

ADB 4765

**INTERPRETATIONS OF ETERNAL TREE (*SHAJARAT*
AL-KHULD) ACCORDING TO CHRISTIAN
SCHOLARS AND *MUFASSIRŪN***

KHADIJAH BINTI MOHD KHAMBALI @ HAMBALI

**A THESIS PRESENTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY (PH.D)**

**DEPARTMENT OF 'AQĪDAH AND ISLAMIC
THOUGHT**

**DIVISION OF UŞŪLUDDĪN
ACADEMY OF ISLAMIC STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR**

2003



LIST OF ABBREVIATION

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| AD | After Death of Jesus |
| <i>Al-Jāmi'</i> | <i>al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān</i> |
| Associate Prof. | Associate Professor |
| B.C | Before Christ |
| d. | death |
| Dr. | Doctor |
| <i>Fī Zilāl</i> | <i>Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān</i> |
| H | Hijri |
| هـ | هجريّة |
| Ibid | Ibiden |
| M | Masihi |
| م | مسيحية |
| n.d | not dated |
| r. 'a | RadialLahu'anhu |
| ş.'a.w | ŞalLahu'alaihiwassallam |
| Prof. | Professor |
| <i>Shajarat</i> | <i>shajarat al-khuld</i> |
| <i>Summa Theologiae</i> | <i>Summa Theologiae A Concise Translation</i> |

NOTES OF TRANSLATION

Arabic Word

Names And Transcription

| | | |
|-----|---|---------------|
| أءء | : | a, ` (Hamzah) |
| ب | : | b |
| ء | : | t |
| ء | : | th |
| ج | : | j |
| ح | : | h |
| خ | : | kh |
| د | : | d |
| ذ | : | dh |
| ر | : | r |
| ز | : | z |
| س | : | s |
| ش | : | sy/sh |
| ص | : | ṣ |
| ض | : | ḍ |
| ط | : | ṭ |
| ظ | : | ẓ |
| ع | : | ' |
| غ | : | gh |
| ف | : | f |
| ق | : | q |
| ك | : | k |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ل | : | l |
| م | : | m |
| ن | : | n |
| ه | : | h |
| و | : | w |
| ي | : | y |
| ة | : | h |

Vokal Panjang

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| آ | : | ā |
| و | : | ū |
| ي | : | ī |

Vokal Pendek

| | | |
|------------|---|---|
| َ (fathah) | : | a |
| ُ (ḍammah) | : | u |
| ِ (kasrah) | : | i |

ABSTRACT

The main aim of this thesis is to undertake a comparative study of Christian and Muslim understandings of the “eternal tree” (*shajarat al-khuld*) mentioned both in the Bible and the Qur’ān. For the purpose of this study, we have chosen two Christians scholars who represent Christian views on the eternal tree. These were St. Augustine (354-430AD) and St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274AD). We have also chosen two Muslim interpreters of the Qur’ān who represent Muslim views on the tree, Imām al-Qurṭubī (d.671H/1273) and Imām Sayyid al-Quṭb (1906-1966). The choice of these four thinkers is arbitrary apart from the fact that their exegesis had been famous and influential. Their interpretations may also be regarded as traditional.

In an effort to discuss the opinions of the four scholars on the meanings of *shajarat al-khuld*, we have referred to their renowned books, *Confessions* and *The City of God* by Saint Augustine, *al-Jāmi’ li Ahkām al-Qur’ān* the Qur’anic exegesis (*al-tafsīr*) of Imām al-Qurṭubī, *Summa Theologiae* by Saint Thomas Aquinas and *Fī Zīlāl al-Qur’ān* the Qur’anic exegesis (*al-tafsīr*) of Imām Sayyid Quṭb. These primary sources are complemented by various secondary sources.

The thesis is organized into an Introduction, Six Chapters and a Conclusion. The Introduction outlines the objectives, methodology and significance of our study. The First Chapter explores Christian and Muslim methodological approaches to the interpretation of the sacred texts with a view of clarifying the religious background for understanding the eternal tree in the two traditions.

Chapter Two discusses the creation of man as the background to understanding the eternal tree, including “the beginnings” of Adam and as taught in the Bible and the Qur’ān. This study then explores the meanings of the term *shajarat al-khuld* in relation to creation of man.

In Chapter Three, we explain the symbolic meanings of the tree as understood by the four thinkers. These symbolic meanings of the tree refer primarily to knowledge, sexual desire, impurity and tribulation. Each of these meanings is discussed in details in the next three chapters (Four to Six).

This study concluded with a summary of the similarities between the four thinkers on their understandings of the eternal tree as well as their differences. Based on these views we draw the necessary conclusions regarding Christian and Islamic teachings on this important idea.

ABSTRAK

Matlamat utama tesis ini adalah untuk menjalankan kajian perbandingan tentang pemahaman Kristian dan Islam berhubung "pohon khuldi" yang disebut di dalam Bible dan al-Qur'ān. Untuk mencapai tujuan tersebut, kajian ini telah memilih dua (2) orang sarjana Kristian yang mewakili pandangan Kristian terhadap "pohon khuldi". Sarjana-sarjana ini adalah St. Augustine (354-430M) dan St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274M). Kajian turut memilih dua (2) tokoh ahli tafsir muslim (*mufasssir*) iaitu Imām al-Qurṭubī (m. 671H/1273M) dan Imām Sayyid Quṭb (1906-1966M) mewakili pandangan Islam terhadap pohon yang dimaksudkan. Antara alasan pemilihan empat (4) sarjana pemikir tersebut adalah kerana takwilan dan tafsiran mereka yang amat terkenal dan berpengaruh. Tafsiran mereka juga boleh dianggap tradisional.

Dalam usaha untuk membincangkan pendapat empat (4) orang sarjana tersebut tentang pengertian dan maksud "pohon khuldi", kajian ini merujuk karya-karya mereka yang terkenal; *Confessions* dan *The City of God* oleh St. Augustine, *al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān* (sebuah karya tafsir) oleh Imām al-Qurṭubī, *Summa Theologiae* oleh St. Thomas Aquinas dan *Fī Zīlāl al-Qur'ān* (sebuah karya tafsir) oleh Imām Sayyid Quṭb. Sumber-sumber utama yang dinyatakan ini turut dilengkapi oleh sumber-sumber lain.

Tesis ini disusun meliputi bahagian Pengenalan/Pendahuluan, Enam Bab dan Kesimpulan. Bahagian Pengenalan/Pendahuluan menggariskan objektif, metodologi/kaedah dan kepentingan kajian ini. Bab Pertama meneroka

pendekatan metodologi/kaedah Kristian dan Islam tentang tafsiran teks-teks suci dengan menjelaskan latarbelakang agama untuk memahami "pohon khuldi" dalam kedua-dua agama ini.

Bab Dua membincangkan penciptaan manusia sebagai latarbelakang untuk memahami "pohon khuldi", termasuk "permulaan" Adam yang dinyatakan di dalam Bible dan al-Qur'an. Kajian ini kemudiannya meneroka maksud istilah "pohon khuldi" dan hubungannya dengan penciptaan manusia.

Dalam Bab Tiga, kajian ini menjelaskan maksud simbolik "pohon khuldi" menurut pemahaman empat (4) tokoh pemikir tersebut. Maksud simbolik pohon ini merujuk terutamanya kepada "pengetahuan", "keinginan seksual", "ketidaktulenan" / "ketidaksucian" dan "kesengsaraan" / "tribulasi". Setiap maksud tersebut akan dibincangkan secara terperinci dalam tiga bab seterusnya (Bab Empat hingga Bab Enam)

Kajian ini disimpulkan/dirumuskan dengan ringkasan persamaan dan perbezaan "pohon khuldi" mengikut pemahaman keempat-empat sarjana/tokoh pemikir tersebut. Berdasarkan pendapat mereka, kajian ini membuat kesimpulan yang sewajarnya menurut ajaran Kristian dan Islam terhadap idea penting ini.

ان الهدف الرئيسي من هذا البحث هو لدراسة المقارنة ما بين المعتقدات النصرانية وبين المعتقدات الإسلامية حول "شجرة الخلد" التي كانت مذكورة في الانجيل والقرآن الكريم. ولذلك تستمد هذه الدراسة آراء النصرانية في "شجرة الخلد" ويمثلها العالمان النصرانيان هما القديس أغسطين (٣٥٤-٤٣٠م) والقديس طوماس أكوينس (١٢٢٥-١٢٧٤م). وتستمد أيضا آراء الاسلام ونظراته ويمثلها المفسران هما الامام القرطبي (٥٦٧١/١٢٧٣م) والامام الشهيد سيد قطب (١٩٠٦-١٩٦٦م) رحمهما الله. والسبب من اختيارهم الاربعة لهذه الدراسة هو أن تفسيراتهم تأخذ مكانة مرموقة عند الباحثين.

ولدراسة أرائهم الأربعة حول "شجرة الخلد" تؤخذ مؤلفاتهم للمراجعة؛ الاعتراف ومدنية الله (*The City of God: Confessions*) القديس أغسطين، والجامع لأحكام القرآن للامام القرطبي (تفسير)، والبحث الشامل في اللاهوت (*Summa Theologiae*) للقديس أكوينس وكتاب في ظلال القرآن (تفسير) للامام الشهيد سيد قطب. ويجنب هذه المصادر مراجع الاخرى التي تتعلق بالدراسة.

يحتوى هذا البحث على المقدمة وستة أبواب والخاتمة. فى المقدمة أهداف الدراسة وطرقها وأهميتها. وأما الباب الأول يتكلم عن القواعد أو الطرق التي

اتخذها الاسلام والنصرانية في تفسير الآيات المقدسة مع بيان أسس الذين لفهم معنى "شجرة الخلد" عند هاتين الملتين.

والباب الثانى يحكى عن الخلق اللانسان كأساس لفهم معنى "شجرة الخلد" ويشتمل بداية خلق آدم عليه السلام كما بينه القرآن الكريم والانجيل. ويليه الكلام عن معنى "شجرة الخلد" فى الاصطلاح وعلاقتها بخلق الانسان.

وفى الباب الثالث، تجرى الدراسة فى بيان معنى "شجرة الخلد" بالرموز الى آراء العلماء الاربعة الذين قد سبق ذكرهم. وهذا المعنى الرمزى يرجع الى "المعرفة" (knowledge)، و"الغريزة الجنسية" (sexual desire)، و"اللاطبيعية" و"اللاقدسية" (impurity)، و"المحنة" (tribulation). كل تلك المفردات ستناقش مناقشة دقيقة فى الأبواب الثلاثة التالية.

وتختم الدراسة هذه بالاختصار عن اتفاق آراء العلماء الاربعة واختلافاتهم حول "شجرة الخلد". ومن أرائهم تستنتج الدراسة استنتاجا مطابقا لدين الاسلام والنصرانية تجاه هذه الفكرة العظيمة.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study focuses on the comparative study of scriptural interpretations of the eternal tree in two religious traditions, namely Christianity and Islam. For the purpose of this study, we have chosen two Christian Scholars; St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas and two *Mufasssirūn* Scholars; Imām al-Qurṭubī and Imām Sayyid Quṭb.

During three years of researching and writing, I have consulted with many scholars and friends. I wish to express my special gratitude to my respected supervisor, Prof. Datuk Dr. Osman Bakar, Malaysia Chair of Islam in Southeast Asia, Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding (CMCU), Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service (SFS), Georgetown University, Washington DC, USA for being so generous with his time and guidance. He gave careful attention to this thesis, as well as invaluable suggestions, motivation and moral support. I learned and benefited in many ways from his professional advice and he was a very inspirational Muslim Scholar and I am honored to have been his student. I am especially grateful to Prof. Dr. John L. Esposito, the Director and University Professor of Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, History and International Affairs, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, Washington DC, USA, for providing me with two years of hospitality and as Visiting Research Professor in his department and with provided full facilities, internet/e-mail access and library resources. I am also especially grateful to Prof. Dr. John Obert Voll, professor of history at the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University, Washington DC for his

invaluable suggestions and loan of the invaluable book “*Adam, Eve and the Serpent*”. I owe special thanks as well to my friends, especially Miss Lisa Swaim the international student advisor of International Student & Scholar Services, International Programs, Georgetown University, Datin Badariah Ahmad and her family, Rosiza Buang and her husband Muhammad Ali, Dr. Thomas Mann, professor at Library of Congress, Cornelia Neaver Taylor of the service advisor staff at the Library of Congress, students in Hebrew classes, professors, administrative staff at the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, administrative staff at the Library of Congress, Washington DC, administrative staff at Thomas Jefferson Library, Washington DC, administrative staff at the Library of International Institute of Islamic Thought, Herndon, Virginia and administrative staff at Joseph Mark Lauiger Memorial Library, Georgetown University, Washington DC who supported me in various ways during my stay in Virginia.

I owe special thanks too, to al-ustādh Abdul Ghani Samsudin; president of Persatuan ‘Ulama, Malaysia for invaluable biography of al-Qurṭubī and administrative staff at the Main Library of the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Perputakaan Negara, Malaysia and Library of Academy of Islamic Studies.

I also owe special thanks to my editor and best friend Barbara Carlson, who read the entire manuscript and helped me with editing, corrections and gave encouragement and to Jamaluddin Mohideen who offered comments and criticism on portions of the work as it was in progress.

I would also like to thank my employer, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, which granted me a three years study leave with generous financial support. I am also happy to thank the Director of the Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya Prof. Dato' Paduka Dr. Mahmood Zuhdi Hj Abdul Majid, and my department head, Associate Prof. Dr. Che Zarrina Hj Sa'ari as well as my colleagues in the Academy of Islamic Studies for giving their moral support.

I owe my most personal and special thanks to those many families whose have given presence and personal support, and encouragement, and especially to my parents, Hj Mohd Hambali Hj Abdul Salam, Hajjah Kalsom Hj Mokhtar and my mother in-law, Hajjah Miskiah Hj Siddiq and all my brothers (in-laws) and sisters (in-laws).

Finally and most of all, I am especially grateful to my lovely husband Lukman Abdul Hamid for the extraordinary sacrifice, patience, understanding and love, he has shown toward my work as he was burdened with the heavy responsibility of caring after our two lovely children, the 'delights of our eyes' and source of inspiration.

Khadijah Mohd Hambali

6166 Lessburg Pike

B 107, Falls Church

Virginia 22044, USA

December 2002

No. 35, Jalan Yakut 7/13,

Sec. 7, 40000, Shah Alam,

Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia

CONTENTS

| | Pages |
|---|----------|
| LIST OF ABBREVIATION | ii |
| NOTES OF TRANSLATION | iii-iv |
| ABSTRACT | v-vi |
| ABSTRAK | vii-viii |
| ملخص | ix-x |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENT | xi-xiii |
| CONTENTS | xiv-xxxi |
| 1.0 INTRODUCTION | 1-6 |
| 1.1 INTERPRETATION CHOSEN FOR STUDY | 6-7 |
| 1.2 THE BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES OF EXEGESES CHOSEN FOR STUDY | 7 |
| 1.2.1 ST. AUGUSTINE (354-430AD) | 8-11 |
| 1.2.2 IMĀM AL-QURṬUBĪ (d.671H/1273) | 11-14 |
| 1.2.3 ST. THOMAS AQUINAS (1225-1274AD) | 14-16 |
| 1.2.4 IMĀM SAYYID QUṬB (1906-1966) | 16-20 |

| | | |
|--------------|---|--------------|
| 1.3 | OBJECTIVES AND THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDY | 20-21 |
| 1.5 | RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES AND LITERATURE REVIEW | 21 |
| 1.5.1 | CHRISTIAN'S LITERATURE | 21-29 |
| 1.5.2 | MUSLIM'S LITERATURE | 30-38 |

CHAPTER ONE

THE CREATION OF MAN AS THE BACKGROUND TO UNDERSTANDING *SHAJARAT AL-KHULD* OR THE ETERNAL TREE

| | Pages |
|--|--------------|
| 1.0 INTRODUCTION | 39 |
| 1.1 THE CONCEPT OF THE CREATION OF MAN ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE | 39 |
| 1.1.1 THE TERM OF ADAM | 40-42 |
| 1.1.2 THE CREATION OF ADAM: THE PHYSICAL ASPECT | 42-48 |
| 1.1.3 THE CREATION OF ADAM: THE SPIRITUAL ASPECT | 48-51 |
| 1.1.4 THE CREATION OF EVE | 52-55 |
| 1.2 THE BACKGROUND OF THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL | 55-59 |
| 1.2.1 THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL | 59-64 |
| 1.2.2 THE TREE OF LIFE | 64-68 |
| 1.2.3 SERPENT | 68-77 |
| 1.2.4 THE FALL OF MAN | 77-80 |

| | |
|--|--------------|
| 1.2.5 GARDEN OF EDEN (PARADISE) | 80-83 |
| 1.2.6 MAN IN THE CHRISTIAN CONTEXT | 84-88 |
| 1.2.7 THE ASPECT OF CHARACTER | |
| SIMILARITY BETWEEN GOD AND | |
| MANKIND TO CHRISTIANITY | 88-89 |
| (i) MATERIAL ASPECT | 89 |
| (a) MORALITY | 89 |
| (b) SPIRITUALITY | 90 |
| (ii) FORMAL ASPECT | 90 |
| (a) PERSONALITY | 90 |
| (b) IMMORTALITY | 91-92 |
| (c) RATIONALITY AND | |
| INTELLIGENCE | 92 |
| (d) AUTHORITY | 92-93 |
| 1.3 THE CREATION OF ADAM ACCORDING TO | |
| THE QUR'ĀN | 93 |
| 1.3.1 TIME AND DAY OF ADAM'S CREATION | 93-95 |
| 1.3.2 THE STAGES IN ADAM'S CREATION | 96 |
| i. STAGE WHEN EXTRACTING | |
| THE ESSENCE OF SOIL | 96 |
| ii. STAGE WHEN IT TURNS | |
| INTO STICKY SOIL | 96-98 |
| iii. STAGE WHEN THE CLAY SMELT | 98-99 |
| iv. STAGE WHERE THE CLAY | |

| | | |
|--------------|---|----------------|
| | HAS HARDENED | 99-100 |
| v. | THE STAGE OF THE | |
| | BREATHING THE SOUL | 100-103 |
| 1.3.3 | THE CREATION OF EVE ACCORDING | |
| | TO THE QUR'ĀN | 103-110 |
| 1.4 | THE BACKGROUND OF <i>SHAJARAT AL-KHULD</i> | |
| | ACCORDING TO THE QUR'ĀN | 111-113 |
| 1.4.1 | DEFINITION OF <i>SHAJARAT</i> | 113-116 |
| 1.4.2 | THE TYPE (IDENTITY) OF <i>SHAJARAT</i> | 116-120 |
| 1.4.3 | GARDEN OF EDEN OR <i>AL-JANNAH</i> | 120-123 |

CHAPTER TWO

SYMBOLIC MEANING OF *SHAJARAT AL-KHULD* OR THE ETERNAL TREE

| | Pages |
|---|---------|
| 2.0 INTRODUCTION | 124 |
| 2.1 THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLARS VIEWS | 125-127 |
| 2.2 ST. AUGUSTINE: <i>THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE</i> | 127-128 |
| 2.2.1 THE ROLE OF SATAN | 128-130 |
| 2.2.2 THE NATURE OF ADAM AND EVE'S DISOBEDIENCE OF GOD'S PROHIBITION | 130-136 |
| 2.3 ST. THOMAS AQUINAS: <i>THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE</i> | 136-139 |
| 2.3.1 THE ROLE OF SATAN | 139-140 |
| 2.3.2 THE NATURE OF ADAM AND EVE'S DISOBEDIENCE OF GOD'S PROHIBITION | 140-142 |
| 2.4 THE <i>MUFASSIRŪN</i> VIEWS | 143-146 |
| 2.5 IMĀM AL-QURṬUBĪ: <i>SHAJARAT AL-KHULD</i> | 147-148 |

| | | |
|-------|--|---------|
| 2.5.1 | THE ROLE OF SATAN | 148-149 |
| 2.5.2 | THE NATURE OF ADAM AND EVE'S DISOBEDIENCE OF ALLAH'S PROHIBITION | 149-154 |
| 2.6 | IMĀM SAYYID QUṬB: <i>SHAJARAT AL-KHULD</i> | 154-156 |
| 2.6.1 | THE ROLE OF SATAN | 156-157 |
| 2.6.2 | THE NATURE OF ADAM AND EVE'S DISOBEDIENCE OF ALLAH'S PROHIBITION | 157-161 |

CHAPTER THREE

**THE INTERPRETATION OF *SHAJARAT AL-KHULD* OR ETERNAL
TREE AS KNOWLEDGE**

| | Pages |
|--|----------------|
| 3.0 INTRODUCTION | 162-163 |
| 3.1 <i>SHAJARAT</i> AS KNOWLEDGE | 163-164 |
| 3.1.1 ST. AUGUSTINE'S CONCEPTION OF KNOWLEDGE (THE THEORIES OF KNOWLEDGE THAT INFLUENCED AUGUSTINE) | 165-167 |
| 3.1.1a GREEK THEORIES OF KNOWLEDGE | 167 |
| 3.1.1.1a PARMINIDES | 167-168 |
| 3.1.1.1b ATOMIST AND SOPHIST | 168-169 |
| 3.1.1.1c SOCRATES, PLATO AND ARISTOTLE | 170-171 |
| 3.1.1b EARLY CHRISTIAN'S THOUGHT ON KNOWLEDGE AND INTERPRETATION OF BIBLE | 171-182 |
| 3.1.1c ST.AUGUSTINE'S INTERPRETATION OF GENESIS | 183-190 |
| 3.1.1d ST. AUGUSTINE'S SYNTHESIS OF | |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| GREEK THEORIES AND | |
| TRADITIONAL CHRISTIAN | 190-199 |
| 3.1.d.a CHRISTIAN PLATONIST | 199 |
| 3.1.1e ST. AUGUSTINE'S | |
| INTERPRETATION OF <i>SHAJARAT</i> | 200-203 |
| 3.1.2 IMĀM AL-QURṬUBĪ'S CONCEPTION OF | |
| KNOWLEDGE (THEORIES OF | |
| KNOWLEDGE THAT INFLUENCED | |
| IMĀM AL-QURṬUBĪ) | 203-204 |
| 3.1.2a THE HOLY QUR'ĀN AND | |
| <i>AL-ḤADĪTH</i> AS THE MAJOR | |
| SOURCES | 204 |
| 3.1.2.1 a THE GLORIOUS QUR'ĀN | |
| AND <i>AL-ḤADĪTH</i> | 204-205 |
| 3.1.2.1b THE REPORTS FROM | |
| <i>ṢAḤĀBAH</i> | 205 |
| 3.1.2.1c THE REPORTS FROM | |
| <i>TĀBĪ'ĪN</i> OR SUCCESSORS | 205-206 |
| 3.1.2.1d THE ARABIC LANGUAGE | 206 |
| 3.1.2.1e DELIBERATION AND | |
| DEDUCTION | 206 |
| 3.1.2b MUSLIM SCHOLARS' OPINION AND | |
| IMĀM AL-QURṬUBĪ'S | |

| | |
|--|----------------|
| 3.1.3 ST THOMAS AQUINAS' CONCEPTION OF KNOWLEDGE (THEORIES OF KNOWLEDGE THAT INFLUENCED ST. THOMAS AQUINAS) | 219-220 |
| 3.1.3.1 CHRISTIAN PLATONIST | 220 |
| 3.1.3.1a ERIGENA | 220-221 |
| 3.1.3.1b ST. ANSELM | 221 |
| 3.1.3.1c PETER ABELARD | 221-222 |
| 3.1.3.2 THE ARABIC ARISTOTLE | 222 |
| 3.1.3.2a IBN SINA (AVICENNA) | 223 |
| 3.1.3.2b IBN RUSHD (AVERROES) | 223-224 |
| 3.1.3.2c ARISTOTLE AND CHRISTIAN | 224 |
| 3.1.3.2d ST. BONAVENTURE | 225 |
| 3.1.3.3 ST. THOMAS AQUINAS' INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE/GENESIS | 226-233 |
| 3.1.3.4 ST. THOMAS AQUINAS' SOURCES OF INFLUENCE | 233-235 |
| 3.1.3.5 ST. THOMAS AQUINAS' SYNTHESIS (SCHOLASTIC PHILOSOPHY) | 236-238 |
| 3.1.3.6 ST. THOMAS AQUINAS' INTERPRETATION OF <i>SHAJARAT</i> | 238-245 |

| | | |
|----------------|--|----------------|
| 3.1.4 | IMĀM SAYYID QUṬB'S CONCEPTION | |
| | OF KNOWLEDGE | 245-246 |
| 3.1.4a | THE TRADITIONAL SOURCES (THE | |
| | HOLY QUR'AN AND <i>AL-ḤADĪTH</i> | 246 |
| 3.1.4b | IMĀM HASSAN AL-BANNĀ AND | |
| | THE <i>IKHWĀN</i>: CONTEMPORARY | |
| | SOURCES | 247-250 |
| 3.1.4c | <i>IKHWĀN AL-MUSLIMŪN</i>'S OPINION | |
| | AND THOUGHT | 250-256 |
| 3.1.4.2 | IMĀM SAYYID QUṬB'S | |
| | INTERPRETATION OF <i>SHAJARAT</i> | 257-268 |

CHAPTER FOUR

THE INTERPRETATION OF *SHAJARAT AL-KHULD* AS SEXUAL DESIRE

| | Pages |
|---|----------|
| 4.0 INTRODUCTION | 269--270 |
| 4.1 VIEWS OF ST.AUGUSTINE AND ST. AQUINAS | 270 |
| 4.1.1 SEX IN THE BIBLE | 270-275 |
| 4.1.2 ST. AUGUSTINE'S INTERPRETATION OF <i>SHAJARAT</i> AS SEXUAL DESIRE | 275-290 |
| 4.1.3 ST. AQUINAS' INTERPRETATION OF <i>SHAJARAT</i> AS SEXUAL DESIRE | 291-305 |
| 4.2 VIEWS OF IMĀM AL-QURṬUBĪ AND IMĀM SAYYID QUṬB | 305 |
| 4.2.1 AL-QURṬUBĪ AND SAYYID QUṬB'S INTERPRETATION OF <i>SHAJARAT</i> AS SEXUAL DESIRE | 305-312 |

CHAPTER FIVE

THE INTERPRETATION OF *SHAJARAT AL-KHULD* AS TRIBULATION

| | Pages |
|---|----------------|
| 5.0 INTRODUCTION | 313 |
| 5.1 AUGUSTINE AND AQUINAS' VIEWS OF <i>SHAJARAT AS TRIBULATION</i> | 313-320 |
| 5.2 AL-QURṬUBĪ'S INTERPRETATION OF <i>SHAJARAT AS TRIBULATION</i> | 321-328 |
| 5.2.1 <i>MIḤNAH</i> REFERRED TO <i>AL-KHILĀFAH</i> | 328-332 |
| 5.2.2 <i>AL-MIḤNAH</i> REFERRED TO <i>AL-MĀN</i> | 332-340 |
| 5.2.3 <i>AL-MIḤNAH</i> REFERRED TO KNOWLEDGE | 340-341 |
| 5.3 SAYYID QUTB'S INTERPRETATION OF <i>SHAJARAT AS TRIBULATION</i> | 342-343 |
| 5.3.1 A SUPERIOR INTELLECT | 343-346 |
| 5.3.2 FREE WILL | 346-347 |
| 5.3.3 RESPONSIBILITY | 347 |
| 5.3.4 MORALITY (<i>AL-AKHLĀQ</i>) | 348-349 |
| 5.4 VIEWS OF THE STUDY | 350 |
| 5.4.1 <i>SHAJARAT AS SEXUAL DESIRE</i> | 350-354 |

CONCLUSION

355-370

BIBLIOGRAPHY

371-407

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a comparative study of scriptural interpretations of the eternal tree¹ in two religious traditions, namely Christianity and Islam. The idea of the eternal tree is common in the scriptures of both religions, the Bible and the Qur'ān. In the Qur'ān, the Arabic term used is *shajarat al-khuld*.² In the Bible, the eternal tree is primarily identified as the “tree of knowledge of good and evil”. In Islamic interpretation, the eternal tree is primarily identified as the “tree of knowledge”.

In Christianity, the idea of the tree is very closely related to the idea of “The Fall”. The story of man’s estrangement from his Creator, the story of Adam and Eve, has always been of the utmost interest to the Church. Since about 1900 Biblical exegetes have re-examined the literary form of the account of The Fall and have come to a deeper knowledge. As a result new light has been thrown on the nature of The Fall and its consequences. “The Fall of man” and terms related to The Fall, such as “the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil”, “the Tree of Life”, and “the Serpent”, had widely been discussed in Yahwist tradition, the ancient Near Eastern accounts such as The Gilgamesh Epic³ (Pritchard ANET 75, 77, 96) and in the Bible.

¹ For the purpose of this study, hereafter we used simply the tree and sometimes the forbidden tree to refer to the eternal tree.

² For the purpose of this study, hereafter we used simply *shajarat* to refer to *shajarat al-khuld*.

³ Gilgamesh Epic is one of the oldest recorded stories of human history in the world. It tells the story of an ancient King of Uruk, Gilgamesh who may have actually existed and whose name is on the Sumerian King list. The story of Gilgamesh, in various Sumerian versions, was originally widely known in the third millennium B.C. After a long history of retelling, this story was recorded, in a standardized Akkadian version, in the seventh century B.C., and stored in the famous library of King Assurbanpal. Later, the story of Gilgamesh was lost to human memory, except for occasional fragments. The story was rediscovered in the mid-nineteenth century A.D., and made available in translation to German by the beginning of the twentieth century. People were especially amazed when they read these most ancient stories and realized that one of the stories in Gilgamesh that is

Christian theologians refer to the Yahwist writer of the 10th or 9th century B.C. and especially **Genesis Chapter 2 and 3**, to explain the human condition. Accordingly, that narrative may be called etiological, for it assigns the causes of existing conditions. It is also inspired reconstruction, for the sacred writer not only worked under divine inspiration as claimed by Christianity, but he also reconstructed the origins of mankind in the light of his interpretation of existing conditions. The writer worked deductively and with an interest that was religious in manner. This, of course, does not mean that the account lacks any historicity (in the sense of reality), but that it is a sacral history that differs vastly from modern profane history. Catholic scholars use such terms as “folklore” (J. Chaine), “sapiential” (A.M Dubarle, L. Alonso Schokel) and “myth” (if this term is correctly understood such as J.L McKenzie) in relation to the Genesis account. These terms have their validity, but they must be used with a prudence that forestalls misunderstanding and hence scandal.⁴

A further important factor is that the Yahwistic account does not deal exclusively with a first man and first woman whose names he knew or the facts of whose lives he was able to set down in a biographical style. He wrote about the man (*hā'ādām*) and the woman (*hā'issā*) as individuals symbolizing collectives and not as “individuals”, known to him by experience or biography. They were the objects of a “theologising” and the Yahwist could theologize well. The genius of the Israelites was demonstrated in their ability to combine history and theology so

the flood story was a close analogue of the flood story in Hebrew Bible. Please refer to Maureen Gallery Kovacs (translated) (1990), *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 5. John Maier and John Garden (translated) (1981), *Gilgamesh*. New York: Vintage, p. 3.

⁴ J.L McKenzie (1954), *The Literary Characteristic of Genesis 2-3*. New York: Garden City, pp. 541-572.

successfully that their history was not deprived of theological dimension nor their theology of historical dimension. What the account described was something that actually took place-but one must look through the imagery in order to view theologically what happened and what continues to happen. Just as the writer dealt with the conditions in which mankind found himself, so there was implied the existence of real individuals in the beginning, from whose sinful act humanity had become contaminated. This latter point is shown by **Genesis chapter 4**⁵, where man, as a consequence of "The Fall", is portrayed as jealous, murderous to the point of fratricide, boastful, revengeful, insolent, deceitful and fearful.

This interpretation is quite in keeping with the essential demands of *Humani generis* (Ench of Biblical 617-618) and at the same time makes use of the recommendations of *Divino afflante Spiritu* (Ench of Biblical 560). However, the text from **Genesis chapter 2 and 3** is in itself an unusual and ingenious literary masterpiece and the problems it occasions will continue to vex future generations.⁶

In the story of "The Fall", the Yahwist did not declare his purpose; in fact few writers of either the Old Testament or the New Testament declared their intentions with precision. In the case of the Yahwist, several purposes were probably in his mind. Although he was a keen practical psychologist and moralist,

⁵ For an example **Genesis 4: 4-5** "But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favour on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look favour. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast". **Genesis 4: 8** "Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field". And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him".

⁶ *Ibid.*

he or she was also interested in transmitting a real, though sacral event of the remote past, which could be captured only in a generic, deductive and religious sense. His intention was to describe the events, which led to the sorry condition of mankind. In the Yahwist's experience man's plight was the struggle to make the thin Palestinian soil produce its fruit (note the shift from the Babylonian scene, with its rich alluvial soil, to the Palestinian). On the other hand, woman's plight was even more severe; she had a lonely status, was dominated by man and yet yearned for him, and while she suffered at childbirth she still desired to bear children in order to obtain status. The Yahwist also observed the shame connected with nakedness and most of all the heavy penalty of death that reduced man to dust. Since the writer, like the Priestly Writers, believed that God had made all things good and there had been, at creation a state of peace and good order prevailing (**Genesis chapter 2** and see also **Genesis 1.31**), the writer concluded, under divine inspiration, that something very real had taken place between the time of creation and his own time to mar this peace; tragedy had upset the equilibrium that man should have within himself and in his relations with others, especially with God. Since this disorder affected all men and their descendants, the search for the answer was projected into the past to find the cause for it at the very beginning of mankind, at the first man and woman.⁷ In the punishment exacted by God (**Genesis 3.14-24**), the purposes of the Yahwist can be seen clearly. Another possible intention, which did not exclude the other purposes, was a polemic against the power of evil itself, represented by the serpent.

⁷ Please refer to *Genesis 4.12-24; 9.20-25; 16.12; 19.30-38*.

In Islam, the idea of the tree is also related to the origin of Adam and Eve but Islam does not entertain the idea of "The Fall" as understood by Christianity. It is known that the Companions of the Prophet (*ṣaḥābah*) had asked the Prophet⁸ and investigated the meaning of *shajarat* and developed the concept. The Muslim exegesis (*Mufasssirūn*) explored the term of *shajarat* to extend and expand its real meaning based on both the creation and Adam and Eve disobedience of God's order. Their discussion is slightly different from that of the Christian theologians who emphasize the cause of "The Fall" and its relation to the teachings of Christianity. But at the same time *mufasssirūn* developed analysis of the text and interpretation of the theme of *shajarat* in the texts.

Upon further reflection on this matter, we became convinced that it would be a worthwhile and interesting investigation to further explore the concept of *shajarat* according to Christian scholars who referred to the Yahwist tradition and Near Eastern accounts and Muslim scholars who referred to Islamic sources namely the Holy Qur'ān and commentary upon the Qur'ān or Qur'anic exegesis (*al-Tafsīr*) and to see in what way the interpretations of this concept are related to the intellectual perspectives of the thinkers.

Therefore, this is a comparative study of the scriptural interpretations of the tree according to the Christian Scholars and *Mufasssirūn*. Their beliefs and the extent of the definition and concept of *shajarat* are widely discussed.

⁸ We will discuss it further in Chapter Three.

This study is organized into an Introduction, Five Chapters and a Conclusion:

1. An introduction to the study
2. The creation of man as the background to understanding *shajarat al-khuld* or the eternal tree
3. Symbolic meaning of *shajarat al-khuld* or the eternal tree
4. The interpretation of *shajarat al-khuld* as knowledge
5. The interpretation of *shajarat al-khuld* as sexual desire
6. The interpretation of *shajarat al-khuld* as tribulation
7. Conclusion

1.1 INTERPRETATIONS CHOSEN FOR STUDY

As far as we know, no attempt has yet been made in comparative study of scriptural interpretations of the forbidden tree in Christianity and Islam. Research on the tree is only discussed by each religious tradition, but not in depth and not in comparison with other. For (the purpose of) this study, we have chosen two

Christians Scholars- St. Augustine⁹ and St. Thomas Aquinas¹⁰-(hereafter called St. Aquinas or Aquinas)- and two *Mufassirūn* Scholars - Imām al-Qurṭubī¹¹ and Imām Sayyid Quṭb¹². The main consideration for our selection of these four thinkers is the fact that their exegesis has been famous and influential. Their interpretations may also be regarded as traditional. Even though, Imām al-Qurṭubī and Imām Sayyid Quṭb are separated in time by centuries, Sayyid Quṭb's interpretations are no less traditional than those of al-Qurṭubī.

1.2 THE BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES OF EXEGESES CHOSEN FOR STUDY

This study will discuss the biographies of the four chosen scholars generally and chronologically; St. Augustine (354-430AD), Imām al-Qurṭubī (d.671H/1273), St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274AD) and Imām Sayyid Quṭb (1906-1966) in order to understand their life and works as well as their views and opinions in their interpretations of the tree.

⁹ St. Augustine is the most famous Christian theologian and philosopher. Almost all Christian sects acknowledge his wisdom, principles, scholarship and knowledge. He is however, better known and respected by the Roman Catholics. His two books, *The City of God* and *Confessions* are considered a main source of reference for Christians (again, Roman Catholic in general). His writings portray him as a philosopher. He is also known as the originator of the original sin doctrine, which is closely related to the story of Adam, Eve and Jesus. The book *The City of God* also discusses the tree.

¹⁰ St. Thomas Aquinas is a Roman Catholic Christian theologian. His writings in *Summa Theologiae* have influenced the Roman Catholics on the question of faith especially after the 16th century till today. Here in the discussion of the tree, this research refers often to *Summa Theologiae*.

¹¹ His voluminous *al-Tafsīr al-Jāmi' li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* is the main source of reference in this study relating to the *shajarat*.

1.2.1 ST. AUGUSTINE (354-430AD)

Augustine was born in 354 of a heathen father and a Christian mother at Tagaste, a small town in the province of Numidia, Algeria. His mother instructed him in the Catholic faith as she understood it, a very crass and superstitious kind of faith and he would have been baptized as a boy had she not persuaded him to wait until he matured, so that the healing virtue of baptism might not be destroyed by the lusts of youth.¹³

Augustine was a hard working student and an omnivorous reader; and kept him from the many excesses to which his temperament made him easily liable. His reading was confined almost exclusively to Latin authors such as Cicero, whom he admired greatly, Varro, Sallust and some Greek writers, which he knew in Latin translations.¹⁴

In spring 381, Ambrose, bishop of Milan, for whom he had conceived a great respect, then baptized Augustine a Catholic Christian. Afterward, Augustine spent a year in Rome and then returned to his native town where he lived in retirement. In 391, much against his will, he was made priest in the Catholic church of the neighbouring seaport of Hippo Regius. Here he remained for the rest of his life,

¹² His most famous composition is *Fī Zīlāl al-Qur'ān* (In the shade of the Qur'ān), which is the main source of reference for interpreters and scholars in other fields of study.

¹³ St. Augustine (1961), *Confessions*. Translated with an introduction by R.S. Pine-Coffin. England: Penguin Books Book I & Book II, pp. 21-55. Arthur Cushman McGiffert (1933), *A History of Christian Thought: The West From Tertullian to Erasmus*. Volume II. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, p.71. Hereafter, this book will be known as *A History of Christian Thought*.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 73.

giving himself wholly to the service of the church. He spent four years as priest, and then was bishop until his death in 430 at the age of seventy-five.¹⁵

Augustine wrote the work after he had been a member of the Catholic Church for thirteen years and a bishop for five, and his Catholicism led him to see many things in a distorted light. The work is accurate enough in its reflection of his mood and his state of mind at the time he wrote it, for it is as frank and probably as sincere as any such production can be. But it must be read with caution and with large allowance for the author's desire to make his career religiously edifying.

His literary career covered a period of more than forty years, and during that time he wrote not only sermons, Biblical commentaries, apologetic, doctrinal, polemic and practical works, but also a vast number of letters, more than two hundred of which are still extant. In fact, no other ancient Father is as intimately known by the Christian's world as Augustine. Fortunately, we have many writings from his pen: *Contra Academicos*, *De Beatā Vitā*, *De Ordine*, *Soliloquies*, *De Immortalitate Animate*, *De Magistro*, *De Doctrina Christina*, *De Genesi ad Litteram*, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, *De Sermones Dei in Monte*, *De Consensu Evangelistarum* and others. The *Confessions*, written in 397-398 is a personal document and statement of faith and *The City of God*¹⁶ written in 413 and completed in 426. These books were Augustine's greatest writings and rightly

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 79.

¹⁶ St. Augustine (2000), *The City of God*. Translated by Marcus Dods. Introduction by Thomas Merton. New York: The Modern Library. St. Augustine (1998), *The City of God*. Edited and translated by R.W. Dyson. United Kingdom: University of Cambridge. For the purpose of this

belong to the great literature of the world.¹⁷ For the purposes of this study, we will use these as our reference for analysis, as his thoughts on the tree are best described in them.

In his *Confessions*, written at the age of forty-five, Augustine gives an interesting but inadequate and in certain important respects misleading account of his intellectual and religious development. As a matter of fact, the work is not and was not intended to be an autobiography in the ordinary sense. It was written rather to show forth, or “confess,” the goodness and greatness of God as illustrated in certain phases of Augustine’s own career. As his purpose was to glorify God, he also described briefly in the course of the work, the lives of his friend Alypius and his mother Monnica, in whom he found similar evidences of God’s controlling grace.

In *Confessions* he speaks of his mother in terms of filial devotion and says that he owed everything to her. She was a pious woman and her affection for her son was very real, but for all her piety she was controlled by decidedly worldly motives where he was concerned. For instance, when with a tardy sense of justice and decency he wanted to marry his mistress, the mother of his son with whom he had been living for years, it was his mother who dissuaded him on the grounds that the marriage would interfere with his prospects, and it was she who found him a wealthier fiancée. Religious - minded as she was, Augustine undoubtedly had

study, we rely more on the book translated by Marcus Dods. However in several cases, we prefer the other one.

¹⁷ St. Augustine, *Confessions*, p. 20.

better moral character in him than she had, and we may fairly believe that he owed more to his father than is commonly supposed.

With great intellectual gifts he combined a vivid emotional nature and a profoundly religious temperament. He also had an uncommon talent for expression and wielded a facile and tireless pen. He was a philosophical thinker of high rank and made important contributions in psychology, particularly in connection with the primacy of the will. At the same time, he was a theologian of great importance, the most famous and commanding of all the Latin Fathers. He entered into the heritage of western Catholic thought and can be understood only in its light. Although most of his ideas had found expression before his day, he made them thoroughly his own, brought them into a larger and more imposing setting, and so worked them over in the light of experience and observation as to give them new significance and an influence far wider and more lasting than would otherwise have been possible.¹⁸

1.2.2 IMĀM AL-QURṬUBĪ (d.671H/1273)

(As we know) Successive generations of Muslim scholars have devoted a considerable amount or great deal of their intellectual talents and genius to exposition of the classification and description of *al-'ulūm* (sciences). The authors of these sciences or *al-'ulūm* were scholars of diverse religious and philosophical persuasions, representing almost the whole spectrum of the Islamic intellectual tradition. Among them are philosophers-scientist and *mufasssirūn*, theologians-

jurist and as well as Sūfis, Sunnis and Syī'ites. Imām al-Qurṭubī is one of *mufasssirūn* who contributed to the interpretations of revealed text.

In marked contrast to the life of several other great *mufasssirūn* who enjoyed fame and influence in both the Islamic world and Western world, very little is known with certainty about Imām al-Qurṭubī's background and early education and training. Even about his later life, there are too many episodes, which are at present not known in a definitive manner. Abū 'Abdullah Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abī Bakr ibn Farah al-Anṣārī al-Khazraji al-Andalusī al-Qurṭubī al-Mufassar, who will be known as Imām al-Qurṭubī was the famous learned writer and research scholar of Andalusia (Spain).¹⁹ His famous name al-Qurṭubī refers to the fact that he was believed born in Qurtuba, Andalusia (Spain), although there is surprisingly, no reference to his date of birth.²⁰ He then moved to East Qurtuba and lived in Munyah Ibn Khusaib till end of his life.²¹ This statement is strengthened by Prof. Dr. al-Qusbi Mahmūd Zulot who studied the methodology of the exegesis of al-Qurṭubī. The Professor noted that we could presume that al-Qurṭubī was born in the end of the year of 6H or a year before. He also believed that al-Qurṭubī was born in the year of caliph Ya'qūb ibn Yūsuf ibn 'Abd al-Mu'min (580-595H).²² In any case, al-Qurṭubī was well known as an important early *mufasssir* or exegeses and one to be reckoned with during his era. He was a

¹⁸ St. Augustine, *Ibid.* Book II, p. 48-49.

¹⁹ Shari'ah Institution (1999), *Famous Commentaries of the Qur'an*. Islamic United States: Centre of North America, pp. 3-4. Hereafter, this book will be known as *Famous Commentaries*.

²⁰ 'Umar Redā Kahhalah (n.d), *Mu'jam al-Muallifin*. Volume IV. Beirut: Maktabah al-Muthanna, p. 24.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² al-Qusbi Mahmūd Zulot (Prof. Dr.) (1979), *al-Qurṭubī wa Manhajuhu fī al-Tafsīr*. al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Anṣār, p. 6 & 8.

described in this book rather than in his *Tafsīr*. Imām al-Qurṭubī passed away on Monday night ninth *Syawāl* 671H/1273.²⁸

Indeed, al-Qurṭubī, who had been viewed as the “silent” scholar and was born an infamous family, became known as the “positive thinker” and researcher. This was the reason that the date of al-Qurṭubī’s birth was not noted and known.²⁹

1.2.3 ST. THOMAS AQUINAS (1225-1274AD)

St. Thomas Aquinas sometimes called the Angelic Doctor, Prince of Scholastic, the Italian philosopher and theologian was born about 1225, of the noble family of Aquino of Roccasecca in central Italy. He began his education at the neighbouring monastery of Monte Cassino, the parent house of the Benedictines and continued at the University of Naples. In spite of bitter opposition from family and friends, he joined the newly formed mendicant Order of Preachers (the Dominican Order) in 1243, the year of his father’s death. He was young and had not yet graduated from University. His mother, opposed to Aquinas’s affiliation with a mendicant order, confined him to the family castle for more than a year in a vain attempt to make him abandon his chosen course. She released him in 1245, and later Aquinas journeyed to Paris to continue his studies. He studied under the German Scholastic philosopher Albertus Magnus and followed him to Cologne in 1248. Because Aquinas was heavyset and taciturn, his fellow novices called him Dumb

²⁸ *Ibid.* al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi’*, p. ii. ‘Umar Redā Kahhalah, *Mu’jam al-Muallifīn*, p. 24. Ibn Farḥūn, *al-Dibāj al-Madhhab fī Ma’rifah ‘A’yān ‘Ulamā’ al-Madhhab*, p. 317. Ali Yusuf Ali, *Silsilah Ulama’ Tafsir*, p. 55. al-Zahabi, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssirūn*, p. 457.

²⁹ ‘Umar Redā Kahhalah, *Mu’jam al-Muallifīn*, p. 24.

Ox, but Albertus Magnus is said to have predicted that “this ox will one day fill the world with his bellowing”.³⁰

Aquinas was ordained as a priest about 1250 and he began to teach at the University of Paris in 1252. Two years later after he was lecturer, and his first writings, primarily summaries and amplifications of his lectures were appeared. His first major work was *Scripta Super Libros Sententiarum* (*Writings on the Books of the Sentences*, 1256?), which consisted of commentaries on *Sententiarum Libri Quatuor* (*Four Books of Sentences*), an influential work concerning the sacraments of the church, by the Italian theologian Peter Lombard.³¹ In 1256, Aquinas was awarded a doctorate in theology and appointed professor of philosophy at the University of Paris. Pope Alexander IV (reigned 1254-1261) summoned him to Rome I 1259, where acted as adviser and lecturer to the papal court.

St. Aquinas was an extremely prolific author with about 80 works ascribed to him. His two most important and great writings are *Summa Contra Gentiles* (1261-1264) and *Summa Theologica/Theologiae* (1265-1273). *Summa Contra Gentiles*, which has been translated into English as *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith* (1956), is a closely reasoned treatise intended to persuade intellectual Muslims of the truth of Christianity. *Summa Theologica*, which has been republished frequently in Latin and vernacular editions under its Latin title, was written in three parts (on God, on the moral life and on Christ) and was intended

³⁰ Arthur Cushman Mc Giffert, *A History of Christian Thought*. Volume II, p. 259.

³¹ *Ibid.*

to set forth Christian doctrine for beginners. The last part remained unfinished at his death, which came in 1274, when he was on his way to attend the Council of Lyons. He was not yet fifty.³²

For purpose of this study, we rely on his great writing *Summa Theologica* as our reference in doing analysis. This is because his references of the tree are best described in this book.

1.2.4 IMĀM SAYYID QUṬB (1906-1966)

Imām Sayyid Quṭb was born October 8, 1906 in the village of “Musha” in the township of Qaha, in the province of Assyout, in Egypt. His father is Haj Quṭb, son of Ibrahi, and a very religious person of his village. His mother was also religious and from a well-known family. She cared for him, his two younger sisters Hamīda and Amīna, and his young brother Muḥammad.³³

He began school in Musha in 1912 and finished his primary education in 1918. It should be noted that he memorized the Qur’ān when he was ten years old. Because of the revolution of 1919 he did not return to school for two years.³⁴

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 276-278.

³³ Sayyid Quṭb (1971), *Fī Zilāl al-Qur’ān*. Volume 1. Beirut: Dar al-Ma’rifah, p. *Muqaddimah*. Hereafter, we used simply *Fī Zilāl*. Sayyid Quṭb (2000), *In the Shade of the Qur’ān Fī Zilāl al-Qur’ān*, translated and edited by Adil Salahi & Ashur Shamis. Volume 1. America: The Islamic Foundation, p. 2 Ahmed al-Kadi (2000), “Great Muslim of the 20th Century: Sayyid Quṭb”, *The Message*, No. 3. New York: Islamic Circle of North America, pp. 13-14.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

In 1920, when he was fourteen years old, he moved to Cairo where he lived with his uncle, Aḥmad Ḥussain 'Uthmān. When his father died, he convinced his mother to move to Cairo, where she lived until she died in 1940. After her death, he expressed his loneliness in several articles (Ummah, my mother) published in the book, *Atatīaf Alarbaa* (the Four Lights), which he wrote with his sisters and brother.³⁵

In Cairo, he completed his High School education and enrolled in the teachers' college, Darul Oloom in 1929. In 1939, he qualified as a teacher of Arabic, received his Bachelor of Arts degree, and joined the ministry of education in a teaching position. After six years, he left that job and devoted his time to freelance writing. A factor that led to his resignation was his disagreement with the ministry and many colleagues regarding his philosophy of education and his attitude towards the literary arts.³⁶

He spent eleven years in prison, during which he had an opportunity to confirm his belief in Maudūdī's ideas. This conviction led the secular Nasserites to condemn him to death by false accusation.

Imām Sayyid Quṭb, the doyen of the Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwān al-Muslimīn*)³⁷ had a very profound impact on the Muslim Arab youth coming of age since the late 1960's. Western writers in recent years have focused on him as one of the two most influential Muslim thinkers of this century, the other being Sayyid Maudūdī.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

Prior to 1951, Quṭb's writings were "moralistic". Quṭb became a revolutionary after being introduced to Maudūdī's ideas; that Islam is complete way of life and that every Muslim's primary responsibility was to work towards the establishment of Allah's order on earth. A two-year sojourn (1948-1950) in the United States opened his eyes to the malaise of western culture and non-Islamic ideologies.³⁸

From 1939-1951, an obvious switch in his writing towards the Islamic ideology was noted. He wrote several articles on the artistic expression of the Qur'ān, as well as the two books titled "*Expressions of the Qur'ān*", and "*Scenes from the Day of Judgment*". In 1948, his book "*al-'Adālah al-Ijtima'iyah fī al-Islām*" (*Social Justice in Islam*) was published. In it, he made it clear that true social justice can only be realized in Islam. In November 1948, he went to the United States to study educational curricula. He spent two and one half years moving between Washington D.C, and California, where he realized the materialistic attitude of the literary arts and its lack of spirituality. He interrupted his stay in the United States and returned to Egypt in August 1950, where he resumed his job as a teacher and inspector in the ministry of education before he resigned in October 1952 (again because of his continued and repeated philosophical disagreement with the minister of education and many of his colleagues).³⁹

The period from 1951 to 1965 included his joining the *Ikhwān*. His ideas were quite clear regarding the fallacy of many of the prevailing social and political/economic injustices and the need for Islamic reform, and he became the

³⁷ For the purpose of this study, hereafter, we used simply *Ikhwān*.

³⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 11-12.

chief editor of the newspaper of *Ikhwān*. During this period, several of his books on Islamic ideology and Islam as a complete way of life appeared. He was arrested in 1954 when the *Ikhwān* was accused of attempting to overthrow the government, and was sentenced for fifteen years imprisonment with hard labour. He remained in Jarah prison near Cairo for about ten years, after which (due to his poor health), he was released when the Iraqi President, Abdul Salam Arief, intervened.⁴⁰ In 1965, he published his famous book *Ma'ālim fī Tāreq* (Milestones), which led to his re-arrest with accusation of conspiracy against the Egyptian President, Abdul Naseer. He was tried and rapidly sentenced to death based upon many excerpts from his book, Milestones. An international uproar, protests and demonstrations in various Muslim countries, and appeals to President Abdul Nasser to pardon Sayyid Quṭb were unsuccessful and he was executed by hanging on August 29, 1966.

He left behind a total of 24 books, including several novels, several books of literary arts critique and education of adults and children and several religious books, including the thirty volumes of Commentary on the texts of the Qur'ān.⁴¹ His famous exegesis *Fī Ṣilā al-Qur'ān* (In the Shade of the Qur'ān) was translated into other languages such as Malay and English was published repeatedly and was used widely in interpretations of the Qur'ān. For the purpose of this study, we rely on Sayyid Quṭb's *Fī Ṣilā* because his references of the *shajarat* are best described in this exegesis.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

Sayyid Quṭb will always be remembered for his legacy of clearly defining the basic ideas of the Oneness and sovereignty of Allah, the clear distinction between pure faith and the association of overt and hidden partners with Allah (*syirk*), and the only hope of salvation of humanity. Sayyid Quṭb was smiling when he was executed, showing his conviction of the beautiful life to come in Paradise –a life he definitely and rightfully deserved.

Imām Sayyid Quṭb was generally regarded as the eminent thinker and scholar as well as the one the most commentary *mufasssirrūn*. He was one of the most prominent representatives of the Egyptian activist and chief ideologist of the Muslim Brotherhood or *Ikhwān*.

Imām Sayyid Quṭb represented an important period, which witnessed the beginning of integration of *al-'ulūm* (sciences) with modern and western sciences as well as the integration of Islamic political thinking with political thinking of the West. Imām Sayyid Quṭb flourished as a categorical and critical thinker.

1.3 OBJECTIVES AND THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

The objectives of this study are:

1. To study the similarities and differences between Christian and Muslim's interpretation and understanding of *shajarat* or the eternal tree

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

2. To analyse the comparative study of the views of the two traditional Christian and the two Muslim scholars regarding the meaning of *shajarat* or the eternal tree
3. To relate the views held by the four thinkers, about *shajarat* or the eternal tree, to the general teaching of their respective religions.

1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Our methodological approach is to analyse the views of the four thinkers as listed in the Primary Sources. These will be complemented by various Secondary Sources.

At this time, there are several specific researches on the topic of *shajarat*, which is known in Christianity as the “tree of knowledge”. They are found as books, microform, electronics and moving image or slide transparency. Unfortunately, these books are not directly related to the concept of *shajarat* or the eternal tree. In order to examine the literature review, we will discuss them as follows:

1.5.1 CHRISTIAN’S LITERATURE

We are not listing or describing comprehensive Christian literature, on this subject, of the Classical Period, but will focus on Christian literature of the Modern Period.

Captain Russell Kelso Carter (1894, San Francisco) who wrote *The Tree of Knowledge; a Startling Scientific Study of The Original Sin and The Sin of The Angel, with a History of Spiritism in all Ages* attempts to explain the concept of spiritualism from a scientific perspective. He discussed the original sin of Adam and his wife Eve, which is the cause of the fall of man. He also discussed the original sin of the angel who is referred to as Satan. However, he does not discuss the concept of the tree. This book is also available as microform and electronic data.

One book on the “tree of knowledge” was written by an unknown woman (1908, New York), *The Tree of Knowledge: a Document* is mainly about the status of woman and that her position should equal to that of man. Man and woman have been given knowledge equally. Because of this opportunity, woman can debate man in any topics and aspects. This book however focused on women without discussing anything about the concept of tree of knowledge.

The Tree of Knowledge, written in Spanish by Pio Baroja (1928, New York), was translated into English by Aubrey F.G. Bell. This book was also printed into microform and electronic data. It emphasizes the importance of knowledge from the Christian perspective.

In addition, several books refer to the structure of the human body, especially as to the creation of the first man, Adam, and his partner, Eve. This is to show that the different biological structure of men and women causes “attraction” and is related to the meaning of *shajarat* or the eternal tree. The rationale of the human

biology, mind and desire are some of the reasons brought forth, which encourages *shajarat* to be defined differ than real tree. Some of the references on the biological structure of men from the scientific aspect include Harry Robert Turney's (1968, New York), *Man and System: Foundation for the Study of Human Relations*, T. Thompson (1969, America), *Anatomy for the Medical Record Librarian*. These publications discuss the creation of men and the structure of the human body from the aspect of Modern Science. The result of the research from these books is that there are similarities in the elements of soil and the human body. No doubt the ratio of these elements is not the same, but the similarity of elements is what is important here. However, these books do not discuss the stages of Adam's creation in detail.

Two books available in microform and electronic data were more focused on the evolution, the anthropology of man and its process. The titles of these two books are *An Introduction to Anthropology* by Victor Barnouw (1971, Illinois), which focuses on the anthropology of man based on the first man and *The Tree of Knowledge: A Study of The Evolution of Reason* by Fred S. Spier (1975, New York). Spier discusses cosmology, science and philosophy, nuclear warfare, and moral and ethical aspects based on that tree which is mentioned in the *Torah* as the "tree of good and evil". He tried to link the concept of good and evil in the mind of man with his own ethical and moral aspects. He also was inclined to the view that the evolution of mankind and cosmology are indeed related to the knowledge of man. This book also gives a commentary on the evolution of man, referring to Adam and Eve and their relationship.

Leanne Payne (1981, Crossways Books) in her book, *The Broken Image*, touches on the relationship between men and women, referring back to the history of Adam and Eve. They are supposedly the pioneers of such a relationship, but theirs was not blessed by God. Even though superficially Adam and Eve's relationship is the one that destroys the sacred relationship of men and women, without them, men on earth would never have understood such a relationship. She does not however, discuss the concept of *shajarat* from the view of either Christianity or the West. The same can be said of *Healing of Memories*, by David A Seamands (1985, Victoria Books) in which he scrutinises the history of Adam and Eve and how it was moulded into the emotions of two genders.

Almost all publications, based on Adam and Eve, are inclined to lean towards aspects of relationship and how male-female relationships need to abide by the law and practices of the Bible. This brings us to the conclusion that Christianity does not approve of same gender relationships. In-fact, one book emphasises the law and ethics of having a relationship only between men and women and discusses the unlawful aspects of gender relationship in Christianity. This we can see in Elizabeth Moberly's (1983, Cambridge) *Homosexuality: A New Christian Ethic*.

The Tree of Knowledge (1984, Library of Congress) available in moving image or slide or transparency and also in videocassette, written in Spanish and English with some English dubbed, emphasized only the power of knowledge. This book also discussed the category of knowledge in relation to the first knowledge, which was given by God to Adam.

Louis A. Gottschalk (1985, Eden Press, California) discussed the tree of knowledge as it was discussed in Torah in *The Tree of Knowledge*. But this author did not attempt any discussion of the concept of that tree. He only focussed on the power of knowledge, and how it relates to the first man, Adam and Eve and their life in heaven.

Other books focus more on the life of the first man, Adam and his partner Eve. These two books are M.J. Kister, (1985, University of Calgary), *Adam: A Study of Legends in Tafsir and Hadith Literature* and Earl W. Count's (not dated, New York) *This is Race*. Most discussions by Western scholars pay more attention to Adam and Eve's relationship throughout their stay in heaven. The scholars are quite sure that the forbidden tree here is descriptive of their relationship. This can be seen from the interpretation of the Bible, which is slanted in that direction. This definitely has links to the concept of Original Sin, which was introduced by the second founder of Christianity, St. Paul. However, Western and Christian scholars do not debate these explanations and the rationalisations of the meanings, which are slanted towards the concept of Original Sin. It is probably because the Bible is to be believed rather than to be debated; as debate may rouse confusions. There are, however, opinions, which view Adam and Eve's relationship as one leading towards universal human development. This opinion is rather different from the interpretation in the Bible and the views of other scholars who blame Adam and Eve for causing men to be born as sinners as a result of their unblessed relationship.

However the book by Elaine Pagels (1988, New York) *Adam, Eve and Serpent*, emphasizes new interpretations of **Genesis**, especially in **chapter 1-3**, that relate to the story of Adam, Eve, Serpent and ‘fruit of tree of knowledge’. She explained the ideas of sexuality, moral freedom and human value based on the story in **Genesis**. She discussed the conflicting interpretations of **Genesis** voiced by the traditional and radical Christians such as St. Augustine and modern Christians such as the young bishop, Julian of Eclanum, as well as Jewish, traditional and pagan interpretations of the story of Adam and Eve. This book concluded that certain ideas in particular those concerning sexuality, moral freedom and human value developed during the first four centuries as interpretations of the **Genesis** creation stories, and they have continued to affect culture and everyone in it, Christian or not, ever since. However, this book does not emphasize on the concept of *shajarat* except in describing it as “carnal knowledge”, and relating it to new interpretations of sexuality, moral freedom and human value, based on Adam, Eve and the Serpent. Indirectly, this book slightly mentioned the concept of tree of knowledge.

The Tree of Knowledge (1990, London, England) is a historical fiction on the creation of Adam and Eve and their life in heaven emphasizing the tree of knowledge, situated in the middle of heaven. But as this is historical fiction, Eva Figs does not discuss the concept of the tree.

Humberto R. Maturana and Francisco J. Varela (1992, New York) wrote in Spanish *The Tree of Knowledge: The Biological Roots of Human Understanding*, which, focused on the creation of man. Robert Paolucci and

foreword by J.Z. Young, translated this book into English. It emphasizes the biology of man and his creation and includes discussion about the biological differences between man and woman based on the creation of Adam and Eve.

Georg Henrik Von Wright (1993, New York: Leiden) in *The Tree of Knowledge and Other Essays* compiled his writings on modern philosophy-20th century and analysis philosophy and modern-20th century civilization. This book has nothing related to any discussion of the tree, although the title of his book seems to suggest that topic.

A research into the history and background of the disobedience of Adam and Eve in heaven, according to the Christian perspective was discussed by John White (1993, Illinois) in his publication, *Eros Redeemed: Breaking the Stranglehold of Sexual Sin*. He also discussed the importance of Adam and Eve's relationship as the trigger, which pioneered growth, and development of the earth. He does not, however, discuss the concept of the tree. His writing has opened doors towards understanding that male-female relationships are necessary in order to achieve God's mission to develop the earth. John White in *Eros Redeemed Breaking the Stranglehold of Sexual Sin* also tries to clean up the image of Adam and Eve as the cause of the Original Sin. The reason, he argues, was that without Adam and Eve, men would not have known how to expand their ties of kinship and develop human civilization. He added that the special relationship between Adam and Eve led to human and world development.

General other pieces of research by Christian scholars attempt to look behind the meaning of the forbidden tree as the unblessed sexual relationship of Adam and Eve. John Piper and Wayne Gruden's (eds.) (1993, Illinois), wrote the *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*. This book offers a perspective of the importance of the male-female relationship from the aspect of humanity and personality in developing men. However, it does not explain the reason of the forbidden tree being such. Other Biblical interpretations have interpreted the forbidden tree or the eternal tree as "tree of knowledge of good and evil", which is then interpreted by other Western researchers as the unblessed relationship of Adam and Eve.

'Ets ha-da'at: Elohim, Logikah Ve-Sibatiyut, written in Hebrew by Yuval Stienitz (1994, Tel Aviv: Devir) is translated in English as *Tree of Knowledge: God, Logic and Causation*. This book discussed logic, causation, god and metaphysics, which the author tried to relate to the plan of God in His creation of man and mankind. This book is not related to the concept of the tree and its relation to Adam and Eve directly, but rather indirectly, providing information that relates to the concept of that tree.

Other research has been done by Western scholars on the creation of the first man, Adam, and his partner, Eve. Ronald L. Ecker's (1995, Hodge & Braddock) *And Adam Knew Eve: A Dictionary of Sex in the Bible*, debates the relationship between Adam and Eve, from their creation to the concept of male-female relationships according to the laws and practices of The Old and New Testament. He discusses the importance of relationships among men according to the Bible.

He also studies and explains in detail the understanding of the forbidden tree as a starting point for Adam and Eve to learn to survive a challenging life, the first step towards human development. His opinion is based on his interpretation of a Hebrew term found in the Bible but he does not, however discuss his rationale completely in placing the concept as such.

Further, the article *Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge the Relationship between Faith and Practice in Islam* by Vincent J. Cornell in *The Oxford History of Islam*, edited by John L. Esposito (1999, New York: Oxford University Press) discussed and elaborated on the meaning of “fruit of tree of knowledge”, as it relates to the teachings and the practices of Islam. He explained in detail the relationship between Five Pillar of Islam (*arkān al-Islām*), the Sixth Pillar of Islam (*arkān al-Īmān*), morality (*akhlāq*), practices (*‘amal*), *iḥsān* and knowledge. These are the compulsory practices in Islam. Indirectly, this book slightly mentioned the concept of the tree, and gives us room to discuss the matter.

There is also *Tree of Knowledge, Tree of Life: Conversation with The Torah* by Michael Rosenak (2001, Boulder: Westview Press). This book focussed on the criticism, interpretation and commentary of the Bible, especially The Old Testament and Pentateuch. It also discussed Jewish religious education and its philosophy, as well as Judaism, which emphasizes its study and teaching. However, this book does not discuss the concept of *shajarat* and its relation to Adam and Eve.

1.5.2 MUSLIMS' LITERATURE

We are also not listing or describing comprehensive Muslim literature, in this study, of the Classical Period, but will focus on Muslim literature of the Modern Period.

There are several Muslim studies on the creation of the first man. Al-Bāḥī al-Khulī's writing (1960, Cairo), *Adam 'a.s: Falsafah Taqwīm al-Insān wa Khilāfatih* provides much information on the creation of Adam's essence. Through information obtained from the Qur'ān and the interpretations of several exegesis and science publications, it is certain that Adam's body was made out of soil from the earth. Definitely, this is related to the fact that man's ultimate mission is to submit to God and develop the world as God's servants and His caliphs on earth.

These elements have also influenced the biological difference between men and women, which is suitable to their duties in developing the world. When this matter is linked to *shajarat* or the eternal tree, it will definitely open doors for further discussion on the "other meaning" behind the creation of Adam and Eve as well as God's restriction to not approach the tree, which is an offence to Adam and Eve. The question now is, in what form did self-offence happen and what are the reasons for *shajarat* to be defined as having an entirely separate meaning from that of "just a tree". This becomes the starting point of this study - to look to the different views among the Christian Scholars and *Mufasssirūn* Scholars on the

meaning of *shajarat*, which can be brought forth to strengthen the explanations of its definition as such.

The list of books includes those by al-Shahrastānī (1961, Cairo), *al-Hay'ah wa al-Islām* and al-Shahrastānī, Muḥammad ibn 'Abd. al-Karīm (1967, Cairo), *al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, Ibn Qayyīm (1979, Beirut), *Miftah Dār al-Sa'ādah wa Manshu Wilāyat al-'Ilm wa al-Irādah* and *al-Tafsīr* by Sayyid Quṭb (1982, Beirut), *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*. These works are closely related to the early history of *shajarat* and include the basic foundation of its concept of *shajarat*. Ibn Qayyīm and al-Shahrastānī however, believe that *shajarat* is a concept of knowledge but Sayyid Quṭb views it as the sexual desire, which was to emerge in Adam and Eve. The researchers did not discuss further the significance of this concept to that of *shajarat*. This study, therefore tries to enrich studies on the concept of *shajarat* by examining the extent that *shajarat* is identified and its significance.

Majid Ali Khan (1978, Lahore) writes about *Islam on Origin and Evolution of Life*. This publication discusses the creation of men and the structure of the human body from a modern science aspect. The result of this writing has found that there are similarities in the elements of soil and the human body. No doubt the ration of these elements are not the same, but the similarity of elements is what is important here. These books however, do not discuss the levels of Adam's creation in detail.

'Abdullah Yūsuf 'Alī (1983, U.S.A.: Amana Corp.) in *The Holy Qur'ān Text, Translation and Commentary* discussed the meaning of *shajarat* as the "tree of

eternity". He explained that the suggestion of the Evil One (Satan) is clever, as it always is: it is false, and at the same time plausible. It is false because that felicity was not temporary, like the life of this world. Adam and Eve were supreme in the Garden and a "kingdom" such as was dangled before them would only add to their sorrows. It was plausible, because nothing had been said to them about eternity, as the opposite of eternity was not yet known, and the rewards of Power arise from the saviour of Self, and Self is an alluring (if false) attraction that misleads the Will. 'Abdullah Yūsuf 'Alī tried to make a clear discussion on the meaning of *shajarat*.

In addition, *Mufasssirūns* do not find the opinions, which establish Adam and Eve as the cause of men's sins in any interpretation of the Qur'ān. Only a few views lean towards the idea of *shajarat* as the beginning of Adam and Eve's relationships, as presented by Sayyid Quṭb. He does not, however express, his view strongly and his rational on that issue was inconsistent. This means that there is still much room for a Muslim scholar to examine this subject. This study therefore uses the historical approach as well as interpretations from the Qur'anic verses or texts (*nuṣūṣ*) directly related to *shajarat*. There are quite a number of *al-Tafsīr* and publications relating to the history and background of *shajarat*, the existence of man and his importance to the world's civilisation. An example is *Marriage and Sexuality in Islam; A Translation of al-Ghazali's Book on the Etiquette of Marriage from Ihya'* by al-Ghazzālī (1984, Beirut). This publication dealt with the concept of marriage and behaviour in married life, according to Muslim principles. He stresses the importance of knowledge as the primary asset of each individual, especially husband and wife, in building human civilisation, as

the family is the foundation of universal human development. This is the main reason that knowledge is the main requirement of each couple in building a marriage. It is closely related to the creation of Adam and the fact that he was given knowledge to bear the responsibilities as a caliph and God's servant on earth. Knowledge is then phrased in the form of *shajarat*, which is the tree of knowledge.

The discussions on knowledge, as linked to *shajarat*, did not proceed further – and no reason was given. Instead, Imām al-Ghazzālī explains that knowledge is the starting point in understanding the principles of marriage and the relationship within couple, to ensure that the marriage is based on the principles of Islam.

There is several other *al-Tafsīr*, which discusses the life of Adam and Eve in heaven and they include the story of *shajarat*. Among these include *al-Tafsīr al-Qayyīm* by Ibn Qayyīm al-Jawziyah (1985, Beirut), *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* by Fakhr al-Rāzi (1985, Cairo), *al-Jāmi' li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by al-Qurṭubī (1965, Beirut) and *Ṣafwah al-Tafāsīr* by Muḥammad 'Alī al-Ṣābūnī (1981, Cairo).

There are also writings on the problems faced by Adam and Eve in heaven after their disobedience to God's order. These publications, however do not debate the concept of *shajarat* completely. The rationalisation aspect on the various views of the *shajarat* is also not discussed with more depth. This encourages us to do research for the advancement (or promotion) of new information (or finding), which may be established after the study is completed.

The discussion of the concept of *shajarat* based on the *nuṣūṣ* is found in current and past academic writings, such as *al-Asās fī al-Tafsīr* by Sa'id Ḥawwa (1985, Cairo) and *Pokok Larangan Syurga: Satu Tafsiran* by Dr. Mahmood Zuhdi Abdul Majid (1993, Academy of Islam, University of Malaya). Both debates refer more to text related to *shajarat* and thereafter offer comments on the views of several *Mufasssirūn* on this subject. However, Sa'id Ḥawwa is not firm in voicing his stand on the concept of *shajarat*. In Mahmood Zuhdi's debate however, he is inclined towards placing *shajarat* as meaning of Adam and Eve's sexual relationship, which is based on plot and style as explained in *nuṣūṣ* of al-Qur'ān. He then, provides comments and analysis of the views of the great *Mufasssirūn*. The infirm attitude of the *Mufasssirūn* in defining *shajarat* as Adam and Eve's sexual relationship, however, encouraged Mahmood Zuhdi to open the debate on the issue. In other words, his debates leave room for more discussion to obtain information and stronger evidences. After all, Mahmood Zuhdi does not explain his reasons completely and the explanations of *shajarat* as having its own concept are far too different from its meaning as a tree. He also presents the different views of the *Mufasssirūn* and then comments on them, but in the end it seems to mean a sexual relationship. There is still much room for further discussion on this subject. Thus this research debates the concept of *shajarat* through the method of Qur'anic texts (*nuṣūṣ*) and history to assess the situation, which is slanted to mean something different from the reality of it as a tree as well as the explanations on why it is such.

In addition, al-Shahrastānī debated this eternal tree in his famous composition *al-Milal wa al-Niḥal*. Ibn Hazm brought this up in his publication, *al-Sa'ādah* and

Imām Ghazzālī in *al-Iḥyāʾ*. Though these books do not provide a complete historical picture, they do discuss the background of the creation of the first man and its connection to the eternal tree. The discussions, which were presented by them, however, did not stress the real understanding, which was the meaning of the eternal tree. Only al-Shahraṣṭānī defined it to mean knowledge. Ibn Hazm and al-Ghazzālī supported his views, which described the first human as being equipped with knowledge, which could cause him harm if it was abused (which he could hurt himself with). There are however, no further debates on this matter and no explanations to connect it as such. We are encouraged to do this study in an attempt to offer some explanations and relate each interpretation of the tree, which has been produced by various Muslim scholars.

Several books which refer to the history of the first man written by al-Suyūṭī, (1951, Cairo), *al-Itqān fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān*; Hisyām Qabalan, (1986, Beirut), *Ma’a al-Qur’ān fī al-Dīn wa al-Dunyā*, Maḥmūd Shalabī, (1987, Beirut), *Hayāt Ādām*; unknown author (not dated, Lahore), al-Suyūṭī (not dated, Lahore), *Ithnā ‘Asyarah al-Rasā’il*; Ibn Kathīr (1966, Beirut), *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*. All of these books focussed on the life of Adam as the first man and as the caliph.

There are several other famous *al-tafsīr* and other books debate the history of Adam and Eve’s creation from the etymology aspect. For an example, the writings of Abū ‘Alī bin al-Ḥassan al-Tibrīṣī (1339H, Beirut), *Majma’ al-Bayān fī al-Tafsīr al-Qur’ān* and Muḥammad bin Aḥmad bin Ilyās al-Ḥanafī (not dated, Misr), *Badā’i al-Zuhur*. These authors debated the process of Adam and Eve’s creation from the historical aspect, the main features of the human body and the

structure of its creation, and the personality of a human compared to that of an animal. Discussion on the details of Adam and Eve's creation is important in this study as it is closely related to the disobedience of God's order not to approach the forbidden tree. (To understand this research topic, one must appreciate that "creation" is). This study finds that the process of the creation of the first human is probably related to men's personality; making them one of God's most special creations, as they are endowed with intellect (*'aql*) in order to think and have desires. Unfortunately, all of those books are not directly focussed on the concept of *shajarat*. Subsequently, this study tries to prove that *shajarat* does not mean as a tree per se that cause the realization and the attraction to create Adam and Eve's relationship through approximation.

Based on these discussions, it is found that most research and publications on *shajarat* discuss it from a historical and textual aspect and are thus useful in identifying and explaining the background of *shajarat*. This study, however, emphasizes the beliefs of Muslim scholars, particularly *Mufasssirūns*, by referring to the Muslim sacred books, which are the Qur'an and its interpretations, and linguistic aspects that will discuss the etymology of *shajarat*.

The discussion above shows that previous research focused more on the background history of *shajarat* and its connection to Adam and Eve. This includes establishing their relationship as the starting point for human and world development. Indirectly, this shows that almost all Western scholars view the tree as Adam and Eve's relationship in expanding human and world civilisation. Elaine Pagels mentioned briefly that the "fruit of forbidden tree" referred to

“carnal knowledge” without discussing it further. Vincent J. Cornell emphasized the “fruit of the tree of knowledge”, which related to the teaching, faith and practices of Islam. Thus, the concept of *shajarat* and the rationale that it could have a different meaning from “being just a tree” has not been debated in-depth by either Western or Eastern scholars. We find that Western scholars are inclined towards using the interpretations of the Bible, which explains that it is a means of tribulation and survival; as a result of Adam and Eve relationship, their lives were full of challenges, which ensured universal human development. This means that they agree on the concept of the tree as related to "The Fall" of Adam and Eve. However, the rational of these opinions has not been examined further. Muslim scholars however use the interpretation of the Qur’ān to obtain the concept of *shajarat*. They are of the opinion that *shajarat* carries its own concept, which is different from the original meaning of it as a tree. These explanations however are not debated in great detail. Only a small percentage of the interpreters such as Imām Sayyid Quṭb place *shajarat* as the sexual desire of Adam and Eve based on the plot and style of *nuṣūṣ* of the Qur’ān, without denying that the interpretation of *shajarat* referred to knowledge also. The opinions of other *mufasssirūn* such as Imām al-Qurṭubī, theologians such as al-Shahrastānī, Ibn Hazm, a jurist and al-Ghazzālī, a philosopher place *shajarat* as knowledge (*‘ilm*) based on the fact that Allah had bestowed on Adam with intelligence to prepare him to perform the duties and responsibilities as a caliph and God’s servant. They do not though, express their views and the rational of the meaning is not debated in depth. The same can also be said for Mahmood Zuhdi’s opinion that inclines towards placing *shajarat* as Adam and Eve’s sexual relationship but does not debate the concept of *shajarat*. Abdullah Yusuf Ali tried to explain the meaning of the *khuld* as both

eternity and the concept of that eternity. Thus, this study aims to enrich the debate on the concept of *shajarat* and the rationale for its different meanings based on the history and the Qur'anic texts (*nuṣūṣ*), as related to the research topic. Indeed, all the opinions of the researcher, as above will be analyzed in depth.

Even though the previous researchers do not exactly do justice to this topic, they have most certainly contributed much in building the basis of theory for this study.