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Front cover: San Markand Mosque, Central Asia, circa A.D. 1660.

Special thanks to Sam Shamoun for his assistance in gathering together various articles that refute Islam.

Islam Part 4: Miscellaneous Issues

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1. Brief introduction to Muslim claims for the Quran

The Quran is held to be God's perfect and final revelation to mankind. It was revealed by God to Muhammad over a 23-year period through the medium of the angel Gabriel. The first revelation took place in the year A.D. 610 to Muhammad at the age of forty. This lasted until the latter's death in A.D. 633.

The Quran consists of 114 chapters called suras which are placed haphazardly, having no chronological sequence. This is due to the fact that Muhammad died unexpectedly, having failed to produce a chronological order of the chapters in the Quran.

Below we present some of the claims made by Muslims in support of the Quran's divine origin and our response to them.

A. Perfect preservation of text

The Quran has been transmitted with no variant readings, being virtually identical to the codices compiled by Muhammad's companions.

B. Perfect eloquence

This argument is made stronger when one realizes that Muhammad, according to Islamic traditions, was illiterate. This makes it impossible for Muhammad to be the author of a Book considered by Muslims to be the epic of Arabic poetry and eloquence.

C. Scientific accuracy of the text

It is presumed that not only does the Quran contain no demonstrable errors of science, but foretold certain facts only recently discovered. For instance, the Quran accurately lays out the different stages of embryonic development centuries before modern science ever discovered them.

This is supposedly documented by a French doctor, Maurice Bucaille, in his work titled *The Bible, Quran and Science*.

D. The challenge of the Quran

In S. 2:23 the Quran challenges unbelievers:

“And if ye are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant, *Then produce a Sura like thereun to; and call your witnesses or helpers (if there are any) Besides God, if your (doubts) are true*” (Y. Ali).

Accordingly, this challenge to produce a sura like it has never been met for nearly 1,400 years, affirming the divine origin of the revelation.

1a. Response to claims

A. To assume that the preservation of a text proves its inspiration is fallacious since every book that has been preserved accurately would be the word of God.

Besides, the Quran is not free from variant readings since thousands of conflicting readings existed during the caliphate of Uthman (d. A.D. 658), Islam's third leader. This has been documented by Arthur Jeffery's work *Materials for the History of the Text of the Quran*.

B. Eloquence does not prove inspiration since there are records of men who, in spite of certain handicaps, were able to produce masterpieces that have stood the test of time. One example is the blind poet Homer who produced two Greek classics, *Odyssey* and *Illiad*.

C. Again the claim that a book containing accurate scientific information qualifies it as the word of God would make all documents that contain no factual errors God's word.

Furthermore, a careful analysis of the Quran indicates that it is far from being free from scientific errors. For instance, in S. 18:86 we are told that the sun sets in a muddy spring; that men were transformed into apes and swine (S. 2:65; 5:60; 7:166).

Finally, the work done by Dr. Maurice Bucaille is far from being an unbiased critique of the Bible and the Quran. Bucaille often has to mistranslate and twist certain words of the Quran in order to arrive at his conclusions. An excellent response to Bucaille's work is Dr. William Campbell's *The Quran and the Bible in Light of History and Science* available from Middle East Resources, P.O. Box 96, Upper Darby, PA 19082.

D. This challenge of the Quran to produce a sura like it is purely subjective, since no matter what is produced a Muslim can never acknowledge that the challenge has been met. This stems primarily from the Quran itself which disallows any possibility whatsoever for it to be defeated:

“But if ye cannot—AND OF A SURETY YE CANNOT—then fear the Fire whose fuel Is men and stones,—which is prepared for those who reject faith” (S. 2:24, Ali).

Hence, to even attempt to meet the challenge defeats the purpose, seeing that a devout Muslim will never admit to the criteria being met.

2. Muslim claims for Muhammad's prophethood

A. Muhammad's integrity

Presumably, Muhammad was the epitome of virtue and honesty. His life was exemplary, a model for humanity to follow.

B. Advent foretold in previous Scriptures

The Quran claims that Muhammad's advent was foretold by God to both Moses and Jesus, as well as to their followers (S.7:156–157; 61:6).

Two prophecies often pointed out by Muslims to prove that Muhammad is predicted in the Holy Bible are [Deuteronomy 18:15–20](#), the Prophet like Moses; and Jesus' promise to the disciples that another Comforter was to arrive in [John 14:16–17, 26; 15:26](#), and [16:7](#).

2a. Response to claims

A. An examination of Muhammad's life opens up many questions which need to be addressed. For example, the Quran itself testifies that Muhammad was a sinner in suras 4:105–

107, 9:48, 40:55, 47:19, and 48:1–2. In fact, in S. 80:1–10 Muhammad is rebuked for ignoring a blind man’s request focusing instead on a wealthy Arab noble.

We are also told that Muhammad was allowed to take his adopted son’s divorcee as his wife in S. 33:36–38. To make matters more difficult, Muslim historians such as al-Baidawi indicate it was Muhammad who was the cause of the divorce in the first place.

Another questionable aspect of his life is the fact that he took a nine-year-old girl by the name of Aisha to be his bride. This becomes more astonishing when we realize that Muhammad was 56 years old at the time (Bukhari vol. 7:64).

B. There are no predictions of Muhammad in the Bible since the prophecies in question do not refer to him at all. The first prophecy is referring to Christ, who truly was the Prophet like Moses (cf. [John 1:45](#), [5:46](#); [Acts 3:20–26](#)).

The second prophecy refers to the advent of the Holy Spirit, who arrived shortly thereafter on the day of Pentecost, empowering the church of Christ to carry out the great commission of world evangelism (cf. [Luke 24:49](#); [Acts 1:8](#), [2:1–47](#)).

For a more in-depth critique of the above Muslim claims consult John Gilchrist’s *Is Muhammad Foretold in the Bible?* available from South Asian Friendship Center, P.O. Box 607673, Chicago, Ill., 60660

3. Muslim view of the Bible

Muslims believe that God in the past revealed inspired books to certain prophets for their respective communities to follow. These books include the Book of Abraham, the Law of Moses, the Psalms of David, and the Gospel of Jesus (S. 5:44–47; 21:105; 87:18–19).

Yet, Muslims presume that these books became corrupt in time and no longer reflect the original revelations. It therefore became necessary for the Quran to be given in order to expose the corruptions and verify all that remained intact in the previous scriptures.

In response to this, it must be reiterated that nowhere in the Quran does it ever say that the Bible has ever been corrupted. In fact, the Quran affirms that an uncorrupted Bible existed during the time of Muhammad (S. 2:113; 3:79, 93–94; 5:44–48; 28:48–49; 32:23; 53:36).

We currently have in our possession copies of the Holy Bible dating before, during and after the time of Muhammad that are virtually identical to the Bible we have today. This destroys the Muslim myth of Bible corruption since the Quran testifies to the authority and preservation of the biblical text.

In fact, the Quran commands Muhammad to verify his message by appealing to the book of the Judeo-Christian communities in S. 10:94

4. The nature of God contrasted

A. Muslim perspective

God is absolutely One, allowing for no plurality in the Being of God. In fact, to assume a plurality is to commit the unpardonable sin called *Shirk*, association of partners with Allah (S. 4:116).

It is not surprising then, to find that the God of Islam is not a Triune Being of Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

“Say: He is Allah (Arabic term for God), the One and Only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; *He begetteth not, nor is He begotten*; And there is none like unto Him” (S. 112:1–4).

This verse will not only not allow for plurality, but denies God as Father since he “begetteth not,” i.e. has no children. Nor will it allow for God in the flesh, the Son Incarnate, since he cannot be “begotten.” Hence, the first two Persons of the Christian Godhead are eliminated in Islam.

Finally, in Islam the Holy Spirit is not God but the Angel of revelation, Gabriel. Hence, to assume that Muslims and Christians worship the same God is simply erroneous seeing that the Muslim deity is a singularity within unity.

B. Christian perspective

The God of the Holy Bible is a perfect Tri-Personal Being, a plurality within an indivisible unity. God exists in three distinct, yet inseparable Persons; each Person being fully God, each existing in perfect harmony and unity ([Matthew 28:18–20](#)).

The Bible affirms God as:

- The Father—[1 Peter 1:2](#)
- The Son—[Titus 2:13](#); [2 Peter 1:1](#)
- The Holy Spirit—[Acts 5:3–4](#); [Hebrews 9:14](#)
- Yet, all the while still one God—[Deuteronomy 6:4](#); [Galatians 3:20](#).

Note: It should be pointed out that the Quran misrepresents the Trinity by presuming that Christians worship three gods consisting of Father, Mary the mother, and Jesus their Son (cf. S. 4:171; 5:73, 116).

So embarrassing is this fact that Muslim translator A. Yusef Ali deliberately added the term trinity into his translation of the text of 4:171 and 5:73, when the word is not even in the Arabic original.

This is done in a deliberate attempt to deceive non-Arabic speaking readers into thinking that the Quran attacks the trinity when in reality it is attacking a corrupt form of tritheism.

5. The person of Christ contrasted

A. Muslim perspective

Jesus was only a messenger of God sent to preach the pure Abrahamic monotheism that was eventually perfected by Muhammad, the religion of al-Islam. He was neither God or the Son of God, and to assume such is utter blasphemy (S. 5:17, 72; 9:30).

In fact, in order for God to have a son implies that he also has a wife. This indicates that Muhammad’s understanding of sonship was purely carnal, implying that God had to have sexual relations in order to beget a son (S. 6:102; 72:3).

Christ is also given certain titles and attributes which he alone shares in the Quran, some of which include:

- He is the Word of God—[3:39](#), [45](#); [4:171](#)

- A spirit from God—4:171
- A sign and mercy to man—19:21; 21:91
- Virgin born—19:16–21
- Author of Life—3:49; 5:110—c.f. 15:28–29
- Sinless—19:19

Finally, according to the Quran Christ did not die nor was he crucified but ascended alive into heaven. From there, he will return as the final judge, ushering in the end of the age (S. 3:55; 4:157–159; 43:57, 61).

B. Christian perspective

The biblical Jesus, which is the Jesus of history, was God the Son who for our sake became a perfect man ([Matthew 1:23](#); [John 1:1–3, 14](#)).

The title, Son of God, is not to be understood in a carnal sense, but is used to assert a distinction between the first two Persons of the God-head. Furthermore, it is also used to indicate the intimate love and communion Christ has shared with the Father from eternity ([John 17:5, 24](#)).

The Bible also teaches that Jesus came as a sacrifice for our sins, that through him we might receive forgiveness and assurance of salvation ([Mark 10:45](#); [John 1:29, 3:16, 10:27–28](#)).

After dying for sinners on the cross, he was resurrected on the third day to immortal glory ([Mark 16:6–8](#); [Luke 24:33–43](#); [John 20:24–29](#); [Acts 1:1–3](#)).

From there he ascended to heaven where he now intercedes for believers. He shall also come again to receive them into glory, as well as to judge the nations ([John 14:1–3](#); [Acts 1:9–11, 3:20–21](#); [Hebrews 1:3, 7:24–25, 9:11–12](#); [Revelation 1:7–8, 17–18](#)).

Hence, because of the perfect work of Christ, believers are guaranteed eternal life seeing that Christians have a perfect savior who perfectly saves all who come to him ([John 6:39–40](#); [1 Timothy 1:15](#)).

This is something of which no Muslim can ever be assured, since he depends on his imperfect works to justify him before a holy God.

Therefore, Christians should fast and pray that God would illuminate Muslims in order that they might see and accept Jesus as their personal savior. After all, “the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” ([James 5:16](#)).

Folk Islam

By Dr. Jim Romaine

Zwemer Institute of Muslim Studies

But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God, the Eternal King.
 When He is angry, the earth; the nations cannot endure His wrath.
 Tell them this: These gods, who did not make the heavens and the earth,
 will perish from the earth and from under the heavens ([Jer 10:10, 11](#)).

Introduction

The subject of Folk Islam is a vast mosaic. It is far too great a subject to try to cover in one article, so I have limited myself to just one area of Folk Islam, the animistic elements of Folk Islam and I have had to limit myself to only a few representative subjects in that area. Animism and pre-Islamic heathenism is so pervasive in Islam that it is hard to say where it begins or ends.

One could also take each of the Five Pillars of Islam, the SALAT (daily prayers), the SWAM (fast), the ZAKAT (alms), and the HAJJ (pilgrimage), but this is something Samuel Zwemer did very well in his books *The Influence of Animism on Islam* and *Studies in Popular Islam*. I highly recommend these books to you for your careful study.

Finally, as I sought to lay out some of the beliefs and practices of Folk Muslims, I have hinted at ways to approach Folk Muslims with the gospel message, but I have not discussed this at length as that is a whole other subject and worthy of its own study. With these exclusions in mind I trust that the reader will allow for some editorial judgements and practical limitations.

Definitions

Islam

What does Islam mean? Recently Muslims have said that Islam means peace. But this is not true and Christians must not succumb to this kind of Muslim propaganda. To believe this would be naive, and it contradicts Muslim dictionaries, philosophers and theologians. Prior to the rise of international Islamic terrorism, almost all Muslims defined Islam as submission and obedience. But recently to make Islam more acceptable in non-Muslim democratic countries. Muslims have tried to change the meaning of Islam. They say they base their claim on the Arabic meaning of Islam. But the Arabic word for peace is *salaam* and the Arabic root of Islam is ASLAMA—to submit.

Islam, as a technical term to denote the system of beliefs and rituals based on the Koran, is derived from the recurrent use of the verb ASLAMA (submit, sc. oneself) in the Koran to denote the characteristic attitude of the true believer in relation to God (Gibbs, vol. 1, p. 176).

The testimony of prominent Muslim theologians underlines this definition. Abul A'la Mawdudi, probably one the most well known and respected Muslim philosophers and theologians of the last century wrote:

“Islam is an Arabic word meaning submission, surrender, and obedience. As a religion, Islam stands for complete submission and obedience to God, and this is why it is called Islam” (Mawdudi, p. 1).

Hammudah Abdalaati said:

“In the religious sense the word Islam means submission to the Will of God and obedience to His Law” (Abdalaati, p. 7).

“The term Islam in the lexicon of the Arabs means submission to God. The religion of Islam is the religion of submission to the will of the omnipotent and omniscient Creator, the only God” (Farah, p. 3).

Farah in his Glossary writes:

“Islam—literally submission, i.e. to Allah” (Farah, p. 411).

“Islam is a religion based upon surrender (TASLIM) to the Will of the One God or Allah and upon the knowledge of His Unity” (Nasr, p. 3).

In the early days of Islam, those who faced Muslim invaders were given two choices—surrender or die. Those who chose to surrender were given the choice of converting to Islam or paying the JIZYA which is a protection tax extracted from those who consent to living in submission to Islamic law. These people were called the *AL-DHIMMA* or *DHIMMIS*. This illustrates the true meaning of Islam, to surrender.

Surah 113:1–5 indicates that Muhammad, himself, lived in constant fear ... (and) sensed the influences of evil ... He was especially afraid of envy (Abd Al-Masih, p. 13, 14). (All Quranic quotations are from Abdullah Yusuf Ali's translation, *The Meaning of The Holy Qur'an* 1989 edition unless contained within a quotation.)

Say, I seek refuge With the Lord of the Dawn.
From the mischief Of created things;
From the mischief Of Darkness as it over spreads;
From the mischief Of those who practice Secret Arts;
And from the mischief Of the envious one As he practices envy.

This early Makkan Surah provides the antidote to superstition and fear... (Yusuf Ali p. 1, 715). Does this sound like a religion of peace and serenity?

The testimony of Muslims themselves shows that neither Islam nor the Qur'an is able to remove or remedy the fear of evil spirits. Just the opposite, they increase these fears and assist in the worship of spirits by their teachings. They allow Muslims to continue worshiping ancient spirits and ancestors and add new ones to those they already worshiped.

These definitions are important because they provide us with the key to understand Islam. The key to understand Islam is the word Islam. Islam means to submit and a Muslim is one who submits. In Islam the relation of the believer to Allah is that of a slave to his master. This relationship is characterized by unquestionable obedience, fear, and doubt and is further exaggerated in Folk Islam.

In Christianity, the believer's relationship to God is that of a child to his Father, [1Jn 3:1](#). It is a relationship characterized by love and trust, [1Jn 4:9, 10](#). The Bible teaches that we do not need to fear the unknown, just the opposite.

“Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest” ([Jos. 1:8](#)).

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me” ([Ps. 23:4](#)).

“And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” ([Matt. 10:28](#)).

The Bible teaches that God is our Father, God loves us, protects us, and casts out all fear. ([1Jn 4:18](#)).

“How different from Muhammad is our Lord Jesus who said, ‘Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; ... Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid’ ” ([John 14:27](#)) (al-Masih, p. 14).

The Islamic understanding of Allah does not give a Muslim peace and rest because he stands before an incomprehensible god who, as a dictator, does what he wills. He leads one person aright and sends another to hell. He is not a personal God as in Christianity. The individual

Muslim has no personal relationship with Allah. He cannot say to him, “You are my Father.” Allah in Islam is not a Redeemer or a Savior. Therefore, man is forced to search for whatever other powers and assistance he may find; thus, the occult enters into every aspect of Islam (al-Masih, p. 5).

Islam is a legalistic system that is rigid and unyielding. Islam gives neither peace nor hope to either the orthodox Muslim or the Folk Muslim. The orthodox Muslim lives under the tyranny of the Shari’a Law and the Folk Muslim lives in constant fear of spirits, powers, and the unknown. The Qur’an predicts this kind of hopelessness (Sura 45:24, 25).

And they say: “What is there but our life in this world?
We shall die and we live, And nothing but Time can destroy us.”
But of that they have no Knowledge: they merely conjecture:
And when our Clear Signs are rehearsed to them,

Their argument is nothing but this: they say, “Bring (back) our forefathers, if What ye say is true!”

Islam is not a religion in the sense of the word as Westerners understand religion. Bassam Madany writes:

“Islam is more than a religion. This reality is not easily recognized by the average American since his understanding of this subject is limited by an individualistic concept of religion, namely, a system of belief and a code of ethics and that are limited to the life of the individual, his family and his or her house of worship... But Islam is much more than a religion. A leading expert on the history of the Arabs and of Islam, was the late Lebanese/ American scholar, Philip Hitti. He taught at Princeton University for almost fifty years. His book, *Islam: a Way of Life*, has three parts, Part I: Islam as Religion; Part II: Islam as State; and Part III: Islam as Culture.”

“Where the needs of ordinary Muslims have been excluded from the theological expression of Islam, as under radical reform movements, Folk-Islam beliefs and practices have frequently been tolerated because Islam is, in itself, more than simply a religious system. As a way of life, accommodation to the needs of adherents is inevitable” (Musk, p. 237).

Islam is filled with divisions, conflicts, contradictions and syncretism. Nevertheless, Muslims love to talk about their supposed peace and unity. Some of these divisions are between sects, Sunnis, Shias, Sufis and Folk Muslims, some between ethnic groups, Turks, Arabs, African-Americans, Indonesians, Kurds, Kazaks, and some between political or ideological groups. There are as many divisions among Muslims as there are among Christians or any other religious belief. A Muslim once told me there were almost as many forms of Islam as there were Muslims!

The words Samuel Zwemer wrote over sixty years ago are just as true today as they were then:

“The student of Islam will never understand the common people unless he knows the reasons for their curious beliefs and practices... Witchcraft, sorcery, spells and charms are the background of native Moslem psychology to an extent that is realized only by those who have penetrated most deeply into the life of the people... Not only does superstition prevail among the vast majority of Muslims with literature on magic, the universal sale of amulets, charms, talismans, magic-squares and the practice of

geomancy, but in the very source-books of Islam, the Koran and the Traditions, these practices nearly always find their origin or their justification... Their doctrine of God includes the magic use of His names and attributes... In no monotheistic faith are magic and sorcery so firmly established as in Islam..." (Zwemer, 1939, p. viii, ix).

Forty-five years later J. Christy Wilson once again underlined this point:

"If we are to appreciate the practical out workings of the Muslim religion, which now claims one-sixth of the human race as adherents, we need to understand folk Islam" (Parshall, p. 9).

Folk Islam

Folk Islam, also known as Popular or Low Islam, which influences probably 90 percent of all Muslims, is a pragmatic belief system that seeks to deal with the problems and questions of the ordinary Muslim's everyday life. Folk Islam centers on powers and forces, problem solving and remedies of daily life, not philosophical or doctrinal teaching.

Folk Muslims—those who are doctrinally Muslims but practically animist. Folk Muslims confess Allah but worship spirits and are more concerned with magic than with Muhammad (Love, p. 2).

Folk Islam is a mixture of orthodox Islam, local indigenous beliefs, and animism. Animism is the belief that all objects are filled with unseen personal spirits and impersonal forces and powers. These spirits and powers have influence and control of human lives. It is important to discover which forces and powers are present around us and what we must do to appease them or influence them. The essence of animism is the power they use and the control of it positively or negatively.

In Folk Islam there is little effort to develop a single, coherent system of beliefs. Folk Islam is very localized in its beliefs and will vary greatly from place to place and culture to culture, but the central pagan and animistic beliefs are basic to all Folk Muslims.

The Folk Muslim does not want to know about the unity of Allah. He wants to know: How can I survive in this world? Why am I sick? What should I do to get well? What about life-cycle rites? Birth, naming, circumcision, marriage, and death, are major rites of passage. Puberty, military service and life crises—sickness, disasters, and war are lesser rites. These all provide the focus of attention for Folk Muslims and increase their fears. Its adherents exist in a world filled with fear. Some of the main fears listed by Muslims are fear of the unknown, fear of evil spirits, fear of the lack of power and of those who have power, fear of death, fear of the future, fear of inequality, fear of the meaninglessness of life, fear of sickness and its results, fear of a crisis or natural disaster, and fear of rejection and shame.

In short Folk Muslims fear the past, the present, and the future, the known and the unknown. "Fear is the continual, strong force that moves the mystic towards animistic and, at times, esoteric practices" (Parshall, p. 121). Fear is the first key word to understand Folk Islam. What would you say to a Folk Muslim about fear? How would you present the gospel of peace to a Folk Muslim? (Cf. [Jos. 1:9](#); [Ps. 18:2](#); [23](#); [27:1](#); [Lk. 2:10](#); [Jn 14:27](#)).

Paul Hiebert wrote:

“In folk Islam ... [p]eople in everyday life are believed to be at the mercy of evil powers; spirits, demons, evil eyes, curses and sorcery. Their only protection is to seek the aid of Allah, angels, saints, charms, good magic and other powers” (Love, p. 19).

Folk Muslims, on the whole, make no distinction between personal spiritual beings and impersonal forces: for instance a jinn, a spiritual being; or the evil eye, an impersonal force; can both cause sickness. People who have this knowledge or who can control these powers are considered “spiritual,” powerful and can control other people.

Folk Muslims and Animists are actually a type of pantheists because they believe all places and objects are filled with unseen impersonal spiritual powers and forces and these spiritual forces have souls and indwell both people and things. In Folk Islam all the world is a living organism. Even foods possess spirits, especially bread and water. Like electricity in batteries, it is not seen but it is there and has power. It can flow from one object to another and do good or evil. Power is the second key word for Folk Muslims.

Love says that “folk Islam is the most pressing issue we face in reaching Muslims” (Love, p. 22). How would you explain the power of the God to a Folk Muslim? (Ex. 9:16; 1Chr. 20:11; Isa. 40:29; Jn. 10:18; Rom. 1:16; 2Cor. 12:9; 2Tim. 1:7; Heb. 2:14)

Folk Islam—Worldview

Folk Islam offers the Muslim a way to explain the unexplainable. Folk Islam is a belief system through which the ordinary Muslim views reality and tries to understand the problems of everyday life. In Islam there is a great dichotomy between the faith as it is defined theologically by orthodox Islam, and the faith as it is practiced by the ordinary people in Folk or Popular Islam. Most Muslims are not even aware of the conciliation which their syncretism demands. Often when Muslims travel from one part of the Muslim world to another they don't recognize their religion.

Musk gives this example of the Folk Muslim's worldview:

“The folk-Islamic worldview enters into the realm of the formal ritual of circumcision (KHITAN) mainly in the questions of the time and site of circumcision. The day for the rite may be fixed by an astrologer. The place of operation is located at a saint's tomb, if that is feasible; the BARAKA (blessing) of the saint and shrine will bring blessing to the boy and family” (Musk, p. 134).

Folk Islam provides the ordinary Muslim, who sees life in terms of personal beings and spirits, and impersonal powers, with a rationale for the unknown, unintelligible, and unexplainable events of life. It provides a way to survive in this world which is filled with unknown powers and spirits. It also provides a way for people to access and use these powers to protect themselves or to harm someone else. For the Folk Muslim the “chief end of man” is to protect yourself, understand, manipulate, and use spirits, powers, and forces for your advantage. Folk Islam is an effort by the common people to meet their own felt needs in the context of their worldview. It provides them a way to exist in a world of fear. The differences between Muslim and Christian worldviews become clearest in times of crises when basic beliefs are laid bare. The worldview of the ordinary Muslim embraces a rigorous view of causality.

“The ultimate appeal in the question of causality is to God. It may be because of God's anger with sin, or it may be the result of his arbitrary will... God is seen to be the

ultimate cause when death is the outcome. In the case of fatal road accidents, lawsuits by relatives of victims may be dropped because it is recognized that God willed the victim to die at such a time and in such a way.

“A verse in the Qur’an on causality is arresting: ‘Every man’s bird (of omen) have We fastened on his neck, and We shall bring forth to him on the resurrection-day a book which he will meet spread open’ (Sura 17:14). Several interpretations of this verse are possible. It could be taken to mean that the future of each person is dependent upon his own good or evil deeds— ‘on his own head be it.’ It could mean that fate itself (TA’IR, literally ‘bird’), attached to an individual, is the driving force in his life. So a man’s future is intricately linked with birds or omens or stars... Or again, the verse could mean that God himself is absolutely in control of each man’s destiny. He alone decides, and applies, the fate of each individual” (Musk, 104).

In Folk Islam, life is like a game where you don’t know what powers I have and I don’t know what powers you have, so I must be cautious and protect myself at all times. Folk Islam operates in the world of human needs and fears. It is important for the Folk Muslim to understand what beings and forces are influencing him to either worship them, appease them, or manipulate their power. This way of life is very different than how Islam presents itself to the outside world but, nevertheless, it is very real to the Muslim.

Detmar Schuenmann writes:

“... the true power of Islam does not lie in its dogma and practices nor in the antithesis of the Trinity against the Lordship of Christ and His redeeming death, but in the occult practices of its leaders, thus holding sway over their people” (Douglas, p. 885).

Islam’s occult practices, fear of the unknown, and understanding of spiritual forces and powers, is its true identity. Musk writes:

“The world of popular Islam is ... a world constantly in flux, full of all kinds of ‘beings’ and ‘powers.’ It is a world which knows process of change from one state to another... What Westerners find difficult to conceive of is spiritual beings which might operate, as spirits, in the earthly realm” (Musk, p. 16, 17).

According to J. Dudley Woodberry, former missionary in Pakistan:

“The felt need for power is so great among folk Muslims that their entire worldview is seen through the spectacles of power.”

Folk Islam is no doubt the most popular form of Islam. It would be wrong to call this a sect, for it operates within, is accepted by, and is sanctioned by orthodox Islam. The vast majority of Muslims fear the unseen world and seek to make contact with it or appease it in many ways.

As Augustine said:

“ ‘Our heart is restless until we find our rest in Thee.’ Muslims’ ‘hearts cry out for fulfillment in a love relationship to a more personal God’” (Parshall, p. 18).

But if, like the Muslim, you have no personal relationship with the living God, you must turn to other powers and ways to fill this vacuum (**Rom. 1:24, 25**). The Christian answer to the fear, loneliness and alienation in Islam is “union with Christ,” being part of “the Body of Christ,” and true Christian fellowship. In Islam, the occultic, animistic practices of Folk Islam are an effort to

fill this vacuum created by the concept of Allah who gives neither personal salvation, assurance nor peace. Unlike a Christian, a Muslim can never be completely confident that he has “peace with God” (Rom. 5:1).

Folk Islam—Sources

Among Muslims, there is argument over the true source of Islam. Is it just the Qur’an or is it the Qur’an, the Hadith and the Sunna, or is it the Qur’an, the Hadith, the Sunna, and the Shari’a Law, or it is the Qur’an, Hadith, the Sunna, the Shari’a Law and the Umma, or is it whatever you want it to be?

There are no “official” authoritative written texts for Folk Islam. Folk Muslim beliefs are handed down from one generation to another. Folk Islamic beliefs are dominated by local teachers, myths, proverbs, legends and powers continually being maintained from one generation to another. Folk Islam is not institutionalized, but centered largely around felt needs and local customary rites. Authority depends on the practitioner’s proven power rather than any position conferred by an official hierarchy. Thus the religion becomes local, informal, and people-centered and as such is pervasive and attractive for many.

Folk Islam—Origins

Zwemer, Musk and many other Islamists write about the pre-Islamic animistic practices which were incorporated into Islam.

“Islam sprang up in Pagan soil and retained many old Arabian beliefs in spite of its vigorous monotheism. Wherever Mohammadanism went it introduced old or adopted new superstitions. The result has been that as background of the whole ritual and even in the creed of popular Islam, Animism has conquered. The religion of the common people from Tangier to Teheran is mixed with hundreds of superstitions, many of which have lost their original significance, but still bind mind and heart with constant fear of demons, with witchcraft and sorcery and the call to creature-worship.

Popular Islam: Felt-Needs, Animistic and Possible Christian Answers (Musk, p. 73)

Felt-Needs in Popular Islam

Animistic Answers to Felt-Needs Not Acceptable—More Acceptable

Christian Answers to Felt-Needs

Fear of the unknown

idolatry stone worship

fetishes talismans charms

superstitions

Security in Christ as as your Guide and Keeper

Fear of evil

sorcery, amulets witchcraft

exorcism knots

Protection in Christ

Fear of the future

angel worship

divination spells

fatalism fanaticism

Trust in Christ as Lord of the future

Shame of not being in the group

magic curse or bless

hair-nail trimmings

Acceptance in fellowship of believers

Powerlessness of individual against evil

saint worship

baraka saint/angel petitioning

Authority and power of the Holy Spirit

Meaninglessness of life

familiar spirits

Purpose in life As God's child

Sickness

tree/saint worship

healing magic

Prayer and divine healing

“The strength of Islam is its composite character. It entrenches itself everywhere and always in animistic and pagan superstition. I find they have fetishes and superstitious customs which amount to as many gods as the heathen who bow down to wood and stone.

“The essence of heathenism seems to be not the denial of God, but complete estrangement from Him. The existence of God is everywhere known, and a certain veneration given Him. But He is far away, and is therefore all but ruled out of religious life. His place is taken by demons, who are feared and worshiped.

“When we read the account of pre-Islamic worship at Mecca we realize how many of the ancient customs persist in Islam. (Author's Note: Zwemer goes on to list thirteen specific idols of Arabia that continue among Muslims).

“Some writers go so far as to say that Animism lies at the root of all Moslem thinking and all Moslem theology. ‘The Moslem,’ says Gottfried Simon, ‘is naturally inclined to

Animism; his Animism does not run counter to the ideal of his religion. Islam is the classic example of the way in which the non-Christian religious do not succeed in conquering Animism. Moslem ritual, instead of bringing men to God, serves as a dragnet for Animism' ” (Zwemer, 1920, p. vii, 1–7 passim).

Animistic practices are clearly condemned in Scripture, [Lev. 19:31](#): “Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God” and in [Deut. 18:10–13](#) God says:

“Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD, and because of these detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you. You must be blameless before the LORD your God.”

The Apostle Paul said in Romans chapter one that godlessness and heathenism are a result of a fall from a higher and better knowledge of God. When man no longer feared God he turned from the true knowledge of God to worship the creature rather than the Creator. In Islam this has resulted in the abundance of prophets and pilgrimages, spirits and stones, sacrifices and charms in Islam today.

It would seem that many of the beliefs and practices of popular Islam that have found acceptance in what began—in intention at least—as a revolution to an ideal religion, derive from two main sources. Various animistic practices were prevalent throughout Arabia when Muhammad emerged as the founder of a new religion. Many of his followers continued with some of the practices and most of the beliefs with which they were already familiar. A second major source has been the underlying continuation of ideas and practices, current among other people who have gradually become Muslims, as Islam has spread. Such “converts” have tended to retain many of their previous concepts beneath a veneer of conformity to orthodox Islam.

Some of the practices of Arabian tribesmen which continued, officially or unofficially after their Islamitization, included the hajj to the Ka’ba with various of its attendant ceremonies, rituals in such activities as paring nails or washings after certain kinds of defilement, the use of amulets for protection, the use of hair and fingernails for offensive magic, the protective measures taken against the Qarina, the evil eye and jinn, and various kinds of divination (Musk, p. 229).

Woodberry wrote concerning the origins of Islam:

“Its origins go back to religious beliefs existing prior to Islam... For example, Mohammad preached against polytheism and against the idols in the Ka’ba... But at the same time, he adopted into Islam the essentially pagan pilgrimage to Mecca, though he changed its content (making it refer to the one true God instead of the various gods of the desert), he included the sacred black stone found in the Ka’ba in the pilgrimage. So even today, people touch the stone and expect to receive blessing from doing so... Although magic is condemned in the Koran, certain magical practices or spells are admitted. You may use a spell (according to orthodox tradition), to counteract the evil eye, snake bites, scorpion bites, and yellowness in the eye, so long as you do not associate anyone else with God. Mohammed allowed these and other practices ... formerly associated with the spirit world” (Pulse, p. 2).

Even during the time of Muhammad, animism was already present in Islam. In pre-Islamic Arabia there were over 360 gods and idols. Each community, tribe, clan, or town had its own god. These gods were both male and female and included three that were called the “daughters of Allah,” Lat, Uzza, and Manat.

“Have ye seen Lat, and Uzza, And another, The Third (goddess), Manat? Verify they are the most exalted females (maiden) (arab. ‘gharaniq’) and their intercession is to be hoped for” (Sura 53:19, 20).

These verses were chanted by polytheist and pagans as they marched around the Ka’ba to honor their idols. In Yusuf Ali’s note on verse 19 he says:

“The three principle idols of Pagan Arab Idolatry were the goddesses Lat, Uzza, and Manat. Opinions differ as to their exact forms: one version is that Lat was in human shape, Uzza had its origin in a sacred tree, and Manat in a white stone” (Yusuf Ali, p. 1,379, note 5,095).

These verses are of course part of what has become known as “the Satanic Verses,” an expression first coined by Sir Wm. Muir in the late 1850’s. According to Muslim tradition, during his days in Mecca, while Muhammad was talking with some elders in Mecca at the Ka’ba about his mission and claim to be a messenger from Allah, he began to recite Sura 53. As he described Gabriel’s first visit to him he goes on to speak of a second visit by the Lote tree. Gabriel asks Muhammad: “What do you think of Lat and Uzza and Manat the third beside?” These were well known idols of the Arabs in Mecca. Then, Satan put some other words of compromise in his mouth, “These are exalted Females, Whose intercession verily is to be sought after.”

These two verses, according to Ali Dashti:

“were excised from most of the early copies of the Qur’an because it was thought that Satan put them into the prophet’s mouth...” (Dashti, p. 31).

Of course, the idolaters of Mecca were delighted and are said to have knelt down and prayed with the Muslims. But when the Muslims in Mecca reprimanded Muhammad for idolatry he was suddenly revisited by Gabriel and given a new revelation which we now have in the Qur’an.

Arabian paganism, according to Zwemer:

“...was true even in the case of the Prophet Mohammed himself when he consecrated the Ka’ba-stone and then, for a moment, lapsed to pay honor to Lat and Uzza, of which he said: ‘They are two high soaring cranes and verily their intercession may be hoped for’ ” (Sura 53:19) (Zwemer, 1939 p. vii).

A few pre-Islamic practices and forms of magic are condemned in the Qur’an (Sura 2:102; 5:103) such as “Secret Arts” (Sura 113:4) identified as blowing on knots, and said by Yusuf Ali to have been “a favorite form of witchcraft practiced by perverted women” (Yusuf Ali, p. 1,716 note 6,305) but this has made little difference to Muslims as they have made the Qur’an itself a book of magic and a kind of “Secret Art.”

Other examples of syncretism in Islam are the sutra and the rites of hajj. A sutra is an object that is placed between a person praying and the Ka’ba to protect the person praying from demons during ritual prayers. Muhammad taught that when you pray you must always have a sutra in

front of you to protect you from the power coming from the Ka'ba. If you study these two teachings of Muhammad carefully it would seem the "power coming from the Ka'ba" must be a demonic power.

The Hajj or Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca, is also a continuation of a pre-Islamic pilgrimage practice of Arabs and is also filled with animistic rites such as the Zamzam well and the throwing of stones at a pillar representing Satan.

The rapid spread of Islam was due in part to its animistic practices and its acceptance of animistic practices and local beliefs. Folk Islam's beliefs and practices are very localized and change a lot from country to country or village to village so there is no one list of things all Folk Muslims believe or do. Folk Muslims believe that Folk Islam is really "true Islam." From their perspective there is no conflict or contradiction between their beliefs and the Qur'an.

For further study of this interesting subject of the animistic practices in Islam I recommend the following books, *Wombs and Alien Spirits* by Janice Body, *The Unseen Face of Islam* by Bill Musk, *The Influences of Animism on Islam* and *Studies in Popular Islam* by Samuel Zwemer, *Bridges to Islam* by Phil Parshall and *Communicating Christ in Animistic Contexts*, Gailyn Van Rheenen.

Beliefs of Folk Muslims

Three Problems

After the death of Muhammad three critical problems arose in Islam. First, who should succeed Muhammad as the leader of the Umma (Muslim community)? Should it be the "best" Muslim or should it be Muhammad's closest relative? The issue divided the Muslim community into two large groups. Those who said it should be the "best" Muslim were in the majority and became the Sunnis. Those who said it should be Muhammad's closest relative, Ali, were in the minority and became known as the Shias or Alivies.

The second great question was, Without a prophet, how do you determine the will of Allah? Since Islam teaches that Muhammad was the last prophet, who was going to tell Muslims Allah's will? Who was going to teach them the meaning of the Qur'an? Who was going to tell them what to do and not do? How will you know how to please Allah? Who was going to help them overcome their fears?

The following Hadith (Sahih Muslim I, pp. i-ii —commentary) illustrates the grandeur of this problem:

"And We have sent down Unto thee (also) the Message; That thou mayest explain clearly to men what is sent For them, and that May give thought" (Sura 16:44).

"As a final dispenser of the Message of Allah, the Prophet alone is best fitted and, therefore, divinely authorized to determine the meaning of the Holy Qur'an, to unfold before humanity the deep wisdom contained in it, and then, on the basis of his wisdom, to purify the souls of the people and elevate them to the highest pinnacle of morality and God-consciousness. Say (O Muhammad): If ye do love Allah, Follow me: Allah will love you And forgive you your sins; For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful (Surah 3:31).

"It is by following Muhammad that we (Muslims) can achieve the cherished goal of winning Allah's favor" (Nehls, p. 31).

Muhammad clearly expected Muslims to follow his example.

“Whoever obeys me shall enter Paradise, and whoever disobeys me has been refused” (Hadith, Mishkat I, p. 173).

The third question was, How do you know how to draw near to Allah and protect yourself from evil spirits and powers? Orthodox and Folk Muslims are both interested in this question but they answer it differently. Orthodox Muslims turn to the Qur’an and the Sunna and finally to the Umma. Folk Islam uses all of these and mixes local religious beliefs and customs with no problem or conflict. Folk Muslims believe that there is a desire in every man to draw closer to Allah and communion with him but that spiritual powers must be used to do this.

Because Islam is so open to syncretism, orthodox Muslims never criticize other Muslims publicly. One group in Senegal is reported to briefly interrupt their occultic activities in order to pray Muslim-style together with orthodox Muslims.

One of Folk Islam’s basic “felt needs” is the desire to draw closer to God and have some kind of communion with God. Islam presents Allah as unknowable and unapproachable, which Folk Muslims find unfulfilling and unsatisfactory. Folk Muslims want to know, “Who is going to protect us from the spiritual powers and forces that surround us daily? Who is going to appease the evil spirits we encounter daily?” Everything in the world is a source of power and potential blessing or cursing, a source of good or evil. How do you live and protect yourself in this kind of world? Reality for a Folk Muslim is a life of fear and danger.

Now that there was no prophet and all revelation had ended, where were they to turn for help? In Folk Islam this search led to the use of pirs, witch doctors, divination, and sorcery, plus amulets, charms, curses, spells, and talismans to replace the presence of Muhammad.

Folk Islam teaches that there is little difference between good and evil. Sin in Islam is not doing the right thing, at the right time, in the right place, or in the right way. Folk Muslims are not concerned with keeping moral laws. Their chief concern is not offending any spirits or powers. Any offended spirit will exact retribution in the form of finance, sickness, or injury. The same spirits can be either a source of good or evil.

Fatma Hanim knew that Eleggua, her spiritual power, required his followers to perform a simple offering to him every Monday morning. One Monday, however, Fatma forgot to perform the ritual offering. She had just returned from a long trip and was very tired. Fatma was busy unpacking and she was walking around her apartment putting things away. Suddenly, she cut her leg on the sharp edge of the handle on a cabinet door. When she pulled back her leg, the door of the cabinet swung open and there, looking up at her was Eleggua. Why did Fatma cut her leg?

The Muslim Creed says, “There is no God but Allah...” This is the main teaching of Islam. Allah is absolutely one. He has no partners or equals and every man is His servant or slave. But all Muslims do not interpret this the same way. Folk Muslims believe in only one God but the belief in God also includes belief in jinn, spirits, magic, sorcery, and other powers. Is this how you draw near to Allah?

The Qur’an in Folk Islam

The Qur’an is the primary source for Muslims. The word “Qur’an” means “recite” or “read.” The entire Qur’an is considered NAZIL or “sent down,” word for word in Arabic to Muhammad, over a period of twenty-three years, from the Throne of Allah in the seventh heaven. Most Muslims believe it is an eternal book and uncreated. The Qur’an is the primary source of teaching guidance, protection and BARAKA in Islam. The Qur’an has become an idol to most Muslims. The doctrine of the Holy Book has become a doctrine of “Qur’aniolatry” or

“Qur’aniomancy.” For many Muslims the Qur’an has become the greatest source of magic and power in Islam. It has many ritual uses. It is used for protection, to ward off evil or pronounce curses. No religion has ever made its holy book a fetish or a book of magic as Islam has.

“...the Koran itself has the power of a fetish in popular Islam. Not only is the book (believed to be) eternal in its origin and used for mystic purposes, but only those who are ritually pure may touch it. Certain chapters are of special value against evil spirits. It is related in the traditions, e.g. that ‘whosoever reads the 105th chapter and the 94th chapter of the Koran at morning prayers will never suffer pain in his teeth’! This is one reason why these two chapters, i.e. of the ‘Elephant’ and the one entitled ‘Have we not expanded,’ are almost universally used for the early prayers. At funerals they always read the chapter ‘Y.S.’; and those, in fear of jinn and spirits, the chapter of jinn. One has only to read the last chapter with the commentaries on it to see how large a place this doctrine occupies in popular Islam. The cure for headache is said to be in the 13th verse of the chapter called ‘Al-Ana-am’ or the ‘Cattle...’ ” (Zwemer, 1920, p. 22).

Muslims claim the Qur’an is the final and only true revelation from God. All the other previous revelations, the Tavrāt, the Zabur, and the Incil have since been corrupted. The Qur’an, as we have it, is an exact copy of the eternal Qur’an in heaven. It is the embodiment of the revelation dictated to Muhammad by the angel Gabriel in “Arabic pure and clear” according to Sura 16:103 and given as “a guide and a mercy to those who believe” (Sura 16:64 and 21:107).

Certain chapters and phrases from the Qur’an have special meanings. The Fatiha, the opening Sura of the Qur’an, and the Bismillah, “in the name of Allah,” are memorized by all Muslims and used daily for magical protection from the evil eye, curses, or other forms of evil. The last two verses of the Qur’an are called the “Two Charms” and are often used to ward off evil or sorcerers and witches. Sura 6:14 is another verse that is supposed to ward off headaches. Muslims often write verses from the Qur’an on cards and put them in the foundation of new buildings to protect the building from evil. Muslims also often write verses on a piece of paper and enclose it in an amulet which is then hung around the person’s neck for protection or healing.

“The Qur’an, for example, is used as a defense mechanism, powerful in its intrinsic BARAKA to protect the wearer of it, as a miniature amulet, from the power of the evil eye. Or, if the eye strikes, verses from the Qur’an may be said over the victim. He may be given water to drink in which paper containing verses from the Qur’an has been soaked” (Musk p. 30).

Certain Suras (chapters) are quoted in the belief that such a recitation of holy words will assist the devotee in obtaining good health.

Sura 113 is believed to be a deterrent of all sorts of disease.

Sura 114 has the power to counteract psychic affections.

Suras 94 and 105 are to be recited early in the morning as a safeguard against toothaches.

Sura 72 is to be quoted when one is fearful of the power of evil jinn.

Sura 13 is a cure for headaches (Parshall p. 75).

Muslims will write out Qur'anic texts in chalk, place the slate in water, and then drink the mixture to cure ailments. This use of the Qur'an for healing is based on a rather literal understanding of the following verse:

Sura 17:82: "We send down (stage by stage) in the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy To those who believe: To the unjust it causes Nothing but loss after loss."

The Qur'an is also used for "asking favors" and a place of refuge by certain Muslims. The Muslim will close his eyes, speak the name of God or the *Fatiha*, open the Qur'an at random and place his finger on a verse. He then reads this verse believing that God has guided him to it. The verse may be some kind of guidance as to what he should or should not do or it may be a verse which he makes into a charm for protection.

This concept of using the Qur'an for "refuge taking" comes from the Qur'an because Allah is far away. Muslims take refuge in a book they can see and touch rather than a personal God. When a Muslim begins to pray, he seeks refuge in the words of Allah from the activities of Satan who attacks him. Ritual prayer also acts as a kind of refuge (TAAWWUDH TA'AWWUDH). It is a preferred act for the one in prayer to seek refuge from Satan between his opening supplication and his Qur'anic recitation. This is based on the following beliefs:

Sura 16:98: Allah says: "When thou does read the Qur'an, seek Allah's protection From Satan the Rejected One." and,

Sura 23:97: "And say, 'O my Lord! I seek refuge with Thee From the suggestions of the Evil Ones.' "

Ibn al-Mundhir said, "It has been related from the Prophet, that he would preface his Qur'anic recital with:

" 'I seek refuge in Allah from Satan, the outcast' " (*AUUDHU A'UUDHU BI LLAHI MINA SH-SHAYTAANI R-RAJIM*).

The activities of the jinn are especially powerful at certain times and in certain places. People should avoid the night, because darkness belongs to the jinn. The Shaitans become particularly dangerous and active at sunrise, because of the horns of Satan, and so Muslims should not pray at that time. Certain days in different parts of the Muslim world are viewed as auspicious for the demons. On the other hand, Friday, being the Muslim holy day, is usually considered a time when Allah's power and angelic presence overrides demonic activity. Above all, Ramadan is the time when the demons are imprisoned, and prayers are answered. Hence, Ramadan is a gift in spiritual warfare to Muslims—a time when they can be at rest, be protected from HASAD and receive BARAKA. Thus, to engage in Hajj at this time is the crown of supernatural activity in the life of a Muslim. It should be remembered that part of the Hajj ritual involves the stoning of Satan. Likewise, demons are especially powerful in unclean places such as toilets and graves.

What would you say to a Muslim about Refuge taking? (Cf. [Ps. 16:1](#); [27:1](#); [46:1–11](#); [Matt. 11:28](#).)

Folk Muslims believe the power of the Qur'an also provides protection from jinn and evil spells.

"With much incantation and frequent mention of the Prophet's name, He (Hafiz Muhammad, a magician) wrote some magical signs and a certain verse of the Qur'an on a scrap of paper. This he folded and refolded and sewed into a leather pouch. It was to be

placed close to Hussein's heart. The Fatiha should be recited every morning, noon, and evening and a pair of new scissors, sharp ones, should be kept under Hussein's pillow to 'cut' the strong spell ... Hussein gradually improved" (Musk p. 34).

Muhammad veneration

Veneration of Muhammad is a many faceted issue practiced by both orthodox and Folk Muslims. It is a teaching Muslims say they find in the Qur'an: "Allah and His Angels send blessings on the Prophet: O ye that believe! Send ye blessings on him, And salute him With all respect" (Sura 33:56). And: "Say: 'If ye do love Allah, Follow me: Allah will love you And forgive you your sins; For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful' " (Sura 3:31).

Muhammad provides the major link between orthodox and Folk Muslims and between Muslims and Allah. Orthodox Muslims claim that neither the Qur'an nor the Hadith supports the veneration of Muhammad or saints (Sura 9:31). Folk Muslims say they find support for both in the Qur'an (Sura 2:104; 3:31; 33:56) and ignore all prohibitions.

"In the development of such an official religion for largely pagan Arabs, certain concessions were made (perhaps inevitably) to their more animistic or folk beliefs and practices. The Qur'an retains such concessions within its embrace, sometimes by heaven-sent inclusion, at other times by comment on situations met with by Muhammad... The concept of dead prophets being able to act as recipients of blessing finds implicit justification in the Qur'anic..." (Musk p. 226).

Muslims have always exalted Muhammad to a special place. Prayers are made to him daily and most Muslims believe he will intercede for them on the day of judgement. Relics of Muhammad are scattered all over the Muslim world, strands of his hair, or beard, his foot print, and his teeth are visited and prayed to daily. Every time his name is pronounced Muslims immediately ask

Allah to bless him. The death of Muhammad also opened the door wide for many of the practices of Folk Muslims, such as veneration of Muhammad and saint worship.

I was told that in the Middle East you can stand on any street corner and yell, "There is no God" and people will ignore you. But if you whisper "Muhammad is a false prophet" you may be arrested or killed on the spot.

"Within a few generations of his death, Muhammad had acquired many special names by which he could be invoked, several of them the same as names applied to God himself: Nur al-Nur (the light of Light), al-Ra'uf (the Merciful) and others ... Muhammad is exalted, blessed and prayed for by the reciter of the (al-Jazuli) litany ... Prayer is addressed directly to him ... Muhammad is especially venerated in two festivals of the Muslim year: MAWLID AL-NABI and LAYLAT AL-MIRAJ ... The tomb of Muhammad, in Medina, is perhaps one of the greatest objects of veneration associated with Muslim devotion today" (Musk p. 231, 233).

In Islam Allah has "99 Beautiful Names" which Muslims use for prayers and blessing, but Muhammad has several hundred "Noble Names."

"The formula 'God bless our Prophet and lend him salvation' was expanded and elaborated into litanies of praise and appeal" (Musk p. 231).

“Muhammad is honored and respected as the ‘Seal of the Prophets’ (Sura 33:40). His name is not spoken or written without the words ‘peace be upon him’ being added ... The term INSAN AL KAMIL (the perfect man) is used of him. For the believers his life became a beautiful pattern of conduct, the Sunna (33:21) along with his sayings and actions ... after his death many miraculous signs and events were attributed to Muhammad, and the cult of his veneration grew. Poems were written about him, and devotional literature giving him titles like the names of God ... Another title of significance is that which calls Muhammad a light, or the lamp. This from the reference to light in Sura 24:35, 33:45–47. Muhammad is also an intercessor (Sura 20:109, 34:23, 43, 86) able to help the believers” (Cooper p. 109).

Yusuf Ali in his notes gives this role to Muhammad:

In Islam there is a well-known song in praise of Muhammad, the Zarqan:

Cloaked is he in beauty marked by a joyful countenance.
Like a flower in delicate freshness; like the full moon in splendor,
Like the sea in bountifulness, and like time in aspiration.
Even when he is alone in his majesty, it is as though
He were in the midst of soldiers, with attendants thrown around him.
It is as though a pearl hidden in an oyster were
In the two mines of his speech and his smile.
No perfume can equal the dust that has gathered on his limbs (Musk p. 83).

Another poem honors his birth:

Sultan is he, all hidden truth possessing,
Full knowledge of the Unity professing.
For love of him, thy son (Amina), the skies are turning;
Mankind and angels for his face are yearning.
This is the night foretold in song and story,
In which the world rejoice to see his glory (Musk p. 88).

Do these poems not sound like worship to you? They are used by Folk Muslims as acts of worship.

According to the text of FAQIH (teachings) with regard to the grave of Muhammad, veneration of Muhammad is a fundamental part of Islam. If you study the career of Muhammad, the later Qur’anic texts and Hadith, you encounter a continual elevation of Muhammad. This concept is implicit in the idea of the Sunnah, the example of the life of Muhammad. In his own lifetime Muhammad instructed Muslims to pray for showers of blessing upon him, and to call blessings upon him (SALAWAT).

A tradition relates that the prophet equated faith in Islam with love for him, a love that surpasses even the natural love for one’s family. Abu Hurayrah Sahih Al- Bukhari, said of Allah’s Apostle, “By Him in Whose Hands my life is, none of you will have faith till he loves me more than his father and his children.” We can see parallels with the assertion of Jesus in [Matt. 10:37](#) that whoever loves his family more than Christ Himself is not worthy of Him. Muslims are very jealous to show Muhammad as equal to or greater than Jesus whether it is in terms of miracles or teachings or veneration or numbers of followers. This is why they exaggerate so much in their writing.

Muslims claim Muhammad never demanded worship and that they do not worship Muhammad, which is why they dislike the term “Muhammadism” so much. But the Qur’an and the Hadith make the very clear assertion, despite the claims of Islam to the contrary, that Muhammad is more than “merely” a prophet. Uniquely, he could have more than four wives. He demanded devotion to his family. Shi’ism later emphasized this teaching in particular to bring honor to Ali.

When Muhammad died, his close confidant, Hassan ibn Thabit, said:

“He was the light and brilliance we followed. He was sight and hearing second only to God ... By God, no woman has conceived and given birth to one like the apostle, the prophet, and guide of his people ...”

This glorifying of Muhammad has led to a controversial practice among many Muslims—the MAULID-AL-NABI festival, the Birthday of the prophet. It is not sanctioned in official FAQIH, but it fits naturally into the progressive elevation of the person of Muhammad. There may well be another example of Muslim’s jealousy of Jesus, vis-a-vis Christmas. A similar elevation occurred with respect to the SAHABA and the AHL-I-BAIT, particularly in the eyes of the Shia with special regard to Ali and Fatima.

All Muslims pray to Muhammad. Muhammad is the object of many ritual prayers and liturgies. Addressing prayers to Muhammad, asking Allah to bless and accept him, asking Muhammad to intercede for them and to grant them favors is an everyday occurrence in Islam.

The following poem is called “The Prophet’s Mantle” and is one of many examples of the veneration given to Muhammad. It was written by al-Bushiri in the thirteenth century. The poem is well known among Muslims and has a strong hold on their hearts and minds. If this is not worship or veneration, then what is?

Muhammad, Lord of both worlds and both races and both peoples,
Arab and non-Arab,
Our Prophet, who commands and for bids,
There is none more just than he in saying ‘No’ or ‘Yes,’
He is Friend whose intercession is to be hoped for
Assaulting every kind of fearful threat ...
He excelled the prophets in bodily form and character,
Nor did they approach him in deed or in honor or nobility ...
For it is he whose inner meaning and outward form are perfect;
Wherefore the Creator of souls chose him as a friend.
He is free from peer in his excellent qualities,
So that for essence of goodness is in him undivided.
Leave aside what Christians claim for their Prophet,
And judge what you will in praise of him; and be reasonable.
For the excellence of the Apostle of God has no limit
Which may be expressed by word of mouth (Chapman p. 126).

Baraka

The Qur’an is the source of many BARAKA (blessings) in Islam. It is believed to have some intrinsic power and is always good. A very close second source is Muhammad. Almost

everything a Folk Muslim does is either to get baraka or to protect himself from evil. Blessing and fear—this is the vicious cycle that is the daily life of the Folk Muslim. Both people and objects can possess or give baraka and it can be both gained and lost. Muslims believe that baraka is passed even by simple acts like exchanging greetings. The concept of baraka is fundamental to the Muslim’s worldview.

Folk Muslims try to use the impersonal forces for good to get baraka. Many people visit the shrines of Muhammad, Ali, Abu Bakr, Hussein, and Eyup in places like Medina, Istanbul, Sarmarkan, Qandahar, and Nazmakan. Muslims believe these shrines are sources of present manifestations of supernatural blessing with respect to business, child bearing, and especially healing.

“Boys in Istanbul are taken to the shrine of Eyup to ward off the influence of the evil eye, and to obtain protective baraka against any dangers in the forthcoming operation” (Musk p. 134).

Brides are taken to this same shrine to pray for blessing in hopes they will be fertile and fruitful.

In Mecca, Muslims touch the Black Stone for blessing and it is explicitly stated in the faqih that drinking Zamzam water gives baraka, especially for physical healing: This teaching is found in primal Islam itself, with respect to the veneration of the Black Stone.

Al-Khattabi said: “... It is known ... that kissing the Black Stone ... (is) ... a means of seeking Allah’s blessings ...” Both Bukhari and Muslim also confirm this:

(a) the Prophet drank Zamzam water, and said: “It is blessed (water); it is food for the hungry, and a healing for the sick;” and

(b) the angel Gabriel had washed the heart of the Prophet with its water on the Night Journey.

According to Muslim tradition a person drinking Zamzam water should pray and expect healing, blessings and whatever is best for him in this life and in the hereafter while doing so. Muhammad said, “The water of Zamzam is (good) for whatever it is intended.”

Pre-Islamic Arabia saw baraka as a mysterious power, something similar to luck or good fortune. Islam transferred this to Allah and Folk Muslims transferred it to Muhammad and then to his grave and then to other saints and shrines. In the ordinary Muslim’s mind, the concept is only logical. Baraka can be transferred through contact, so people will often touch or kiss the hand or feet of a holy man who is known to possess baraka. Muslims also take a “blessed cloth” from a “holy man” to take blessing to someone who is perhaps sick at home.

Folk Islam, and even orthodox Islam, retained an animistic belief in the power of nature to speak and give blessing. On the Day of Judgment it is said the trees and the stones will announce the presence of Jews hiding behind them. We can see how all this comes together and relates to the Black Stone. Stones were objects of worship in pre-Islamic Arabia. This practice continued at the Ka’ba and then passed on to local objects. According to Abu Raja’ al-Utaridi Sahih Al-Bukhari:

“We used to worship stones, and when we found a better stone than the first one, we would throw away the first one and take the latter. But if we could not get a stone then we would collect some earth (i.e. soil) and then bring a sheep and milk of a sheep and pour it over it, and perform the TAWAF around it...”

A Christian could develop an interesting discussion with a Muslim friend, if he is truly seeking a “better stone,” based on [Rom. 9:33](#): “Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence: And he that believeth on Him shall not be put to shame” or [1 Pet. 2:7, 8](#), who is “the stone which the builders rejected,” and “a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence”?

Special “stones” are important to Muslims. There is the Black Stone, the stone under the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, the Morhe Rebat Pai stone in Iran, and the Herat and Balk stones in Afghanistan to name just a few. As a Christian what would you say to Muslims about special stones? (Cf. [Matt. 21:42](#); [Mk. 12:10](#); [Lk. 20:17](#); [1 Cor. 3:10–15](#); [Eph. 2:20](#), [1 Pet. 2:4–8](#), Jesus, the Rejected Stone, has become the Head of the Corner, a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, the only foundation we can build on, and we have become living stones.

The place of the Ka’ba and the Black Stone deserve special attention. It is one of the strangest forms of syncretism in any religion.

“It is the irony of history that the fragment of a flying meteor landing in the desert of West Arabia should become the holiest relic of a religion which has for its central teaching and creed the unity of God” (Zwemer, 1939, p. 17).

The Ka’ba is the greatest shrine and most holy place in Islam. Only Muslims are allowed into the city of Mecca and in the Grand Mosque that surrounds the Ka’ba. The Ka’ba is a large cube-shaped building. The walls are 12 meters (about 40 feet) high. The front and back walls are about 18 meters (about 60 feet long) and the sides are 14 meters (about 45 feet long). On the outside front wall in the eastern corner about four feet above the ground is the Black Stone set in a gold holder, similar to a filling in a tooth. This is the focal point of all Islam.

In pre-Islamic Arabia the Ka’ba was the central place of idol worship and housed all the idols of the pagan Meccans who would come to Mecca for business and all the idols of the tribes in Arabia. Some say there were over 360 in number. When Muhammad returned to Mecca from Medina he “cleansed” the Ka’ba of all its idols but one. He allowed the Meccans to keep the sacred Black Stone.

Zwemer observes:

“The pre-Islamic sacredness of the Ka’ba did not consist in the idols found there. The Black Stone was the actual sanctuary. The Ka’ba was only an extension of this stone and partook of its sanctity. It was therefore not a temple for idols, but itself an idol, an exaggerated holy stone” (Zwemer 1939, p. 18).

Perhaps a starting point to speak to Muslims about idols would be [1 Thess. 1:9](#): “For they (the Thessalonians) turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.”

Tradition says that on the day of judgment the Black Stone will have two eyes to see, and a tongue to speak and identify all those who have touched it or kissed it. Another tradition says the Black Stone was originally white. Muslims say it turned black because of the sins of man. The true reason is it changed color when the Ka’ba caught on fire and was burned down.

Muslims, sometimes call the Ka’ba “The Navel of the Earth.” All who are able to touch or kiss the sacred Black Stone receive forgiveness of sins. Omar, the second Caliph, thought the Black Stone an idol.

Tradition says: “Verily I saw Omar, when he kissed the Black Stone, saying: ‘Truly I know that thou art only a stone, unable to profit or hurt anyone, and if I had not seen the apostle of God kiss thee, I would not have kissed thee myself’ ” (Zwemer, 1939, p. 21).

It is well known that before Muhammad was rejected as a prophet by the Jews in Medina, Muhammad instructed Muslims to pray toward Jerusalem. But after his rejection, to show his anger toward the Jews he, having received a “new revelation” (Sura 2:136–145), changed the direction of prayer toward the Arabian pagan shrine, the Ka’ba. According to Yusuf Ali in his note on page 57, “The change took place about 162 months after Hijrah.” The house of idols became the house of Allah and the center of the old heathen cult became the most sacred place in Islam, the direction to which all Muslims pray five times every day, and the place to which they annually make hajj.

The worship of stones and shrines in Folk Islam can be seen first of all as coming from the worship of the Black Stone and the circumambulation of the Ka’ba. The Ka’ba with the Black Stone, despite Muslims’ objections, is an idol and object of worship. It is hardly surprising that Muslims in different parts of the world venerate mountains, stones, wells and trees, seeing as the worship of this stone is central both physically and spiritually to Islam and one of the main sources of baraka.

This is evidence of yet another contradiction within Islam. Things, which supposedly are forbidden in Islam, are permitted and commanded in relation to the “House of Allah,” the Ka’ba, for Allah has so commanded it and so honored the Ka’ba. The grave of the prophet is another similar case, as many Muslims make pilgrimage to it at the end of the annual hajj to receive extra blessing. It should be noted that poorer Muslims and many Shiites take pilgrimages to local shrines in place of the hajj for the same reasons.

The Ka’ba is one of the chief examples of animism in Islam. The point is the belief in the power of baraka that such phenomena possess is a central belief of Islam. The fact that Islam has this understanding is an aid in its missiological contextualization, since it addresses issues in ways that the average African or Asian can comprehend, since the spirit-world and the belief in sacred places, stones, mountains, trees and wells endued with supernatural power is an intimate part of the life of most people in the pagan world and now in Islam too. It is a cause of grief to only a few orthodox Muslims that certain cultures retain pre-Islamic supernatural beliefs and practices which are synthesized with Islam. Just the opposite is true, most Muslims of all kinds accept these practices as sources of blessing.

The concept of baraka provides a meeting point for the esoteric and exoteric elements in Islam. We should not be surprised to learn that modern Islamist political forces engaged in activities against various regimes in the Muslim world try to empower their political jihad with the supernatural power of baraka. Even Islamist guerrillas will often seek baraka for their weapons by bringing them to a holy shrine and marching them around the tomb of a saint. Another way is to inscribe on a gun barrel the names of the Five People of the Shawl or a verse from the Qur’an. Either will infuse the weapon with baraka. Alternatively, one can whisper a suitable Qur’anic verse into the barrel of a gun before firing it. The gun of the assassin of Anwar Sadat was inscribed with the words of the BISMILLAH, B’ISMI’LLAH AL-MUNTAQIM—“In the Name of God the Avenger!” Al-Muntaqim is one of the ninety-nine names of God, and one especially associated in Islamist minds with resistance to “puppet” tyrants. The Beautiful Names are infused with spiritual power. By employing one of them on his gun the Mujahad hoped that divine baraka would empower his act. The fact that Sadat died as a result of the use of this “blessed” weapon would indicate to many Muslims that his hope was well-founded.

It can be seen from what we have examined that baraka affects every aspect of the life of a Muslim, from the mundane to the political, and indicates that he sees the supernatural affecting every dimension of the material world.

Jinn

“Jinn: who are they? In (Sura) 18:50 we are told that Iblis was one of the Jinns, and it is suggested that was why he disobeyed the Command of Allah. But in that passage and other similar passages, we are told that Allah commanded the angels to bow down to Adam, and they obeyed except Iblis. (Author’s Note: The Qur’an’s teaching of Allah’s command to Iblis to worship a man, Adam, is very strange in a religion that claims it is *shirk* for Christians to worship Jesus and that no one or no thing should be worshiped except Allah. But I leave that contradiction to you to solve. Compare that idolatry with what Jesus said to Satan in [Matt. 4:10](#).) That implies that Iblis had been of the company of angels. In many passages Jinns and men are spoken of together. In 55:14–15, man is stated to have been created from clay, while Jinns from a flame of fire. The root meaning of JINNA, YUJANNU, is ‘to be covered or hidden,’ and JANNA YAJUNNU, in the active voice, ‘to cover or hide,’ as in 6:76. Some people say that jinn therefore means the hidden qualities or capacities in man; others that it means wild or jungle folk hidden in the hills or forest. I do not wish to be dogmatic, but I think, from a collation and study of the Qur’anic passages, that the meaning is simply ‘a spirit,’ or an invisible or hidden force. In folklore stories and romances like the Arabian Nights they become personified into fantastic forms, but with them we are not concerned here. Both the Qur’an and the Hadith describe the Jinn as a definite species of living beings. They are created out of fire and are like man, may believe or disbelieve, accept or reject guidance. The authoritative Islamic texts show that they are not merely a hidden force, or a spirit. They are personalized beings who enjoy a certain amount of free will and thus will be called to account” (Yusuf Ali, p. 323).

Jinn are especially important to and feared by Folk Muslims. Jinn are one of the most common objects of belief among Folk Muslims. Jinn are a kind of spirit being and can be either good or evil (Sura 72:10). Although technically they are neutral, neither good or evil, they are feared and generally thought of as evil. The Qur’an speaks a lot about jinn. They were created by Allah (Sura 6:100) out of fire (Sura 15:27, 55:15) and rank between men and angels. Like angels they live in the world of spirits and can move unseen from place to place. Like men they live in this world. One special feature of jinn is that they can change shape and impersonate humans. They are capable of “salvation” and one of Muhammad’s objectives was to convert the jinn, another of his great successes, who will be judged on the day of judgment (Sura 15:27;72:1–7, 14, 15).

Jinn can be called by whistling, blowing a horn or music pipe. But to keep the jinn away or avoid inciting, Folk Muslims do not refer to them directly but only by allusion. Jinn inhabit unpleasant places, during the night, especially, graveyards and garbage. They are eaves-droppers and are constantly trying to steal heaven’s secrets. They are very jealous of humans, especially women and children. They inspire poets. And there are special amulets to ward off jinn. The fear of jinn is one of the most common fears in Folk Islam and a strong motivating force among ordinary Muslims. Some jinn have been given names and they are particularly feared. Female jinn are GUL, S’LAT, SLUQ, AULUQ, and A’ISHA QANDISHA. Male jinn are ’AFRIT, ’AZAB, AND UMM AL-SUBYAN.

A man once came into a mosque carrying some arrows. Muhammad yelled at him to hold the arrows by their points so they would be covered because the points of the arrows or other sharp objects arouse the jinn. The interesting point, no pun intended, of this story is that Muhammad

thought there were jinn in the mosque! A second indication of this belief that there are jinn inhabiting mosques is exemplified in the way Muslims pray in the mosque. When Muslims pray in the mosque they form tight ranks. The Hadith teach that Muhammad said this was to prevent the jinn from passing between the Muslims as they pray.

A Muslim teacher once told me that Muslims should not smoke since jinn are created from fire, smoke attacks and empowers the jinn.

Another Hadith says, the reason that Muslims wear a head covering when they pray is because evil spirits can enter the body from the back of the head. What would you say to a Folk Muslim about fear of spirits? (Cf. [Matt. 10:28](#); [Lk. 21:26](#); [James 2:19](#)).

Muhammad himself stated that everyone is accompanied by a jinn. However, he proclaimed that he had spiritual power against the demons, so association with him, and later invocation of his protection, is a charm against them.

Certain sicknesses and calamities are attributed to jinn. In Morocco the most important jinn is named A'isha Qandisha, a female spirit with very alluring features that causes sickness. Around this belief the Hanadsha dancers have developed.

“Ahmet was about 14 years old when he was first struck by a jinn. His family had recently moved to Moulay Idriss to find work and were staying with his sister. Ahmet laughed at a group of Sidi Ali's followers who were performing in the street ... The moment he laughed, he was stricken with a paralysis of the lower limbs” (Cooper, p. 197).

“One Wednesday evening, Hussein was walking home from Mianeh... ‘Hussein! We have been expecting you. Come and dance the “warrior round” ... Hear the tune? Now dance with us!’

“The music was quite intoxicating ... He was lost in the haunting melody that called forth his complete submission to the flame that danced within him ... Horror shot through him like lightning! In an instant he felt panicky, cold, feverish, sober, paralyzed. As his body froze, his mind raced! ... “These are jinn! Jinn! I've been tricked into joining a jinn celebration! Oh God, save me! Oh Ali, save me!” ” (Musk, p. 36, 37).

Possession is most often a result of jinns being angry because some wrong has been done to them and thus it is a punishment for those who wronged. For example, when humans accidentally harm or hurt them by urinating on them, by pouring hot water on them, or by killing some of them, the jinn think that they have been intentionally harmed.

Harm is exactly what the evil jinn bring. They cause nocturnal emissions, which are very dangerous, since Islam believes in the reality of sexual relations between humans and spirits, and where such occurs, the human being is brought into bondage to the jinn. In Morocco there is a female jinn called A'isha Qandisha and in Algeria an equivalent called Betjallal which actually performs this action. We have seen when we looked at the doctrine of the jinn that Islam believes not only in the possibility of sexual relations between humans and jinn, but also in the possibility of offspring from such unions.

Jinn can cause harm to children, bringing illnesses and similar phenomena, such as depression, fear and insomnia. Especially, they can cause madness. We can see how this relates to demonization and insanity from the following text:

“Nafi ibn Jubayr ibn Mut'im related from his father who said, ‘I heard the Messenger of Allah say in his voluntary prayer:... O Allah, I seek refuge in You from Satan the outcast, and from his pricking, spittle and puffing.’ I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, what

are his pricking, spittle and puffing?’ He said, ‘His pricking is insanity by which he takes the children of Adam; his spittle is arrogance; and his puffing is (evil) poetry.’”

To understand the references to poetry, we must recognize that in ancient Arabia, the poet was a propagandist, who, often in inter-tribal competitions, would mock and denigrate the other tribe. Moreover, the poet was believed to be possessed by a spirit. Hence the cursing involved in poetry was held to be supernatural and effective. The Qur’an also demonstrates the link between insanity and demonization:

Sura 2:275: As stands one whom the Evil One by his touch hath driven to madness.

Van Rheenen says, “The message to the animist (Folk Muslims) must present God who sent his Son not only to bring salvation from sin ([Luke 19:10](#)) but also to destroy the works of Satan ([1 John 3:8](#)).” One of the “works of Satan” which terrifies Muslims most is that of demon-possession. This occurs not merely because of the malevolence of the jinn, but because of human action.

Qarina Spirit

“Among all the superstitions in Islam there is none more curious in its origin and character that the belief in the Qarin or Qarina” (Zwemer, 1939, p. 53).

The Qarina is a double spirit, in the case of males a female mate and in the case of females a male mate. According to this belief every person has a double or twin spirit somewhere in the world seeking its partner. It is born into the spirit world at the same time as a human birth. The Qarina spirit is restless and constantly searching for its twin (Sura 6:100; 18:50; 37:47–56; 43:36; 50:20–29). Amazingly some Muslims believe this double spirit is a jinn or demon. It often takes the form of an animal, especially a dog or a cat, as it searches for its prey.

“The Qurana (plural of QARINA) come into the world from A’ALAM AL BARZAKHIYA (Hades) at the time the child is conceived, before it is born; therefore during the act of coition Moslems are told by their Prophet to pronounce the word ‘bismillah.’ This will prevent the child from being overcome by its devil and turned into an infidel or rascal” (Zwemer, 1939, p. 61).

Many precautions are taken to defend the unborn child against a Qarina spirit. Many mothers deny the real sex of their baby for several days after it is born to hide it from the spirits. Sometimes before the child is born a special amulet is prepared for it and then pinned on the baby as soon as it is born. Some mothers put certain verses of the Qur’an in a white pan containing water before the baby is born and then at birth the baby is washed with the special water. Some mothers, on the seventh day after the baby is born, light a candle and placed it in a jug of water near the head of the child as it sleeps. Sometimes a special amulet is prepared from seven grains of seven different kinds of cereal that are sewn in a bag and then attached to the infant’s clothing. These and many other kinds of amulets are used to protect children from the Qarina. The belief in the Qarina is a terror by night and by day to Folk Muslim mothers and their children.

The seal of the Seven Covenants of Solomon is especially useful to protect yourself from any mischief a Qarina spirit might seek to do. The Qarina are characterized by jealousy.

Whatever we may think of this strange doctrine it is clear what Muhammad thought. In the KITAB AKAM UL MARJAN FI AHKAM EL JAN, by Abdullah-esh-Shabli, one of the most famous books about jinn in Islam, in chapter 5 we read the follow conversation with Muhammad. He claims even he had a jinn.

“It is related by Muslim and others from ’Ayesha that the Apostle of God left her one night and she said, ‘I was jealous of him.’ Then she said, ‘Mohammed saw me and came to me and said, “What’s the matter with you, ’Ayesha? Are you jealous?” And I replied, “Why should one like me not be jealous of one like you?” Then the Apostle of God said, “Has your devil spirit got hold of you?” Then I said, “O Apostle of God, is there a devil with me?” Said he, “Yes, and with every person.” Said I, “And with you also, O Apostle of God?” Said he, “Yes, but my Lord Most Glorious and Powerful has assisted me against him, so that he became a Moslem.” ’ ’ ”

“Whenever the Apostle of God went to bed to sleep at night he said, ‘In the name of God I now lay myself down and seek protection from him against the evil influence of my devil (QARIN, SHAITAN), and from the burden of my sin and the weight of my iniquity’ ” (Zwemer, 1939, p. 57, 58).

Special times and seasons

There are many holidays and feasts in Islam. There are both official and unofficial feasts. Some are religious, some are traditional, and some are cultural. Some are obligatory for Muslims and some are not.

In Islam both the clock and the calendar are set according to Muhammad’s word. Muhammad abolished scientific practice by declaring, “Verily, the number of months with Allah is twelve months in Allah’s Book, on the day when he Created the heavens and the earth; of these are four that are sacred; that is the subsisting religion” (Sura 9:36, 37). By this verse all Muslims are bound to the lunar calendar and abolished all serious scientific study of astronomy.

Islamic holidays are scheduled according to the lunar calendar of 354 days. Because Islam follows a lunar calendar its holidays fall back about 10 or 11 days each year according to the Gregorian calendar. The error and problems the lunar calendar system causes the Muslims is clearly evident every day in the times of prayer and every year at Ramadan and the hajj.

During the “Times of Ignorance” the Muslims were far more scientific than they are today. In pre-Islamic Arabia, Arabs were not pleased when the time of pilgrimage came at an unsuitable time for business. Therefore, they arranged for a leap year with an additional month, so that the pilgrimage season would always come in the fall. But Muhammad changed this system so now the pilgrimage time changes every year and some years it is in the winter and some years it is in the extreme heat of the Arabian summer. If this is not bad enough for the pilgrim, think what it means to the month of Ramadan, the month of fasting. If you are a Muslim living in the extreme northern or southern hemisphere you may live where the sun never sets or sets for only a few minutes each day. In this circumstance a Muslim could starve to death. And Muslims say Islam is a modern, universal religion?

The whole idea of sacred months is deep in the Qur’an and goes right through all Islam’s sacred rites. According to Sura 9:5 there are months when no fighting is supposed to take place. Why did Allah have to regulate when Muslims could fight?

Their two “official” feasts are ID AL-FITR, “the Festival of the Breaking of Bread,” at the end of Ramadan, and the ID AL-ADHA, “the feast of sacrifice,” at the time of pilgrimage. The

Id al-Fitr is also called the ‘lesser feast’ and is probably Islam’s most joyous holiday, much like Christmas. Candy and presents are given to children, and families visit for three or four days. Ramadan, the month of fasting, of course, is the most sacred, most blessed, and most important month. Some believe the jinn are imprisoned during this month.

The Id al-Adha is the highest holy day in Islam and comes approximately sixty days after Ramadan during the month of Dhu al-Hijjah. This is the month when all Muslims who are physically able are supposed to undertake the pilgrimage, hajj, to Mecca at least once in their lifetime. The hajj lasts for the first ten days of this month. This holiday is also called “the greater feast,” and is celebrated by the sacrificing of sheep and other animals as a remembrance of Abraham’s sacrifice of his son. Each Muslim is supposed to sacrifice a sheep or at least one for each family. Some wealthy families sacrifice a bull or a camel. Some poor families sacrifice a small bird or nothing. Some of the meat from each sacrifice is supposed to be given to the poor. This holiday lasts for three or four days in many countries.

Other important holidays are “the Night of Journey and Ascent” from Sura 17:1, and the Lailat al-Qadr, “the Night of Power and Glory,” mentioned in Sura 97:1–5.

The LAILAT AL-ISRA WA AL-MI-RAJ is celebrated on the twenty-seventh of Rajab and is the night Muhammad is supposed to have ascended into heaven to meet the former prophets and talked directly to Allah. This is the most mystical night in all Islam and many legends have become associated with it.

“Muhammad and his followers continued to observe certain aspects of the old Ka’ba cult in the Maecan sanctuary. One night when Muhammad was sleeping near the holy Ka’ba itself ... An angel, presumably Gabriel, came to the sleeping Prophet and split open his chest and belly from the throat to the groin, from which he drew out Muhammad’s heart and bowels. These were then washed in a golden basin filled with faith (another version has Zamzam water, from the famous spring beneath, the Ka’ba shrine) and replaced in Muhammad’s body, which was then closed up. Then a small steed was brought, whose name was Buraq ...

“Gabriel then led Muhammad, who was seated on Buraq, through the sky to Jerusalem, where he prayed ... at the ‘farthest mosque’ ... (Note: no mosques existed in Jerusalem until 68 years after Muhammad’s death!) Then Gabriel led Muhammad up through the seven heavens into the very presence of God” (Deny, p. 76, 77).

This supposed event is important in the history of Islam because it gives Muhammad a certain standing. All other prophets before Muhammad had been to Jerusalem. Muhammad had never been there. When Muhammad went into heaven he met with all the previous prophets which gave him unity with them. Then Muhammad went into the presence of Allah, to the Throne of Allah and spoke directly to Allah, something no other prophet had ever done.

The “Night of Power and Glory” is celebrated on the twenty-seventh or twenty-eighth night of Ramadan. This is the night when Muhammad is supposed to have received the first revelation of the Qur’an. It is considered by some Muslims to be the holiest night in Islam. This is a night many Muslims go to the Mosque, even if they only go once a year, and in this way it is similar to Easter.

The fourteenth day of the eighth month is LA ILAT AL-BARA’A “the night of repentance.” According to tradition this is the night Allah comes close to the earth to call men to repentance and grant forgiveness of sins. In some countries this is a night when prayers are made for the dead in hopes that Allah will notice them and grant them paradise.

There are several minor special days in Islam. New Year's is the first of Muharram, Ras al-Sana. It is not a religious holiday. It is a day of celebration and gift-giving, like Christmas, in many Muslim countries. The tenth of Muharram is a minor religious holiday for a one day fast but it is not obligatory so almost all Sunni Muslims ignore it. For Shi'a Muslims it is a day of sorrow when they mourn for the assassination of Hussein, the son of Ali.

The twelfth day of the third month of the Islamic year, the month of Rabi'u'l-Awwal, is the celebration of Muhammad's birthday MAWLID AL NABI, to "remember him." It is an unofficial holiday but it is still celebrated by many Muslims.

According to Islam, most plagues sent by God come during the month of Safr, the second month. Hasan and Hussein, the son of Ali, were also killed during this month. Musk says that on the last Wednesday of Safr Malay Muslims bathe in water consecrated by Qur'anic verses written on pieces of paper and dropped into the water.

Practices of Folk Muslims

Magic and witchcraft

Folk Muslims feel alienated from Allah and driven by a fear of the supernatural, of spirits, and the unknown. They are overwhelmed by a sense of the coming judgment day and hell, both vividly portrayed in the Qur'an. To overcome this, many Muslim teachers have written books or encyclopedias of magic seeking a solution in appeasement through amulets and spells. Muslims use magic as a kind of "safety net" in life. According to the Qur'an and Muslim traditions, the prophet, himself, permitted blowing on knots and spells to counteract sickness.

There are many different types of magic and people who practice magic in Islam. Imams, teachers, sorcerers, witches, magicians, wizards, witches, as well as ordinary Muslims all may practice some form of magic. There are many types of magic, "black magic" (which has its source in Satan) and "white magic" (which has its source in Allah) and "anti-magic" (remedies for magic). Magic is a form of ritual and manipulation. It is considered by some to be even more powerful and more harmful than the evil eye. This is because its power can be transmitted from great distances without the need to even know the target. The chief ways magic is used is as productive magic, to produce fertility and harvest; protective magic, to overcome fear and curses; destructive magic, to control or harm someone else; and divination, used to discover the cause of something or the future.

In West Africa, Islam is dominated by local Muslim holy men who are reputed to be channels of blessing and mediators of salvation through spiritual descent from Mohammed. They are also the main source of magic, charms, curses, and sorcery, thus having great power and prestige in the community.

"While Christians pray to God, magicians command the gods (demons). Magicians are not too concerned about having a personal relationship with God, loving others or understanding truth. Their major focus is pragmatic, utilitarian and self-centered. They want to manipulate the powers for their own interests" (Love, p. 2).

However, sorcery can be a very dangerous practice. In some Muslim countries the penalty for sorcery is death. It should be noted that in 1996, a Syrian man was beheaded in Saudi Arabia for practicing witchcraft and sorcery.

Here are a few common examples of magical practices.

- 1.. Sacrificing of a black cock.
- 2.. Blowing or spitting on a sick person or on knots.
- 3.. Mixing herbs or powders to blow on someone or put in their food or drink.
- 4.. Use of nail parings, hair cuttings, eyebrow hairs, and saliva.
- 5.. Eating paper with Qur'anic verses on it or drinking water with a verse from the Qur'an dissolved on it.

When a woman in the village became jealous of her husband's second wife, she went to a sorcerer to put a curse on the other wife.

“She wanted to place a spell on my mother which would make her seem hideous to her new husband, causing him to reject her. This she did by taking some of my mother's hair (note: hair is one of the most common instruments for casting spells by Folk Muslims)... The spell was cast, and soon the magic began to work. One day my father got up and announced to all that he did not want this woman who was his new wife... So he rejected her and sent her back to her father's house” (Cooper, p. 196, 197).

Muslims of all kinds fear curses. They worry that someone might steal their fingernail clippings, or a piece of their hair to use to cast a spell on them. Love claims that in one North African country, occult fairs draw thousands of people to learn spells and witness:

“supernatural feats, offer blood sacrifices, and receive blessing (baraka)... some participants slash themselves with knives, yet do not bleed. Others dance in trances. Still others take bites of bread and then throw the bread out so the crowd can receive blessing... certain people possessed by animal spirits (like the spirit of a lion) who use their bare hands to kill and devour a cow or other animal” (Love, p. 20).

Samuel Zwemer tells the following story:

“What do you suppose I have just seen?”

“There was a whole group of Arab women standing outside the big door of the mosque and they all had cups or glasses in their hands.

“O, they were beggars, and they were waiting for the men to get through reciting their prayers.

“But no, they were not beggars, because I saw the beggars at another door, and besides, I watched the men as they came out of the mosque, and, it is hard to believe it, they spat right into the cups and glasses and bowls that the women and children and even men held out to them. Some of the Moslems spat into one cup after another—into every cup that was put near them. I never saw the like in all my life!

“That is indeed most strange and revolting! What were they doing it for? I'm sure I don't know. Why don't you go and ask some Moslem about it?”

“Soon he came back, utterly disgusted.

“Did you find out what the purpose is?”

“Yes, and that is the most repulsive thing of all! I wouldn't have believed it about them if anybody but one of their own religion had told it to me. Those people with the cups and bowls have some friend or someone in their family who is sick, and they are collecting the spittle of the men who have just finished their prayers for their sick ones at home. The collected spittle is their medicine” (Zwemer, 1920, p. 165, 166).

A common form of magic in Algeria is the *semoule* dish. A dish of semoule is placed before a dead body taken out of its grave and placed upright in front of the dish. The hand of the dead body is taken and pressed into the bowl of semoule. This imprint is then made into charms and sold in the market.

Sometimes a piece of paper with a person's name on it is put into the mouth of a toad. The toad's mouth is sewn up and its limbs are bound together and then the toad is buried in the ground. As the toad cries and dies so the person whose name was put into the toad's mouth also cries and dies. Sometimes a similar curse is passed with the use of a turtle.

Among Folk Muslims there are also many animistic customs connected to marriage ceremonies to protect the bride and groom or to make them fertile.

1. Grains of rice or wheat are thrown into a river for protection.
2. The bridegroom steps over a pile of clothes containing shavings from his beard.
3. The bride will shake out dust from her shoes and throw it in a river.
4. A red ribbon is tied around the waist of the bride to protect her virginity.
5. Milk is offered to the bride as she is on the way to the bridegroom's house but she does not drink it. She dips her fingers into it and sprinkles it on those around her.

Diagnosis of the cause of any illness seems usually to be made by a mixture of magic, case history and simple divination. Divination is:

“the decision-making process by which animists determine the impact of personal and impersonal powers upon themselves” (Van Rhee, p. 170).

This is a kind of fortune telling and has a two-step process. Step one is to discover the cause of a problem. Step two is to understand the appropriate solution or cure. Not all practitioners can do both parts. Sometimes a divinator can analyze the problem, but does not know the solution or perhaps cannot perform the required task necessary to cure the person. For that you might have to go to a magician or sorcerer. Divination is one of the most common practices among Folk Muslims to understand the immediate, ordinary, everyday problems of life. Why is my child sick? Who should I marry? What should I do about a certain business decision? Sometimes divination is used to gain information ahead of time to avoid a problem.

Diviners have many different ways “to determine the will of the spirits.” Ordinary means are dreams, astrology, cards, stones or palm reading, and visions. One act usually performed by a female practitioner is the egg-breaking ceremony, to find the caster of the evil eye. Cabalistic designs may be inscribed on the fresh egg and it is placed inside a handkerchief. The fingers are interlocked and the wrapped egg held between the palms with elbows extended to the sides to exert pressure on both ends of the egg. Names of persons who have recently seen the victim and might thus be casters of the eye are recited aloud, normally starting with closest relatives. When the individual who has cast the eye is named, the egg breaks.

Saints, shrines and holy laces

One reason Folk Muslims do not follow the orthodox doctrines of the Qur'an is because the Qur'an does not give them satisfactory answers to their everyday questions and felt needs. To find satisfaction they turn to cult worship of a local saint, *pir*, witch doctor or *Zar* practitioner, being more concerned about obtaining a blessing from a man in the form of miracles than the favor of Allah. These Folk Muslim leaders are often considered mediators between God and

man. The Folk Muslims want to know who has power and how can they get power and use it for their welfare now.

Rick Love tells the following story from a friend working with Muslims Southeast Asia:

“Early in our experience with [this people group], my wife sought to share Jesus with our next-door neighbor lady who had become a good friend. Knowing that [these people] are interested in the lives of the prophets, my wife read stories from the Gospels of Jesus calming the storm, healing the sick and revealing the secrets of men’s thoughts. Our neighbor’s response was, ‘That was interesting, but my own father does those things all the time!’

“After further questioning the lady, my wife discovered that her father, the village imam [the leader of the mosque], was known for his ability to access ‘Allah’s power’ in order to heal the sick, find lost people and possessions, and demonstrate other supernatural skills.

“Our friend therefore was not impressed to hear about the miracles of Christ performed 2,000 years ago!” (Love, p. 3).

There are many different words for “saint” in Islam. These words each imply a certain relationship and show how deep this belief is and how important it is. It is yet another example of the emptiness of orthodox Islamic doctrines to satisfy Muslims’ heart desires. Some of the terms used for saints are WALLI—friend, patron, saint; MURSHID—guide; SHAFTI—intercessor; SHAYKH—leader; PIR—holy man, MURABIT—one who has joined himself to God.

Phil Parshall describes the qualities of a pir as one who:

“keeps all the laws of Islam... will not be a person concerned with financial gain... is a man of spiritual perception... will be honest and upright in all his dealings with people... (and) is expected to possess almost magical powers. Pirs frequently claim power to transcend time and space” (Parshall, p. 84).

I met one pir who said he could travel through time or from place to place at will. He showed me a picture of himself with a halo over his head. He said if I was meant to be his disciple I would be able to see the halo all the time. Fortunately, I could not see it except in the picture.

As a result of the elevation of Muhammad, his companions and his family, the invocation of the saints became not merely a folk practice but part and parcel of Islam itself. Following the example of the veneration of Muhammad it is not much of a leap to begin the worship of saints, shrines and holy places. An entire set of customs and protocols had developed around the veneration given to various saints according the local Muslims. Veneration can be given to either living or dead saints, to special rocks, trees, rivers, foods or shrines built to honor someone or some things. In the room of “Holy Relics” in Topkapi Museum, in Istanbul, I have often seen Muslims praying before the tooth, footprint, or the hair from the beard of Muhammad.

Since Ali, Fatima and other saints are definitely in Paradise, and were close to Muhammad in this life, and since there was an ambiguity about the propriety of intercession in Islam, it was easy for Folk Muslims to believe these saints could also be approached, and naturally the same was true of other prophets. By extension, if any great saint in Islamic history was renowned for his holiness or spiritual power, he would be able to intercede. Indeed, the Islamic word for a saint is *wali*, “friend” or “patron,” or SHAFI, “intercessor.” A saint renowned for miracles would be particularly popular. This also sounds similar to Roman Catholic teaching.

Saint worship and pir veneration has continually increased throughout the history of Islam and is yet another example of the creature replacing the true worship of God in “Spirit and in truth” with idolatry (Rom 1:20–23). Saint veneration and the “worship” of Muhammad has become one of the central practices of almost all Muslims. Growing out of honoring saints has also come shrine visitation, vow-making, and oath taking.

The veneration of Muhammad and the appeal of ordinary Muslims to local dead and living saints betrays the sense of hopelessness and need for help which formal Islam fails to address adequately... Folk Islam finds other ways to answer these needs the ordinary Muslim has daily. Orthodox Islam has few resources for handling the daily needs and nightly dreads of ordinary Muslims.

I have lived and traveled in Muslim countries for over 30 years. I have visited many mosques, shrines, and attended many meetings of folk and mystical Muslims. But there is one experience I will never forget. It was a visit to the tomb of Mevlana Jala ad-Din Rumi in Konya, Turkey. This large green shrine contains the tomb of Mevlana and several other important early masters of the Mevlevi order. I entered the large building and immediately had trouble breathing. I felt a heavy weight on my chest and strong spiritual oppression causing me to become physically sick. I was only able to stay in the building a few minutes and I had to leave. I have never been back to revisit this shrine but I have visited many others since and never had that same experience again. Could it be I was oppressed because I was in that city to visit a young Turkish man who had recently become a Christian?

All over the Muslim world, arising alongside mosques are shrines, which are symbols of Folk Muslim forms of worship. These shrines cover the tombs of dead saints. Folk Muslims believe the dead saints’ powers are still accessible after death and that their spirits frequent their tombs; devotees (more often women than men) flock there and express their petitions in various ways. Each saint has a festival, known as *Ur*, which occurs either on his birthday or on the anniversary of his death. Offerings are then brought to the shrine and greater blessings are expected on this day. It is interesting that these practices have not been restricted to the tombs of local saints. The grave of the prophet, presumably the place of greatest spiritual power, has also been affected in this way.

Folk Islam allows worship of burial sites and graves, visiting shrines, kissing saints, having saints bless them, drinking “Qur’anic water” or eating paper with a verse from the Qur’an written on it, seeking aid from the dead, and other strange practices, like wiping hands over the graves and tombs, kissing them, and circumambulating them. Even though these are abominable innovations according to orthodox Islam, they are rites practiced daily by Muslims.

Graves are particular places for Folk Muslims. Folk Muslims have many special rituals connected with graves and graveyards. “The Qur’an is read at the grave during that period to assist the archangel Gabriel in defending the soul of a deceased relative against the Devil. Qur’an readings focus on the recitation of the Sura Ya Sin and assist the deceased during the dreaded ‘squeeze of the grave’”(Musk, p. 136).

Despite the claims of the Islamic FAQIH, it should be noted that Muhammad spoke about making his grave a place of worship and warned against it, lest idolatrous associations arise connected with it. But all Muslims participate in this practice even though the strict orthodox (at least outwardly) Muslims say they regard stone or saint worship with horror, yet they almost all practice it.

Just as popular as grave and shrine worship are the “prayer trees” or “prayer vines.” These are trees or vines that are covered with small pieces of cloth or paper that represent the prayers of

the person who put them there. This is another Islamic belief that is similar to a Roman Catholic belief, the concept of lighting a candle as a symbol of prayer. These similarities show how much Muhammad was influenced by and copied the practices of the religions around him in Arabia.

Tree worship and stone worship are also common among Folk Muslims. These are sacred because Folk Muslims believe they contain spirits. By hanging amulets on trees and stones the tree or stone becomes a source of blessing. Warneck writes:

“What has Animism made of God?... The idea of God has become a mere decoration; His worship a caricature. Spirits inferior to men, whose very well being is dependent on men’s moods, are feared instead of the Almighty; the rule of an inexorable fate is substituted for the wise and good government of God. Absurd lies are believed concerning life after death, and efforts are made to master the malevolent spirits by a childish magic” (Zwemer, 1920, p. 17).

The evil eye

The evil eye is recognized by Muslims as a common cause of sickness and death. The evil eye curse is probably the most feared and most spoken about curse among Muslims. Its force is very broad and attributed to almost every sickness or problem that afflicts a Muslim, especially a child.

“... a humorous proverb from Palestine asserts that two-thirds of mankind die from the attacking influence of the evil eye upon them. The remaining third dies because it is careless in protecting itself against the evil eye!” (Musk, p. 26).

For the ordinary Muslim the evil eye is a fearful and overwhelming belief. One reason for this is that no direct mention is made of the evil eye in the Qur’an although it does mention envy twice.

Anne Cooper gives the following example of an Iranian villager from Robert Alberts:

“A child was taken ill with throat irritations and coughing... An egg-breaking ceremony was held to discover the culprit... The egg broke when a female attendant at the village bath-house was named... With the spell thus broken and with a special herb burning around him as a further precaution, it was expected that the boy would quickly recover. However, the child’s condition did not improve and he was finally taken to a doctor for injections and cough syrup. Within two days, he had recovered. When the investigator asked the child’s father how it was that the doctor had cured the child if the cause had been the evil eye, he was told: ‘The child of course had two conditions at the same time. He had a cold, but he had also been hit by the evil eye. The doctor cured the cold, but of course he was powerless against the bad eye and we took care of that in our own ways’” (Cooper, p. 197).

Another cure is the use of spells against the evil eye. Normally, Christians associate such phenomena with occult activity. It is otherwise with Islam, this fits in with the teaching of Muhammad and the use of various kinds of curses against demonic malice. There are many Hadith that testify to this.

“Asthma Bint ’Umairs relates that she said, ‘O Prophet, the family of Ja’far are affected by the baneful influences of an evil eye; may I use a spell on them or not?’ The Prophet said, ‘Yes, for if there were anything in the world which would overcome fate, it would be the evil eye’” (Mishkat, XXI, C.I., Part 2).

“Again we read, Anas says: ‘The Prophet permitted a spell being used to counteract the ill effects of the evil eye...’” (Sahih Muslim—p. 233).

“Um Salmah relates ‘that the Prophet allowed a spell to be used for the removal of yellowness in the eye, which, he said, proceeded from the malignant (evil) eye’” (Sahih Al-Bokhari, p. 854).

“Auf ibn Malik says, ‘The Prophet said there is nothing wrong in using spells, provided the use of them does not associate anything with God’” (Mishkat, Book XXI, ch. I) (Zwemer, 1920, p. 170).

There are three basic forms of the evil eye:

1) The salty eye is the most powerful form of the evil eye and is normally a permanent possession. It may be acquired by a child during gestation if, for example, its mother happens to view the face of a corpse. Whatever the unfortunate child looks at, whether intentionally or inadvertently, is likely to come to harm. It is said it can even stop tractors and topple buildings with a glance. Such a condition is incurable and only avoidance of the person concerned will save one from being “looked at.”

2) The bad eye comes and goes as a momentary condition and is the most common expression of the evil eye. It is the glance one casts when his thoughts range to envy, jealousy, covetousness, and undue pride or admiration. Usually, this kind of eye is cast unintentionally and so its effects are only minor and temporary. There are defenses against it and answers for its effect.

3) The unclean eye is normally a momentary condition and occurs when the look is cast by someone ceremonially unclean. This kind of condition occurred most often when a person had failed to take the purificatory bath. Often the unclean eye can be countered as with the bad eye but sometimes it can be lethal, especially if the recipient of the eye is already suffering from injury or sickness. This is the type of evil eye Muslims fear from non-Muslims.

Other kinds of “evil eyes” take on such culture-specific forms as “the eye that wounds,” “the narrow eye” or “the hot eye.”

The evil eye has special repercussions on the ordinary Muslim’s concept of causality. Such repercussions may best be illustrated in terms of crises of sickness. A variety of causes are attributed to illness. Possibilities include natural reasons, breaking of taboo, sorcery, jinn activity, the Qarina, fate and ultimately Allah himself. The evil eye features as one among such possibilities.

The following describes the proceedings which occurred in Baytin, Jordan, during the “exorcism” of an evil eye from a child:

“... a fire is built and the child is placed close by. A piece of alum is then thrown into the flames by the mother or the woman who is working to destroy the evil eye. She repeats certain phrases in a low voice while the alum burns, and the child is supposed to inhale the flames. When the burned alum has cooled into solid substance it is dug out of the ashes and examined. From the shape of the alum, the woman pretends that she can reveal the identity of the person with the evil eye. The alum is then crushed under the foot of the child, and a trace of it is smeared on the baby’s forehead. To guard against the

recurrence of such an incident, a piece of alum and a blue bead are wrapped in a small piece of black cloth and placed in the child's clothing."

The description of such exorcism illustrates the manner in which one force (that of nature in the form of alum) is employed to overcome another force (the evil eye). Incantation is also involved; often such chanting comprises rhymed couplets against the eye. Divination from the cooled alum leads to identification of the thrower of the eye and the power of that person's look is broken under the heel of the afflicted child. Prophylaxis prevents further problems from this source. The incident well demonstrates the integrating elements of evil eye belief, complementing and justifying one another and together determining the behavior of a woman whose child is taken ill. The evil eye takes a strong place amongst other potential powers in the ordinary Muslim's scheme of causal connection.

One anthropologist suggests that, because there can be no cure for the casting of the evil eye, a huge variety of "defensive, protective rituals and devices" has been developed to try and prevent its power from touching an individual. As we have seen, the ordinary Muslim's view of causality does admit a process of diagnosis and cure for many evil eye problems. However, such hope in no way denies the seriousness of the evil eye's harmful potential and hardly detracts from the common desire to be protected as much as possible from it.

"From the baskets of the *Ait Bamra* women we selected two big hands of Fatima, cut of yellow plastic on a red ground, decorated with sequins, centered with a core of sulphur. Sulphur, said A'isha, was the best deterrent of the Evil Eye."

Another protective measure is the KHAMSA, the five fingers of the hand extended towards the potential administerer of the glance. To extend the open hand toward a person is normally viewed as a gross insult (in the Middle East) because it comprises an accusation that that person has "the eye." A ruse is commonly adopted in which a person wipes his forehead with the back of the open hand. This natural gesture incidentally directs the khamsa at the feared eye without directly insulting the onlooker.

The "Hand of Fatima" is a common talisman hung on cars or painted onto houses throughout the Arab Middle East. Often this hand is printed on a card with an eye in the middle of it. This hand is widely used as an amulet against the evil eye. Sometimes this charm is made out of brass in the form of a cupped hand and set on a table. Sometimes I have seen someone inadvertently use this as an ashtray!

We have previously noted the elevated status of Fatima, the daughter of the prophet in Islam. An associated talisman is made up of an eye transfixed by an arrow, often painted onto vehicles. An inscription such as the word DOAS DO'AS, "to invoke" or "pray," may be included. In this context it signifies a special prescription of occult words and/or symbols. It is commonly inserted in the foundations of buildings being constructed.

Love says that charms and blood sacrifices are common in Muslim lands as means of protection.

"... blood sacrifices are practiced at the highest levels of Indonesia's government. In 1983, before construction of a modern international airport for Jakarta could begin, Indonesian Muslims... offered up prayers during a ceremony in which the heads of five water buffalo were buried. In earlier times, a young girl or boy was sacrificed before land was disturbed—a gift to the spirits living on the land" (Love, p. 5, 6).

A different form of protection is found in the avoidance of exposure to the evil eye. The aim is to keep people or objects which are especially vulnerable away from possible contamination by the evil eye. So a new-born baby is carefully isolated, a bride's head is kept covered, women in general are encouraged to remain secluded. One of the reasons for the HEJAB is that it acts as a bane against evil spirits. Often, carefully designed phrases are ejaculated to couch any compliments in a way that denies access to the evil eye. A very common example of this is the use of the words MA SHAALLAH SHA'ALLAH ("by the will of Allah") before congratulating a mother on her child's beauty.

It must be stressed that such beliefs are not merely superstitions added on to primal Islam. The evil eye is a cosmological force which affects all aspects of the everyday life of the Muslim. Muhammad himself acknowledged the reality of the evil eye:

Abu Hurayrah Sahih Al- Bukhari: "The Prophet said, "The effect of an evil eye is a fact.'"

Zar ceremony

"Smoking, wanton dancing, flailing about, burping and hiccuping, drinking blood and alcohol, wearing male clothing, publicly threatening men with swords, speaking loudly, lacking due regard for etiquette, these are elements of the Zar ceremony" (Boddy, p. 131).

Women are especially prominent in Folk Islam and the Zar ceremonies. Whilst a woman's attendance at the mosque or congregational prayers is frowned upon by many Muslim groups, her attendance at a shrine or a visit to a zar cult ceremony does not involve any loss of family honor. As a result, women are very involved in Folk Islam, for they can bring their problems, illnesses and anxieties to a place where they are guaranteed a sympathetic ear and where they can participate in many rituals and festivals.

"... the dialectic between the zar and Islam on a religious level corresponds to that between women and men in an everyday world pervaded and informed by sexual complementarity. It is important to realize that if women are constrained by their gender from full participation in Islam, men are constrained by theirs from full participation in the zar" (Boddy, p. 6).

In modern American English, this would be called "pay back."
The zar is:

"a type of spirit, the illness it can cause, and the ritual by which the illness is assuaged; more generally, the 'cult' that surrounds such spirits (Boddy, p. xxi). The zar spirit is a powerful, possessing spirit that is malevolent only to a certain degree... Zar spirits are not exorcised but become part of everyday life and decision-making. They give motivation and meaning to home life and determine the form of feminine spiritual experience" (Musk, p. 180, 181).

Zar ceremonies are characterized by the presence of women or men dressed as women. One of its main functions is to appease spirits and perform divination. Women usually sit on the floor on mats while music is played and some dance. Food is served and candles are burned. Zar

ceremonies may last anywhere from a few hours to several days. The ceremony is rich in complex imagery and movements. Dancing and music are some of the main features.

“What is singular about the zar is its spontaneity, its imagination, whose basis nonetheless is a comprehensive repertoire of symbols and spirit roles—a resource on which participants draw for inspiration” (Boddy, p. 131).

The zar spirit is different from other spirits in that Muslims do not seek to exorcise it, but rather to use it as a personal source of power and income. The zar practitioner is highly sought after to perform ceremonies and give blessings. The zar ceremony gives the participants a “spiritual” experience that is like a drug high. This is done through trance dancing and mystic music. Often particular zar spirits prefer certain colors so they want those attending or performing to wear that color. These spirits have names that reflect the color they prefer. For example, one spirit is the Red Sultan. A person who is possessed by this spirit will have to wear something red at all times or keep a red candle light in her home at all times.

There is a vast variety of reasons and motivations for a woman to become part of a zar cult. First, it is the one ceremony that is practiced almost totally by women, so women see it as something special for them and something that gives them a place and power in a man-centered religion. Second, it deals with issues women in Islam face but find no answer for in traditional Islamic rituals, such as contact with the supernatural world. Third, if a woman is worried, is under stress, or has a problem in her home, maybe a sick child or her husband is out of work, she can turn to the zar ceremony for relief and help. Fourth, because the zar ceremonies are attended by both rich and poor at one time and in one place, all on an equal basis, they find there a place of communion and acceptance. Social pressures are lifted and there is intense group interaction. Finally, it is a place not only to find physical and mental healing, but spiritual strength.

Amulets, charms and hasad (envy)

The use of prayer beads, amulets, talismans, charms, magic, sorcery, exorcism, stone and tree worship, cursing and blessing, and many other animistic practices are common to Folk Muslims and are used to “bridge the gap between Islam and the everyday world they live in” (Musk, p. 222).

The most powerful amulet or charm in Islam is the Qur’an itself and especially the Bismillah, the blessing at the beginning of all but one Sura, and the Fatiha, the first Sura. Second to this, in terms of power, is possibly the Seal of the Seven Covenants of Suleiman (Solomon) which supposedly protects the Muslim from jinn and other evil forces. The Seven Covenants of Suleiman is supposed to have special power to help women troubled by jinn at the vulnerable time of child bearing. Each prophet in Islam, and there are 124,000, have a special power of protection. This is a system much like that of the saints in Roman Catholicism.

Zwemer says there were over two hundred and seventy different kinds of known amulets just in Egypt alone. Muslim amulets are made of many different things: the hair of horses, camels, donkeys, people’s heads, men’s beards etc., ankle and ear rings, bowls, water, bread, rice, grains, powders. The names of some of these amulets and talismans are:

AUDHA

—to take refuge

HIJAB

—to shield with a curtain

HIRZ

—to guard against evil

NAFRA

—to flee or make flee

WADH

—to make distinct

TAMIMA

—to complete

The Seal of the Seven Covenants of Suleiman amulet begins with Allah and concludes with Muhammad, yet another indication of idolatry and Muhammad veneration in Islam. In between are prayers to Gabriel, Michael, Azrael, and Israfael. The naming of specific angels lends the amulet more power for protection from certain evils that each angel controls. At the end of the amulet are two special verses from the Qur'an, Sura 24:53, the Light verse, and Sura 2:256, the Throne verse. These are two of the most well-known verses in the Qur'an. Finally, included in the midst of the amulet is a long section describing the powers of Umm al-Subyan (Mother of Children) and her submission to Suleiman.

“UMM AL-SUBYAN has the principle voice in the Seal of the Seven Covenants of Suleiman. This popular charm is used throughout the contemporary Arabic-speaking world as a protective device, especially around the vulnerable months of childbirth. In the text of the seal, Umm al-Subyan relates to the prophet Suleiman the covenant terms on which she will refrain from touching the sons of Adam and daughters of Eve. Before being forced by Suleiman to come to this agreement, she brags rather crudely both of her power to harm and her ability to appear as something other than what she is:

“I enter a house and crow like a cockerel; I bark like dogs, and drop manure like a bull or a cow; I cough like camels, and neigh like a horse; I bray like donkeys, and hiss like snakes; I mimic them perfectly. I close up wombs and destroy children without anyone suspecting me. I come to a woman and bind up her womb, preventing her from becoming pregnant. I make a woman barren, I come to a woman in pregnancy and destroy the fetus so that the woman miscarries. She is not able to keep the child. I come to the engaged girl or woman and tie the hems of her garments; then I announce the disaster to the matchmakers. I come to a man and render him impotent...” (Musk, p. 40).

Does this sound like a holy text?

But even more prolific than the Seal of the Seven Covenants of Suleiman is the SUBHA, the Islamic rosary, another Islamic custom similar to those of Roman Catholicism. These prayer beads are seen everywhere, usually in sets of 33, but sometimes in sets of 99 beads. Every eleventh bead is a marker of a different shape so that the Muslim can tell how many prayers he has “said” without having to keep actual count. Each bead represents a name of Allah so as a Muslim prays through the beads three times he says a prayer in each of the 99 names of God. Performing this act is termed AL-TASBIH, the repetition of the praises of God. Although the motivation behind this act may be very noble, the performance generally lacks sincerity or

knowledge. I have seen many Muslims play with these beads as they smoke a cigarette or drink a beer. Sometimes the beads are in the colors of their favorite soccer team.

A few rare and unusual pictures of Muhammad show him holding and using a rosary. Several of "his" rosaries are found today in Islamic museums. This indeed is strange, given that no mention is made of the subha in the Qur'an and there is evidence that it was not introduced into Islam until centuries after Muhammad died by Sufis from India and western Asia. In the 14th century a learned Muslim author of the AL-MUDKHAL, mentions the subha "as one of the strange new practices in Islam which should not be countenanced" (Zwemer, 1939, p. 2). The strict disciples of Muhammad thought of the subha as a foreign innovation. Some writers believe they are borrowed from Hindus, Buddhists, or Catholics.

A second use of the sabha is for magic and divination. After a Folk Muslim solemnly repeats the Fatiha, he will breathe upon the sabha in order to put the power and the magic of the Qur'an on the beads. One way these beads are then used is for fortune telling. The Muslim will pick up the sabha at random and start counting the beads toward the "pointer" bead. As he counts he says the following three words in order, *Allah*, *Muhammad*, and ABU JAHL. If the count ends on the word "Allah," then his request is considered favorable. If it ends with Abu Jahl it is considered bad. And if it ends on Muhammad the answer is doubtful.

A third way the rosary is used, which comes directly from animistic superstition, is for healing the sick and for "black magic."

"With the rosary in the hand, one reads any chapter from the Koran up to the fifteenth verse (this verse always contains a word of talismanic power), and while this verse is being read the rosary is counted and the result follows" (Zwemer, 1939, p. 10).

In some countries rosaries are made from gall-stones which are supposed to have healing power.

A common word in English that most people do not realize has an animistic origin is "abracadabra" which is used in connection with magic tricks. Muslims make an amulet from this word and wear it around the neck for protection. The idea of this amulet was to force the spirit of the disease gradually to relinquish its hold upon the sick person.

Even the "99 Wonderful Names of Allah" are used for magic. Kastallani says there are many different lists of these names and these names are used not only for blessings but for cursing as well. The number "99" is often used for a hyperbole for anything large. Saying "99" is just saying something is big or great.

There is one tradition that Zwemer relates that is very interesting. The pointer bead or minaret bead is said to represent the "Great name of Allah," the hundredth name of Allah which is unknown to men. This bead is also called the "camel" which relates to the tradition that the camel is the only one who knows the hundredth name of Allah and for this reason always has a smug expression on his face.

It is pinned on every child shortly after birth and worn day and night until about age six. It is attached to the corner of most mirrors and picture frames. It is hung over doorways and imbedded into the fronts of buildings. It is hung from almost every rearview mirror in cars, buses and trucks. It is hung around the neck of animals for their protection. It is the symbol of many companies, and the favorite name for pets. It is the most frequent kind of charm used in Turkey and rural Iran. It is a glazed ceramic bead of bright turquoise with a white dot and a black dot in

the white dot, the MAVI BONCUK. It is powerful because the potential of the evil eye is canceled by a glance at anything turquoise.

A Muslim friend once told me the best place to buy an amulet is outside a Mosque. Love quotes Robert Wessing:

“The best place to get an amulet to ward off children’s diseases is the main mosque in Bandung” (West Java) (Love p. 5).

In Morocco, a variety of amulets against the effect of the evil eye can be bought in a Marrakesh market close to where the beauty preparations are being sold:

“Talismans, charms, and amulets of every description are widely used by pirs. The pir will blow on the charm, transferring baraka to it. The same might be done with food. Many such charms have verses of the Qur’an inscribed on them. Alternatively, magic words written by a pir are effective talismans. A Hadith recounts this practice by Muhammad: Abdullah ibn Amr ibn as al-’As Abu Dawud said:

“The Apostle of Allah used to teach them the following words in the case of alarm: ‘I seek refuge in Allah’s perfect words from His anger, the evil of His servants, the evil suggestions of the devils and their presence.’ Abdullah ibn Amr used to teach them to those of his children who had reached puberty, and he wrote them down and hung it on the child who had not reached puberty.”

d

t

b

4

9

2

j

h

z

3

5

7

h

a

w

8

1

6

The alphabetical and numerical figure above is the AL-BUDUH talisman, all straight lines add up to 15. This talisman is also known as the “Triangle of al-Ghazali.”

“The alphabetical equivalent of the square can be arranged differently to obtain the roots of words such as love or inclination. In such a form it may be used as a talisman to produce love” (Musk, p. 165, 166).

In this form, it is often used by young men and women who wish to win the heart of someone. The charm appears in many forms and often also has the Seven Covenants of Suleiman attached. Zwemer says that this amulet is one of the most celebrated amulets in the world of Islam.

There is nothing comparable in Christianity to the concept of using a spell against demonic attack. The fact that Islam uses spells in exorcism indicates how much of its cosmological understanding and practices are borrowed from pre-Islamic animism. Muhammad simply adopted and adapted existing ideas of demonology and offered Islamic faith and ritual as a more effective bane against the malevolence of the jinn, but without overthrowing many of the existing methods of exorcism. In fact, Islamic faqih recognizes the permissibility of using spells and talismans, charms, and medical treatments.

There is no harm in seeking a spell to cure the evil eye and similar things. Also, there is nothing wrong in the use of charms, or the use of medicine in the treatment of diseases, or the taking of drugs; blood-letting, cauterizing and cupping are all good treatments... There is no harm in cauterization or using the verses of the Qur’an or decent speech for the cure of disease. There is no harm in wearing a charm which contains verses of the Holy Qur’an...

Indeed, Islamic faqih even presents a cure for the evil eye using such methods. Hence, we can see that such activities are part of primal Islam. It should be remembered that Muslims often view illness or insanity as the work of the jinn, so it is not surprising that they would use “folk” remedies approved by the prophet for healing.

Muslims often swear by the beard of the prophet. It is claimed that the Iranian revolution in 1979 was aided by the discovery by a woman of one of the hairs of the prophet’s beard in her Qur’an. Not surprisingly, the hair of the prophet is effective against demonic activity. Again, this points to the elevation of the prophet, and his role as a charismatically-endowed holy man, whose very body was endued with baraka.

Some writers claim that Islam is not opposed to but rather inclined to Animism and that Animism lies at the root of all Muslim theology. The Folk Muslim’s belief and use of hair and finger-nails as fetishes is another obvious indication of Animism in Islam. According to Animistic teaching, the soul of man resided not only in his heart but in his hair, teeth, body fluids, and finger-nails. Therefore these body parts can be used to give blessings or put curses on someone. This belief causes Muslims to hang pieces of their hair on the tombs of saints together with shreds of their garments, nails, teeth, etc. Even the way that Muslims cut their nails and hair, and trim their beards follows Muhammad’s traditions. During the hajj there are special rules concerning hair cutting, shaving, and nail cutting. Some of these traditions come from pre-Islamic times.

Cut your nails on Monday, cut them for health;
Cut them on Tuesday, cut them for wealth;
Cut them on Wednesday, cut them for news;
Cut them on Thursday, a pair of new shoes;

Cut them on Friday, cut them for woe;
Cut them on Saturday, a journey to go;
Cut them on Sunday, you cut them for evil
And all the week you'll be ruled by the devil (Zwemer, 1920, p. 79).

Among many Folk Muslims, when a mother leaves for a trip, she ties some of her own hair on each of her children so that the children believe she is still there with them.

Zwemer wrote, "It is the fear of the loss of the soul that brings Folk Muslims into a life-long bondage to superstitions." Jesus warned of this: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul" (Mk. 8:36). Or: "And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28).

The Qur'an itself, quite apart from other amulets, is to many, a charm which possesses wide powers of healing. Any Muslim will tell you that the Qur'an is no ordinary book, even among holy books, but is itself the authenticating miracle of the apostleship of Muhammad, a sign and wonder, supernaturally imparted on the "Night of Power" Laylat-al-Qadr (27th or 28th day of Ramadan). The Qur'an claims to have been supernaturally revealed by angelic spirits on this night. A Hadith states: Anas ibn Malik Mishkat Al-Masabih

"Allah's Messenger said that when Laylat al-Qadr comes, Gabriel descends with a company of angels who invoke blessings on whoever is standing or sitting and remembering Allah, who is Great and Glorious. ..."

We can see from this that Islam has a belief in the supernatural impartation of spiritual power through the agency of spirits, and that this is linked to the revelation of its holy book. Hence, when a Muslim engages in an Islamic ritual, he is not simply performing the required religious function, he is seeking the reception of charismatic unction (i.e. baraka) into his life from the angels, the mediators of the "miracle" of revelation. It should also be remembered that Qur'anic verses are called ayahs, meaning "signs," in the sense of "signs and wonders," and that Arabic is the language of the angels. Hence, such verses are intrinsically supernatural, and bestow spiritual blessing.

The Muslims' concern to ward off the jinn, in many ways, resembles the fear of evil spirits in the Middle Ages. Unlike Christianity, the use of charms is not an addition to the primal faith, but is rather an integral part of Islam. As we have stated, often talismans containing verses from the Qur'an were put on children to ward off the effects of the evil eye and sickness. Abu Sa'id al-Khudri Mishkat Al-Masabih said:

"The Prophet used to seek protection against the jinn and the evil eye in many places till Suras al-Falaq and an-Nas were revealed. After they were revealed, he stuck to them and discarded everything beside them."

It is worth looking at Sura 113, al-Falaq:

Say: I seek refuge
From the mischief, Of Darkness as it overspreads;
With the Lord of the Dawn
From the mischief, Of those who practice Secret Arts;
From the mischief

And from the mischief,
 Of created things; and Sura 114 al-Nas:
 Of the envious one As he practices (sic.) envy.
 Say: I seek refuge With the Lord And Cherisher of Mankind,
 From the mischief Of the Whisperer (Of Evil), who withdraws (After his whisper)—
 The King (or Ruler) Of Mankind,
 (The same) who whispers Into the hearts of Mankind—
 The God (or Judge) Of Mankind—
 Among Jinns And among Men.

There are two aspects of Sura Falaq which should be noted. First, the reference in the fourth ayah (verse) "... the mischief of those who practice Secret Arts" is better rendered "Those (women) who blow on knots." Qur'anic commentators relate that the reason for this chapter is that a Jew named Lobeid, with his daughters, had bewitched Muhammad by tying eleven knots on a cord which they hid in a well, which caused him to fall ill. Eventually the cord was found, and Muhammad recited over it the Suras Falaq and Nas, and at every ayah a knot was loosed until when the last words were spoken, the spell was broken. In Indonesia, some Muslims react to a difficult birth by untying every possession of a couple. In Arabia, the friends of a bridegroom getting married in traditional Arab dress will ensure that no knot is tied on his garments, to guarantee that no evil spirit will make him impotent on his wedding night.

There are several Hadith which deal with the issue of knots, for example the following: Abu Hurayrah Al-Muwatta said:

"The Messenger of Allah said, 'Shaytan ties three knots at the back of your head when you sleep, and he seals the place of each knot with, "You have a long night ahead, so sleep."'

"If you wake up and remember Allah, a knot is untied. If you do *wudu*, a knot is untied. If you pray, a knot is untied, and morning finds you lively and in good spirits, and if not, morning finds you in bad spirits and lazy."

In the light of this, we can see again, that the use of Qur'anic verses in charms is not exactly a "folk" practice in Islam, but rather is something native to Islam. This is not to deny the prevalence of traditional religious practices which have been carried on after the Islamitization of an area, for example, the cult of Saint Saddu in Pakistan, but the whole use of banes and charms is a central part of Islam itself. The recitation of the Qur'an and the practice of Islamic rituals are actually means of receiving baraka and warding off evil spirits. It is clear that Muhammad accepted the reality of the pre-Islamic cosmology of the spirit world and merely replaced traditional banes and charms with Islamic practices and added to the previous beliefs.

Second, the concept of "envy" in Sura Falaq is not to be equated with the idea in English of "emulation." HASAD in Arabic does not denote covetous desire, but malevolence, and is associated with the evil eye. A Muslim reading [Matthew 27:18](#): "For he knew that for envy they had delivered him up," would understand that the Jews handed Jesus over to Pilate to be killed because of the evil eye of malice, which is actually one meaning of pythons, translated "envy" in English versions. Interestingly, the Arabic Bible uses Hasad here. Hasad brings ruin, illness or even death on its victim. Hasad is the opposite of baraka. They are not just different in spiritual

direction, but in their means of transmission; Baraka is nearly always obtained or conveyed by some kind of touch; the evil eye transfers its effect by non-tactile communication. It would seem that while the spread of blessing requires contact, physical or by word, a mere “look” will suffice to bring harm on someone.

Exorcism

Islam not only recognizes the reality of demonic oppression, it believes it has a duty to help the one so afflicted.

The Islamic idea of exorcism differs markedly from the Christian practice. Part of the reason for this is its understanding of jinn as redeemable and their relationship to humans. Unlike the Christian view of demons as fallen angels who are in literal terms irredeemably evil and damned, Islam sees some jinn as good and also holds that the offer of salvation has been made to them as well as to humans. After all, Muhammad was sent to the jinn as well. The official way to deliver a person or place from the presence of spirits is to invite them to leave in the name of Islam, informing them of the oppressive nature of their presence, and reminding them that their granted residences are places such as graveyards, toilets, deserts and abandoned settlements. In seeking to disturb human habitations and persons, they are breaking the laws of Allah for which they will answer on the Day of Judgment.

With respect to the liturgical practice of exorcism, it is permissible to use incantations to effect this, but the use of charms is forbidden. Normally, this is effected through Islamic prayers, scolding the jinn, cursing them, etc., with the aim of inflicting sickness or even death on the jinn. The basis of doing this is that the jinn are very much in the same condition as humanity. What one can do to humans, one can also do to jinn. On that basis, just as jihad can be performed against a human enemy, the same can be done against a foe from the jinn—specifically, against one possessing someone. Since jihad involves physical violence, such can be administered to the jinn. This violence is literal. The standard Islamic means of demonic deliverance is to beat the person severely—or in the eyes of Islam, the jinn. We read that this could be done three or four hundred times, but only the jinn would feel it.

There have been a number of cases where the person has died from this. In one case in which an exorcism took place, a young man whose possessing jinn did not respond to Qur’anic recitation or the smoke from burning cotton wool, was beaten unconscious by the pir’s disciples with their shoes, whereupon the pir announced a successful exorcism, only to have the young man die a week later from his wounds.

The Qur’anic recitation often employed in exorcism is

Surah 2:255:
Allah! There is no god
But He—the Living,
The Self-subsisting, Eternal.
No slumber can seize Him
Nor sleep. His are all things
In the heavens and on earth.
Who is there can intercede
In His presence except,
As He permitteth? He knoweth
What (appeareth to his creatures

As) Before or After Or Behind them.
Nor shall they compass

Aught of His knowledge
Except as He willeth.
His throne doth extend
Over the heavens
And the earth, and He feeleth
No fatigue in guarding
And preserving them.
For He is the Most High,
The Supreme (in glory).

This is attested as a bane against Satan in the Hadith: Abu Hurayrah Sahih Al-Bukhari wrote:

... Someone came and started taking handfuls of the foodstuff (of the Sadaqat) (stealthily). I took hold of him and said, “By Allah, I shall take you to Allah’s Messenger.” “... He said, “(Forgive me and) I shall teach you some words with which Allah will benefit you.” I asked, “What are they?” He replied, “Whenever you go to bed, recite AYAT AL-KURSI (‘Allah—there is no god but He, the Living, the Self-subsisting ...’) until you finish the whole verse. (If you do so), Allah will appoint a guard for you who will stay with you and no Satan will come near you until morning.” So I released him... The Prophet said, “He really spoke the truth, although he is an absolute liar. Do you know to whom you were talking, these three nights, O Abu Hurayrah?” Abu Hurayrah said, “No.” He said, “It was Satan.”

Other traditions speak of the use of Sura Fatiha in exorcism. What we previously noted about the equating of humans with jinn and their ability to respond to the Message of Islam is underlined by a strange case in 1987 of a jinn who had possessed a woman in Saudi Arabia. When the exorcist recited the Qur’an over it and reminded it that it was a sin to engage in oppression, the jinn informed the exorcist that it was a Buddhist from India. Upon being invited to accept Islam and leave the woman, it did so.

Curses and spells

In Islam the practice of curses and spells is very common and very important. Cures are administered in different ways, though an important part of any cure is actually the diagnosis; the identification of who is responsible is also important. Of course, in some cases no “cure” is feasible. In such cases the diagnosis is purely retroactive and no present pragmatism can help a person mortally afflicted by the evil eye. Where the “hitting” has not been fatal the burning of incense, incantation, Qur’an reading, visits to saints’ tombs to obtain baraka may all be employed as part of a curing process.

Dr Philip Steyne, in his book, *God of Power*, tells the following story:

“‘Pastor, this Bible you sold me is no good. I tried it and it doesn’t work,’ said the young man with finality. ‘I have twice tied it with cords and cast the spell, but nothing has happened. Will you please show me how to make it work’” (Steyne p. 35).

A young Muslim man in Egypt heard a Christian talk about the power of the word of God. He wanted to cast a spell on a young woman and seduce her. He bought a Bible and opened it to the Gospel of John, because he heard it was called “the Gospel of Love,” then he lit a candle and placed it in front of the Bible and went to bed.

In a conference organized by the Islamist Hizb-ut Tahrir in London in 1994, the meeting concluded by the chairman’s reading out a list of international organizations such as the UN, IMF and even the Arab League, and pronouncing a liturgical curse of Allah upon them all.

Tradition records Muhammad himself engaging in it against the enemies of Islam: Abu Hurayrah Sahih Al- Bukhari. Abu Hurayrah said, “No doubt, my prayer is similar to that of the Prophet.”

Abu Hurayrah used to recite “QUNUT” (invocation) after saying “Allah listens to him who praises Him” in the first RAKAH of the Salat. He would ask Allah’s forgiveness for the true believers and curse the disbelievers. Among the last words of Muhammad, phrased when he realized that the People of the Book—Jews and Christians—were never going to acknowledge him as a true prophet of God, were the following:

“Abdullah ibn Abbas Sahih Al-Bukhari wrote:

“When the last moment of the life of Allah’s Apostle came he ... said, ‘May Allah curse the Jews and Christians for they built the places of worship on the graves of their Prophets.’”

How different from the words of Jesus just before He died, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do” (Lk. 23:34).

There are reports that Christians living in Muslim countries are subjected to curses. Usually, such curses affect a person’s physical or psychological well-being or that of his/her family. I have met many Christians that became ill with some unexplainable sickness that they could not cure, earaches, headaches, sleeplessness, etc. Then they went home and suddenly the illness disappeared.

One Christian worker in North Africa received a written curse which produced a strange rash on her arm. There are reports that considerable numbers of the children of Christians in one large Muslim region are born with deformities. There are cases of marriages suddenly breaking down, or of suicides in the families of those engaged in work among Muslims. Of course, sometimes ordinary factors may be the cause, but the incidence of such occurrences among those involved in ministry to Muslims suggests that supernatural factors are often in play.

It should be noted that the formal Islamic Qunut (supplicatory) prayer mentioned previously goes as follows:

“O Allah! bring destruction to the unbelievers, those who reject Thy words, and disbelieve Thy messengers, and dissuade (people) from Thy path, and fight against Thy friends. O Allah! help Islam and the Muslims, and leave their enemies helpless and friendless: the Jews and the Christians and the polytheists. O Allah! dissolve their unity, rip apart their integration. Let there be dissension amongst them, obliterate their race, eradicate their roots, and let fall such a terrible calamity upon them as does not avert from the wrong-doers. O Allah! destroy them as Thou destroyed the ’Ad and the Thamud. O Allah! hold them in a grip which befits Thy power and dominance.”

It is recorded in the Qur’an that Muhammad invited the Christian delegation from Najran to engage in mutual cursing to see whom God would answer, but the Christians declined:

Sura: 3:61:
If anyone disputes
In this matter with thee,
Now after (full) knowledge
Hath come to thee,
Say: "Come! let us Gather together
Our sons and your sons,
Our women and your women,
Ourselves and yourselves:
Then let us earnestly pray,
And invoke the curse
Of Allah on those who lie!

Does this sound like the prayer of a religion that means "peace"?

A special curse is used to establish honesty, by making an oath, and the consequences of lying under oath can be terrible in physical terms as the following text demonstrates: Jabir ibn Samurah Sahih Al- Bukhari:

"The people of Kufah complained to Umar about sad Sa'd... One of the men called Usamah ibn Qatadah... said, 'As you have put us under an oath, I am bound to tell you that sad Sa'd never went himself with the army, never distributed (the war booty) equally and never did justice in legal verdicts.' (On hearing it) sad Sa'd said, 'I pray to Allah for three things: O Allah! If this slave of yours is a liar who stood up to show off, give him a long life, increase his poverty and beset him with afflictions.' (And so it happened)."

Later on when that person was asked how he was, he used to reply that he was an old man beset with afflictions as the result of sad Sa'd's curse. Abdul Malik, the sub-narrator, said that he had seen him afterwards: his eyebrows were overhanging his eyes owing to old age and he used to be teased and assaulted by the small girls in the road.

The curse sets in motion cosmological forces bringing physical and psychological illness to the one who submits to it in vain. One of the most interesting Islamic curses of this nature is that of the LAAN, employed when a man suspects his wife of infidelity: Al-Hedaya Vol. I (Hanafi Manual) Chapter X. of Laan, or Imprecation.

Laan, in the language of Islamic law, signifies testimonies confirmed by oath, on the part of a husband and wife (where the testimony is strengthened by an imprecation of the curse of Allah, on the part of the husband, and of the wrath of Allah on the part of the wife), in case of the former accusing the latter of adultery.

In folk circles, this is often accompanied by a Qur'anic verse being soaked in a glass of water which is then given to the woman to drink. If she is innocent, no harm will come to her, but there will be immediate awful consequences if she lies and is guilty. It is possible that this may have been copied from a similar Jewish practice in the Torah—prescribed for wives suspected of adultery in [Numbers 5:11–31](#).

Of course, curses are used in other contexts as well. Often Muslims will curse their personal enemies, the classic case being that of a polygamous wife, cursing her rival for the attentions of her husband, especially that the other wife will miscarry, so that the husband's love will remain with her. Although not sanctioned by official Islam, it is part and parcel of the everyday life of a Muslim. It can be seen that the concept is closely related to that of the evil eye, so an example of

the physical devastation wrought by the evil eye is illustrative of what a curse can perform, citing the words of a caretaker at a small primary school in a village in Egypt:

“A long time ago we had a nanny goat which had many kids and gave us milk. It supplied one bowl of milk every day. We kept it in our house so nobody would see it, but one day a neighbor’s wife noticed it. Our neighbors are well-off people with many cows and buffaloes, some of which were milked. But the next day, she came to our house and asked for some of our goat’s milk, even though they are rich and have plenty of livestock while we are poor and had only our goat. She envied the goat and, sure enough, when we tried to milk the goat, it gave only blood. She had envied it well.” (Note: A very similar story is told in the first chapter of Musk’s book, *The Unseen Face of Islam*.)

Not surprisingly, Islamic faqih has had to address the issue of spells, curses and the evil eye, and to provide a means of deliverance, one that resembles the practice of wudu: Al-Risala (Maliki Manual) The Curing Effect of the Evil Eye:

“The cure for a person upon whom a spell has been cast is as follows: the man who cast the spell shall wash his face, his hands, his elbows, his knees, the sides of his feet and the inside of his wrapper in a bowl and this is then poured upon the person upon whom the spell has been cast...”

Dreams and visions

Islam believes that peoples’ dreams (RUIYA) are supernatural in origin, to the point of possessing elements of prophethood.

Muhammad said:

“A good dream coming from a pious man is one forty-sixth fraction of prophethood. If one of you should see in his dream what he dislikes, let him spit three times on his left when he wakes up and say, ‘O God, verily, I take refuge in You from the evil of what I saw in my dream, lest it should harm me in my religion and my worldly affairs.’”

On the other hand, a bad dream is from Satan, and hence, the reference to spitting as a means of exorcising him.

A whole science has grown up concerning the interpretation of dreams. This is because while the jinn can interfere with a man’s dreams, God can also intervene in this way, normally through the appearance of Muhammad, who cannot be counterfeited, or some Muslim saint. In fact, as we have seen in part, the prophetic inspirational character of dreams is the one element of the active nature of prophethood to survive the passing of Muhammad.

“Al-Muwatta of Imam Malik Ata ibn Yasar said:

“The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, ‘All that will be left of prophecy after me are the MUBASHSHIRAT.’

“They said, ‘What are the mubashshirat, Messenger of Allah?’

“He said, ‘The true dream which a man who is SALIH sees—or which is shown to him—is a forty-sixth part of prophecy.’”

Hence, such dreams are revelational in nature. This is a strange teaching in a religion that says it believes all revelation ended with Muhammad. It is essential to have people who are

qualified to interpret them, just as it is necessary to have scholars who could interpret the “prophetic” Qur’an and Sunnah. As with the “sources of authority” in Islam, there is no prerogative of private interpretation of an inspirational dream, even by the man who was its subject. It follows that in practice, there is another source of revelation in Islam, albeit not officially recognized as such in so many words—inspirational dreams. Folk Muslims, however, take them very seriously. They provide an ongoing revelation of the divine will in the everyday life of the community and the individual. Hence, the Muslim is not left alone to engage in wise judgment about his circumstances, based on the Qur’an, Sunnah or by consulting his imam. He believes he can receive divine guidance through dreams and visions.

There are many renowned examples of the effects of dreams in the Muslim world. Muhammad himself justified his marriage to the child Ayesha on the basis of a dream. One of the reasons the Egyptian forces fought so well in the 1973 War was the report of a dream someone had of Muhammad’s appearing on the Sinai front and pointing to Jerusalem. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini’s wife, Batul, overcame her father’s reservations to Ruhollah’s offer of marriage to her (largely because of the age difference—she was ten, he was twenty-nine) on the basis of a dream she had where Fatima appeared to her and told her she must marry a man with the same birthday as the daughter of the prophet (which was also that of Ruhollah as it turned out). In 1982 the Iranian Government ceased offering financial inducements to families who offered their children for martyrdom in the war against Iraq after the senior cleric Ayatollah Ali-Akbar Meshkini announced that Imam Hussein had appeared to him in a dream ordering the cessation of the practice. Visitations and dreams are common throughout the Muslim world. Among the Malays of Patani in southern Thailand, it is believed that a living saint does not die, but continues to exist in the woods and in the “dreams of men.”

An inspirational dream can give advance warning of death of either the subject or someone close. Apart from dead relatives, the dreams involve the appearance of saints, jinn, angels, and other spiritual beings. The following sad news item appeared in *The Egyptian Gazette*, carried by Associated Press:

“A man who said he had been told by his spiritual saint in a dream that his family was no longer needed by Allah, slit the throats of his wife and six of his children with a knife while they slept, police in Sind province, southern Pakistan, said yesterday” (Monday, August 17, 1981:1).

A dream may not be clear, since it sometimes uses imagery which needs to be interpreted. Or it may indeed be explicit, such as Muhammad’s famous dream vision of Jesus and the two thieves of Calvary, recorded in the Hadith: Abdullah ibn Umar Sahih Al-Bukhari:

“... the Prophet said, ‘While I was asleep circumambulating the Ka’ba (in my dream), suddenly I saw a man of brown complexion and lank hair walking between two men, and water was dropping from his head. I asked, “Who is this?” The people said, “He is the son of Mary.”’”

Of course, Folk Muslims take the issue further. The call in contemporary times to be a practitioner of some sort often comes through the medium, a person with contact to an ancestor or spirit by vision, seance or a dream, as in the case of *zar* spirit. Among the Tausug of the Philippines, most medicine men begin a practice through a dream in which they are visited by Shaytans. The Malayan BOMOR (curer) usually receives the “sign” of his new calling in a

dream. Divination by dream interpretation is a ubiquitous practice in popular Islam. Typical of the process in Morocco is the following:

“Moha, who is said to be married to A’isha Qandisha, lives near a river and is consulted by the sick. Men bring him a thread from their turbans; women a thread from their scarves. He places the thread under his right cheek before going to bed and dreams of A’isha, who tells him what is wrong with the patient and what cure to follow.”

Among the Yoruba, dream interpretation is “one of the most common forms of divination,” with memorized interpretations handed on from practitioner to practitioner. The practice of ’ILM TABIR AL-TA’BIR (science of interpretation), is diffused throughout the Sudan. In Afghanistan, the Bakhshi (Shaman) will spend a night sleeping in the house of his patient. The dream which he receives during the night enables him to diagnose the patient’s ailment and to select the appropriate therapy. Similarly, in Egypt, the female KUDIYA will sleep with her client’s head scarf and dream of the zar spirits troubling the woman concerned.

Not only practitioners, but ordinary Muslims also, depend on dreams for information concerning means of healing. In Morocco, a pilgrim will stay overnight at a selected saint’s tomb, hoping for a dream “in which the saint appears and gives instruction as to how to deal with his complaints.”

Dreams are sought as a means of communicating with the dead. Sometimes the dead come to the dreamer to inform him of the location of a hidden object, to give advice, or even to complain about certain activities of the living. The Kabyles of Algeria will put food on the graves of their deceased relatives if they see one in a dream.

Dreams are also conceived of as previews of fated events. In Algeria, to dream of a bareheaded man portends misfortune, while to dream of a howling dog means that the evil eye will strike the dreamer. To dream of straw signifies a gift of money. If a Tausug dreams of a naked woman, he will expect to be wounded the following morning. Among Malays, to dream of precious stones is good luck, while to dream of rain or storm portends ill.

Dreams help Muslims provide reinforcement for local customs and mores. There have been instances where villagers had sworn falsely at saints’ graves. As a result, dreams occurred in which the respective saints appeared to the offenders, threatening to punish them if they did not confess their crimes and repent by paying atonement to Allah. Wet dreams, or “Satan’s dreams,” are often considered to be the occasions of sexual intercourse with one’s familiar spirit, or Qarina (q.v.).

In the full and complex cosmological world of popular Islam, dreams are of central importance, especially with regard to religious activity. It has been seen that many figures, representing different kinds of living “beings,” appear in Muslims’ dreams. Concepts of causality, as defined within popular Islam, come to the surface in the practice, for example, of divination by dream. As far as the concept of impersonal “force” is concerned, appropriate powers are fixed upon and even activated in a dream/trance state by qualified practitioners. Dreams may be deliberately sought or they may surprise a Muslim into certain corrective behavior. The natural and supernatural worlds coalesce as part of the one reality: the dream-world unites them. In consequence, dreams are highly motivational within the worldview of popular Islam.

What is said of dreams also goes for visions. The two are clearly equated in Islam. They are thus also inspirational in character. They are often associated with trances, a mode by which

Muhammad received his revelations. Like dreams, they need correct interpretation. They also give guidance.

One step towards an approach to Folk Muslims

Any approach to the Folk Muslims must be grounded in the Trinity. Folk Muslims believe in a three layer universe. Up above is a god who is far removed and impersonal. Down below the Muslim lives in a world of fear, and in between, is the “forgotten middle zone” filled with spirits, jinn, demons etc. (Charts adopted from Musk, p. 176, 177, 192).

The god of the Folk Muslim, Allah, is a god they fear. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity, although a doctrine which the Muslims hate and reject, is nevertheless, “to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God” and demonstrates again that “the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God.” It is only in the true God, the God of the true Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, that the Muslim can find the real peace and security he is seeking but never finds in the “Islamic Trinity,” Allah, the Qur’an, and Muhammad.

Folk Islamic View

World Views

Cosmology

Beings

Powers

Impersonal

Personal

Transcendent

Allah

Fate

QADR (fate)

Allah

Upper World

Angels

Qur’an

angels

spirits

magic
magic
Iblis

jinn
astrology
sorcery *jinn*

Middle

ancestors
baraka
astrology
prophets

World

evil eye
divination
dead saints
souls of recent dead

baraka
zar spirits

evil eye
Qarinta spirit

curses
ancestors

stones
blessings

dreams

visions

sleep

humans

trees

holy men

Empirical

animals

herbs

herbs

humans

World

medicine

animals

Natural forces

plants

food

A Comparison of the ‘Islamic Trinity’ and the Christian Trinity. View Of God’s Presence in the Daily Lives of His People. (Author’s Note: similarities does not mean same)

Islamic Trinity

Christian Trinity

Allah

Title

Similarities

Father

One unknown

One Person

Sovereign

Sovereign

Compassionate

Compassionate

Merciful

Merciful

Superintends history

Superintends history

Creator of all things

Creator of all things

Sustainer of Life

Sustainer of Life

Omnipotent

Omnipotent

Omniscient

Omniscient

Omnipresent

Omnipresent

Self-existent

Self-existent

One, Absolute—Tawhid

One in Three—Wahid

Holy

Holy

Almighty

Almighty

Differences

Singular unity

Tri-unity

Impersonal

Personal

Distant

Near

Removed

Immediate

Capricious

Faithful

Author of sin

In Him is no darkness

Emotionless

Expresses love, joy, sorrow, patience, etc.

To be feared

Reverent

Absolutely free, arbitrary

Covenantal, Trustworthy

Absolutely transcendent

Transcendent but Immanent

Unknown, unknowable

Known/knowable—limitedly

Vengeful

Just

al-Jabbar—Tyrant, enforcer

Love

al-Mutakabir—Proud one

Humble

Khier al Makara—Great Deceiver

Truth, cannot lie

Leads astray who he wills

Faithful and True—tempts no one

99 Names

I AM

‘Loves not the prodigals’ Sura 3:140

Loves the prodigal [Lk 15](#)

Desires to afflict some with sin Sura 5:49

Wants all to repent [2 Pet. 3:9](#)

Tests people

Does not tempt [James 1:13](#)

Salvation by good works Sura 7:8, 9

Salvation by grace [Eph 2:8, 9](#)

The Eternal Qur’an

Title

Similarities

The Eternal Son

Word of Allah—a book

Word of God—a Person

Holy book

Holy God

Unchanging

Unchanging

Pure

Pure

Sinless

Sinless

Powerful

Powerful

True

Faithful and True

Does miracles

Does miracles

Eternal in heaven

Eternal in heaven

Came down from Heaven

Came down from Heaven

God's final revelation

God's final revelation

Differences

Written word of Allah

Living Word of God

Man's need—knowledge

Man's need—a Savior

Allah sent a book

God sent a propitiation

Sovereign Lord

Christ, Messiah

Son of God, only-begotten

Son of Man

Lamb of God

Saviour

Servant

Lived among us

like us, knows us

Prophet, Priest, King

Mediator between God/man

Second Adam

A man of authority

A man of compassion

Loving

Faithful

The Way

The Truth

The Life

Muhammad

Title

Similarities

The Holy Spirit

The Paraclete

The Paraclete

Guide

Guide

Person

Person

Powerful

Powerful

Teacher

Teacher of all Truth

Agent of Allah on earth

Agent of God on earth

Commands

Commands

Speaks for Allah

Speaks for God

Intercedes for men

Intercedes for men

Differences

Prophet

God

Temporal Man

Eternal Spirit

Lived with us

Lives with us and in us

Created being
Active in creation

For of Him, and through Him, and unto Him, are all things. To Him be the glory for ever. Amen. (Rom. 11:36).

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The Crucifixion of Christ: A Fact, not Fiction

By Sam Shamoun

The Bible is an anvil on which many hammers have been broken, yet its enemies never tire of attempting to make some impression on it. Ahmed Deedat of the Islamic Propagation Centre in Durban made little headway with his booklet *Was Christ Crucified?* even though over a hundred thousand copies were eventually distributed, but instead of abandoning his project, he has published a new attack on the Christian faith in the form of his booklet *Crucifixion or Crucifixion?*

The whole theme of this publication is that Jesus was a man of weak temperament and character who plotted an unsuccessful coup in Jerusalem and who fortuitously survived the cross. This theory has no Biblical foundation and is contradicted by the Qur'an, which teaches that Jesus was never put on a cross (Surah 4.157). It is promoted only by the Ahmadiyya cult of Pakistan which has been declared a non-Muslim minority sect. Only Deedat knows why he continues to espouse the cause of a discredited cult and why he advocates a theory that is anathema to true Christians and Muslims alike.

In this booklet we shall set forth a refutation of Deedat's publication, concentrating solely on the subject at hand without dealing with many issues in his treatise where he goes off at a tangent or writes purely rhetorically.

Did Jesus plan an attempted coup?

Deedat constantly employs a theme in the early part of his booklet to the effect that Jesus planned a coup during his last week in Jerusalem which eventually had to be aborted. Under the heading An Aborted Coup he says:

“... his high hopes did not materialise. The whole performance fizzled out like a damp squib...” (Deedat, *Crucifixion or Crucifixion?*, p. 10).

It must come as a surprise to all Christians and Muslims to hear a new argument, first conceived nearly twenty centuries after the event, that Jesus was planning a political coup. For one thing, Jesus constantly avoided any involvement in the politics of his day. He refused to be

drawn into debates on the merits of paying taxes to the Roman oppressor (Luke 20:19–26), withdrew from the crowds when they wanted to make him a political leader (John 6:15), and regularly taught his disciples not to be like those who sought political power (Luke 22:25–27).

The Jews did everything they could to convince Pilate, the Roman governor, that Jesus was advocating a revolt against Caesar (Luke 23:2) and yet even Deedat, in an unguarded moment, is constrained to admit that this charge “was absolutely false” (p. 27). It is thus of great significance to find that even Deedat acknowledges that Jesus “did not look like a Zealot, a political agitator, a subversive person, a terrorist!” (p. 27) and goes on to say in his booklet:

“His was a spiritual kingdom, a ruler to rescue his nation from sin and formalism” (Deedat, *Crucifixion or Cruci-fiction?*, p. 27).

It is therefore all the more remarkable to find him attempting to prove elsewhere in his booklet that Jesus was indeed plotting a political coup to deliver the Jews from their overlords. His comments on page 27 of his booklet unwittingly pull the carpet right out from underneath his own thesis! He admits that Jesus was not planning a revolution.

The theory is, in any event, absurd as it appears from an analysis of some of Deedat’s arguments in its favour and we shall briefly consider these to prove the point. We begin with his treatment of Jesus’ statement just before his arrest, that those of his disciples who had no sword should sell their garments and buy one (Luke 22:36). He interprets this to mean that Jesus was calling them to arms and to prepare for a jihad, a “holy” war, whatever that might be. What followed this statement of Jesus is of great significance. His disciples said:

“Look, Lord, here are two swords.” And he said to them, “It is enough” (Luke 22:38).

Two swords would hardly be “enough” to stage a revolution and it is obvious that Jesus meant “enough of that,” that is, your misunderstanding of what I am saying. Nevertheless, because he is trying to convince his readers that Jesus was planning a coup, he is at pains to argue that two swords would have been enough to overthrow the whole Jewish hierarchy in Israel and immediately thereafter, their Roman overlords! As is to be expected, his argument is hardly persuasive. He resorts to further flights of fancy in suggesting that Jesus’ disciples were “armed with sticks and stones” (p. 13), like some riotous mob. There is not a shred of evidence in the Bible to support this claim, raised by Deedat purely to try and mitigate the strange anomaly that Jesus would consider two swords sufficient to stage a major revolt! At another place Deedat says:

“The disciples of Jesus always misunderstood him” (Deedat, *Crucifixion or Cruci-fiction?*, p. 23).

The word “always” is in bold print in this quote in his booklet. Once again Deedat has unwittingly contradicted himself, for if Jesus intended that his disciples should arm themselves to the hilt as Deedat suggests, then his disciples understood him perfectly, for this is precisely what they took his statement to mean. But he is right in saying that the disciples regularly misunderstood him—here as much as at any other time. We need to consider what Jesus said just after saying that they should purchase swords to get a better understanding of this matter. He said:

“For I tell you that this scripture must be fulfilled in me, ‘And he was reckoned with transgressors’; for what is written about me has its fulfillment” (Luke 22:37).

The scripture he quotes is from [Isaiah 53](#), a prophetic chapter written about seven hundred years beforehand, in which the prophet Isaiah foresaw the suffering of the Messiah on behalf of his people, in which he would make himself an offering for sin ([Isaiah 53:10](#)). The whole verse from which Jesus quoted reads as follows:

“Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors” ([Isaiah 53:12](#)).

Jesus plainly stated that this prophecy was about to be fulfilled in him and its meaning is abundantly clear. He would “pour out his soul to death” the following day on the cross and would be “numbered with the transgressors” (he was duly crucified between two thieves—[Luke 23:33](#)). Yet he would “bear the sin of many” as he atoned for the sins of the world on the cross and would “make intercession for the transgressors” (he prayed for his murderers from the cross—[Luke 23:34](#)). Because of this gracious work, God would grant him to “see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied” ([Isaiah 53:11](#)) and would give him “the spoil” of his victory—a clear prediction of his resurrection.

Deedat ignores the full statement of Jesus because it contradicts his purpose, but it is surely clear that Jesus was anticipating his crucifixion, death and resurrection as the Saviour of the world and was not planning a coup as if he were a common upstart. The imminent events would take Jesus away from his disciples, and his exhortations to buy purses, bags and swords was a colloquial way of advising them to prepare to earn their own living once he had gone.

Central to Deedat’s theme of an aborted coup is the argument that the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem a week earlier among a crowd of disciples hailing him as the Messiah, was a march on Jerusalem. He uses these exact words when he says:

“The march on Jerusalem had fizzled out” (Deedat, *Crucifixion or Cruci-Fiction?*, p. 21).

Under the heading *March into Jerusalem*, Deedat acknowledges that Jesus’ expressly rode into the city seated on a donkey. Surely this was a most unlikely vehicle of conveyance for a coup! Jesus clearly chose it because donkeys symbolise peace and docility, and he wished to show Jerusalem that he was coming in peace and was fulfilling this promise of God recorded in another prophecy centuries earlier:

“Rejoice, greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on an ass” ([Zechariah 9:9](#)).

He came in humility and peace on a beast which symbolised his purpose. “He shall command peace to the nations,” the prophecy continues ([Zechariah 9:10](#)). It is grossly absurd to suggest that Jesus was heading a “march” or that he was instigating a violent “armed struggle” as people would say today.

Deedat conveniently overlooks the fact that just as Jesus was about to be arrested the same night, his disciples cried out, “Lord, shall we strike with the sword?” ([Luke 22:49](#)). One of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear, but Jesus immediately rebuked him and healed the man who had been injured. All the evidence shows that he was not planning a destructive coup at all but was preparing for the supreme gesture of love he was to exhibit to the

world in his pending suffering and death on the cross for the sins of men. In the same book quoted above we read that God once promised:

“I will remove the guilt of this land in a single day” ([Zechariah 3:9](#)).

That day had just arrived, and Jesus was making himself ready to “secure an eternal redemption” ([Hebrews 9:12](#)) by taking away the sins of the world on that fateful Friday for which he had come.

The theory that Jesus was planning an abortive coup is a gross injury to his gracious dignity and a shocking caricature which one does not expect from a man who is supposed to believe that Jesus was one of the greatest men who ever lived.

Deedat has never done military training and his ignorance in this field is exposed on page 14 of his booklet where he suggests that Jesus took Peter, James and John with him into the Garden of Gethsemane as an inner line of defence with eight more guarding the gate. He boldly suggests that this was a masterly tactic:

“that would bring credit to any officer out of ‘Sandhurst,’ ” a “leading military academy in England” (p. 14).

A former officer in the British Army once commented on this claim by saying to me that he had never heard such things taught at Sandhurst! Deedat says of the eight disciples that Jesus left at the gate:

“He positions them strategically at the entrance to the courtyard; armed to the hilt, as the circumstances would allow” (Deedat, *Crucifixion or Cruci-Fiction?*, p. 14).

He goes on to say that he took Peter, James and John, “these zealous Zealots (the fighting Irishmen of their day)” (p. 14), to prepare his inner defence. This argument founders on closer analysis. Peter, James and John were peaceable fishermen from Galilee (Jesus had only one Zealot among his disciples and it was none of these three—[Luke 6:15](#)) and they were his closer circle of disciples throughout his ministry. On the occasion of his transfiguration, these same disciples alone went up the mountain with him while the rest mingled with the crowds below ([Matthew 17:1, 14–16](#)). Likewise, when Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead, he again took the same three disciples with him into the house ([Luke 8:51](#)). He often took these three disciples, Peter, James and John, into his closest confidence on appropriate occasions and this shows clearly that Jesus was not planning a masterly defence in Gethsemane when he took them with him into the inner part of the garden. Rather, he was once again seeking their close fellowship on yet another of those important occasions when he desired only the intimate companionship of his closest disciples. All this shows quite conclusively that there is no substance in the argument that Jesus was planning a coup.

The image of Jesus in Deedat’s booklet

One of the strangest things about Deedat’s booklet is the caricature he presents of the person of Jesus Christ. Strange, indeed, because Muslims are supposed to honour Jesus as the Messiah and as one of the greatest of God’s prophets. One or two statements in his booklet are considerably offensive to Christians and must surely injure sincere Muslims who have learned to respect Jesus as a man of honour and dignity. It is hardly surprising that Deedat’s booklet was at

one time declared “undesirable” by the Director of Publications in South Africa (early in 1985). In one place he says:

“Jesus had failed to heed the warning of the Pharisees to curb the over exuberance of his disciples ([Luke 19:39](#)). He had miscalculated. Now he must pay the price of failure” (Deedat, *Crucifixion or Cruci-Fiction?*, p. 10).

On another page he says that “Jesus had doubly miscalculated” (p. 19) in that he thought he could rely on his disciples to defend him and that he would only have to deal with Jews. As if such allegations were not sufficient to defame Jesus, he goes on to speak of the “hot and cold blowings of Jesus” and fills up the measure of his slanders in saying:

“It can be claimed with justification that Jesus Christ (pbuh) was the ‘Most unfortunate of all God’s Messengers’” (Deedat, *Crucifixion or Cruci-Fiction?*, p. 23).

We are sure that even Muslims must find such statements extremely offensive. Christians do not hesitate to regard them as blasphemous. Nevertheless it is not our desire to express emotional indignation but to show how fatuous Deedat’s claims are.

It requires only a cursory analysis of those last hours in the life of Jesus before his crucifixion to see that there can be no substance at all in the claim that Jesus had “miscalculated” or ever blew “hot and cold.” For the one thing that characterises everything Jesus said on the last night he was with his disciples was a total awareness of all that was to befall him and his willingness to undergo it.

He knew that Judas Iscariot would betray him ([Mark 14:18](#)—he had known this for a long time in fact as it appears from [John 6:64](#)) and that Peter would deny him three times ([Matthew 26:34](#)). He predicted that he would be apprehended and that all his disciples would desert him ([Mark 14:27](#)). We just cannot find any ground at all for Deedat’s claim that Jesus hoped his disciples would fight for him and that he had “miscalculated.” These passages show quite plainly that Jesus had calculated exactly what was going to happen, for his disciples all did precisely what he said they would do.

He constantly told them that last fateful night that he was about to be parted from them ([John 13:33](#), [14:3](#), [14:28](#), [16:5](#)) and that they should not lose heart for his sufferings would be entirely in accordance with all that had been predicted in the prophecies of the former prophets ([Luke 22:22](#)). When the Jews finally came to arrest him, far from preparing any kind of defence, he walked straight into their hands. We read:

“Then Jesus, knowing all that was to befall him, came forward and said to them, ‘Whom do you seek?’ They answered him, ‘Jesus of Nazareth.’ Jesus said to them, ‘I am he.’ Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them” ([John 18:4–5](#)).

Jesus came forward, knowing all that was to befall him. He knew that he was about to be crucified and killed, but that he would rise on the third day, as he had so often predicted in plain language ([Matthew 17:22–23](#), [20:19](#), [Luke 9:22](#), [18:31–33](#)). In fact there was no need of a showdown with the Jews at all. If Jesus had wanted to avoid arrest, all he needed to do was to leave Jerusalem. Instead he went to the very place where he knew that Judas Iscariot would lead the Jews to look for him ([John 18:2](#)) and when they came, he voluntarily gave himself over to them. Furthermore, he hardly needed the valiant efforts of eleven disciples to defend him for he plainly testified that he could have called on twelve legions of angels to help him if he had so wished ([Matthew 26:53](#)). Just one angel had the power to destroy whole cities and armies (2

[Samuel 24:16](#), [2 Kings 19:35](#)) and one shudders to think what twelve legions of angels could have done to protect him.

There is just simply no substance in Deedat's claim that Jesus was plotting and scheming and became a failure through his miscalculations. On the contrary it is quite remarkable to see how he knew precisely what was to happen to him. Far from being a "failure," he became the most successful man who ever lived—the only man who has ever raised himself from the dead to eternal life and glory. Muhammad failed to conquer death and it brought his life to nothing in Medina in 632 AD and holds him to this day in its grip. Jesus, however, succeeded where Muhammad had failed. He is "our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" ([2 Timothy 1:10](#)). He triumphed over death and ascended into heaven where he ever lives and reigns. So much for Deedat's insult that he was supposed to be the "most unfortunate" of all God's messengers. The truth is that he was the greatest man who ever lived.

It has become apparent, and will become more so as we proceed, that Deedat's booklet is nothing but a distortion of the Scriptures. He perverts the meaning of texts which he feels can be tortured into serving his purpose and simply suppresses others which refute his theories completely.

Did Jesus defend himself at his trial?

On page 28 of his booklet Deedat attempts to discredit the Gospel records of Jesus' crucifixion further by contesting a prophecy in [Isaiah 53:7](#) which predicted that he would not open his mouth in his defence at his trial but would be led to the cross "as a sheep before its shearers is dumb." It is quite clear from the prophecy that this did not mean that Jesus would say nothing at all once he was arrested but rather that he would not venture to defend himself before his accusers. Deedat's whole argument depends on certain statements made by Jesus which he attempts to draw out as defences made against his accusers.

He attempts to ridicule Jesus by asking whether he spoke "with his mouth closed" when he told Pilate that his kingdom was not of this world ([John 18:36](#)), when he called on one of the officers of the High Priest to testify of anything he had said wrongly ([John 18:23](#)), and when he prayed to God that, if possible, the cup of suffering he faced might be taken away from him ([Matthew 26:39](#)).

It needs to be pointed out that *none* of these statements was made by Jesus during his public trials before the Sanhedrin in the house of Caiaphas the high priest, or before the Roman governor Pontius Pilate. The first statement was made to Pilate during private conversation in the praetorium; the second was made during Jesus' appearance before Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, which was not during his trial before the Sanhedrin as Deedat wrongly suggests (p. 28)—the trial only took place after this event in the house of Caiaphas as the Gospels clearly show ([John 18:24](#), [Matthew 26:57](#)); and the third was made in the Garden of Gethsemane before Jesus was even arrested. The evidence brought forth by Deedat is therefore totally irrelevant to the point and he proves nothing at all. What does concern us is whether Jesus defended himself either before the Sanhedrin in Caiaphas' house or during his public trial before Pilate. It does not surprise us to find that Deedat overlooks what the Gospels plainly have to say about these two official trials. After hearing the evidence against Jesus before the Sanhedrin, Caiaphas put Jesus on terms to answer his accusers and what transpired is of great importance:

“And the high priest stood up and said, ‘Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?’ But Jesus was silent” (Matthew 26:62–63).

Instead of defending himself he promptly testified, in answer to the next question, that he was indeed the Son of God—a testimony that prompted the Sanhedrin to sentence him to death. The important point is that, in answer to his accusers, we read plainly that Jesus was silent. Likewise, we read that when Pilate put much the same question to him the same thing transpired. He did not open his mouth to say anything in his own defence.

“But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he made no answer. Then Pilate said to him, ‘Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?’ But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor wondered greatly” (Matthew 27:12–14).

Deedat subtly conceals these incidents which tell us plainly that Jesus was silent before the Sanhedrin when accused by the false witnesses that had been put forward, and that he made no answer—not even to a single charge—when accused before Pilate. In his traditional fashion Deedat suppresses the evidences that relate directly to the subject at hand and instead tries to draw arguments from other occasions not relevant to the issues.

It is also interesting to find that exactly the same thing happened when Jesus appeared before Herod, the Jewish king, before being sent back to Pilate.

“When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had long desired to see him, because he had heard about him, and he was hoping to see some sign done by him. So he questioned him at some length, but he made no answer. The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing him” (Luke 23:8–10).

Once again, when Jesus was accused, he made no answer. On every occasion when he was actually on trial before the Sanhedrin, Herod or Pilate, he said absolutely nothing in his own defence and so fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that he would not defend himself at his trial by opening his mouth to speak on his own behalf. None of the statements quoted by Deedat was made while Jesus was actually on trial and so yet another of his arguments falls entirely to the ground.

The theory that Jesus survived the cross

We have never ceased to wonder why Ahmed Deedat continues to promote the theory that Jesus was indeed crucified, but came down alive from the cross. Our amazement arises from two considerations. On the one hand, this idea is held to only by the heretical Ahmadiyya sect in Islam and is denounced by all true Christians and Muslims. On the other hand, this theory has been refuted time and again and, whereas Deedat continues to promote it, he can offer no reply to the arguments produced against it.

For example, on page 36 of his new booklet, Deedat claims that when the centurion watching over Jesus on the cross “saw that he was dead already” (John 19:33); this means purely that he “surmised” that Jesus had died and that there was nothing to verify his death. In a reply to his earlier booklet *Was Christ Crucified?*, I showed quite plainly that the centurion’s observation was the best possible evidence that Jesus was already dead. The centurion had to confirm before

the Roman governor that the crucified man was already dead and, if he was wrong, his own life was likely to be forfeited. We read:

“And Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph” (Mark 15:44–46).

The Roman governor, Pilate, knew that if the centurion confirmed his death, then it was sure, for in those days any soldier who allowed a prisoner to escape would lose his own life in consequence.

When the Apostle Peter escaped from prison some time later in the city, the sentries appointed to guard him were summarily executed (Acts 12:19). Again, when another jailer supposed that Paul and Silas had escaped from prison as well, “he drew his sword and was about to kill himself” (Acts 16:27), until he discovered they had not. He preferred to die by suicide than by execution. Death was the penalty for allowing prisoners to escape— what then could the centurion expect if a man condemned to death had escaped because he had made some careless and negligent observations? No one but the centurion could have been such a reliable witness to the death of Jesus on the cross!

Although an emphatic refutation of Deedat’s assumption that the soldiers only “surmised” that Jesus was dead has thus been given, Deedat continues to promote the same old argument. He casually overlooks the conclusive evidence against his theory and just simply reproduces it. It is a poor advocate who can only repeat his original arguments once these have been thoroughly disproved by his opponent.

Not only did the centurion observe very conclusively that Jesus was dead but one of the soldiers thrust a spear into his side—an act calculated to ensure his death. One of the common Roman methods of killing people was to “put them to the sword,” that is, to thrust them through. This is precisely what the soldier did to Jesus, and even if he had been in perfect health, he could never have survived such a blow. Yet Deedat ridiculously suggests that this death-dealing blow “came to the rescue” of Jesus and helped to revive him by stirring up his blood so that “the circulation could regain its rhythm” (p. 39). Surely not even the most gullible of his readers will believe such absolute nonsense—that a death-blow, a spear-thrust through his body, could help to revive him! When one has to resort to such absurdities, it is clear that there is no merit to the argument.

A similar absurdity is set before the reader a few pages later in Deedat’s booklet, where he is discussing the occasion when Mary Magdalene came to anoint the body of Jesus shortly after his crucifixion:

“In 3 days time, the body would be fermenting from within—the body cells would be breaking up and decomposing. If anybody rubs such a decaying body, it will fall to pieces” (Deedat, *Crucifixion or Cruci-Fiction?*, p. 44).

This, too, is sheer scientific nonsense. Jesus had died late on the Friday afternoon and it was only a day and two nights later, as Deedat admits on the same page, that Mary Magdalene came to anoint his body. No body will “fall to pieces” within such a short period. In bold letters Deedat adds that Mary came alone to the tomb to supposedly help Jesus recover, yet in Matthew 28:1 and Luke 24:10 we discover that she was accompanied by at least two other women, Joanna and Mary the mother of James, and that only to bring spices which they had prepared according to the burial custom of the Jews. There is just no substance in Deedat’s arguments. The crucifixion

and resurrection of Jesus are facts of history—the only fiction is his theory that Jesus supposedly survived the cross and recovered.

Another argument once again repeated by Deedat that has often been refuted is his suggestion that Jesus was reluctant to die. In refutations of his previous booklet on the subject of the crucifixion, I have shown clearly that Jesus was only reluctant to be forsaken by his Father and be abandoned to the realm of sin and the wickedness of sinful men. This fear reached its pitch in the Garden the night before Jesus was crucified when the hour had come for him to be handed over to sinful men ([Matthew 26:45](#)). Had he been reluctant to die, this fear would only have reached its climax as he faced the cross the next day, but after he had been strengthened the night before by an angel who ministered to him ([Luke 22:43](#)), he faced death with remarkable fortitude. He calmly walked forward, knowing all that was to befall him, as we have seen. He walked right into a course that he knew must lead to his crucifixion and death.

He calmly took all the injuries heaped on him the following day, and without any sign of fear or protest, gave himself over to be crucified. As he was taken out of Jerusalem he showed more concern for the women of the city and their children than for himself ([Luke 23:28](#)) and on the cross cared only for those around him and not for himself ([John 19:26–27](#)). Indeed, instead of finding that he was reluctant to die, we discover in the Gospel narratives that he set his face towards the cross, and although he had many opportunities to avoid it, he did not seize them but went on, determined to redeem men from their sins.

Yet another of Deedat's arguments thus comes to nothing. We find him in considerable confusion in another place when he says:

“For God Almighty will never allow His truly ‘anointed one’ (Christ) to be killed—(Deuteronomy 18.20). (Deedat, *Crucifixion or Cruci-Fiction?*, p. 15).

There is no substance in the suggestion that God would not allow his anointed one to be killed, for there was a specific prediction in the prophecy of the great prophet Daniel that the “anointed one shall be cut off, and shall have nothing” ([Daniel 9:26](#)). It is, in fact, from the very use of the word “mashiah” in this text that the Jews came to call the awaited Saviour of the world the “Messiah,” and yet it is right in this text that we read that this very Messiah would be cut off—a clear prediction of the crucifixion and death of Jesus.

We are particularly intrigued to find that Deedat quotes [Deuteronomy 18:20](#) as a reference to the coming “anointed one,” the “Christ,” the Messiah, namely Jesus. In his booklet *What the Bible Says About Muhammad*, he labours to prove that the prophecy of a coming prophet in [Deuteronomy 18](#) is a reference to Muhammad, even though we have proved again and again that it was an anticipation of the coming of the Messiah, namely Jesus. (The Qur'an confirms that the only Messiah, the only “anointed one,” al-Masih, was Jesus—[Surah 3.45](#).) It is therefore most significant to find Deedat making one of his occasional slips and conceding in the above quote from his booklet that the prophecy relates to Jesus, the Messiah, and not to Muhammad.

Perhaps the most absurd argument in the whole of Deedat's booklet is his suggestion that God, in hearing Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, sent his angel to strengthen him “in the hope that God will save him” (p. 35). He goes on to argue that God especially put it into the minds of the soldiers that Jesus was already dead on the cross and says this was “another step in God's plan of rescue” (p. 36). The argument, thus, is that after hours of scourging, beating, having thorns pressed into his head, being forced to carry his cross, being crucified, succumbing into unconsciousness in exhaustion at the point of death after hours of indescribable agony, and

enduring an awful sword-thrust. God wonderfully stepped in to “save” him by fooling everybody into thinking that Jesus was already dead when he was really only at the point of death.

One struggles to find any logical progression of thought in this line of reasoning. If it was God’s intention to “save” Jesus, surely he would have taken him away immediately, as the overwhelming majority of Muslims believe. What sort of “comfort” or “strengthening” could the angel have given if God’s hand was only to be revealed after hours of indescribable agony and torture to the point of death on the cross?

Firstly, such pain and suffering would have been unnecessary and God’s deliverance brought about only after a tragic delay. Secondly, it could have been no comfort to Jesus to know that he faced the horrors of crucifixion only to be delivered at the point of death. Furthermore, if Jesus was taken down alive from the cross purely because he was so close to death that all thought he was already dead, we cannot see how God “saved” him or even where he intervened. This would have been nothing more than an accident caused by an illusion.

The whole argument is obviously strained against the logical progression of the events in the Gospels. The truth of the whole matter is that Jesus was physically at the breaking point in contemplating suffering for sin. He had just told his disciples that he was “exceedingly sorrowful—even unto death” ([Mark 14:34](#)). God heard the prayer of Jesus and the angel gave him strength to proceed and endure the cross and death and so fulfil his mission to redeem sinners from sin, death and hell.

To save Jesus from dying while at the point of death after hours of agony on the cross would have been an untimely and senselessly delayed deliverance accompanied by a lengthy period of painful recovery from the horrific ordeal. To save him from death by raising him in glory and perfect health is sensible, logical, and is in fact the genuine Biblical account of the crucifixion.

We press on to Deedat’s argument that Jesus disguised himself after surviving the cross so that no one would recognise him, calling this “a perfect masquerade!” (p. 49). He suggests that when Jesus met two disciples on the road to Emmaus the day he walked out of the tomb alive ([Luke 24:15](#)), he concealed his identity until he revealed it in breaking bread before them, and then went away. This is nothing but an attempt to water down the incident in the Bible which has a far more dramatic element. It will be useful to quote exactly what happened:

“When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him; and he vanished out of their sight. They said to each other, ‘Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?’ ” ([Luke 24:30–32](#)).

The drama here unfolds rapidly. Suddenly their eyes are opened and he vanishes out of their sight! If we look carefully at this passage we can see what really happened when they recognised Jesus.

The Bible states that after his resurrection his body bore the nature that all the righteous will bear in heaven. He was able to transcend all earthly limitations and could appear or vanish at will. He could suddenly appear in a locked room ([John 20:19](#)) and could conceal or reveal himself at will.

So, here it was not Jesus who removed a “disguise.” The text plainly says “*their* eyes were opened.” Suddenly *they* were able to perceive who he was. So likewise we read that the risen Jesus, in his eternal body, was not only able to open men’s eyes to perceive his true identity but could even open their minds to perceive the meaning of God’s revealed Word ([Luke 24:45](#)).

Just as he suddenly appeared in the room (Luke 24:36), so he equally suddenly vanished out of their sight. The dramatic character of the narratives in Luke 24 cannot be explained away in rationalistic terms. The thrust of this whole chapter is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead (cf. 24:46) and it was this remarkable event that led to such dramatic incidents.

The whole theme of the narratives in the Gospels is the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus. It requires a good deal of word-twisting to argue otherwise. An example is Deedat's suggestion that Jesus was laid in a "big, roomy chamber" (p. 79). All the Gospels teach plainly that this was nothing but a tomb which had been especially hewn out of a rock by Joseph of Arimathea as his own burial-place. In Matthew 27:60, we read that Joseph took Jesus' body and "laid it in his own new tomb" (so also Mark 15:46, Luke 23:53). In John 19:41–42, it is twice said Jesus was laid in a tomb and bound according to the burial-custom of the Jews. Deedat's attempts to torture these accounts of a funeral into his own speculation that Jesus was placed in a "big roomy chamber" so that he might "recover" are a self evident proof that there is no substance in his argument at all.

Lastly, we shall consider his four statements on page 50 of his booklet where he points out that many people testified on the day of resurrection that he was alive. The word is placed in capital letters, is underlined, and is accompanied by an exclamation mark in each case. This purports to be an argument favouring his theory that Jesus had not died on the cross but was still alive. We marvel at such reasoning for the whole point of the resurrection from the dead, as set out in the Gospels, is this very fact—that Jesus was raised alive from the dead. What, then, is Deedat trying to prove? The testimonies that Jesus was alive are central to the whole Christian belief that Jesus had risen from the dead after being killed on the cross.

In his quote from Luke 24:4–5, Deedat only quotes the words of the angels to Mary and the other women, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" He significantly omits these words which follow:

"Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise" (Luke 24:6–7).

In these words we clearly find the angels speaking of Jesus being crucified and rising on the third day. Clearly they proclaimed that he was alive because he had duly risen from the dead. Much the same was said by the brethren at Jerusalem to the disciples from Emmaus:

"The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon" (Luke 24:34).

The united testimony of all was that Jesus was alive because he was risen indeed. "He has risen" (Mark 16:6) was the universal testimony that day. He had come alive from the dead and had conquered all the power of death. He had made it possible for men to be raised with him to newness of life (Romans 6:4) and to rise with him to eternal life in victory over death and sin (1 Corinthians 15:55–57). He had fulfilled his own declaration:

"I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die" (John 11:25).

Deedat's whole argument is a pitiful caricature of the glorious event described in the Gospels. Our brief treatment of his argument that Jesus came down alive from the cross and some-how recovered proves conclusively that there is nothing at all in what he says. The

misleading arguments he presents lead us to conclude that he fails to prove his cruci-“fiction” theory because he comes from an “improper”-gation Centre!

Wild statements in Deedat’s booklet

One of the things that struck me again and again as I read through Deedat’s booklets was his unrestrained tendency to make wild statements devoid of good sense and authority. It seems he trades on Muslim ignorance of the Bible and simply hopes his readers will accept without question whatever he says. He surely cannot be endeavouring to convince Christian readers who know their Bible well and who can only marvel at his presumptuousness. To begin with, he says in his booklet:

“From the ‘call to arms’ in the upper-room, and the masterful deployment of forces at Gethsemane and the blood-sweating prayer to the God of Mercy for help, it appears that Jesus knew nothing about the contract for his crucifixion” (Deedat, *Crucifixion or Crucifixion?*, p.16).

The last statement, to the effect that Jesus knew nothing about his crucifixion is a fallacy set forth in bare defiance of overwhelming facts to the contrary. Time and again Jesus told his disciples that he would be crucified, killed, and rise again on the third day in statements like these:

“The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised” (Luke 9:22).

“Behold we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day” (Matthew 20:18–19).

When he was duly raised from the dead he rebuked his disciples for not believing all that he had told them as well as the prophecies of the former prophets that he would be killed and rise on the third day (Luke 24:25–26, 46). On numerous other occasions he made it plain that this was the whole purpose of his coming to earth. He told them he had come to lay down his life as a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28), that his body would be broken and his blood shed for the forgiveness of their sins (Matthew 26:26–28), that he would give up his life that the world might live (John 6:51), and that he had power to lay down his life and power to take it again (John 10:18). It is surely absurd to suggest that Jesus knew nothing about his pending crucifixion. On the contrary, as he faced this climactic moment in his life, when as the Saviour of the world, he would redeem mankind and pave the way for many to enter eternal life, he proclaimed, “I have come for this hour” (John 12:27). So aware was he of the fateful climax that awaited him that he constantly referred to it as “my hour” (John 2:4) and “my time” (John 7:6). Of no other man was it more truly said, “cometh the hour, cometh the man.” The hour for the salvation of the world had come, and God had sent the only man who could achieve it, Jesus Christ.

Deedat makes a similar loose statement when he says that the title “Son of God” in the Bible “is also another harmless expression in Jewish theology” (p. 25). On the contrary, just as Muslims hold to an austere unitarianism which does not allow that it is possible for God to have a Son, so the Jews of that time and to this day reject the concept completely. When the high priest asked Jesus if he was the Son of God, as he had been reported as making such a claim,

Jesus answered, “I am” ([Mark 14:62](#)). If this was a “harmless expression” as Deedat claims, the high priest would hardly have taken exception to it, but he immediately cried out “he has uttered blasphemy” ([Matthew 26:65](#)). When Jesus appeared before Pilate, the Jews cried out:

“We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he has made himself the Son of God” ([John 19:7](#)).

Muslims to this day attempt to avoid this issue and allege that Christians have turned the prophet Jesus into the Son of God. But the Jews could hardly foist this claim on his followers when Jesus himself made this very confession before them. “He has made himself the Son of God,” they cried, and this was why they condemned Jesus for blasphemy. Through his resurrection, however, God gave assurance to all men that Jesus was indeed his own beloved Son just as he had claimed ([Romans 1:4](#)).

Deedat makes a similar outlandish claim when he says that “any Christian scholar will confirm” that the Gospels were only written anything up to a number of centuries after the time of Jesus. It has been generally accepted among all good Biblical scholars that the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) were all written about 55–60 AD (less than thirty years after Jesus’ resurrection) and the Gospel of John up to 70 AD. Only the most prejudiced “scholars” could suggest otherwise, and even hostile critics have accepted these dates. How could the Gospels have been written centuries later when manuscript fragments dating as early as 120 AD still exist and quotes from the Gospels are found in the writings of the early Christians in the generation immediately succeeding the apostolic age?

Deedat makes a most unfortunate statement when he says in another place “Salvation is cheap in Christianity” (p. 61). We doubt whether Muslims will consider Abraham’s willingness to offer his son to God a “cheap” sacrifice. Surely, then, there can be nothing cheap in the willingness of God to give his own Son as a sacrifice for our sins. The Bible tells Christians plainly, “you were bought with a price” (1 Corinthians 6.20)—what a price!—and the apostle can only speak in consequence of God’s “in expressible gift” ([2 Corinthians 9.15](#)). There is no way to possibly evaluate the price that was paid to save men from sin, death and hell. Salvation in Christianity is the most expensive thing this world has ever seen—the life of the only Son of the eternal God. In the same way, no man can obtain this salvation unless he commits his whole life to God through faith in his Son, and surrenders his whole personality and character to his will.

Lastly, in one of his typically inaccurate charges, Deedat claims that the story of the appearance of Jesus to his doubting disciple Thomas, as recorded in [John 20. 24–29](#), is a “flagrant ‘gospel fabrication’” (p. 31), and he has the temerity to claim further:

“Biblical scholars are coming to the conclusion that the ‘doubting Thomas’ episode is of the same variety as that of the woman ‘caught in the act’—([John 8. 1–11](#)), i.e., it is a fabrication!” (Deedat, *Crucifixion or Cruci-fiction?*, p. 76).

Most significantly Deedat does not tell us who these so-called “Biblical scholars” are. There is not a shred of evidence anywhere to back up the claim that the story of Thomas’ unwillingness to believe in the risen Christ until he had seen him, and his declaration on duly seeing him, that he was his Lord and his God, is a “fabrication.” The story is found extant in all the earliest manuscripts available to us without any variance in reading, and the evidences therefore are unanimously in favour of its authenticity. There is no support whatsoever for the speculation that this story may have been invented.

Deedat seems to base his claim on the assumption that Jesus was not nailed to the cross but only tied with ropes. He makes another really wild statement when he says “contrary to common belief, Jesus was not nailed to the cross” (p. 31). Archaeological discoveries in the land of Palestine have confirmed that Romans crucified victims by nailing them to their crosses (a skeleton was found with a nail through both feet in recent years). Furthermore it is the universal testimony of the prophecies to and historical records of Jesus’ crucifixion that he was nailed to his cross ([Psalm 22:16](#), [John 20:25](#), [Colossians 2:14](#)). Deedat’s argument is not only “contrary to common belief” as he admits, but, like so many of his points, is also contrary to the Scriptures, contrary to reliable historical records, contrary to archaeological discoveries, contrary to the evidences, and, as all too often, contrary to good sense. He cannot produce even an iota or a shred of evidence to support his claim that Jesus was fastened to the cross with ropes and, instead, has to resort to an unwarranted and thoroughly presumptuous attack on the sound historical record that Jesus was nailed to the cross, once again without any evidence whatsoever that this record is a “fabrication.”

If there had been any merit at all in Deedat’s attack on the Biblical record of the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, he would hardly have had to resort to such ridiculous claims as those we have considered. They indicate a fair measure of desperation in the critic as he battles against the odds to prove an untenable thesis.

Gospel truths deliberately suppressed by Deedat

After all that has gone before, it will not surprise our readers to find Deedat deliberately expunging words from the Bible that do not suit his purpose. On the day after Jesus’ crucifixion the chief priests came to Pilate, and in [Matthew 27:62–64](#), we find a request made by them that the tomb should be sealed. It appears in Deedat’s booklet as follows:

“Sir, we remember that that deceiver said ... Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made secure until the third day, lest ... the LAST error shall be worse than the FIRST (error)” (Deedat, *Crucifixion or Cruci-Fiction?*, p. 42).

Twice in the quotation one finds three innocuous-looking dots as though something has been omitted because it is unimportant or irrelevant to the issues. Deedat’s argument is that the Jews had suddenly realised that Jesus might still be alive and that they might have been “cheated” (p. 42). They supposedly went to Pilate to get him to seal the sepulchre so that he could not escape and recover. Nevertheless, says Deedat, they were a day too late and their “last” error was to allow some of Jesus’ disciples an opportunity “to render help to the wounded man” (p. 43).

All that has happened here is that Deedat has had to forcibly expunge two clauses in the quotation referred to, not because they are considered unimportant, but because they refute his arguments completely and oblige the reader to discover a totally different picture of what was really transpiring. We shall record the whole quotation as it appears in a modern translation and shall place in italics the words wrenched out by Deedat and replaced with dots. The passage reads:

“Sir, we remember how that impostor said, *while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise again.’* Therefore, order the sepulchre to be made secure until the third day, lest *his disciples go and steal him away, and tell the people, ‘He has risen from the dead’,* and the last fraud will be worse than the first” ([Matthew 27:62–64](#)).

We see immediately that the Jews did not for one minute believe that Jesus had come down alive from the cross. They went to Pilate, speaking of something Jesus had said while he was still alive. These words can only be interpreted to mean that, in their view, Jesus was no longer alive. And they asked Pilate to seal the tomb, not because they feared a wounded man might recover, but because they feared his disciples would steal his body and proclaim that he had risen from the dead. This is the obvious and plain meaning of the passage.

It is quite clear why Deedat omitted the clauses in italics. They disprove his theory completely. In fact we have found him regularly using this devious tactic in his booklets against Christianity. He distorts the Scriptures by wrenching some texts out of context which he feels can be twisted and perverted into serving his ends, and then casually ignores others completely which thoroughly discount his theories. Only in this case he has done this with just one passage, twisting some of its words to try and prove that the Jews thought Jesus was still alive, and expunging others which immediately show that this was not what was in their minds at all.

Surely, any sincere Muslim can see that the whole theme of his booklet on the crucifixion is a contortion of the truth and that Deedat has constantly warped the clear statements in the Gospels which testify unambiguously to the fact of the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We might add that this is not the first time that we have come across publications published by Deedat's Centre where quotations from other writings are so mistreated. We would advise all readers to treat such quotations, where words are deleted and are simply replaced by three dots, with extreme caution. Invariably, what is left has been twisted into yielding an interpretation that the whole quotation could not possibly yield.

The Jews had remembered Jesus' oft-repeated prophecy that he would rise from the dead after three days and they wanted to prevent any possible fulfillment of this prophecy—whether actual, through his resurrection, or contrived, through the actions of his disciples. There is no warrant for Deedat's claim that the "Jews doubted his death" and that they "suspected that he had escaped death on the cross" (p. 79). The words omitted by him in the quotation on page 42 of his booklet show quite plainly that they were satisfied that he was indeed dead, but that they did not want his disciples to claim that he had been raised to life again.

Christians do not object to sincere critical analyses of their scriptures and convictions. In fact, we welcome them in a way because they challenge us to be sure of what we believe, and no true Christian would want to believe things that could not withstand critical analysis. We do sincerely take offence, however, at publications like Deedat's *Crucifixion or Cruci-Fiction?* which do nothing but pervert and distort the evidences for our faith and which are calculated to injure our feelings. We are persuaded that most Muslims would feel the same way about any Christian publication that distorted Islam the way Deedat degrades Christianity.

We are comforted to find that there are many Muslims in South Africa who have expressed their keen disapproval of such publications. A local Muslim magazine had this to say of Deedat's methods:

"It is a well known fact throughout South Africa, even among Christian evangelical circles, that in so far as Mr. Ahmed Deedat in particular is concerned, the Muslim community of South Africa as a whole is not in total agreement with his method of propagating Islam. *The Muslim Digest* itself provides ample testimony for having been reluctantly compelled over the years to condemn, in no uncertain terms, the method of Mr. Deedat's propagation of Islam, especially amongst Christians. No less has Mr. Deedat been condemned by responsible Muslim religious bodies and individuals for the

manner in which he propagates Islam that results in ill-will being generated against Muslims” (*The Muslim Digest*, Jul/Aug/Sept., 1984).

We shall close with a brief consideration of Deedat’s argument that, if it can be proved that Jesus did not die on the cross, this proves he was not crucified at all! We have, in earlier publications, shown that such an obtruse argument arises from a predicament Deedat inflicts on himself with his theory that Jesus survived the cross. For the Qur’an plainly states that Jesus was “neither crucified nor killed” (Surah 4.157) and the overwhelming majority of Muslims throughout the world take this (obviously, in our view) to mean that Jesus was never put on the cross at all. I held a symposium with Deedat in Benoni on the subject, “Was Christ Crucified?” in 1975, and the local newspaper thereafter summed up his argument perfectly by saying, “He was crucified, but did not die, he argued.” As there are a number of discerning Muslims who have seen that his whole theory debases not only what the Bible says but also what the Qur’an says about the crucifixion, he is now trying to extricate himself from this predicament in which he has placed himself.

He therefore argues that “to crucify” means to “kill on a cross” and says that if a man survived the cross, this means he was never crucified. He shows that in English “to electrocute” means to kill by an electric bolt and that “to hang” means to kill by hanging. Therefore he says that in English “to crucify” must also mean to “kill on a cross” and claims that he cannot be held responsible for a deficiency in the English language which does not have alternative words for an attempted crucifixion, electrocution or hanging.

In saying this he misses the point completely. The narratives of the crucifixion in the Bible were originally written in Greek and more than a thousand years were to pass before they would ever be translated into English. The important point is not what “to crucify” might mean in Deedat’s understanding of English but what it meant in Greek when the Gospels were first written. One quotation will suffice to show that “to crucify” in Biblical times meant simply “to impale on a cross.” The Apostle Peter once declared to a Jewish multitude:

“This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men” ([Acts 2:23](#)).

The verse clearly reads “you crucified and killed,” meaning obviously, “you impaled him on a cross and you killed him there.” Therefore it is absurd to suggest that if a man was not actually killed on a cross, this means he was never crucified. If “to crucify” only meant to kill on a cross, Peter would just have said “you crucified him,” but by adding “and killed,” he shows plainly that “to crucify” meant simply to impale on a cross. Deedat remains in the predicament of advocating that Jesus was indeed crucified but did not die—a theory repugnant to true Christians and Muslims alike.

One struggles to follow the reasoning behind Deedat’s line of approach. He seems to think that if he can prove that Jesus did not die on the cross, this proves that the Qur’an is true when it says he was not killed by the Jews. But how can the point possibly stand, when the whole argument of necessity concedes the other thing the Qur’an denies—the actual crucifixion of Jesus? There just does not seem to be any logic in his argument at all.

The Fallen Nature of Man in Islam and Christianity

By Samuel Shahid

Muslims in general reject the Christian concept of the fallen nature of humanity which resulted from Adam's rebellious attitude against God. Adam indeed disobeyed God, yet—according to Islam—every person is responsible for his own actions. If a person is righteous and practices what is good, he will be rewarded greatly, but if he deviates from the straight path and commits evil, he will surely suffer in an eternal hell. As the offspring of Adam, we could not inherit Adam's sin and be accountable for it in God's eyes. Muslims ask, for example, "If a man's arm is amputated, does that mean that his son will be born with one arm?" And, by the same analogy, "How can Adam's descendants inherit Adam's sin?" Moreover, "does the justice of God decree that children should bear the iniquities of their forefathers?" These questions have often been raised to negate any possible need for a divine incarnation and/or redemptive act such as Christians see in the cross of Christ. Christians agree that if anyone is righteous and practices only good, he will be rewarded with heaven, but they also maintain that none except Christ meets that criterion. All others have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God because they inherited a sinful nature from Adam. For them, divine intervention was an inevitable necessity for the redemption of fallen and sinful human beings. If we are really interested in probing the depth of this spiritual understanding of the fallen nature of mankind, we must examine objectively the story of that fall both in Islam and in Christianity.

Because of space limitations I will not attempt to quote all the verses cited in the Qur'an and the Bible which deal with this issue, but rather select the most significant references which will highlight points under discussion and provide us with a deeper insight into the subject.

It is stated in the Qur'an, Sura (Chapter) 2:36, concerning Adam's disobedience:

"Then did Satan make them slip from the (garden) and get out of the state of (felicity) in which they had been. We said: 'Get ye down all (ye people) with enmity among yourselves; on earth will be your dwelling place, and your means of livelihood for a time.'"

In the commentary of the Jalalayn on this verse we read:

"We said: 'Get ye down' to the earth; that is, you and your offspring still contained within you. 'among yourselves' means some of your offspring will harbor enmity for some others because of your oppression towards each other."

This means that God cast Adam and Eve and all those who were yet to be born to them in future generations out of paradise as a penalty for the disobedience of their parents and thus all mankind, represented in Adam and Eve, were punished.

If we scrutinize the details of the story of the fall closely, we will realize that the consequences were more serious than the mere action of punishment. As a result of this rebellion against God, a drastic change occurred in human nature. The Qur'an indicates that "all of you will become hostile to each other." This means that sin has entered the world and has created a new state of life. Human nature became enslaved to the power of sin and even the entire universe was subjected to a significant modification, for when Adam was settled in paradise, God designated him to be the master of the earth, reigning over all its creatures. But as soon as he

committed his sin and rebelled against God, that paradisiacal world in which Adam and Eve dwelt changed completely and became a world of evil, oppression, iniquity and polytheism. Even Adam's repentance did not help him much. Yes, God did accept his repentance and forgave him (according to the Qur'an—see verse 37) but neither Adam nor his descendants were able to return to paradise nor even to find it again. Since then, suffering, misery, and hostility have dominated man's life.

'Abdullah Yusuf' Ali, a translator of the Qur'an into English, comments on this verse:

“Evidently Adam is the type of all mankind and the sexes go together in all spiritual matters.”

This is a sound statement. Adam was, at the time, the representative of mankind when he committed his sin. Thus, when he fell, his offspring fell with him.

There are a few other verses in the Qur'an which denote the responsibility of Adam as the representative of the human race. For example, in Sura 7:172–173 we read:

“When God drew forth from children of Adam—from his loins—their descendants and made them testify concerning themselves (saying): ‘Am I not your Lord (who cherishes and sustains you)?’ They said: ‘Yea! We do testify!’ This least you should say on the day of judgment: ‘Of this we were never mindful.’ Or lest you should say: ‘Our fathers before us may have taken false gods, but we are (their) descendants after them; wilt thou then destroy us because of the deeds of men who were futile?’”

In the commentary of the Jalalayn, we read the following interpretation:

“He (God) drew forth each one of them from the loins of the other back to Adam, generation after generation in the form they will take when they are born. They were as numerous as the ants in Nu'man (a mountain) in the day of 'Arafa. He erected in front of them the evidences of His deity and installed in them brains and made them testify concerning themselves.”

Muhammad Farid Wagdi, in his commentary on these verses, says:

“Remember that your God drew forth from the loins of the children of Adam their offspring in the same form they will take (when they are born) century after century and erected in front of them the evidences of His deity and installed in their brains the capacity to make them recognize these evidences. Thus they were elevated to the level of those who were told: ‘Am I not your Lord? They said, Yes.’ Thus their full knowledge of it and their being deeply rooted in it made them, so to speak, witnesses, lest they say in the Day of Judgment: ‘Of this (that is, their knowledge of God) we were never mindful.’ Or they say: ‘Our fathers have taken false gods, thus we followed them. Wilt thou destroy us because of the deeds of the futile people?’”

'Abdullah Yusuf' Ali goes one step further in his understanding of the above verse. He says:

“The words of the text refer to the descendants of Adam; i.e., to all humanity, born or unborn, without any limit of time. Adam's seed carries on the existence of Adam and succeeds to his spiritual heritage. Humanity, as such, has a corporate aspect.”

This is a clear confirmation of the deputyship of Adam for all mankind. According to the aforementioned comments, God performed a miracle in which He drew forth the posterity of

Adam who were yet to be born up to the Day of Judgment to make each one of them testify concerning themselves and bound each individual by a covenant. Then He replaced them in Adam's loins.

This interpretation is not foreign to Islamic theology. In fact, Ibn 'Abbas transmits to us Muhammad's interpretation of the text of these two verses:

“God took the pledge from the loins of Adam in Nu'man; i.e., 'Arafa. He drew forth all his posterity which He created and dispersed them in His presence like ants. He talked to them and said: 'Am I not your Lord? They said: Yea, we testify!' Lest they say in the Day of Judgment, 'Of this (i.e., the knowledge of God) we were never mindful.'”

Ibn 'Abbas also said:

“In the beginning, when God cast Adam to earth, He sent him to a desert in the land of India. Then he rubbed his loins and drew forth every soul he decided to create until the Day of Judgment. That took place in Nu'man which is behind mount 'Arafa. God then talked to them and enabled them to speak. He took from them the pledge that they will worship him and never associate anything with Him. (He did that) after He installed in them brains and granted for them their sustenance and determined the length of their life-span, their afflictions, and so forth. Then He replaced them in Adam's loins. Thus the Day of Judgment will never come until everyone who gave his pledge is born.” (See also Al-Khazin II, 191.) Abu Hurayra also quoted Muhammad's saying:

“Thus, Adam disobeyed and his descendants disobeyed likewise. Adam forgot and ate from the tree; likewise, his offspring also forgot. Adam sinned and his posterity sinned too!” (Quoted by Tarmadhi and others.)

It is obvious from these verses, interpretations and traditions that Adam is recognized by Muslims as the representative of his offspring and that the Qur'an alludes to this. Thus Adam, by his disobedience and sin, made all his descendants sin, too. Undoubtedly corruption permeated the essence of Adam's nature and caused a drastic change in its components, in some respects similar to the way a genetic change may produce a new breed or significantly alter an old breed. This change in human nature was transmitted to Adam's seed who inherited his fallen nature and his propensities.

In Sahih al-Bukhari (Vol. 3:1213, No. 3156) there is further evidence of the veracity of this interpretation. We read:

“We were told on the authority of Qays Ibn Hafasa ... on the authority of Muhammad, that God says to the one who suffers least among the people of hell: 'If you possess all the wealth of the world with which to redeem (yourself, would you do that?)' He said, 'Yes.' Then God said, 'I had asked something, which is much easier than this, while you were still in the loins of Adam: Not to associate other gods with Me. Yet you have refused and worship false gods.'”

Therefore, we must ask. What happened to this posterity which pledged to worship God and not to associate others with Him so that it failed to fulfill its promise and broke its pledge? The only conclusion which explains this tragic failure is that it inherited the fallen nature of Adam, the father of mankind, who, in his capacity as the representative of man, has failed to live up to God's expectations. How else can the Muslim explain the observable fact that all human beings continue to repeat Adam's sin of rebellion against the known will of God?

There is another tradition ascribed to Muhammad based on the authority of 'Abdullah which says:

“Whenever a soul is killed unjustly, the first son of Adam (Cain) would bear part of its blood (responsibility) because he was the first who decreed assassination.” (Al-Bukhari 3:3157. See also nos. 6473 & 6890.)

Thus, if Cain, according to Muhammad, was morally responsible for every soul unjustly killed, why should not Adam be responsible for bequeathing the fallen nature of man to his seed, to those who carried his own characteristics and genes? Was not Adam the first man who first disobeyed God? Yes, and so corruption has permeated the nature of man through his first parent.

The Qur'an declares in Sura 5:32:

“On that account, we ordained for the children of Israel that if any one slew a person—unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land—it would be as if he slew the whole people; and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people.”

'Ali explains:

“To kill or seek to kill an individual because he represents an ideal is to kill all who uphold the ideal. On the other hand, to save an individual life in the same circumstances is to save a whole community.”

In light of the above quotations, we can see that no instruction or teaching or guidance will ever enable us to restore the pristine essence of sinless human nature as it was manifested in Paradise. The essential change which is required is a change in the very nature of mankind. All the prophets have failed to generate any change in human nature or in man's character. Yes, they called people to worship God only and to live according to the Ten Commandments, but that call could not change people. They knew the shortcomings of man and that he is bound by chains of sin. They realized also that all their teaching had failed to produce salvation because no one was able to meet God's standards, nor His righteous demands. In this respect the Bible and the Qur'an agree.

The Bible asserts the existence of original sin which we have all inherited from Adam. We read in [Romans 5:12](#):

“Therefore just as through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, so death spread to all men, because all sinned.”

Thus the progeny of Adam carried forward all the characteristics of his fallen nature and became subject to the sentence of death. In another word Adam, sinned; therefore all his descendants sinned with him, too. Sin has distorted God's image in man. The Bible asserts that God created man in his own image; i.e., He bestowed on him reason, will, ability of free choice, freedom of conscience, and creativity. But man abused the freedom with which God blessed him and chose to rebel against God in the person of Adam. Soon this rebellious nature dominated the will of mankind and corrupted it. Therefore, the fall of Adam was not a temporary defect but rather a determinative event which had a tragic impact on the universe. Its effect has afflicted not only individuals, but the entire human race across the ages. Since this nature became subject to the condemnation of God, man was destined to suffer in an eternal hell forever because God's holiness does not tolerate sin. “The wages of sin is death” ([Romans 6:23](#)). This is God's law and justice. Yet, God is LOVE. He created man in His own image which He would never dishonor

for His own sake. Thus He planned a way of salvation for mankind. His plan is the only straight path which delivers man from his dilemma. God's holiness demanded justice while His love pleaded for mercy and forgiveness. In order to meet the requirements of His holiness, justice, and love, the living Word of God, Christ, with all His perfection, righteousness and goodness became incarnate because of His great love for all people and suffered in Himself the consequences of their sin. Man has failed to save himself from the bondage of his fallen nature; therefore the righteous One, the Christ, who is free from all iniquity, determined to pay the price for our redemption. So He, the Living Word of God, became flesh and was crucified; that is, God's judgment fell upon Jesus, who by His own choice and because of His love, granted to us the gift of freedom and forgiveness of sin. The Bible says:

“God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:19).

In other words, Christ's voluntary incarnation and His death on the cross opened wide the door of freedom for us because we became righteous in God's eyes through Jesus. Christ has paid the price on our behalf by His atoning death. Our only obligation is to accept Him by faith. His sacrificial act of love enables Him to restore our pristine nature which was distorted by sin. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says:

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come.”

The “new things” include our fallen human nature which is formed anew. It is now liberated, by the living power manifested in Christ's death and resurrection, from its old dispositions. Christ has restored to it its beauty, purity and the greatness which it lost as the result of the fall. This restoration was not possible without God's intervention. That is why the verse above says: “New things have come.”

The act of creation cannot be performed apart from Christ. Christ Himself realized the impossibility of man's deliverance from his inevitable destiny without divine intervention. This is why He said:

“Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

Christ did not request that sinners should free themselves first, then come unto Him. He knew perfectly well that man is not able to justify himself before God. This is an impossible task. So he summoned them unto Him, as they were, burdened with sins, in order to recreate them anew. Then, and only then, will they be justified because the righteous Christ atoned for them by His death, for:

“He who knew no sin was made to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Or, as the apostle Peter says:

“He Himself bore our sins in His own body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness” (1 Peter 2:24).

John, the apostle, reiterates the same idea as he states:

“And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin” (1 John 3:5).

The phrase “take away sins” was not possible without an atoning act that meets all the requirements of God’s justice and holiness. The Bible summarizes this basic fact when it states:

“Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness” (Hebrews 9:22).

The true greatness of this redemptive act is that Jesus was not compelled to carry out this responsibility, but He voluntarily gave Himself, of His own free will, to save us from the condemnation of eternal hell. In Hebrews 9:14 we read:

“Of how much more value is the blood of Christ Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God.”

Even Christ Himself said publicly:

“For this reason the Father loves me because I lay down my life that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from me, but I lay it down on my own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again” (John 10:17–18).

In short, the fallen nature of man which he inherited from Adam is a fact recognized by both Islam and Christianity. But this nature could not be changed by guidance, instruction or teaching because such a change requires an internal transformation which touches the depths of the human soul. Doctrines have failed to produce such change because they lack spiritual power. Man’s endeavors can never acquire God’s favor or reach the level required by His justice. Who among us, for instance, can comply completely with the Ten Commandments? What prophet is there who did not commit sin and did not need to ask for forgiveness? The founder of Islam himself attested, as recorded in more than one sound tradition, that he asked for forgiveness seventy times a day. If the prophets from Adam to the latest prophets of the Old Testament have failed to meet God’s requirements without offering a sin sacrifice how could any ordinary man elevate himself to a level which pleases God???

For this reason, the sinless, perfect and righteous One became incarnate to liberate us from the bonds of iniquity and has elevated us to a higher level and made us acceptable to God. The divine love was embodied in Christ on the cross. The Bible epitomizes the majesty and greatness of God’s love in John 3:16:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son so that whoever believes in Him would not perish, but have everlasting life.”

By the merits of the Living Word of God we are liberated from our fallen nature which we inherited from our forefather, Adam, and therefore, we are justified in the presence of God as we become new creatures in Christ.

The Punishment for Apostasy From Islam

By Silas

Abstract

During Muhammad's lifetime, and the lifetimes of the next 4 "Rightly Guided Caliphs," a number of Muslims left the faith of Islam. The punishment for leaving Islam was death. Those that had left the faith were either killed outright, or were given a few days to turn back to Islam. If they persisted in leaving Islam, they were put to death. This death sentence is in effect whether the apostasy occurred in an Islamic state or not.

Text inside of [] type brackets are my comments. Text inside of () type brackets are from the Hadith itself.

Introduction

One of the more controversial topics for Muslims in the West is the punishment for apostasy from Islam. Muslims living in the Mideast have no problem with the concept of putting apostates to death. But to Muslims living in the West, it is an embarrassing Islamic edict. The Western values of freedom of thought and freedom of speech are two virtues that have never blossomed under Islam. Consequently, when asked about the Islamic law for apostates, Muslims in the West hide behind excuses such as "only a true Islamic state can execute apostates," or "punishment was carried out because those apostates were threats to the new Islamic state, and it is not needed anymore."

What exactly was the law during Muhammad's and the Caliphs' time? What were the requirements for a death sentence to be carried out? Was the sentence only for a short period of time? Was it only to be administered under a "true Islamic state," or did it apply to anyone who had left Islam?

A close examination of the Quran, Hadith, and Sirat will show that indeed, the punishment for leaving Islam, either under an Islamic government, or not, was execution.

To begin with, the Quran does not come out and explicitly state that apostates should be murdered. However, there are a number of Quranic verses that pertain to apostasy, and they shed some light on the punishment for apostates.

Starting with the Quran.

Sura 9:73, 74:

"Prophet, make war on the unbelievers and the hypocrites and deal rigorously with them. Hell shall be their home: an evil fire. They swear by God that they said nothing. Yet they uttered the word of unbelief and renounced Islam after embracing it. They sought to do what they could not attain. Yet they had no reason to be spiteful except perhaps because God and His apostle had enriched them through His bounty. If they repent, it will indeed be better for them, but if they give no heed, God will sternly punish them, both in this world and in the world to come. They shall have none on this earth to protect or help them." [Dawood]

We see here that Allah urges Muhammad to "make war" on the people who have left Islam. It also states that "Allah will punish them in this world, and in the world to come."

What exactly Muhammad was to do to the people in his "making war" on them is not explicitly stated, but it can be surmised that they will be physically punished, if not outright

killed. Further, Allah Himself is also going to punish those who leave Islam. What is His punishment? Whatever it is, it will be unpleasant.

Sura 47:23–28:

“If you renounced the faith, you would surely do evil in the land, and violate the ties of blood. Such are those on whom God has laid His curse, leaving them deaf and sightless.... Those who return to unbelief after God’s guidance has been revealed to them are seduced by Satan and inspired by him....”

Again, God is punishing people in this world, but the totality of punishment isn’t detailed ... other than becoming “deaf and sightless.” No doubt this is spiritual blindness, because millions have left Islam and have never become physically blind. Note also Muhammad’s fear and hatred of and toward those that have left Islam—he claims that they will “do evil in the land and violate the ties of blood.” Perhaps his mistaken assumption is his justification for ordering the killing of apostates.

Additionally, one could review Sura 3:86–91 and Sura 16:106. These verses clearly state that apostates will be punished in hellfire. However, though it is implied, the punishment meted out while they live is unclear. Sura 4:137 similarly shows that God will not forgive the apostates, but no mention of an earthly punishment is made. Finally, brief mention is made of apostates in 3:72, 5:54, 9:107 but none of these sheds any penetrating light on the subject.

Quranic verses summary

A review of the Quran’s position on apostates:

- Muhammad is to “make war” on them.
- Allah is going to punish them in this world and in the next.
- Allah curses them.
- They will be punished in hellfire.

The Dictionary of Quranic Terms and Concepts, page 16 (written by M. Mir, a Muslim writer), defines the actual Quranic information as:

“APOSTASY. Arabic “irtidad.” Traditional Islamic law prescribes the penalty of death for a Muslim who commits apostasy. The punishment is not stated in the Quran, but is said to be based on certain Hadith. The advocates and the opponents of the said penalty have, in their attempt to find Quranic support for their views, appealed to certain Quranic verses, but the fact is that none of the arguments offered do full justice to the Quranic context....”

The teachings of the Hadith on apostasy

It is from the Hadith that we draw our understanding and information on the punishment for the apostate. From the Hadith, we find no ambiguity on the subject. All quotes will be from Bukhari’s Hadith, from the 9 volume English set, translated by Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan. Bukhari, volume 9, No. 17:

“Narrated Abdullah: Allah’s Messenger said, ‘The blood of a Muslim who confesses that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah, and that I am His Messenger, cannot be shed except in three cases: in Qisas (equality in punishment) for murder, a married person who commits illegal sexual intercourse, and the one who reverts from Islam (Apostate) and leaves the Muslims.’ ”

Bukhari, volume 9, No. 37:

“Narrated Abu Qilaba: Once Umar bin Abdul Aziz sat on his throne in the courtyard of his house so that the people might gather before him.... He replied ‘By Allah, Allah’s messenger never killed anyone except in one of the following three situations: 1) A person who killed somebody unjustly, was killed (in Qisas), 2) a married person who committed illegal sexual intercourse and, 3) a man who fought against Allah and His messenger, and deserted Islam and became an apostate....’ ”

In Chapter 2, from *The Book of Obliging the Reverters from Islam*, page 42, (following Hadith No. 56) it reads:

“The legal regulation concerning the male and the female who reverts from Islam (apostates). Ibn Umar Az-Zuhri and Ibrahim said, ‘A female apostate (who reverts from Islam), should be killed. And the obliging of the reverters from Islam to repent Allah said—....’ ”

Following this chapter, a number of Quranic verses are given, among them are some already mentioned. They are 3:86–89, 3:100, 4:137, 5:54, 16:106–110, 2:217.

Bukhari, volume 9, No. 57:

“Narrated Ikrima, ‘Some atheists were brought to Ali and he burnt them. The news of this event reached Ibn Abbas who said, “If I had been in his place, I would not have burnt them, as Allah’s messenger forbade it, saying, ‘Do not punish anybody with Allah’s punishment (fire).’ I would have killed them according to the statement of Allah’s Messenger, ‘Whoever changed his Islamic religion, then kill him.’ ” ’ ”

Bukhari, volume 9, No. 58:

“Narrated Abu Bruda, ‘Abu Musa said ... Behold, there was a fettered man beside Abu Musa. Muadh asked, “Who is this (man)?” Abu Musa said, “He was a Jew and became a Muslim and then reverted back to Judaism.” Then Abu Musa requested Muadh to sit down, but Muadh said, “I will not sit down till he has been killed. This is the judgment of Allah and his messenger,” and repeated it thrice. Then Abu Musa ordered that the man be killed, and he was killed. Abu Musa added, “Then we discussed the night prayers....” ’ ”

Bukhari, volume 9, No. 64:

“Narrated Ali, ‘Whenever I tell you a narration from Allah’s messenger, by Allah, I would rather fall down from the sky, then ascribe a false statement to him, but if I tell you something between me and you, (not a Hadith), then it was indeed a trick (i.e., I may say things just to cheat my enemy). No doubt I heard Allah’s messenger saying, “During the last days there will appear some young foolish people, who will say the best words, but

their faith will not go beyond their throats (i.e. they will leave the faith) and will go out from their religion as an arrow goes out of the game. So, wherever you find them, kill them, for whoever kills them shall have reward on the Day of Resurrection.” ’ ”

Bukhari, volume 9, No. 271 [This one is similar to No. 58]:

“Narrated Abu Musa: A man embraced Islam and then reverted back to Judaism. Muadh Jabal came and saw the man with Abu Musa. Muadh asked, ‘What is wrong with this (man)?’ Abu Musa replied, ‘He embraced Islam, and then reverted back to Judaism.’ Muadh said, ‘I will not sit down unless you kill him (as it is) the verdict of Allah and His messenger.’ ”

Bukhari, Chapter 26, from the *Book of Mutual Consultation*, page 339, following Hadith No. 461.

“The Statement of Allah ... 42:32, 3:159, ... The prophet said, ‘If someone changes his religion, then kill them....’ ”

Other references

From the Sirat Rasulallah and the Kitab Al-Tabaqat Al-Kabir.

After Muhammad took Mecca, he ordered a number of people to be killed. Several of them were apostates. Here is the background. Muhammad ordered the execution of 10 people when he took Mecca.

Here is the list of names found in Ibn Sa’d “Tabaqat.” The quote is from the Tabaqat, Vol. 2, page 168.

“The apostle of Allah entered through Adhakhir, [into Mecca], and prohibited fighting. He ordered six men and four women to be killed, they were (1) Ikrimah Ibn Abi Jahl, (2) Habbar Ibn al-Aswad, (3) Abd Allah Ibn Sa’d Ibn Abi Sarh, (4) Miqyas Ibn Sababah al-Laythi, (5) al-Huwayrith Ibn Nuqaydh, (6) Abd Abbah Ibn Hilal Ibn Khatal al-Adrami, (7) Hind Bint Utbah, (8) Sarah, the mawlat (enfranchised girl) of Amr Ibn Hashim, (9) Fartana and (10) Qaribah.

The Sirat Rasulallah gives some details behind the list of names. The information below corresponds to No. 3 on the list.

“The apostle had instructed his commanders when they entered Mecca only to fight those who resisted them, except a small number who were to be killed even if they were found beneath the curtains of the Kaba. Among them was Abdullah Sa’d, brother of the B. Amir Luayy. The reason he ordered him to be killed was that he had been a Muslim and used to write down revelation; then he apostatized and returned to Quraysh [Mecca] and fled to Uthman Affan whose foster brother he was. The latter hid him until he brought him to the apostle after the situation in Mecca was tranquil, and asked that he might be granted immunity. They allege that the apostle remained silent for a long time till finally he [Muhammad] said yes [granting Abdullah immunity from the execution order].”

Analysis

We find that although a severe physical punishment is mentioned in the Quran, we are not told what that punishment is. However, we find in Bukhari's Hadith, that the punishment is death. There is no ambiguity about this. Muhammad clearly taught that apostates are to be put to death.

Further, we find, in contrast to what many Muslim apologists assert, that these apostates are to be killed wherever they are as per Bukhari, vol. 9, No. 64:

“So, wherever you find them, kill them, for whoever kills them shall have reward on the Day of Resurrection.”

We see from this that Muslims are instructed to kill apostates. Further, those who commit the murder will get a reward in heaven.

Tying into this, we find from both Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Hisham, that those who had apostatized prior to the incorporation of an Islamic state in Mecca, were ordered to be executed. These people were Muslims living in Medina, and later left Islam. When Muhammad was able to order their deaths, he did so.

These people would correspond to Muslims living in the West, who left Islam. Following the Sunnah, these Muslims are already under a death sentence. It would not be against Islamic law for Muslims to murder these ex-Muslims. If anything, they would have a reward waiting for them in heaven.

Discussion

I am reminded of Jesus' words, “In fact a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God” (John 16:2).

Indeed, many Muslims who have converted to Christianity have paid the price with their very lives.

When I lived in a Muslim country, I spoke with a number of Muslims about the punishment for apostates. Several educated Muslims told me that there were Muslim death squads operating in Europe, and that they were trying to form similar death squads in the USA. One of their purposes was to murder those who left Islam. While Muslims in the West would be quick to deny that, or denounce that, Muslims living in the Mideast support it. When I asked my Muslim friends in the Mideast if they supported those death squads, they all said yes.

This aspect of Islam portrays one of its most ugly sides—i.e. the murder of those who think for themselves. Looking today at the Islamic world, we see it backwards, regressive, and primitive. The poor people who have grown up in Islam, who have had to adopt this dark system, are kept in bondage. It is no wonder that their countries continue to regress since freedom of thought, freedom of creativity, freedom of expression is stifled. We see the Muslim states falling further behind the rest of the world in areas like education, science, and the arts. The more Islamic a state becomes, the further it regresses.

Questions

1) What is to be made of a religion that forbids a man to think and choose for himself? In effect, Islam is a type of religious slavery. “Leave Islam, and you die.”

- 2) How does this mental bondage affect society, and its ability to provide for its people?
- 3) Leaving Islam doesn't necessarily mean a person is now at war with his people. Isn't it possible for a person who is born a Muslim to serve his country, and do no harm to its people?

Conclusion

Muhammad taught that apostates are to be murdered, wherever they are. This death sentence can be carried out wherever these Muslims are found, either in a Muslim country, or in a non-Muslim country. The Quran supports this notion, and both the Hadith and Sirat establish this portion of Islamic law.

For more articles by Silas, see the Answering Islam home page at www.answering-islam.org

Answers to 12 Anti-Trinitarian Arguments

By Sam Shamoun

The following article is a response to a Muslim that issued the following 12 arguments against the doctrine of the Trinity. Before responding, we would first like to define what the historic Christian position of the Trinity is.

First, the Trinity entails believing in one and only one eternal, invisible, immaterial, omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient Creator. Second, the doctrine of the Trinity also entails believing that there are three eternally distinct yet inseparable Persons who do not act independently from the others, but in perfect unity. The three Persons of the Godhead do not function separately and apart from the other members. Rather, they always work in perfect harmony. Hence, historic Trinitarianism does not teach that the three distinct Persons seek out their own personal initiatives since to do so would destroy the perfect and inseparable unity of the Godhead.

Furthermore, by the term "Person," we mean that the three members of the Godhead are conscious agents who are aware of their own personal existence as well as the existence of the others. Because of this, the three Persons are able to have intimate communion and fellowship amongst themselves. By the use of the term "Person" we do not mean to imply that there are three material entities that occupy space or exist within time.

Finally, the historic Christian position on Jesus Christ is that he is one divine eternal Person having two distinct natures and wills. Jesus Christ is the God-man (*theanthropos*), perfect God and perfect man united in one Person.

With this just stated we now proceed to the 12 arguments:

1) Whoever is distinguished from GOD is not GOD.

Response: This is faulty logic since it assumes several things. It first assumes that the term "God" has only one referent, namely the Father. Yet, this fails to take into consideration that the term "God" has different referents in different contexts. Cf. [John 1:1, 20:28](#); [Acts 5:3-4](#); [Romans 9:5](#); [Hebrews 1:8-9](#); [1 John 5:20](#); [Titus 2:13](#); [2 Peter 1:1](#).

Second, it assumes that only one Person shares the eternal Being of God, i.e. the Father. Hence, any time Scripture distinguishes between the Father and the Son or the Holy Spirit it is therefore assumed that neither the Son nor the Spirit can be God since the Father alone is God. Yet, this begs the question, since the Holy Bible testifies to the absolute Deity of all three Persons.

Third, it assumes that whenever Scripture distinguishes between the persons of the Godhead, this is interpreted to mean a distinction of Being as opposed to Person. Yet, the Scripture is not distinguishing between the nature or Being of the three Persons of the Godhead. Rather, it is distinguishing amongst the three Persons that coexist within the Being of the one true God.

2) He who gave the Holy Spirit to the Israelites is Jehovah alone, therefore Holy Spirit is not Jehovah.

Response: This again assumes that Jehovah is only one Person so that whenever it speaks of Jehovah sending the Spirit, the Spirit therefore cannot be Jehovah. This again begs the question, since it assumes that Jehovah is not a tri-personal Being.

The fact is that the name Jehovah or God can refer to the Father, the Son or the Holy Spirit. Here are some examples where the term Jehovah or God is used in reference to the Holy Spirit:

“The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me; his word was on my tongue. The God of Israel spoke, the Rock of Israel said to me: ‘When one rules over men in righteousness, when he rules in the fear of God’ ” (2 Samuel 23:2–3).

David equates the Spirit speaking with him as God speaking to him.

“Then Peter said, ‘Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn’t it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn’t the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God’ ” (Acts 5:3–4).

Lying to the Holy Spirit is the same as lying to God.

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:17–18).

The Oxford Study Bible translates this passage in the following manner:

“Now the Lord of whom this passage speaks is the Spirit...”

The Greek word “Lord” is *KURIOS*. This was the term used by the translators of the Septuagint in translating the word *Jehovah* into the Greek language. Therefore, for Paul to call the Spirit “Lord” is equivalent to claiming that the Holy Spirit is Jehovah God!

Interestingly, the Jehovah Witnesses’ official Bible translation, the New World Translation, understands the Greek word *KURIOS* to mean Jehovah:

“Now Jehovah is the Spirit; and where the spirit of Jehovah is there is freedom. And all of us, while we reflect like mirrors the glory of Jehovah, are transformed from glory to glory, exactly as done by Jehovah [the] Spirit” (NWT).

Hence, even a non-Trinitarian cult realizes that to say that the Spirit is Lord means that the Spirit is actually Jehovah God!

In light of the preceding factors the passage clearly states that the Holy Spirit is the Lord/Jehovah. Yet, at the same time the Spirit is seen as a distinct Person from the Lord (i.e. “the Spirit of the Lord”). This passage therefore affirms both the deity of the Holy Spirit as well as the multi-personal nature of God.

Other passages where Jehovah is used in reference to more than one person include:

“Then the LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah—from the LORD out of the heavens” ([Genesis 19:24](#)).

Jehovah is said to bring fire down from another who is said to be Jehovah in heaven. Hence, we find two distinct Persons identified as the one true God Jehovah.

Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the LORD said to Hosea:

“Call her Lo-Ruhamah, for I will no longer show love to the house of Israel, that I should at all forgive them. Yet I will show love to the house of Judah; and I will save them—not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but by the LORD their God” ([Hosea 1:6–7](#)).

Jehovah speaking to Hosea claims that he will save the house of Judah by Jehovah their God, clearly distinguishing between two Persons as the one true God.

“The LORD has a charge to bring against Judah; he will punish Jacob according to his ways and repay him according to his deeds. In the womb he grasped his brother’s heel; as a man, he struggled with GOD. He struggled with THE ANGEL and overcame him; he wept and begged for his favor. He found him at Bethel and talked with him there—the LORD God Almighty, the LORD is his name of renown!” ([Hosea 12:2–5](#)).

The God with whom Jacob struggled was actually the Angel of Jehovah. This passage is therefore identifying the Angel as Jehovah God.

For this is what the LORD Almighty says:

“After he has honored me and has sent me against the nations that have plundered you—for whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye—I will surely raise my hand against them so that their slaves will plunder them. Then you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me. Shout and be glad, O Daughter of Zion. For I am coming, and I will live among you,” declares the LORD. “Many nations will be joined with the LORD in that day and will become my people. I will live among you and you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you” ([Zechariah 2:8–11](#)).

Jehovah states that he is coming to dwell in Jerusalem and that the people will then know that it is Jehovah who sent him.

“Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. The LORD said to Satan, The LORD

rebuke you, Satan! The LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?’ ” (Zechariah 3:1–2).

The Angel, who is said to be Jehovah, rebukes Satan by Jehovah. Again, we have two distinct Persons identified as the one true God Jehovah.

These passages should put to rest the notion that Jehovah is uni-personal as opposed to being multi-personal.

3) Whoever does not speak of his own accord is not God (Holy Spirit and “Jesus” did not speak of their own accord).

Response: First, this again assumes that God is a singularity within unity, one Person and one Being.

Second, this assumes that in order for Trinitarianism to be true, the three Persons must speak or act on their own initiative. This shows a gross misunderstanding of the Trinity, since the three Persons do nothing independently, but in perfect unity and agreement. Hence, statements like the above only reinforce the belief that this one God exists as three Persons who work in perfect accord.

In fact, Jesus in [John 5](#) makes precisely the same point:

“Jesus gave them this answer: ‘I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these. For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him. I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear THE VOICE OF THE SON OF GOD and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned’ ” ([John 5:19–29](#)).

This passage clearly shows that Christ and the Father are the one God since Christ does the works that God alone can do. It also demonstrates that the distinct Persons of the Godhead work in perfect unity and harmony, never independently.

4) Whoever is taught is not God, or, is told what to say by another (“Jesus” speaks what he is told [John 8:26](#)).

Response: Being told what to say or being taught implies personal distinctions, that the Father and Son are distinct Persons. This is precisely what the Trinity teaches. Since they are distinct Persons they can communicate and have fellowship amongst themselves. This

communication and fellowship is eternal since all three Persons have coexisted together from eternity as the One God (cf. [John 1:1–3](#); [8:23–24](#), [56–59](#); [17:5](#); [Hebrews 9:14](#)).

Secondly, we must notice when this teaching between the Father and Son actually takes place:

“So Jesus said, When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I AM and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me” ([John 8:28](#)).

Notice that in this passage Christ affirms both his Deity (the use of the Divine name of God “I AM”) and the perfect unity between the members of the Godhead, i.e. “and that I do nothing on my own.”

“ ‘Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him AND KEEP HIS WORD. Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.’ ‘You are not yet fifty years old,’ the Jews said to him, ‘and you have seen Abraham!’ ‘I tell you the truth,’ Jesus answered, ‘before Abraham was born, I AM!’ At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds” ([John 8:55–59](#)).

Jesus again points to his perfect Deity and Divine pre-existence as well as the perfect unity of the Godhead.

“And Jesus cried out and said, ‘He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me. He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me. I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness. If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me’ ” ([John 12:44–50](#), NASB).

Once again Jesus emphasizes both his Deity and the perfect inseparable unity that exists amongst the three members of the Godhead. These passages also refer to Christ’s earthly ministry where he assumed the role of a servant. Therefore, Jesus is using terminology suitable in highlighting his role as the Father’s servant who perfectly obeys his master’s instructions. Far from disproving our position, these passages serve to reinforce the historic Christian understanding of the Trinity.

5) He that receives from another is not God ([John 16:14](#)).

Response: This again assumes Unitarianism, namely that there is only one Person who is God.

Secondly, these passages demonstrate that the one who receives and the one who gives are **DISTINCT PERSONS**, which again is precisely what the doctrine of the Trinity teaches. The context of this specific passage demonstrates the distinction of Persons within the Godhead—

Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the Father. Since Trinitarians do not believe that Jesus is the same PERSON as the Father or that the Father is the Holy Spirit we really do not see how this passage supposedly refutes our position.

6) He that is sent by another is not God (e.g. both “Jesus” and the Holy Spirit are SENT by God).

Response: This again demonstrates faulty logic. This argument actually establishes the Trinitarian view, namely that one who is sent cannot be THE SAME PERSON AS THE ONE WHO SENT HIM. Therefore, this is a straw man argument since it either misrepresents or misunderstands what the actual doctrine of the Trinity teaches.

7) Whoever is not the giver of all things is not God. Whoever is a gift of God is not the giver of ALL things. Whoever is a gift of God is himself given, the gift is within the power of giver. God can never be within the power of another (Acts 17:25).

Response: Let us first quote the context of Acts 17:

“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live” (Acts 17:24–26).

The passage speaks of God’s role as Creator and Sustainer, that God creates and provides for all mankind. Let us see whether the God that made and sustains creation is uni-personal or tri-personal:

Jehovah is said to be the Creator and Sustainer of all things:

“He ALONE stretches out the heavens and treads on the waves of the sea. He is the Maker of the Bear and Orion, the Pleiades and the constellations of the south” (Job 9:8–9).

“This is what the LORD says—your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the LORD, who has made all things, who ALONE stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by MYSELF” (Isaiah 44:24).

“But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: ‘Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them. In the past, he let all nations go their own way. Yet, he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy’” (Acts 14:14–17).

The Son is said to be the Creator and Sustainer of all things:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made... He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:1–3, 10, 14).

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For BY HIM all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; ALL THINGS WERE CREATED BY HIM AND FOR HIM. He is before all things, AND IN HIM ALL THINGS HOLD TOGETHER. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy” (Colossians 1:15–18).

“In the past, God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, AND THROUGH WHOM HE MADE THE UNIVERSE. The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, SUSTAINING ALL THINGS BY HIS POWERFUL WORD. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven... But about the Son he says... ‘In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end’” (Hebrews 1:1–3, 8a, 10–12).

“Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything” (Hebrews 3:3–4).

“Write this to the angel of the church people in Laodicea: Here are the words of the one whose name is Truth. What he says can be trusted. He is the one who began all that God made” (Revelation 3:14, Worldwide English Translation NT only (WE)).

The Holy Spirit is said to be the Creator and Sustainer of all things:

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters” (Genesis 1:1–2).

“The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life” (Job 33:4).

“When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth” (Psalm 104:30).

“The fortress will be abandoned, the noisy city deserted; citadel and watchtower will become a wasteland forever, the delight of donkeys, a pasture for flocks, till the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the desert becomes a fertile field, and the fertile field seems like a forest” (Isaiah 32:14–15).

“Look in the scroll of the LORD and read: None of these will be missing, not one will lack her mate. For it is his mouth that has given the order, and his Spirit will gather them

together. He allots their portions; his hand distributes them by measure. They will possess it forever and dwell there from generation to generation” (Isaiah 34:16–17).

“And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you” (Romans 8:11).

God is said to be the Giver of gifts:

“And in the church, God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way” (1 Corinthians 12:28–31).

The Son is said to be the Giver of gifts:

“But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict” (Luke 21:14–15).

“Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:4–5).

“But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: ‘When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.’ (What does ‘he ascended’ mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) It was HE who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:7–13).

“And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God” (Philippians 1:9–11).

The Holy Spirit is said to be the Giver of Gifts:

“Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues,

and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines” (1 Corinthians 12:7–11).

All three Persons together are said to be the Giver of Gifts:

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men” (1 Corinthians 12:4–6).

The Holy Bible also states that the Father and Son share all things in common, with the Holy Spirit apportioning the things of God to believers:

“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” (Matthew 11:27).

“He then began to speak to them in parables: ‘A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully. He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed. He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, “They will respect my son.” But the tenants said to one another, “THIS IS THE HEIR. Come, let’s kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.” So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard” (Mark 12:1–8).

“Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God” (John 13:3).

“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you” (John 16:13–15).

“All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them” (John 17:10).

“However, as it is written: ‘No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him’ but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:9–11).

“... but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, WHOM HE APPOINTED HEIR OF ALL THINGS, and through whom he made the universe” (Hebrews 1:2).

Hopefully, this should sufficiently answer the allegation.

8) Whoever changes place is not God. The Holy Spirit changes places therefore he is not God (if God were to change places then he would cease to be where he was before and begin to be where he was not before—which would be a contradiction of his attribute of being omnipresent, and therefore of his deity. Therefore it could not have been God who came to “Jesus,” but an angel who appeared as a person in the name of God).

Response: This commits the fallacy of false dilemma as well as the fallacy of equivocation. It assumes that God must be immobile in order to be immutable. God is immutable in relation to his nature and being, yet God is not immobile since God is able to manifest his presence locally without this nullifying his omnipresence.

Hence, the Holy Spirit changing places refers to a localized manifestation of God’s presence through his Spirit. The Holy Bible clearly teaches that the Holy Spirit is present everywhere and can dwell and fill groups of individuals while also appearing at specific points at the same time. Cf. [Psalm 139:7–12](#); [John 14:16–17, 26](#); [Acts 2:1–4](#); [1 Corinthians 3:16](#); [6:19](#). If this is not omnipresence I don’t know what is!

Second, this argument cuts both ways. The Quran teaches that Allah actually changes places and moves:

“Nay! When the earth is pounded by power, AND THY LORD COMETH, and His angels, rank upon rank, and Hell, that Day, is brought face to face—On that Day will man remember, but how will that remembrance profit him?” (S. 89:21–23).

“He it is who created the heavens and the earth in six days; then He mounted the throne” (S. 57:4—M.M. Pickthall English Translation).

“Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah’s Apostle (p.b.u.h) said, ‘Our Lord, the Blessed, the Superior, comes every night down on the nearest Heaven to us when the last third of the night remains, saying: “Is there anyone to invoke Me, so that I may respond to invocation? Is there anyone to ask Me, so that I may grant him his request? Is there anyone seeking My forgiveness, so that I may forgive him?”’” (SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, Volume 2, Number 246).

The following hadith is taken from *Al-Ahadith Al-Qudsiyyah—Divine Narratives* translated by Dr. Abdul Khaliq Kazi & Dr. Alan B. Day, published by Dar Al Kitab Arabi—USA, 1995:

“Hadith 134: Jabir b. Abdullah narrated that the Prophet said: Whilst the people of Paradise were enjoying their blissful state, a light will appear above them. They will raise their heads and lo! The Lord has risen above them and would say: ‘Peace be upon you, O people of Paradise! That would be in accordance with the Qur’anic verse “Peace!” A word from the Merciful Lord’ (Qur’an: 36:58). The Prophet said: Then Allah would look at them and the people will look at Him, and they will not be distracted by the joys of Paradise as long as they were looking at Him, until Allah became veiled from them. His Light and Blessing over them will remain in their dwellings” [Ibn Majah] (p. 191).

Therefore, using the above logic, we are forced to conclude that Allah is not God since he moves from place to place.

Finally, seeing that omnipresence is used as proof for Deity, this serves to establish the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ since he is also omnipresent. Cf. [Matthew 18:20](#); [28:20](#); [John 14:21, 23](#); [Ephesians 1:22–23](#); [4:7–10](#); [Colossians 3:11](#).

9) Whoever prays to “Jesus” to come to judgement is not God. The Holy Spirit does this so he is not God.

Response: This again entails circular reasoning since it assumes what is yet to be proven, namely that God is uni-personal. The objector then proceeds to read this unproven assumption into the text. It is therefore not surprising that the objector ends up concluding that the Holy Spirit cannot be God since he is seen praying to the Father. This is a classic case of eisegesis, allowing one’s presuppositions to determine the meaning of the text as opposed to allowing the text to determine one’s belief.

In actuality, the Trinity teaches that the three Persons are distinct, which allows for communion and dialogue amongst themselves.

Furthermore, this argument cuts both ways and ends up proving that Allah cannot be God. The Quran claims that Allah actually prays:

“He it is who sends prayers on you (Arabic—YUSALLII ALAYKUM), as do His angels...” (Sura 33:43).

“Allah and His angels pray for the Prophet (Arabic—YASALLUUNA ALAN-NABIYY): O ye that believe pray for him (SALLUU ’ALAYHI), and salute him with all respect” (Sura 33:56).

Since a Being that is a singularity-within-unity cannot pray (since if he did who would he be addressing when praying?), many translations obscure the meaning of the Arabic by inserting the word “blessing” as opposed to saying “pray.” Yet the term for blessing is derived from “baraka,” which does not appear in the above citations.

In fact, Sura 33:56 is interpreted by the Muslim scholar Al-Najjary as:

“The prayers of Allah are His praises for Muhammad among the angels, and the prayers of the angels are their prayers for Muhammad, and the [angels] praying is their blessings. The prayers of Allah are mercy, and the prayers of the angels is to ask forgiveness [for Muhammad].”

“Ibn ’Abbas says: ‘The tribe of Israel said to Moses: “Does your God pray?” God called upon him and said: “Yes, I do pray, and my angels [pray] upon my prophets,” and Allah then sent down this verse: “Allah and His angels pray...”’” [quoted by Ibn Katheer on Surat Al-Ahzaab 33:56]. Perhaps the objector can explain this for us.

10) He who is told by God through an intermediary what he is to say, i.e. “Jesus” has an understanding distinct from God, therefore “Jesus” is not God.

Response: Again, this assumes that the Being of God only encompasses one Person as opposed to encompassing the three Persons. Furthermore, the Holy Bible uses the term *God* in different contexts to refer to different things and persons. See above for references. All this

statement proves is that the Father and Son are distinct Persons not distinct Beings. Their Persons are distinct, yet their Being is the same.

Finally, this fails to take into consideration that Jesus is God as well as man. Therefore, Christ had and continues to have both a divine and human consciousness. In his divine consciousness, he is all-knowing and immutable. Cf. [Luke 10:22](#); [John 1:45–49](#); [2:23–25](#); [16:30–31](#); [21:17](#); [1 Corinthians 1:24, 30](#); [4:4–5](#); [Colossians 2:2–3](#); [Hebrews 1:10–12](#); [13:8](#); [Revelation 2:23](#); [Jeremiah 17:10](#).

Yet, as man his knowledge was finite and mutable; [Mark 13:32](#); [Luke 2:40, 52](#).

11) Whoever hears from God and what he, i.e. “Jesus” is to say is taught by God. The Holy Spirit does so.

Response: We have answered this already. See our response to No. 4.

12) Whoever has a will distinct from God is not God; the holy spirit has a will which is distinct from the will of God ([Romans 8:26–27](#)) and whoever follows the will of God i.e. “Jesus” is NOT God (BECAUSE THEY ARE INSEPARABLE! (according to you and Athanasius).

Response: Correction. That the three Persons all have will demonstrates that they are PERSONS, not mere abstract forces. Therefore, this argument only proves that the Holy Spirit is a Person and not just a force, since he is said to have a will.

Furthermore, the term “will” does not appear in [Romans 8:26–27](#). Rather, we find the term used in [1 Corinthians 12](#):

“Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines” ([1 Corinthians 12:7–11](#)).

This passage affirms that the Holy Spirit is God, the third Person of the Trinity. This is due to the fact that the Holy Spirit is able to empower and equip all Christian believers with the gifts of God. The only way for the Spirit to be able to do so is if he is all-powerful, all knowing and ever present.

Furthermore, this passage also demonstrates the Holy Spirit’s sovereignty since he gives gifts to whomever he is pleased to give them. In other words, the Holy Spirit is free to do as he wills with any believer as the Spirit sees fit.

Therefore, this proves that the Holy Spirit is the Sovereign Lord of all creation.

Finally, that Christ seeks to fulfill the Father’s will and not his own affirms a) that the Father and Son are distinct Persons, b) that the Father and Son are not mere abstract forces but intelligent and conscious agents and c) that the Son is in perfect union with the Father and therefore seeks to fulfill the latter’s will.

This ends our rebuttal. We pray that the God and Father of our risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ grant all who read this paper the grace of his Holy Spirit to believe in him. Jesus is Lord forever!

For further articles by Sam Shamoun, see the Answering Islam home page www.answering-islam.org

Also see Robert A. Morey, *The Trinity: Evidence and Issues*, World Publications.

A Rebuttal of Jamal Badawi's 'Wife Beating'

By Silas

Islam is rightly criticized because the Quran commands men to beat disobedient wives. Allah commands men to beat their wives if they continue to be rebellious to their husbands. Accordingly, this aspect of Islam has come under censure because it allows a man to physically assault his wife.

Muslim apologists like Badawi seek to do spin control. Like a White House lawyer, Badawi seeks to improve the image of Islam rather than reveal the truth. After all, they don't want Islam to be seen as denigrating to women, especially in the West. That would scare away potential converts. As a result, a number of attempts have been made by Muslim apologists to soften the Quran's stance, or to portray it in a different light.

In this rebuttal, I examine Badawi's apologetic and compare it to a number of traditions (Hadith) and other Islamic writings. I want to bring to light Islam's true position on wife beating. It is, as we shall see, somewhat more severe than Badawi and other Muslims are willing to admit publicly. I don't blame them for being ashamed; legalized wife beating is a blight on society.

Badawi wrote:

"There are cases, however, in which a wife persists in deliberate mistreatment and expresses contempt of her husband and disregard for her marital obligations. Instead of divorce, the husband may resort to another measure that may save the marriage, at least in some cases."

I question Badawi's logic here. The issue at hand is not saving the marriage; the issue is bringing the wife into obedience in a way that pleases her husband. If he chooses to divorce her because of her disobedience, or chooses to bear with it is another issue. A husband is free to divorce his wife even if she is not disobedient. A wife may be pleasing to her husband in many areas, but disobey him in one. He may wish to put up with her disobedience, even after a beating, and not divorce her. The wife isn't beaten to save the marriage, the wife is beaten to bring her into obedience to the man.

Further, since when does wife beating save marriages? Usually, it destroys them. Most women who have been beaten feel a sense of degradation. I know of no cases where a mature adult woman, who has been beaten by her husband, is grateful for the bruises and humiliation.

Badawi wrote:

"Such a measure is more accurately described as a gentle tap on the body, but NEVER ON THE FACE, making it more of a symbolic measure than a punitive one."

Again Badawi misses the mark. A “beating” is not a “gentle tap” on the body. A beating is a painful, degrading experience. He states that since the wife is not to be struck on the face, the beating is symbolic rather than punitive. Does Badawi have any idea of what a beating can constitute? Just a little common sense and experience teaches us that a person can receive a very painful beating without ever being struck in the face. Many people have died from such beatings. Bruises on the body can be very agonizing and a severe beating on the body can do lasting damage. A person doesn’t need to be struck in the face to receive a painful beating.

Badawi is also incorrect about the scope of wife beating. Islamic wife beating may have not been on the face, but it certainly was physical, and it was meant to hurt the wife. Look at it from another perspective: If the wife is already in rebellion to her husband, a “gentle tap” is not going to change her attitude. At that point, she would probably laugh in his face.

Following is the related Qur’anic text:

“Men are the protectors and maintainers of women because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means. Therefore, the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in (the husband’s) absence what Allah would have them guard. As to those women on whose part you fear disloyalty and ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (next) do not share their beds, (and last) beat (tap) them (lightly); but if they return to obedience, seek not against them means (of annoyance): for Allah is Most High, Great (above you all). (4:34)”

Here Badawi uses a modified Quranic text. Look at all of the word insertions enclosed by () parentheses. This verse is from Ali’s translation of the Quran, a translation written with the Western reader in mind. Ali inserted words designed to make Islam more palatable to the Western reader. Like Badawi, he didn’t want the truth about Islam and wife beating to be understood properly.

Here are some of Ali’s insertions into the Quranic text: “strength,” “tap,” “lightly,” “of annoyance.” All of these words are meant to shade the true meaning of the Quran. In these cases, the true meaning of the Arabic words are deliberately obscured.

Let’s examine the word used for “beat.” Ali and Badawi would like us to believe that it really means “tap,” instead of the more brutal word of “beat.” But as I will show, “beat” is clearly the correct translation.

The word in the Quran in 4:34 used for “beat” is “idreb.” It is a conjugate of the word “daraba,” which primarily means “to beat, strike, to hit”—*Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, page 538.

The Arabic word “idreb” is used in two primary ways. 1) to strike up a poem, and 2) to physically “beat,” or “strike” someone. I find that “idreb” is used 12 times in the Quran. Eight times it is used in the physical action of striking, and three times it is used in the context of speaking or applying a proverb.

Clearly then, the most frequent use of the word is in physically striking.

Here is a Quranic verse in which “idreb” is used:

8:12—“‘Strike’ off their heads, ‘strike’ off the very tips of their fingers!”

Here, God is telling the angels to strike the infidels. One has to ask, is God telling His angels to “gently tap” these people?

Now examine the context of 4:34. First of all, the man has already tried the verbal approach. He has already admonished his wife, and it has failed to bring her into submission to him. Second, he has stopped sleeping with her. This means he is no longer having “relations” with

her. [I wonder who is really punished more in this, the husband or the wife?]. And she is still refusing to obey her husband. So, now, if she continues in rebellion, something more drastic must occur. “Applying a parable” won’t do. The verbal has already failed, and the man and woman are now deprived sexually. Since 4:34 describes a progression of stronger actions which must be followed, something stronger needs to be done according to the Quranic progression.

The next step is then “idreb.” Logically, it can only be the physical “beating” meaning most frequently associated with “idreb” in the Quran. Therefore, the context in 4:34, clearly shows that “beat, flog, or scourge” is the correct translation. “Tapping” is just Muslim whitewash or distortion of what is really meant by the Quran.

One final and extremely important note must be made on this verse: All of the translations of the Quran translate it as “beat” or similar. None of the translations use the term related to “applying a parable.” All translations use some form of physical striking.

Badawi wrote:

“Even here, that maximum measure is limited by the following: a. It must be seen as **A RARE EXCEPTION TO THE REPEATED EXHORTATION OF MUTUAL RESPECT, KINDNESS AND GOOD TREATMENT**, discussed earlier.”

Again, Badawi’s logic fails—he distorts the context of the verse. The command to beat the wife is not a “rare exception,” but the third step in a series of dealing with a disobedient wife.

Badawi wrote:

“b. As defined by Hadith, it is **NOT PERMISSIBLE TO STRIKE ANYONE’S FACE, CAUSE ANY BODILY HARM OR EVEN BE HARSH**. What the Hadith qualified as *dharban ghayra mubarrih*, or light striking, was interpreted by early jurists as a (symbolic) use of *miswak* (a small natural toothbrush)! They further qualified permissible ‘striking’ as that which leaves no mark on the body.”

Badawi mentions a “*miswak*.” He has missed his own hadith. Here are two references that prove that Islamic wife beating is physical and is supposed to do harm.

No. 1) “A woman complained to Muhammad that her husband slapped her on the face, (which was still marked by the slap). At first the prophet said to her: ‘Get even with him,’ but then added: ‘Wait until I think about it.’ Later on, Allah supposedly revealed 4:34 to Muhammad, after which the prophet said: ‘We wanted one thing but Allah wanted another, and what Allah wanted is best.’”

The above quote comes from Razi’s “*At-Tasfir al-Kabir*” on 4:34. Razi is one of the best known Muslim scholars. I think that he knew what he was talking about.

In addition, here is a Hadith from Bukhari vol. 7, No. 715, that supports the case:

“Narrated Ikrima: ‘Rifaa divorced his wife whereupon Abdur-Rahman married her. Aisha said that the lady came wearing a green veil and complained to her (Aisha) and showed her a green spot on her skin caused by beating. It was the habit of ladies to support each other, so when Allah’s messenger came, Aisha said, ‘I have not seen any woman suffering as much as the believing women. Look! Her skin is greener than her clothes!’ When Abdur-Rahman heard that his wife had gone to the prophet, he came with his two sons from another wife. She said, ‘By Allah! I have done no wrong to him, but he is impotent and is as useless to me as this,’ holding and showing the fringe of her

garment. Abdur-Rahman said, 'By Allah, O Allah's messenger! She has told a lie. I am very strong and can satisfy her, but she is disobedient and wants to go back to Rifaa.' Allah's messenger said to her, 'If that is your intention, then know that it is unlawful for you to remarry Rifaa unless Abdur-Rahman has had sexual intercourse with you.' The prophet saw two boys with Abdur-Rahman and asked (him), 'Are these your sons?' On that Abdur-Rahman said, 'Yes.' The prophet said, 'You claim what you claim (that he is impotent)? But by Allah, these boys resemble him as a crow resembles a crow.'"

Let's note several items from this Hadith.

1) A woman was beaten by her husband because of marriage discord.

2) The Muslim women were suffering more than the non-Muslim women (via Aisha's comment), note it is said in the plural. This tells you just how good Muslim women back then really had it. Things were so bad for them, that they had to "support" each other because they were being abused in one way or another.

3) The woman was badly bruised.

4) Muhammad did not reprove the man for beating his wife. In fact, he reproached the woman for saying Rahman was impotent. Even though she was bruised, Muhammad accepted it, and did not reprove Rahman. Clearly, this beating was acceptable to Muhammad.

Badawi wrote:

"It is interesting that this latter fourteen-centuries-old qualifier is the criterion used in contemporary American law to separate a light and harmless tap or strike from 'abuse' in the legal sense."

This statement is irrelevant because it is already shown that an Islamic wife-beating can leave bruises. What should be noted is that Islamic wife-beating is illegal in the United States. I find that interesting: a nation passes a law, superior to Quranic law, that protects women from the religious treatment permitted by "Allah" of the Quran.

Badawi wrote:

"This makes it clear that even this extreme, last resort, and 'lesser of the two evils' measure that may save a marriage does not meet the definitions of 'physical abuse,' 'family violence,' or 'wife battering' in the 20th century law in liberal democracies, where such extremes are so commonplace that they are seen as national concerns."

Again Badawi is incorrect. Islamic wife beating is not the "lesser of two evils." It is an evil permitted by the Muslims' god. It is an evil legally permitted by Islamic law. Treating women as similar to animals is just plain wrong.

And Badawi is wrong about Islamic wife beating not meeting the definitions of "physical abuse," or "family violence," or "wife battering." Clearly Islamic wife beating is physical abuse, violent, and wife battering. I find it excellent that our society addresses spousal abuse. It is good that we track it, identify it, and judge it to be wrong. I only wish that Islamic society did likewise. However, Islamic societies do not identify it as abuse, they do not keep statistics on it, and they do not judge spousal abuse, according to 4:34 to be wrong. After all, if Allah almighty commanded men to beat disobedient wives, why should they judge or review his command?

Here is a case from Saudi Arabia. Note the institutionalized aspect of Islamic wife beating. Islamic wife beating has been observed in the Mideast. Sandra Mackay in her book *The Saudis*, comments on the amount of wife beating that goes on there:

“Women survive by totally placing themselves in the hands of men. It is in this basic relationship of master and servant that a woman’s physical needs are met.... Restlessness is repressed.... Obedience is security.

“The man’s absolute authority over the women in his family is maintained through fear—the fear of physical brutality, the fear of economic insecurity....” (page 138).

“My translator lowered her head and quietly said that if the men found out about the women’s disobedience, they would be beaten” (page 139).

Badawi wrote:

“c. The permissibility of such symbolic expression of the seriousness of continued refraction DOES NOT IMPLY ITS DESIRABILITY.”

Again, Badawi misses the point of 4:34. Beating the wife is commanded, and according to Islamic law, desirable. If the wife will not obey her husband, then he is to beat her. It is desirable, on the part of Islam that she be brought into submission to her husband, even if it includes a harsh beating. And on this point, is Badawi saying that one of Allah’s commands are not to be followed because they are not “desirable” in his eyes?

Badawi wrote:

“In several hadith, Prophet Muhammad discouraged this measure. Among his sayings are the following: ‘Do not beat the female servants of Allah;’ ‘Some (women) visited my family complaining about their husbands (beating them). These (husbands) are not the best of you.’”

Badawi has misquoted the Hadith. It is given in the Sunan of Abu Dawud. Here is the actual quote.

No. 2141—“Iyas Dhubab reported the apostle of Allah as saying:

“‘Do not beat Allah’s handmaidens,’ but when Umar came to the apostle of Allah and said: ‘Women have become emboldened towards their husbands,’ he (the prophet), gave permission to beat them. Then many women came around the family of the apostle of Allah complaining against their husbands. So, the apostle of Allah said, ‘Many women have gone round Muhammad’s family complaining against their husbands. They are not the best among you.’”

Note here that Muhammad commented on the women who were complaining to his wives: “they are not the best among you.” Muhammad was not commenting on the husbands who beat their wives. Muhammad had permitted husbands to beat the wives because the women became “emboldened” toward their husbands. Muhammad censured the wives for complaining about their husbands.

Abu Dawud’s notes on 2141 are:

“This shows that wives should obey their husbands....”

On 2142:

“This means that a man tries his best to correct his wife, but he fails to do so, he is allowed to beat her as a last resort. This tradition never means that a husband should beat his wife without any valid reason.”

Here is another Hadith on wife beating from Abu Dawud:

No. 2142: Umar reported the prophet as saying: “A man will not be asked why he beat his wife.”

Does this sound like Umar is addressing a woman who was “tapped” by her husband? Of course not. Is Badawi accusing Umar of not following the Sunnah? And if wife beating were not according to the Sunnah, why does Allah command wife beating in the Quran? Why did Muhammad permit wife beating in his farewell address? Clearly, wife beating is allowed, even commanded in Islam.

A comment on the Hadith of Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 7, No. 132:

“Narrated Zam’a, ‘The prophet said, “None of you should flog his wife as he flogs a slave and then have sexual intercourse with her in the last part of the day.” ’ ”

Note that Muhammad did not forbid beating the wife, he only didn’t want her beaten as severely as a Muslim’s slaves could be beaten.

Badawi quoted:

“...How does anyone of you beat his wife as he beats the stallion camel and then he may embrace (sleep with) her?...” (Sahih Al-Bukhari, op. cit., vol. 8. Hadith 68, pp. 42–43).

Here, Muhammad is commenting on going too far in beating his wife, and then expecting sex with her at night. He didn’t dis-allow wife beating, he just didn’t want the women to be beaten like rebellious animals, say with a whip or club. This is similar to the previous Bukhari Hadith. However, physical wife beating, one that causes pain, and causes bruises is allowed. It is just not allowed to beat as severe as in a slave’s or animal’s beating.

Badawi wrote:

“d. True following of the Sunnah is to follow the example of the Prophet Muhammad, who NEVER RESORTED TO THAT MEASURE, regardless of the circumstances.”

This statement is absurd from an Islamic point of view. If the Quran commands wife beating, then Muslims are to obey it. Whether or not Muhammad beat his wives is irrelevant. The point is that Muhammad commanded wife beating for persistent disobedience on the wife’s part.

Badawi wrote:

“e. Islamic teachings are universal in nature. They respond to the needs and circumstances of diverse times, cultures and circumstances. Some measures may work in some cases and cultures or with certain persons but may not be effective in others.”

What does this mean? It certainly sounds sweet and spiritual—“universal in nature,” but what does it really mean? Is Badawi saying the Muslim men in the West don’t have to obey the Quran because it is legally and culturally wrong or that the Quran’s rules don’t apply in the West, or in the 20th century? Or is Badawi admitting that the West’s systems of laws are superior to the Quran’s and the latter are therefore abrogated? Certainly the societal laws in America are superior to Islamic laws.

Badawi wrote:

“by definition, a ‘permissible’ act is neither required, encouraged or forbidden. In fact it may be BETTER TO SPELL OUT THE EXTENT of permissibility, such as in the issue at hand, rather than leaving it unrestricted and unqualified, or ignoring it all together. In the absence of strict qualifiers, persons may interpret the matter in their own way, which can lead to excesses and real abuse.”

Again, Badawi misunderstands the Quranic text. He calls the wife beating of 4:34 “permissible.” He is wrong; it is a command. The Quran clearly outlines the steps to be taken when a husband is dealing with a rebellious wife. The third step to be taken is wife beating. Period. It is given as a command, not an option dependent upon the husband’s whim. All Islam states is that the wife is not to be beaten as severely as a slave or animal.

That is the extent of the beating.

Badawi wrote:

“f. Any excess, cruelty, family violence, or abuse committed by any ‘Muslim’ can never be traced, honestly, to any revelatory text (Qur’an or Hadith). Such EXCESSES AND VIOLATIONS ARE TO BE BLAMED ON THE PERSON(S) HIMSELF, as it shows that they are paying lip service to Islamic teachings and injunctions and failing to follow the true Sunnah of the Prophet.”

According to the rules for Islamic wife beating, it is permissible to bruise the wife. If bruising the wife is considered as “spousal abuse” by U.S. law, then in fact Islam itself is to be blamed for justifying the abuse of women. Islam itself is to be judged as a religion that justifies the maltreatment of wives who are not submissive to their husbands. Islam itself is to be seen as a system of oppression for women worldwide.

Conclusion

Islam is very definitive about a women’s position in regards to a man. The Quran commands men to beat their wives if their wives persist in disobedience to their requests or orders. This is a brutal way to subject women to men’s commands, and as we see in Saudi, it opened the door for women to become almost de-humanized. By establishing that a women is not able to control herself, placing men as “managers” of women, and further even commanding men to beat women, Islam makes women second class people. Like a kept prized animal, women are people who are to be treated kindly, but severely disciplined when they get out of line. There is no way to justify this degrading, institutionalized, physical and psychological abuse of women allowed and commanded by Islam.

For more articles by Silas, visit the Answering Islam home page at www.answering-islam.org

Muhammad and the Snakes!

By Silas

A young Muslim man returns home and finds his wife standing near the door. He assumes immediately she’s an adulterer and raises his weapon to kill her. But she warns him that something dangerous is within their house. The man rushes in and on the bed is a large snake. The man attacks the snake and kills it, but during the struggle he is also bitten, both die quickly.

Snakes kill people, people kill snakes. There is nothing uncommon about it; it’s been happening for thousands of years.

So, what is unusual about this instance?

Muhammad had some very unusual things to say about this event. As you read Muhammad's words try to determine if he relied upon his own ideas, upon Allah's wisdom, or perhaps another source of information? Think about his statements, then decide if he was superstitious, irrational, or telling the truth.

Presentation of material

The following are a collection of Hadith from several Islamic sources. Each one contains a unique detail that I feel is necessary to present the overall picture. Try to form a composite in your mind of what Muhammad intended.

(1) From Muslim's collection of Hadith [1], Book 026, Number 5557:

“Abu as-Sa'ib, the freed slave of Hisham b. Zuhra, said that he visited Abu Sa'id Khudri in his house, (and he further) said: I found him saying his prayer, so I sat down waiting for him to finish his prayer when I heard a stir in the bundles (of wood) lying in a corner of the house. I looked towards it and found a snake. I jumped up in order to kill it, but he (Abu Sa'id Khudri) made a gesture that I should sit down. So I sat down and as he finished (the prayer) he pointed to a room in the house and said: Do you see this room? I said: Yes. He said: There was a young man amongst us who had been newly wedded. We went with Allah's Messenger to (participate in the Battle of) Trench when a young man in the midday used to seek permission from Allah's Messenger to return to his family. One day he sought permission from him and Allah's Messenger (after granting him the permission) said to him: Carry your weapons with you for I fear the tribe of Quraiza (may harm you). The man carried the weapons and then came back and found his wife standing between the two doors. He bent towards her smitten by jealousy and made a dash towards her with a spear in order to stab her. She said: Keep your spear away and enter the house until you see that which has made me come out. He entered and found a big snake coiled on the bedding. He darted with the spear and pierced it and then went out having fixed it in the house, but the snake quivered and attacked him and no one knew which of them died first, the snake or the young man. We came to Allah's Apostle and made a mention to him and said: Supplicate to Allah that that (man) may be brought back to life. Thereupon he said: Ask forgiveness for your companion and then said: There are in Medina 'Jinns' who have accepted Islam, so when you see any one of them, pronounce a warning to it for three days, and if they appear before you after that, then kill it for that is a devil.”

Note: If you don't know what “Jinn” are, see the link below for further information.
<http://answering-islam.org/Index/J/jinn.html>

(2) From Muslim's collection of Hadith Book 026, Number 5558:

“Asma' b. 'Ubaid reported about a person who was called as-Sa'ib having said: We visited Abu Sa'id Khudri. When we had been sitting (with him) we heard a stir under his bed. When we looked we found a big snake, the rest of the hadith is the same. And in this Allah's Messenger is reported to have said: Verily in these houses there live aged (snakes), so when you see one of them, make life hard for it for three days, and if it goes away (well and good), otherwise kill it for (in that case) it would be a nonbeliever. And

he (the Holy Prophet) said (to his Companions): Go and bury your companion (who had died by the snake bite).”

(3) Sunan of Abu Dawud, Book 41, Number 5236:

“Narrated Abu Sa’id al-Khudri:

“Muhammad ibn Abu Yahya said that his father told that he and his companion went to Abu Sa’id al-Khudri to pay a sick visit to him. He said: Then we came out from him and met a companion of ours who wanted to go to him. We went ahead and sat in the mosque. He then came back and told us that he heard Abu Sa’id al-Khudri say: The Apostle of Allah said: Some snakes are jinn; so when anyone sees one of them in his house, he should give it a warning three times [4521]. If it returns (after that), he should kill it, for it is a devil.”

Hasan’s note 4521 states:

“The verb means to make things difficult. It means that one should tell the snake three times that it will be in difficulties if it returns. It should not blame one if it is driven away and killed. The warning should be given for three days. There is a difference of opinion whether it should be given three times or for three days. What is agreed is that it should be given three times for three days.”

(4) Sunan of Abu Dawud, Book 41, Number 5240:

“Narrated AbdurRahman Ibn Abu Layla:

“The Apostle of Allah was asked about the house-snakes. He said: When you see one of them in your dwelling, say: I adjure you by the covenant which Noah made with you, and I adjure you by the covenant which Solomon made with you not to harm us. Then if they come back, kill them.”

(5) Sunan of Abu Dawud, Book 41, Number 5229:

“Narrated Abdullah ibn Mas’ud:

“The Prophet said: Kill all the snakes, and he who fears their revenge does not belong to me.”

(6) Sahih Muslim, Book 026, Number 5544:

“Salim, on the authority of his father. reported Allah’s Apostle as saying: Kill the snakes having stripes over them and short-tailed snakes, for these two types cause miscarriage (of a pregnant woman) and they affect the eyesight adversely. So Ibn ’Umar used to kill every snake that he found. Abu Lubaba b. ’Abd al-Mundhir and Zaid b. Khattab saw him pursuing a snake, whereupon he said: They were forbidden (to kill) those snakes who live in houses.”

(7) Sunan of Abu Dawud, Number 5232:

“Ibn Umar reported the Apostle of Allah as saying: Kill snakes, kill those which have two streaks and those with small tails, for they obliterate the eyesight and cause miscarriage” [4519].

“Salim said: Abd Allah used to kill every snake which he found. Abu Lubabah or Zaid b. al-Khattab saw him chasing a snake. He said: He (the Prophet) prohibited killing house snakes” [4520].

Hasan’s note 4519 says,

“They were poisonous snakes and caused harm to people. The people are commanded to kill them.”

Hasan’s note 4520 says,

“The version of al-Bukhari and Muslim has: For they are resident jinn.”

(8) Sahih Muslim, Book 026, Number 5559:

“Abu Sa’id Khudri reported Allah’s Messenger having said: There is a group of Jinns in Medina who accepted Islam, so he who would see anything from these occupants should warn him three times; and if he appears after that, he should kill him for he is a Satan” [2607].

Siddiqi’s note 2607 reads:

“It is on the basis of this hadith that some of the scholars are of the opinion that it is not proper to kill snakes of Medina without issuing them a grim warning with these words: ‘*adjure you in the name of that Covenant which Hadrat Sulaiman took from you that you should not harm us and do not appear again.*’ This is not essential for any other place besides Medina. The reason for this is that some of the Jinns had embraced Islam and they lived in the houses and at times assumed the form of big snakes” (Nawawi, Vol. II, p. 234).

Summary

Muhammad had commanded the killing of all snakes, except those that lived in houses. Additionally, Muhammad believed that some “Jinn” had received Islam and somehow turned into snakes. These “Muslim” snakes inhabited homes. If a Muslim snake was found in a home by the human Muslims, they were to warn the Muslim snakes for three days. The Muslims were to say, “I adjure you by the covenant which Noah made with you, and I adjure you by the covenant which Solomon made with you not to harm us.” If the snakes left the home, well and good, but if they remained in the house, they were to be killed because they are “the devil,” i.e. evil, non-Muslim snakes, perhaps real snakes, perhaps an emissary of Satan.

Discussion

As I read and study the Hadith I am struck over and over again at Muhammad’s extreme superstition. Fear and superstition permeated his theology. Now, for some strange reason he believed that Jinn had received Islam and morphed into snakes. You can’t blame these Muslim snakes for wanting to live in homes can you? But, Muhammad didn’t want these Muslim snakes to live in human Muslim homes, so he ordered his followers to warn and trouble the snakes in order to drive them out.

Aren’t people who carry on like this put into mental hospitals?

Let me ask you. If you saw someone carrying on a conversation with a large, strange snake in his house, that could be poisonous, what would you think? Or, what would you think if a friend or co-worker told you about finding a large snake in his home and he was now “warning” it? Try

it for yourself... Speak to one of your friends at work and tell him, as seriously as possible, that you're talking with a potentially dangerous snake, because it could be a Muslim snake, and you're intending to do this for three days. Watch his reaction!

Let's not forget the story about the poor young Muslim man who died from the snake bite. Imagine if he had allowed the snake to remain in his house for 3 days. It could have bitten his wife or other visitors to the home.

You don't need to be a herpetologist to know that Muhammad has some serious problems. Here are some issues to be considered.

1). First of all, not all outdoor snakes are harmful. Many of them are in fact quite beneficial to humanity. They kill destructive pests like rodents. What's the point in killing beneficial snakes?

2). Second, what does that say with respect to Islam and the destruction of a beneficial species of animal?

3). Third, isn't it quite bizarre for people to be talking with snakes? Muhammad was a superstitious man, in the Quran he has Solomon talking with ants. But here, the stakes are a bit higher—i.e. they are Muslim snakes. I'd hate to see a Muslim try talking with a poisonous snake. Definitely not a good idea. It might make for a good comedy, or "world's most dangerous stunts" type show, but certainly not a good idea for a real life situation.

4). Snakes have poor ability to hear. If Muhammad were really led by God wouldn't he have used a more reliable form of communication with the snakes? After all, the motive was to communicate effectively with the snakes and warn them or drive them away.

5). Should we assume that snakes, at least the snakes in question, understood Arabic? Especially the Arabic dialect of the home in which he chose to live?

6). Normally snakes don't "live" in homes. If Jinn have morphed into snakes, would they live as snakes? Snakes avoid contact with humans.

7). Do you really think that by speaking to a snake and referencing Solomon and Noah, that that would prohibit the snake from biting you or anyone else? Are the Muslims willing to give it a try? I'm sure there are many cobras in India that are available for the job.

General info on snakes

From the *World Book Encyclopedia* entry on Snakes, pages 524–536, (1993 edition).

"Throughout history, snakes have been the subject of many myths and superstitions. The fear of snakes results from a lack of knowledge about the animals. Most snakes are harmless to people. In addition, snakes are helpful in controlling rats and other rodents."

"The main value of snakes is that they form part of the environment and help preserve the balance of nature.... Snake venom has several uses in medicine and biological research.... Certain pain-killing drugs are prepared from neurotoxins in venom. Researchers use the powerful enzymes in venom to break down complex proteins for biochemical studies."

Of course there are many in-depth books and articles about snakes. If you want to learn more about them do some research. Unfortunately for Muhammad, he only had his myths and superstitions to go on. As a result, he ordered the killing of many beneficial creatures.

Here is some additional information from an article found on the web.

http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/995_snakes.html

About 8,000 people a year receive venomous bites in the United States; nine to 15 victims die. Some experts say that because victims can't always positively identify a snake, they should seek prompt care for any bite, though they may think the snake is nonpoisonous. Even a bite from a so-called "harmless" snake can cause an infection or allergic reaction in some people.

Though poisonous snakes can be dangerous, snake venom may have a positive side. Clinical trials are presently under way to test the therapeutic value of a venom-derived product called ancrod in treating stroke. Earlier proposals, using snake venom to treat neuromuscular disorders such as multiple sclerosis, never reached the clinical trial stage.

Advice for the Muslims

If you come across a snake in your house, be careful. It may be poisonous. Do not follow Muhammad's advice and "warn" it for 3 days. If need be, call the fire department, or animal society representative (the names of such agencies vary from state to state), or even the police department. If you follow Muhammad's advice you, or your children, or friends, could be bitten by the snake. If the snake is poisonous, the bite could prove fatal, especially to small children.

Conclusion

Muhammad's irrational statements on Jinn and snakes stemmed from his lack of knowledge and superstition. Where he got the idea of Jinn turning into snakes is beyond me. But we see that his command to kill all snakes is detrimental to the environment. Further, his command to warn dangerous snakes is potentially harmful to people that follow and obey him.

My question to the Muslims is this: why put your trust in the teachings of this man? Are you going to entrust your eternity to someone who taught that people should dialog with snakes?

Prayer for salvation

This prayer is written for anyone. This includes Muslims who are seeking the truth and who want to know God in a personal way.

"Lord Jesus, I believe in You. I believe that You are the Son of God and the Lord. I believe that You died for my sins and were raised from the dead. I confess that I am a sinner and I ask You to come into my heart, cleanse me from my sins, and forgive me for my sins. I turn to follow and obey You—I put my faith in you. I now receive You as Messiah and Lord and totally commit my life to You. Amen."

References

1. Muslim, A., "Sahih Muslim," translated by A. Siddiqi, International Islamic Publishing House, Riyadh, KSA.
2. Abu Dawud, Suliman, "Sunan," al-Madina, New Delhi, 1985, translated by A. Hasan. Further reading: Chapter XI: Tree, Stone and Serpent Worship in Samuel Zwemer's *The Influence of Animism on Islam*.

For more articles by Silas, visit the Answering Islam home page at www.answering-islam.org

The Fatwa Against the Nation of Islam

By Shaykh 'Ali Mo'allim Hussen

President, Board of Ulema, Italian Muslim Association

On March 7, 1998, the Board of Ulema of the Italian Muslim Association (AMI) issued the following fatwa against the Nation of Islam. The English translation was rendered by Professor Abdul Hadi Palazzi, secretary-general of the Italian Muslim Association and director of the Cultural Institute of the Italian Islamic Community.

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

Praise to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and blessings and peace upon His servant and Messenger, the Prophet Muhammad ibn 'Abdillah, upon his family, his companions and those who follow his way till the day of the Resurrection. Allah, the Most High, says in the Holy Qur'an: "Of the people there are some who say: 'We believe in Allah and the Last Day,' notwithstanding their unbelief. Fain would they deceive Allah and the believers, but they only deceive themselves, and realize it not. In their hearts there is a disease, and Allah permitted this disease to increase. Grievous is the penalty they incur, because they are false" (Qur'an 2:8-10).

During the past few months a group active in the United States that calls itself the "Nation of Islam" has received worldwide press coverage. Its leader, Louis Farrakhan, met Islamic scholars and heads of State, introducing himself as a representative of American Muslims. Some brothers of ours asked this Board: "Can Mr. Farrakhan and his followers be accepted as 'Muslim' in the sense that this word is defined by the Shari'ah?" With the permission and the help of Allah, after due investigation of the matter, this Board answers as follows:

Praise to Allah, the One who created good and evil, and who revealed the difference between the true and the false. Generally speaking, the hukm (Shari'ah rule) is that each one who claims to be a Muslim must be accepted as such by other Muslims, except in the case they have a clear evidence of the contrary. The most common hukm is that "unbelief is not proved by actions," but "is proved by the principles that are believed." The most common way to prove what a man actually believes is by analyzing his speeches and writings.

That means that the fact that someone does not usually observe the hukm of the Shari'ah is not enough to prove his unbelief. This view is held by the Hanafi, Maliki and Shaf'i schools, but the school of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal says that "unbelief is not proven by actions, except for the compulsory ritual prayers (salawat)."

According to this school, a Muslim who refuses to pray a compulsory prayer must be regarded as a renegade, but the other three schools say he is a Muslim, although a sinner (fasiq). Notwithstanding this divergence, the four schools are unanimous in considering non-Muslim someone who—without being under pressure—says, "I do not regard prayer as compulsory," or "There is no need to fast on Ramadan," or "There is no harm in drinking wine," etc. That kind of declaration proves that a person has rejected one of the clear hukms, about which there is no doubt or possibility of misunderstanding. The consensus of Islamic jurists is that rejecting a single hukm is like rejecting them all, and that missing an element of faith is like missing them all. There is no difference between a hukm concerning things that must be believed by the heart, or things that must be done by the body. As a general rule, it is forbidden to investigate whether Muslims observe the Shari'ah, even if their belief is correct from all points of view. Notwithstanding this, as soon as a Muslim hears from his brother something that can be identified as a wrong belief, he has the duty to correct him and to teach him the correct doctrine according to the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

In cases when some wrong doctrine can imply unbelief, it is necessary, for the involved person, to repent and to pronounce again the two testimonies. The case is different when a person or a group is openly preaching and teaching doctrines that look unusual. In that case, the Ulema are bound to investigate the matter, and judge whether these doctrines imply heresy (*bid'ah*) or apostasy (*riddah*).

Regarding the “Nation of Islam,” their official doctrine is that Allah appeared in the form of a human being named Fard Muhammad, and that this “incarnation of God” chose another man, called Elijah Muhammad, as his Prophet. This is a clear contradiction of the Monotheistic faith (*Tawhid*), and of the Qur’anic teaching according to which Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) is the Seal of the Prophets. This is enough to say that everyone who belongs to the “Nation of Islam” is not, ipso facto, a Muslim, but an unbeliever.

Muslims must declare this truth, and each one of them who keeps silent while listening to Mr. Farrakhan being called “a Muslim leader” is sinning. Since the matter concerns “faith and unbelief,” it is not permitted to avoid a judgment due to political or diplomatic considerations. Every marriage between a Muslim and a member of the “Nation of Islam” is null and void, and whoever, after becoming a member of this organization, wants to return to Islam, must repent and be re-converted. In case he was married, he must re-celebrate his wedding; in case he performed the Pilgrimage, he must perform it again.

We pray to Allah to make all this clear to our brothers in Islam, and to help them never to deviate from the doctrine that was revealed in the Holy Qur’an and that is presently accepted by the Islamic Community. And we call upon Allah as a Witness of what we say.

The Invasion of Islamic Ignorance

By Gregory A. Hanson

The terms *Islam* and *Muslim* have now become common terminology in almost every household across America because of the tragic events of 9–11 and the war on terrorism. Demand is great for more information on Islam, and scholars are popping out of the woodwork. It seems that everywhere you look there are books, tapes and videos by authors claiming to be experts or authorities on the subject. But are all these “scholars” truly experts? Have these “scholars” done the research by which they publish their proclamations, or have they carelessly put together books to get a “piece of the pie” from a hungry world that is anxious to find out more about this new rising threat called Islam?

We have read a large number of these works and have found the information going out to the masses greatly disturbing. Yet there are others such as Dr. John Ankerberg, Dr. Robert Morey and Dr. Mark Gabriel who are found to be eye-opening and informative, and have strived to portray the teachings of Islam more correctly.

The books we reviewed were published by Christian authors. As Christian leaders it is our responsibility to accurately inform our readers of sound scholarship and to refute those who oppose the truth ([Titus 1:9](#)).

We have provided information on several authors in charts on pages 99 and 100 to show who the real scholars are.

A responsible reader will continually ask questions regarding the text that they are reading. Where is this person getting his/her information? Do they document their sources? If so, are the

sources reliable (primary/secondary)? Who is this author and what are his/her credentials in writing about this topic?

Conclusion

Careful study should be applied in all areas of research. The Christian Church needs to use intelligence in its research of enemies of the Faith, such as Islam. We should not allow the invasion of Islamic ignorance to creep into our worldview or mind-set. Islam is indeed a very dangerous religion. Do not be deceived by a nation striving to be politically correct and be tolerant of everyone. As we enter the war against terrorism, the Christian Church needs to be victorious and arm itself for battle against those who attack the truth.

Topic Evaluations

Pre-Islamic Origins & Moon God recognized
Allah Same God as in the Bible
Ishmael the Father of the Arabs
Probably read Qur'an
Refutes Qur'an
Knowledgeable of Hadith(s)
Portrays Islam as not peaceful
Title
Author

A Christian Response to Islam
William Miller
Not really
No
Yes
**

*
**

Answering Islam
Norman Geisler Abdul Saleeb
Very little
Yes
Yes
*

**** Author(s) perspective quality:**

Poor

***** Author(s) perspective quality:**

Fair

*** Author(s) perspective quality:**

Very poor

**

Bruce & Stan's Pocket Guide to Islam

Bruce Bickel Stan Jantz

No

Kind of

Yes

*

*

*

**

Christian Apologetics to Islam

Joshua Lingel

No

No

Yes

Fast Facts on Islam

John Ankerberg John Weldon

Yes

No

No

**

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Muhammad: a Biography of the Prophet

Karen Armstrong

No

Yes

Yes

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Muhammad's Mecca

Montgomery Watt

Yes

No

Yes

N/A

N/A

Islam and Terrorism

Mark Gabriel

N/A

No

N/A

***** Author(s) perspective quality:

Excellent

*** Author(s) perspective quality:

Good

Islam at the Crossroads
Paul Marshall Roberta Green Lela Gilbert

No

Yes

Not refuted

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Islamic Invasion
Dr. Robert Morey

Yes

No

No

Islam Revisited
Dr. Anis Shorrosh

No

Yes

Yes

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Secrets of the Koran
Don Richardson

No

Yes

Yes

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The Blood of the Moon
George Grant

No

Yes

Yes

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The Muslim Doctrine of God
Samuel Zwemer

Kind of

No

Ambiguous

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Understanding Muslim Teachings and Traditions
Phil Parshall

No

N/A

N/A

**** Bukhari quotes only

**

Winning the War Against Radical Islam

Dr. Robert Morey

Yes

No

No

Key:

Author(s) perspective quality:

*poor

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The Truth About the Nation of Islam

By Dr. Robert Morey

Introduction

Every major religion has its own set of cults or fringe groups, which use the name and terminology of that religion while in fact denying the core beliefs of that religion.

Hinduism: Thuggees, Hare Krishnas

Buddhism: Zen Buddhist cults/masters

Christianity: Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons

Islam: Sufism, Bahatism

It is in this sense that we view the Nation of Islam, or, as they are popularly known, the Black Muslims. It is a cult on the fringes of Islam, but it is not really a part of the religion of Islam. Why we say this is the focus of this study.

I. Its Origin and History

The Nation of Islam began in the early 1930s with the teachings of a white man by the name of Wallace D. Fard. His background and family heritage are still unknown.

The fact that both the Arab prophet Muhammad and Wallace Fard were white men is not generally known to most followers of the Nation of Islam. They have been fed the lie that Muhammad and Fard were black men. Since Wallace Fard and Muhammad were both white men, Islam and the Nation of Islam can both be called "a white man's religion."

The Watchtower Connection

Fard used the literature and teachings of the Jehovah's Witnesses to attack the Trinity and to reduce Jesus Christ to a mere man. He also developed a theory of racism in which the white man was created by an evil black scientist/god by the name of YaKub. This is why the white man is called "white devil." In contrast, black people are "gods" in that they sprang from the original black deities of the universe.

Elijah Poole

In 1931, one of his first converts was Elijah Poole, the son of a Baptist preacher. Fard changed Elijah's "Christian" name to the "Muslim" name of Kariem. But in 1934, Fard disappeared just as suddenly as he appeared. It is thought that Elijah had him murdered so he could take over the movement.

Kariem then changed his name to Elijah Muhammad and under his guidance the Nation of Islam made noteworthy converts such as Muhammad Ali.

Malcolm Little

One of the early converts of Elijah was a young man by the name of Malcolm Little who, like Elijah himself, was the son of a Baptist preacher. Elijah changed Little's name to Malcolm X and he became Elijah's chief spokesman. See the book *Islamic Invasion* for more details on Malcolm X.

Elijah Muhammad was a superb businessman who made himself, his family and his organization fabulously wealthy. He continued using Jehovah's Witness doctrines such as the end of the world coming in the 1970's, and 1914 as "the beginning of the end." This false prophecy proves that he was a false prophet.

Malcolm X leaves

Confronted with the gross immorality and greed of Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm became disillusioned with the cult. He began to doubt many of its teachings, particularly the idea that all white people were devils.

During a trip to Mecca, Malcolm X discovered that the teachings of Wallace Fard and Elijah Muhammad had nothing in common with the religion of Islam. But while at Mecca, he saw black slaves being sold in chains to white Arabs in the slave market but said nothing about it to the black community in America. His "slavegate" cover-up is a blemish on Malcolm's character to this day.

He left the Nation of Islam, became an orthodox Muslim and set up his own competing mosque. This meant that Elijah had to compete with Malcolm for those black dollars. This is the bottom line as to why he was murdered by a Black Muslim death squad.

After the death of Elijah Muhammad, the Nation of Islam was taken over by Wallace D. Muhammad, a son of Elijah. But he changed many things to bring it into line with orthodox Islam. In particular, he threw out the doctrine that white people were devils.

Louis Farrakhan

Louis Farrakhan did not like the changes that Wallace Muhammad was making. He split off and formed his own group, which he called the "Nation of Islam." He even set up his own army, which he called the "Fruit of Islam."

Since that time six competing groups, all calling themselves "the Nation of Islam," have arisen, each claiming to be the "true" successor to Elijah Muhammad. Since Elijah Muhammad said not to march on Washington, D.C., Farrakhan was clearly not following his teachings when he staged his "The Million Man March."

Farrakhan takes a ride

During his speech at the 1991 Savior's Day Celebration, Farrakhan claimed that he was beamed on board a giant spaceship in orbit around the earth forty miles up into outer space. This is the space ship which will destroy the white man one day.

Among the thousands of people on board, he heard the voice of none other than "Master Elijah Muhammad!" Thus he is still alive and not dead, according to Louis. The funeral for

Elijah, which was seen by thousands of people on TV, was a deception, according to Louis. He also claims that 1,500 little space ships follow him around at all times!

During this same speech, he attacked orthodox Islam as well as Christianity and preached his own unique doctrines.

II. Its True Nature

Some fringe groups are actually more racist than religious in nature. But they cloak their racism under religious terminology and paraphernalia in order to deceive and to manipulate people. This is particularly true of the Ku Klux Klan and the Nation of Islam. They are mirror images of each other in many ways. A comparison of these two racist organizations will be quite instructive (see box).

The Ku Klux Klan

The Nation of Islam

It began in times of racial tension and social upheaval.

It began in times of racial tension and social upheaval.

Self-proclaimed defender of the white man.

Self-proclaimed defender of the black man.

Has racist beliefs and a racist agenda.

Has racist beliefs and a racist agenda.

Self-styled defender of Christianity.

Self-styled defender of Islam.

But it denies what Christianity teaches.

But it denies what Islam teaches.

It is condemned by Christians.

It is condemned by Muslims.

Uses Christian symbols such as symbols the cross.

Uses Islamic symbols such as the crescent.

Claims to believe in the Christian God.

Claims to believe in the Muslim God.

Claims to honor Jesus Christ but it denies what he taught.

Claims to honor Muhammad but it denies what he taught.

Uses Christian names.

Uses Muslim names.

Wears "Christian" costumes: pointed hoods and gowns.

Wears "Muslim" costumes: skull caps and gowns.

Uses racist slurs against black people: niggers, coons, etc.

Uses racist slurs against white people: devils, honkey, etc.

Has a special hatred for Jews.

Has a special hatred for Jews.
Uses fear, intimidation and violence to get its way.
Uses fear, intimidation and violence to get its way.
Preaches segregation of the races.
Preaches segregation of the races.
Wants a “whites only” country.
Wants a “blacks only” country.
It has made its leaders wealthy.
It has made its leaders wealthy.

It is interesting to note that Elijah Muhammad sent Malcolm X to talk with the head of the KKK to see if they could work together.

III. The Teachings of the Nation of Islam

I. On God

No. 1. The Nation of Islam is guilty of teaching polytheism, which is the belief in more than one God. This is one reason why it has been condemned by Jews, Christians, and Muslims who believe that there is only one God.

According to Louis Farrakhan, the “24 elders” mentioned in the book of Revelation are actually 24 black godmen!

No. 2. The Nation of Islam is also guilty of teaching that all the gods including Allah are material in nature. This is in stark contrast to the Bible, which teaches that God is spiritual in nature ([John 4:24](#)).

No. 3. The Nation of Islam also teaches that all of the original gods were black men. This also is condemned by the Bible in [Num. 23:19](#).

II. On Allah

Allah is not just one man but a succession of men beginning with Wallace Fard. He was the Allah of the Muslims, the Jesus of the Christians, the Messiah of the Jews and the coming Mahdi. Then after he departed from the scene, Elijah Muhammad was proclaimed as Allah, Jesus, Messiah, and the coming Mahdi.

Now that Elijah has ascended to his space ship, in the 1991 Savior’s Day Celebration, Farrakhan was introduced as being “the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace.” Farrakhan has now stated that he is Allah, Jesus, the Messiah, and the coming Mahdi all rolled into one!

III. On Christ

Jesus is reduced to a mere man. His virgin birth, divine nature and atoning work on the cross are not only denied but ridiculed.

IV. On Man

The white man was not created by the god Allah but by the god YaKub. He was the same black scientist who accidentally created the moon during a laboratory explosion. He made the white race out of the evil in the universe.

V. On the Resurrection

Elijah Muhammad denied the physical resurrection of the body and taught a “mental resurrection” instead.

IV. How to Respond to the Nation of Islam

A. Begin by pointing out that it has nothing whatsoever to do with the religion of Islam, Muhammad or the Qur’an. They have simply ripped off the names and symbols of Islam while denying the essential core of the Islamic faith.

B. Point out that Allah is not God, Muhammad was not the prophet of God and the Qur’an is not the word of God. Thus Islam is itself a false religion. When combined with the Nation of Islam, it is double error.

C. Tell them that, like the KKK, it is a racist organization that uses religion to deceive and to manipulate people.

D. The real problem which faces all of us is not the color of our skin but the reality of our sin. The solution is not one’s race but God’s grace.

E. Point out to them that according to the Muslim scriptures called the Hadith in Vol. VI, No. 435, Muhammad was a slave owner of black slaves! Thus such names as “Muhammad” “Kariem” “Abdul” “Aisha” etc., are “slave” names! Contrast this with the fact that Jesus did not own any slaves and that He came to set all men free. Thus Bible names are better than slave names.

F. Tell them that the Nation of Islam stands opposed to everything that Martin Luther King Jr. ever believed or accomplished. They cannot follow both King and Louis. They have to choose which one they will honor.

G. Stand firm for what Dr. King said: “Do not judge us by the color of our skin, but judge us by the content of our character.”

H. If the Bible is the “white man’s book” as they claim, challenge them to find the words “white man” in the Bible. Such words never appear in the Bible because Jesus came to save all races and ranks of mankind.

I. Share the Gospel with them. Boldly tell them: No other gods ([Exo. 20:3](#)); No other name ([Acts 4:12](#)); No other way ([John 14:6](#)).

J. Give them the tracts: “Islam: The White Slaver’s Religion” and “Islam: The Religion of the Moon God.” Challenge them to read and refute the book *Islamic Invasion*. Show them the REF videos on Islam. Go after them and win them to Christ.

Conclusion

We have the truth on our side. So take the high ground and seize the initiative. The NOI cannot give even one verse in the Qur’an or the Hadith which says that Muhammad was a black man.

But we have lots of verses in the Hadith which state that he was a white man. Shout it from the rooftops and tell it on the mountains: Muhammad is dead while Jesus is alive!