspired piece, “*To my Brother Salim: If You Remain steadfast*”, Dr. Dahesh points out that the conscious soul is an entity independent of its embodiment.

*Suddenly, yes suddenly,
O my beloved brother Salim,
You realize how we shall cast off
Our strange earthly bodies
And enrobe the wondrous
Spiritual raiment!
Such a magnificent precious garment!*⁶⁶

In another spiritual message revealed to Dr. Dahesh on the occasion of the departure or death of a fellow Daheshist, we read,

*“Blessed is every Daheshist
Who departs into the other world?
—I did not say who dies—
for there is absolutely no death at all.
There is only a transformation
from one state into another—
from the state of ignorance*

⁶⁶ Dr. Dahesh. *Anthology of Dr. Dahesh's Works* (Annasr Almohalleq Publishing, 1970), p. 310.

*into the state of comprehensive
spiritual knowledge,
if the departed are deserving of
this Degree of Knowledge.*⁶⁷

This spiritual message denies the existence of simple extinction with death and asserts the fact that man's soul "transmigrates" from one embodiment to another, according to spiritual merit. I return to the Qur'an verse, "O quiescent soul, return unto your Lord well-pleased and well-pleasing, and join the ranks of My servants, and enter My Paradise" (the Surah of Al-Fajr or The dawn. Verses: 27-30). In this verse, God Almighty calls for the soul that has managed to elevate its spiritual-conscious faculties or sayyals, to enter Paradise after it has succeeded in overcoming the temptations and trials of its physical worlds through its many reincarnations. We realize that this term, "return unto your Lord..." points out that the soul, in a previous life, was in the spiritual Kingdom of God, and then fell to the physical worlds in order to take diverse material forms in order to elevate itself and return to God's Kingdom and enter His Paradise. In summary, there is an eternal existence that predates the reincarnations of the soul or the existence of sayyals.

The following verse indicates that the material shape or reincarnation changes according to the relevant spiritual-facultative levels, "Then, when they arrogantly disdained what they were forbidden, We said to them: "Be miserable monkeys" (the Surah of Al-A'raf or The Ramparts. Verse 165). This verse implies that there are specific changes including degradation of the spiritual facultative activities of a group of people due to their arrogance, rebellion and disobedience to God's commands. Their facultative characteristics are replaced by others that entail spiritual punishment and physical change in accordance with the merits and degrees of their new and lowly spiritual faculties and they are reincarnated into monkeys. This verse implies that monkeys, in general, have a common spiritual-facultative nature characterized by tyranny and arrogance. In fact scientific studies on some species of monkeys have shown this. Does this holy verse, however, imply that the spiritual level of the monkeys is lower than that of humans? Although this is suggested it is not easy to provide a definitive answer, for there is no evidence for this. We learn that a group of people, who had rebelled

⁶⁷ A spiritual message which was addressed by the Spirit of Father (Prophet) Nahum in the occasion of the passing away of Ali Onbargi (Salim's brother) on 12/15/1975.

and oppressed others, had conscious faculties or sayyals that underwent a specific degradation and were metamorphosed into monkeys. Nevertheless there are exceptions to this generalized rule and there can be monkeys who are spiritually higher than some evil humans despite the monkeys' general base tendencies that show injustice, rebellion and disobedience.

What was been revealed through Daheshist spiritual message applies to all matter in life. "You have to know that everything is vain and perishable, only the Spiritual Truth is eternal." I agree with the following statement by the physicist Werner Heisenberg. He writes, "The laws of life have their origin beyond their mere physical manifestation and compel us to consider their spiritual source."⁶⁸

Is Consciousness in its Capacity to Distinguishing Between Good and Evil Inherent in the Soul? Or is it both Inherent and Acquired at the Same Time?

This question suggests that at the time of death, some of a person's spiritual-intellectual power transmigrates to a new reincarnation, while some of that power is acquired during his new life. In other words, the soul, after death, preserves its acquired spiritual characteristics and carries them to the new embodiment, where additional spiritual characteristics are acquired from the environment in which it develops.

This concept is in fact acceptable to many, including some Daheshists. This concept is also suggested in the field of Psychology. However, Western psychology does not admit the concept of reincarnation, but rather states that man carries psychosomatic characteristics inherited at birth through DNA, and then new psychological traits will be acquired from the environment in which he lives.⁶⁹

However, I believe that if one probes Daheshist teachings in depth, they come to realize that spiritual consciousness, or the ability to distinguish between good and evil in creatures, is not acquired from the environment.

⁶⁸ Heisenberg, Werner. *Across the Frontiers* (Oxford, 1990), p. XIV.

⁶⁹ Although often beneficial, Daheshism does not acknowledge Psychology as a validated science. Scientific realities, as in the laws of the natural sciences hold up to the rigors of experimental studies and arithmetical equations that cannot be extrapolated to the field of psychology. Hence, psychology cannot be considered a science in the strict sense of the word. As for altered psychological states, such as schizophrenia, Daheshists contend that these pathological states are in fact mental-facultative states arising from the coexistence of sayyals that are in conflict with one another within the same individual

Rather, it is inherent in the soul and has been with the soul since the beginning of this vast, physical universe that God Almighty created by His Eternal Will. Spiritual knowledge cannot be inherent and acquired at the same time. Most importantly, these faculties or spiritual sayyals are in constant states of conflict and this determines the levels of their consciousness in terms of elevation or degradation. As the soul degrades itself, spiritual distinction weakens and consequently evil increases in the soul. On the other hand, as a soul spiritually exalts itself, veils of darkness and ignorance are lifted and good qualities radiate from within, from the lights of spiritual knowledge. If the sayyals of spiritual intelligence by which creatures can distinguish between good and evil relevant to the temptations of their respective worlds were not inherent in all creatures, the existence of God's divine mercy would be contradicted. For those creatures without this spiritual intelligence would be at a disadvantage and would have no hope of advancing themselves spiritually.

In summary, spiritual knowledge, one of the most notable indications of spiritual progress and elevation, does not result from scientific advancement or from research, neither is it acquired from the environment, but rather is earned, to a certain extent, through an exalted soul that spiritually deserves it. The power of spiritual knowledge to distinguish between good and evil despite the changes that occur in actual spiritual levels, adheres to the essence of the soul, from the beginning of its creation through the present and in the future, in all of its physical reincarnations and extended sayyals. This power of spiritual knowledge remains in the soul despite its lowliness or loftiness, mental vividness or blindness until the sayyal to which it adheres progresses and frees itself of the suffering of physical reincarnations and returns to merge into the non-physical Worlds of The Spirits, the worlds of light, bliss and beauty, and from which it originally emanated. It then returns to the Kingdom of the Merciful as stated in the Qur'an, "O quiescent soul, return unto your Lord well-pleased and well-pleasing" (the Surah of Al-Fajr or The dawn. Verses: 27-28).

An Illustrative Appendix About The Reality of Sayyals in Daheshism

What differentiates Daheshism from other heavenly religions is the unique concept of sayyals. They are spiritual-facultative entities to which all events, matters and beings are correlated. The attributes of the sayyals make them indispensable to comprehending the spiritual Daheshist doctrine and to appreciate what it provides in terms of profound and interrelated spiritual teachings. Each Daheshist principle is connected to these spiritual fluids directly or indirectly.

I cannot but admit that my attempts to understand the reality of the sayyals have challenged me since I became a Daheshist. In one of my journeys with Dr. Dahesh to the Middle East, I brought up the subject of sayyals to him admitting that I was still experiencing great difficulties in understanding this new concept and that, despite all of my constant attempts to comprehend it, there were still many unclear and contradictory points that were clouding my understanding.

Dr. Dahesh answered, “Do not worry about the reality of sayyals, for you cannot totally understand the concept even if I would explain it to you.” He added, “The day will come when many issues about the sayyals will become clear and then you will comprehend them by yourself without the help of others; however, this will not happen unless you deserve it spiritually by attaining a certain “Degree of Knowledge.” He added, “It is sufficient for you to know that when you improve your tendencies, desires, thoughts and deeds, and keep yourself away from transgressions and wrongdoings, you will improve your sayyals as well as understand them better.” After this clarification from Dr. Dahesh over 30 years ago, I realized that understanding the concept of sayyals required a certain spiritual-mental maturity and that I was not then qualified for grasping the concept.

While writing my book in English, *Born Again* with Dr. Dahesh, in the late 1980's, I attempted to introduce the reader to an acceptable and simplified explanation of Daheshist principles. I found myself immersed, once more, in a new attempt to deepen my understanding of the reality of the sayyals as well as to attempt to explain them. This served to drive me to concentrate on the concept of sayyals and deepen my knowledge in all that was available to me in the Daheshist literature. Furthermore, I studied the Holy Books, particularly the Qur'an, and the Bible in addition to many

books on modern physics in order to gain a deeper insight to the realities of life and nature.

This reading has enabled me to reach a better understanding of the sayyals. I have to say, however, if I had not accepted some spiritual, Daheshist preconceptions, which Divine Providence has illustrated, I would not have reached these conclusions. Among these preconceptions is that the only purpose in life is spiritual progress that everything in nature is subject to change, that consciousness exists in all things, and that the concept of reincarnation has a much broader meaning than that in previous religions, encompassing all creatures including inanimate objects spread throughout the universe.

These are the questions I asked myself. What are sayyals? Why are they so called? What Daheshist teachings are conveyed when discussing sayyals? How does one differentiate between the different types, characteristics and attributes? How can we improve them? These questions have been extremely important to me in order to attain a more profound and inclusive understanding of Daheshist teachings. Nevertheless, the following conclusions that I have come to in my understanding of the sayyals are personal convictions and I do not force them on anyone.

Basically, sayyals are the basis and origin of all events and matters in life implying the conscious facultative abilities in all creatures. However there are still many realities relevant to the sayyals that remain spiritual secrets that are hidden to human understanding.

There are three different types of Sayyals:

The Main Sayyals

These are the main sayyals of consciousness. By them, an individual can distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong, beneficial and harmful deeds. These sayyals reincarnate, taking form in a complete psychological and physical entity that is independent and responsible. In the beginning, these main sayyals belonged to beings in the World of Spirits. These sayyals determine the progress or degradation of the being's spiritual level. When they reincarnate taking well-deserved forms, they merge with other temporary sayyals related to the physical form, nature, and attributes of the body in which they dwell. This body becomes a tool or a vessel for experiences and temptations. If these main sayyals keep the body under control, overcoming its whims, tendencies, and desires, choosing justice over

oppression, loyalty over betrayal, love over hatred, truth over dishonesty, virtue over immorality, and so on, they prevail over evil and elevate their spiritual degree. The opposite is also true. Then these same sayyals, or at least some of them, leave the body which they have inhabited to re-encounter in another in order to begin a new and well merited life cycle where once again, they are subject to the temptations relevant to the nature and needs of their new embodiments and are exposed to criterion of good and evil in the world in which they reincarnate. The following clarification is necessary. One or more of the main sayyals may leave an individual without causing death of an individual since death, that is the complete loss of consciousness does not occur until the last main sayyal leaves man.

The ultimate goal of all of the main sayyals is to continue to improve spiritually until they merge once again with the World of Spirits from which they once originated.

The Specific Sayyals

These are the sayyals that are related to the God-given physical, psychological and sensory needs of each species or sub species. The individuals of each species share the same shape, body, internal and sensory organs, and other factors related to their functioning and survival and are very different from one species to the next. For instance, the specific sayyals of the venomous vipers include not only the ability to secrete venom but an instinct to know how to distinguish between its victims, knowing which individuals deserve to be bitten and which do not. How they use this instinct, however, is related to the Main sayyals of the viper. A dog's sayyal of smell, for example, is much more powerful than that of man's. Another example of a specific sayyal belonging to man is the sayyal of possession of material things, like money for example. Although it is not a constitutional sayyal, it is one of modern man's living requirements and an important component of his psychology. Materialism, on the other hand has no relevance to dogs.

Upon death, these specific sayyals do not simply disintegrate, but rather they abandon the body and transform into rational spiritual essences which are then transferred to other creatures who in most cases are at the same spiritual level to make up a new being endowed with main sayyals. The specific sayyals cannot exist in a creature independently without the presence of the main sayyal.

The Environmental Sayyals

These are the sayyals of environmental influence and what they generate in terms of lifestyle habits, customs, and traditions as well as social and living requirements relevant to the environment in which a person lives and works. The environmental sayyals are significant and correlated to one's mental faculties and obviously affect them, in terms of thought processes. They contribute to attributes that differentiate an American from an Arab or a German from an Indian. These common environmental sayyals link individuals to their compatriots and societies.

Therefore the psychological constitution of an individual is made up of the main facultative sayyals, the species-specific sayyals in form and traits, and the environmental sayyals. The diverse psychological constitutions of humans within societies define a civilization's progress, in the sciences, arts, and other aspects, as well as the establishment of just laws that guarantee human rights. However, they may also generate societies in which ignorance, corruption, decadence and despotism pervade. One man's psychological constitution drives him to commit sin and transgression and to perpetrate evil, while another person's elevated psychological constitution drives him to do the contrary.

Humans with degraded psychological constitutions may also cause them famines, epidemics, devastating diseases, drought and other natural disasters. According to Daheshism, the forces that cause these natural disasters and others such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, hurricanes, and floods are in fact themselves sayyals or rational, intelligent entities that have taken specific shapes and characteristics to achieve a definite purpose. They obey their Creator's commands and therefore generate events and disasters according to precise spiritual causality and strict divine justice.

A review of the reality of sayyals and relevant spiritual concepts shows that the various Daheshist principles are logically and simply correlated with one other. In order to demonstrate this, I will give an illustration of the role of sayyals in a specific example of reincarnation, one of the most important tenets in Daheshism:

Let us suppose that a man reincarnates as an insect; what conclusions can be drawn in the light of Daheshist spiritual teachings? First, when we say that a man reincarnates as an insect, we refer to the main sayyal or sayyals that have separated from him to reincarnate in an insect's body. This does not necessarily mean that all of his spiritual-mental being has reincarnated as an insect, although this is certainly possible.

First, a specific lowly spiritual transformation has occurred to the main sayyal that has been released from this man, and therefore this sayyal has been metamorphosed into an insect.⁷⁰ It is worth noting that man himself freely brought upon himself this transformation as a result of committing evil acts and transgressions.

Second, this reincarnation took place due to spiritual causality related to the laws of divine justice, reward and punishment that God has established to apply to His creatures according to their deeds and thoughts.

Third, the reincarnation of a man as an insect is a temporary material reflection of the nature and level of that sayyal that took the body of an insect. If a major change occurs to the spiritual degree of the sayyal of this same insect, it will lose its reason to be. In other words, the insect is a being endowed with a temporary, conscious, and physical embodiment without a real existence apart from the sayyal that brought it into being.

Fourth, if this conscious sayyal had degraded itself to the spiritual level of an inanimate object such as a rock, for example, it would reincarnate into a rock. This example serves to demonstrate that spiritual-facultative conscious powers are all inclusive existing in all entities including inanimate objects.

Fifth, before the main sayyal reincarnates in the body of an insect, it had a human consciousness consistent with man's world and environment. However, when it transmigrated into an insect, its consciousness changes and becomes correlated to the respective nature of the insect and its world. The world of humans becomes irrelevant to it. Thus the facultative constitutions of creatures are made of diverse kinds of sayyals, such as the specific and environmental sayyals that give each creature his respective consciousness.

Sixth, when a major change occurs to the last main sayyal in a being, it leaves its body causing death and bringing about decay and disintegration. One or more specific sayyals may leave the body before death, such as the sayyal of hearing, or sight, or smell, or motion as a man ages or becomes ill; however, man does not lose life and consciousness, the state of death, until all the main sayyals leave him.

Seventh, if the released sayyal or sayyals that took the shape of an insect were not the last main sayyal, the man keeps his human nature and essence by virtue of what is left of his main sayyals that keep him alive. Thus a

⁷⁰ The reincarnation of a man as an insect is, in my viewpoint, a manifestation of spiritual degradation, for the scientific studies and documentary films show that the world of insects is aggressive and thoroughly governed by forces of greed, deceit, and murder.

certain person or spiritual being, according to Daheshist teachings, is not restricted to his living body but can also encompass diverse projections of his spiritual sayyals, not only on Earth but in creatures in different worlds spread throughout the universe.

Eighth, let us consider a man who has one lowly sayyal that is released and reincarnated in an insect. Yet, this man still has his human form, conscious and alive. The degraded sayyal has taken on an independent existence from the man from whom it has separated, acquiring mental characteristics harmoniously related to the physical needs, experiences and temptations of this insect. This way, the insect now becomes responsible for uplifting its spiritual level despite the spiritual correlation of the sayyal that connected it to the man in the first place. The same occurs when a son or daughter is born to an individual; this son or daughter becomes spiritually responsible for himself, having independent sayyals even though they still have sayyals that are linked to one of his or her parents.

My hope is that this discussion serves to shed some light upon the Daheshist concept of sayyals in order to make them somewhat easier to comprehend. I repeat once again that I do not force my convictions and understanding of the sayyals on anyone. My hope is that they provide at least a partial explanation of the nature of sayyals that is the reality of life.

If I had to sum up my personal understanding of the sayyals in one paragraph, I would say:

The essence of all things in nature is spiritually aware and conscious and is constituted of sayyals. God created these sayyals and controls their transformation and interactions in all that we observe in nature and in creatures. Some of these conscious essences or sayyals descended from the Spiritual Worlds due to the commitment of transgressions by spiritual beings and consequently were reincarnated on Earth and other physical worlds. God Almighty gave form to other specific sayyals when He created nature and all creatures and said to them, “Be” and they were. From the diversity of spiritual consciousness encompassing many different spiritual levels and their merging with specific sayyals, everything in nature materialized and creatures became diverse. Unique facultative and conscious beings were formed each with different material and psychological characteristics encompassing all creatures and inanimate objects. For each of these beings, God established just, ultimate, all-inclusive and precise spiritual systems with means to ascend the ladder of spiritual progress. All that we see and experience in life, nature, events, death and other phenomenon are simply manifestations of the spiritual elevation and degradation of countless

numbers of conscious sayyals on their journeys up this ladder. The ultimate goal of each being is spiritual improvement so that it can rid itself of suffering countless physical reincarnations, allowing it to return, once again, to the non-physical worlds of light and bliss, the Worlds of The Spirits, and the Kingdom of God.

The Author

(1932-2004)

Salim Onbargi was born in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1932, of a Palestinian father and a Lebanese mother. He grew up in Palestine. In 1947, he moved with his family to Lebanon due to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In 1957, he graduated from the University of Texas with a B.A. in Political Science and a B.B.S. in Industrial Engineering.

He worked as an industrial engineer in the Middle East and in the U.S.A. He joined J.D. Marshall International of Chicago, Illinois from 1967-1981.

In 1963, he made acquaintance with Dr. Dahesh and believed in his Spiritual Mission. He accompanied Dr. Dahesh to more than 23 countries during his travels around the globe.

In 1993, the Daheshist Publishing Co. in New York published his book (in English), *Born Again with Dr. Dahesh*.

Salim Onbargi died in Connecticut, in the United States of America, on May 13, 2004.