

من المستحق للعبادة؟

Who Deserves to be Worshipped?

An open call to the sincere followers of Moses and Jesus, true prophets sent by Allah, to encourage dialogue and understanding amongst people of different faiths in the spirit of tolerance and respect

In this book, you will learn about:

- ❖ Islam's basic principles and characteristics
- ❖ Eleven facts about Jesus (peace be upon him) and his mother (Mary)
- ❖ Twenty abandoned biblical teachings revived by Islam
- ❖ Eleven proofs from the Bible of Jesus' humanness and prophethood
- ❖ Sixteen biblical proofs of God's unity in His essence (negating trinity)
- ❖ Twenty arguments refuting the doctrines of 'Original Sin' and redemption (absolution of sins through Jesus' sacrifice)
- ❖ Twenty-seven proofs from the Bible of Muhammad's prophethood
- ❖ Proof that Islam is a sound ideology

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Revised and Expanded 2013

***NO DOUBT THIS LIFE IS AN EXAMINATION
WHICH NEEDS YOUR FULL CONSIDERATION
AS TO WHAT YOU WILL TAKE TO
YOUR FINAL DESTINATION
ONLY TRUE BELIEF AND GOOD DEEDS ARE
YOUR WAY TO SALVATION***

(Muhammad Sherif)

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Honorific phrases in this book

(the Exalted)	Used after the mention of God/Allah to express: Glorified and Exalted is He
(blessings and peace be upon him)	Blessings and peace be upon him; used after mention of the Prophet Muhammad
(peace be upon him)	Peace be upon him; used after mention of any prophet or after mention of Angel Gabriel
(May Allah be pleased with him)	used after mention of a male Companion of the Prophet Muhammad
(May Allah be pleased with her)	used after mention of a female Companion of the Prophet Muhammad

About the word 'Lord'

The word *lord* in English has several related meanings. The original meaning is 'master' or 'ruler' and in this sense it is often used to refer to human beings: 'the lord of the mansion' or '*Lord So-and-So*' (in the United Kingdom, for example). The word *Lord* with a capital L is used in the lexicon of Islam to refer to the One and Only God - Allah. In Islam, there is no ambiguity about the meaning of this word. While it is true that one may occasionally use the word *lord* (whether capitalized or not) to refer to a human being, in Islamic discourse the reference of this term is always clear from the context. Whereas for Christians, Hindus and other polytheists, the word *Lord* with a capital L may refer to Allah, to Jesus or to some imagined deity, for Muslims, there can be no plurality of meaning. Allah alone is the Lord, and the Lord is Allah - not Jesus, not Rama, not any other being.

The Editor

About the word 'Allah'

Although the English word 'God' has often been used interchangeably in this book with the word Allah, there is a difference. 'Allah' is the word in Arabic that is translated as 'God'. However, 'Allah' has a much more precise meaning than 'God'. 'Allah' is not merely an Arabic term for the word 'god'. Instead, the root word of the word 'Allah' is *ilâh*, which means 'a god'. There are countless numbers of made-up 'gods', but only One True God whose name is Allah. The word 'Allah' literally means 'the worshipped'. Allah is, thus, the proper name for the **only Being that is worthy of worship**, the True Creator of the universe. By saying 'Allah', Muslims are, in essence, negating every other entity which people wrongfully worship. The name 'Allah' is how God Almighty has referred to Himself in the Qur'an¹, and how Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) also referred to Him. Therefore, in this work, the term 'Allah' will often be used in reference to this One and Only God, who is worthy of worship.

¹ The Qur'an is the sacred book or scripture revealed to Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him). A detailed explanation of the Qur'an has been given in chapter 9: "The Six Articles of Islamic Faith."

Preface

Wise individuals know that they exist for a purpose and a final destination, whether or not they are aware of the exact nature of that destination. Wise individuals also understand that if they do not know where they are going, they will never strive to reach there. This book has shed some light on the following:

- ❖ Why were human beings created?
- ❖ What is their final destination?
- ❖ How can they reach that destination ‘safely’?

I would like to thank the respected scholars who gave me the chance to learn and quote extensively from their books, especially Dr. Jamal Badawi, Dr. Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, Dr. Ahmed Deedat, Dr. Naji Arfaj and Brother Muhammad bin Abdullah Caraballo. My small contribution is mainly a compilation of passages from their wonderful works.

With this short preface, I leave you to peruse the book.

Kind regards

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Introduction

Every individual is born into a religious environment that is not necessarily in accordance with his or her choice; children are raised to follow the religion or ideology of their family, society or culture. Even as new-borns, they are assigned either the religion of their family or the ideology of the state; in some countries, the child's assigned religion is even recorded on the birth certificate. By the time individuals reach their teens, they have usually accepted the beliefs of their parents or their particular society, feeling that they have little choice in the matter.

However, individuals often encounter, or are exposed, to various beliefs and ideologies throughout the course of their lives, leading many to question long-held beliefs, traditions or philosophical ideas. They begin to question the validity of their own beliefs. Seekers of truth often reach a point of confusion, especially upon realizing that the believers of every religion, sect, ideology and philosophy claim to profess the one and only truth.

There are only three possibilities: either everyone is correct or everyone is incorrect; or, only one is correct and the rest are incorrect. It is impossible for all of them to be upon the true religion as the fundamentals of all religions are different. On the other hand, to claim that they are all incorrect is to deny that

Allah (*Subhânahu wa Ta'âlâ* - Glorified and Exalted is He) revealed His will to humankind. This proposition will seem absurd to those who believe in a Wise Creator. After all, why would Allah create human beings and not reveal a way to the truth? So, **which religion is the right one and how can the seeker of truth come to know it?** This is the main subject of this work.

When beginning the search for the true religion, one should keep the following four things in mind:

Firstly, Allah has given us the ability and the intellect to discover the answer to this crucial question, which is also a life-changing decision: **What is the true religion?**

Secondly, Allah, the Most Compassionate, has not left us to go astray without any guidance. Indeed, He sent us prophets with scriptures to show us the right path.

Thirdly, always remember the underlying reason for this search: the ever-lasting life to come depends upon finding the true religion in this life. This should be your ultimate

motivation, and a driving force to keep you searching until you are completely satisfied.²

Fourthly, one can only determine the true path and make a rational and correct decision if one willingly puts aside all the emotions and prejudices, which often blind one to reality.

² The Bible, in its present form, confirms that seeking the truth is the main cause for salvation. In John 8:32, it has been stated, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” Muslims believe that the existing form of the Bible contains elements of the original true message, although it has been altered significantly.

1. Proof of Allah's Existence

This great universe and everything that is in it cannot be the product of chance, and could not have created itself. Signs testifying that Allah is the only Creator can be seen throughout the earth and in the very soul of each person. Allah has said in the Qur'an:

{It is Allah who created the heavens and the earth and sent down rain from the sky and produced thereby some fruits as provision for you and subjected for you the ships to sail through the sea by His command and subjected for you the rivers. And He subjected for you the sun and moon, continuous [in orbit], and subjected for you the night and the day. And He gave you from all you asked of Him. And if you should count the favour of Allah, you could not enumerate them...} (*Qur'an 14: 32-34*)³

³ The translations of the meanings of the Qur'anic verses in this book have been taken from Saheeh International. *The Qur'an: Arabic Text with Corresponding English Meaning*.

In the Qur'an, Allah has mentioned the search of Prophet Abraham (‘*alayhi as-salâm* - peace be upon him)⁴ for the truth. This is an example of how those who follow Allah's signs will be rightly guided to the worship of Him alone. Allah has said:

{And thus did We show Abraham the realm of the heavens and the earth that he would be among the certain [in faith]. So when the night covered him [with darkness], he saw a star. He said: This is my lord. But when it set, he said: I like not those that disappear. And when he saw the moon rising, he said: This is my lord. But when it set, he said: Unless my Lord guides me, I will surely be among the people gone astray. And when he saw the sun rising, he said: This is my lord; this is greater. But when it set, he said: O my people, indeed I am free from what you associate with Allah. Indeed, I have turned my face toward He who created the heavens and the earth, inclining toward truth, and I am not of those who associate others with Allah.} (*Qur'an* 6: 75-79)

The strongest proof for Allah's existence is the creation itself. Allah continuously instructs humankind to observe the universe, as this will affirm the divine truth of His existence and

⁴ This is an expression of respect which Prophet Muhammad (*salla Allâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* - blessings and peace be upon him) has recommended us to say each time a prophet is mentioned.

His greatness along with the fact that He alone should be worshipped.

Another obvious fact: **He answers our prayers.** When an individual prays (supplicates) to Allah, He answers his or her prayer; this is an indication of Allah's existence. Allah has said in the Qur'an:

{And your Lord says: Call upon Me; I will respond to you...}
(*Qur'an 40: 60*)

2. The Purpose of Creation

Have you ever wondered why we exist? What is the reason for our existence? Have you ever wondered why we die, and where we will go after death? What will happen to us in the end? Have you ever asked yourself why Allah has made the earth and all that is in it subservient to human beings? Why were the night and the day, and the sun and the moon created? What are we supposed to do during our lifetime? Were we created just to eat, drink, and enjoy ourselves before we die? A poet has summarized this timeless question:

I do not know whence I have come.

I saw my feet walking on the road.

As they please I go and stop.

What am I doing here?

How did the road find me?

I do not know! I do not know! I do not know!

Allah has emphasized in many verses of the Qur'an that He did not create human beings without a purpose. He has said:

{Then did you think that We created you uselessly and that to Us you would not be returned?} (*Qur'an 23: 115*)⁵

He has also said:

{Does man think that he will be left neglected?} (*Qur'an 75: 36*)

In addition, He has said:

{Do the people think that they will be left to say: We believe, and they will not be tried?} (*Qur'an 29: 2*)

It is clear from these verses that human beings were not created without a purpose; this purpose has been mentioned clearly in another verse which says:

{And I did not create the *jinn*⁶ and humankind except to worship Me.} (*Qur'an 51: 56*)

Hence, the main purpose of creation is **to worship the Creator Alone**. This is called monotheism.

⁵ Please note that any quotation in this book from the Qur'an is the translation that we feel has the closest meaning to its original Arabic. The translation is not the Qur'an itself.

⁶ jinn: non-human, rational beings created by Allah from fire.

Islam sets a vision for human beings, which is strikingly simple yet completely logical. Indeed, why would the Creator of the universe shroud the main message He wants humankind to understand, their one key to winning paradise in the hereafter, in mystery? How then would He expect humankind to arrive at the truth? It is clear that humankind must revert to its basic instinct regarding the Creator of the universe; it must shed the layers of indoctrinated ideologies and man-made teachings it is covered with. Humankind must reclaim its birthright; it must reclaim Islam.

3. Monotheism: the Message of all the Prophets

All the prophets instructed their people to worship Allah alone (monotheism) and shun worshipping His creation (paganism). Allah has said:

{And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying]: Worship Allah and avoid *tâghoot*⁷...} (*Qur'an* 16: 36)

Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), for example, believed in One God (Allah), Who has no partner. The Qur'an has explained:

{And [We sent] Abraham, when he said to his people: Worship Allah and fear Him. That is best for you, if you should know.} (*Qur'an* 29: 16)

Allah has also said about him:

⁷ *Tâghoot* means idols; everything evil that is worshipped besides Allah.

Note: Wherever possible, Arabic terms have been translated into English. In cases where we have chosen to retain the Arabic, the transliterated word or phrase is shown in italics the first time it appears in the text; the term is also defined in the glossary found at the end of this book. (Editor)

{And [mention, O Muhammad], when Abraham said to his father and his people: Indeed, I am disassociated from that which you worship, except for He who created me; and indeed, He will guide me.} (*Qur'an* 43: 26-27)

Although the Bible has been altered a great deal, Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) was reported in the Gospels to have said, "It is written: Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only." (Luke 4:8)

It also mentions that God has said, "I am the first, and I am the last, and besides Me there is no God." (Isaiah 44:6)

"The Lord our God is one Lord." (Mark 12:29)

The Book of Acts 3:13 says, "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant⁸ Jesus."

Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) also said (as mentioned in the Qur'an) to his people:

{You worship not besides Him except [mere] names you have named them, you and your fathers, for which Allah has sent down no authority. Legislation is not but for Allah. He has

⁸ The use of the word 'servant' does not imply that Allah needs assistance or help. It equals to 'slave' which means 'the one devoted in worship' by obeying His commands and shunning what He forbids.

commanded that you worship not except Him. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know.} (*Qur'an* 12: 40)

This is why Allah has described those who deviate from Abraham's message (monotheism) as the ones who are fooling themselves. He has said:

{And who would be averse to the religion of Abraham except one who makes a fool of himself...} (*Qur'an* 2: 130)

4. The Basic Message of Islam

The basic message of Islam is the same as the message of all the previous prophets: worship Allah **alone** and avoid worshipping anything besides Him, whether it is a person, place or thing: directly or indirectly, secretly or openly. This basic principle of monotheism is contained in the fifth verse of the opening chapter of the Qur'an, known as 'The Opening':

{It is You we worship and You we ask for help.} (*Qur'an 1: 5*)

Allah has also said:

{Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him...} (*Qur'an 4: 36*)

{...So whoever disbelieves in tâghoot and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it...} (*Qur'an 2: 256*)

Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), the last prophet, is reported to have said: <<Anyone who says: There is none worthy of worship other than Allah, and dies holding that belief, will be granted paradise.>> (Bukhari and Muslim)⁹

⁹ *Saheeh al-Bukhâri* and *Saheeh Muslim* are two collections of the authentic, documented traditions and sayings of Prophet Muhammad

5. Proofs that Only Allah Deserves to be Worshipped

Here is an obvious fact: **Allah is the sole Creator and Sustainer of everything**. This makes Him the only one deserving of your worship. It's really that simple. Supplication, for example, is an act of worship, where the individual directs his or her heart to Allah and specifies to Him his or her needs. Allah has instructed in the Qur'an to call upon Him,

{And your Lord says: Call upon Me; I will respond to you...}
(*Qur'an 40: 60*)

The question then arises as to why people direct their worship to created objects, such as idols. The fact is that the idols have no power of their own; anything which results from that act of worship only comes about through the permission of Allah. Hence, if a person prays to an idol and his or her prayers are answered, it is not the idol which actually answered his prayers, but Allah. Similarly, prayers to Jesus Christ (peace be upon him), Buddha, Krishna, Saint Christopher, Saint Jude or Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), are not

(blessings and peace be upon him). Other collections have also been used as references in this book.

answered by them; instead, they are answered by Allah. Consequently, prayer directed to anyone or anything other than Allah is of no avail. The same applies to all acts of worship, like prayers, charity and fasting. All have to be directed to Allah alone.

The prophets were very explicit in their teachings that only Allah should be worshipped; they themselves were sent to teach this very message. They claimed neither fame nor status, and never once did they instruct the people to direct acts of worship to them. Instead, they warned their people against doing just that. For example, Islam teaches that Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) was a human being who was created by Allah in a miraculous way. He was born of a mother, Mary, without a father and he worshipped Allah. He was neither a God (Allah) nor the son of God. He was neither one of three manifestations of God, as Christians claim, nor was he the son of a prostitute, as some Jews have alleged. He told his people (the tribes of Israel) to worship Allah alone. He did not tell people to worship either himself or his mother. Furthermore, Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) did not worship himself when he worshipped; he worshipped Allah alone.

However, those who claim to be the followers of Jesus Christ actually do something other than what he taught; they worship Jesus himself. Others worship Mary, claiming she is

the mother of Allah. If Jesus did not instruct them to worship him or his mother, how can one do this very act and yet claim to follow his message?

Allah has said in the Qur'an:

{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 abode is the fire. And there are not for the wrongdoers any helpers.} (*Qur'an* 5: 72)

Allah has also warned in the Qur'an that He will ask Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) on the Day of Judgement regarding the Christians' worship of him and his mother:

{And [beware the day] when Allah will say: O Jesus, son of Mary, did you say to the people: Take me and my mother as deities besides Allah? He will say: Exalted are You! It was not for me to say that to which I have no right. If I had said it, You would have known it. You know what is within myself, and I do not know what is within Yourself. Indeed, it is You who is Knower of the unseen. I said not to them except what You commanded me - to worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. And I was a witness over them as long as I was among them;

but when You took me up, You were the Observer over them, and You are, over all things, Witness. } (*Qur'an* 5: 116-117)

Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) was given life; he was born from a woman's womb and was circumcised. He felt hunger, pain, and weariness. Since all these attributes are those of human beings and not of God (Allah), it is clear that Jesus was not God (Allah).

Similarly, Buddha was a reformer who introduced a number of humanistic principles into the Hindu religion practiced in India. He did not claim to be God, nor did he suggest to his followers that he should be worshipped. Yet today, most Buddhists have made him their God and they prostrate themselves before idols representing his likeness. Furthermore, over the ages, in the supposedly monotheistic religions like Judaism and Christianity, followers have allowed a select few human beings to be accorded the status of a law-giver where those laws are in direct contradiction to Allah's laws; this has become the case with their rabbis and church officials. This is a form of creature-worship. Allah has mentioned:

{They have taken their scholars and monks as lords besides Allah...} (*Qur'an* 9: 31)

Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) explained this verse to mean that by unquestioningly obeying

them in things which they made lawful or unlawful according to their desires, without any sanction from Allah, they have given these rabbis and priests the status of deities. Briefly, from the perspective of object-worship, all religions today (except Islam) invite people to the worship of creation in one form or another!

It should be noted that some (non-Muslim) people incorrectly label Islam as ‘Mohammedanism’. This phenomenon exists because it is tempting to elevate Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) to a status far above his teachings, as in the case of all the other religions. This is ironic since his very message was the negation of equating man (**any** man) with Allah. Islam teaches that Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) was a human messenger, who, including himself, is required to worship Allah rather than be elevated to the status of Allah and be worshipped. Muhammad was a messenger **and** a slave¹⁰ of Allah; that is all.

¹⁰ The status of a ‘slave’ of Allah is the most beloved and honoured position before Allah, since it implies sincere worship and love for Him. This status applies to all messengers and true followers. More detail has been mentioned in chapter 11: “The Meaning of Worship in Islam.”

Allah's attributes prove that He alone deserves to be worshipped.

He is One, without relatives; He has no father, son, mother or wife. He is the Eternal Absolute. He neither gives birth nor was He born; indeed, there is nothing like Him. He is perfect in His knowledge, in His power, in His will, in His mercy and in all His other attributes. Allah is all-powerful and perfect, while human beings are weak and imperfect. That is how He has defined Himself and how all prophets have defined Him.¹¹ Therefore, it is only befitting that one directs all acts of worship to the One who fits this description. Worshipping anything else would be futile.

¹¹ This agrees with what is mentioned in the Gospel of Barnabas, chapter 17, where Jesus said:

He alone hath no equal. He hath had no beginning, nor will he ever have an end, but to everything hath He given a beginning, and to everything shall He give an end. He hath no father nor mother; He hath no sons nor brethren nor companions.

(The Gospel of Barnabas is not included in today's Bible, but it is available on the Internet - Editor.)

Another proof is the teaching of Islam that every soul has been imbued with the awareness of Allah and a natural inclination towards worshipping Him alone. In the Qur'an, Allah has explained that when He created Adam (peace be upon him), He caused all of Adam's descendants to come into existence; then, He took a pledge from all of them, saying:

{...Am I not your Lord? They said: Yes, we have testified...}
(*Qur'an* 7: 172)

Allah has then explained why He had all of humankind bear witness that He is their Creator and the only true God, the only one worthy of worship:

{...[This] - lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection: Indeed, we were of this unaware.} (*Qur'an* 7: 172)

Allah has further elaborated on this point, saying:

{Or [lest] you say: It was only that our fathers associated [others in worship] with Allah before, and we were but descendants after them. Then would You destroy us for what the falsifiers have done?} (*Qur'an* 7: 173)

Therefore, people who associate partners with Allah in worship cannot claim on that day that they had no idea that Allah is the only one who deserves to be worshipped.

Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) reported that Allah has said:

<<I created my slaves following the right religion, but the devils made them go astray.>> (Muslim)

Also, Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) said:

<<Each child is born in a state of Islam. Then his parents make him a Jew, a Christian or a Zoroastrian.>> (Bukhari and Muslim)

Thus, Islam is the **birthright** of every human being, since every child is born with a natural belief in the existence of Allah and an inborn inclination towards worshipping Him alone. Just as the child submits to the physical laws which Allah has imposed on this physical world, its soul submits naturally to the fact that Allah is the only Lord and Creator. However, if his or her parents are following a different path, the child is usually neither strong nor aware enough to recognize the truth; also, he or she cannot resist the will of the parents. In such cases, the religion the child ultimately follows is in line with custom and upbringing. However, Allah, the Most Merciful and Compassionate, will not hold him or her to account or punish for following a false religion before he or she reaches the age of reason and is exposed to the pure message of Islam.

To sum up, one can naturally, without the aid of other human influences, come to the conclusion that only Allah deserves to be worshipped. This conclusion is neither confusing nor elaborate; it can be arrived at by even the most uneducated.

6. The Message of False Religions

False religions, on the other hand, all teach **the worship of creation (paganism)** in one way or another. Some religions call towards idolatry indirectly, while proclaiming Allah's unity; others openly invite one to the worship of other gods besides Allah or along with Allah, instead of calling towards the worship of Allah alone (pure monotheism). Idolatry is the greatest sin that a human being can commit because it diverts worship from the Creator to His creation. It necessarily implies elevating the creation to the status of Allah and thus, equating creation with Him. This explains why idolatry is the greatest sin a human being can commit. The one who dies in a state of idolatry has sealed his or her fate in the hereafter. Allah has stated in the Qur'an:

{Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills...} (*Qur'an* 4: 48)¹²

Human beings should not worship anything or anyone other than Allah. This is because it makes no sense to worship the creation which is weak in nature, and to neglect the Creator

¹² See also (*Qur'an* 4: 116).

who controls this creation and the whole universe! Not only is this act misdirected and futile, it is a manifestation of ingratitude to the One who has created everything. Allah has said in the Qur'an:

{Do they associate with Him those who create nothing and they are [themselves] created? And the false deities are unable to [give] them help, nor can they help themselves. And if you [believers] invite them to guidance, they will not follow you. It is all the same for you whether you invite them or you are silent. Indeed, those you [polytheists] call upon besides Allah are slaves like you. So call upon them and let them respond to you, if you should be truthful. Do they have feet by which they walk? Or do they have hands by which they strike? Or do they have eyes by which they see? Or do they have ears by which they hear?...} (*Qur'an* 7: 191-195)

Some idol worshippers try to justify what they are doing by saying, "We treat idols as mediators and intercessors between us and Allah." This belief is based on the false comparison between Allah and kings, who often operate using mediators between them and their people. This is an incorrect belief because Allah does not need mediators between Him and His creation. He hears and knows everything, and can respond

directly to all the needs of His creation. In hundreds of Qur'anic verses, Allah has invited human beings to have a direct relationship with Him without any mediator or intercessor; He has prohibited them from worshipping anything other than Him, under any circumstances.

The idea of having different deities (idols and statues) as intermediates and mere 'channels' is as old as time. Many non-Muslims, before the time of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), used to claim that they believed in Allah as the Creator and the Sustainer; however, they said that they merely used idols as a means of drawing closer to Allah or as a means of having prayers answered. This is still a common practice amongst many people today; they say they believe in one God, yet they maintain their reliance upon statues, superstitions and other symbols (or traditions) as a way to worship and invoke God for their needs.

Allah has rejected their claims, saying that when they are in trouble, whom do they call? They call none other than Allah. This is evidence that the concept of intercessors between a human being and God is false and of no benefit.

Allah has specified that anyone who attributes deity to others with Him will be left with that other entity on the Day of Judgement, calling to that entity for help. An individual falsely hopes that this entity will, somehow, help him or her when

needed. However, this is of no avail because the entities themselves will disassociate themselves from the people on the Day of Judgement (when one is in need of most help). It will be asked of these people:

{...Where are those you used to invoke besides Allah? They will say: They have departed from us, and will bear witness against themselves that they were disbelievers.} (*Qur'an* 7: 37)

Allah has said:

{Say, [O Muhammad]: Invoke those you claim [as deities] besides Allah. They do not possess an atom's weight [of ability] in the heavens or on the earth, and they do not have therein any partnership [with Him], nor is there for Him from among them any assistant.} (*Qur'an* 34: 22)

So, if these entities {do not possess an atom's weight [of ability] in the heavens or on the earth}, how can they help the one who worships them? Moreover, Allah has pointed out the simple fact that:

{And those you call upon besides Him are unable to help you, nor can they help themselves.} (*Qur'an* 7: 197)

Allah, the Most Wise, has not prescribed any religious beliefs and rites that would affect the direct relationship

between Himself and humans; beliefs and rites such as Hinduism, Buddhism, baptism, confession, or belief in a human being as a saviour or an intermediary, have done just that.

7. Allah and His Creation

Islam emphasizes that Allah and His creation are distinct entities. Allah is neither part of His creation nor does He intermix with it. His creation is neither equal to Him in His attributes nor a part of Him. Indeed, Allah is the Most High; He is above all His creation, above the heavens and above His Throne, as He has informed us about Himself in the Qur'an and in the previous scriptures. This might seem obvious, but people's worship of creation instead of the Creator is, to a large degree, based on ignorance or negligence of this fact. The erroneous belief that the essence of Allah is everywhere in His creation or that He is a part of His creation, justifies the worship of Allah's creation. Philosophical idol worshippers justify their idolatry by saying that they do not actually worship the stone or metal image; they only worship Allah who becomes concentrated in it during their rituals of worship. They claim that the stone idol is only a focal point for Allah's essence and is not Allah itself! Anyone who accepts the concept of Allah being present in any way within His creation will be obliged to accept this argument to justify idolatry.

Setting aside such motivations as financial gains or fame, people's claims to divinity have largely manifested based on the mistaken belief that it is possible for Allah to be present in humans. Taking this belief one step further, they claim that Allah is more present in them than in others, and people should therefore submit to them and worship them as Allah's incarnate or as Allah concentrated within their person. Similarly, those who have asserted that others were gods have found fertile ground among those who accept the false belief of Allah's presence in human beings.

As far as the doctrine of incarnation held by late Christians is concerned, it was developed after Jesus' departure. It was incorporated into Christianity from paganism. In the mythology that preceded Christianity, it can be seen how some heroes were considered to be gods.

The vast majority of Christians today pray to Jesus, claiming that he is God (Allah). The philosophers among them claim that they are not worshipping Jesus the man; they are only worshipping God (Allah), who was manifest in Jesus the man. This is also the rationale of pagans who bow down to worship the idols. As mentioned before, when a pagan philosopher is asked why he or she worships an idol which was made by human hands, he or she replies that he or she is not really

worshipping the idol. Furthermore, he or she may claim that the idol is only a focal point for the presence of Allah, and thereby claim to worship Allah who is manifest in the idol, and not the physical idol itself. There is little or no difference between that explanation and the answer given by Christians for worshipping Jesus. The origin of this deviation lies in the false belief that Allah is present in His creation. Such a belief (erroneously) justifies the worship of Allah's creation.¹³

Islam has freed its followers from such superstitions by rejecting the doctrine of the incarnation. The divinity of Jesus has been rejected in the noble Qur'an in many verses. Let us take two of them:

{They have certainly disbelieved who say: Allah is the Messiah, the son of Mary...} (*Qur'an* 5: 72)

{Say: He is Allah, [who is] One, Allah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets, nor is born, nor is there to Him any equivalent. } (*Qur'an* 112: 1-4)

¹³ Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 69.

These two verses clearly specify that neither Jesus nor any other prophet resembles Him in an attribute or in essence, and hence, nothing can be an incarnation of Allah.

Consider the following. In the south-eastern region of the Amazon jungle in Brazil, South America, a primitive tribe erected a new hut to house their main idol Skwatoo, representing the supreme God (Allah) of all creation. The following day a young man entered the hut to pay homage to his god. While he was prostrating to what he had been taught was his creator and sustainer, a mangy, old and flea-ridden dog slunk into the hut. The young man looked up just in time to see the dog lift its hind leg and pass urine on the idol. Outraged, the young man chased the dog out of the temple, but when his rage died down, he realized that the idol could not be the Lord of the universe. He came to the conclusion that God must be elsewhere. As strange as it may seem, the dog urinating on the idol was a sign from God for that young man that his idol did not deserve to be worshipped. This sign contained the divine message that what he was worshipping was false. It liberated him from following his tradition unquestioningly, a tradition that proved to be erroneous. As a result, this

man was given a choice: either to seek the true God or to continue in the error of his ways. This example illustrates the fact that humans are capable at arriving at the truth on their own, regardless of society, etc.¹⁴

Clearly, if one follows this argument, it means that either God does not have the attributes He claims or that God is no different than His own creation. Both negate the idea of an All-Powerful God, so both must be false. Islam teaches that God is too great and perfect to lower Himself to a level of likeness to His creation or mix with them.

To conclude, all false religions have in common one basic concept with regard to God: God and His creation are one. They either claim that all humans are God, or specific people are God, or nature is God, or God is a figment of people's imagination, or a person or being is a mediator between people and God (as mentioned in previous chapter). Thus, by equating the two, it may be said that false religions invite humans to worship the creation instead of worshipping the Creator.

¹⁴ Philips, *The True Religion of God*.

8. The Meaning of the Religion's Name: 'Islam'

Further evidence that Islam is the true religion comes from the meaning of the word 'Islam' itself. Basically, the word 'Islam' is an Arabic word that denotes submission and obedience. As a religion, Islam has two meanings: general and specific. Islam, in general, refers to the religion which God revealed to all the prophets: the worship of God alone (monotheism) and the avoidance of paganism. This explains why, in the Qur'an, all prophets have called themselves Muslims. According to the Qur'an, all the prophets were Muslims; what they taught was nothing but earlier versions of Islam. Their sincere followers were Muslims as well.¹⁵ Consequently, one should not regard Islam as an innovation that was brought by Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him). Instead, it should be regarded as the original

¹⁵ Jesus was reported to have said in the Bible:

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. (Matthew 5:17-18)

message of Allah (in its fundamentals) to all the prophets throughout history. Specifically, the word ‘Islam’ also refers to the religion that was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him). None of the previous religions were **specifically given** this name by Allah, except for this last religion - Islam.

Islam was neither named after a person or a group of people, nor was it decided upon by later generations of humans. Indeed, the name ‘Islam’ was given by Allah Himself as is clearly mentioned in the Qur’an in many verses, for example:

{Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam...} (*Qur’an* 3: 19)

On the other hand, Christianity was named (by its followers) after Jesus Christ, and Judaism after the tribe of Judah. However, it is not mentioned anywhere in the Bible that the religion of the followers of Prophets Isaac and Moses (peace be upon them) and their descendants is called Judaism, or that the religion of the followers of Christ¹⁶ is called Christianity. In

¹⁶ Both the names ‘Jesus’ and ‘Christ’ are derived from Hebrew words, through Greek and Latin. Jesus is the English equivalent and Latin form of the Greek ‘Iesous’, which in Hebrew is ‘Yeshua’.

other words, the names ‘Judaism’ and ‘Christianity’ had no divine origin or approval. It was not until long after Jesus’ ascension¹⁷ that the name ‘Christianity’ was given to the religion of those claiming to be his followers. The same applies to Buddhism, which was named after Gautama Buddha, Confucianism after Confucius, and Hinduism after the Persian word for India, ‘Hind’, and so on.

Another reason for calling Christians, Buddhists and others as such is because their followers worship them (in the case of Christ and Buddha). However, Muslims are not called ‘Muhammadans’ because Muslims do not worship Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him); they worship ‘Allah’ and submit to Him alone. In fact, this phenomenon of naming an ideology after a person has become so common that many mistakenly label Islam as ‘Mohammedanism’, although Muslims have never used, nor do they accept, such a label.

‘Christos’ is a Greek translation of the Hebrew ‘messiah’, and the Arabic *masaha* which means to rub, to massage, to anoint.

¹⁷ The Qur’an has mentioned that Jesus was neither killed nor crucified on a cross; rather, Allah raised him to the heavens. Jesus will come into this world again before it ends. This has been discussed in detail, later in this book.

9. The Six Articles of Islamic Faith

Islamic belief is based on six fundamental articles of faith.

1. Belief in Allah

This includes the following beliefs:

- ❖ Belief in Allah's existence: The existence of humankind and the entire universe is not a mere accident or the product of chance. The universe and everything that is in it manifests and points to the realization of a Creator.
- ❖ Belief that Allah is the Creator, the Sustainer, the Owner of the universe and its contents, the provider of everything, the Giver of life and the Causer of death.
- ❖ Belief that Allah is the only One who has the right to be worshipped.
- ❖ Allah has revealed, both in His Final Revelation, the Qur'an and through his Prophet's teachings, ninety-nine names and attributes. They offer some insight into the absolutely unique, wondrous and perfect nature of Allah. The most frequently used name is Allah, which means the 'Worshipped'. Some of those attributes are: the Everlasting, All-Powerful, All-Knowing, All-Hearing, All-

Seeing, Self-Sufficient and Self-Sustaining. Allah Almighty is above all comprehension, and He does not resemble His creation, as He has said in the Qur'an:

{...There is nothing like unto Him...} (*Qur'an 42: 11*)

He has also said:

{Say: He is Allah, [who is] One, Allah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets, nor is born, nor is there to Him any equivalent.} (*Qur'an 112: 1-4*)

He is the most Rich, free of all needs.

He has said in the Qur'an:

{And I did not create the jinn and humankind except to worship Me. I do not want from them any provision, nor do I want them to feed Me. Indeed, it is Allah who is the [continual] Provider, the firm possessor of strength.} (*Qur'an 51: 56-58*)

Allah's ninety-nine names and attributes have all been mentioned in the Qur'an and the statements of the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him).

2. Belief in the angels

Angels are creatures created by Allah for specific functions. They are normally invisible and have no free will; they do as Allah commands them. They should not be

worshipped. The angel, Gabriel (peace be upon him), was responsible for conveying the revelation to the prophets. Two angels are assigned to every human being to record their good and evil deeds. Another angel accompanies each human being, encouraging him or her to do good deeds. Others blow the human spirit into the foetus at the end of the fourth month of conception; yet others take the human spirit at the time of its death by Allah's permission. There are other angels that have various responsibilities, too many to enumerate in this small book.¹⁸

There are two main points of difference between the Islamic and the Christian view of angels. Although they are noble and free of sin, believing Muslims hold a greater status in the Eyes of Allah. The angels were commanded to bow to Adam (peace be upon him) due to his superior knowledge, and they all did as they were commanded. Christians, on the other hand, believe that angels are of two kinds: good/obedient and evil/disobedient. That is how they justify their belief that Satan is a 'fallen angel' - an evil angel who disobeyed God, when he

¹⁸ For more detail, see al-'Uthaymeen, *Explanation of the Three Fundamental Principles of Islaam*.

did not bow to Adam with the other angels. According to Islam, angels worship Allah, and cannot disobey Him; angels have no choice over whether or not to worship Allah. They are sinless beings because they obey Allah and commit no sins. This is part of the Islamic belief as well. However, both angels and humans are creatures of Allah and both are obliged to worship Him. Thus, the second main point of difference between the Christian view and the Islamic view of angels is that of free will: whereas angels have no free will, human beings might obey Allah, be sinful, follow some commandments and commit some sins.

3. Belief in the scriptures

This article of faith refers to belief in all the scriptures revealed in their original form by Allah to His messengers. Revealed scriptures form the enlightenment which the messengers received to show the right path of Allah to their people. All the revealed books call to the worship of Allah alone and forbid the worship of anything other than Him or besides Him. They contain guidance for humankind in all aspects of life. They define right and wrong, and offer human beings a complete system of beliefs and practices governing all their affairs. The Creator alone knows best what is beneficial for His creation and what is not. Thus, the divine laws contained in those scriptures command and prohibit various acts and substances to protect the human spirit, the human body, and

human society from harm. Human beings definitely need to abide by His commandments documented in His revealed books in order to fulfil their potential by living a righteous life.

The original texts of revealed books do not differ from each other in their main doctrinal principles. However, due to the differences between nations in time and space, there were some differences in the practical teachings (laws) of the scriptures, according to the wisdom of Allah. Their basic message, however, remains the same.

Muslims believe in the previous books as mentioned in the Qur'an: the Scripture of Abraham (peace be upon him), the Torah of Moses (peace be upon him), the Psalms of David (peace be upon him) and the Gospel of Jesus (peace be upon him). The following verse from the noble Qur'an emphasizes the fact that belief in all the previous scriptures sent by Allah is an integral part of the Islamic belief system:

{Say, [O believers]: We have believed in Allah and what has been revealed to us and what has been revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the descendants and what was given to Moses and Jesus and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him.} (*Qur'an* 2: 136)

However, long before the advent of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), all these scriptures had been either lost or irretrievably corrupted by later generations over the centuries with myths, superstitions, idolatry and irrational philosophical beliefs, carrying contradicting thoughts. Hence, the existing forms of those scriptures cannot be described as Allah's revelation.

The Bible for example, is one of the remaining books in the hands of its followers. Ever since it was revealed to Jesus (peace be upon him), it has undergone so many changes that today, there are four well-known Bibles instead of one: the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John comprise the Bible (The New Testament), along with other documents.

These were written between 40 and 115 years after Jesus (peace be upon him) had left and are based on documents that have been lost. The Gospel according to Mark, was the first one written in Rome, at least 40 years after the disappearance of Jesus (peace be upon him). The Gospel according to Matthew was written in the Greek Language about 90 years after Christ. The Gospel according to Luke was written in Greece approximately 80 years after Christ. These three Gospels are called Synoptic because they originate from the same lost document and they have a lot in

common. The Gospel according to John, on the other hand, has deep differences with the Synoptic Gospels. It is in this Gospel of John where the Divinity and pre-existence of Jesus (peace be upon him) was mentioned, even though Jesus himself never claimed this. This Gospel was written between 110 and 115 years CE.¹⁹

Analysis of these Gospels reveals the following:

1. During the lifetime of Jesus (peace be upon him), there was no written document containing his sayings, acts or lectures.
2. The first records of the sayings of Jesus (peace be upon him), which were made close to the time of his disappearance, have been lost.
3. The Gospels were written between 40 and 115 years after Jesus' 'disappearance', and were based on lost documents. As a consequence, there was a loose manipulation of the content.

¹⁹ Abdul Razak, *Study Guide, Comparative Study - Islam and Christianity*.

4. None of the Gospel writers knew, saw or heard Jesus (peace be upon him).
5. The Gospels were written in Greek while Jesus (peace be upon him) spoke Aramaic.
6. For at least one hundred years after the Gospels were written, they did not have any canonical authority, and were changed by the writers of the different sects in order to adapt them to their own needs.
7. The present Gospels, seen as a whole, are full of contradictions.²⁰

These factors have been brought up here in order to demonstrate that the Gospel of Jesus (peace be upon him), his original message that was revealed by Allah, has not reached us in its original form. In this way, it can be affirmed that the four Gospels, included in today's Bible, cannot be considered similar or equivalent to the inspired Gospel of Jesus (peace be upon him).

3.1 Biblical proofs of the Bible's distortion

1. The Old Testament clearly testifies that it was altered by humans. God (Allah) is quoted in Jeremiah 8:8 as saying,

²⁰ Source for points 1-7: Caraballo, *My Great Love for Jesus Led Me to Islam*, 14-15.

“How can you say, 'We are wise, and the law is with us?'”
But behold, **the false pen of the scribes has made it into a lie.**”²¹

2. Dr. Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips has explained:

About five years after the end of Jesus' ministry, a young rabbi by the name of Saul of Tarsus, who claimed to have seen Jesus in a vision, began to change Jesus' way. Paul (his Roman name) had considerable respect for Roman philosophy and he spoke proudly of his own Roman citizenship. His conviction was that non-Jews who became Christians should not be burdened with the Torah²² in any respect. The author of Acts 13:39 quotes Paul as saying: And by him every one that believes is freed from everything which you could not be freed by the Law of Moses. It was primarily through the efforts of Paul that the Church began to take on its non-Jewish character. Paul wrote most of the New Testament

²¹ Revised standard version.

²² As mentioned earlier, Torah was the book revealed to Prophet Moses.

letters (epistles), which the Church accepts as the official doctrine and inspired Scripture. These letters do not preserve the Gospel of Jesus or even represent it, instead, Paul transformed the teachings of Christ into a Hellenic (Greco-Roman) philosophy.²³

3. The clearest evidence of biblical distortion is the revision of the Bible, to the extent that it can be said that every edition is different from the previous one.

3.2 Distorting revelations is the biggest sin

The Qur'an has emphasized, in more than one verse, that distorting Allah's revelation is a severe sin. Allah has said in the 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.} (*Qur'an* 2: 79)

An important note

It shall be noted that those who followed the scriptures when they were in their pure and unadulterated forms are considered to be on the right religion, and will have nothing to fear on the Day of Judgement.

²³ Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 81.

3.3 Revelation of the Qur'an

Following the distortion of the previous scriptures, Allah, the Most Compassionate, did not leave human beings to go astray without an unadulterated reference. Indeed, He revealed the Qur'an and promised to preserve it as the final revelation to humankind for all times. It is the Word of Allah which He revealed to Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) through the Angel Gabriel (peace be upon him). It was revealed in parts (fragments) of different lengths over a period of 23 years. Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) recited the Revelation to his Companions, who wrote it down during his lifetime on palm leaves, parchment, animal bones (the shoulder-blades of camels made a good writing surface), and flat stones. At the same time, he indicated the precise location where each revealed section belonged in the body of the complete volume of the revelation. In addition, the Qur'an was memorized by hundreds of Prophet Muhammad's Companions. One year after the death of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), the first Caliph, Abu Bakr (*radiya Allāhu 'anhu* - may Allah be pleased with him), instructed the Prophet's Companions to collect the whole Qur'an in one volume. Later, the third Caliph 'Uthmān (may Allah be pleased with him), prepared several copies from the

original text and sent them to the major centres of the Islamic civilization. One of these seven reproductions still remains, and is kept in Istanbul, Turkey.

From that time onwards, more than 1400 years ago, the same Qur'anic text has been in use with the exact wording, order and language (Arabic). Not a single word from its 114 chapters, 6200 verses, and approximately 80,000 words has been changed since it was revealed. Indeed, Allah has promised in the Qur'an to preserve it forever. He has said:

{Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur'an and indeed, We will be its guardian.} (*Qur'an 15: 9*)

Just ponder over the fact that the Qur'an, in its entirety, is memorized by millions of people, regardless of age, sex, social class, or ethnicity! It is the only book that has been thus preserved, not only on the shelf but in the hearts of humankind.

The Qur'an supersedes all previous scriptures. Allah has said to Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) about the Qur'an:

{And We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], the book in truth, confirming that which preceded it of the scripture and as a criterion over it...} (*Qur'an 5: 48*)

An essential point to understand about the Qur'an is that it is a miracle in terms of both its revelation and its content. At the

time of the revelation and since, there have been those who have denied the divine and miraculous nature of the Qur'an saying that Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) was either taught by others or that he wrote it by himself! In order to counteract this claim, Allah has presented a challenge to the whole of humankind saying:

{And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our slave [Muhammad], then produce a chapter the like thereof and call upon your witnesses other than Allah, if you should be truthful.} (*Qur'an* 2: 23)

These are some of the prophecies which the Qur'an has foretold, as no one from the time of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), until this day, has been able to produce the like of one chapter or even a verse of the Qur'an. As such, Muslims do not need any other scriptures to base their faith on, either fully or partially. The Qur'an remains clear and easily understood by anyone who has a good command of the Arabic language. All its legal injunctions and instructions are clear when the meanings of its words are translated into any of the world's languages.

3.4 The entire Qur'an is a proclamation of monotheism

1. Some of the verses inform about Allah: His names, attributes, acts and speech. Those verses indicate the Unity and Oneness of Allah with respect to His most excellent names, essence, and perfect attributes.
2. Other verses point to the necessity of worshipping Allah alone, without any associate or partner, and the renunciation of the worship of anything other than Him. These verses indicate the focus of worship and the necessity for people to single out their Lord in their intentions, requesting His aid, and in turning to Him in repentance.
3. The Qur'an also contains injunctions and prohibitions; doing something that has been enjoined or refraining from what has been prohibited is the fulfilment and perfection of the affirmation of the Oneness of Allah.
4. The Qur'an includes stories and information about people of true and sincere belief and tells about their immediate reward in the life of this world as well as the immense reward reserved for them in the hereafter.
5. The Qur'an also contains stories about those who associate partners with Allah. It describes their punishment in this life and the punishment they are promised in the hereafter.

These are the just desserts of those who deviate from the affirmation of Allah's Oneness.

3.5 The Prophet's teachings

The teachings of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) are the second source of the Islamic knowledge after the Holy Qur'an. They explain and elaborate the Qur'anic verses. They also explain, in minute detail, the manner of worship as performed by the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him). The Prophet's statements provide further clarification and details as to how to fulfil what Allah has ordered and refrain from what He has forbidden. These teachings have been meticulously collected and reported by the Prophet's Companions (may Allah be pleased with them).

3.6 Preservation of Islamic teachings

Preventing Islamic teachings from alteration does not stop at the preservation of the Qur'anic text; rather, it is also forbidden to introduce into the Prophet's guidance (by saying or writing) anything that is contrary to its premise, values or teachings.

The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) said:

<<Whoever introduces into this matter (the Islamic teachings) something that does not belong to it, shall find it rejected.>>
(Bukhari and Muslim)

<<One of the Prophet's Companions said: The Prophet gave us a highly effective admonition, such that many of us were tearful and felt our hearts shudder.

Someone said to him: O Messenger of Allah! This sounds like the admonition of someone bidding his audience farewell. Please outline for us what you recommend.

The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) said: I urge you to always remain conscious of Allah (God-fearing), and to listen to and obey your leaders, even if the leader is an Abyssinian slave. Anyone of you who will live long will witness much strife and conflict. Therefore, hold tight to my way and the way followed by the Rightly-Guided Rulers.²⁴ Hold on to it and bite onto it with your molars,²⁵ and steer away from any invented thing (in religious affairs and laws), for such inventions are deviations (from the right path).>> (An authentic hadith²⁶ recorded by Ibn Hibbân, Abu Dâwood and at-Tirmidhi)

²⁴ He meant specifically the four Caliphs who came after him.

²⁵ That is, do not let go of it.

²⁶ Hadith (*hadeeth*): the collected statements and actions of Prophet

Thus, in matters of religion, one is not permitted to change Islamic teachings. Whatever is contrary to it is wrong and unacceptable. With this strict protection, Islam, as it was revealed, has been kept pure from myths and superstitions as well as changes that reflect the whims of people and leaders.

4. Belief in the messengers of Allah

This article of faith addresses the belief that Allah has conveyed His message through selected human beings. These individuals, called prophets and messengers, were selected by Allah to be examples of how the scriptures were to be understood and implemented. Prophets have demonstrated practically, for their followers, how one should live by the law. The way of the prophets is the only way to Allah, because it has been prescribed by Allah Himself. Hence, without prophets, people would not know Allah, His attributes or how to worship Him.

The role of the prophets can be summarized as follows:

1. Receive the message from Allah.

Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) that with the Qur'an form the basis of Islamic law.

2. Deliver it to the people.
3. Advise people to fear Allah and abide by His commandments.
4. Advise people who have deviated, disobeyed Allah, or worshipped anything or anyone other than Him, to repent and obey and worship Him only.
5. Inform people about the fundamental aspects of faith.
6. Teach detailed religious and moral tenets to their followers.
7. Be a model for their people, and lead them to eternal paradise.

Allah has sent a prophet or prophets to every nation; their duty was to convey the message that He alone should be worshipped and anything worshipped along with Him or besides Him is false and unacceptable. The Qur'an has mentioned the names of twenty-five prophets (see diagram) while indicating that many others existed yet were not mentioned by name. The first of these prophets was Adam (peace be upon him) and the last was Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him). May Allah's mercy and peace be upon the prophets.

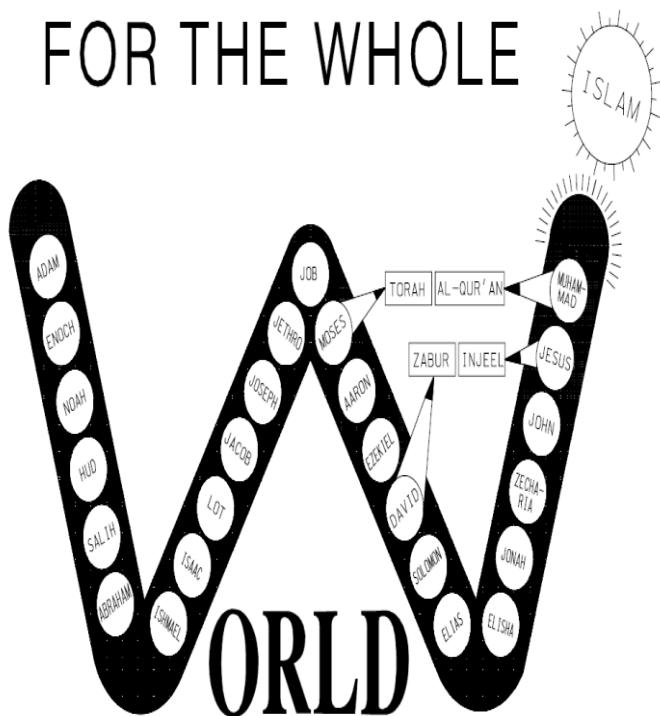
Every prophet was sent to a specific people for a specific era. Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) was

an exception, who was sent as the last and final messenger until the hour of judgement. The proofs that Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) was a messenger of Allah are innumerable; all have been mentioned in his detailed biography. The greatest proof is the miracle of the Qur'an, which could not have been written by any human; also, it could not have been conveyed except through a Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace be upon him).

Indeed, the books of the Bible mention the advent of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), in spite of the changes which have been introduced in their content.

The Qur'an and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) relate, with reverence, the lives of many of these prophets. Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), the last prophet, has remained as the absolute example for his followers. His teachings were further elucidated in practice by his Rightly-Guided successors. The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) encouraged his followers continuously to follow the prophets' way, and warned against conflict over Islamic principles and values. This was to ensure that his followers would not deviate from the right path, as had happened to the followers of previous prophets.

Prophet Muhammad's followers owe him two things: obedience and love.



4.1 Obedience to the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) (followship)

Obedience to the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) has been mentioned in thirty different verses of the Qur'an. It implies following his commands and avoiding what he prohibited. Obedience to the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) indicates the true fulfilment of the second part of the declaration that brings a person into Islam, "I bear witness that Muhammad is Allah's Messenger."

When we examine anything the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) encouraged, urged or ordered, we find that it is all from Allah and that it leads to something good either for us personally or for others who are close to us in our families or for our wider community, whether it is the Muslim community in general or humanity at large. He has only prohibited what is harmful or of no benefit, like adultery, gambling, alcohol, lying, disrespect to parents and so on. The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) prohibited satanic ways in many statements because these tend to pull a person away from the right path.

A good believer reaches a state of mind when his or her desires and pleasures in this life are in line with what Allah wants from him or her. Every individual should be obedient to

Allah and His Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him), and observe strictly the instructions from Allah. The spirit develops by following Islamic teachings, while it decays and suffers from a spiritual loss if these teachings are abandoned.²⁷

4.2 Loving the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him)

Islam teaches that loving the Prophet is part of the Islamic faith.

The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) has been quoted as saying:

<<None of you is a true believer unless I am dearer to him than his parents, his children, and all other people.>> (Bukhari and Muslim)

The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) also said:

<<There are three qualities which are certain to give anyone the sweetness of faith: to love Allah and His Messenger more than anyone else, to love a person for no purpose other than for Allah's sake, and to hate to relapse into disbelief after Allah has saved him from it as much as one would hate to be thrown into the fire.>> (Bukhari and Muslim)

²⁷ Compiled from Caraballo, *My Great Love for Jesus Christ Led Me to Islam*.

We are required to love Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) more than all others (except Allah) because it was through him that we learned who Allah is along with His attributes, our position in relation to Him, what Allah wants from us, and how to worship Him. He has guided us, through practical example, along the way; following this is certain to earn us Allah's acceptance and the ultimate bliss. He has spared us the worst calamity that can ever befall anyone, which is incurring Allah's anger and punishment. He sacrificed everything to deliver Allah's message to us. He sacrificed his health and wealth and his whole life. If we realize all this, how can we not love him more than we love ourselves and all others?

We love Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) because, as described in the Qur'an, he was a 'mercy for all nations'. His compassion extended to all: friends and enemies. Consider this: his enemies often became his beloved Companions and followers. They embraced Islam, saying that his character proved he was a true Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace be upon him).

It should be noted that we must love Allah more than the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him); the Prophet

(blessings and peace be upon him) comes after Allah. Loving Allah, the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) and his followers is an act of worship for which one will be rewarded. The reverse is also true: hating Allah or His Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) will expel one from the bounds of Islam. Correspondingly, hating those who hate Allah or the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) is part of the Islamic belief, for which the individual will be accounted for and rewarded.

It needs to be clarified here that the emotion of ‘hate’ that is referred to in this context does not lend itself to the commonly known evil type of hate which is the imperfect human emotion; rather, it is the type of hate that perfects one’s faith as it is directed - in the right measure - against those who have taken a defiant stance against the Creator and His chosen messengers. It is a lot like the negative feeling one may hold against the actions of a human who defies and abuses his or her elderly parents in an evil manner, or an outlaw who fights the justice system and spreads fear and corruption in society. It is clear that hating the actions of such individuals is a natural feeling that good people are expected to have. Although Islam teaches love in all its forms, it also instructs faithful believers not to love those who do not love Allah and His messengers, until they change their ways, in which case, they are

commanded to love them! In a nutshell, a Muslim loves as well as hates for Allah's sake. Here is a great fact about this emotion of hate: a Muslim is instructed not to hate anyone for personal reasons. For example, if a Muslim person has been insulted by anyone, he or she has been instructed to forgive; surely, the difference is great between hating for the sake of Allah (well-placed emotion) versus hating for self-satisfaction (a destructive emotion).

The love we should have for the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) must be genuine love, not a mere verbal statement. It should be supported and proven by obedience: following his commands and avoiding what he has prohibited. Correspondingly, again, the expression of our feelings of hate or revulsion at the refusal of our fellow human beings to believe in Allah's Oneness and follow the monotheistic teachings of His prophets should be in our positive and pro-active approach to those who disbelieve. We pray for them to be guided to the truth; at the same time, we need to work for that and work with them towards that.

5. Belief in the Last Day

Islam teaches that this life is only a test of conduct for each individual, to see whether or not he or she will follow the

commands of Allah. In the hereafter, people will be resurrected; they will stand before Allah for a just reckoning of their deeds and actions while they were alive on earth. People with good deeds will be generously rewarded and warmly welcomed to Allah's heaven. However, those with records of many bad deeds will be punished and cast into hell. People have been given knowledge of right and wrong, instinctively and through revelation; they must choose their path in this short life. Their choices in this life will ultimately determine their places in the eternal life to come. Allah has said in the Qur'an:

{So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.} (*Qur'an* 99: 7-8)

Belief in the Day of Judgement implants in the human heart, the consciousness of Allah. It impels people and society at large to obey Him sincerely without any external pressure. Effectively, the hereafter for the individual starts right after his or her soul departs from the body. Shortly after the burial, two angels come to the grave and ask the following three questions (like a final examination):

Who is your Lord?

What is your religion?

Who is your prophet?

Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) said that the believer would not have difficulties in answering these questions correctly, while the unbeliever would not be able to give the right answers.²⁸ Depending upon the result, a person will begin to either suffer or enjoy his or her stay in the grave. The grave will either expand or contract, to give comfort or torture to its dweller, depending upon what they deserve. (As narrated in hadiths recorded by Bukhari and Ahmad)

6. Belief in predestination

This includes belief in the following:

- a) Allah knows everything. His knowledge is not bound by time. Past, present and future are all known to Him.
- b) Everything which takes place is already written in a book called the 'Preserved Tablet'.
- c) Allah has created everything, including the actions of people, the good and the bad. However, He has commanded people to do good deeds and forbade them from doing evil.

²⁸ A believer believes in all the six articles of faith.

- d) One must believe that everything that happens in this universe is happening with Allah's permission, and nothing can take place against His Will.

It should be noted that Allah's prior knowledge of things does not mean that human beings have no choice. Human beings choose, but Allah knows their choices prior to their choosing and actions. He merely **allows** them to follow through with their decisions.

10. The Five Pillars of Islam

Worship in Islam is an all-inclusive term for all actions and statements that Allah loves and approves of. Every virtuous action which is performed with the intention of carrying out the commandments of Allah and seeking His pleasure is considered to be an act of worship. Islam is built on five acts of worship which are the foundations from which all deeds emanate. They stand as the framework of spiritual life on which the structure of Islam rests. They are the following:

1. The declaration of the two testimonies of faith

“I testify that there is no deity²⁹ worthy of worship except Allah, and that Muhammad is His slave and messenger.”³⁰ The sincere declaration of this double testimony (also referred to as the testimony of monotheism) and adherence to this teachings automatically brings one within the fold of Islam and dying while believing it guarantees one a place in paradise. This is

29 “Deity” is defined as ‘an object of worship’.

30 In Arabic: *Ash-hadu al-lâ ilâha illâ Allah, wa ash-hadu annâ Muhammadan ‘Abduhu wa Rasooluhu.*

why this testimony is considered to be the cornerstone of Islam. The acceptance of this belief distinguishes the Muslim from the non-Muslim. Hence, all actions depend upon this pillar; deeds (no matter how great) are of no avail to a person if he or she does not utter this testimony. However, there are many acts which may contradict this declaration and expel its doer from Islam as quickly as he or she came in. The most serious of those acts is worshipping other than Allah whether in the form of supplication, prayer or other acts that signify worship or belief in other than Allah.

2. Prayers

Formal prayers are prescribed five times daily as a duty to Allah at the following times: dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset and nightfall. A Muslim may offer formal prayers almost anywhere as long as the location is clean. Muslim males are enjoined to pray in congregation in a mosque, while females are encouraged to pray in their homes. Prayer provides humans with regular contact with Allah, which helps them avoid evil. Furthermore, it is symbolic of equality of poor and rich, ruler and subject, dark-skinned and fair-skinned. Human beings from every conceivable background stand together, united in rows, shoulder to shoulder, and prostrate themselves before Allah. Prayer strengthens the belief in Allah and elevates the human being to a higher morality. It helps to purify the heart and

prevent temptation towards wrongdoing and evil. This act of worship compels the believers to remember their Lord no matter where they are, night or day. In this way, prayer is continuously taking place throughout the entire world at any given moment.

3. *Zakâh* (Obligatory charity)

Every Muslim whose net annual savings are above a certain specified minimum must pay an annual amount of 2.5% of those savings to the poor and the needy people in the community. *Zakâh* fosters generosity and helps purify the soul of selfishness and greed. *Zakâh* also helps reduce resentment and envy between the poor and the rich members of the society. Islam is a practical religion. Not only does it safeguard the average individual and his or her rights, it protects the rights of the weaker members of the community as well.

4. Fasting the month of Ramadan

Fasting in Islam means abstinence from food, drink and sexual acts from dawn to sunset. It is an annual obligation during the month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. Fasting was imposed on former communities of believers in earlier divine religions. The Qur'an states that the main purpose of fasting is to help us be more conscious of

Allah and more obedient to Him. It teaches sincerity and engenders devotion. It helps us develop a sense of social conscience, patience, self-restraint, will power and compassion for needy members of the society.

Someone might ask: Why has Allah, in His wisdom, prescribed fasting for many nations?

The answer is that the purpose of fasting is clearly defined as being for the development of Allah-consciousness (piety) in the believer's heart, since only Allah knows who is actually fasting and who is not. Consequently, the one who is fasting refrains from eating and drinking based on an awareness of Allah. Regular fasting enhances that awareness, which subsequently leads to the implanting of righteousness in the heart of the individual.

As a secondary benefit, fasting is very beneficial to one's health. It purifies the body of toxins; it is a rest from the useless waste cluttering the body. It allows the body to recuperate and heal. It trains the body, as well as the mind, to function with an amount of food that is sufficient. Also, the needs of basic instincts of survival are kept in check, and when the individual is able to control these, other needs will be easier to control. In return for this sacrifice, Allah grants the believers great rewards and forgiveness of their sins.

5. Hajj (Pilgrimage to Makkah)

The Hajj is obligatory for every Muslim once in a lifetime, if one can afford it financially and bear it physically. During the Hajj, Muslims from all corners of the world meet in an international congregation dedicated to the worship of Allah. It is a great lesson in patience. The huge gatherings for the Hajj are a reminder of the Day of Judgement when all of humankind will gather for their reckoning. It emphasizes the belief that all Muslims are brothers and sisters, irrespective of their geographical, cultural, racial or social origins.³¹

31 It should be noted that the five pillars have high importance in Islam; learning and practicing them are priorities for every Muslim, whereas everything else can be learned gradually, with patience and dedication.

11. The Meaning of Worship in Islam

The meaning of worship is, simply, total submission and complete obedience to Allah's commandments in belief, intentions, statements, and actions. This is achieved by striving to do what Allah has encouraged, avoiding what He has forbidden, and worshipping Him alone according to His teachings. This is the true meaning of the **worship** of Allah or 'slavery to Allah' in Islam. May Allah enable his followers to achieve this level of worship.

12. The Moral System in Islam

Islam has unique moral teachings. These teachings call for strengthening the relationship between humans and their Lord, as well as with one another. They also call for people to correct and straighten themselves, both inwardly and outwardly.

12.1 Relation with the Lord

In the Qur'an, Allah calls people to correct and strengthen their relationship with Him and draw close to Him through spiritual and physical acts of worship, such as prayer, Hajj, supplication, and charity. In addition, the Qur'an calls us to seek knowledge about Allah through His names and attributes. This instils fear and awe of the Lord in people's hearts and establishes discipline in applying Allah's commands and prohibitions.

The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) also instructed people to remember Allah at all times and in every situation. This creates a permanent connection between people and their Lord and instils stability, strength and tranquillity in their hearts. It is one of the means of protecting against evil and vice, since a Muslim will be reminded constantly that Allah is watching his or her every action. The Prophet (blessings and

peace be upon him), for example, instructed for specific invocations to be uttered at the time of sleep, before entering the lavatory, before sexual intercourse, while travelling, when in fear, upon entering or leaving one's house, first thing in the morning and in the afternoon, on being afflicted by distress, anxiety or misfortune, when burdened by debt or poverty, upon entering a graveyard, when stopping for a rest or setting up camp, and in many other situations.

12.2 Relations with people - general

Concerning a person's relationship with others, the Qur'an promotes behaviour which strengthens and reinforces social relationships such as the importance given to the role of the family. Treating parents kindly, maintaining good relations with other family members, seeing to the rights and needs of spouses and children and dealing with them with love and mercy, and supporting orphans and the weaker members of society are all obligatory. Conversely, disobeying parents, severing family ties, neglect or abuse of spouses and children, and social isolation are all prohibited.

In addition, the Qur'an instructs that all people should be treated with high moral behaviour and noble manners. One is encouraged to smile, forgive, return harm with good, and have patience when dealing with other Muslims. Since this high code

of moral behaviour is quite trying, Allah has promised immense reward for the one that achieves this.

The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) instructed people to adopt good manners when in gatherings, such as not raising one's voice, respecting elders, being gentle with youngsters, greeting those present by saying, "*Assalâmu alaykum wa rahmatuallâh wa barakâtuhu*," which means 'may the peace, mercy and blessings of Allah be upon you'. Islam also demands that we guard our tongues against saying negative things about others, even if what we wanted to say was true.

Islam also enjoins that agreements and contracts must be fulfilled, entrusted items returned, and rulers obeyed. It enjoins noble characteristics just as it forbids vileness, baseness, crime, oppression, hostility, aggression, and all other blameworthy and reprehensible qualities.

12.3 Relations with parents

Islam highly recommends kindness to parents. This command is mentioned eight times in the Qur'an. In one of the verses, Allah said to Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him):

{And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be dutiful to your parents. If one or both of them

become old, do not say to them a word of disrespect nor shout at them, but address them in terms of honour. And be highly submissive out of mercy, and pray for them saying: My Lord, bestow on them your mercy as they brought me up when I was a child.} (*Qur'an* 17: 23-24)

<<A man asked Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him): Whom should I honour most?

The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) replied: Your mother.

Then the man questioned: And who comes next?

The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) answered: Your mother.

Then the man inquired again: And who comes next?

The Prophet responded: Your mother.

Then the man queried again: And who comes next?

The Prophet replied: Your father.>> (Bukhari and Muslim)

12.4 Relations with relatives

Kindness towards relatives has been promoted by most major religions. Islam, however, takes this aspect to a new dimension. Relatives have specific rights laid out by the Sharia (Islamic law). We are obliged to assist our relatives by economic as well as social means. The rights of relatives are

based on nearness in blood relationship. This can be seen mostly in the rights of inheritors, which are specifically laid out in the Qur'an. The Qur'an goes a step further, even assigning rights to foster relations. A Muslim is not allowed to make a bequest that excludes any of his or her relatives who have been given a share in the inheritance. Furthermore, even the amount of charity one can assign has been limited; the rights of the relatives must be fulfilled first.

A Muslim must treat all relatives with utmost respect and kindness, whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims. A Muslim is not allowed to boycott his or her relatives or cut off relations with them. Muslims are encouraged to keep in contact with them even if these relatives abandon one. Indeed, maintaining family ties is of such great importance that a Muslim is greatly rewarded for doing any good actions that promote this.

12.5 Relations with neighbours

Islam encourages treating neighbours very kindly. There is a verse in the Qur'an that sums this all up:

{...[Show] kindness unto parents, and unto near kindred, and orphans, and the needy, and unto the neighbour who is related

[to you] and the neighbour who is not related, and the fellow-traveller and the wayfarer...} (*Qur'an* 4: 36)³²

Also, the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) said:

<<(The Angel) Gabriel continued to urge me to treat neighbours kindly and politely, so much that I thought he would order me to make them my heirs.>> (Bukhari and Muslim)

The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) also said:

<<Anyone who believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm his neighbour, and anyone who believes in Allah and the Last Day should entertain guests generously, and anyone who believes in Allah and the Last Day should say what is good or keep quiet.>> (Bukhari and Muslim)

One of the Prophet's neighbours used to throw trash on him regularly, as he passed by. Once, when she did not do this, he inquired about her, concerned that something was wrong. He found her ill in bed, and when she thought he would display anger or vengeance, she was surprised to find him merciful, despite her rude behaviour towards him. She then embraced

32 The translation of the meaning of this verse was taken from *The Glorious Qur'an*, translated (meanings rendered) by Muhammad M. Pickthall. (Editor)

Islam because of his kindness. Remember, kindness to neighbours is rewarded by Allah.

12.6 Food - Moral conduct

The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) taught many practical good manners, including the virtue of adopting the correct manners for eating and drinking. These include eating with one's right hand and not finding fault with the food but rather being satisfied with it. If you like the food, you should eat it, but if you have no appetite for it, you should leave it in the dish without criticizing it. This is both out of respect for the blessing of the food and in order to avoid hurting the feelings of the person who has cooked it or offered it. It is also preferred for us to eat with others and not alone, either by eating with family or by inviting a poor person to eat with us. '*Bismillâh*' (with the name of Allah I start) is said before beginning to eat, and '*Alhamdulillah*' (all praise belongs to Allah) is said after the meal, in order that people remember the blessing they have been given and the One who provided it. The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) also prohibited people from blowing on food or drink or breathing onto it, out of respect for others who may be sharing it and to avoid the spread of contagious diseases.

12.7 Hygiene - Islamic moral conduct

Islam also enjoins both physical and spiritual cleanliness. It encourages that we keep our bodies clean, along with our clothes and our shoes. Islam has guided Muslims for their well-being, down to the minute details. For example, a Muslim is encouraged to wash thoroughly after using the toilet, clean the teeth often (especially with the *siwâk*, or toothbrush), and shower after sexual relations.

12.8 Spiritual - Islamic moral conduct

Concerning spiritual purity, the Qur'an instructs that the soul should be straightened and corrected and that the heart should be purified from spite, malice, jealousy, pride and inequity. It calls for integrity of heart and love, affection and humility towards people. It instructs that the tongue should be purified from lying, backbiting, slander, and insult. It should then be replaced with truthfulness and softness in speech. Islam encourages unity, so much so that a Muslim is encouraged to give as many excuses as he or she could for suspected bad behaviour or speech on the part of his or her fellow Muslims. Also, the wealth, property, and life of a Muslim are held sacred: this means that no one else has the right to interfere with these without the Muslim's express permission. The enormity of sins such as slander and backbiting is emphasized in many verses of

the Qur'an, and a chapter of the Qur'an (chapter 104) is dedicated to this very subject.

We should restrain our eyes from looking at that to which they are not entitled (such as the private parts of others), and we should keep our ears from listening to loose and immoral talk, including lewd lyrics.

The Qur'an praises and encourages knowledge and criticizes ignorance, saying that it leads to destruction. It commands people to action and dynamism while prohibiting wasteful talk and laziness.

12.9 Family structure and rights

It also orders that children should be born within a legal marriage and that sexual desire should be controlled and contained within these parameters.

To uphold the family structure and the well-being of society, the Qur'an prohibits fornication because it is one of the worst assaults on a person's honour and dignity. It is something which causes disease and produces children who are looked upon by society as 'illegitimate'. Likewise, the Qur'an forbids everything which leads to fornication, so it prohibits looking at

pornographic pictures and being alone with women who are not close relatives.³³ It also commands that men should lower their gaze from looking or staring at women whom they have no right to look at. Muslim women thus enjoy protection and security and can be confident that a Muslim man will not even look at her if not permitted to. The same prohibitions hold for women gazing at men unlawfully.

12.10 Decency and veiling

With this same reasoning, Islam enjoins morality in behaviour and appearance. Fashions that reduce women to sex objects are not acceptable. Islamic veiling is a means of protection from unwanted external attention. Allah says in the Qur'an:

{O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves [part] of their outer garments. That is more suitable that they will be known and not be abused...} (*Qur'an* 33: 59)

That means, women may wear whatever they wish in the privacy of their own homes and in the presence of their

33 Close relatives are men's mothers, daughters, sisters, nieces, and wives.

husbands, where they will receive only the type of attention they desire.

12.11 The rights of the wife

Islam urges men to be kind to their wives. Allah says in the Qur'an:

{... He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy...} (*Qur'an 30: 21*)

Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) said:

<<The best of you are those who are kindest to their wives.>>
(Recorded by Ibn Mâjah with a sound chain of narration)

This is because one can be kind in public where everyone is watching, yet be mean and cruel at home. Islam holds Muslims accountable even in this situation, where their true nature may be revealed. This is the true test of moral behaviour.

In Islam, the wife retains her independent legal status and family name. She is not the property of her husband in any way, but she has many rights due to her from him, as he does from her.

In Islam, it is the husband's obligation to give his wife a valuable gift at the time of marriage. The groom must present the bride with a marriage dowry. The bride retains her dowry even if she is later divorced. The wife is never obliged to act as a co-provider for the family unless she herself voluntarily chooses to do so. It is the husband's sole responsibility to support his family financially. Islam gives women (whether married, divorced or single) the right to inherit, own and trade.

12.12 Polygyny

Polygyny (having more than one wife) is permitted in Islam as a solution to social problems. It addresses the problem of orphans and widows in society. It is also a solution which promotes honesty and matrimonial trustworthiness (especially within the family) for those who have a desire or need for more than one sexual partner, instead of having one wife and taking mistresses. Thus, instead of having an extramarital affair, Islam requires the man to take responsibility for his actions. Islam limits polygyny to a maximum of four wives at one time. However, it requires the husband to maintain absolute equality in his treatment of his wives, caring for each financially and emotionally in the exact same manner. It should be noted that if a woman is unhappy in this situation, and she fears that she will be unable to fulfil her responsibilities to her husband as well as

to Allah, she could opt out of the marriage. A man is not allowed to force her to remain married.

12.13 Divorce rules

Islam is a religion of moderation. Although divorce is allowed when necessary, family unity is encouraged. For example, in the event of a divorce, the two spouses are encouraged to bring arbitrators from their family members to help reconcile them. Islam discourages divorce, yet recognizes the rights of both partners to end their matrimonial relationship if circumstances dictate it. Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) said:

<<A believing man should not hate a believing woman. If he dislikes one of her traits he will be pleased with another.>>
(Recorded by Muslim)

Therefore Islam is realistic about the option of divorce, yet also encourages solutions to hold the marriage together.

It is clear that women in Islam are honoured for their roles as mothers. Islam acknowledges that a woman sacrifices her life for her children, and thus, she is given an honour above that of the father.

12.14 Protection of life

The Qur'an also calls for the protection and sanctity of human life and specifically mentions that the taking of an innocent life is one of the worst and most hideous crimes. The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) forbade breaking the bones of a dead person, so what about the taking of an innocent life? The Qur'an prescribes 'a life for a life' and 'an eye for an eye' for all injuries, however large or small, unless the family of the person killed or the injured person accepts financial compensation instead.

12.15 Protection of property

The Qur'an commands that a person's property and wealth should be safe and inviolable and therefore, it prohibits theft, bribery, usury and deception. It calls for moderation in spending and hence, forbids extravagance, lavishness and the squandering of money while at the same time forbidding the hoarding and amassing of wealth. It calls for balance, and commands that people should neither be greedy, stingy and covetous nor extravagant and wasteful. It encourages people to seek their means of livelihood and their provision in lawful ways such as buying, selling and renting (activities that bring financial or material benefit to all parties concerned). As mentioned, Islam also safeguards the rights and needs of the poor, especially those who are relatives or in one's own

community, so that they do not have to go elsewhere to seek help.

12.16 Maintaining health

Islam promotes the protection of good health and has therefore commanded that only wholesome and nutritious food be eaten, and eaten in moderation. It has prohibited the consumption of all harmful food and drink such as pork, carrion, tobacco, alcohol and other intoxicants (mind-altering substances), and so forth. It also prescribes fasting, which has many benefits for the body, especially the digestive system.

12.17 Animal rights

The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) commanded for animals to be treated fairly and with kindness, instructing that they should be fed and watered. He promised that such actions would be rewarded on the Day of Resurrection. He also instructed that they should not be made to carry a burden more than they could bear, nor tormented or caused undue suffering or killed unless they were harmful. If an animal is to be slaughtered as food then it should not be slaughtered in front of other animals. This is to avoid making the animal suffer.

12.18 Rights of the deceased

Islam maintains respect for the person even after death. When a Muslim dies, he or she must be buried according to the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him). The body of the person is washed and perfumed. Then it is wrapped in two pieces of white cloth and the body is buried facing the Kaaba.

We are advised to hold the deceased's body gently to ensure that its bones do not break. Before and after the burial, people are encouraged to pray that Allah forgive the deceased and admit him or her into paradise. Islam prohibits sitting on or walking over the grave, in another sign of respect for the dead.

13 Islam and Other Religions

One may ask, “If all true religions came with the same message, namely the worship of Allah alone, then why do we find such differences between them?” The answer is that the original forms of these earlier messages were either lost or distorted by later generations. Consequently, the pure messages of monotheism became polluted with myths, superstitions, idolatry and irrational philosophical beliefs; hence, those religions no longer represent the embodiment of Allah’s revelations. However, Allah, the Compassionate, did not leave human beings without guidance. He ultimately sent Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) to revive the original message and to call human beings back to the correct path: belief in the unique Oneness of Allah and worship of Him according to His teachings mentioned in the Qur’an. Consequently, Islam is the seal and completion of all religions, the Qur’an is the seal and completion of all revealed books, and Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) is the seal of all prophets - the final prophet.

14 Eleven Facts about Jesus (peace be upon him) and his Mother (Mary) in the Islamic Teachings

The Qur'an does not present a detailed biography of Jesus (peace be upon him). However, it does highlight the important aspects of his birth along with his miracles, his mission and his ascension. The Qur'anic account of Jesus' ministry confirms most of his miracles mentioned in the Bible; it even identifies some which are not mentioned in the Bible. What we know about Prophet Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) can be divided into two topics: his personality and his message. Eleven facts have been detailed below.

What you should know about Jesus (peace be upon him)

14.1 The status of Jesus (peace be upon him) in Islam

Islam teaches that Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) is one of the most respected prophets because of his efforts in spreading the word of Allah. It displays a true spirit of love towards him and his mother, Mary. There is not a single disparaging remark against Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) or any other prophet in the entire Qur'an or other Islamic literature or Islamic history books. An evidence of praise for Jesus (peace be upon him) is the fact that his story along with that of his mother's has been mentioned in three places in the

Qur'an: chapters 3, 4 and 19. In fact, an entire chapter of the Qur'an, (chapter 19), is named after 'Maryam' (Mary) in her honour.³⁴

Another evidence of praise is that the name of Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) has been mentioned 25 times in the Qur'an; this is in contrast to the mention of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), whose name is mentioned only four times. This proves that Islam honours all prophets for the message they have in common; it did not discard one prophet with the advent of another.

Jesus (peace be upon him) has been referred to in the Qur'an with many titles, Ibn Maryam (son of Mary), the

³⁴ Readers should consider that in all of the 66 books of the Protestants and 73 of the Roman Catholics, this honour has not been given to Mary in the Christian Bible. Also, none of those books is named after Mary or her son.

Deedat, *Christ in Islam*, 11.

It is also noteworthy that no chapter in the Qur'an is named after any of Prophet Muhammad's wives or daughters.

Messiah (the anointed one), ‘Abdullâh (slave of Allah),³⁵ and *Rasool Allâh* (the messenger of Allah).

This praise and glorification agrees with what Jesus (peace be upon him) is reported to have said in John 16:14³⁶ describing the prophet who would succeed him: “He will glorify me.”

14.2 The beginning of his lineage

The Qur’anic account of Jesus (peace be upon him) starts with the story of his mother, Mary.

When she conceived her, Mary’s mother vowed to dedicate her unborn child to the worship of Allah and service to Jerusalem.

³⁵ The meaning of slavery is linked to the meaning of worship, which is total submission and complete obedience to Allah's commandments in terms of one’s belief, intentions, statements, and actions. This can be achieved by striving to do what Allah has encouraged, avoiding what He has forbidden, and worshipping Him alone according to His teachings. This is the true meaning of the worship of Allah or ‘slavery to Allah’ in Islam. May Allah enable his followers to achieve this level of worship. Amen.

³⁶ New International Version (NIV) and the King James Version (KJV).

Mary grew up to be very righteous. She dedicated herself to the worship of Allah and was supplied with provision from Him. Therefore, it is no mystery as to why she was chosen to be the mother of Jesus (peace be upon him). The Qur'anic verses inform us:

{[Mention, O Muhammad], when the wife of 'Imrân said: My Lord, indeed I have pledged to You what is in my womb, consecrated [for Your service³⁷], so accept this from me. Indeed, You are the Hearing, the Knowing. But when she delivered her, she said: My Lord, I have delivered a female - and Allah was most knowing of what she delivered - and the male is not like the female; 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]. So her Lord accepted her with good acceptance and caused her to grow in a good manner and put her in the care of Zechariah. Every time Zechariah entered upon her in the prayer chamber, he found with her provision. He said: O Mary, from where is this [coming] to you? She said: It is from Allah. Indeed, Allah provides for whom He wills without account.} (*Qur'an* 3: 35-37)

³⁷ She means the service to Jerusalem.

It is interesting to note that when the mother of Mary delivered her child, she was a bit disappointed to discover that she did not have a son. This was because she had always wished for her child to be dedicated to the worship of Allah. However, little did she know that this very child would be extremely righteous, and end up being the mother of Jesus himself. This was better for her than a son, hence, Allah's words: {...and Allah was most knowing of what she delivered...}

14.3 The status of Mary

Mary, mother of Jesus, is very highly respected in Islam. Her story is an important one that is mentioned several times in the Qur'an. Mary is mentioned by name 31 times in the Qur'an, and in fact an entire chapter of the Qur'an is named after her. This is an honor that not even the women in Prophet Muhammad's family were accorded. Although there are stories and anecdotes in the Qur'an about other women of strong faith, and others of importance in the history of the three Abrahamic religions, none other than Mary is actually mentioned by name.

Allah has said:

{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. 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]...} (*Qur'an* 3: 42-44)

14.4 The news about Jesus (peace be upon him)

When Mary approached adulthood, she was informed about the honour of bearing this noble son well before his birth. It was the angel Gabriel (peace be upon him), who appeared in front of her with this news. The following verses in the Qur'an describe the dialogue between Mary and the angel:

{[And mention] when the angels said: O Mary, indeed Allah gives you good tidings of a word 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.} (*Qur'an* 3: 45-47)

14.5 The birth of Jesus (peace be upon him)

Mary conceived this child miraculously (the first miracle) and retired to a distant place where she waited for the birth of

her child. This amazing story has been related to us in chapter 19 of the Qur'an, titled Maryam (Mary):

{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: O, 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.} (*Qur'an 19: 22-26*)

14.6 Subsequent miracles of Jesus (peace be upon him)

Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) was blessed with the ability to perform many miracles. This supported his claim that he was a prophet sent by Allah. Allah Almighty has said in the Qur'an:

{...And We gave Jesus, the son of Mary, clear proofs and supported him with the pure spirit...} (*Qur'an 2: 87*)

Muslims do not hesitate to accept the fact that Jesus (peace be upon him) performed miracles. At the same time, Muslims do not elevate Jesus (peace be upon him) to the position of Allah or describe him as the 'son of God'. They do not consider

him to be anything more than a divinely-inspired man: a messenger and prophet of Allah.

The same applies to all the other prophets, since many of them were blessed with different miracles as well.

The first miracle associated with Jesus (peace be upon him) was that he was born from a mother without any human intervention (father). Allah gave the divine command 'Be' and he was created.

The Qur'an has mentioned the miraculous creation of both Adam and Jesus in the following verse:

{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.}
(*Qur'an* 3: 59)

The Qur'an has mentioned that Jesus' miraculous birth did not change his status as a human; that is, he did not evolve from a human being to become Allah or a son of Allah. This is because, rationally, if that had been the case, then Adam would have had a greater right to such an honour, since he was born without a human father or mother.

Another miracle was that Allah gave Jesus (peace be upon him) the ability to talk in his infancy, a blessing which helped

save his mother from the harsh slander of her own community. He is one of only three people whom Allah chose for this. This remarkable story has been narrated in the Qur'an:

{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 in the cradle a child? [Jesus] said: Indeed, I am the slave 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 zakâh 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.}
(*Qur'an* 19: 27-33)

Other subsequent miracles performed by Jesus (peace be upon him) have also been mentioned in the Qur'an:

{[The day] when Allah will say: O Jesus, son of Mary, remember My favour upon you and upon your mother when I supported you with the pure spirit and you spoke to the people

in the cradle and in maturity;³⁸ and [remember] when I taught you writing and wisdom,³⁹ the Torah and the Gospel,⁴⁰ and when you designed from clay [what was] like the form of a bird with My permission, then you breathed into it, and it became a bird with My permission; and you healed the blind and the leper with My permission; and when you brought forth the dead with My permission; and when I restrained the children of Israel from [killing] you when you came to them with clear proofs and those who disbelieved among them said: This is not but obvious magic.} (*Qur'an 5: 110*)

Indeed, the Islamic account of the miracles bestowed on Jesus (peace be upon him) describe more miracles than those known to Christians. Also, facts 10 and 11 below are two more miracles associated with Jesus (peace be upon him) and his role as the Messiah.

³⁸ This means that Jesus called people to worship Allah both while he was a baby in the cradle and when he reached adulthood.

³⁹ 'Wisdom' here means the correct and profound understanding of religion.

⁴⁰ It is the original form of revelation given to Jesus. According to Qur'anic exegesis, Jesus had memorized both these scriptures.

An important note

As shown in the previous verse, it was emphasized after mentioning each miracle that whenever Jesus (peace be upon him) performed a miracle, he informed people that it was by Allah's permission. He made it clear to his followers that he was not performing the miracle by himself. As Dr. Philips points out:

There are texts in the New Testament which confirm that Jesus did not act on his own. Jesus is quoted in John 5:30 saying: I can of mine own self do nothing...In acts 2:22, Paul writes: Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs **which God did through him** in your midst, as you yourselves know...⁴¹

14.7 Human qualities of Jesus (peace be upon him)

Islam forbids the deification of human beings (going to excess in the exaltation of humans-prophets or otherwise-to the point where they perceive them as divine). Addressing both the Jews and the Christians, Allah has said in the Qur'an:

⁴¹ Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 45.

{O People of the Scripture,⁴² 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. Never would the Messiah disdain to be a slave of Allah, nor would the angels near [to Him]. And whoever disdains His worship and is arrogant - He will gather them to Himself all together. And as for those who believed and did righteous deeds, He will give them in full their rewards and grant them extra from His bounty. But as for those who disdained and were arrogant, He will punish them with a painful punishment, and they will not find for themselves besides Allah any protector or helper. O humankind, there has come to you a conclusive proof from your

⁴² Allah begins this sacred verse with a word of respect, whereby the Jews and the Christians have been addressed as learned people, who have received revelation in the form of scripture.

Lord, and We have sent down to you a clear light. So those who believe in Allah and hold fast to Him - He will admit them to mercy from Himself and bounty and guide them to Himself on a straight path.} (*Qur'an* 4: 171-175)

Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) also warned against the deification of humans. He said:

<<O people, beware of going to excesses in religion, for verily people before you were destroyed for going to excesses in religion.>> (Recorded by Ibn Mâjah and an-Nasâ'i with a sound chain of narration)

Being a human prophet, Jesus (peace be upon him) did not ask people to worship him. Allah has informed us in the Qur'an that on the Day of Judgement, He will gather all the nations in front of Himself and will ask the messengers how they were received by their peoples and what they said to them. Among those who are going to be questioned is Jesus (peace be upon him):

{And [beware the day] when Allah will say: O Jesus, son of Mary, did you say to the people: Take me and my mother as deities besides Allah? He will say: Exalted are You! It was not for me to say that to which I have no right. If I had said it, You would have known it. You know what is within myself, and I do not know what is within Yourself. Indeed, it is You who is Knower of the unseen. I said not to them except what You

commanded me - to worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. And I was a witness over them as long as I was among them; but when You took me up, You were the Observer over them, and You are, over all things, Witness. If You should punish them - indeed they are Your slaves; but if You forgive them - indeed it is You who is the Exalted in Might, the Wise. Allah will say: This is the day when the truthful will benefit from their truthfulness. For them are gardens [in paradise] beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever, Allah being pleased with them, and they with Him. That is the great attainment.} (*Qur'an* 5: 116-119)

14.8 Jesus' prophethood

The Islamic view of Jesus (peace be upon him) is a moderate one, as it lies between the two extremes. The Jews rejected Jesus (peace be upon him) in his role as a prophet of Allah and called him an impostor. The Christians, on the other hand, considered him to be the son of God (Allah) and 'God-incarnate' in some cases; thus, they began worshipping him. Islam considers Jesus (peace be upon him) to be one of the greatest prophets of Allah. Allah has said:

{The Messiah, son of Mary, was not but a messenger; [other] messengers have passed on before him. And his mother was a

supporter of truth.⁴³ They both used to eat food. Look how We make clear to them the signs; then look how they are deluded.} (Qur'an 5: 75)

14.9 The mission of Jesus (peace be upon him)

Now one might ask: what was the real mission of Jesus (peace be upon him) according to the Qur'an?

The answer is: Jesus (peace be upon him) propagated the message of monotheism: worship of Allah alone as prescribed in the Gospels. He worked hard to propagate this message, and invited everyone of the people of Israel to it. Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an that Jesus will say on the Day of Judgement when He asks him whether he asked the Christians' to worship him and his mother:

{I said not to them except what You commanded me - to worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord...} (Qur'an 5: 117)

Refer for details to chapter 17: "Islam's Revival of the Basic Teachings of Jesus (peace be upon him)," Subheading 17.3: "Revival of the doctrine of monotheism."

⁴³ She never claimed that she was a mother of God, or that her son was a God. She was a pious, virtuous woman.

The prophecy of Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) as a successor to Christ was a part of Jesus' message. Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an:

{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.} (*Qur'an 61: 6*)

Though the Bible has been altered a great deal, it contains remnants of the original true message revealed to Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him). In this regard, the messenger of whom Jesus gave glad tidings and prophecies is still referred to in both the old and new testaments of the Bible.

Jesus was a link in a long line of prophets and messengers sent by Allah to various civilizations and nations, whenever they needed guidance or deviated from the teachings of Allah. Jesus was sent by Allah especially to preach to the Jews, who had deviated from the teachings of Moses and other messengers. Just as he was supported by Allah miraculously in his conception, birth and childhood, he was also supported by

numerous miracles to prove that he was a messenger from Allah. However, a majority of Jews rejected his ministry.

It must be noted that Jesus Christ (peace be upon him), son of Mary, was the last in the line of prophets sent to the Jewish people.

14.10 Jesus' ascension

Jesus' ascension is the last miracle which was given to him while he was on the earth. The Jews attempted to kill him. Allah replaced him with another person who resembled him. Jesus (peace be upon him) was neither killed nor crucified; rather, he was raised to Allah. It was the other person, bearing resemblance to him, who was killed. To this day, the Christians believe that Jesus himself was the one who was killed. Allah has said in the Qur'an:

{And [for] their saying: Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of Allah. And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them. And indeed, those who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except the following of assumption. And they did not kill him, for certain. Rather, Allah raised him to Himself. And ever is Allah Exalted in Might and Wise.} (*Qur'an 4: 157-158*)

14.11 The second coming of Jesus (peace be upon him)

In the Islamic teachings, there is clear evidence indicating the second coming of Jesus (peace be upon him) before the final hour; this is an additional and final miracle for Jesus. He will return not as God, as the Christians believe, but as Jesus, Allah's messenger and slave, as he has always been. The purpose of his coming will be to correct the misconceptions surrounding his message and mission. According to a statement of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), he will stay for forty years, and these will be the happiest years of life on this earth. During that time, those who had misconceptions about him will correct their understanding and believe in him as a messenger, not as the son of God (Allah).

It was narrated by Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him)⁴⁴ that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace be upon him) said:

⁴⁴ Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) was one of the closest Companions of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him). It should be noted that the words, actions, and tacit approvals of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) have been narrated by the Companions and have subsequently been

<<By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, it will not be long before the son of Mary descends amongst you, a just judge and ruler. He will break the cross, kill the swine and abolish the tribute paid by Jews and Christians. Money will be so plentiful that no one will accept it. At that time, a single prostration will be better than this world and everything in it.⁴⁵

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) then said: Read if you wish (the following verse of the Qur'an):

{And there is none from the People of the Scripture⁴⁶ but that he will surely believe in Jesus before his death. And on the Day of Resurrection he will be against them a witness.}
(Qur'an 4: 159)>> (Bukhari)

recorded. A Companion, according to the majority of scholars, is one who has met personally with Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) during his lifetime and was a Muslim at the time of meeting him. Thus, one will find much of the history of the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) through such narrations, called the Hadith.

⁴⁵ This is because with the advent of Jesus, people will know with certainty that the final hour is very near.

⁴⁶ People of the Scripture: Jews and Christians

In another narration, Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

<<Among the things which Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) was recorded to have said regarding Prophet Jesus' return is the following: There will be no prophet between me and Jesus, and he will return. When he does, you will know him. He will be a well-built man of ruddy complexion and he will descend wearing a two-piece garment. His hair will look wet, though no water touched it. He will fight people to establish Islam and he will break the cross, kill the swine and cancel the *jizyah*.⁴⁷ During his time, Allah will destroy all religions except Islam and the Antichrist⁴⁸ will be killed. Jesus will remain on earth for forty years, and when he dies, Muslims will pray the funeral prayer for him.>> (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

⁴⁷ Jizyah: It is a tax taken from the Christians and the Jews in lieu of living under Muslim protection.

⁴⁸ The Antichrist is also called the 'false Christ'; he is a man who will claim that he is Allah, and he will be followed by ignorant people, but Prophet Jesus will find him and kill him.

Jesus' return will be one of the signs of the Day of Judgement. It will be the final miracle given to him before he dies.

15 The Amazing Prophecies of Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) in the Bible:⁴⁹

"Twenty-seven Proofs from the Bible on Muhammad's Prophethood

The Biblical prophecies about the advent of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) prove the truth of Islam for people who believe in the Bible. Before addressing these prophecies, the following points should be considered by the readers:

Islamic teachings gave a criterion on the basis of which portions or passages from the Bible could be either accepted or rejected. This criterion has been described in the following verse of the Qur'an:

{And We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], the book in truth, confirming that which preceded it of the scripture and as a criterion over it...} (*Qur'an* 5: 48)

49 This chapter was compiled from *Muhammad in the Bible* by Dr. Jamal Badawi and *What the Bible says about Muhammad* by Dr. Ahmed Deedat.

This verse emphasizes two main aspects of the Qur'an:

- a) The Qur'an confirms only those teachings or passages of the previous scriptures which have remained intact.
- b) The Qur'an is the final, complete, authoritative and authentic revelation from Allah. It is the final arbiter and the only criterion to correct any inaccuracy or misinterpretation which might have occurred in the transmission of scriptures throughout the ages. It helps to discover, expose, and disclose human additions or interpolations of previous revelations prior to its revelation (the Qur'an). Indeed, one of the names of the Qur'an is *al-Furqân* (the criterion which distinguishes between right and wrong, truth and falsehood).

It follows, therefore, that a Muslim has no reason to reject the essence of any passage in the Bible if such a passage is confirmed by the Qur'an. For example, we read in the New Testament, a reiteration of one of the Ten Commandments:

“And Jesus answered him. The first of all commandments is hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord.” (Mark 12:29)

A Muslim who reads this passage in the Qur'an can find no objection to its essence. After all, the Qur'an confirms:

{Say: He is Allah, [who is] One.} (*Qur'an* 112: 1)

If, however, a Muslim reads in the Bible (or other previous scriptures for that matter) accusations of major moral sins levied against great prophets or doctrines which are totally negated in the Qur'an, he or she can accept only the Qur'anic version as the original unadulterated truth, revealed by Allah.

Likewise, if the Bible (or other scriptures) contain apparent prophecies about the advent of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), and if the Qur'an confirms that fact, then there is nothing unusual or objectionable in referring to such prophecies.

Describing true believers, the Qur'an has stated:

{Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered⁵⁰ prophet, whom they find written in what they have of the Torah and the

⁵⁰ Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) was illiterate; he could neither read nor write. No human had ever taught him a word. The wisdom behind his unlettered status is to repel false accusations that the Qur'an was written or authored by Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him). It shall be noted that there were no Arabic-language Bibles in existence in the 6th century of the Christian era, when Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) lived and preached. Indeed, Prophet Muhammad (blessings and

Gospel, who enjoins upon them what is right and forbids them what is wrong and makes lawful for them the good things and prohibits for them the evil and relieves them of their burden and the shackles which were upon them. So they who have believed in him, honoured him, supported him and followed the light which was sent down with him - it is those who will be the successful.} (*Qur'an* 7: 157)

The original Bible given to Prophets Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them) contained a complete and clear profile of the advent of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him). Even in its present form(s), the Bible still contains several such prophecies, as will be shown in the forthcoming chapters. Quoting Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him), the Qur'an has stated:

{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

peace be upon him) was educated through the Qur'an, revealed to him by His Creator, containing things that no other human being could have known. Additionally, the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace be upon him) was the best of humanity in every aspect of his character, including his intellectual skills.

when he came to them with clear evidences, they said: This is obvious magic.} (*Qur'an 61: 6*)

The main attributes of Prophet Muhammad's profile in the Bible

The main elements in Prophet Muhammad's profile, as depicted in the Bible, are the following seven:

1. His name
2. His characteristics
3. The location from which he was to emerge
4. The message to be revealed through him
5. Fulfilment of prophecies which he foretold
6. The time when he was to appear
7. The unique proof
8. Consistency of Muhammad's teachings with Jesus' teachings

15.1 His name

Proof 1: Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) is mentioned by name in ten locations in the Christian Gospel

Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) is mentioned by name in ten locations in the Gospel of Barnabas, in chapters 39, 41, 44, 54, 55, 97, 112, 136, 165, and 220.⁵¹

Consider the following explicit quote from chapter 165:

The disciples answered: O Master, who shall that man be of whom you speak, who shall come into the world? Jesus answered with joy of heart: He is Muhammad; Messenger of God, and when he comes into the world, even as the rain makes the earth to bear fruit when for a long time it has not rained, even so shall he be occasion of good works among men, through the abundant mercy which he shall bring. For he is a white cloud full of the mercy of God, which mercy God shall sprinkle upon the faithful like rain.

It is a fact that the Trinitarian church has done its utmost to obliterate all existing copies of the Gospel of Barnabas and to either hide it from the masses or to label it a forgery.

15.2 His characteristics

In Deuteronomy 18, Moses (peace be upon him) stated that God told him:

⁵¹ The Gospel of Barnabas is not included in either the Protestant or Catholic Bible. (Editor)

I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers;⁵² I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account. (Deuteronomy 18:18-19)

From these verses, we can conclude that the prophet mentioned in this prophecy must have the following three characteristics:

Firstly, he will be like Moses (peace be upon him).

Secondly, he will descend from the brothers of the Israelites, the Ishmaelites.

Thirdly, God will put His words into the mouth of this prophet, and he will declare what God commands him.

Let us examine these three characteristics in depth:

⁵² When these words were spoken, they were addressed to the Israelites. The most notable ‘brethren’ of Israelites (descendants of Abraham through his second son Isaac) are the Ishmaelites (descendants of Abraham through his first son Ishmael).

Proof 2: A prophet like Moses (peace be upon him)

There were hardly any two prophets who were as similar as Prophets Moses (peace be upon him) and Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him). Both were given a comprehensive law and code of life. Both encountered their enemies and were victorious in miraculous ways. Both were accepted as prophets and statesmen. Both migrated, following conspiracies to assassinate them. Analogies between Moses (peace be upon him) and Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) overlook not only the above similarities, but other crucial ones as well. These include the natural birth, the family life, and even death; both Moses (peace be upon him) and Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) died the natural death.

Some people believe that this prophecy refers to Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him). However, this cannot be true. The following ten points of comparison between Prophets Moses (peace be upon him), Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) and Jesus (peace be upon him) demonstrate that Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) does not fit this particular prophecy. It would clarify the identity of “that Prophet” who has come after Moses (peace be upon him). This comparison is self-evident. Following are the details:

1. Birth

The birth of Jesus (peace be upon him) was miraculous. According to Christian and Muslim beliefs, he was miraculously born of the Virgin Mary.⁵³ However, both Moses (peace be upon him) and Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) were born in the usual manner; the physical

⁵³ In the Gospel of St. Matthew 1:18, "...before they came together, [Joseph the Carpenter and Mary] she was found with child by the Holy Ghost."

St. Luke tells us that when the good news of the birth of a holy son was announced to her, Mary reasoned:

...how this shall be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee...
(Luke 1:35)

The Holy Qur'an confirms the miraculous birth of Jesus in noble and sublime terms. See chapter 14: "Eleven Facts about Jesus (peace be upon him) and his Mother (Mary) in the Islamic Teachings."

It should be noted that it is not necessary for Allah to plant a seed in any human or animal. He merely wills it and it comes into being. This is the correct view of the conception and birth of Jesus.

association of man and woman. Therefore, Jesus is not like Moses; however, Muhammad is like Moses.

2. Parents

Moses had a father and a mother; so did Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him). Jesus, however, had only a mother and no human father. Therefore, Jesus is not like Moses, but Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) is.

3. Marital status

Both Moses (peace be upon him) and Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) got married and had children. There is no record of a marriage and offspring in the case of Jesus (peace be upon him). Therefore, Jesus is not like Moses, but Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) is.

4. Death

Both Moses (peace be upon him) and Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) died due to natural causes and were buried. The end of the mission of Jesus (peace be upon him) on the earth was unusual; being raised up to the heavens according to Islamic belief and crucifixion according to Christian belief.⁵⁴ According to Christians, Jesus died for the sins of the world, but Moses did not have to die for the sins of

⁵⁴ This subject will be discussed in chapter 16.

the world. He and Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) died due to natural causes. Therefore, Jesus is not like Moses, but Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) is.

5. Prophethood

Jesus was regarded by later Christians as the Son of God and not as a prophet of God (Allah), as Moses and Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) were. Therefore, Jesus is not like Moses, but Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) is.

6. Acceptance/rejection of prophethood by people (moral success)

Unlike Jesus, Moses and Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) were accepted as prophets by their people in their very lifetime. No doubt, the Jews gave endless trouble to Moses and they wandered in the wilderness. He left Egypt when he learned of a plot to kill him; he went to Medyan, where he was welcomed and reassured by Jethro. However, ultimately, the Jews, as a nation, acknowledged that Moses was a Messenger of Allah sent to them. The Arabs, too, made Muhammad's life terribly difficult during the first ten years of his mission. He suffered very badly at their hands and left his home town Makkah, upon learning about a plot to kill him. He went to

Yathrib, which was later called Madinah, after 13 years of preaching in Makkah. However, before his demise, the Arab nation as a whole accepted him as the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace be upon him).

On the other hand, Jesus (peace be upon him) was not accepted by the people to whom he was sent. According to the Bible, “He [Jesus] came unto his own, but his own people received him not.” (John 1:11) Even today, after two thousand years, his own people - the Jews, as a whole - still reject him. Thus, from this aspect, Jesus is not like Moses, but Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) is.

7. Confrontation of the enemy

Moses encountered his enemies (the Pharaoh’s army) who sought to destroy him and his followers before they could escape to the Red Sea. Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) also encountered his enemies (the pagan Arabs), who sought to destroy him and his followers in several battles. No such encounter was reported in the case of Jesus. On the contrary, Jesus was reported to have commanded his disciple, Simon Peter, to put his sword back into its sheath when he attempted to defend Jesus at the time of his arrest. From this aspect as well, Jesus is not like Moses, but Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) is.

8. Victory

Moses' encounter with his enemies ended with a military and moral victory. His enemies drowned, and Moses and his followers were saved.

Muhammad's encounters with his enemies also ended with his final military and moral victory over them. He and his followers re-entered Makkah, the city and centre of plotting against him. Impressed with his truthfulness and magnanimity, the great majority of his former enemies chose to become Muslims and his ardent supporters. Jesus' victory against his enemies was only a moral victory, which did not involve an immediate military victory over them at the same time. Therefore, Jesus is not like Moses, but Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) is.

9. Acceptance

During his lifetime, after his people's initial resistance and scepticism, Moses was accepted by his people as a Prophet, not withstanding certain lapses (such as the worship of the golden

calf).⁵⁵ Also, after initial resistance, Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) was enthusiastically accepted as a Prophet and a leader, also during his lifetime. Until the end however, and with the exception of a few followers, Jesus (peace be upon him) was rejected by his people (the Israelites). The Christian Gospel clearly confirms this: when Jesus (peace be upon him) was dragged before the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, and charged with sedition, he made a convincing point in his defence to refute the false charge.

He said: My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now is my kingdom not from hence. (John 18:36)

This convinced Pilate (a pagan) that although Jesus (peace be upon him) might not be in full possession of his mental faculty, he was not a danger to his rule. Jesus claimed a spiritual kingdom only; he only claimed to be a Prophet. Therefore, Jesus is not like Moses, but Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) is.

⁵⁵ An Israelite was found picking up firewood on Sabbath Day, and Moses had him stoned to death. (Numbers 15:36) There are other crimes, also mentioned in the Bible, for which capital punishment was inflicted on the Jews at the behest of Moses.

10. Preservation of teachings

The teachings revealed to Moses were available in a written form in his lifetime. The Qur'an revealed to Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) was also written down in its entirety during his lifetime and under his supervision. The teachings of Jesus, however, were not written during his lifetime. Even the earliest Gospel was written down many years after him. Therefore, Jesus is not like Moses, but Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) is.

With these ten points of comparison between Moses (peace be upon him), Jesus (peace be upon him) and Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), any rational person will conclude that Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) is the prophet referred to in Deuteronomy 18:18-19, "like unto me (Moses)."

Proof 3: That he will descend from the brothers of the Israelites, the Ishmaelites

The two prophets, Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) and Moses (peace be upon him), were both descended from the brothers of the Israelites. To elaborate, Abraham (peace be upon him) had two wives: Sârah and Hagar. Hagar bore Abraham his first son, Ishmael (peace be upon

him),⁵⁶ and then Sârah bore him Isaac (peace be upon him).⁵⁷ Ishmael became the grandfather of the Arab nation, and Isaac became the grandfather of the Jewish nation. The prophet who was prophesized about was not to come from among the Jews themselves, but from among their brothers, the Ishmaelites.⁵⁸ Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), a descendant of Ishmael, is indeed this prophet.

Also, Isaiah 42:1-13 speaks of the servant of God, His ‘chosen one’ and ‘messenger’ who will bring a law. “He will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope.” (Isaiah 42:4)

Verse 11 connects the ‘chosen one’ with the descendants of Kedar. Who was Kedar? According to Genesis 25:13, Kedar

⁵⁶ See (Genesis 16:15).

⁵⁷ See (Genesis 21:2-3).

⁵⁸ According to the *Hebrew Dictionary of the Bible*, ‘brethren’ is the “personification of a group of tribes who were regarded as near kinsmen of the Israelites.” The Bible refers to the Israelites as the brethren of the Ishmaelites (for instance, see Gen.16:12 and Gen.25:18).

was the second son of Ishmael, the ancestor of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him).⁵⁹

⁵⁹ The full text in the chapter of Isaiah 42:1-8 reads:

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations. He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; He will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope. This is what God the LORD says - he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it: I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness. I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.

The same verse prophesies about the ‘chosen one’, whose mission of prophethood would be for all the nations; this fits only Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) whose mission was for all nations, unlike the Hebrew prophets whose missions were limited to Israel:

...he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not fail or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law... Let the desert and its cities lift up their voice, the villages Kedar inhabits.

Proof 4: God (Allah) will put His words in the mouth of this prophet, and he will declare what God commands him.

Allah, the Almighty, sent the angel Gabriel (peace be upon him) to teach Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) the exact words he should repeat to the people. The words are, therefore, not his own; they did not come from his own thoughts. Instead, they were put into his mouth by the angel. To clarify, a teacher is teaching a language to a student; if he asks him to read or repeat after him, is he not putting these unheard words of a foreign tongue into his student’s mouth?

In an identical manner, the words of the Holy Qur’an were revealed.

History tells us that Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) was forty years of age. He was in a cave some three miles north of the city of Makkah. It was the 27th night of the Islamic month of Ramadan. In the cave, the arch-angel Gabriel (peace be upon him) commands him in his mother tongue: *iqrâ'* which means read, proclaim, or recite!

Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) is terrified and, in his bewilderment, he replies that he is unlettered. The angel commands him a second time with the same result. For the third time, the angel utters the same command. Now, Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) grasps that what is required from him is to repeat and to recite, and he repeats the words as they are put into his mouth:

{Recite in the name of your Lord who created - created man from a clinging substance. Recite, and your Lord is the most Generous - Who taught by the pen - taught man that which he knew not.} (*Qur'an* 96: 1-5)

As soon as the awesome angel departed, Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) rushed back home, shaking in fear and sweating all over. He asked his beloved wife, Khadeejah (*radiya Allâhu 'anhâ* - may Allah be pleased with her) to cover him up. He lay down, and she remained by him,

calming him down and comforting him. When he had regained his composure, he explained to her what he had seen and heard. She assured him that Allah would not allow any terrible thing to happen to him. During the next twenty-three years of his life after being given the prophethood, words were 'put into his mouth' in the same way, and he uttered them. These words (verses) made an indelible impression on his heart and mind, and as the volumes of the sacred scripture (the Noble Qur'an) grew, they were recorded on palm leaves, on skins and on the shoulder-blades of animals as well as in the hearts of his devoted disciples.

The words (revelation) were actually put into his mouth exactly as foretold in the prophecy under discussion, "and I will put my words in his mouth." (Deut. 18:18) In a similar quote from John 16:13, Jesus (peace be upon him) says, "When the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his authority, but whatever he hears he will speak." Also, Jesus (peace be upon him) foretold that the "Paraclete" to come after him was one who, "shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak."

As a scholar of comparative religion has said:

Neither the content of the revelation, nor its form, were of Muhammad's devising. Both were given by

the angel, and Muhammad's task was only to repeat what he heard.⁶⁰

Proof 5: Unlettered Prophet

Muhammad's experience in the cave of Hirâ (later known as Jabal an-Noor - the Mountain of Light), and his response to that first revelation is the exact fulfilment of another Biblical prophecy. In the Book of Isaiah, chapter 29, verse 12,⁶¹ we read, “and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying: read this, I pray thee: and he saith: I am not learned.”

It is a well-known fact that Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) was unlettered;⁶² he could not read or write. He was described in the Qur'an as the unlettered Prophet. (*Qur'an* 7: 157-158)⁶³ Allah has also said:

⁶⁰ Parrinder, *World Religions*, 472.

⁶¹ KJV.

⁶² The wisdom behind this has been discussed in an earlier footnote.

⁶³ The verse has already been mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

{Nor does he speak from [his own] inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed, taught to him by one intense in strength.}
(*Qur'an* 53: 3-5)

Proof 6: A new song

Another indication (other than the prophecy in Deuteronomy) is that Isaiah ties the messenger connected with Kedar with 'a new song' (meaning a scripture in a new language) to be sung to the Lord (Isaiah 42:10-11). More explicitly, the Book of Isaiah mentions, "For with stammering lips, and another tongue, will he speak to this people..." (Isaiah 28:11) This latter verse correctly describes the "stammering lips" of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) reflecting the state of tension and concentration, as well as of unfamiliarity, that he went through at the time of revelation.

Proof 7: Revealed in sections

A related fact is that the Qur'an was revealed in sections over a span of twenty-three years. It is interesting to compare this with Isaiah 28 which speaks of the same thing, "For it is: Do and do, do and do, rule on rule, rule on rule; a little here, a little there." (Isaiah 28:10)

Proof 8: Name of God

Deuteronomy 18:19 reads, "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which he shall

“speak in My name, I will require it of him.” This prophecy in Deuteronomy has mentioned that this prophet will speak the words of God starting with the **name of God**. If we look at the Qur’an, we will find that all its chapters, except chapter 9, are preceded or begin with the phrase: “In the Name of God (Allah), the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.”

The very first passage of the Qur’an revealed to Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) reads:

{Recite in the name of your Lord who created.} (*Qur’an 96: 1*)

Furthermore, Islam also teaches people to start almost every action in their daily life with the words: “In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful,” which is in accordance with the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him).

As mentioned earlier, the name ‘Allah’ is how He refers to Himself in the Qur’an, and how Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) always referred to him. To say, “in the Name of Allah” is a far clearer fulfilment of the prophecy: “He

shall speak in My name,” than other common expressions such as “In the name of God” or “In the name of the Father.”⁶⁴

**Other Biblical characteristics of Prophet Muhammad
(blessings and peace be upon him)**

An equally interesting and most revealing profile of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) can be found in the 42nd chapter of the Book of Isaiah. Let us examine some of these characteristics:

Proof 9: The ‘one in whom God’s soul delights’ is called the ‘servant of God’ (V.1), His ‘elect’ (V.1) and His Messenger (V.19)

Translated into Arabic these titles read: *‘Abduhu wa rasooluhu, al-mustafâ*. All the prophets were indeed slaves, messengers and elects of Allah. Yet, no prophet in history has been called universally by these specific titles as Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) has been. The testimony of faith by which the person enters into the fold of Islam reads, “I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship other than

⁶⁴ Comment on ‘the Father’: This is an example of the serious distortions in the Bible. Allah has said about Himself:

{He neither begets nor is born, nor is there to Him any equivalent.}
(*Qur’an* 112: 3-4)

Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and messenger.”

Virtually, the same formula is repeated five times a day during the call to prayers, five times a day immediately before the beginning of prayers, nine times a day during the minimum mandatory prayers and several more times if the Muslim performs additional recommended prayers. The most common title of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) since his mission until today is Rasool Allâh (the Messenger of Allah). The Qur'an has given him this title. During his lifetime, he was addressed as such by his followers. The voluminous collections of Hadith have been narrated typically in these forms: “I heard the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace be upon him) say...” or “The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace be upon him) said...” He has been described in the Qur'an as ‘Allah’s slave’ and Allah’s Messenger’.

Proof 10: He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he has set judgement in the earth (V.4), he shall prevail against his enemies (V.13) and shall bring judgement to the Gentiles (V.1)

While comparing the lives and missions of Jesus (peace be upon him) and Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him),

it is clear that this verse talks about Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him). To elaborate, in the case of Jesus, he expressed, on more than one occasion, how disappointed he was with the Israelites' rejection of him. Also, Jesus was not present long enough to prevail over his enemies (beyond the moral victory, which is common to all prophets).

On the other hand, we find no trace of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) being discouraged even in the most critical moments of his mission. In one year, his beloved and supporting wife, Khadeejah (may Allah be pleased with her) died, following 25 years of successful marriage; his uncle, Abu Tâlib, who was instrumental in protecting him from the fury of the pagan Arabs (in Makkah) also died. These two tragedies were combined with the fact that his followers constituted only a small persecuted and tortured group. Under such trying circumstances, Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) went to the city of Taif to invite people to Islam and seek their support in his struggle against paganism. He was rejected, mocked at and stoned until his knees and feet bled. In spite of all this, he was never "discouraged" (to use Isaiah's term, V.4). His constant utterance was:

<<O Allah! Forgive my people for they do not know what they are doing.>> (Bukhari)

When the angel of mountains offered him the chance to retaliate by destroying their city, he refused in the hope that some of descendants of these wicked people would worship Allah, and indeed, some of them did!

After this bitter struggle, Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) “prevailed against his enemies”, established a strong community of believers who indeed “brought judgement to the Gentiles”, especially in the Persian and Byzantine Empires. Many such Gentiles were guided to Islam while others suffered defeats. As such, he was truly “a light of the Gentiles” and for the whole world as well.

Proof 11: “He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street” (V.2)

Not only was this a distinct characteristic and mark of decency of Muhammad’s, it was indeed the embodiment of the revelation given to him. In the words of the Qur’an:

{And be moderate in your pace and lower your voice; indeed, the most disagreeable of sounds is the voice of donkeys.}
(*Qur’an* 31: 19)

{Allah does not like the public mention of evil except by one who has been wronged...} (*Qur’an* 4: 148)

Proof 12: “The Isles shall wait for his law”

The only prophet, who came after this prophecy (Isaiah’s time) with a complete and comprehensive code of law, was Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him). The law revealed to him spread to all corners of the earth, even to the remote islands and the farthest deserts.

Proof 13: “God’s glory will not be given to another” (V.8)

The greatest glory a person receives from God (Allah) is to be entrusted as His messenger to humankind and receive His glorious revelation. Not only did this apply to Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), but it uniquely applied to him as the last and final messenger and prophet of Allah. Truly, Allah’s glory (revelation of scriptures) was not given and will not be given to any other prophet after Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), as he is the ‘seal’ of all prophets. After a letter or a message has been written, folded and sealed, nothing further can be added to it. It has been more than 1400 years since Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) was sent and the Qur’an was revealed to him. Yet, we hear of no genuine prophet of the magnitude and influence on humanity to be compared with such figures as Abraham (peace be upon him), Moses (peace be upon him), Jesus (peace be upon him) and Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him); nor do we hear about another post-

Qur'anic glory or holy book that has influenced humankind to such a degree.

Proof 14: A descendant of Ishmael (peace be upon him)

The person to come was connected with the Arabs, and specifically with the descendants of Ishmael (peace be upon him), who settled in Makkah and its environs. Verse 11 to the 42nd chapter of Isaiah leaves absolutely no doubt about the identity of that prophet.

“Let the wilderness of and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar does inhabit, let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains.” (Isaiah 42:11)

According to the Book of Genesis, Kedar was the second son of Ishmael (Gen.25:13). The best prophet, who came from Ishmael's descendants, is Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him). His enemies (of his own clan), who were misled by their leaders or mighty men (as described in Isaiah 21:17), ultimately embraced Islam and were embraced by it. Indeed, they had reason to “lift up their voice”, to “sing” praise of God, and “shout from the top of the mountains”. Consider now this daily call to prayer, heard around the world from every mosque: *Allâhu Akbar!* (Allah is the Greatest!)

This “shouting” is chanted annually by multitudes of Muslims from all over the world from Mount ‘*Arafah* and other places as part of the annual rites of Hajj (pilgrimage): “Here I am [at Your command] O Allah. Here I am. Here I am. There is no partner with you [in our worship]. Here I am at Your command. Verily, yours is the praise, the blessings and sovereignty. There is no partner besides you [in our worship].”

Proof 15: He will be sent “to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, (and) them that sit in darkness out of the prison house” (V.7)

Many of those who were opposed to the truth and fought Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) bitterly ended up as the most devout believers. Their blindness to the truth was cured. Those who lived in the darkness of an unholy life came to the light of truth completed through the mission of Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him).

No wonder the Qur’an describes itself as ‘light manifest’. Describing the Qur’an, Allah has addressed Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him):

{...[This is] a book which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], that you might bring humankind out of darknesses into the light by permission of their Lord - to the path of the Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy.} (*Qur’an 14: 1*)

Proof 16: “Sing unto the Lord a new song and his praise from the ends of the earth...” (V.10)

A new song may be a reference to a new scripture in a language other than the language of the Israelite scriptures. This interpretation seems consistent with a more explicit mention of someone who will be speaking to people (including the Israelites) in “another tongue”. (Isaiah 28:11)

This explanation seems to fit closely with the verse (Isaiah 24:16) which speaks of the praise of God “from the ends of the earth”. Only in the case of Islam do we find this prophecy realized in amazing accuracy. In all ends of the earth, five times every day, the praise of Allah and of His last messenger, Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), is chanted from the minarets of hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of mosques around the world. Additionally, frequent praises of Allah and Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) by millions of devout Muslims are made on daily basis. It is even a part of the five daily obligatory prayers to praise Abraham and his descendants along with Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) and his descendants.

The 42nd chapter of Isaiah is indeed a fascinating one. It is not a casual or ambiguous reference to the Messenger of Allah

(blessings and peace be upon him) who was to come centuries later. It is rather a comprehensive profile, which fits only one person: Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him). After all, the chapter relates this profile to Kedar, son of Ishmael, and no other descendant of Ishmael fits this description except Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him).

Proof 17: Riding the camel

Prophet Isaiah (peace be upon him) prophesied that two leaders whom he metaphorically called ‘chariots’ would come, one riding a donkey, and another riding a camel, “And he saw a chariot with a couple of horsemen, a chariot of asses, and a chariot of camels, and he hearkened diligently with much heed.” (Isaiah 21:7, KJV)

Who are the ‘couple of horsemen’?

They are Jesus (peace be upon him) and Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him). Let us examine the proof:

Jesus fulfilled the riding of the donkey prophecy, "Jesus found a young donkey, and sat upon it, as it is written." (John 12:14)

The quote ‘as it is written’ is referring to Isaiah 21:7. It is important to know that nowhere in the New Testament do we see Jesus (peace be upon him) riding any camel. Nowhere in the

New Testament do we see any fulfilment of any kind about the prophecy of riding the camel.

When we look at Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), he rode the camel several times during his lifetime. Perhaps, the most well-known event of him riding the camel is when he migrated from Makkah to Madinah to escape the torture of the pagans. Then, when Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) rode into Madinah on his camel, the Muslims in Madinah wanted to build the first Islamic mosque and the Prophet's humble home next to it. They argued with each other about the site because each group/tribe wanted the location to be in their neighbourhood. So, to avoid hurting anyone's feelings, the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) gave his camel the reins so that it would walk and then settle at the location that it naturally chose. This wisdom from Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) solved the problem.

Now, the open question to any Jewish rabbi or Christian priest or minister is as follows:

Where in the Bible do we see the prophecy about riding the camel being fulfilled?

Who in the Bible was the prophet who rode the camel to fulfil the Prophecy of Isaiah 21:7? The New Testament fulfils the riding of the donkey prophecy in John 12:14 and it claims that it fulfilled only that prophecy. There is still an unfulfilled prophecy regarding riding the camel in the New Testament.

If Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) was not the one who fulfilled the remainder of the prophecy in Isaiah 21:7, then who was that prophet?

These prophecies in the Old and New Testaments predict, in unequivocal terms, the advent of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) and the genuineness of his prophethood.

15.3 The location from which he was to emerge

Proof 18: Deuteronomy 33:1-2

Deuteronomy 33:1-2 combines references to Moses (peace be upon him), Jesus (peace be upon him) and Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him). It speaks about God's revelation coming from Sinai, rising from Seir (probably the village of Sa'ir near Jerusalem) and shining forth from Paran. According to Genesis 21:21, the wilderness of Paran was the place where Ishmael (peace be upon him) settled (that is, in Arabia, specifically Makkah).

Another sign of the prophet to come from Paran (Makkah) is that he will come with "ten thousand of saints" (Deuteronomy 33:2 KJV). That was the number of faithful who accompanied Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) to Makkah in his victorious, bloodless return to his birthplace to destroy the remaining symbols of idolatry in the Kaaba. The text says, "He shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousand of saints, from his right hand (went) a fiery law for them."

According to the Islamic history, the city of Makkah (Paran) was liberated by Prophet Muhammad's ten thousand troops.

If Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), who liberated the city of Paran with 10,000 believing men (the 'saints'), was not the one who fulfilled this Biblical prophecy and ended the worship of the 365 gods (in the form of idols), then who was that prophet? Is there another prophet who marched upon Makkah with this exact same number of men? The historical answer is: Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) is the only prophet on whom this prophecy fits perfectly.

Proof 19: Habakkuk 3:3

Habakkuk 3:3 speaks of God (God's help) coming from Te'man (an oasis north of Madinah according to Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*), and the 'holy one' coming from Paran. That 'holy one' who under persecution migrated from Paran (Makkah) to be received enthusiastically in Madinah was none other than Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him).

Indeed, the incident of the migration of the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) and his persecuted followers is vividly and prophetically described in **Isaiah 21:13-17**. That section foretold the battle of Badr as well, in which the few ill-armed faithful miraculously defeated the 'mighty' men of Kedar, who sought to destroy Islam and intimidate their own folks who had turned to Islam. The text reads:

An oracle concerning Arabia: You caravans of Dedanites, who camp in the thickets of Arabia, bring water for the thirsty; you who live in Tema, bring food for the fugitives.

They flee from the sword, from the drawn sword, from the bent bow and from the heat of battle.

This is what the Lord says to me: "Within one year, as a servant bound by contract would count it, all the

pomp of Kedar will come to an end. The survivors of the bowmen, the warriors of Kedar, will be few.” The LORD, the God of Israel, has spoken. (Isaiah 21:13-17)

15.4 The message to be revealed through him

The Bible foretells the story of revelation.

Proof 20: Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) was illiterate.

During his entire life, he never learned to read or write. The exact circumstances of the first revelation have been mentioned: it was the habit of Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) to frequently get away from the midst of his fellow Arabs and their heathenistic ways and spend many days secluded in the cave of Hirâ in the mountains of Makkah. There, he would pray to Allah according to the practice of Abraham (peace be upon him). When he reached the age of forty (610 CE), the angel Gabriel (peace be upon him), one day, appeared before him in that cave and ordered him to recite. Muhammad (peace be upon him), in his terror, thought he was being asked to read, so he stammered that he was unlettered. The angel Gabriel (peace be upon him) again ordered him to read, but Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) again

informed him that he was unlettered. The angel Gabriel (peace be upon him) took a firm hold of him and commanded him, "Recite, in the name of your Lord who created!" Now Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) began to understand that he was not being asked to read, but to recite and to repeat. He began to repeat after him, and Gabriel (peace be upon him) revealed to him the first verses of the Qur'an, those at the beginning of the 96th chapter of the Qur'an:

{Recite in the name of your Lord who created - created man from a clinging substance. Recite, and your Lord is the most Generous - Who taught by the pen - taught man that which he knew not.} (*Qur'an* 96: 1-5)

As mentioned above, the actual word angel Gabriel (peace be upon him) used to address Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) was the Arabic word *iqrâ'* which means read, recite, or rehearse. It is derived from the Arabic root word '*qara*'. However, if we were to go back to the original Hebrew form of the verses of Isaiah 29:11, we would find that the actual word which is translated into English as "Read this [I pray thee]" is the Hebrew word *qara'* [kaw-raw']. Is it just an amazing coincidence that the Hebrew text used not only a word with the same meaning, **but the exact same word itself**? Isaiah 29:11-18 reads:

And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which [men] deliver to one that is learned, saying: Read this, [I pray thee], and he saith, I cannot, for it [is] sealed: And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying: Read this, [I pray thee], and he saith: I am not learned. Wherefore the Lord said, For as much as this people draw near [me] with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, [even] a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise [men] shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid. Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding? [Is] it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a

fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest? And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.

Remember that when a statement in the earlier scriptures is found also in the Qur'an, then this is proof of its validity. This is because if it is confirmed by the later scripture, it is clearly a remnant of the original revelation that was not deleted or changed over time by those who rewrote the Bible.

15.5 Fulfilment of prophecies which he foretold

Proof 21: One may ask the following question: What criterion should be used to distinguish between a genuine prophet and false prophets, who may also presume to speak in the name of Allah?

The answer to this question is clearly given in the concluding verses of chapter 18 of the Book of Deuteronomy:

And if thou say in thine heart, how shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it pre-sumptuously; thou shall not be afraid of him.
(Deuteronomy 18:21-22)

In John 14:16, Jesus (peace be upon him) is reported to have said, describing his successor, “He will declare to you the things that are to come.”⁶⁵

It is a fact that not a single prophecy made by the Qur'an or Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) has proved to be inaccurate in the least. Every prophecy made about the near future during his time did come to pass. Examples of these are:

The prophecy⁶⁶ that Muslims would conquer the two ‘superpowers’ of their time; the Persian and Byzantine empires: This prophecy was made when Muslims were few and weak, when to prophesize their mere physical survival would have sounded too hopeful!

Another prophecy was that Surâqah, a man who was about to kill Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), would become a Muslim. Not only was it prophesied that he would become Muslim, but that he would help the Muslim

⁶⁵. New International Version (NIV) and the King James Version (KJV).

⁶⁶ In the chapter titled “The Romans” (*Qur'an* 30: 2-5).

army conquer the Persian Empire, and have access to the Emperor's crown, which would be placed on his head! Not only did this prophecy appear to be a virtual impossibility when it was made, but it was as if the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) was looking distinctly at the scene which took place years after his death. The fact that Surâqah did become a Muslim, lived long enough to participate in the conquest of Persia, the Muslims came out victorious, Surâqah had access to the Emperor's crown and actually wore it, can hardly be regarded as a coincidence or a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Surely, it is no mere coincidence that all the prophecies that were described by the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) actually happened, down to the last detail. Nor can such accuracy in each and every prophecy emanate from any other individual than a true and genuine prophet using the criterion stipulated in Deuteronomy (18:21-22)

Proof 22: Test of prophethood

Jesus (peace be upon him) himself provided a sort of "test", if you will, for the one claiming prophethood:

...by the fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes from the thorns, or figs from the thistles? Every good tree will bear good fruit and every evil tree will bear evil fruit...by their fruits ye shall know them. (Matthew 7:16-20)

Anyone who applies this test to the teachings of Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) will find in the Last Testament of Allah - the Noble Qur'an - the teachings which will bring to the world much-needed peace and happiness. (See chapter 12: "The Moral System in Islam.")

"The ultimate criterion of a true prophet is the moral character of his teaching."⁶⁷

George Bernard Shaw said of Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him):

I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems, and that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness.⁶⁸

15.6 The time when he was to appear

Proof 23: God's promise to make Ishmael (peace be upon him) a great nation

⁶⁷. Dummelow, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*.

⁶⁸ Shaw, *The Genuine Islam*, vol. 1, no. 8.

It is well-known that from the descendants of Ishmael (peace be upon him) came the last great prophet of monotheism, Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), whose followers constitute a great nation, nearly one-fifth of the total world population in all corners of the earth.

“I will make the son of the maidservant into a nation also, because he is your offspring.” (Genesis 21:13)

Genesis 21:18 says about Ishmael (peace be upon him), “I will make him into a great nation.”

In Matthew 21:19-21, Jesus (peace be upon him) spoke of the fruitless fig tree (a biblical symbol of the prophets' heritage) to be cleared after being given a last chance of three years (the duration of Jesus' ministry) to give fruit. In a later verse in the same chapter, Jesus (peace be upon him) said, “Therefore, say I unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruit thereof.” (Matthew 21:43) That nation is Ishmael's descendants (the rejected stone in Matthew 21:42) which was victorious against all superpowers of its time, as prophesied by Jesus (peace be upon him), “And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.” (Matthew 21:44)

Moreover, in the Old Testament, Genesis 12:1-3, it can be found that God Almighty promised to create "Great Nations"

from Ishmael (peace be upon him), Abraham's first son and the forefather of the Muslims:

The LORD had said to Abraham: Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you. (Genesis 12:1-3)

The quote “go to the land I will show you” is referring to the city of Paran (Makkah). The quote “I will make you into a great nation” is quite interesting; it describes perfectly the followers of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), namely Muslims.

As you probably know, Muslims worship Allah Almighty by prostrating to Him. Every time they pray and prostrate, they end their prayer by sitting on their knees and say the following exact quote [translated], “...and bless Prophet Muhammad and the family of Prophet Muhammad, as You have blessed Prophet Abraham and the family of Prophet Abraham...”

As can be clearly seen, Muslims bless Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) every single day of their lives when praying to Allah Almighty. They also say "peace be upon him" or "peace and blessings be upon him" when they refer to his name or any other prophet's name.

Yes, the Muslims are the "great nation" that Allah Almighty has talked about; they are blessed by Him because they worship none but Him, and they bless Abraham (peace be upon him) everyday (not less than nine times) in their prayers.

Proof 24: According to the Gospel of John, the Jews were waiting for the fulfilment of three distinct prophecies.

The first was the coming of Christ. The second was the coming of Elijah. The third was **the coming of the prophet**. This is obvious from the three questions that were posed to John the Baptist:

Now this was John's testimony, when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely: I am not the Christ. They asked him: Then who are you? Are you Elijah? He said: I am not. Are you the Prophet? He answered: No. (John 1:19-21)

If one looks in a Bible with cross-references,⁶⁹ he will find in the marginal notes where the words “the Prophet” occur in John 1:21 that these words refer to the prophecy of Deuteronomy 18:15 and 18:18. It can be concluded from this that Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) is the prophet mentioned there, because he is the only prophet who came after Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him), and because he is the one who is ‘like unto him’. Furthermore, it is obvious that the Jews and John knew that the ‘Prophet’ and the Christ were two different persons, as each was referred to by a separate question.

Proof 25: John 16:7

In John 16:7, Jesus (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: “Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; **but if I go, I will send him to you.**”

The term ‘Counsellor’ cannot refer to the Holy Spirit here, because - according to the Gospels - the Holy Spirit was already present in the world prior to Jesus' birth as well as during his ministry. Luke 3:22 has mentioned that the Holy Spirit

⁶⁹ Nowadays, we can do this easily online. (Editor)

descended on Jesus (peace be upon him) in the shape of a dove. However, this verse (John 16:7) implies that the “Counsellor” is yet to come.

15.7 The unique proof

Proof 26: One of the proofs that Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) was the mentioned prophet in the Bible is that the message he came with has reached across the East and the West, and his community now extends all over the world, something which did not occur with any previous community. Had Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) not been the mentioned prophet, the prophets who came before him, especially Moses (peace be upon him) and Jesus (peace be upon him), would have done two things: first, they would mentioned who they refer to exactly, and second, they would have warned their peoples vehemently about Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), and we would have seen this in their scriptures. This is because all the prophets warned about false prophets and cautioned their peoples about following them and being guided by them. An example on that is that the previous prophets mentioned the Antichrist by name, for example, and even Noah (peace be upon him), who was the first messenger, warned his people about him. However, none of the prophets warned about Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him). In fact, quite the contrary: Jesus gave good tidings

of Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), praised him and ordered people to follow him, and forbade them to oppose or disobey him.

15.8 Consistency of Muhammad's teachings with Jesus' teachings

Proof 27: One important proof that Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) is the mentioned prophet in the foretold Biblical references is the absolute consistency between the original (undistorted) teaching with which Jesus and other prophets were sent and those with which Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) came. These are: the call to monotheism, glorifying Allah in His supreme attributes, unity of Allah in His essence, forbidding people from ascribing any of Allah's attributes to him, and many others.⁷⁰ This is not a surprise, because every prophet revived the basic beliefs that had been distorted over time after the departure of the preceding prophet. Islam, being the final message, revived the basic beliefs and practices of all the preceding messages, including the message of Jesus (peace be upon him). It clarified it and removed the misconceptions which had become attached to the

⁷⁰ See chapter 17: *'Islam's Revival of the Basic Teachings of Jesus'*.

pure creed with which Jesus was sent so that people would find it clear and straightforward to follow.

As the well-known scholar and commentator on the Qur'an, 'Abdur-Rahmân ibn Nâsir as-Sa'di wrote:

If Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was not a true prophet, then his message would have contradicted the common message of Jesus and other prophets before him. Instead, it revived it and re-instated it.

It should now be clear that the Biblical prophecies speak of none other than Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him). Many thanks to Allah Who made the path clear for us. It is interesting to note that in year 571 CE, Jesus' prophecy was fulfilled. Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) was born into a community of Ishmaelite Arabs who had become polytheists and idolaters; when he reached maturity and was given revelation, Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) started preaching his message of the worship of Allah alone.

In the year 632 CE, he left this world; however, his bright message will remain with people till the end of this world.

Being a true follower of Jesus (peace be upon him) must be more than a lip service, wherein one says that he or she follows

or loves Jesus (peace be upon him) and that is it, in order to attain paradise and be saved from hellfire. True followers of Christ should accept his prophecy of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and follow his teachings of 'Islam', or complete and devoted submission to the One and Only God-Allah.

Note: Not only did Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) vouch for Jesus' and Moses's prophethood, he also testified the prophethood of all the true prophets who had been sent before him. He neither denied any of them nor did he fabricate anything about them. This was unlike what the reigning kings usually do against the kings who have reigned before them. Had Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) been a liar or a fabricator of his message (Islam), he would have not spoken of their truthfulness or praised them the way he actually did. He would have lied about them, which was the practice of the enemies of God's messengers throughout history!

Indeed, God Almighty has mentioned this very fact about Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in the Qur'an:

{Rather, the Prophet has come with the truth and confirmed the [previous] messengers.} (*Qur'an* 37: 37)

16 The Facts about ‘The Original Sin’⁷¹

20 Arguments Regarding the Doctrine of the ‘Original Sin’

Background

According to the explanation of this doctrine, Adam sinned when he disobeyed Allah and ate from the forbidden tree. According to the Christian theology, the following eight doctrines branch off the ‘Original Sin’ principle:

1. All Adam’s descendants inherit his sin, which means that all human beings are born with this Original Sin on their account.
2. For God’s justice to be achieved, a price must be paid as a penalty for every sin that has been committed, in order for that sin to be wiped out and the individual to be forgiven.
3. The only way to wipe out sin is to shed blood, and according to Paul, “without the shedding of blood there is no remission.” (Hebrews 9:22)
4. However, this blood must be perfect, sinless, and incorruptible.

⁷¹ Compiled from Caraballo, *My Great Love for Jesus Led Me to Islam*.

5. Christians believe that Jesus (peace be upon him) alone could pay the infinite price of sin; this is because they believe that his blood is perfect, sinless, and incorruptible, and he is the alleged son of God, the infinite God.
6. Christian theology says that Jesus shed his holy sinless blood, suffered indescribable agony, and died to pay for the sins of people. This concept is known in Christian theology as 'atonement'.
7. Christians believe that nobody can be saved (attain salvation) unless he or she accepts Jesus Christ as his or her redeemer. In other words, salvation is restricted to those who believe that Jesus was willingly crucified, killed on the cross, and shed his blood as a price of that sin. Acceptance of this doctrine is the only way to attain 'salvation'.
8. Otherwise, everyone is condemned to suffer eternally in hell because of his or her sinful nature and originally inherited sin from the father of humankind, Prophet Adam.

The doctrine of the Original Sin can be divided into six distinct parts:

- 1) The factuality of the existence of the Original Sin.

- 2) Humanity's inheritance of the Original Sin.
- 3) Belief that God's justice requires a penalty of blood which must be paid against that sin.
- 4) Belief that Jesus has paid the price for the sins of all humankind by sacrificing his blood and 'dying on the cross'.
- 5) The rationality of 'God's sacrifice' dogma.
- 6) Salvation from sin (original and newly attained) is only possible for those who believe in his vicarious sacrifice.

Analysis

Arguments against the six parts of the dogma of the 'Original Sin' are as follows:

Argument against the first part: the factuality of the Original Sin

1. There is no conflict between the Qur'anic verses and the Christian theology with reference to the fact that Adam committed a sin when he ate from the forbidden tree. However, Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an that Prophet Adam repented after that and submitted himself completely to his Lord; consequently, he was forgiven by Allah for the sin he had committed. This is a tenet of Islamic belief and has been mentioned in three different chapters in the

Qur'an (2: 37, 7: 24 and 20: 122). Based on Adam's repentance and Allah's acceptance of his repentance, the sin of Adam was not inherited by his children. Hence, it did not require the suffering and death of Jesus Christ (or of anyone else) in order to be forgiven.

Argument against the second part: 'All human beings inherited Adam's sin'

2. The doctrine of the inherited sin has no support from the words of Jesus.
3. Indeed, Jesus himself regarded children as innocent and pure, **not born in sin**. This is clear from his reported saying:

Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for such is the Kingdom of God. Verily, I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. (Mark 10:14-15)

4. The doctrine of the inherited sin implies that all people after Adam and before Jesus were born with the Original Sin and died with the Original Sin on their account; hence,

all of them will be cast into hellfire because they did not even know of this dogma, and thus could not profess it!

5. The doctrine of the inherited sin has **no support in the words of the prophets who had come either before him or after him.** If it was required by God, then they would have told their people about it and taught them to believe in it; this is because all prophets were sent to guide people towards the way of paradise and ward them away from sins and hellfire.

6. All the prophets taught that every human being is accountable for his or her own sins, and hence children will not be punished for the sins of their fathers. Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an:

{That no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another.} (*Qur'an* 53: 38)

He has also said:

{Every soul, for what it has earned, will be retained.} (*Qur'an* 74: 38)

7. Sin, as it is said, are not inherited; they are something which a person acquires for oneself by doing what one should not do or refraining from what one should do. Rationally considered, it would be the height of injustice to condemn the entire human race for a sin committed

thousands of years ago by the first parents. Sin is a wilful transgression of the law of Allah. The responsibility or blame for it must lie only on the person committing it, **and not on his or her descendants**. It is the height of misanthropy to even consider such a thing. How unreasonable and hard-hearted a person can become by believing that every baby is sinful at birth!

8. Saying that the Original Sin, committed by our father, Adam (peace be upon him), was inherited through humanity goes against the attribute of mercy which Allah attributes to Himself. With this, the creed of the inheritance of the Original Sin has no room whatsoever in Islamic teachings.

Argument against the third part: 'Blood penalty'

The third part of the Original Sin doctrine says that God's justice requires that a price must be paid for the sins of humankind (original and otherwise) and that if God were to pardon (forgive) a sinner without punishment, it would be a denial of His justice.

The response to that has two points:

9. This view reflects complete ignorance of two of Allah's attributes, namely mercy and forgiveness. To elaborate, if Allah finds some real good in you and sees that you are sincerely repentant, having a real urge to conquer the evil within you, then Almighty Allah will forgive your failings and sins, out of His loving mercy and forgiveness.
10. The God we worship (Allah) is the Most Strong and Most Rich; no one can harm Him. Consequently, if He prescribes a law and demands obedience, then it is not for His own benefit to abide by it; it is for the benefit of humankind. If we disobey Him, we are the losers, not Allah. If He punishes a person before death for his or her faults and sins, it is not for His own satisfaction or compensation, but in order to check evil and purify/reform the sinner, out of His mercy. Bearing these facts in mind, claiming that Allah's justice requires a price to be paid for the sins of others is not valid.

**Argument against the fourth part of the 'Original Sin':
Jesus (peace be upon him) was sacrificed for humanity**

The fourth part of the Original Sin doctrine says that Jesus (peace be upon him) paid the penalty for all the sins (the Original Sins and any others) by sacrificing his blood on the cross of Calvary. The response to this proposition has ten points:

11. The Christian concept of salvation has no support in the words of Jesus (peace be upon him). It is not historically correct to say that Jesus (peace be upon him) had come to die willingly and deliberately for the sins of all humanity. In reality, the present form of the Bible testifies that he **did not wish to die on the cross**. (See Mark 14:36)
12. Indeed, the Bible points to the fact that God (Allah), not Jesus (peace be upon him), is the **ultimate saviour**:

You may know and believe Me and understand that I am He. Before Me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after Me. I, I am the Lord, **and besides Me there is no Saviour**. (Isaiah 43:10-11)
13. To punish a man who is not guilty for the sins of others is the height of injustice, harshness and lack of mercy, which cannot be attributed to the Almighty.
14. Rationally, we cannot accept that the suffering and death of one man can wipe out the sins of others. It is similar to a father, for example, removing one of his good teeth to relieve the pain of his child's bad tooth. Hence, the idea of crucifixion is false and illogical.
15. Jesus (like all the other prophets) was sent to convey a message and to be an example for his followers during his

time on the earth. He was not sent to deliberately die for them on the cross or offer his blood to absolve their sins.

16. Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an that He is the Most Merciful and Most Compassionate; He forgives the sinner no matter how many and how evil are the sins, once he or she repents. **He may even forgive the sinner who does not repent**, according to His will, mercy and favour.
17. The concept of atonement is false because it indirectly encourages people to sin, since their sins will be wiped out through someone else once they believe in him! Further, if someone died for another person's sins, what is the point of adhering to good and forbidding evil?

Argument against the fifth part: the 'sacrifice' of Jesus (peace be upon him)

18. Christian doctrine states that Jesus (peace be upon him) was crucified by the administration of the Roman governor of Jerusalem, Pontius Pilate, with the cooperation of certain Jewish leaders.⁷² However, the Qur'an has explained that Jesus did not die; rather, Allah raised him when they attempted to kill him. Allah replaced him with another person who resembled him, and it was this other

⁷² Harrington, 'Who Killed Jesus?'

person who was killed. To this day, the Christians believe that Jesus himself was the one who was killed on the cross. Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an:

{And [for] their saying: Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of Allah. And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them. And indeed, those who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except the following of assumption. And they did not kill him, for certain. Rather, Allah raised him to Himself. And ever is Allah Exalted in Might and Wise.} (*Qur'an 4: 157-158*)

19. Here is another proof that Jesus was not killed and is still alive. In the Islamic teachings, there is clear evidence indicating the second coming of Jesus before the final hour; this is an additional and final miracle for Jesus. He will return not as God, as the Christians believe, but as Jesus, Allah's messenger and slave, as he has always been. The purpose of his coming will be to correct the misconceptions surrounding his message and mission. According to a statement of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), he will stay for forty years, and these will be the happiest years of life on this earth. During that time, those who had misconceptions about him will correct

their understanding and believe in him as a messenger, not as the son of God (Allah).

It was narrated by Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace be upon him) said:

<<By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, it will not be long before the son of Mary descends amongst you, a just judge and ruler. He will break the cross, kill the swine and abolish the tribute paid by Jews and Christians. Money will be so plentiful that no one will accept it. At that time, a single prostration will be better than this world and everything in it.

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) then said: Read if you wish (the following verse of the Qur'an):

{And there is none from the People of the Scripture but that he will surely believe in Jesus before his death. And on the Day of Resurrection he will be against them a witness.} (*Qur'an* 4: 159)>> (Bukhari)

This ends the answer of the fifth part of the doctrine.

Argument against the sixth part: Salvation only possible via belief in Christ's vicarious 'sacrifice'

20. The Bible itself contradicts the notion of the 'Original Sin'. In this regard, the Bible says about the dispute concerning the Original Sin:

The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labour. (I Corinthians 3:8)

Original Sin and atonement from an Islamic perspective

Islam declares that:

- ❖ People cannot transfer their responsibilities to saviours or saints. Each person's redemption and salvation depends upon his or her own deeds.
- ❖ Forgiveness of sins (salvation) can only be attained through repentance to Allah and sincere and persistent efforts to fight off evil and do good. Allah forgives the faults and sins of those in whom He sees real goodness and those who have turned away from their sins and reformed themselves - without punishing them **or any other person on their behalf.**

In numerous verses in the Qur'an and statements of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), it is mentioned that **those who repent are granted** forgiveness from sins; furthermore, their sins are replaced with an equivalent reward, and:

{...And no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve.} (*Qur'an 2: 112*)

In many verses of the Noble Qur'an, Allah Almighty calls on people to repent sincerely.

{[O Muhammad], inform My slaves that it is I who am the Forgiving, the Merciful and that it is My punishment which is the painful punishment.} (*Qur'an 15: 49-50*)

Here, Allah is inviting the sinners to repent; regardless of the magnitude of their sins, He will forgive them. At the same time, He is warning those who do not repent: no punishment can be compared to His punishment.

He has also said:

{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.} (*Qur'an 39: 53-54*)

See how beautifully, soundly and logically, the book of Allah, the Qur'an, addresses the issue of sinning and atonement. It must be noted that Islam confirms that the Islamic approach to the subject was revealed in all the divine messages, including

the message of Jesus Christ. May peace and blessings be upon him and all the prophets!

Conclusion

By maintaining the concept of the Original Sin, the entire notion of justice in Christian theology becomes flawed. Having analyzed the six tenets of this doctrine and the arguments against them, the structure of the whole principle of ‘Original Sin and atonement’ is proven to be false. This is because it has no support either in the revealed sources or in logic; rather, its support lies only in the ideology of the Christian Church.

17 Islam's Revival of the Basic Teachings of Jesus⁷³

Introduction

All prophets were sent with the same message: monotheism in the worship of Allah, testifying to the supremacy of His attributes as well as the His unity of essence. However, their messages may differ in terms of legislation (Sharia), for instance, the manner of performing prayers, fasting, types of charity and so on. This depends upon each nation's characteristics, according to Allah's wisdom, for He knows His creatures better than they know themselves.

Every prophet revived the basic beliefs that had been distorted after the departure of the preceding prophet. Islam, being the final message, revived the basic beliefs and practices of all the preceding messages, including the message of Jesus. It elaborated them so that people would find them clear and straightforward to follow.

Following are some basic teachings which were established by Prophet Jesus and were revived in the message of Islam:

73. Compiled from Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ* and Caraballo, *My Great Love for Jesus led Me to Islam*.

17.1 Revival of the creed of Allah's Unity (of essence)

This fundamental teaching was taught by Jesus (peace be upon him), as quoted below, but abandoned by most Christians. It was revived by the message of Islam. All praise and thanks are for Allah for His guidance.

Sixteen proofs from the Bible and rational thought regarding Allah's Unity in His essence, negating the doctrine of the Trinity:

1. Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.
(Deuteronomy 6:4)
2. Has not the One God made and sustained for us the spirit of life? (Malachi 2:15)
3. You may know and believe Me and understand that I am He. Before Me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after Me. I, I am the Lord, and besides Me there is no Saviour. (Isaiah 43:10-11)
4. I am the first and I am the last; besides Me there is no god. Who is like Me? (Isaiah 44:6-7, RSV)⁷⁴

⁷⁴ RSV: 'Revised standard version'.

5. And there is no other god besides Me, a righteous God and a Saviour; there is none besides Me. Turn to Me and be saved...To Me every knee shall bow. (Isaiah 45: 21-23)
6. Now this is life eternal, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.⁷⁵ (John 17:3)
7. Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only. (Matthew 4:10)
8. Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is One Lord. (Mark 12:29)
9. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.⁷⁶ (1 Timothy 2:5)
10. I am the LORD, and there is no other god. I have not spoken in secret or kept My purpose hidden... I am the Lord, and I speak the truth; I make known what is right. (Isaiah 45:18-19, GNT)
11. An additional important proof from the Bible that God (Allah), Jesus (peace be upon him), and the Holy Spirit are each distinct in their essence: the Bible (the Old or New

⁷⁵ This verse indicates very clearly the distinction between Allah as God and Jesus as a prophet.

⁷⁶ This verse indicates clearly that God has to be worshipped alone without any mediator; also, Jesus was a human, not 'God'.

Testaments) does not state anywhere that Allah, Jesus (peace be upon him) or the Holy Spirit comprise one entity called God, or one of the three. It is a mere product of man-made, illogical, philosophical thinking which people have blindly inherited from their parents and grandparents through ages and generations, without any rational assessment or validation.

12. The following biblical verses contradict the creed of the Trinity in an indirect way:

- ❖ You have never heard his voice nor seen his face. (John 5:37)
- ❖ No one has ever seen him. And no one can see him. (1Timothy 6:16)
- ❖ No one can see me and stay alive. (Exodus 33:20)

According to these biblical verses, no one can see or hear God. Yet, God is supposed to be Jesus (peace be upon him) according to Christian belief. In such a case, these verses should make no sense, because Jesus' family, followers, the Jews, and many other contemporaries saw and heard him during his time. This means that Jesus cannot be what these verses are talking about; they must be referring to

someone else: to God (Allah), the Highest, Whom no one can see or hear.

13. It is curious, too, that Jesus himself never mentioned the Trinity. He did not say anything regarding divine entities forming a trinity. If there was a trinity, he would have said it very clearly to his people, because prophets came to convey the truth, not to hide it.
14. The concept that Jesus (peace be upon him) held about Allah was no different from the concept that all the other previous prophets had had. All of them preached the Unity of Allah instead of the concept of 'Trinity'. Jesus simply repeated the monotheistic, unitarian message that had been revealed to the prophets who had come before him.
15. The doctrine of Trinity is irrational because nothing that comes out of Him or is created by Him can become His equal or partner.
16. The Qur'an rejects the concept of Trinity as strongly as it rejects the idea that Allah has a son. This is because Allah has informed us He is One. This is a **fundamental tenet** of all the revelations. Three, by reason and by simple arithmetic, cannot be one. The Qur'an has addressed Christians on this subject:

{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.} (*Qur'an 4: 171*)

Islam revived the concept of Allah's Unity in essence, and absolutely negated the doctrine of 'son-ship' and the doctrine which states that Allah is Jesus (peace be upon him). Allah has said:

{They have certainly disbelieved who say: Allah is the Messiah, the son of Mary...} (*Qur'an 5: 72*)

He has also said in the Holy Qur'an:

{Say: He is Allah, [who is] One, Allah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets, nor is born, nor is there to Him any equivalent. } (*Qur'an 112: 1-4*)

17.2 Revival of Allah's Supremacy in terms of His attributes and qualities

Allah has multiple and supreme attributes. He is the Most Gracious and Most Merciful. He was praised in all the revealed books and through the words of all His prophets. According to the Bible, Jesus (peace be upon him) taught that Allah is supreme in His attributes. In Matthew 19:16-17, when the man called Prophet Jesus 'good', saying, "Good teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" Prophet Jesus replied, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but One, that is God." He denied the attribution of 'infinite goodness' or 'perfect goodness' to himself, and affirmed that this attribute belongs to Allah alone.

In Isaiah (44:6-7, RSV), it has been reported that God (Allah) says, "I am the first and I am the last; besides Me there is no god. **Who is like Me?**"

Islam effectively revived this basic concept. Numerous verses in the Qur'an and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) affirm that Allah:

- ❖ Has no partners or equals.
- ❖ Is 'invisible' because He is over His throne, over the heavens, and no one can see Him in this life.
- ❖ Is not physically manifested or incarnated in other forms.

- ❖ Is eternal; He does not die.
- ❖ Begets not, nor is He begotten; He does not need anyone like a mother, a wife, or a son.
- ❖ Has no partners in His Godhead.
- ❖ Is self-sufficient; everyone depends upon Him and needs Him; however, He neither depends upon anyone, nor does He need anything, such as food, drink, or help. For example, Allah has said in the Qur'an:

{...There is nothing like unto Him...} (*Qur'an 42: 11*)

{So do not assert similarities to Allah. Indeed, Allah knows and you do not know.} (*Qur'an 16: 74*)

{...and for Allah is the highest attribute. And He is Exalted in Might, the Wise.} (*Qur'an 16: 60*)

This basic part of belief (that Allah deserves the best names and attributes) has been emphasized repeatedly in the Noble Qur'an. This is evident to the reader of the Qur'an, who finds that numerous Qur'anic verses end with a reference to a divine attribute, such as {the All-Hearing, All-Seeing}, {the Most Forgiving, the All-Compassionate}, and {the Most High, the Most Great}.

17.3 Revival of the doctrine of monotheism (worship of Allah alone)

As mentioned earlier, the call to the worship of Allah alone (monotheism), without any intermediary, was the message of all the prophets. Because of the persisting deviation in this doctrine, it has had to be reaffirmed by all of the prophets of Allah throughout the ages. The monotheistic message of Islam simply tells people that they should worship only Allah, and should not worship anyone or anything other than Allah, in any way, shape or form.

However, Christians now call upon (supplicate to) Jesus (and others) besides Allah. Moreover, they direct all types of worship to Jesus. Associating others with Allah is nothing but polytheism. Surprisingly, although the text of the Bible has been altered significantly, it still contains evidence that Jesus called others towards monotheism:

- ❖ In Luke 4:8, ESV,⁷⁷ the Devil asks Jesus to worship him, promising him authority and glory of all of the kingdoms of this world, “And Jesus answered him, ‘It is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, **and Him only shall you serve.**’”

⁷⁷ ESV: 'English standard version'.

- ❖ **And there is no other god besides Me**, a righteous God and a Saviour; there is **none besides Me. Turn to Me** and be saved...**To Me every knee shall bow.** (Isaiah 45:21-23)
- ❖ **Turn to me** now and be saved, people all over the world!
I am the only God there is. (Isaiah 45:22)
- ❖ **Worship the Lord** your God, and serve **Him only.** (Matthew 4:10)
- ❖ In the Bible, the true God emphatically testifies:

I am the LORD, and there is **no other god**. I have not spoken in secret or kept my purpose hidden...I am the Lord, and I speak the truth; I make known what is right. (Isaiah 45:18-19, GNT)

Thus, the essence of the message of Jesus was that only Allah deserves to be worshiped; the worship of anyone or anything besides Allah or along with Him is false. It is important to note that worshipping others besides God is a major alteration of Jesus' message. The call to monotheism became distorted after his departure by later followers, beginning with Paul, who turned that pure and simple message into a complicated Trinitarian philosophy which justified the worship of Jesus, followed by the worship of Jesus' mother,

Mary, the angels and the saints. Catholics have a long list of saints to whom they turn in times of need.

Worshiping others besides Allah is irrational and in vain; this is because neither the living nor the dead can answer the prayers (supplication) of humankind. The worship of Allah should not be shared with His creation because they are people just like us; they are not the creators. They are weak creatures like us; they need food, drink, shelter, and help, and after their death (or ascension in the case of Jesus) they cannot even hear the ones who call them!

Islam effectively revived the doctrine of monotheism. For example, Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an:

{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 abode is the fire. And there are not for the wrongdoers any helpers.} (*Qur'an* 5: 72)

{Indeed, those you [polytheists] call upon besides Allah are slaves like you...} (*Qur'an* 7: 194)

{...Is there a deity with Allah? High is Allah above whatever they associate with Him.} (*Qur'an* 27: 63)

{...Is there a deity with Allah? Say: Produce your proof, if you should be truthful.} (*Qur'an* 27: 64)

{And I did not create the jinn and humankind except to worship Me.} (*Qur'an* 51: 56)

Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) said:

<<Supplication is an essential act of worship.>> (An authentic hadith narrated by at-Tirmidhi and Abu Dâwood)

Consequently, if a person claims to be a Muslim and prays to a prophet, saint, statue, or anything else, then he or she has stepped out of the bounds of Islam.

Thus, according to these affirmations, all other supposed gods and deities whom people worship and call upon, like Jesus, the Holy Spirit, Brahma, Shiva, Krishna, or Buddha are neither gods, nor are they manifestations of the one true God (Allah). Even if someone were to worship Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), the same punishment mentioned above would apply to him.

17.4 Revival of the creed of Jesus' prophethood

9 proofs from the Bible of Jesus' prophethood

There are many verses in the New Testament which affirm Jesus' prophethood.

1. Now this is life eternal, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you **have sent**.⁷⁸ (John 17:3)
2. In Matthew 21:11, the people of his time are recorded as referring to Jesus as a prophet, "And the crowds said: this is the **prophet Jesus** of Nazareth of Galilee."
3. In Mark, 6:4, it is stated that Jesus referred to himself as a Prophet, "And Jesus said to them, '**A prophet** is not without honour, except in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.'"
4. In the previous verses, Jesus is referred to as having been sent as a messenger. In Matthew 10:40, Jesus was purported to have said, "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and He that receiveth him that **sent me**."
5. In John 5:30, it is narrated that Jesus also said:

⁷⁸ This verse indicates very clearly the distinction between God, the Deity and Jesus, the Prophet. See also John 4:34, 5:30, 7:16 & 28, 11:42, 13:16, 14:24.

I can do nothing on my own authority, **as I hear I judge**; and my judgement is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of Him **who sent me**.

6. Jesus was also reported in the Gospel, according to Matthew 19:16, HNV,⁷⁹ to have been referred to as ‘the teacher’, which is the role of all the prophets, “Behold, one came and said to him, ‘**Good teacher**, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?’”
7. In Matthew 19:17, Jesus responded to the one who addressed him as “good teacher”, saying, “Why callest thou me good? **There is none good but one, that is God.**” Jesus here rejects being called ‘good’, and states that only God is truly good; he clearly implies that he is not God. Also, Jesus here rejects being called ‘perfectly good’, because perfection belongs only to God (Allah).
8. In Matthew 5:17-18, Jesus stated:

Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the [way of] the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them, for I say to you, till

⁷⁹ HNV: 'Hebrew names version'.

heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished.

9. Also in Matthew 5:19, Jesus Christ was reported to have insisted on strict obedience to the commandments of Allah, which is the role of any prophet:

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.

17.5 Revival of the creed of Jesus' humanness

No evidence for the divinity of Jesus (peace be upon him) in the Bible

It should be noted that nowhere in the Gospels was Jesus reported to have called himself 'God' or one of three. If this was the case then it would have been mentioned very clearly in the Bible at least once; this is because Jesus - like all other prophets - was sent to enlighten his people about the truth and clear up doubts, not to confuse them further.

Indeed, the Bible, in its present form, points to Jesus' humanness. Even in some of the writings of Paul, which the Church has taken to be sacred, Jesus is referred to as a man, distinct and different from God (Allah). In 1 Timothy, 2:5, Paul

writes, “For there is one God and one mediator⁸⁰ between God and men, **the man Christ Jesus.**”

Today, there are many modern scholars in Christianity who hold that Jesus Christ was not ‘God’.

In 1977, a group of seven biblical scholars, including leading Anglican theologians and other New Testament scholars, published a book called *The Myth of God Incarnate*, which caused great uproar in the General Synod of the Church of England. In the preface, the editor, John Hick, wrote the following:

The writers of this book are convinced that another major theological development is called for in this last part of the twentieth century. The need arises from growing knowledge of Christian origins, and involves a recognition that Jesus was (as he is presented in Act 2.21) ‘a man approved by God’ for a special role within the divine purpose, and that the later conception of him as God incarnate, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity living a human life, is a

mythological or poetic way of expressing his significance for us.⁸¹

It should be noted that the concept of Jesus' humanness is not only held by the Muslims; it is also held by the Jews and other early sects of Christianity such as the Ebionites (Nazarenes), the Cerinthians, the Basilidians, and the Goths. They, too, maintained that Jesus was a beloved Prophet of God, and they have not elevated him from his rightful status. Even today, there are churches in Asia and Africa along with the Unitarian church and Jehovah's Witnesses who do not worship Jesus as God. It is important to stress here that this is not enough to free them on the Day of Judgement unless they accept Islam, Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), and the last revelation from Allah.

The truth about 'son-ship'⁸²

In the Bible, the expression of 'son' has been used to refer to many of the earlier prophets. Israel, for example, was called the 'Son of God' in one of the books of Moses, "And thou shalt

⁸¹ Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 61.

⁸² Compiled from Caraballo, *My Great Love for Jesus Led Me to Islam*.

say unto Pharaoh, thus saith the Lord, **Israel is My son**, even My first born.” (Exodus 4:22)

Also, in the Psalms, the same title was given to David, “I will declare the decree: the Lord had said unto me, **Thou art My Son**, this day have I begotten thee.” (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 many others in the Bible, it has been established that the word ‘son’ refers to ‘**nearness to God in love**’. This is ascertained when we see Jesus himself saying that every man who did **the will of the Father** in heaven was a Son of God.

Jesus was reported to have said in the following verses:

“Love your enemies... that ye may be the **children of your Father** who is in Heaven.” (Matthew 5:44-45)

“Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they shall be called the **sons of God**.” (Matthew 5:9)

Hence, what made a man worthy of being called the ‘Son of God’ was a devout life and kind, merciful behaviour.

The Bible proves that Jesus actually rejected being called ‘Son of God’:

And demons also came out of many, crying, ‘You are the Son of God!’ **But he rebuked them**, and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ. (Luke 4:41)⁸³

Therefore, in view of the above, there is **no justification to regard Jesus as the Son of God in an exclusive and unique meaning**. When Jesus used the phrase ‘Son of God’, it **meant exactly the same as it meant when it was used for Adam, Israel, David and Solomon** (peace be upon them), that is, the nearest in love to God.

The humanness and prophethood of Jesus (peace be upon him) is affirmed in many verses of the Qur’an to correct the grave mistake of elevating him to the status of God (Allah) or to ascribe him as the Son of God (Allah).

In the Qur’an, Allah has denied having a son in nine different chapters: 2: 116, 10: 68, 11: 117, 18: 4, 19: 77, 19: 88, 19: 91-92, 21: 26, 25: 2, 39: 4, and 72: 3. As an example, He says:

⁸³ Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 50.

{And they say: The Most Merciful has taken [for Himself] a son. You have done an atrocious thing. The heavens almost rupture therefrom and the earth splits open and the mountains collapse in devastation that they attribute to the Most Merciful a son. And it is not appropriate for the Most Merciful that He should take a son. There is no one in the heavens and earth but that he comes to the Most Merciful as a slave. He has enumerated them and counted them a [full] counting. And all of them are coming to Him on the Day of Resurrection alone.}
(Qur'an 19: 88-95)

Allah has also mentioned:

{The Messiah, son of Mary, was not but a messenger; [other] messengers have passed on before him. And his mother was a supporter of truth. They both used to eat food. Look how We make clear to them the signs; then look how they are deluded.}
(Qur'an 5: 75)

Clearly, the idea that Jesus was God or that he was the son of God is textually weak and logically impossible.

Important notes

1. In none of Christian or Muslim scriptures, Mary claimed that she was a mother of God, or that her son was a God. As mentioned in the Qur'an, she was a pious, virtuous woman.

2. As a precautionary measure, there are many verses in the Qur'an which also confirm Prophet Muhammad's human attributes, in order to prevent his followers from elevating him to a divine or semi-divine status, as happened in the case of Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him).

For example, in chapter 18, Allah instructs Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) to inform the following to all those who hear his message:

{Say: I am only a man like you, to whom has been revealed that your god is one God. So whoever would hope for the meeting with his Lord - let him do righteous work and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone.} (*Qur'an 18: 110*)

17.6 Revival of the doctrine of Jesus' ascension (negating crucifixion)

Some of the changes made to Prophet Jesus' message after his ascension are so fundamental that they **strike at the very root of Christianity**. For example, the only two references to the ascension of Jesus that were found in the Gospels of Mark and Luke in the King James Version were removed from the Revised Standard Version, edited in 1952. Before the removal of these passages, the relevant verses read as follows:

“So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, **he was received up into heaven**, and sat on the right hand of God.” (Mark 16:19, KJV)

“And it came to pass; while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and **carried up to heaven**.” (Luke 24:51, KJV)

The relevant verse in the Gospel of Mark was removed, along with a number of other verses that immediately preceded and succeeded it, sixteen verses in total.

In the 1952 Revised Standard Version, Luke 24:51 read, “While he blessed them, he parted from them.” The words ‘carried up to heaven’ had been removed.⁸⁴

Islam revived the creed of Jesus’ ascension. The Qur’an confirms the earliest scriptures that inform us that Allah raised him when his enemies attempted to crucify him. He replaced him with another person who resembled him, and in reality, it was this other person who was crucified. To this day, Christians believe that Jesus himself was the one who was killed.

⁸⁴ The verses Mark 16:9-20, as well as the words ‘carried up to heaven’ in Luke 24:51, were restored in 1971, and they are found in today’s Revised Standard Version. (Editor)

Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an:

{And [for] their saying: Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of Allah. And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them. And indeed, those who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except the following of assumption. And they did not kill him, for certain. Rather, Allah raised him to Himself. And ever is Allah Exalted in Might and Wise.} (*Qur'an 4: 157-158*)

17.7 Revival of the prohibition of augury⁸⁵

Knowledge of what is going to happen in the future is a unique attribute of Allah alone. No one knows what will happen in the near or distant future except Him. Using augury and witchcraft is prohibited in the revealed scriptures because the one who does it tries to raise him or herself to the level of Allah in terms of assuming one of His divine attributes.

Forecasting the weather is not considered as part of augury and witchcraft; this is because weather forecasters depend upon

⁸⁵ Augury has many meanings, some of which are prognostication, prophecy, and divination. Of course, prophecy is a gift that Allah gave to the prophets alone.

physical measures and mathematical calculations. This is unlike augury and witchcraft, where a person claims that he or she knows what is going to happen in the future, just like Allah. Indeed, He alone is All-Knowing.

Jesus prohibited augury and witchcraft. In Leviticus 19:26, “you shall not eat any flesh with the blood in it. You shall not practice **augury or witchcraft**.”

Islam revived this doctrine, which says that Allah alone knows the future. Allah has mentioned:

{...The unseen is only for Allah [to administer]...} (*Qur'an 10: 20*)

He has also clarified:

{Say: None in the heavens and earth knows the unseen except Allah, and they do not perceive when they will be resurrected.} (*Qur'an 27: 65*)

Based on this, Islam strictly prohibits consulting fortune-tellers, clairvoyants, and the like.

Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) said:

<<If anyone consults a fortune-teller or sooth-sayer, and believes in what he (or she) says, then (that person) has

disbelieved in what was revealed to Muhammad.>> (Bukhari and Abu Dâwood)

17.8 Revival of the prohibition of witchcraft

Referring to the Old Testament quotation above (Leviticus 19:26), witchcraft is prohibited in the teachings of Moses (peace be upon him), Jesus (peace be upon him), and all the prophets. The reason behind it is that sorcerers and practitioners of the occult seek satanic assistance to do their magic, which is against the teachings of all the prophets.

Islam revived the prohibition of witchcraft.

<<Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) said: Avoid the seven great destructive sins.

His Companions asked: O Allah's Messenger, what are they? He said: To worship others besides Allah, **to practice sorcery**...>> (Bukhari and Muslim)

Revival of the prohibition of harmful practices

Without doubt, the doctrinal teachings about the nature of Allah and Jesus were revived by the religion of Islam. At the same time, some of the prohibitions related to practices harmful to the individual and/or to society, which Jesus and the earlier prophets had taught people, were revived as well.

17.9 Revival of the prohibition of taking interest

Upholding the law, Prophet Jesus opposed giving or taking of interest because the texts of the Old Testament expressly forbade interest. It is recorded in Deuteronomy 23:19 that:

You shall not lend upon interest to your brother, interest on money, interest upon victuals, interest on anything that is lent for interest.⁸⁶

Islam revived the teaching of Jesus regarding the prohibition of interest:

{O you who have believed, fear Allah and give up what remains [due to you] of interest, if you should be believers.} (*Qur'an* 2: 278)

There is great wisdom in the prohibition of interest. Firstly, the one who earns income through interest does so without working for it; in contrast, Islam strongly encourages one to work for one's living. Secondly, the one who borrows does so due to a lack of financial resources; however, the debt (because of interest) creates an even greater burden as the borrower must repay the principle coupled with hefty interest charges. Thirdly, a system based on interest can lead to inflation, recession and

⁸⁶ Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 93.

even a complete collapse of financial markets, as we are witnessing in our time. Many nations in both the developed and developing world have become enslaved by the system of usury and interest.

It is undisputed that the 2008-2009 world economic downturn (and possible collapse of many world economies), which started in the United States and spread to Europe and Asia, was caused directly by excessive lending in amounts several times over the actual worth of the assets in loans; this spread the interest charges over many resold loans, resulting in an exaggerated and unrealistic inflation of the value of the actual money lent. This false representation of reality meant that it would be impossible for most debtors to pay back such loans. God, the Almighty, forbade usury in three places in the Qur'an (2: 275-278; 3: 130; and 4: 161).

{Those who consume interest cannot stand [on the Day of Resurrection] except as one stands who is being beaten by Satan into insanity. That is because they say: Trade is [just] like interest. But Allah has permitted trade and has forbidden interest. So whoever has received an admonition from his Lord and desists may have what is past, and his affair rests with Allah. But whoever returns to [dealing in interest or usury] - those are the companions of the fire; they will abide eternally therein.} (*Qur'an* 2: 275)

In Islam, the distinction between legitimate (allowed) practices versus the forbidden ones is very clear. Islam permits loans and the borrowing of money, but without interest charges. In fact, it is highly encouraged in the Qur'an to forgive a debt in order to remove the hardship from the one who has borrowed, especially if he or she is in financial difficulties; Allah has promised a great reward for the one who is able to make this sacrifice.

Muslims who abide by these rules consequently never suffer negative repercussions. However, when human beings do disobey God Almighty they are engulfed by disastrous results. These may come in the form of health threats, financial collapse, break-up of the social fabric, and much more. So it is clear that Islam warns people about many serious ailments afflicting our societies in this day and age; it is equally clear that these ailments are recognized by the world community as harmful. This is a powerful sign that Islam is the true religion and that Allah (Hallowed is He) is the true God, the One only Divine Lord and saviour.

17.10 Revival of the prohibition of consuming pork

Jesus did not eat pork. He followed the laws of Moses and he did not eat pork at all.

Leviticus 11:7-8 says:

And the swine, because it parts the hoof and is cloven-footed but does not chew the cud, is unclean to you. Of their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch, they are unclean to you.⁸⁷

Nevertheless, most Christians today eat pork. Islam revived the prohibition of consuming the meat of the pig. In the Qur'an, Allah has mentioned:

{He has only forbidden to you dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah. But whoever is forced [by necessity], neither desiring [it] nor transgressing [its limit], there is no sin upon him. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.} (*Qur'an* 2: 173)

17.11 Revival of the prohibition of consuming blood

Jesus also did not eat anything containing blood, nor did he consume blood itself. God (Allah) is recorded as having instructed Prophet Moses in the Torah, Deuteronomy 12:16, "Only you shall not eat the **blood**, you shall pour it upon the earth like water," and in Leviticus 19:26, "You shall not eat any

⁸⁷ Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 83.

flesh with the **blood** in it. You shall not practice augury or witchcraft.”⁸⁸

This prohibition has been revived in many verses of the Qur'an, one of which mentions:

{Say: I do not find within that which was revealed to me [anything] forbidden to one who would eat it unless it be a dead animal or blood spilled out or the flesh of swine - for indeed, it is impure...}⁸⁹ (*Qur'an* 6: 145)

17.12 Revival of the prohibition of alcoholic drinks

Jesus abstained from alcoholic drinks according to the instructions recorded in Numbers 6:1-4:

And the Lord said to Moses, say to the people of Israel, when either a man or a woman makes a special vow, the vow of the Nazirite, to separate himself to the Lord, he shall separate himself from

⁸⁸ Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 84.

⁸⁹ (*Qur'an* 2: 173) (mentioned earlier) prohibits the meat of the pig (pork, ham, et cetera) as well as the blood of any animal that is lawful to eat. Blood must be drained from the slaughtered animal before preparing the meat for food.

wine and strong drink, he shall drink no vinegar made from wine or strong drink, and shall not drink any juice of grapes or eat grapes fresh or dried. All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is a product of the grapevine, not even the seeds or the skins.⁹⁰

Islam revived the prohibition of intoxicants irrevocably. In the Qur'an, Allah has mentioned:

{O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful.} (*Qur'an* 5: 90)

17.13 Revival of the prohibition of adultery

The Bible has addressed adultery in Matthew 5:27-30, NIV, where it is said:

You have heard that it was said: Do not commit adultery. But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your

⁹⁰ Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 85-86.

whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

Islam revived the prohibition of adultery by considering fornication to be amongst the strictly forbidden acts. Allah, the Most High, has mentioned in the Qur'an:

{And those who do not invoke with Allah another deity or kill the soul which Allah has forbidden [to be killed], except by right, and do not commit unlawful sexual intercourse. And whoever should do that will meet a penalty.} (*Qur'an* 25: 68)

Allah has also mentioned:

{And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse. Indeed, it is ever an immorality and is evil as a way.} (*Qur'an* 17: 32)

As a precaution from adultery and fornication, all acts which might lead to it are also prohibited. Islam has, thus, strictly forbidden men from being alone with non-mahram women,⁹¹ mixing with them freely, or even shaking hands with

⁹¹ mahram: Women with whom marriage is not permitted, for example, one's sister or one's mother. Non-mahram women are those with whom marriage is permitted.

them. At the same time, it encourages men and women to dress modestly and to speak with a firm, business-like voice that is not enticing, when dealing with men.

At this point, one may inquire about the wisdom behind the prohibition of adultery. The answer is that intimate relationships outside the sacred bond of marriage lead to numerous harmful effects. Some of these include diseases such as HIV/AIDS, and children who are looked down upon in society and considered to be without a lineage. Moreover, pre-marital and extra-marital relationships are destructive to the family system, which is so precious in Islam.

Revival of various beneficial practices

Along with the doctrinal teachings about the nature of Allah and Jesus that were revived by the religion of Islam, some of the detailed practices pertaining to everyday life which Jesus and the earlier prophets had taught by example were revived as well. To continue our list, following are a few examples of those teachings.

17.14 Revival of ablution before prayer

The significance of ablution is evident when we recall that it is a form of preparation for prayer, whereby worshippers cleanse themselves before they stand before Allah, the Creator.

Jesus used to wash his limbs before performing the prayer, according to the teachings of the Old Testament. Moses and Aaron have been recorded as doing the same in Exodus 40:30-32, RSV:

And he set the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it for washing, with which Moses and Aaron and his sons **washed their hands and their feet**...as the LORD commanded Moses.⁹²

Islam revived ablution

Islam revived ablution for prayer in the Qur'an, which has instructed:

{O you who have believed, when you rise to [perform] prayer, wash your faces and your forearms to the elbows and wipe over your heads and wash your feet to the ankles...} (*Qur'an* 5: 6)

Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) taught his followers (by his statements and his example) that ablution includes washing the hands, rinsing the mouth,

⁹² Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 86-87.

washing the face, washing the arms, wiping the head, and finally washing the feet.

17.15 Revival of performing prayers physically

Jesus performed his prayers physically, not just through supplication. In Mark 14:32, it is stated, “And they went to a place which was called Gethsemane; and he [Jesus] said to his disciples, ‘Sit here, while I pray,’” and in Luke 5:16, “But he withdrew to the wilderness and prayed.”

Islam revived prayers as a main act of worship. Allah has instructed believers to perform prayers in numerous Qur’anic verses, for example:

{And establish prayer and give zakâh and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience].} (*Qur’an* 2: 43)

Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) taught his followers (through words and actions) that performing prayers includes standing up, bowing down and prostrating. Interestingly, the manner of performing prayer in Islam is more in line with what Jesus taught than with what Christians do today. According to Isaiah (45:23, RSV), God is reported to have said: “To Me every **knee shall bow.**”

Jesus is described in the Gospels as prostrating during prayer. The method of prostration in prayer followed

by Jesus was not of his own making. It was the mode of prayer of the prophets before him. In the Old Testament, Genesis 17:3, Prophet Abraham is recorded to have fallen on his face in prayer; in Numbers 16:22 and 20:6, both Moses and Aaron are recorded to have fallen on their faces in worship; in Joshua 5:14 & 7:6, Joshua fell on his face to the earth in worship; in I Kings 18:42, Elijah bowed down on the ground and put his face between his knees. This was the way of the prophets.⁹³

“Christians today kneel down, clasping their hands, in a posture which cannot be ascribed to Jesus or others.”⁹⁴

In many of his statements, Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) taught his followers the manner of prayer, including bowing down and prostrating to Allah.

17.16 Revival of compulsory charity (*zakâh*)

⁹³ Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 87-88.

⁹⁴ Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 87.

Jesus (peace be upon him) confirmed the institution of compulsory charity known as ‘the tithe (tenth)’, which was required from the annual harvest. “You shall tithe all the yield of your seed, which comes forth from the field year by year.” (Deuteronomy 14:22)⁹⁵

The Qur’an is a revival of Jesus’ teachings. It teaches Muslims to pay charity at the time of harvest. Allah has mentioned:

{And He it is who causes gardens to grow, [both] trellised and untrellised, and palm trees and crops of different [kinds of] food and olives and pomegranates, similar and dissimilar. Eat of [each of] its fruit when it yields and give its due [zakâh] on the day of its harvest.⁹⁶ And be not excessive. Indeed, He does not like those who commit excess.} (*Qur’an 6: 141*)

The system of charity is well-organized; it provides different rates for cash, precious metals, various trade goods, agricultural products and cattle.⁹⁷ The purpose of charity is very

⁹⁵ Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 91.

⁹⁶ The due is one-tenth if the field is naturally irrigated and one-twentieth if it is artificially irrigated. This obligatory charity is levied on other material resources, like trade and livestock, as well.

⁹⁷ For example, the amount of zakâh for cash after one year has passed

well-defined; it is to provide social support to the needy people in the community and not to provide comfortable living for priests.⁹⁸

The categories of those who are eligible to receive such charity have also been clearly defined in the Qur'an; see chapter 9, verse 60.

In Islam, although the zakâh is obligatory, voluntary charity is highly promoted and encouraged. Often, Muslims voluntarily give far more from their wealth than the obligatory minimum amount. They do so because charity that is based on sincere intentions promises great rewards for the donor from Allah. In the history of Islam, there are many accounts of people who gave their entire wealth to the poor, seeking Allah's pleasure through this remarkable act of charity.

17.17 Revival of fasting

According to the Gospels, Jesus fasted for forty days. Matthew 4:2 says: And he fasted forty days and forty

on it (intact) is 2.5%.

⁹⁸ Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 92.

nights, and afterwards he was hungry.⁹⁹ This was in accordance with the practice of the earlier prophets. Moses is also recorded in Exodus 34:28 to have fasted. It says: And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights, he neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.¹⁰⁰

The Qur'an is a revival of many of the teachings of Jesus and Moses. It teaches the believers to fast during the month of Ramadan.

Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an that fasting is enjoined on the Muslims as it was enjoined on previous nations.

{O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous.} (*Qur'an 2: 183*)

In addition, Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) affirmed that Prophet David used to fast regularly; he said:

⁹⁹ See also Matthew 6:16 & 17:21.

¹⁰⁰ Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 92.

<<The best manner of fasting¹⁰¹ is that of my brother David, who used to fast every other day.>> (Bukhari and Muslim)

17.18 Revival of greeting with the supplication of peace

According to Dr. Bilal Philips, Jesus greeted his followers by saying, “Peace be with you.” This greeting was the same as that mentioned in the books of the Old Testament. In 1st Samuel 25:6, Prophet David instructed emissaries whom he sent to Nabal, “And thus you shall salute him: ‘Peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have.’”¹⁰²

Islam is a religion of peace and respect for others. It revived this noble moral teaching.

The Qur’an instructs all those who enter homes to give the greetings of peace; Allah has instructed the believers to greet each other with peace as well. Consider the following verse:

{And when those come to you who believe in Our verses, say: Peace be upon you....} (*Qur’an* 6: 54)¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ This refers to voluntary fasting, not the obligatory fasting prescribed during the month of Ramadan.

¹⁰² Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 90.

¹⁰³ As mentioned in Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 90-91.

Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) also taught his followers to say this greeting whenever they met each other. The greeting of peace extends even to the heavens as the angels will greet those who enter paradise with the same greeting of peace.

17.19 Revival of veiling (hijab) for women

The women around Jesus veiled themselves according to the practice of women around the earlier prophets. Their garments were loose and covered their bodies completely, and they wore scarves which covered their hair. In Genesis 24:64-65: And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she alighted from the camel, and said to the servant: who is the man yonder, walking in the field to meet us? The servant said: It is my master. So **she took her veil and covered herself.**¹⁰⁴

Islam encourages decency. Muslim women are instructed to cover their bodies and wear veils that cover their heads and chests. Allah has mentioned:

{And tell the believing women to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment

¹⁰⁴ Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 88.

except that which [necessarily] appears thereof and to wrap [a portion of] their head covers over their chests and not expose their adornment... } (*Qur'an 24: 31*)

The wisdom behind veiling is explained in chapter 33, verse 59, where the Qur'an states that it protects women from possible social harm.¹⁰⁵ In addition, veiling discourages males from approaching females with dishonourable intentions.

In today's society, disregard for the hijab has led to the objectification of women, whereby they are used as commodities from which to acquire pleasure and then discarded without a second thought. It is no surprise then that many companies use women as advertising props to entice customers into purchasing their products. The fact remains that even in the eyes of those who use women as objects, only those who keep themselves veiled and hidden from the public eye are regarded as modest.

17.20 Revival of polygyny

There is no record of Prophet Jesus opposing polygyny. There are a number of examples of polygamous marriages

¹⁰⁵ Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 89-90.

among the prophets recorded in the Old Testament. Prophet Abraham had two wives, according to Genesis 16:3, RSV:

So after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her maid, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife.

So did Prophet David (peace be upon him), according to the first book of Samuel 27:3, "...and David with his two wives, Ahin'o-am of Jezreel, and Abigail of Carmel, Nabal's widow."

In 1 Kings 11:3, Solomon is said to have, "...had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines."

According to 2nd Chronicles 11:21, **Solomon's son**, Rehobo'am, had a number of wives. The Old Testament even specified laws regarding the division of inheritance in polygamous circumstances, which indicates that the practice was a normal one in society. (See Deuteronomy 21:15-16)¹⁰⁶

Islam revived this practice of the earlier prophets, but imposed stringent restrictions on polygyny. It permits marriage to up to four women with strict conditions stipulating justice and equal treatment among one's wives as the basic condition for polygyny. In the Qur'an, Allah has stated:

¹⁰⁶ Source: Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 94.

{...marry those that please you of [other] women, two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one or those your right hand possesses...} (*Qur'an* 4: 3)

The only restriction on polygamy (polygyny) recorded in earlier scriptural teaching was the ban on taking a wife's sister as a rival wife in Leviticus 18:18.¹⁰⁷ This law is applied in Islam as well, as is stated in (*Qur'an* 4: 23).

17.21 Revival of circumcision

Jesus was circumcised. According to Luke 2:21:

And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

According to the Old Testament, Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), who was himself neither a Jew nor a Christian, was the first to be circumcised.

In Genesis 17:9-12, RSV, it is written: And God said to Abraham: As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall

¹⁰⁷ Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 95.

keep between me and you and your descendants after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. **He that is eight days old among you shall be circumcised.**

However, today most Christians are not circumcised because of a rationale introduced by Paul, who claimed that circumcision was the circumcision of the heart. In his letter to the Romans 2:29, he wrote, “He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spirited and not literal.” In his letter to the Galatians 5:2, he wrote, “Now I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you.” This was Paul's false interpretation. Jesus was not circumcised in the heart nor did he say anything about circumcision of the heart, he kept the “everlasting covenant” and was circumcised in the flesh.”¹⁰⁸

Islam revives circumcision. Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) said:

¹⁰⁸ Philips, *The True Message of Jesus Christ*, 81-82.

<<There are five practices which correspond with the natural human inclination: shaving pubic hair and underarm hair, **circumcision**, trimming the moustache, and trimming fingernails and toenails.>> (Recorded by Bukhari, Muslim and others)

Conclusion

To conclude, Islam revived the faith of the prophets, which is based upon the belief in one God (Allah). Along with belief, they revived many rules and practices related to morality, justice, and pure living. Hence, the Islamic way of life is much closer to the way of the life of Jesus and the previous prophets (peace be upon them all) than that of any other group of people who claim to be their followers.

18 Features of Islamic Teachings

Allah has made the message of Islam easy to understand and to follow. He annulled some previously prescribed rites and practices while affirming others according to His wisdom. As a result, the Islamic creed and law suit peoples' spiritual, psychological, social and economical needs, for all of humankind and for all eras.

Islamic teachings have the following unique features:

18.1 Rationality

One should not have to derive the truth from a series of complicated logical proofs, only to arrive at something he or she is unsure of (as is common in other religions or philosophies). When the truth is found, it should be clear and obvious. The truth is so simple that anyone is capable of seeing it, and this is the most compelling feature of Islam.

18.2 Perfection

Since Allah is perfect, His teachings must also be perfect and free from any contradiction or error. The Qur'an challenges its readers to find any errors in it, if they do not believe it is really from Allah:

{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.} (*Qur'an* 4: 82)

Dr. Maurice Bucaille, a French Christian physician, found many scientific facts mentioned in the Qur'an that were not known by humans at the time that the verses of the Qur'an were being conveyed by Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) to those around him. Bucaille wrote, "I could not find a single error in the Qur'an."¹⁰⁹

18.3 Clarity

Allah is the Most Compassionate. He therefore guides people through clear and simple revelation free of myths, superstitions and mysteries.

18.4 Scientific validity and accuracy

It is not surprising to find in the Qur'an and statements of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) information which has only recently been discovered by modern science. This indicates that the Qur'an is the word of Allah and that Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) is His

¹⁰⁹ Bucaille, *The Qur'an and Modern Science*.

Prophet. On the other hand, the religious views which the church presented concerning God, the Bible, and the individual's relation to God forced people into an unfortunate choice: either science or God. Most educated people have come to the conclusion that one cannot be a scientist or an educated person and be a true Christian at the same time. Many philosophers, scientists and the majority of lay people lost hope of reconciling religion and science; thus the ideology of secularism was developed. This dichotomy would not have arisen if the original Gospel which was revealed to Jesus (blessings and peace be upon him) had not been distorted. Islam, the pure religion, raises no contradiction whatsoever between religion and science. This is naturally obvious because both religion and true scientific knowledge are from the same source: Allah, who does not contradict Himself.¹¹⁰

18.5 Prophetic fulfilment

Many of the events prophesied in the Qur'an and in the Prophet's statements have come to pass. This is further proof

110 For more information on the many scientific facts that are referenced in the Qur'an, see *The Qur'an and Modern Science* by Dr. Maurice Bucaille and *A Brief Illustrated Guide to Understanding Islam*, by I. A. Ibrahim, also available at www.islam-guide.com.

that Islam is not a man-made religion, because it is unimaginable for an uneducated man who was living isolated from other civilizations to make up such prophecies.

18.6 Moderation

In Islam, there is no conflict between spiritual and worldly life. Rather, it provides a balance between all aspects of human life, taking into account the needs and wants of individuals and society. Therefore, secularism, materialism, monasticism and extreme asceticism are all rejected in Islam, which provides a middle way to achieve harmony and balance between the spiritual and material needs of people. This is why Allah has called the Muslim nation in the Qur'an as a:

{...just community [moderate nation]...} (*Qur'an* 2: 143)

18.7 Comprehensiveness

Islamic teachings provide people with definite guidelines to follow in all aspects of life: spiritual, individual, social, moral, political, economical, and so on.

18.8 Uniqueness

For anyone who claimed that Islam was man-made, Allah challenges them to:

{...produce a chapter the like thereof...} (*Qur'an* 2: 23)

Indeed, the entire Qur'an - its language, its elegance, its miraculous nature - is unparalleled. The ancient non-Muslim Arabs tried to construct a verse yet failed, even though their language and poetry was very highly developed in that era. Even many recent non-Muslim scholars admit that the Qur'an is one of the greatest books known to humankind. This point ultimately leads to the fact that Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) - the illiterate - was a true prophet to whom the Qur'an was revealed.

18.9 Justice

All of humankind descended from one man and one woman (Adam and Eve). Islam teaches that the criterion by which each human being is judged is righteousness, not the colour of one's skin or one's status in society. The best person in the view of Allah is the most righteous. A verse of the Glorious Qur'an reads:

{...Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you...} (*Qur'an* 49: 13)

19 Islam, the Universal Religion

Islam is a universal message to all of humankind and for all times, until the Day of Judgement, whereas every other prophet was sent to his own people, and for a limited time period. Prophet Jesus' mission was limited to the 'lost sheep of the house of Israel'.¹¹¹ Muhammad (peace be upon him) was sent for everyone: male or female, rich or poor, Arab or non-Arab, slave or freeborn. Islam can be practiced anywhere on the earth; it is not tied to locality or culture. So, if you are not from the tribes of Israel (the descendants of the twelve sons of Prophet Jacob) as in the case of Indians, Asians, Africans, indigenous peoples and Europeans, and you are a Christian, then you are following a prophet (Jesus) and a message which was not meant for you. This means you are not on the right track!

¹¹¹ Matthew 15:24.

20 Why Islam?

Every person should revert to Islam because it is the birthright of every person and the original print on every human soul when he or she was born.

Every person should revert to Islam because Allah has sealed and superseded all previous messages with Islam. Allah has mentioned to all people in the Qur'an:

{...This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favour upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion...} (*Qur'an* 5: 3)

Every person should revert to Islam because people in every age must worship their Lord (Allah) according to the law prescribed by Him as revealed to His Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him). The tribes of Israel, for example, were ordered to worship Allah according to the Law of Moses. When Prophet Jesus was sent to them, they were ordered to worship Allah according to what was prescribed in the Gospel. Then when Allah sent Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) with the message of Islam to all people, it became incumbent on all people, **the tribes of Israel and all others**, to enter Islam.

After all, what could be more serious than the rejection of the religion which the Creator and Sustainer of everything has enjoined upon all people? Indeed, this is the greatest injustice committed by human beings. It is sad but true that if a person dies in this state, he or she will be punished and cast into the hellfire to live there for eternity. This concept has been emphasized hundreds of times in the Qur'an and in the statements of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him). Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an:

{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.} (*Qur'an* 3: 85)

Also, Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) said:

<<Whoever among the Christians and Jews hears of me and does not follow what I have brought, and dies in this state will be among the inhabitants of hellfire.>> (Muslim)

Note that Allah was reported to have said in the prophecy of Deuteronomy 18, "If anyone does not listen to My words that the prophet speaks in My name, I Myself will call him to account." (Deuteronomy 18:19)

Having proved that the prophet referred to here is Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), this means that whoever believes in the Bible must believe in this prophet and in what this prophet says; else, he or she will be called to account for that. After the realization of who this prophet is, it follows logically that one must adhere to his teachings.

There are those who may not accept Islam because they think that becoming a Muslim means to turn one's back on all previous prophets sent by Allah. This is a false concept because of the following:

Firstly, belief in all messengers of Allah is a pillar of Islamic faith and hence, no Muslim is a believing Muslim if he or she does not believe in Jesus, Moses or any other prophet.

Secondly, belief in the messengers is a part of what each messenger taught (that is, every prophet called his people to believe in the next prophet who comes after him and follow him whenever he appears). So, rejecting a prophet amounts to rejecting the predecessor.

Thirdly, rejecting any messenger amounts to the rejection of the One Who sent him: Allah.

Fourthly, Islam promises the followers of previous faiths great rewards if they add belief in Islam to belief in their previous faith.

The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace be upon him) said:

<<Three people have a double reward: a person from the People of the Scriptures (the Jews and the Christians) who believed in his prophet (Jesus or Moses) and then believes in Prophet Muhammad (by embracing Islam)...>> (Bukhari)

The first reward is for believing in his or her faith before he or she knew about Islam; the second reward is for recognizing the truth and believing in Islam.

Hence, the Islamic perspective on the relationship between the messengers is like the relationship between the links in a chain; rejecting one of them amounts to rejecting all of them. Therefore, becoming a Muslim means having the honour of believing in all the prophets who came before Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) and not turning one's back on any previous prophets.

Finally, we have to accept Islam because Islam has revived the eternal divine teachings that had been either forgotten or distorted in the previous messages. Islam retains and maintains the practical teachings mentioned in the previous scriptures that are part of the birthright of all people till the end of this world.

21 A Final Call to Reason

A concluding suggestion: consider what everyone has in common. Come, let us reason together:

{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)

{People of the Scripture} is the respectful title given to the Jews and the Christians in the Noble Qur'an. Muslims are being commanded to invite them with noble and respectful words: O People of the Book, O learned people, O people who claim to be the recipients of Divine revelation of a holy scripture, let us gather onto a common platform: that we worship none but Allah, because none but Him is worthy of worship, because He is our Lord and Cherisher, our Sustainer and Evolver, worthy of all praise, prayer and devotion.

These truths are basic and an integral part of any human being's intellect. Sort through the layers of indoctrination which hide this simple fact, and one will be able to see that deep

down, every human being retains the simple and obvious concept of Allah. In essence, every human being agrees that there is only One God worthy of worship, One God who is free of partners, helpers, or anything that is ascribed to Him falsely.

22 This is it

In this book, you have been shown the right path, and Allah has given you the ability to distinguish right from wrong; He has also given you the freedom of choice as to whether or not to accept the message of Islam. If you accept His call, you will be warmly welcomed into paradise. If you reject it, you will end up with the biggest loss ever imagined: the loss of paradise and the guarantee of abiding in hellfire for all eternity. Take a moment to comprehend what **eternity** really means. It is a very frightening realization.

To those who have been faithful Christians, you are warmly welcome to embrace Islam because:

- ❖ Jesus asked his followers to follow Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) whenever he appeared;
- ❖ When Jesus comes back before the end of this world, he will follow Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) and abide by his teachings.

Yes, since Jesus called his true followers to follow it while he was on the earth, and will follow Islam when he comes back, all faithful Christian should follow Islam as well.

To those who have been believing Jews, remember that Abraham and Moses surrendered themselves completely to their

Lord, whether they called Him Elohenu, God, or Allah. All pride in ethnicity or ancestry is vain: what will matter in the end is your individual relationship with your Creator. This means total submission - Islam.

To those of other faiths or who, until now, did not feel that they had any faith at all, consider this message **now**, without any reluctance or hesitation, before it is too late; **before death overtakes you**. It can be soon. Who knows?

23 A Whisper

Some people are not able to find the truth because of their blind commitment to their beliefs. Their tenacious adherence is usually not based on an intellectual understanding of the teachings, but on powerful cultural and emotional influences. Because they were brought up in a particular family or society, they firmly cling to the beliefs of that group, believing that they are upholding the truth.

There are others who are convinced about the religion of Islam and are mentally ready to embrace it. However, when they come to the point when they remember the drastic change in their lives which might not please their families and communities, they tend to go back and change their minds about the decision.

Here is a whisper in their ears:

Irrespective of the amount of money, prestige, position, and power an unbeliever might have possessed in this life, he or she will never have enough to buy his or her entrance into paradise. In the hereafter, the poorest from among the inhabitants of earth, who had testified to the truth of Islam, will be far happier and more dignified than the richest person who did not accept the message of Islam.

Rejecting Allah's message is the biggest sin that one can commit. For this reason, while the soul of an unbeliever is still in his or her body, the wise individual should quickly utilize the occasion: he or she is still alive to accept Allah's message before it is too late. The time for repentance is limited. Once death arrives, it is no longer possible to obtain forgiveness.¹¹² Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an:

{[For such is the state of the disbelievers], until, when death comes to one of them, he says: My Lord, send me back that I might do righteousness in that which I left behind. No! It is only a word he is saying...}¹¹³ (*Qur'an* 23: 99-100)

Religion is, without question, the most important aspect of a person's life as it impacts whether or not a person is rightly guided; it follows, therefore, that choosing the true faith is the most important personal decision one must make; this decision

¹¹² Compiled from Caraballo, *My Great Love for Jesus Led Me to Islam*.

¹¹³ The unbelievers will ask for a 'second chance' when they see the angels ready to punish them, but it will be too late; they were given the time, the intellect and the guidance, but they neglected it for years till time ran out.

needs to be based on clarity and total conviction. When it comes to matters of religion and creed, nothing must be left to chance. This is because the one who is truly guided - as opposed to the one who is not - will surely find eternal happiness in the hereafter!

Being presented with the previous proofs, whoever has a sane intellect can analyze and reason; a crossroad has been reached, in which Allah (Glorified is He) calls all people to follow the clear, straight road and avoid all the foggy, zigzag ones. The right path has now become distinct from the wrong path, as Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an:

{...The right course has become clear from the wrong. So whoever disbelieves in tâghoot and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing.} (*Qur'an* 2: 256)

He has also specified:

{There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong. So whoever disbelieves in tâghoot and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing.} (*Qur'an* 2: 256)

It is my duty and responsibility, as a member of this great planet, and as the one who has submitted my free will to the

law and commandments of the Supreme Being, to urge all human beings to stay away from the worship of false deities, to stop putting their faith in statues, sphinxes, figures, amulets, talismans, horseshoes, and any other objects that have been manufactured by humans or created by God. After repentance, a person should submit completely to the will of Allah, the Only God of the universe.

24 How to Become a Muslim

Every religion has its own requirements for conversion: If someone wants to become Jewish, he or she needs to be able to pledge all of the following:

- 1) To enter the 'eternal covenant' between God and the people of Israel and to become a Jew of his or her own free will;
- 2) To accept Judaism to the exclusion of all other religious faiths and practices, which means to deny the prophethood of Jesus and Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) and to deny the revelations that God sent to humankind through them;
- 3) To pledge undivided loyalty to Judaism and to the Jewish people under all circumstances;
- 4) To commit to learning the Torah and Jewish knowledge; and
- 5) To raise his or her children as Jews.

To be a Christian one must:

- 1) Believe that God (Allah) has a partner, a mother, and a son;
- 2) Believe that every new-born baby is born sinful;

- 3) Believe that God became a man and descended to the earth to die for the sins of the people;
- 4) Deny the prophethood of Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) publicly; and
- 5) Deny that the Qur'an is revelation from Allah.

However, to become a Muslim is simple:

- 1) Bear witness that no one deserves worship except Allah (disown all false gods);
- 2) Bear witness that Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) is His messenger;
- 3) Believe in all the six articles of faith; and
- 4) Worship Allah as taught by Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him).

Hence, becoming a Muslim is a simple and easy process. If anyone has a real desire to be a Muslim and has full belief that Islam is the true religion of God, all he needs to do is to pronounce the *shahâdah*, the testimony of faith. Pronunciation of this testimony with a sincere heart enters the person into the folds of Islam. It is the main gate to Islam.

Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) said:

<<Whoever testifies that there is none worthy of being worshipped but Allah, Who has no partner, and that Muhammad is His slave and Prophet, and that Jesus is the slave of Allah, His Prophet, and His word¹¹⁴ which He bestowed in Mary and a spirit created from Him; and that paradise (heaven) is true, and that the hellfire is true, Allah will eventually admit him into paradise, according to his deeds.>> (Bukhari)

The first part of the testimony consists of the most important word of truth that Allah has ever revealed to His noble prophets, "There is nothing divine or worthy of being worshipped except for Allah." He has stated in the Holy Qur'an:

{And We sent not before you any messenger except that We revealed to him that: There is no deity except Me, so worship Me.} (*Qur'an* 21: 25)

Bearing this testimony implies that all forms of worship, whether it is praying, fasting, invoking, seeking refuge in, and offering an animal as sacrifice, must be directed to Allah and to

¹¹⁴ It means that Jesus was created when Allah said the 'word': Be; when He said it, he was created in the womb of his mother, Mary.

Him alone. Directing any form of worship to other than Allah (whether it is an angel, a messenger, Jesus, Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), a saint, an idol, the sun, the moon, or a tree) is considered to be a contradiction to the fundamental message of not only Islam, but of all the prophets; it is an unforgivable sin in the hereafter unless one repents before death.

The second part of the testimony means that Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) is the slave¹¹⁵ and the chosen messenger of Allah. This implies that a true Muslim obeys and follows the commands of the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) as mentioned in the collections of his Hadith. One must believe in what he has said, practice his teachings and avoid what he has forbidden as the Hadith were, in fact, revelations and inspirations conveyed to him by Allah.

As mentioned earlier, Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) was sent in order to practically implement the Qur'an in his saying, deeds, legislation as well as all the

¹¹⁵ The meaning of 'slavery to Allah' was explained earlier in chapter 11: "The Meaning of Worship in Islam."

other facets of life. ‘Ā’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her), the wife of the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him), when asked about his character, replied:

<<His character was that of the Qur’an.>> (Muslim and Abu Dâwood)

Hence, to truly adhere to the second part of the shahâdah is to follow his example in all walks of life. Allah has mentioned:

{Say, [O Muhammad]: If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.} (*Qur’an* 3: 31)

A true Muslim must try to mold his or her life and character and emulate the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him), as he was a living example for humans to follow. Allah has said to His Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him):

{And indeed, you are of a great moral character.} (*Qur’an* 68: 4)

Allah has also said to all people:

{There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the last day and [who] remembers Allah often.} (*Qur’an* 33: 21)

Upon entering the folds of Islam, all of one's previous sins are forgiven; one starts a new life of piety and righteousness since he or she, in essence, has repented from the ways and beliefs of their previous life. The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) said to a person, who had placed the condition upon the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) in accepting Islam that Allah would forgive his sins:

<<Do you not know that accepting Islam destroys all sins which come before it?>> (Muslim)

As soon as a person accepts Islam, he or she will be free of all the sins committed before his or her acceptance. The person's record will be wiped clean, and it will be as if he or she was born that very day. One should try as much as possible to keep his or her records clean and strive to do as many good deeds as possible; the more he or she does the more he or she will be elevated in paradise.

It shall be emphasized again that accepting Islam does not mean to turn one's back on the messages of previous prophets (peace be upon them all). Indeed, it is a fulfilment of those messages. Therefore, if you are a Jew or a Christian, accepting Islam and following Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) is a fulfilment of the messages which Moses and

Jesus (peace be upon them) brought, as has been clearly described and proved in the previous chapter: “Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) in the Bible.”

However, rejecting Islam means to turn one's back not only on Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) but also to his preceding prophets (Moses and Jesus). This is actually a clear violation of their messages, which diminishes one's hope of paradise in the hereafter.

It is now up to you to decide your own future home. Wish you all the best!

25 To Sum it Up...

The creation and existence of everything in this world has a purpose and wisdom behind it. Human beings are the superior creation as Allah has given them the intellect, has created everything for them, and has given them power and knowledge over most of the creation. There is, obviously, a specific purpose behind their existence, which is what has been elaborated in this book.

A wise person is expected to behave and act in accordance with the purpose of his or her existence; he or she should not remain oblivious from the final destination which he or she is going to hit one day or another.

26 Conclusion

The following twenty-five facts were discussed in this book:

First, the purpose of creation is to worship Allah alone.

Second, the basic message of Islam is to worship Allah alone without any intercessor or mediator. Any form of worship that is not dedicated to Allah alone, will be rejected as one form of polytheism, which amounts to apostasy from the Islamic point of view.

Third, the evidence that only Allah has the right to be worshipped was elaborated.

Fourth, Islam is a restatement of the basic message of all religions: worship Allah alone. It is the last religion for all people and for all times. So, whether they were raised as Jews, Christians, Hindus, atheists, or with any other creed, everyone, once they hear about it should follow it, become a Muslim and pronounce the testimony right away, without further delay; whoever rejects it is considered to have rejected the message of Allah, and accordingly will be cast into hell. Such a person cannot expect guidance, for he or she has deliberately renounced guidance.

Fifth, Islam is uniquely rational, simple and uncomplicated. It rejects all forms of polytheism and false beliefs.

Sixth, both the divine origin of the name of the religion 'Islam' and the comprehensiveness of its meaning point to its truth.

Seventh, the message of false religions is paganism (the worship of creatures, rather than the Creator).

Eighth, Islam is the only religion today that teaches the right concept of Allah, free of any confusion or irrational facts.

Ninth, Islam's basic principles and characteristics point to its truth.

Tenth, indeed, Islam is the only religion that fights extremism - whether that extremism comes from secularism and materialism or from excessive spiritualism. Islam ensures a balance between spiritual, moral and materialistic needs. It is truly the middle path and is a perfectly balanced way of life. This should not be surprising because Islamic teachings are not manmade, but have been revealed to humanity by Allah the Creator, the Most Wise, the Most Knowledgeable.

Eleventh, the truth of every religion relies on the accuracy with which the original revelation from Allah was preserved. This rule is only satisfied by Islamic teachings. The Qur'an is the final word of Allah which has been preserved throughout the ages. Hence, it supersedes all previous scriptures.

Twelfth, Islam is the final religion, and intended for all humankind. All people therefore have an obligation to embrace it.

Thirteenth, Allah and His creation are totally different entities. He is One, distinct from His creations.

Fourteenth, Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) was sent to all people. He is the last Prophet and his teaching, Islam, will remain as the only correct and authentically revealed teaching until the Day of Judgement.

Fifteenth , prophets are human beings sent by Allah to convey and revive the original message: worship of Allah alone (monotheism) and being careful not to worship anything other than Him. Prophets are only human beings sent by Allah to be examples of how the scriptures were to be understood and implemented.

Sixteenth, the reality of the prophets, their uniform message, and the way of life is revived and can only be found preserved in Islamic teachings, manifested in the Qur'an and the

statements and actions of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him). They are the only authentic and proven resource documents today which preserve the facts about Jesus, Moses and their messages. They guide those who follow these sources to a way of life which is more consistent with the way of life of Jesus and Moses than that practiced by most Christians and Jews themselves. They guide to the love and respect of both of them, and of all the prophets.

Seventeenth, Islam considers disrespect of any prophet as stepping out from the boundaries of Islam.

Eighteenth, Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a virtuous woman, honoured above the women of all nations in that time.

Nineteenth, it has been proved that the Bible is widely distorted; this implies that Christianity has been distorted as well, as is evident from several doctrines introduced by humans into Christianity that resulted in its deviation from pure monotheism into tri-theism within the first 400 years after Jesus' ascension. It shall be noted that those who followed the scriptures when they were in their pure and unadulterated forms are considered to be on the right religion, and will have nothing to fear on the Day of Judgement.

Twentieth, oral traditions passed on for generations were substantially changed from the original message. People who had not seen Jesus began to write books focusing on his personality more than his message. These articles became overly exaggerated, losing the true essence of his existence and message. They exalted him to extreme heights. This then posed a problem for Christianity as divisions in the doctrine arose, with each group espousing their own theories and explanations. This resulted in variant notions of the crucifixion, the Trinity, the divinity of Jesus, the divine ‘sonship’ of Christ, Original Sin, and atonement. The following cardinal doctrines of Christianity are rejected by Islam:

- ❖ The Trinity
- ❖ The divinity of Jesus
- ❖ The notion that Jesus is the son of God
- ❖ Original sin
- ❖ Atonement (reconciliation between God and humankind brought about by the life and death of Jesus)
- ❖ Redemption (salvation from sin through Jesus’ sacrifice)

Twenty-first, the popular Christian concept of salvation is inaccurate. The true way to achieve salvation is to do good deeds and to avoid and repent from sins, and to follow the commandments mentioned in the scriptures, sealed and

superseded by the Qur'an. Islam teaches that sin cannot be transferred from person to person or inherited. Each person is accountable for his or her own deeds and will be rewarded accordingly.

Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an:

{And whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, while being a believer,¹¹⁶ those will enter paradise and will not be wronged [even so much as] the speck on a date seed.}
(*Qur'an 4: 124*)

Twenty-second, it is evidenced in many places in the Old and New Testaments (in its present form) that Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) was mentioned by his illustrious predecessors, namely the Prophets Jesus and Moses (may Allah's blessings be upon them all). With this decisive and factual evidence, it is only befitting that sincere Christians and Jews accept Islam as a continuation of the prophets' legacy left by all the messengers and prophets. As such, as no Muslim is a Muslim till he or she believes in Muhammad and all the prophets sent before him, no Jew or Christian is a true Jew or Christian till he or she believes in

116 i.e. believing in the six pillars of faith mentioned in chapter 9.

Muhammad, the prophesized prophet in both the old and new testament, and hence, they should enter Islam's fold wholeheartedly.

Twenty-third, the way to please Allah has been detailed for us. The Qur'an defines it clearly and the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) gives us details at every point.

Twenty-fourth, God (Allah) is One, His message is one, and the way to Him is one: namely Islam. Allah has specified in the Qur'an:

{And, [moreover], this is My path, which is straight, so follow it; and do not follow [other] ways, for you will be separated from His way. This has He instructed you that you may become righteous.} (*Qur'an 6: 153*)

Last but not least, Islam is your birthright. Yes, you read correctly. Islam is your *right*. Every human being was born into the religion of Islam and human beings are naturally drawn to what they already know. Thus when an individual accepts Islam, he or she is not turning the back on any prior revelation but rather returning to the original pure belief he or she was created in. This being the case, Islam is our birthright, whereas other religious or ideological systems teach to deviate from the pure belief we were created in.

These are the twenty-five basic components which logically and rationally dictate that Islam should be considered as the last and true religion of Allah, so all people should follow it.

May the light of truth shine in our minds and in our hearts.
May it lead us to peace and certitude in this life and eternal bliss in the hereafter.

Kind regards,

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Appendix

For Further Information about Islam

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Online information about Islam

You may also wish to visit the following web sites for up-to-date information and a wealth of reading material:

www.islamfortoday.com

www.islam-guide.com

www.islamonline.net

www.islamtomorrow.com

www.missionislam.com

Online bookstores

www.al-hidaayah.co.uk

www.dar-us-salam.com

www.iiphonline.com

www.soundvision.com

Glossary of Islamic Terms*

<i>abu (or abi)</i>	أبو، أبي	father (of)
<i>alhamdulillâh</i>	الحمد لله	all praise is for Allah
<i>Allâhu akbar</i>	الله أكبر	Allah is the Greatest
<i>Arafah (or 'Arafât)</i>	عرفات، عرفة	the plain outside of Makkah where pilgrims gather at the climax of the Hajj; Mount 'Arafah' falls inside that plain. It is the mountain where prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) stood beside it when he made his Hajj.
<i>Bismillâh</i>	بسم الله	in the name of Allah

* The Arabic words are transliterated according to the conventions of the Transliteration Chart found in this book. If a word has become part of the English language (i.e., is found in a dictionary of Standard English), that spelling is used in this book and appears first in this Glossary, with the transliterated form in brackets after it.

<i>Da'wah</i>	دعوة	disseminating the teachings of Islam and calling people to accept and embrace Islam
<i>Hadith (hadeeth)</i>	حديث	the collected statements and actions of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) that with the Qur'an form the basis of Islamic law
<i>Hajj</i>	حج	the major pilgrimage to the Sacred Mosque, site of the Kaaba at Makkah, to be undertaken by every able Muslim once in his or her lifetime
<i>hijab (hijâb)</i>	حجاب	veil ordained by Allah for believing women
<i>jinn</i> (plural of <i>jinni</i>)	جن	non-human, rational beings created by Allah from fire, often referred to as 'demons' or 'devils'; They have free will like humans: some are Muslims, others disbelievers; some are obedient to Allah,

		others disobedient. Satan is a jinni. Some people try to 'foretell' the future by contacting a jinni. Some disobedient jinn mislead people into thinking that they can tell them what will happen in the future, near or far, or that the jinn can provide people with riches or some sort of power.
<i>jizyah</i>	جزية	a tax levied on the people of the Scriptures when they are under the protection of a Muslim government.
<i>Kaaba (Ka 'bah)</i>	الكعبة	the House of Allah in Makkah, originally built by Prophets Ibrâheem and Ismâ'eel
<i>mahram</i>	محرم	a degree of consanguinity precluding marriage; a man whom a woman may not marry due to the close blood

		or marriage relationship, e.g., her father, brother, son, uncle, or father-in-law
<i>Ramadan</i>	رمضان	the ninth month in the Islamic calendar; the month of obligatory fasting
<i>Sharia (shari'ah)</i>	شريعة	Islamic law derived from the Qur'an and the statements and actions of the Prophet.
<i>siwâk (or miswâk)</i>	سواك	a small twig (<i>usu.</i> of the <i>arâk</i> tree) used as a natural toothbrush
<i>tâghoot</i>	طاغوت	idols; everything evil that is worshipped besides Allah
<i>Zakât (zakâh)</i>	زكاة	obligatory charity: an 'alms tax' on wealth payable by Muslims and to be distributed to poor Muslims who qualify as recipients.

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