

I learned to love Jesus more than my own parents. **"That is Jesus, the son of Mary, the word of truth about which they are in dispute."** (Qur'an 19:34) Jesus has been mentioned by name 25 times in the Qur'an, while Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has been mentioned by name just five times. Additionally, the nineteenth chapter of the Qur'an was named after the Virgin Mary, while there is no chapter in the Qur'an bearing the name of Prophet Muhammad's mother, any of his wives or daughters. It is also noteworthy that Mary is the only woman mentioned by name in the Qur'an. She is described in the most honourable way as one chosen and favoured over all women. God said in the Qur'an: **"And [mention] when the angels said, 'O Mary, indeed Allah has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the worlds.'" (3:42)**

And the Qur'an mentions that fair-minded Christians are closest to the Muslims: "You will find the nearest of them in affection to the believers those who say, 'We are Christians.' **That is because among them are priests and monks and because they are not arrogant.**" (Qur'an 5:82)

My Great  
**Love**  
for  
**Jesus**  
led me to  
**Islam**

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# بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

و صلى الله على النبي الكريم

## Introduction

As a Catholic, I was led to believe that Catholicism was the only true religion and that Judaism was only a preparation for Christianity. Hence, the other religions were all false. In fact, I only heard about Islam for the first time in 1978. I had learned that Muslims believed in the divine origin of Christianity and Judaism. The Qur'an indicates that Allah (the proper name for God in the Arabic language)<sup>1</sup> had sent prophets to every land in order to guide people to the path of truth and righteousness.

In order to carve the Christian message into the depths of my subconscious, the Catholic Church designed a program which, when applied from childhood, had a very high probability of retention. This program affected people's beliefs and their behaviour for the rest of their lives. In this scheme, the central figure is Jesus, and the rites are mostly related to events surrounding his birth, supposed death and resurrection; from his birth, assumed to be in December, to his alleged crucifixion on Easter. Human beings introduced these religious rites many centuries after Jesus' departure rather than by divine revelation.

According to tradition in Venezuela, at midnight on December 24<sup>th</sup> I used to wait for the arrival of Jesus to bring the gifts that I had requested in my yearly wish list. Being from a poor family and having several brothers and sisters, I understood that it was very difficult for the "Child Jesus" to bring me what I had asked for. But I was often confused and puzzled because if Jesus had performed so many miracles, as I had learned from nuns and priests, why was he not able to bring me a tricycle? Wasn't that request easier for Him than bringing dead people back to life? Thus, for several years the concept of the "Child Jesus" left me disappointed.

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1 *"Allah" is the same word that Arabic speaking Christians and Jews use for God. It is a unique word grammatically, since it cannot be made plural or given a gender (i.e., masculine or feminine), which is consistent with the Islamic concept of God.*

As Easter was approaching, I used to watch televised stories of how Jesus was abused until he was hung on a cross to be crucified. I really wanted to climb inside the TV set and help him somehow. I asked God to help him, and asked Him not to let His “son” be crucified. In the end, I would hide and cry because I was taught that “men do not cry.” I could not understand why such brutality was inflicted on such a good man. As a child, this incident cultivated in me an intense love for this great prophet of God. As for other children, perhaps the toys they received on Christmas – as an answer to their wishes – was the cause of their affection towards Jesus.

If the objective of the Church was to somehow infuse a feeling of reverence for Jesus, in my case they were successful. I learned to love Jesus more than my own parents. However, while still a child, I started to question the power of God. The concept that I had about God was that He could do whatever He wanted. He had created the universe, the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, and human beings. I wondered why He could not save Jesus from being crucified on the cross. In order to resolve this dilemma, on one occasion I climbed a small wall in the backyard of my house and challenged God, saying: “If You are really so powerful and can do whatever You like, then make me fly when I jump from this wall. Otherwise, I will not believe that You are so powerful because You could not save Jesus from the cross either.” Fortunately, the wall was not so high and I fell to the ground. With every attempt to fly, I became more and more convinced that God was not so powerful after all. A childish analysis indeed!

Later on in life when I started high school, my parents allowed me to work with an old man who was a photographer, and I accompanied him to many places. It turned out that he was also a very famous fortune-teller. Wherever we went, many of his female clients would ask him about events that would happen in their future. For this task he used to smoke brown tobacco, and as it was being consumed and the ashes fell, he would “reveal” information to his clients. I also learned that he used to hypnotize people in order to learn hidden things about their lives and would then respond to their queries.

All of these experiences were stored in my subconscious at a very early age. During this period, my parents were attending a center that specialized in parapsychology. I accompanied them several times to see what was happening, and it was in this center that I learned about the concepts of meditation, spirits, possession and what I thought was dead people speaking to the living.<sup>2</sup>

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2 *In reality, the dead do not talk to the living; rather, devils imitate the voices of the dead and communicate through the living. On the other hand, Qur'an recitation and prophetic supplications are effective in ridding people of evil spirits. The fact that any Muslim can perform such acts is clear*

Here I learned to pray twice daily at a small altar that my father had built with great care and dedication. At one of the gatherings I attended, the leader of the session prepared a talisman for me, which he said would protect me, so I took it with me wherever I went.

Meanwhile, I continued to think about the crucifixion of Jesus. At the time, my father had a book that he read frequently. It was entitled, *The Life of Jesus Dictated by Himself*. He once told me that according to this book, Jesus had travelled to places away from Jerusalem, which made me a little optimistic about finding an answer to my question regarding his crucifixion.

When I graduated from high school, I was granted a scholarship to study engineering in the USA, which I happily accepted. However, before traveling in 1977, I had a bad experience that affected my belief in Christianity. I saw two Christians help a man who had suffered from an epileptic attack on the street. Afterwards they searched his wallet and stole some of his money.<sup>3</sup> In spite of the fact that individual acts cannot by any means be considered indicative of the validity or invalidity of a religion, this incident greatly affected me. Perhaps to many people this event might seem insignificant, but I had witnessed my father punish my brother severely when he brought home the equivalent of twenty-five cents and could not provide him with a satisfactory explanation as to where he got it.

These texts are a section of the Bible that is in line with the Qur'an; however, their impact on people's lives has almost vanished due to the existence of other texts in the Bible that allow their violation. Out of mercy to humankind, God revealed the Qur'an as a criterion over its predecessors.

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*proof of the miraculous nature of the Qur'an. As for those who supplicate to other than Allah or use the Bible to rid others of possession by devils, it is no more than a cooperation with those evil spirits or using other evil spirits to get rid of other ones.*

3 *Biblical texts clearly forbid stealing and other acts of evil, as in the Ten Commandments: "And God spoke all these words, saying: 'I am the Lord your God... You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour. You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife... nor anything that is your neighbour's.'" (Exodus 20:1-17)*

## My Experience in the United States of America

In 1977, I arrived in the United States to begin my university studies. First, I had to go to a school to learn English, and there I met many people of different beliefs from various parts of the world. At an English language school in Seattle, Washington, I had a roommate from Saudi Arabia who was working on his master's degree and whose name was Fouad. One day he asked me if it was all right for him to pray in the room. I told him that I did not have a problem with it. I was surprised, since it was the first time I saw a Muslim perform his prayers. Before starting to pray, he performed ablution. He washed his hands, rinsed his mouth, and washed his face and arms<sup>4</sup> in the small sink in our room. It was the first time I had seen someone wash his feet in a sink meant for washing hands. Then I observed the movements of his prayers. He stood up, bowed, knelt down, and prostrated. At that point, I remembered how we used to pray in the church by only kneeling down, but what Fouad did was different. A short time later, he left the institute, and for several months, I did not see another Muslim pray.

During break time at the English institute, foreign students from various countries used to meet and discuss a variety of topics. I clearly remember that on one occasion, as we were discussing the origin of religions and prayers, I told them: "You pray the way you do because that is the way your ancestors used to." I went on to tell them that their ancestors used to worship the sun, the moon and the stars, and since then that tradition has been transmitted through all the generations up to the present. I had even started to have doubts about the origin of belief in God. However, due to my deep Christian roots, I did not become an atheist.

One day I went to visit a mosque and observed many people praying the same way that I had seen Fouad pray previously. After the prayer, they all remained seated on the cold floor to listen to a sermon. Since the rest of the people were sitting, I joined them and listened to all that the Imam had to say.

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4 *Islam assigns great importance to the issue of cleanliness. For example, cleanliness of the clothing, body and place in addition to making ablution is a requirement for the validity of performing formal prayer. Ablution is also recommended before recitation of the Qur'an and going to bed. Washing the entire body is an obligation after sexual intercourse and is a commendable act before attending the Friday congregational prayer. Other acts, such as washing the mouth, brushing teeth, trimming nails, removing the pubic and armpit hair, trimming the moustache, using perfume, tidying up living places, removing harmful objects from the way of others, abstaining from polluting public places and utilities, keeping shady places clean, etc. are all acts encouraged and enjoined by Islam. Also, these acts bring one nearer to God and for which one is rewarded by Him. No other religion comes anywhere near Islam as far as cleanliness of the body and soul is concerned.*

His name was Jamil Abdul-Razzaq from Iraq, and he was giving a talk in English about backbiting. I remember that his voice was high pitched and emotional. As he spoke, he looked around the audience as if somebody had spoken ill of someone else, but he did not point out anyone specifically. I think his objective was to instill a feeling of guilt in those involved in backbiting.

That same day someone sent me an envelope with some booklets comparing Islam and Christianity. It took me a long time to read them, as I was then busy starting as a freshman at Oklahoma State University. It was through the comparative booklets that I learned that Islam and the message of Jesus were both revelations from God. Jesus said that the message he was conveying was not his but God's: "For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak." (John 12:49) Likewise, God through Angel Gabriel sent the revelation that Prophet Muhammad conveyed to the rest of humanity: "And indeed, the Qur'an is the revelation of the Lord of the worlds. The Trustworthy Spirit [i.e., Gabriel] has brought it down upon your heart, [O Muhammad] – that you may be of the warners." (Qur'an 26:192-194)

Therefore, the truth of every religion and the proof of its divine origin depends fundamentally on the accuracy with which the original revelation from God was preserved and transmitted to the rest of humankind. The level of deviation and uncertainty depends on the degree of precision with which every word revealed to the prophets was transmitted to others. If these words have not been accurately transmitted and have instead suffered adulteration, it is highly likely that the essence of the original message would be lost forever. Consequently, in order to make a just and unbiased comparison between Christianity and Islam, it is necessary to determine the extent to which the original Gospels and the Qur'an have been kept free from adulterations, additions or deletions. And because the objective is to convey the truth to the esteemed reader, and considering that, at times, a personal account of events does not appeal to some people. What follows in this book is a brief comparison between Christianity and Islam – the two most influential religions in the world with the highest number of followers from all races and nations, and the two most closely associated faiths. After that, I will go on to narrate events from my personal experience. I hope that by the will of God this book will assist the seeker of truth in his or her search for the true religion.

## The Gospels

The four well known Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are found in the New Testament of the Bible. They were written between 70 CE and 115 CE, decades after Jesus had departed, and supposedly based on documents that have since been lost. The Gospel according to Mark was the first one written in the Greek language in Rome, at least 40 years after Jesus' departure. The Gospel according to Matthew was written in Greek about 90 CE. The Gospel according to Luke was written in Greek approximately 80 CE. These three Gospels are called Synoptic because they are supposed to have originated from the same lost documents. The Gospel according to John,<sup>5</sup> on the other hand, is profoundly different from the Synoptic Gospels. It is in this Gospel that the divinity and pre-existence of Jesus was expressed, even though Jesus never confirmed this in the statements attributed to himself. It was written between 110 and 115 CE.

The Gospels were composed after the first followers of Jesus had been divided into several sects. It can be confirmed that they were written in order to reflect the conception of the practical needs of the community. Although traditional sources were utilized to write them down, the writers did not exercise great care to keep the original content free from additions, deletions and other forms of corruption, as the content was meant to serve the writers' personal interests. Christian authorities confirmed this fact<sup>6</sup> after the Qur'an had stated it more than 14 centuries ago.

It is worth mentioning that these four Gospels were not the only documents written in the centuries following the departure of Jesus. There were many others such as the Gospels of Jacob, Peter, Thomas, Philip and Barnabas. If we consider The Gospel According to the Hebrews, for example, it was a document written in Aramaic, the same language spoken by Jesus. The Nazarenes who negated the divinity of Jesus and considered him no more than a great prophet utilized it.

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5 *This John is not one of Jesus' disciples. According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, which was co-written by 500 Christian scholars, "the Gospel according to John is definitely and undoubtedly a fabrication."*

6 *According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Important intentional changes, such as the insertion and addition of whole paragraphs, took place..." v. 2, pp. 519-521. In the introduction to the Catholic Bible (p. 13), it is stated that the copyists had clearly inserted things over the centuries that were not part of the Scriptures, and because of that the text that we have now has reached us pregnant with all kinds of corruption, which is manifest in all copies. Also, in the preface to the RSV, produced by 32 Christian scholars backed up by 50 consultative bodies, we read: "Yet, the King James Version has grave defects... and these defects are so many and so serious..."*



In the fourth century CE, the Gospels According to Mark, Matthew, Luke and John were included in the body of the main Biblical text, and the Church declared the remaining existent documents to be heretical.

However, additional changes continued to be made in these Gospels even though they had already been declared "the Word of God." Moreover, as years passed by, the same Gospels appeared with different texts from their predecessors, which is undisputed evidence of the kind of corruption affecting these books.

Among the many factors to be considered when analysing the veracity of the Four Canonized Gospels and the authenticity of the messages that came along with them are the following:

1. The original Gospel as was revealed to Jesus and is mentioned in the Qur'an<sup>7</sup> as well as in the contemporary Gospels does not exist today.
2. The first records about the sayings of Jesus, which were made shortly following his ascension to Heaven, have been lost.
3. The Gospels were written between 70 and 115 CE, decades after Jesus' departure, and were based on lost documents. Consequently, there was a loose manipulation of the content.
4. None of the Gospels' authors saw Jesus or heard him speak. Hence, they were not eyewitnesses.
5. The Gospels were written in the Greek language, while Jesus spoke Aramaic
6. The present Gospels and most of the Epistles were not chosen and validated until the fourth century CE, when a resolution by a minority of the Council of Nicea was enforced in 325 CE. Before this date, the Gospels did not have any canonical authority and were changed by writers of different sects in order to comply with their personal interests and desires. Up to the present day the practice of tampering with the text is still prevalent.

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<sup>7</sup> *God said about Jesus, "...And We gave him the Gospel, in which was guidance and light." (Qur'an 5:46)*

7. The vast majority of the New Testament is composed of the writings of Paul and his students. Paul, who never saw or heard Jesus speak, was initially one of the most prominent enemies of Jesus' ministry. He killed many followers of the Messiah and imprisoned them (Acts 8:3, 9:1-2) He afterwards forced them to confess to lies against Jesus (Acts 26:11) But when Saul (later called Paul) supposedly converted, "he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles." (Acts 9:26-27)

This event occurred after Paul claimed that Jesus appeared to him and spoke to him on the way to Damascus. He bore witness for himself <sup>8</sup> without presenting any evidence establishing the truth of his claim. (Acts 9:3-8)

Surprisingly, he suddenly became the chief spokesperson in the name of Jesus claiming that he was appointed by Jesus to preach to the world. (Acts 9:3-6)<sup>10</sup> Paul also accused those who "believed not that he was a disciple" of erring concerning the faith. (1 Timothy 6:20-21)

He described Barnabas, who had been good to him, as "carried away with their hypocrisy." (Galatians 2:13) Paul even gave himself the right to propagate teachings that were contradictory to those taught by Jesus Christ and went against "the law" which Jesus came to fulfill.<sup>9</sup> (Acts 21:20 and Romans 7:6)

Thus, we find "And when Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not allow him." (Acts 19:30) He also declared: "All those in Asia have turned away from me," (2 Timothy 1:15) and "No one stood with me, but all forsook me." (2 Timothy 4:16)

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8 *There was no eyewitness to support Paul's claim. Such testimony for one's self is rejected according to the Bible itself. John 5:31 states: "If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true." Added to this is the fact that there are several other contradictions in the narrative. For example, in Acts 9:7, "And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one," while in Acts 22:9, we read: "But they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me." With this claim Paul managed to achieve what he could not achieve by force.*

9 *"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled." (Matthew 5:17-18) Paul sought to gather round himself as many followers as possible, even if his means to do so happened to go against the teachings of Christ or his ways of propagation.*

**8.** The oldest Biblical manuscripts we have access to are : According to John 4:1, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” Paul himself confessed to lying in his preaching: “For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory; why am I also still judged as a sinner?” (Romans 3:7)

Codexes Vaticanus, Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus, all dating back to between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. The extent of alteration the Gospels were subjected to prior to these dates can hardly be determined considering that the language of the Gospels was Greek while Jesus spoke Aramaic.

**9.** There are many discrepancies in several places between the fourth and fifth century manuscripts.<sup>10</sup>

**10.** The Gospels, seen as a whole, together with the Epistles, contain many errors and contradictions.<sup>11</sup> There is also great uncertainty among Biblical scholars as to who the authors of the Gospels actually were.

These facts are mentioned here as evidence that the Gospel of Jesus as revealed by God has not reached us in its original form. In this way it can be affirmed that the four Gospels included in today’s Bible and the Epistles that accompany them cannot be considered similar or equivalent to the Gospel revealed to Jesus. As proof of this assertion, the following information is presented:

The New Testament, on which modern Christian doctrines rest, has undergone radical changes and almost every new edition differs from the others. Some of the changes that are now being implemented are so fundamental that they strike at the very foundation of Christianity. For example, the only two references to the ascension of Jesus that were found in the Gospels of Mark and Luke have now been deleted from the Revised Standard Edition, 1952.

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<sup>10</sup> *Some Biblical scholars point to the existence of thousands of manuscripts from the Gospels, but what is the true value of these manuscripts if amongst the thousands we cannot find two that are alike?! According to the International Translation of the New Testament, not “All the versions of the New Testament that reached us were similar.”*

<sup>11</sup> *The numerous errors contained in the Bible led Robert Kehl Zeller to say in *The Authenticity of the Holy Bible* that no other book ever suffered as many changes, errors and corruptions as the Holy Bible. This is in clear contrast to William Muir and Laura Vaglieri’s statements about the Qur’an. (See footnotes 15 and 16.)*

These passages contained evidence cited to support Jesus' ascension as follows: "So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God." (Mark 16:19) "Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven." (Luke 24:51) The aforementioned

verse from Mark 16:19 has been removed along with a number of other verses that immediately preceded and succeeded it. As for Luke 24:51, the words, "carried up into heaven" were removed.

In Matthew 16:27-28, we read: "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom." As this prophecy never came true, it can only be concluded that it was a fabrication ascribed to Jesus Christ who was a true prophet of God and whose prophecy cannot be mistaken.

The Gospel of Matthew contradicts itself on the same page when talking about Peter: "Jesus answered and said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you... That you are Peter... And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.'" (Matthew 16:17-19) Matthew 16:23 stands in total contrast to all this, as it states: "But He [Jesus] turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.'"

Concerning the alleged crucifixion events, Matthew 27:44 says: "Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing." Here the two thieves are mentioned as acting together. However, Luke 23:39-40 states: "Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, 'If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.'

But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?'" In the latter example the two thieves are not acting together; rather, they are in opposition to each other.



Changes, alterations and contradictions are not found only in the New Testament but also in the Old Testament.<sup>12</sup> For example, in 2 Kings 8:26 we are told: “Ahaziah was twenty-two years old was when he became king.” This contradicts Chronicles 22:2, which states: “Ahaziah was forty-two years old when he became king.”

Another contradiction found in 2 Kings 24:8 is: “Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months,” when compared to 2 Chronicles 36:9, which states: “Jehoiachin was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months and ten days.”

2 Samuel 6:23, which says: “Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death” stands contradictory to 2 Samuel 21:8, which reads: “So the king took Armoni and Mephibosheth, the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bore to Saul, and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite.”

In the New Standard American Version of 1973, the name Michal, as in 2 Samuel 21:8, which appears in both King James Version and the New World Translation of Jehovah’s Witnesses, was replaced by Mirab to conceal the contradiction. Addressing the issue of seeing God as stated in both the Old and New Testaments, John 1:18 tells us: “No one has seen God at any time.” This is also confirmed by John 4:12. However, Genesis 32:30 tells a different story: “And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: ‘For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.’” Strangely enough, Exodus 33:11, also confirms this: “So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.” Moreover, in Exodus 24:9-11, we are told: “Then Moses went up, also Aaron... So they saw God, and they ate and drank.”

In John 3:13 we also find: “No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of man who is in heaven.” This again contradicts Genesis 5:24, which states: “And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him,” as well as

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12 *Vatican Ecumenical Council II (1962-65) admitted to the existence of errors in the Old Testament: “Now the books of the Old Testament, in accordance with the state of mankind before the time of salvation established by Christ, reveal to all men the knowledge of God and of man and the ways in which God, just and merciful, deals with men. These books, though they also contain some things which are incomplete and temporary...” In Providentissimus Deus, on the study of Holy Scripture issued by Pope Leo XIII on 18th November 1893, it is stated: “It is true, no doubt, that copyists have made mistakes in the text of the Bible.” And confession is the master of evidence.*

Kings 2:1, which reads: “And it came to pass, when the Lord was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind...” Thus, was it only Christ who was taken up to heaven or Enoch and Elijah as well? Additionally, there are numerous conflicting versions of the Old Testament (Hebrew, Greek, Samaritan, etc.) whose authors are in many cases unknown to Biblical authorities. The same situation applies to “the great majority of authors and editors of the books of the Bible, who were presumed to be God’s representatives by their people and were also anonymous,” according to the French version.

Islam’s position relative to the Bible is one of fairness and unbiased judgment. It views the Bible as clearly a book that contains some truth; however, some falsehood has tainted its noble origin. The Islamic criteria for distinguishing truth from falsehood are the Qur’an and teachings of Prophet Muhammad. In simple terms, whatever contents of the Bible that are in agreement with the Qur’an and Sunnah are acceptable, and what is in disagreement is rejected. Other statements in it are not to be either believed or discredited. As for the original scriptures that God revealed to His prophets, Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus and others, firm belief in them is among the pillars of faith without which one cannot be a Muslim.

## The Authenticity of the Qur'an

The final scripture revealed to humankind by God (whose proper name is Allah), the Qur'an, has remained unaltered and free from human changes for more than 1400 years. This final message from God was revealed to Prophet Muhammad during a period of almost twenty-three years. It was revealed in segments of different lengths. As soon as he received a segment, he recited it to his companions, who wrote it down and memorized it. In addition, the Prophet indicated to his scribes the precise location where each segment should be placed in the body of the text. In this way the Qur'an in its entirety had been written and memorized by hundreds of Prophet Muhammad's followers during his lifetime. Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, assigned Zaid bin Thabit the responsibility of compiling the first copy of the Qur'an in a single text after Prophet Muhammad died. Then, following the orders of the third Caliph, Uthman, Zaid later prepared seven copies which were sent to the different centers of the Islamic world.

The existence of the Qur'an in its original Arabic text, the existence of millions of people who memorized it verbatim in different parts of the world through the succeeding generations, and the complete agreement of all its copies and manuscripts<sup>13</sup> testify to the authenticity of the last and final revelation sent as guidance to humankind. The entire Qur'an is the literal word of God without the least addition or omission.

When God says in the Qur'an, "Say, 'He is Allah, [who is] One,'" Prophet Muhammad, the conveyor of the message, would not have been able to change a single letter or a word from that divine statement. He had to say what he was commanded to: "Say, 'He is Allah, [who is] One,'" without omitting the imperative verb "say."<sup>14</sup> Also, the Prophetic narrations (called hadiths), which are the second source of Islamic legislation and were also revealed by God in meaning but not necessarily in word, were recorded and kept separate in the books of hadith.

On the other hand, the Bible cannot claim such an untarnished existence, being a mixture of words allegedly said by God, others ascribed to the prophets, while still others spoken by people.

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13 In his book, *The Life of Mohamed*, William Muir states in reference to the Qur'an, "There is probably no other book in the world which has remained twelve centuries [now fourteen] with so pure a text."

14 Dr. Laura Veccia Vaglieri states in her book, *Apologia dell' Islamismo*, "But there is another proof of the Divinity of the Qur'an: it is the fact that it has been preserved intact through the ages since the time of its revelation."

It is clear to anyone who reads the Qur'an that this Book focuses entirely on the oneness of God. It does not depict the life of Prophet Muhammad or his heroism like most people tend to believe. Any person who reads the Qur'an will clearly see that its aim is to promote belief that God is one, alone, glorifying Him, following His commands, and abstaining from what He has forbidden. The Qur'an refers to Muhammad as a messenger of God, like all the other messengers who preceded him. Verse 3:144 reads: "Muhammad is not but a messenger. [Other] messengers have passed on before him. So if he was to die or be killed, would you turn back on your heels [to unbelief]? And he who turns back on his heels will never harm Allah at all; but Allah will reward the grateful."

The Prophet is also described as one who is unable to benefit anyone, including himself, without the permission of God. Verse 7:188 tells us "Say, 'I hold not for myself [the power of] benefit or harm, except what Allah has willed. And if I knew the unseen, I could have acquired much wealth, and no harm would have touched me. I am not except a warner and a bringer of good tidings to a people who believe.'"

In fact, there are even verses reproaching the Prophet actions. There is an incident where in a blind man interrupted him as he was calling a group of influential Makkans to Islam, pleading with the Prophet to give him some religious knowledge. In his eagerness to guide others, the Prophet frowned and ignored him, for he knew that the blind man was of strong faith and that there would be no harm if he waited until he finished his meeting.

However, the Prophet was reproached by God in the Qur'an (80:1-11): "The Prophet frowned and turned away because the blind man came to him, [interrupting]. But what would make you perceive, [O Muhammad], that perhaps he might be purified? Or be reminded and the remembrance would benefit him? As for he who thinks himself without need, to him you give attention. And not upon you [is any blame] if he will not be purified. But as for he who came to you striving [for knowledge] while he fears [Allah], from him you are distracted. No! Indeed, these [verses] are a reminder."

The reader of the Qur'an will also find verses that address the Prophet Muhammad in strong terms in the name of God. Verses 69:44-47 read: "And if he [i.e., Muhammad] had made up about Us some [false] sayings, We would have seized him by the right hand; then We would have cut from him the aorta. And there is no one of you who could prevent [Us] from him."



The Arab pagans at the time of the Prophet accused him of forging the Qur'an. At that point, God revealed to him various verses in which He challenged them to produce a book similar to the Qur'an. Verse 17:88 reads: "Say, 'If mankind and the jinn gathered in order to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like of it, even if they were to each other assistants.'"

Moreover, verses 52:33-34 read: "Or do they say, 'He has made it up?' Rather, they do not believe. Then let them produce a statement like it, if they should be truthful." But they failed to do so. The challenge was later reduced to ten chapters as is clear from verse 11:13, which reads: "Or do they say, 'He invented it?' Say, 'Then bring ten surahs like it that have been invented and call upon [for assistance] whomever you can besides Allah, if you should be truthful.'" But they failed in this also. It was finally reduced to a single chapter. Verses 2:23-24 inform us: "And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our Servant [Muhammad], then produce a surah the like thereof and call upon your witnesses other than Allah, if you should be truthful. But if you do not, and you will never be able to, then fear the Fire whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the disbelievers." Verse 10:38 states: "Or do they say [about the Prophet], 'He invented it?' Say, 'Then bring forth a surah like it and call upon [for assistance] whomever you can besides Allah, if you should be truthful.'"

They failed to accomplish this as well. This proves that the bitter enemies of Islam, although very eloquent in Arabic, failed to compose a single chapter similar to that in the Qur'an. Had they been able to stand up to the challenge, they would have saved themselves much time and effort spent in trying to put an end to Islam by force.

Unlike the Bible, the Qur'an is free from all kinds of error, discrepancy, contradiction or conflict with reason and science. Verse 4:82 reads: "Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an? If it had been from [any] other than Allah, they would have found within it much contradiction."

The Qur'an, which was revealed fourteen centuries ago, mentions facts only recently discovered or proven by scientists with the help of sophisticated equipment and advanced scientific research.

For example, God speaks vividly about the phases of man's embryonic development, saying: "And certainly did We create man from an extract of clay. Then We placed him as a sperm-drop in a firm lodging. Then We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot, and We made the clot into a lump [of flesh], and We made [from] the lump, bones, and We

covered the bones with flesh; then We developed him into another creation. So blessed is Allah, the best of creators.” (Qur’an 23:12-14)

The Qur’an also refers to the formation of the universe and the big bang which began the process. Verse 21:30 reads: “Have those who disbelieved not considered that the heavens and the earth were a joined entity, and We separated them and made from water every living thing? Then will they not believe?” The topic of this verse was the subject of the Nobel Prize in 1973. Modern science also proved that 80% of the cytoplasm of the living cell is actually water. For such precise knowledge to reach Muhammad, an illiterate man,<sup>15</sup> more than 14 centuries ago is manifest proof that the Qur’an is the word of God and that Muhammad was His Messenger.

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<sup>15</sup> In the Qur’an, verse 29:48, God says: “And you did not recite before it any scripture, nor did you inscribe one with your right hand. Otherwise the falsifiers would have had [cause for] doubt.”

## The Life and Mission of Jesus

Very little is known about the early years of Jesus' life. The Virgin Mary gave birth to him in Palestine. All Muslims believe in and respect Jesus because of the references to him in the Qur'an and the prophetic sayings as one of the greatest prophets of Allah.

The essence of his teachings was based on the belief in a unique God and worshipping no one but Him in addition. He also preached love and peace. He performed several miracles, never crediting them to himself but indicating always that it was by God's will.<sup>16</sup> In John 5:30, Jesus is quoted as saying: "I can of Myself do nothing." Luke 11:20 reads: "But if I cast out demons with the finger of God..."

Jesus used to supplicate to God, Creator of the heavens and earth. Upon bringing Lazarus back to life, John 11:41-42 states: "And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, 'Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.'" Simon (Peter), a major disciple, says: "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know." (Acts 2:22) Even the people who witnessed those miracles knew that they were approved by God and that Jesus was a prophet of God. In the case of the widow's son, whom Jesus brought back to life, those present proclaimed, "a great prophet has risen up among us; and, God has visited His people." (Luke 7:16)

In the Qur'an, this great Prophet of God is referred to as "Isa bin Maryam" (Jesus, the son of Mary) 25 times, whereas the name of Prophet Muhammad himself is only mentioned 5 times.

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<sup>16</sup> *In spite of this we find Christian preachers insisting on going against the teachings of Christ and considering his miracles as reasons to believe in his divinity. One may, therefore, be entitled to ask them: Why do you not consider Moses God since he hit the sea with his staff and it parted? (Exodus 14:16-29) His staff was also transformed into a reptile. (Exodus 4:2-5) Why did you not consider Joshua God though he ordered the sun and the moon to stop and they obeyed his command? (Joshua 10:12-13) Why was Elijah not considered God though he quickened the dead? (1 Kings 17:20-22) And what about Elisha who also brought the dead back to life? (2 Kings 4:32-35) Even Elisha's bones after his death raised the dead. (2 Kings 13:20-21) As for Ezekiel (37:7-10), he brought a whole army of thousands of people back to life. Still none of them is considered God or even a god.*

In Chapter 3 of the Qur'an, called Aali-'Imraan (the Family of 'Imraan), we read: "And [mention] when the angels said, 'O Mary,<sup>17</sup> indeed Allah has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the worlds. O Mary, be devoutly obedient to your Lord and prostrate and bow with those who bow [in prayer].' That is from the news of the unseen which We reveal to you, [O Muhammad]. And you were not with them when they cast their pens as to which of them should be responsible for Mary. Nor were you with them when they disputed. [And mention] when the angels said, 'O Mary, indeed Allah gives you good tidings of a word<sup>18</sup> from Him, whose name will be the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, distinguished in this world and the Hereafter and among those brought near [to Allah]. He will speak to the people in the cradle and in maturity and will be of the righteous.

She said, 'My Lord, how will I have a child when no man has touched me?' [The angel] said, 'Such is Allah; He creates what He wills. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, "Be," and it is. And He will teach him writing and wisdom<sup>19</sup> and the Torah and the Gospel and [make him] a messenger to the Children of Israel, [who will say], "Indeed I have come to you with a sign from your Lord in that I design for you from clay [that which is] like the form of a bird,<sup>20</sup> then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird by permission of Allah. And I cure the blind and the leper, and I give life to the dead – by permission of Allah. And I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your houses. Indeed in that is a sign for you, if you are believers. And [I have come] confirming what was before me of the Torah and to make lawful for you some of what was forbidden to you. And I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, so fear Allah and obey me. Indeed, Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. That is the straight path.'"

But when Jesus felt [persistence in] disbelief from them, he said, 'Who are my supporters for [the cause of] Allah?' The disciples said, 'We are supporters for Allah. We have believed in Allah and testify that we are Muslims [submitting to Him].

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17 *Maryam (Mary), the mother of Prophet Jesus, is the only woman mentioned by name in the Qur'an. Her name appears 34 times. In addition, there is no single chapter in the Bible by her name, whereas an entire chapter in the Qur'an is named after her. In fact, no Qur'anic chapter mentions the names of Prophet Muhammad's mother, his daughters or his wives. It is owing to the great love for Mary that many Muslims name their daughters after her.*

18 *Referring to the prophet Jesus, who was conceived merely by a command from God – the word "Be."*

19 *i.e., the teachings of the Prophets.*

20 *This miracle plus that of al-Maa'idah (the table of food that descended from the heavens) and others are mentioned in the Qur'an but not in the Bible.*



Our Lord, we have believed in what You revealed and have followed the messenger Jesus, so register us among the witnesses [to truth].’ And the disbelievers planned, but Allah planned. And Allah is the best of planners. [Mention] when Allah said, ‘O Jesus, indeed I will take you and raise you<sup>21</sup> to Myself and purify you from those who disbelieve and make those who follow you [in submission to Allah alone] superior to those who disbelieve until the Day of Resurrection. Then to Me is your return, and I will judge between you concerning that in which you used to differ.

And as for those who disbelieved, I will punish them with a severe punishment in this world and the Hereafter, and they will have no helpers.’ But as for those who believed and did righteous deeds, He will give them in full their rewards, and Allah does not like the wrongdoers. This is what We recite to you, [O Muhammad], of [Our] verses and the precise [and wise] message.

Indeed, the example of Jesus to Allah is like that of Adam. He created Him from dust; then He said to him, ‘Be,’ and he was. The truth is from your Lord, so do not be among the doubters. Then whoever argues with you about it after [this] knowledge has come to you – say, ‘Come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves, then supplicate earnestly [together] and invoke the curse of Allah upon the liars [among us].’ Indeed, this is the true narration. And there is no deity except Allah. And indeed, Allah is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.”

In addition, in chapter 19, called Maryam, God revealed “And mention, [O Muhammad], in the Book [the story of] Mary, when she withdrew from her family to a place toward the east. And she took, in seclusion from them, a screen. Then We sent to her Our Angel, and he represented himself to her as a well-proportioned man.

She said, ‘Indeed, I seek refuge in the Most Merciful from you, [so leave me], if you should be fearing of Allah.’ He said, ‘I am only the messenger of your Lord to give you [news of] a pure boy [i.e., son].’ She said, ‘How can I have a boy while no man has touched me and I have not been unchaste?’ He said, ‘Thus [it will be]; your Lord says, “It is easy for Me, and We will make him a sign to the people and a mercy from Us. And it is a matter [already] decreed.”’ So she conceived him, and she withdrew with him to a remote place. And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm tree.

She said, ‘Oh, I wish I had died before this and was in oblivion, forgotten.’ But he called her from below her, ‘Do not grieve; your Lord has provided beneath you a stream. And shake toward you the trunk of the palm tree; it will drop upon you ripe, fresh dates. So eat and drink and be contented. And if you see from among humanity anyone, say, “Indeed, I have vowed to the Most Merciful abstention, so I will not speak today to [any] man.”’ Then she brought him to her people, carrying him. They said, ‘O Mary, you have certainly done a thing unprecedented. O sister of Aaron, your father was not a man of evil, nor was your mother unchaste.’

So she pointed to him. They said, ‘How can we speak to one who is a child in the cradle?’ [Jesus] said, ‘Indeed, I am the servant of Allah. He has given me the Scripture and made me a prophet. And He has made me blessed wherever I am and has enjoined upon me prayer and zakah,<sup>22</sup> as long as I remain alive and [made me] dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me a wretched tyrant. And peace is on me the day I was born and the day I will die and the day I am raised alive.’ That is Jesus, the son of Mary, the word of truth about which they are in dispute. It is not [befitting] for Allah to take a son; exalted is He! When He decrees an affair, He only says to it, ‘Be,’ and it is. [Jesus said], ‘And indeed, Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. That is a straight path.’” (Qur’an, 3:16-36)

Further, the words of Prophet Muhammad also include references to Jesus. In one narration, Prophet Muhammad said: “Both in this world and in the Hereafter, I am the nearest of people to Jesus, the son of Mary. The prophets are paternal brothers; their mothers are different but their religion is one.”<sup>23</sup>

In another hadith, Prophet Muhammad said: “When any human being is born, Satan touches him at both sides of the body with his two fingers, except for Jesus, the son of Mary, whom Satan tried to touch but failed, for he touched the placenta cover instead.” This was a response to the supplication of his grandmother, “the wife of ‘Imran,” when she said: “...And I have named her Mary, and I seek refuge for her in You and [for] her descendants from Satan, the expelled [from the mercy of Allah].”<sup>24</sup>

The Qur’an considers the characters of Jesus and Muhammad equally pure, immaculate, and noble since both of them are prophets from the same Almighty God.

<sup>22</sup> *Zakah is one the pillars of Islam. It is a fixed percentage of wealth on specified properties to be given to deserving poor and needy people.*

<sup>23</sup> *Narrated by al-Bukhari, hadith no. 3370.*

<sup>24</sup> *3:36. Both the Qur’an and Prophet Muhammad honored Jesus by stating that he was guarded from the evils of Satan. Actually, this is a refutation of the Biblical claim in Luke 4:2 that Jesus was tempted by the devil.*

## Prophet Muhammad

Jesus had told the Jews that after him no prophet would appear from among them and that the Kingdom of God would be taken from them and given to a nation more worthy of it. (Matthew 21:43) This nation descended from Ishmael, who had been rejected by the Jews.<sup>25</sup> The Qur'an (61:6) states: "And [mention] when Jesus, the son of Mary, said, 'O children of Israel, indeed I am the messenger of Allah to you confirming what came before me of the Torah and bringing good tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name is Ahmad.' But when he came to them with clear evidences, they said, 'This is obvious magic.'"

In the New Testament, Jesus prophesizes the coming of Muhammad in these words: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper<sup>26</sup> will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment... However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak of His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify me..." (John 16:7-14) Since that time, who has glorified Jesus as much as Muhammad did?<sup>27</sup>

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25 *Despite this rejection, the reader of the Qur'an finds that Allah favored the Children of Israel for a certain period. (Qur'an 2:47) Many stories in the Qur'an speak of them and their prophets, especially Moses, who is mentioned by name 136 times. Not only that but Prophet Muhammad encouraged Muslims to fast each year on the 10th of Muharram (the first month of the Islamic calendar) and the day before it in gratitude to Allah for saving Moses and the Children of Israel from the army of Pharaoh by parting the Red Sea. Muslims have thus been fasting in commemoration of this event for more than 14 centuries. Muslims also hold great respect for all the prophets of the Children of Israel. As such, many Muslim families name their children after those prophets.*

26 *The term "Comforter" is used in many versions of the Bible, including the older printings of the King James Version.*

27 *Many people went to extremes regarding the person of Jesus Christ. Some rejected him and spared no effort to discredit him, while others later denied his existence altogether considering him to be a fictional character. As for Jesus' teachings regarding the belief in only one true God, his so-called followers went off in another direction. It was only Islam that declared his prophethood and defended his character.*

In the Gospel of Barnabas, one of the Gospels not recognized by the Church, Jesus says:

“Since men have called me ‘God,’ and ‘Son of God,’ God, in order that I be not mocked of the demons on the day of judgment, hath willed that I be mocked of men in this world by the death of Judas,<sup>28</sup> making all men to believe that I died upon the cross. And this mocking shall continue until the advent of Mohammed, the messenger of God, who, when he shall come, shall reveal this deception to those who believe in God’s law.” (Barnabas 220)

Prophet Muhammad is mentioned several times in various places in the Old Testament. Such mention has survived distortion and corruption. For example, in Deuteronomy 18:18-19, we read: “I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.”

Makkah (Baca), where Prophet Muhammad received his divine revelations, is mentioned in Psalms 84:6, which says: “As they pass through the Valley of Bakka, they make it a spring; the rain also covers it with pools.”

The Qur’an states in Chapter 3, verse 96: “Indeed, the first House [of worship] established for mankind was that at Bakka [i.e., Makkah], blessed, and a guidance for the worlds.”

Prophet Abraham also mentioned the same place where he raised the foundation of the sacred House of God (the Ka’bah), indicating that it was an arid area. In the Qur’an, verse 14:37, we read: “Our Lord, I have settled some of my descendants in an uncultivated valley near Your sacred House.” In addition, Isaiah 21:13 also mentions revelation from Arabia.

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28 *According to the Gospels, his treasurer betrayed Christ for 30 pieces of silver. However, Ibn Kathīr, in his Qur’anic exegesis (Q. 4:157) and others say that the disciple who allegedly betrayed Christ did not actually do so; instead he sacrificed himself for Christ. After he had heard Christ say, “On the day of danger, whom shall I cause to look like me, and he shall be my companion in Heaven?” that disciple expressed his willingness to do so, and so it was. Such a selfless act is worthy of the disciples of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, the act of betrayal committed by Judas is contradictory to other Gospel narrations, such as: “When the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Matthew 19:28) So if Judas was a traitor, Jesus would have said “eleven thrones” not “twelve thrones.”*

The fact that Prophet Muhammad would be illiterate and could not read is mentioned in Isaiah 29:12 as follows: “And when they give the book to one who cannot read, saying, ‘Read this,’ he says, ‘I cannot read.’” (RSV)

In Sahih al-Bukhari, hadith no. 3, we find the following about the first revelation to the prophet of Islam: “He [Muhammad] was in the cave when the angel came to him. The angel came to him and said, ‘Read.’ He said, ‘I cannot read.’ The Prophet further explained, ‘So the angel held me so tightly that I felt exhausted, then let go of me and said, “Read.” I said, “I cannot read.” He held me again so tightly that I felt exhausted, then let go of me and said, “Read.” I said, “I cannot read.” So he held me so tightly for the third time, then let go of me and said, “Read in the name of your Lord who created – created man from a clinging substance. Read and your Lord is the most Generous.””

In Chapter 7, verse 157, the Qur’an states: “Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet whom they find written in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel...”

In Arabia in the year 571 CE, the prophesy of Jesus and his predecessors was fulfilled. The Comforter was born amongst the Children of Ishmael (Ismaa’eel),<sup>29</sup> who were polytheists and idolaters. Muhammad stood out among his people due to the genuineness of his character, his love for truth, and his compassion for the poor and weak. He came to be known as “al-Ameen” (the Trustworthy) amongst his people. He was chosen by Almighty Allah at the age of forty to be His last messenger and prophet to all humankind. He preached belief in the oneness of Allah, the Creator, who alone deserves to be worshipped, Sustainer of the whole universe and all that it contains.

God supported Prophet Muhammad with many miracles that were confirmed by eyewitnesses, such as the splitting of the moon (Q. 54:1) and the hurricane that He sent to counter a full-scale assault by the enemy on Madinah. (Q. 33:9) such miracles were mentioned in the Qur’an after their occurrence, and the unbelievers of the time, who were eager to find faults in the Qur’an, did not find any contradiction between the narrations in the Qur’an and actual events. As a result, many willingly embraced Islam. As for the believers, those miracles strengthened their faith and belief in Allah and His Messenger. Many other miracles were also mentioned in the hadith, such as the flowing of the water

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<sup>29</sup> *In spite of the fact that Ishmael was the oldest son of Prophet Abraham as is clear from Genesis 16:16, “Abraham was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram,” and Genesis 21:5, “Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him,” the Bible comes to contradict itself by claiming otherwise in Genesis 22:2, “And He said, ‘Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love.’”*

from between the fingers of Prophet Muhammad, the increase for food during the digging of the trench around Madinah, the telling of things to come, and of things unknown, which Allah revealed, to him. However, the living miracle of the Prophet is the Qur'an. It mentions linguistic, scientific and legislative issues of a miraculous nature.

Prophet Muhammad lived among his companions, his family and people. There was nothing about him that was unknown or kept secret. His life was an open book. The minutest details about his entire life were known to all those who believed in him as the Messenger of God and sacrificed for the sake of their belief in Him, while Muhammad had nothing to give them except the revelations he received from the Lord of all beings.

He preached a message of unity under the banner of Islam, in which there was no distinction based on race, colour, language, wealth or sex. This is confirmed by the words of God in the Qur'an (49:13): "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted."

The Prophet emphasized that lineage has no value in the sight of God.<sup>30</sup> He said: "Your Lord is One, and your father [Adam] is one. An Arab is not better than a non-Arab, and a non-Arab is not better than an Arab; and a white person is not better than a black person, and a black person is not better than a white person – except through piety and righteousness."<sup>31</sup> This means that piety and righteousness are the criterion by which Allah judges people, regardless of colour or race.

Slavery was widespread throughout the world and was sanctioned by the manmade religions of the time and by the Bible itself, as in Genesis 9:25-27, Exodus 21:2-12 and Ephesians 6:5.

When God sent Muhammad with the last of His messages, the freeing of slaves became one of the greatest acts of goodness that would bring one nearer to God. In addition, it became a praiseworthy means to gain His approval, pleasure and expiate sins and errors. God says in the Qur'an: "But he has not broken through the difficult pass. And what can make you know what is [breaking through] the difficult pass? It is the freeing of a slave." (90:11-13)

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<sup>30</sup> *Abu Lahab, an uncle of Prophet Muhammad, rejected God's message. As a result, Qur'anic verses were revealed condemning him, and he was promised Hellfire. His relationship to the Prophet provided no protection for him against eternal punishment.*

<sup>31</sup> *Narrated by Ahmad, 23105.*



Prophet Muhammad was sent as “a mercy to the worlds.” This is stated in the Qur’an in verse 21:107. Prophet Muhammad said: “The merciful are treated with mercy by Allah. Thus, have mercy upon those on earth, so that He who is in Heaven may have mercy upon you.”<sup>32</sup> Another hadith states: “Whosoever does not have mercy upon the people will not receive mercy from Allah.”<sup>33</sup>

Prophet Muhammad was the living example of mercy. Allah states in the Qur’an (3:159): “So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in the matter.”

The Prophet was compassionate even to his enemies. A clear example of his compassion was shown when he conquered Makkah. The Makkan pagans were sure that he would exact his vengeance on them. However, when he stood at the door of the Ka’bah and said to them: “How do you think I should act toward you?” “With kindness, gracious and merciful brother,” they replied. “Be it so,” declared the Prophet. “I say unto you as Prophet Joseph said unto his brothers, ‘No blame will there be upon you today. Allah will forgive you; and He is the most merciful of the merciful.’”<sup>34</sup> Then he said to them, “Go, for you are free.”

It would have been easy for him to seek revenge for all the torture and death he and his followers suffered at their hands, yet he pardoned them all. This clearly proves that he was indeed a mercy to humankind. In so doing he was following the Qur’anic instruction to be of those “who restrain anger and who pardon the people, and Allah loves the doers of good.” (3:134)

Allah also says in the Qur’an (41:34-35): “Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend. But none is granted it except those who are patient, and none is granted it except one having a great portion [of good].”

When his companions appealed to him to ask for the descent of God’s wrath on his enemies after they had broken his tooth and injured his head, he refused and said, “O Lord, have mercy on my people, for they know not what they are doing.”<sup>35</sup>

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32 Narrated by at-Tirmidhi, 1928

33 Narrated by Muslim, 5983

34 Narrated by al-Bayhaqi, 18648 and 18647.

35 Ibn Hibban, 949. Muslim, 6595.

He never exhibited anger over personal matters. All his anger was for the sake of Allah. He used to say: “The truly strong person is not one who fights others and defeats them; rather, it is the one who restrains himself when angry.”

He was an exemplary model of humility. Once a man came to him trembling with fear thinking he was about to meet a great king. The Prophet met him with all humility and said to him: “Calm down, I am not a king. I am the son of a woman who used to eat cured meat in Makkah.”<sup>36</sup> In another hadith, the Prophet said: “Whoever has in his heart an ant’s weight of arrogance will not enter Paradise.”<sup>37</sup>

When a solar eclipse coincided with the death of the Prophet’s son, Ibrahim, people began to say that the eclipse was due to the death. However, he summoned them and proclaimed: “The sun and the moon are two of Allah’s signs. They do not eclipse for the death or birth of anyone.”<sup>38</sup>

In yet another hadith, Prophet Muhammad instructed his followers: “Do not praise me excessively as the son of Mary was praised by the Christians. I am only a slave of Allah. So call me the slave of Allah and His messenger.”<sup>39</sup>

One companion once said to him: “You are our master and have more power and favor over all of us.” The Prophet, angry at such a thought – and his anger was only for the cause of Allah – answered: “Only Allah is the Master! I am no one’s master. Do not let the devil deceive you. I do not want you to raise me to a status higher than where Allah has placed me. I am only Allah’s slave and His messenger.”<sup>40</sup>

The Shari’ah (divine legislation) that Prophet Muhammad brought made caring for the weak, the poor, the indigent, and orphans an integral part of Islam. Allah says in the Qur’an: “Have you seen the one who denies the Recompense? For that is the one who drives away the orphan and does not encourage the feeding of the poor.” (107:1-3) Neglecting the needy may also lead one to the Hellfire. Allah states in the Qur’an: “Indeed, he did not used to believe in Allah, the Most Great, nor did he encourage the feeding of the poor.” (69:33-34)

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36 *Ibn Majah, 3391.*

37 *Muslim, 225.*

38 *Al-Bukhari, 1044.*

39 *Al-Bukhari, 3372.*

40 *Ahmad, 12295.*

Islam condemns all kinds of injustice, aggression and terror against the innocent. Allah says: “And do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like aggressors.” (Qur’an 2:190)

The Qur’an also states: “Because of that, We decreed upon the Children of Israel

that whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land – it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one – it is as if he had saved mankind entirely.” (Qur’an 5:32)

Muslims are even encouraged to be kind to animals and are forbidden to harm them. On one occasion, Prophet Muhammad said: “A woman was punished because she tied up a cat until it died. Because of this, she was doomed to Hell. She imprisoned it, not giving it food or drink, nor did she let it free to eat the vermin of the earth.”<sup>41</sup>

He also reported the case of a prostitute who gave water to a dog dying of thirst, for which Allah forgave her sins.<sup>42</sup> “The Prophet was asked, ‘O Messenger of God, are we rewarded for kindness towards animals?’ He said, ‘There is a reward for kindness shown to every living animal or human being.’”<sup>43</sup>

The message of Islam promotes tolerance and respect for the rights of non-Muslims. Prophet Muhammad said: “Whoever does injustice to another having a covenant of protection [i.e., a non-Muslim], or falls short in giving one his right, or burdens one with more than he can bear, or takes from one something against his will – I will be his opponent on the Day of Judgment.”<sup>44</sup>

The message of Islam calls for fulfilling trusts and shunning all acts of betrayal. One hadith states: “Give back what you have been entrusted with to whoever entrusted you with it, and do not betray one who has betrayed you.”

Islam also strongly disapproves of selfishness and calls for man to love for others what he loves for himself. The Prophet said: “A man is not considered a believer until he loves for others what he loves for himself.”<sup>45</sup> Good morals and respect for women are also part of the Islamic message.

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41 *Muslim, 5804.*

42 *Al-Bukhari, 3392.*

43 *Al-Bukhari, 2323.*

44 *Abu Dawud, 3054. 50At-Tirmidhi, 1261.*

45 *Al-Bukhari, 13.*

The Prophet said: “The believer with the most complete faith is the one who has the best moral behavior. And the best among the believers are those who are best in treating their women.”<sup>46</sup> There is also this hadith: “A man came to the Prophet and said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, who is most entitled to my best companionship?’ The Prophet said, ‘Your mother.’ The man asked, ‘Who is next?’ The Prophet replied, ‘Your mother.’ The man asked again, ‘Who is next?’ The Prophet again replied, ‘Your mother.’ When the man asked for the fourth time, the Prophet replied, ‘Your father.’”<sup>47</sup>

According to Islamic teachings, the reward for serving and looking after one’s mother is Paradise. The Prophet instructed a man who had consulted him about going for jihad while he had a mother to take care of by saying, “Stay with her because Paradise is under her feet.”<sup>48</sup>

The Prophet also said: “Whoever has a daughter and does not humiliate her or favour his son over her will enter Paradise.” Prophet Muhammad also stated: “Whoever has two daughters or two sisters and treats them well will be my close companion in Paradise.”<sup>49</sup>

Thus, it is clear that kindness to women is strongly emphasized in Islamic teachings and is an act that may take one to Paradise.

Islam encourages kindness to parents and treating them with compassion even when they happen to be in opposition to Islam. Allah says: “And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination. But if they endeavor to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them but accompany them in [this] world with appropriate kindness.” (Qur’an 31:14-15)

According to the Shari’ah, males are responsible for the welfare of females, whether he happens to be a father, son, brother or even a ruler. She is entitled to her share of the inheritance, to a dowry at the time of marriage, to choose whom she wishes to marry, and to remarry after divorce and the like. Allah says in the Qur’an (2:228): “And due to the wives is similar to what is expected of them, according to what is reasonable.”

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46 *Ahmad, 7374.*

47 *Muslim, 6452.*

48 *An-Nasa’i, 3106. Ahmad, 1966*

49 *Ibn Abi Shaibah, 21179*

In Leviticus 15:19-30, we find: “If a woman has a discharge, and the discharge from her body is blood, she shall be set apart seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening. Everything that she lies on during her impurity shall be unclean; also everything that she sits on shall be unclean. Whoever touches her bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. And whoever touches anything that she sat on shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.

If anything is on her bed or on anything on which she sits, when he touches it, he shall be unclean until evening. Moreover, if any man lies with her at all, so that her impurity is on him, he shall be unclean seven days; and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean. If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, other than at the time of her customary impurity, or if it runs beyond her usual time of impurity, all the days of her unclean discharge shall be as the days of her customary impurity. She shall be unclean.

Every bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her as the bed of her impurity; and whatever she sits on shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her impurity. Whoever touches those things shall be unclean; he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. But if she be cleansed of her discharge, then she shall count for herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean. And on the eighth day she shall take for herself two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, and bring them to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then the priest shall offer the one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, and the priest shall make atonement for her before the Lord for the discharge of her uncleanness.”

The Bible not only condemns the woman to a lifetime of uncleanness and treats her like a source of impurity; it also treats her like an offender who has committed a crime that needs atonement as if it were her choice.

The Bible depicts the woman in the most debasing and humiliating way. In 1 Timothy 5:10, it is considered a “good work” for a widow to wash the feet of saints. She is wicked (Zachariah 5:8) and should be forced to marry her husband’s brother after his death. (Deuteronomy 25:5) She is ineligible for inheritance in the presence of male relatives (Deuteronomy 21:15-17 and Numbers 27:1-11), and a man reserves the right to sell his daughter. (Exodus 21:7) Furthermore, a female divorcee is prohibited from remarrying. (Matthew 5:32)

Islam honors and respects human rights, and the application of Shar'iah laws guarantees a life of peace and harmony between people. The Prophet said: "The bankrupt from my nation is one who comes to the Judgment with prayers and fasting and charity yet he also brings with him [heinous deeds], as he has insulted, abused, stolen from, beaten or killed others. So those whom he wronged take of his good deeds to make up for the wrong he did to them. When his good deeds are finished and he still owes them, then their bad deeds are added to his until he is thrown into the Fire."<sup>50</sup>

Among the many proofs of the prophethood of Muhammad is the fact that he was an illiterate man living in an environment that lacked education. In spite of this, he brought a complete law that addresses every aspect of human life at all times in terms of belief, acts of worship, dealings, morals, etc.

He introduced perfect systems in marriage, divorce, pregnancy, parenting, alimony, inheritance, family and neighbourly relations, criminal punishment, human rights, politics, economics, social life, and etiquette of and how to conduct oneself when eating, drinking, getting dressed, traveling, sleeping, waking up, yawning, sneezing, seeking permission, visiting the sick, personal hygiene, etc. He did not bring all this from himself and never claimed that such knowledge was his.

Had Muhammad's aim been personal gain or glory, it would have gone against him to command his followers to perform certain acts such as having to perform ablution and prayer five times a day, washing after sexual intercourse, fasting – without even drinking water – a whole month from dawn to sunset every year (especially in Arabia, which is mainly desert with unbearable heat), let alone forbidding them from acts that are desired by the majority such as drinking, adultery, usury, gambling, etc.

It is stated in Deuteronomy 18:20 and Jeremiah 14:15 that God condemns whoever falsely claims prophethood as he condemned Hananiah to death in less than a year. (Jeremiah 28:15-17) The mission of Prophet Muhammad, on the other hand, lasted for 23 years, and today Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world. During his lifetime God supported him at all times.

He continued on the path chosen for him by Allah; a path that entailed all kinds of suffering for the sake of spreading the Word of God. In spite of all the power and authority that

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50 *Muslim, 6531.*



were at his fingertips after the spread of his message, he still led a very simple basic life, free from luxuries, which he could have possessed if he had wanted. Instead, he slept on a rough straw mat and lived in a mud house. As related by his wife: “There were many times when the Prophet and his family went for successive nights without any food. Most of the bread they contented themselves with was made of barley.”<sup>51</sup> At the time of his death, his shield had been pawned to a Jewish man in exchange for barley to make bread for his family.

He dedicated all of his life and efforts to enable humankind to believe in Allah as the only true God. He said in the Qur’an: “And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.” (51:56) This was in order to guide them to true happiness and rescue them from the calamities of this world and the Hereafter.

Prophet Muhammad, last of the prophets and messengers of God, died in the year 632 CE, leaving with us the Qur’an, God’s final message, and his teachings to guide all of humanity up until the Day of Resurrection.

An American writer, Michael Hart, states in his book, *The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History*, that Muhammad – who topped the list – “Was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the secular and religious level.” This unique combination entitled him to be classed as the greatest, most influential character in the world. William Muir, the Scottish historian previously mentioned, praised the clarity of the words of Prophet Muhammad and the ease of his religion. He also stated that the Prophet accomplished wonderful deeds and that there was no other man in history who succeeded in wakening souls and reviving good morals and virtue in such a short time as he did.

The famous historian, George Bernard Shaw, in his book, *The Genuine Islam*, vol. 1, no. 8, 1936, said that the world was in desperate need of a man who had Muhammad’s intellect, as he was the prophet who always placed his faith in a place of respect and honour. He added that Islam was the religion most able to accommodate all civilizations at all times and that it would claim more ground in Europe in spite of the fact that the clergy of medieval times painted a dark picture of Muhammad and considered him an enemy to Christianity. Shaw goes on to add: “I have studied him – the wonderful man – and in my opinion, far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Saviour of Humanity.”

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51 *At-Tirmidhi, 2400.*

He continues: "I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness..."

Alphonse de Lamartine, the famous French poet, says in his book, *Histoire de la Turquie*, (1854): "Never has a man set for himself, voluntarily or involuntarily, a more sublime aim, since this aim was beyond human grasp: undermine the superstitions placed between the creature and the Creator... Never has a man accomplished in such a short time such a huge and lasting revolution in the world... If the grandeur of the aim, the frugality of the means, the immensity of the result are the three criteria of a man's genius, who would dare to compare a great man of modern history with Mohammad?... He moved souls. He founded upon a book, of which each letter has become law, a unifying spiritual factor embracing people of all languages and races... his forbearance in victory, his ambition, which was entirely devoted to one idea and in no manner striving for an empire... As regards all the standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask: 'Is there any man greater than he?'"

Dr. Vaglieri states in *Apologia dell' Islamismo*: "Muhammad, as a preacher of the religion of God, was gentle and merciful even towards his personal enemies. In him were blended justice and mercy, two of the noblest qualities that a human mind can conceive. It is not difficult to support this with many examples that are to be found in his biographies."

Dr. Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner, a renowned orientalist, said: "I cannot conclude this address better than by expressing a hope that the day will come when Christians will honor Christ more by also honoring Muhammad. There is a common ground between Islam and Christianity, and he is a better Christian who reveres the truths enunciated by the Prophet Muhammad."<sup>52</sup>

## Doctrines of Christianity and Islam

Many denominations of Christianity believe in the following five doctrines:

1. Trinity
2. The divinity of Jesus
3. The divine sonship of Jesus
4. Original Sin
5. The Atonement

In Islam the oneness of Allah, being the one and only God who deserves to be worshipped and petitioned for help, is the fundamental belief of every Muslim, as opposed to the triune God of many denominations of Christianity. Islam sees the deification of Jesus as a reversion to paganism.<sup>53</sup> As described in the Qur'an, Jesus was not an incarnation of God but His prophet and messenger, and like any other prophet, he was a human being in every aspect. Islam also rejects the divine sonship of Jesus and does not accept the dogma of original sin, the vicarious sacrifice and the atonement.

The fundamental doctrines of faith in Islam are seven:

1. Belief in Allah
2. Belief in the Angels
3. Belief in the Revealed Books
4. Belief in the Messengers
5. Belief in the Day of Judgment
6. Belief in Pre-ordainment (Good and bad)
7. Belief in Life After Death

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*In his book, Story of Civilization, vol. 11, p. 276, Will Durant said that Christianity did not put an end to paganism; rather, it adopted it. This applies to the Christianity of Paul and not the true and pure Christianity of Jesus Christ who called for the worship of God alone.*

## The Trinity

This doctrine, adhered to by many Christians throughout the world, refers to the existence of three divine, distinct and separate persons in God: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. It is astonishing, however, that Jesus himself never mentioned the Trinity. He said absolutely nothing about three divine persons in a trinity. In fact, the word “person” itself is not to be found anywhere in the Bible. The concept that Jesus had about Allah was in no way different from the concept that all the previous prophets had. All of them preached the oneness of God, never the Trinity.<sup>54</sup>

Jesus affirmed the tradition that had been revealed to the prophets who came before him. “Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, ‘Which is the first commandment of all?’ Jesus answered him, ‘The first of all the commandments is, ‘Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment.” (Mark 12:28-30)

Other evidence in the Bible shows that Jesus believed in only one God, not in three divine persons in one, as in the following saying: “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.” (Matthew 4:10)

The doctrine of the Trinity was incorporated into the teachings of Jesus more than three hundred years after Jesus’ departure. The four Canonized Gospels do not contain any reference to the Trinity. Neither Jesus nor his disciples taught this doctrine. Likewise, none of the earlier great scholars or the followers of Jesus preached it. The Nicean Council established this doctrine after great controversies and conflict.

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<sup>54</sup> According to Isaiah 44:24, “I am the Lord, who makes all things”; Isaiah 45:5, “I am the Lord, and there is no other, there is no God besides Me”; and Isaiah 45:18, “For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens, who is God, who formed the earth and made it, who has established it, who did not create it in vain, who formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord, and there is no other.” 1 Timothy 6:16 also states about God: “Who alone has immortality.” Isaiah 46:9 confirms: “For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me.” And the Qur’an states: “Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the Guardian and Disposer of all affairs.” (39:62) “That is Allah, your Lord! There is no god but He, the Creator of all things, so worship Him. And He is Disposer of all affairs.” (6:102) “And trust in Him who lives and dies not.” (25:58) “There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.” (42:11) It is only reasonable that He who is such should be worshipped alone.

The Council adopted the view of the minority rather than the majority who believed in monotheism.<sup>55</sup>

However, when considered rationally, the concept of the Trinity is unsustainable. It means to believe in three divine persons who are either finite or infinite. If we consider them infinite, then there are three different infinities, three different omnipotent beings, and consequently three different Gods. However, if we consider them finite, then neither the Father nor the Son nor the Holy Ghost can be God. Indeed the concept of Trinity came into being because of falsely ascribing divinity to two “creatures,” namely, Jesus and the Holy Spirit (Gabriel). Owing to the irrationality of the doctrine of Trinity, the conventional response of the Church clerics is that it is a mystery beyond human comprehension and that it does not have to be understood; it suffices to just accept it as a matter of faith.

Islam preaches a plain and simple belief in the oneness of God. It affirms the uniqueness of Allah and states that He has no partners. He is the self-sufficient one upon whom all of creation depends and who depends on no one. He neither gives birth nor is born. Nothing can come out of Him, be His equal or be His partner.

Jesus preached the oneness of God<sup>56</sup>, as is plainly shown in this dialogue quoted from the Bible: “I speak what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have seen from your father.” They answered and said to Him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God.” (John 8:38-40)

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55 *The ecumenical councils gave themselves rights above their authority. In the First Council, Jesus was deified; in the Second, the Holy Ghost was also deified. In the Third Council the same was done to Mary, and in the Twelfth Council the Church was granted the right to forgive sins. In the Twentieth, the Pope was made infallible. Encyclopedia Americana says that monotheism began as a theological movement at a very early stage in history and that it preceded the belief in the Trinity by tens of years. It also goes on to say that Christianity was a product of Judaism, which was very strict as far as monotheism was concerned. The belief in the Trinity was only admitted in the fourth century AD and did not accurately reflect the original Christian belief in the true nature of God; rather, the Trinity was a deviation from that original belief. (c.f., v. 27, p. 294) The New Catholic Encyclopaedia says: “The concept of one God in three persons did not become part of Christian life and religious practices until near the end of the fourth century. This is the concept which first took the name of Trinitarian Principle. We do not find among the disciples any idea resembling it at all.”*

56 *Jesus confirms his human status, while God said of Himself: “For I am God, and not man.” (Hosea 11:9) “God is not a man... nor a son of man.” (Numbers 23:19) “My spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh.” (Genesis 6:3 The New KJV) “My spirit shall not abide in mortals for ever, for they are flesh.” (Genesis 6:3 KJV)*

Likewise: “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.” (John 17:3-4)

The Qur’an affirms the oneness of God in chapter 112: “Say, ‘He is Allah, [who is] One, Allah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born. Nor is there to Him any equivalent.’”

Allah has said in the Qur’an: “O People of the Scripture, do not commit excess in your religion or say about Allah except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, was but a messenger of Allah and His word which He directed to Mary and a soul [created at a command] from Him. So believe in Allah and His messengers. And do not say, ‘Three’; desist – it is better for you. Indeed, Allah is but one God. Exalted is He above having a son. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And sufficient is Allah as Disposer of affairs.” (4:171)

In another chapter, He says: “They have certainly disbelieved who say, ‘Allah is the third of three.’ And there is no god except one God. And if they do not desist from what they are saying, there will surely afflict the disbelievers among them a painful punishment. So will they not repent to Allah and seek His forgiveness? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.” (5:73-74)

The only text in the entire Bible that “supported” the doctrine of Trinity was in the first Epistle of John, chapter 5, verse 7: “For there are three who bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.” However, it has been eliminated from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible and others,<sup>57</sup> after it was discovered by Christian scholars that these were interpolations made in the King James Version and other editions.

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57 For example, *The Bible in Basic English*, *The Darby Translation*, *Weymouth’s New Testament*, *Holy Bible: Easy-to-Read Version*, *Contemporary English Version*, *The American Standard Version*, *God’s Word Translation*, *The New Living Translation*, *The New American Standard Bible*, *The Revised Standard Version*, *World English Bible*, *International Standard Version*, and *Hebrew Names Version of World English Bible*.



## The Divinity of Jesus

Some Christians believe that Jesus is God for all eternity, the second person of the divine Trinity who, more than two thousand years ago, chose to appear in a human body and was born of the Virgin Mary. As recorded in the Gospels, this dogma, as the one previously discussed, contradicts the words attributed to Jesus. The fact is that Jesus never claimed divinity; instead, he affirmed the divinity of God alone, saying to those around him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.” (Mark 10:18) So if Jesus Christ refused to be called “good,” would he accept to be called “God”?

When Jesus spoke of God, he referred to Him as, “My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.” (John 20:17)

Jesus also rejected the notion that he could do anything on his own. He made it very clear that all things are by the will of God, who had sent him. He is recorded as having said: “I can of Myself do nothing.<sup>58</sup> As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.” (John 5:30) Again he states that the words he speaks are not his but revealed to him as a prophet sent by God: “For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.” (John 12:49)

Also in John 7:17-18, Jesus states: “If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority. He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.” Jesus also stated that the Lord is greater than him, according to John 14:28, which reads: “I am going to the Father, for My Father is greater than I.”

Jesus did things only for the pleasure of God, who sent him: “‘And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.’ As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.” (John 8:29-30) And according to Luke 4:43, Jesus came to preach the Kingdom of God: “But He said to them, ‘I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent.’”

In addition, Jesus stated that entering the Kingdom of Heaven is dependent upon doing the will of God: “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of

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<sup>58</sup> *This is what Jesus said of himself, whereas he said about God: “For with God all things are possible.” (Mark 10:27)*

heaven; but he who does the will of My Father which is in heaven.”<sup>59</sup> (Matthew 7:21) Again he says: “For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.”<sup>60</sup> (Mark 3:35)

According to Mark 13:32, Jesus is also reported to have denied having knowledge of the final hour of this world, saying: “But of that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”

In Luke 13:33-34, Jesus refers to himself as one of the prophets: “Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her!”

These words of Jesus as reported in the Bible demonstrate that he, in relation to God, stood like any other human being. He was not the Creator but a creation like Adam. He prayed to God (Mark 1:35, Mark 14:35 and Luke 5:16), which means conclusively that he was a prophet and not God, for God does not pray to anyone. Jesus also used to praise God, as is clear from Matthew 11:25: “At that time Jesus answered and said, ‘I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth.’”

This dogma of divinity is not supported by the words of Jesus as written in the Gospels. Like the doctrine of Trinity, the doctrine of the incarnation was developed after Jesus’ departure. It was incorporated into Christianity from paganism. In the mythology of religions that preceded Christianity, it can be seen how some heroes were considered to be gods.

Most of what was said about Krishna by the Hindus, Buddha by the Buddhists, Mithra by the Persians, Osiris by the Ancient Egyptians, Bacchus by the Greeks, Baal by the Babylonians, and Adonis by the Syrians was said of Jesus by the Christians. Islam, on the other hand, has freed its followers from such superstitions by rejecting the doctrine of the incarnation and of God’s embodiment in or union with any of His creatures.

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59     *The word “Rabbi,” translated as “Lord” actually means “master” (KJV) or “teacher” (The New KJV). John 1:38 says: “Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, ‘What do you seek?’ They said to Him, ‘Rabbi’ (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), ‘where are You staying?’”*

60     *In Matthew 12:50 we read: “For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.” Matthew here changes the word “God” to “my Father” for theological purposes. Kisman said that both Luke and Matthew deliberately changed Mark’s text a hundred times for theological purposes.*

Islam states emphatically that neither Jesus nor any other human being may be God. Islam also rejects the notion that God may be incarnated or unite with any of His creation. In Chapter 5, verse 75, the Qur'an tells us that Jesus was a messenger of God like many of the messengers who came before him and that he and his virtuous mother "used to eat food." The idea is that anyone who eats cannot be God, be it Jesus, Muhammad or other prophets and messengers, as eating represents need and dependence on external elements, and God is neither in need nor dependent. Also, eating entails processing of the food in the body and then the need to defecate. Such acts do not befit the majesty of God.

Many nations, no matter how primitive they happen to be, reject the idea that a messenger from God could be a human being who "eats food" like them. As such, many prophets were discredited by their people under this pretext. The Qur'an relates that the people of Noah said about him: "This is not but a man like yourselves. He eats of that from which you eat and drinks of what you drink." (23:33)

The Qur'an also quotes the Arabs among whom Prophet Muhammad appeared as follows: "And they say, 'What is this messenger that eats food and walks in the markets?'" (25:7)

As for those who ascribe divinity to Prophet Jesus, we find that they took divergence to a whole new level by degrading God, the Almighty, and considering Him a human who eats food.

The divinity of Jesus is rejected in the Qur'an. Allah says: "They have certainly disbelieved who say, 'Allah is the Messiah, the son of Mary,' while the Messiah has said, 'O Children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.' Indeed, he who associates others with Allah – Allah has forbidden him Paradise, and his refuge is the Fire. And there are not for the wrongdoers any helpers." (5:72)

Allah also revealed: "Indeed, the example of Jesus to Allah is like that of Adam. He created Him from dust; then He said to him, 'Be,' and he was."<sup>61</sup> (3:59) In the Qur'an, Allah describes Jesus as His Prophet, pure and pious like the rest of His prophets, but always as a human being. Jesus said: "Indeed, I am the servant of Allah. He has given me the Scripture and made me a prophet." (19:30) Acts 3:13 also states: "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus." (New Testament, Catholic Edition)

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From the facts presented to the reader above, it is clear that Islam is not the only religion that refutes Jesus' divinity; the texts of the Bible do as well.

In a poll carried out by a British television show called Credo, it was stated by 19 out of 31 bishops of the Anglican Church that Christians are not obligated to believe that Jesus Christ was God.<sup>61</sup>

### **The Divine Sonship**

This doctrine, like those previously discussed, is not in conformity with the teachings and sayings of Jesus. In the Bible the expression "son of God" has been used to refer to Adam (Luke 3:38) and many of the earlier prophets who preceded Jesus. Israel, for example, was called the "son of God" in one of the books of Moses: "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord, "Israel is My son, even My firstborn.'" (Exodus 4:22)

In the Psalms the same title was given to David: "I will declare the decree: The Lord had said to Me, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You.'" (Psalms 2:7) Likewise, in I Chronicles, 22:10, Solomon was called the son of God: "He shall build a house for My name, and he shall be My son, and I will be his Father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever."

From the above statements and from many others in the Bible, it has been established that the word "son" really meant nearness to God in love. Even Jesus said in the following verses: "Love your enemies... that you may be sons of your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:44-45) "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." (Matthew 5:9)

Analysis of all of the previous sayings leaves no doubt regarding the meaning that Jesus assigned to the word "son." Therefore, in view of this, there can be no justification to regard Jesus as the son of God in an exclusive and unique sense as most Christians do. When Jesus used the phrase "son of God," it meant the same as it meant when it was used for Adam, Israel, David and Solomon. Jesus was referred to as the "son of God" 13 times in the Bible, whereas he was referred to as the "son of man" 83 times.

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<sup>61</sup> *And the Bible says of Melchisedec: "...without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life..." (Hebrews 7:3) However, no one ever claimed his divinity. Daily News, 25 June, 1984.*

The Qur'an emphatically and categorically rejects the dogma of "Sonship" in Chapter 2, verse 116: "They say, 'Allah has taken a son.' Exalted is He! Rather, to Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth. All are devoutly obedient to Him."

Furthermore, attributing a son to God would implicitly deny and negate the perfection of God and imply His need of another being besides Himself.

### **The Original Sin**

According to the explanation of this dogma, Adam sinned when he disobeyed Allah by eating from the forbidden tree (the tree of knowing good from evil, as in Genesis 2:17).<sup>62</sup> As a result, and according to Christian theology, all descendants of Adam inherit the sin of Adam, which means that all human beings are born with this original sin. And according to Christianity, for God's justice to be satisfied, a price must be paid for every sin that has been committed.

In other words, God will not let any sin go unrequited and cannot even forgive a simple sin! Accordingly, the only thing that can wipe out sins is the shedding of blood. According to Paul, "And without shedding of blood there is no remission."<sup>63</sup> (Hebrews 9:22)

Nevertheless, this blood must be perfect, sinless and incorruptible. Therefore, Jesus, alleged to be the son of God, shed his sinless blood, suffered indescribable agony, and died to pay the penalty for the sins of men. Because he was the infinite God, he alone could pay the infinite price of sin. Therefore, no one can be saved unless he accepts Jesus as his personal saviour.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, everyone is condemned to suffer eternally in Hellfire because of his or her inherent sinful nature unless he or she accepts atonement for his or her sins made by Jesus with his blood.

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62 *It is therefore fitting to ask: How will Adam be punished for his deed if he did not know right from wrong?*

63 *This very text is in contradiction with other Biblical texts which state that atonement could be through the offering of flour (as in Leviticus 5:11) or money (as in Exodus 30:15) or "of ornaments of gold: armlets and bracelets and signet rings and earrings and necklaces" (as in Numbers 31:50).*

64 *Isaiah 43:11 reads, "I, even I, am the Lord, and besides Me there is no saviour." This verse clearly states that God is the only saviour.*

This dogma can be divided into three distinct parts:

1. the original sin,
2. the belief that God's justice requires that the penalty for sin must be paid for by blood,
3. In addition, the belief that Jesus has paid the price for the sins of men by his death on the cross and that salvation is only for those who believe in his vicarious sacrifice.<sup>65</sup>

Regarding the first part, Reverend De Groot writes: "Scripture teaches us that Adam's sin passed unto all men (our Blessed lady exempted). For in the words of St. Paul: 'Therefore, as by the offence of one [Adam] all men were taken to condemnation; so also by the Justice of one [Christ] many shall be made just.'"<sup>66</sup>

These words make it plain that all men inherited Adam's sin. Like many other Christian beliefs, the doctrine of "Inherited Sin" finds no support in the words of Jesus or of the prophets who came before him. They taught that every man was accountable for his own actions; children would not be punished for the sin of their parents.

No human being is born sinful. Jesus himself regarded children as innocent and pure, not born with sin. It is clear from his reported saying: "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." (Mark 10:14-15)

Rationally considered, it would be the height of injustice to condemn the entire human race for the sin committed thousands of years ago by our first parents. Sin is a wilful transgression of the law of God or the law of right and wrong; hence, the responsibility or blame for it must lie only on the person committing it and not on his children. It is a grave injustice to consider man sinful at birth.

How unreasonable and hard-hearted a man can become by believing in the dogma of the inherited sin as shown by the theological dictum of Saint Augustine that all unbaptized

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<sup>65</sup> *If belief in the crucifixion of Jesus is the only way to salvation for those living in his time and those who believe in him afterwards, what is the case for the sinners who died before Jesus and never had the chance to know him or believe in the crucifixion?*

<sup>66</sup> *Catholic Teaching, p. 140. The Biblical reference is Romans 5:18-19.*



infants are doomed to burn eternally in the Fire of Hell?! Until recently, unbaptized infants were not buried in consecrated grounds in Christendom because they were believed to have died in “original sin.”

Islam condemns the dogma of Original Sin and regards children as pure and sinless at birth. Sin, it says, is not inherited but is something that one acquires by doing what he or she should not do and by failing to do what he or she should do.

The second part of the Christian doctrine of atonement is that God’s justice requires that a price be paid for the original and all other sins of man. If God were to pardon a sinner without punishment, it would be a denial of His justice. Reverend W. Goldsack writes in this connection: “It should be as clear as daylight to anyone that God cannot break His own law: He cannot forgive a sinner without first giving him an appropriate punishment. For if He did so, who would call Him ‘Just’ and Equitable.”<sup>67</sup>

This view shows complete ignorance of God’s justice. God is not a mere judge or king. He is as the Qur’an describes Him: “The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Master of the Day of Recompense.”

He is not only Just but also Merciful and Forgiving: “Allah will forgive you; and He is the most merciful of the merciful.” (Qur’an 12:92) If God knows that man is sincerely repentant, having a real urge to conquer the evil within himself, then Almighty God can forgive his failings and sins altogether. After all, the only proper motive for punishment is to check evil and reform the offender. To punish a person for his past sins, even after he had repented and reformed himself, is a sign of vengeance, not justice. Also, forgiving a person after punishing him or her, or after inflicting punishment on someone else instead, cannot be considered forgiveness by any stretch of imagination.

The God we worship is a God of mercy. If He prescribes a law and demands obedience, it is not for His own benefit but for the benefit of humankind. And if He punishes a man for his faults and sins, it is not for His own satisfaction or compensation, as the Christian dogma proclaims, but it is to curb evil and purify the sinner. God forgives the faults and sins of those who have turned away from their sins and reformed themselves without punishing them or any other person on their behalf, and this is not contrary to God’s justice.

Thus Allah says: “Your Lord has decreed upon Himself mercy: that any of you who does wrong out of ignorance and then repents after that and corrects himself – indeed, He is Forgiving and Merciful.” (Qur’an 6:54)

The third part of the Christian dogma of the atonement is that Jesus paid the penalty for the original and other sins of men by his death on the cross at Calvary and that salvation cannot be obtained without belief in the saving power of his blood. J.F. De Groot writes: “Since Christ, God Incarnate, has taken upon Himself our sins in order to atone for them by giving satisfaction to God’s demand for justice, He is the mediator between God and man.”<sup>68</sup> This dogma is not only a denial of the mercy of God but also of His justice.<sup>69</sup>

To demand the price of blood in order to forgive the sins of men is to show a complete lack of mercy, and to punish a man who is not guilty for the sins of others, whether the former is willing or not, is the height of injustice.

There are many refutations which confirm the falsity of the belief in atonement and crucifixion. The following are only a few from among them:

**First:** The dogma of crucifixion of Jesus Christ to atone for the original sin is based on a corrupt foundation, and anything built on a corrupt foundation is itself corrupt. The idea that Adam’s sin was passed on to his offspring contradicts the verses in the Torah that, according to the New Testament, Jesus came not to destroy but to fulfill.

Also, in Deuteronomy 24:16 we read: “The fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall the children be put to death for their fathers; a person shall be put to death for his own sin.” In Ezekiel 18:20 we also find: “The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son.” According to Matthew 16:27, Jesus himself said: “Then He will reward each according to his works.” This is in agreement with the Qur’an, as it states: “...That no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another and that there is not for man except that [god] for which he strives and that his effort is going to be seen.” (53:38-40)

**Second:** According to Genesis 5:5, our father, Adam, lived with his wife after they had eaten from the forbidden tree for 930 years. This proves the falsehood of Genesis 2:17,

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<sup>68</sup> *Catholic Teaching, p. 162.*

<sup>69</sup> *At this point it must be asked: Was Adam’s remorse and repentance to God, his departing from Paradise, the flooding and the numerous sacrifices made to God not a price enough for his salvation? What about the sins more horrendous than Adam’s? And how could this mystery of salvation remain unknown to all the prophets only to be later discovered by the Church?*

which states: “For in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die,” because it did not occur. This also indicates that Adam repented from his sin and sought forgiveness, and God pardoned him. Ezekiel 18:21-22 states: “But if a wicked man<sup>70</sup> turns from all his sins which he has committed, keeps all My statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die.

None of the transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him; because of the righteousness which he has done, he shall live.” Therefore, as Adam and his wife “lived,” they must have “turned from all the sins they have committed.” This means that the sin was not inherited, and thus, there was no reason that Jesus had to die for the sins of anyone. This is in total agreement with the Qur’an, which states: “And Adam disobeyed his Lord and erred. Then his Lord chose him and turned to him in forgiveness and guided [him].” (20:121-122)

**Third:** It is not correct according to the Bible to say that Jesus had come to die willingly and deliberately for the sins of men. We read in the Bible that he did not wish to die on the cross. For when he learnt that his enemies were plotting against his life, he declared, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death.” (Mark 14:34) After that he prayed to God, saying, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will.” (Mark 14:36) He also asked his disciples to buy swords (Luke 22:36) and keep watch over him at night to protect him from his enemies.

**Fourth:** The Bible tells us in Mark 15:34 that the person crucified “cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ which is translated, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’” Such desperate cries – if we accept for the sake of argument

that they did occur – prove that the person crucified was not willing to die on the cross. More importantly, the passage contains clear evidence that the person crucified could not possibly have been Jesus Christ, as such desperate cries and panic do not befit a prophet of God, let alone one who is claimed to be God.

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*If this is the case with the “wicked,” what would be when the sinner happened to be a righteous person like Adam? Surely, he would be granted forgiveness as he sought repentance.*

**Fifth:** According to Mark 14:50, the crucifixion was not witnessed by anyone of the disciples of Jesus as “they all forsook Him and fled.”<sup>71</sup> Also, none of the Gospel and Epistle writers witnessed the crucifixion; in other words, there were no credible eyewitnesses. Thus, the sources of the story are doubtful, especially considering that the Canonical Gospels themselves differ as to the exact details of the crucifixion from beginning to end.

**Sixth:** The idea that shedding of blood is necessary to appease the wrath of God came into Christianity from the primitive image of God as an all-powerful demon. There is no logical connection between sin and blood. What wipes away sins is not blood but remorse, sincere repentance, persistent resistance to evil inclinations, and constant struggle to carry out the will of God as revealed to us by the prophets. Furthermore, when Jesus was asked about the way to eternal life, his reply was not belief in him as the saviour through the shedding of his blood. Instead, it was: “But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.” (Matthew 19:17)

The Christian scheme of salvation is not only morally and rationally unsound but also contradicts the words of Jesus, who came to rescue men from sin by his teachings and the example of his godly life rather than by deliberately dying on the cross for them and offering his blood for their sins. His mission was also to call sinners to repent, as was the case with all prophets before him. He never said that he came for the atonement of human sin. This is emphasized in Matthew 4:17, as we are told about Jesus: “From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”

It is really incomprehensible that the Bible goes to the extreme and abuses Jesus by making him a curse. Paul says: “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.’)” (Galatians 3:13)

The dogma of atonement likewise originated from ancient pagan religions. According to Arthur Findley in *Rock of Truth*, 16 names were believed by their peoples to have come for their salvation and atonement. These include: the Egyptian Osiris (1700 BC), the Babylonian Baal (1200 BC), the Hindu Krishna (1000 BC), the Tibetan Andra (725 BC), the Chinese Buddha (560 BC), and the Persian Mithra (400 BC).

The dogma of atonement is not only an insult to rational thinking, but it also motivates people to abandon good deeds and commit evils like murder, theft, rape and adultery. Paul

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<sup>71</sup> As we are to think good of the disciples of Jesus, we then conclude one of two things: either this text is another interpolation and was not part of the original text, or (if it was correct) the disciples did leave as they realized that the crucified one was not Jesus himself. Either way, the result is the same.

underestimated the importance of the commandments preached by Jesus and claimed: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law." (Romans 3:28) He even stated that Abraham was not helped by his deeds. (Romans 4:2) It was thus Paul who made salvation only attainable by belief in Christ's crucifixion. What would be the state of mankind if people were to believe in this concept?

The answer to Paul's claim was made by Jesus himself, "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:19)

Islam rejects the dogma of atonement. It declares that the forgiveness of sins cannot be obtained by the suffering and sacrifice of any other person but only by the grace of God and a person's own sincere repentance with persistent efforts to avoid evil and do good deeds. Furthermore, if the sins committed involve injustice to people's rights, those rights have to be given back to their rightful owners and one has to seek their forgiveness whenever possible.

The Qur'an promises salvation to all those who believe in the oneness of God and do good deeds: "Yes [on the contrary], whoever submits himself in Islam to Allah while being a doer of good will have his reward with his Lord. And no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve." (2:112) Allah also says in the Qur'an: "Whoever would hope for the meeting with his Lord – let him do righteous work and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone." (18:110)

James 2:14 and 17 complies with both Islam and the commandments, for they read: "What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not works? Can faith save him?" And, "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."

### **Islam: The Monotheistic Religion of All the Prophets**

An unbiased analysis of the aforementioned Christian doctrines can lead to only one conclusion – that they are both irrational and contrary to the teachings of Jesus. It is sufficient to know that during the years immediately following Jesus' ascendance into Heaven, none of his followers considered him other than a prophet of God. The doctrines mentioned previously were conceived many years later, which is a clear indication that the foundation of the Christian Church was based on a considerable deviation from the original message of Jesus and all the other prophets before him.

Believing in the oneness of God and worshipping no one else but Him is the rule. Associating others in worship with God came at a later stage in the history of humankind. For ten centuries after Adam, human beings worshipped no one but God (Allah). It was only prior to the era of Prophet Noah that idol worship began to be practiced. It was the result of people's excessive endeavours in revering some righteous individuals among them who had passed away. Noah was then sent by God to guide his people back to the right path and call them back to the worship of Allah alone. After that He sent one prophet after another to various nations to preach the same basic message: that there is no god worthy of worship but Allah.

The primary mission of all prophets was not to call people to believe in the existence of God as the Supreme Being and acknowledging Him as the Creator, Provider and Sustainer of the worlds, for even the polytheists knew by nature that God existed and never doubted that such was the case.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> *Atheism only started to spread on a large scale in Christian societies during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Among the reasons for that were the injustices committed by the Church manifested in the enslavement, humiliation and abuse of people "in the name of God." Christianity also conflicted with*

Only a few of them pretended to deny God's existence. There were those who worshipped God by doing good deeds; they also devoted prayers to Him in difficult times. However, during times of ease, they did so through mediators and intercessors. The prophets called them to turn to God and supplicate to Him alone without mediators or intercessors at all times.

And because monotheism is the foremost and most important obligation and the foundation which makes deeds valid and acceptable, we find that all the prophets began by calling their peoples, saying: "Worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him." (Qur'an 7:65) Allah also states in the Qur'an (16:36): "And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], 'Worship Allah and avoid taghut [false deities].'" And verse 21:25 states: "And We sent not before you any messenger except that We revealed to him that there is no deity except Me, so worship Me."

Therefore, it is clear that Islam (submission to Allah) has always been the religion of all the prophets and messengers of God, from Adam to Muhammad. Islam was indeed the religion of Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus. According to Islam, all prophets are brothers and no distinction should be made between them. As for those people who followed the guidance of the prophet of their time and worshipped God as He should be worshipped, they are all considered Muslims, and Paradise will be theirs.

Islam restored to its original status the same eternal message that God revealed to all His prophets. Islam is a continuation of that message, which is, in essence, one. Although Allah had originally addressed it to a specific tribe, people or nation through their prophet, with the passage of time it was misinterpreted and mixed with superstitions, false beliefs and rituals invented by man. This caused a degeneration of the true religion into superstitions and meaningless rituals.

Islam, as revealed to Prophet Muhammad, is a revival of the concept of monotheism taught by Jesus and by all of the preceding prophets of Allah. Islam is a message to all of humanity until the end of time and not to a particular group, as was the case with previous prophets.

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*reason and human needs. The Church fought scientific advancement and persecuted scientists, resulting in a dichotomy between man and faith. Consequently, people became more concerned with the material world and gave in to their natural tendency to pursue worldly temptations. With the absence of reason and compatibility, faith disintegrated, and religion's role in life became non-existent.*

Islam rejects all blasphemous theological beliefs and reinstates the true concept of God; He alone is the Creator, the Provider and Controller of everything in the universe and to whom alone perfection is attributed.

This necessitates that He alone is to be worshipped. Furthermore, He must be worshipped in the way that He ordained and not through invented rituals. He is the only one to whom prayers should be addressed. And just as confirming the oneness of God is the greatest and most important virtue, associating others with Him is the gravest sin of all. It is the only sin unforgivable by God unless one repents to Him before death. He has said in the Qur'an: "Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills." (4:48)

Moreover, it is a sin that deprives one of Paradise and consequently relegates the person who commits it to eternity in the Hellfire. This was stated by Jesus as quoted in the Qur'an (5:72): "Indeed, he who associates others with Allah – Allah has forbidden him Paradise, and his refuge is the Fire. And there are not for the wrongdoers any helpers." Directing any act of worship to other than God is the one sin that nullifies all good deeds. The Qur'an confirms: "But if they had associated others with Allah, then worthless for them would be whatever they were doing." (6:88)

God is indeed the one to whom all needs are sought without intercessors, the one upon whom all creatures depend, the Creator and Sustainer of the entire universe, the Oft-Forgiving, the Most-Merciful, the Almighty, the Omniscient.

Citing the words of the famous Italian orientalist, Dr. Laura Veccia Vaglieri,<sup>73</sup> who writes: "Thanks to Islam, paganism in its various forms was defeated. The concept of the universe, the practices of religion, and social customs were each liberated from all the monstrosities which had degraded them, and human minds were made free of prejudices. Mankind finally realized its dignity and humbled itself before the Creator, the Lord and Master of all mankind." She continues, "The spirit was liberated from prejudice, man's will was set free from the ties which had kept him bound to other men or other so-called hidden powers. Priests, false guardians of mysteries, brokers of salvation, and all those who pretended to be mediators between God and man and consequently believed that they had authority over the will of other people fell from their pedestals.



Man became the servant of Allah alone, and towards other men he had only the obligations of one free man towards another free man. While previously men had suffered from the injustice of social differences, Islam proclaimed equality among human beings.

Each Muslim was distinguished from other Muslims not by reason of birth or any other factor not connected with his personality, but by his greater fear of God, his good deeds, his morals and intellectual qualities.”

She also states in her book, “It was, therefore, neither by means of violence of arms nor through the pressure of obtrusive missionaries that caused the great and rapid diffusion of Islam, but above all, through the fact that this Book presented by the Muslims to the vanquished, with the liberty to accept it or reject it, was the Book of God, the Word of Truth, the greatest miracle Mohammad could show to those in doubt and to those who remained stubborn.” She continues, “The strength of this message was its crystal clear simplicity and marvellous easiness, for Islam reached out to the soul of the people without having recourse to long explanations or involved sermons.”

And a foremost historian, Arnold J. Toynbee, observes: “Indeed, I invite the world to adopt the Islamic principle of brotherhood and equality. The doctrine of God’s oneness brought by Islam is of the most wonderful examples of how to unify the world. The continuation of Islam gives hope to the whole world.”<sup>74</sup>

## **My Final Step Toward Islam: The Influence of Jesus on My Conversion**

Even a portion of the information contained in the previous chapters is sufficient for a seeker of truth to perceive the authenticity of Islam and the extent to which Christianity has deviated from and contradicted the real teachings of Prophet Jesus. Yet, I still did not take any decisive step to distance myself from the path that the Church had outlined for me. My talisman was always with me wherever I went. Inside the small package I always carried were seven small silver crosses and a supposed image and statue of Jesus. I felt that if I ever put it aside, something bad would happen to me. For this reason I never misplaced it; it was always in my pocket.

One day when I was reviewing the literature that had been given to me in the mosque, I read two statements that filled my heart with great joy and happiness. Tears started to flow from my eyes and I said: “My God, this is the truth; this is the answer that I could never find!”

I must admit that up to that time I had never touched or read the Qur’an. I had not seen or touched a copy of it in any language, and the name Qur’an was not part of my vocabulary. In a categorical, emphatic, clear and precise manner, I read in the study guide I had received in the mosque: “They said [in boast], ‘We killed Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah.’ But they killed him not, nor did they crucify him.” (Qur’an 4:157)

Here, I paused in the reading. I repeated several times, “They killed him not, nor did they crucify him.” At the precise moment I was reading those statements, I felt that God was answering the question that made me have doubts about His power due to the lack of a logical and convincing answer.

It was not easy to find this answer. I had to compete with many other students to earn a scholarship. I had to travel thousands of miles to the state of Washington in the westernmost part of the USA. I had to learn to speak and read English, and being from Latin America, I had to have a character that was acceptable to the rest of the Muslims in Seattle in order to find these two statements. The probabilities that this information would reach the hands of a Venezuelan in 1978 were remote.

However, what Allah has decreed must be fulfilled. In those moments while I was still rejoicing over this great news, I spoke to God and asked Him for forgiveness. I wanted to fly with this news to Venezuela and give it to my family and to the rest of the world.

It was happening just like in the movies. My great hero, the good guy in the movie, my beloved prophet, Jesus of Nazareth, to whom I used to pray twice a day in a small altar in my house, had not been crucified!

To me it seemed as though the weight of the cross allegedly carried by Jesus to Mount Calvary vanished and disintegrated in the same manner that great buildings and firm mountains crumble when demolished by dynamite.

What followed this discovery was no less significant. I reasoned: "If this is the truth, then this religion is the right one." For twenty years, I had been told that Jesus had been killed. I had been taken on a journey without any alternate routes. Now, another avenue had been opened with a more logical answer, and now things were getting clearer and the last piece of the "puzzle" was available. This was the last in the sequence of miracles that Jesus had performed by the power of Allah. A man who, by the will of God, had returned sight to the blind, who had walked on water, healed a leper, made the lame walk, multiplied bread and fish to feed thousands of people, and who had given life back to the dead, undoubtedly could not have been crucified! Once again I reasoned and resolved; I wanted to belong to this religion; I wanted to be a Muslim!

In the same manner that the weight of the cross disintegrated, the resurrection of Jesus on Sunday, the Holy Week (Easter), Good Friday, the visit to the Seven Churches (Stations of the Cross), the fasting on Fridays, the eating of fish instead of meat on those alleged "Holy Days" also disintegrated all at once and I realized that they were all lies. The power of the talisman vanished.

The logical mind of a young man studying to be an engineer was now free to reject all of these baseless traditions built upon the irrational concept of God becoming a man and dying for the sins of men. As a young man who had been a professional fireman saving lives and property and who had not acquired the vices of smoking and drinking even though these were among the norms of society, I could no longer accept these impositions.

During the summer of 1979 I took an optional course at Oklahoma State University that further illuminated the new path I had started to walk. The course was called "Islamic Culture." At the end of the summer of 1979, I went back to Seattle, and before the same Imam who had given me the Islamic literature, I embraced Islam officially by pronouncing the testimony of faith (the Shahādah).

I can still remember the Imam asking me: “Are you sure you want to embrace Islam?” I said, “Yes.” Then he insisted, “Even if it means that it will be written in your passport that you are a Muslim?” I said, “Even so.” Then he said, “If you are sure that is what you want, then repeat after me: “I testify that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah, and I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.” I made the testimony in English and then in Arabic by repeating it after the Imam, thereby taking my final step to Islam.

### **How Islam Affected My Life**

Undoubtedly, changes involve certain adjustments, and my case was no exception. Once I had embraced Islam, I promised Allah that I would do whatever I could to learn as much as possible about this religion. While I was still relatively young having just completed my first year at Oklahoma State University, I married a young Muslim girl. In Stillwater, Oklahoma, the Islamic Center assigned me my first Islamic teacher. Brother Faiz from Palestine (may Allah bless him and reward him for what he taught me) dedicated a lot of his time to teach me the prayer, the other pillars of Islam, the pillars of faith, about life after death, the Day of Resurrection and many other topics. I can still remember the great impact caused by the discussion of life after death. During my life as a Christian, no one ever taught me anything similar and in such detail. Death was always a mystery to me.

I did not know what would happen to me once my body had been buried in the ground. In Islam, I found detailed answers. When a person dies, he or she must be buried according to the instructions of Prophet Muhammad. The body of the person is washed completely and perfumed. Then it is wrapped in two pieces of white cloth, and the body is buried in the ground without a coffin and facing Makkah. The dead person will hear the steps of the living as they walk away from the grave and will be aware that he or she is being left alone. Shortly thereafter, two angels come into the grave and ask the deceased the following three questions:

1. Who is your Lord?
2. What is your religion?
3. Who is your prophet?

Prophet Muhammad disclosed that the believer would have no difficulty answering these questions correctly, while the unbeliever would not be able to answer them. Furthermore, depending on the deeds the person had done in this life, he or she would feel either cool

perfumed breezes from Paradise or scorching winds from the Hellfire. The dead person will remain in this state until the Day of Resurrection.

This information provided by Brother Faiz clarified some of my doubts about people who commit crimes and are not punished during their worldly lives. It also explains why Allah gives every human being many opportunities to repent and start a new life while he or she is still alive; a clear portrayal of God's utmost justice to his creatures. I once thought I had deeply understood the concepts of temporary and eternal life.

While in the Catholic Church, I was taught that Jesus had died to save us; in Islam I learned that every person is responsible for his own acts and will be rewarded or punished accordingly. This sounded so logical, and my soul was reassured by it.

This new knowledge was gradually transforming all of my previous information as well as my sense of priorities. I began to devote more time to study of the religion. When my early morning training at the gym began to conflict with morning prayers, I delayed the training to give priority to my prayers.

For several years before embracing Islam, I was an aspiring musician who had participated in several music concerts playing the guitar and singing my heart out. But once I accepted Islam, I abandoned them both and dedicated time to learning to recite the Qur'an in Arabic; the original language of its revelation. The responsibilities of being a married man and my engineering studies at the age of 21 left me with no time for any other activities. But through the guidance of Allah, my attachment to my new religion grew to the extent that I wanted to start teaching what little I knew.

When I returned to Venezuela, my family did not know anything about Islam. They used to watch how I prayed without criticizing or condemning my actions. I had been abroad in the USA for more than four years, so the joy of a reunion with my parents, brothers and sisters prevailed, and they accepted me as I was.

At my job in Venezuela, I asked permission from my supervisor to pray for five minutes in my office. I was practically the only Venezuelan Muslim in the oil industry in 1982. I asked Allah to help me persevere and be steadfast, since temptations appeared everywhere and more and more often. By the grace and mercy of Allah, I managed to remain uncorrupted.

Today, after almost thirty years since I first embraced Islam, I feel increasingly happy that I decided to become a Muslim. I feel even more contented when I see how many people

around me are embracing Islam daily. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all that exists. Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world. It has actually the greatest number of practicing followers<sup>75</sup> in spite of the modest means available to its preachers in comparison with other religions, especially Christianity.

While Islam spreads with ease and by simple means, Christianity would have been no match for Islam had it not been for the enormous resources behind their missionary activities. A simple comparison between the converts to Islam and Christianity, the two major religions with followers all over the world (unlike other religions whose followers are mostly confined to specific nations), shows clearly that Christianity attracts people of limited means. They are drawn to the Church due to poverty and need, as the material temptations it offers are great. What supports this argument is the fact that the churches and what they represent are being abandoned in their own wealthy home countries while being exported to poor countries.

On the other hand, we find that those who embrace Islam are from among the untouchables and the poor, the rich and the famous, and from scientists and scholars. Even those who stand to lose much in terms of worldly gain as soon as they convert to Islam, like members of the Christian clergy, have done so.

Consequently, my faith keeps getting stronger as I witness that the promise of Allah is being gradually fulfilled: “They want to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light although the disbelievers dislike it. It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion, although those who associate others with Allah dislike it.” (Qur’an 61:8-9)

Anyone who reads the Bible may well notice that some teachings from the Bible itself are being implemented by only Muslims. According to the Bible, Jesus and the prophets before him prostrated when praying to God (Genesis 17:3 and Matthew 26:36), yet only Muslims do so in their prayers today. Likewise, only Muslim women wear the head covering mentioned in the Bible, while the vast majority of Christian women tend to disregard this teaching in spite of the fact that Mary used to wear a veil over her head. (Song of Solomon 4:9 and Corinthians 11:5)

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<sup>75</sup> *The number of practicing Muslims exceeds the total number of people practicing all other religions put together. According to the Sunday Times, the number of mosque-goers in Britain one time a week was at least 930,000 people compared to 916,000 churchgoers. This is taking place in a Christian country, where Muslims are a minority.*

Even the greeting used by Jesus, “Peace be unto you,” (Luke 24:36) is used by Muslims, while most Christians greet with “Hello.” There are many other religious rites practiced today mainly by Muslims, such as Wudhu’ (ablution before prayer), circumcision, abstaining from eating pig flesh and the meat of dead animals, etc. Therefore, it is crystal clear that the true followers of Jesus and the prophets of God before him are the Muslims, who follow what they all taught.

### **How My Conversion Affected Others’ Lives**

Having received this great gift from Allah (may He be praised and glorified), I felt a strong desire to convey His final message to those who had not heard it. I was not very successful at the outset. Some people took it as a joke, while others advised me to take the message to the children since older people were already fixed in their ways. For a long time my only support was my wife, who shared my belief in Islam.

In 1990, I returned to the United States of America to do a master’s degree in safety engineering at Texas A&M University. And it was during this trip that I decided to increase my efforts to propagate Islam. I followed an Islamic training program which I created for myself from material available at the Bryan College Station Islamic Library. I used to write to my family in Venezuela about whatever Islamic topics I studied. Happily when I returned to Venezuela in 1992, after only a few brief discussions, my parents and one of my older brothers embraced Islam. Later on, two of my sisters, another brother, and a nephew also embraced Islam.

The director of the recently opened mosque in Caracas approved my proposal for a Sunday program to invite non-Muslims to visit the largest mosque in Latin America. I volunteered to coordinate this program with the Imam of the mosque and, praise be to Allah, our initial effort was a complete success. About 250 people attended what was the first public lecture I had ever given to Venezuelans about Islam. Perhaps for the first time in Venezuela, a mixture of Jews, Christians, atheists and others attended a lecture about Islam. The program was such a great success that by the grace of Allah, many Venezuelans embraced Islam. The Sunday outreach program is still on-going, and anyone interested in knowing about Islam can attend.

When I lecture in different places, I notice that many people are interested in Islam. Many people have embraced this religion; many others take the available literature and go through it gradually, just as I did almost thirty years ago.

Still others are more resistant toward Islam; they say that they have too many vices that they cannot get rid of. At this point, I want to tell the reader that when a person embraces Islam, his or her life may not change dramatically all of a sudden.

It may, but not always. Often this is a process that develops as the person learns and gradually gets closer and closer to Allah, to his or her brothers and sisters in faith, and to the fundamental teachings of the faith.

Many of those who have attended my lectures have asked the following questions:

1. Do I have to speak Arabic in order to be a Muslim?
2. Is it necessary to be an Arab if I want to be a Muslim?
3. Should I stop believing in Jesus and reject the Virgin Mary to be a Muslim?

The answers to all of the above questions are in the negative. Islam is a universal religion, and Muslims are in every country around the world. Language is not a barrier. To be a Muslim it is necessary to believe in Jesus as one of the greatest prophets of Allah, and in Mary as Jesus' mother, whom Allah favoured over all other women.

The first step to become a Muslim is indeed a very simple and easy one. There are no complexities or difficult requirements such as special ceremonies or the mediation of certain agents or anything beyond one's means. The only requirement to embrace Islam is to believe sincerely in and obey the one and only true God. To accept God as the Creator, the Sustainer of the universe, the One in whose hands is life and death, the Controller of all things, the only One worthy of worship, the One who has the most beautiful names and most glorious attributes, the One who has no associate, child, mother or father, and nothing is comparable to Him. All forms of paganism must also be abandoned.

After testifying that none has the right to be worshipped in truth but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, everything else can be learned gradually with patience and dedication. If anyone dies after accepting this firm belief, he or she is considered a Muslim and May, by Allah's mercy, enter Paradise at the end of this world.

When a person testifies that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, this does not mean that he is the only prophet of Allah but that he is the last messenger of Allah and the last in the line of prophets going back to Adam.



## When Religion Is Inculcated by Compulsion

Allah, Almighty, has revealed that no one can be forced to embrace Islam. This is a fundamental tenet of His teachings: “There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong.” (Qur’an 2:256)

Allah has said: “And say, ‘The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills let him believe; and whoever wills let him disbelieve.’” (Qur’an 18:29) Islam also calls for establishing dialogue with the others and inviting them with wisdom and beautiful exhortation to embrace this true religion: “Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best.” (Qur’an 16:125)

The Catholic Church attained the position it has today because of the horrendous bloodshed of millions of innocent people. I was astonished when I learned that in the Netherlands alone, three million people were executed when they did not abide by and accept the doctrines of the Catholic Church.

“Upon the 16th February, 1568, a sentence of the Holy Office condemned all the inhabitants of the Netherlands to death as heretics. From this universal doom only a few persons, especially named; were excepted. A proclamation of the King, dated ten days later, confirmed this decree of the inquisition, and ordered it to be carried into instant execution, without regard to age, sex, or condition. This is probably the most concise death-warrant that was ever framed. Three million people, men, women, and children, were sentenced to the scaffold in: three lines... And under this new decree, the executions certainly did not slacken. Men in the highest and the humblest positions were daily and hourly dragged to the stake. Alva, in a single letter to Philip, estimated the number of executions which were to take place immediately after the expiration of holy week, at eight hundred heads.”<sup>76</sup>

After the Nicean Council was held, it became a capital offense to possess an unauthorized Gospel. As a result, over a million Christians were killed in the years following the Council’s decision. This was the methodology used by Athanasius to unify the Christians. It may seem to most of us that the perpetrators of these crimes against humanity were bloodthirsty individuals with no genuine motives, but I was shocked to find out that the call to perpetrating these horrendous crimes stems directly from the Bible.

It may seem obvious to anyone who reads it that these individuals were implementing some of the Biblical texts. “And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Now therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman who has known a man intimately. But keep alive for yourselves all the young girls who have not known a man intimately.’” (Numbers 31:1 and 17-18) And the Lord said, “Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. Utterly slay old and young men, maidens and little children and women.”

(Ezekiel 9:5-6) Joshua said to the people of Israel, “‘Shout, for the Lord has given you the city [of the Canaanites]!... But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the Lord; they shall come into the treasury of the Lord...’ And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.”<sup>77</sup> (Joshua 6:16-21)

The Lord also allegedly said: “Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both, man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.” (Samuel 15:3)

“Their children also will be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses will be plundered and their wives ravished.” (Isaiah 13:16)

“Samaria is held guilty, for she has rebelled against her God. They shall fall by the sword<sup>77</sup>, their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child ripped open.” (Hosea 13:16)

It appears that the Bible is the only religious book in the world that sanctions the killing of children, the dashing of infants, and the ripping open of the bellies of pregnant women. The presence of such verses in the Bible and ascribing them to God is a clear proof that the Bible was subject to corruption by human hands that invented lies in God’s name.<sup>78</sup>

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77 *Since some have been so bold as to attack Islam and accuse it of having been spread by the “sword,” it is worth mentioning that the word “sword” is actually mentioned 406 times in the Bible while not being mentioned even once in the Qur’an. So which religion was likely to have been spread by the sword?*

78 *Owing to the fact that the presence of such texts and others is a cause of great embarrassment to the “editors” of the Bible, they have been interfering in what allegedly is the Word of God. They treated the text like any other book written by humans and therefore added to and deleted from it what they deemed unfit. For example, 1 Samuel 6:19 reads: “Then He struck the men of Beth Shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord. He struck fifty thousand and seventy men of the people.”*

Allah says in the noble Qur'an: "So woe to those who write the 'scripture with their own hands, then say, 'This is from Allah,' in order to exchange it for a small price. Woe to them for what their hands have written, and woe to them for what they earn." (2:79)

Islam allowed jihad as a means to defend and protect the weak, such as women and children, not for killing or dashing them. "And what is [the matter] with you that you fight not in the cause of Allah and [for] the oppressed among men, women, and children!" (Qur'an 4:75)

Jihad is an act of self-defence, not an act of aggression. Allah says: "Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors." (Qur'an 2:190)

Jihad is also prescribed as a means to insure the freedom of calling others to the way of Allah and offering them the choice to embrace it if they so wish without compulsion. Compulsion is incompatible with religion because religion depends upon faith and resolution, and these would be meaningless if induced by force. Men and women must be given the opportunity to choose whatever religion they believe in, but the alternatives must be presented without bias and without compulsion. Guillotines, saws, axes and fire should not have been the options<sup>79</sup> given to those who did not want to accept doctrines being enforced by the Catholic Church. Allah had already revealed in His last message to humankind: "There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong." (Qur'an 2:256)

*However, the English, French, German and Arabic translations decided that such an act does not befit the Merciful Lord, so they changed the text to only "seventy men." They believed that the mere "looking" into the ark of the Lord is not a crime punishable by genocide. Even at the present time, with the Bible's exposure to translators and printing tools, it is still being altered. One wonders how the situation was in the ancient times when only priests had access to the Bible.*

<sup>79</sup> *The Bible attributes heinous acts of genocide to Prophet David, of which he is totally innocent. In Samuel 12:29-31 we find: "So David gathered all the people together and went to Rabbah, fought against it, and took it. Then he took their king's crown from his head. Its weight was a talent of gold, with precious stones. And it was set on David's head. Also he brought out the spoil of the city in great abundance. And he brought out the people who were in it, and put them to work with saws and iron picks and iron axes, and made them cross over to the brick works. So he did with all the cities of the people of Ammon. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem." Also, in Chronicles 20:3, it is said: "And he brought out the people who were in it, and put them to work with saws, with iron picks, and with axes. So David did to all the cities of the people of Ammon. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem." It makes one wonder how the world can ever live in peace when such inhumane acts of genocide are called upon in a so-called Holy Book and are ascribed to God and His prophets.*

Today, we are witnessing drug addiction, murder, theft, prostitution, corruption, rapes and homosexuality as consequences of the lack of religion being carried in people's hearts. Sticking to ancestral traditions will not necessarily take a nation to success. For this reason, I would like to offer at least one alternative that can save lives, rehabilitate alcoholics, as well as unite families and society.

The heart-breaking news of the year 2002 regarding the Catholic Church in the USA relates to the sexual abuse that some priests committed against innocent children. Astonishingly, top ranking officials in the Vatican did not respond as though such acts were atrocious crimes, but instead tried to cover them up by offering money to silence the victims. One report several years earlier stated that more than five per cent of priests in the USA were perpetrators of sexual child abuse. However, it took several years for this news to become headlines on main TV stations worldwide.

The whole world was shocked in 2004 when it was reported that in the previous 50 years, more than four thousand priests in the USA had been involved in sexual child abuse. That is an astonishing statistic to say the least, but not at all surprising. The undoubted truth is that if there is any one factor to blame, then it should be the Bible itself. It is extremely important that the reader knows that these evil acts are not just carried out by perverts. The Bible itself encourages immorality, as stated in Ezekiel 23:1. Adultery and incest are just two of the evil acts falsely attributed to some prophets. Of course, as Muslims, we wholly reject the idea that any prophet of Allah was involved in such despicable acts.

I have asked the following question to some Christians in those countries or communities where the Bible is generally accepted as Holy Scripture, "Why are the rates of murder, rape, theft, alcoholism,<sup>80</sup> prostitution, homosexuality, incest and widespread corruption extremely high compared to those countries where the Qur'an is the scripture of reference?" Many of them have been shocked by this question since they have never thought about making such comparisons.

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<sup>80</sup> *One of the major abuses and false accusations directed against the person of Jesus at the hands of those who corrupted the Bible, and which no Muslim would tolerate, is his description as a "winebibber": "The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'" (Luke 7:34) The irony is also apparent when one finds Proverbs 20:1 saying: "Wine is a mocker, intoxicating drink arouses brawling, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise." One can only imagine the state of humankind if it were to believe that one of the greatest prophets of God, like Jesus Christ, was an alcoholic*

For example, in a dialogue that I had with a US citizen, I cited a case where the death penalty was imposed in Saudi Arabia on seven criminals who, while under the influence of alcohol, raped a woman. I told him that because of the application of the full weight of the law, hundreds of thousands of other women had been saved from other potential criminals. He disagreed and felt that the law was too severe and that it could not be implemented in his country.

Based on official statistics, I told him that in his country in the last eight months more than half a million women were raped; an average of two thousand women raped every day! He was shocked and admitted to the effectiveness of the application of the Islamic Law. If I could talk to him again, I would tell him that in Islam, even if an Imam were to rape a child, as the priests have done in the church, he would be executed immediately, in order to save the rest of the children. How happy I am to have embraced Islam, and I am proud to be a Muslim.

## An Open Invitation to the Pope and Other World Leaders

I begin in the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. May Allah bless all those who follow the correct path.

I hereby extend this invitation to the Pope and all the leaders of the world, especially those who govern and rule over millions of people of other religions, sects and ideologies; I invite all of you to embrace Islam. Come to Islam and you will be saved from the punishment of Allah and earn His reward in Paradise. If you are a Jew or a Christian, Allah will give you a double reward once you embrace Islam.<sup>81</sup> Prophet Muhammad said: “A person from the People of the Scripture [a Jew or Christian] who believes in his prophet [Jesus or Moses] and then believes in Prophet Muhammad [i.e., embraces Islam] will have a double reward.”<sup>82</sup>

However, if you reject this invitation, you will be held accountable for all those under your influence and all those who follow you.

Like all my Muslim brothers and sisters the world over, Allah has charged me with the responsibility of conveying this message to all humanity to the best of my ability. He has said: “Say, O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you – that we will not worship except Allah and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of Allah. But if they turn away, then say, ‘Bear witness that we are Muslims [submitting to Him].’” (Qur’an 3:64)

Having presented the previous proofs in this book so that whoever has eyes can see them and whoever has intellect can understand them, a junction has been reached where Allah, the Exalted, calls on all people to embrace the truth.

Once again, I affirm that it is my duty and responsibility as a human being, one who submitted by free will to the law and commands of Allah, the one and only God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, to invite all mankind to give up the worship of false deities, whether animate and inanimate objects or any other thing created by Allah or fashioned

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81 *The people of the Book (Jews and Christians) are granted a special status in the Qur’an as to inviting them to Islam and establishing dialogue with them. Allah says: “And do not argue with the People of the Scripture except in a way that is best.” (Qur’an 29:46) The Qur’an also states that the Christians are nearest in love to the Muslims: “The nearest of them in affection to the believers are those who say, ‘We are Christians.’ That is because among them are priests and monks and because they are not arrogant.” (Qur’an 5:82)*

82 *Narrated by Muslim, 342*

by man. After repenting, they must submit themselves completely to the will of Allah, the only true God, Creator of the universe.

It is worthy to note that as much money, prestige, position, and power that a non-Muslim might have in this life, he or she will never have enough to buy his or her entrance to the gardens of Paradise in the next world.<sup>83</sup>

The poorest inhabitant of the earth who has testified that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger (the testimony of faith) will be happier and more dignified in the next world than the richest person who did not accept the last message sent by Allah to guide humankind.

Allah says in the Qur'an (3:85): "And whoever desires other than Islam as religion – never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers."

And in 5:36-37 it states: "Indeed, those who disbelieve – if they should have all that is in the earth and the like of it with it by which to ransom themselves from the punishment of the Day of Resurrection, it will not be accepted from them, and for them is a painful punishment. They will wish to get out of the Fire, but never are they to emerge therefrom, and for them is an enduring punishment."

So, while one's soul is still within his body and he can still breathe, speak and is conscious of his actions, he can always repent to Allah, the Exalted. If repentance is sincere and one testifies that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger, while avoiding all forms of paganism, Allah will forgive him, even if he should be but a minute's distance away from the Hellfire. Allah will then change the person's bad deeds into good deeds and allow him or her entrance into Jannah (the garden of Paradise) eternally.

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83 *Only the person who fulfills his purpose in life, i.e., the worship of Allah alone, may be able to achieve true happiness and internal peace. Allah says: "Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer – We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do." (Qur'an 16:97) Allah also says: "...Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured." (Qur'an 13:28) In chapter 20, verses 123-124, we read: "Whoever follows My guidance will neither go astray [in the world] nor suffer [in the Hereafter]. And whoever turns away from My remembrance indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life." This latter verse explains the cause for many psychological illnesses and why some very wealthy people attempt suicide.*

Allah has said: "...Except for those who repent, believe and do righteous work. For them Allah will replace their evil deeds with good. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful." (25:70) And He has said: "But the ones who believe and do righteous deeds – We will admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. [It is] the promise of Allah, [which is] truth, and who is more truthful than Allah in statement?" (4:122) It is the promise of Allah for anyone who wants to repent sincerely and start a new life. I close this invitation citing the following verses from the Qur'an, where Allah, the Almighty, gives the opportunity to all human beings to repent sincerely. He invites sinners to repent, regardless of the magnitude of their sins, and He will forgive them.

In the Qur'an (39:53-54), Allah revealed: "Say, 'O My slaves who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful. And return [in repentance] to your Lord and submit to Him before the punishment comes upon you; then you will not be helped.'"

Here also, Allah informs us that time for repentance is of limited duration and that when death arrives it is no longer possible to obtain forgiveness.

Finally, Allah extends His promise of forgiveness and mercy to the believer who is steadfast in faith and does good deeds, saying (20:82): "But indeed, I am the Perpetual Forgiver of whoever repents and believes and does righteousness and then continues in guidance."

I supplicate to Allah, the Creator of all that exists, the true Guide, to guide to the right path all those seekers of truth whose minds are open to objective analysis. I ask Allah to guide all those who make sincere self-assessments and to improve their conditions according to what is pleasing to Him.

I learned to love Jesus more than my own parents."That is Jesus, the son of Mary, the word of truth about which they are in dispute." (Qur'an 19:34) Jesus has been mentioned by name 25 times in the Qur'an, while Prophet Muhammad has been mentioned by name just five times. Additionally, the nineteenth chapter of the Qur'an was named after the Virgin Mary, while there is no chapter in the Qur'an bearing the name of Prophet Muhammad's mother, any of his wives or daughters. It is also noteworthy that Mary is the only woman mentioned by name in the Qur'an. She is described in the most honourable way as one chosen and favoured over all women. God said in the Qur'an: "And [mention] when the angels said, 'O Mary, indeed Allah has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the worlds.'" (3:42)



And the Qur'an mentions that fair-minded Christians are closest to the Muslims: "You will find the nearest of them in affection to the believers those who say, 'We are Christians.' That is because among them are priests and monks and because they are not arrogant." (Qur'an 5:82)