

GOD IN ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

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Preface

Islam has become a very vocal religion in our society. The followers of Islam, i.e. Muslims, are very zealous in spreading their type of religion, in a society where people are ignorant or don't care about their spiritual needs.

The special head gears and long coats of Muslim ladies and the special dress and outer appearance of Muslim men are all techniques used in showing themselves as different from the common person. The majority of these Muslim people look and live differently in their respective countries, from where they have originated. The moment they step into the western culture they change themselves altogether. The men and women start dressing themselves in Middle Eastern fashion. If they don't change their outer appearance, they change their behavior. They become strict in their prayer times and in discussing their religion with other people who come in contact with them in their daily lives. These Muslims voluntarily impose on themselves the duty of preaching their religion in this land of "infidels."

The nation of Islam and the Ahmadis of the Indian subcontinent are away from the mainstream of Islam. So, their tactics and techniques are very different in this regard.

In this booklet, which is precisely written to acquaint the Christians with Islam, the idea of their god and the Truth of Christianity is noteworthy and to be followed.

"Now to our God and Father be the glory for ever and ever." Amen. Phil. 4:20

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When God created the universe and all it contained. He created this all as His single entity (Gen. 1:1-25), but when He created man He used a plural gender for Himself (Gen. 1:26). There are many interpretations of the opening words of this verse but I don't want to discuss them at this moment. My contention is to try to show God in His fullness which has been misinterpreted and misunderstood by the founder and followers of Islam which claims to be the last and final religion on this planet.

During this day and age Islam has become a focal point of the world's intelligencia. There are some who discuss it as a religion and there are others who take it as a political force. But, what is it exactly? It is a religion which compels its believers who are Muslims to practice the Law (Shariah) and its principals recorded in their Holy Book Quran.

Muslim scholars claim that Islam is a complete (Modesoperendi) way of life. This means that its canvas is so wide that it covers not only the spiritual aspect, but it is spread over the social, cultural and political spheres too. You name it, it covers the whole lot. Islam grooms its believers to feel superiority in every walk of life because their religion is "true" and "superior" to all beliefs of this world. It is infused in their minds that Christians are infidels and they believe in three Gods while there is One God and One Rasool (messenger) Mohammad (Kalma Shahada) who in the line of dispensationalist messengers is the last and final prophet. According to the Bible, the Christian's stand on this subject is quite clear. In Luke 16:16 and Matt. 11:13, John The Baptist, who in the Quran is mentioned as Yahya, has been ordained to this position by God Almighty.

Islam means submission to the will of God and 99 names are assigned to God.

The most prominent name is Allah. Dr. Robert A. Morey, in his book *Islam Unveiled* has thoroughly discussed how belief in Allah was transformed into a monotheistic faith by Islam from a pagan god of Arabs. He has discussed that in the pre-Islamic era, the worship of Allah was very common. When we study the history of that specific Arab region, we find that Abd Allah (Allah's slave) was a very popular name among these people, even the prophet Mohammad's father's name was also Abd Allah.

When we study the Torah, which according to Islam is a word of God, we don't find this name anywhere. This name was confined to this Arab region and was introduced as God by Islam.

As I have mentioned before, Muslims have a firm impression that Christians believe in three Gods. In Quran, Surah Al-Maidah (the table spread) i.e. v : 116 reads as :

"And when Allah saith; O Jesus, son of Mary! Didst thou say unto mankind; Take me and my mother for two gods beside Allah? He saith; Be glorified! It was not mine to utter that to which I had no right. If I used to say it, then thou knewest it. Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I know not what is in Thy mind. Lo! Thou, only Thou, are the knower of things hidden?"

Has Jesus ever said or indicated anywhere that Mary, His mother is God ? Nowhere. Contrary to this, John 2:4 and John 19:26 reveal that the Lord Jesus addressed her as "dear woman". He had great respect for her as being His biological mother. He fully realized that she was just another subject of His kingdom as all other human beings are. She also needed Him as we need Him for our salvation. In Luke 1: 46-55, Mary's song is recorded as her spiritual delight and thankfulness which clearly establishes her status as a normal human being. With reference to John 2:4, and 19:26 Jesus was not rude nor disrespectful to His mother. He didn't show disrespect even to those who sent Him to the cross. He was loving and compassionate. He prayed for their forgiveness in Luke 23:34.

Islam doesn't believe in the deity of the Lord Jesus. It considers Him just another prophet, nothing more, nothing less. In Quran Surah AL-SHOORAH (Council) i.e 42:13 reads as follows :

"He has ordained for you that Deen (Religion) which He commended unto Noah, and that which we inspire in thee (Mohammad) and that which we commended unto Ibrahim (Abraham) and Moosa (Moses) and Isa (Jesus), saying ; establish the Deen (Religion), be not divided there in."

Muslims believe that Ibrahim (Abraham) offered Ismail (Ishmael) as a sacrifice and not Ishaq (Isaac). But the Torah, to whom they believe to be a word of God, totally denies it (Gen 22). The Quran claims that Mohammad was the full and final messenger in the series of Rasools (Prophets) of the Divine Plan. The Prophet of Islam establishes his lineage from Ibrahim (Abraham) through Ismail (Ishmael) .

Islam came into being almost 600 years after Christianity . After the martyrdom of Stephen, the disciples made their way to Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, preaching Jesus (Acts 11:19 - 21) and they were first called Christians in Antioch (Acts 11 ; 26)

We have noted Quran (42:13), that all prophets preach the same faith but when we study carefully, the way Islam guides its followers, it is all pretentious. It is against the principals of Christianity and the teachings of Jesus. The Quran says that Isa (Jesus) was born without a biological father. He is the Word of God. He is mentioned as the Spirit of God and Masih (Messiah), but in their actual practice and belief, He is just an other prophet on the planet.

The cross is the focal point of Christianity (1 Cor. 1:18) and the resurrected Christ is the anchor of our faith (1 Cor.15:3-8) . Now, let us examine what the Quran says in this respect.

According to the Quran if Isa (Jesus) is the messenger of God then He shouldn't contradict Himself, because all of a messenger's (Rasool's) utterances are from God and so should never be contradictory. In the Quran, Surah Maryam (Mary) i.e 50:33 Isa (Jesus) says :

"Peace on me the day I was born, and the day I die,
and the day I shall be raised alive."

And then in Surah Al-Nisa (Woman) i.e. 4:157, the position about Christ's death totally changes :

"And because of their saying : We slew the Messiah Jesus
son of Mary, Allah's messenger - They slew Him not nor
crucified , but it appeared so unto them..."

Muslim's claim that Isa (Jesus) was taken alive to heaven and somebody else who was made to look like Jesus by God, was crucified. But, what about those witnesses (John 19:25) who were present at the scene. Among these witnesses Jesus' mother was also present. What a strange idea? Even His mother couldn't recognize the phony body on the cross. In the Bible this whole situation is considered as the wisdom and power of God (1Cor. 1:18-24) . The irony of Muslim's thinking is that they evaluate

Christianity on their own level and within their own perspective which is practically all materialistic and focuses the idea of good deeds and worldly gains.

An Iranian Muslim scholar ALI DASHTI, who died in a jail cell, tortured and beaten by the current Islamic regime for writing a book entitled *23 Years*. This was the period of prophet Mohammad's Bi'sat (His period of divine mission). When Dashti died he was 83 years old. His crime was to discuss extensively when, how and in what situation and condition various Surahs of the Quran were revealed to the prophet of Islam. Ali Dashti's boldness cost him his life.

After a long time someone discussed Islam on an intellectual level, otherwise for centuries it has been a forbidden tree. The tyrant people of Islam control the destiny in their own hands. In Islam traffic flows only one way. They control the right to condemn, criticize, and issuing Fatwas (to pass judgements under Islamic laws) at any time and under any circumstances and conditions against any person who doesn't fit in their circumference. No one is allowed to express himself against their prophet and his belief.

Almost all western scholars who discuss Islam discuss it as a religion. They hardly examine its cultural, political, or social aspects. As already mentioned it is a complete 'nodesoperendi' way of life. It prohibits separation of religion and state. If a Muslim does good deeds and fights for the establishment of Dar-Us- Salaam, in the present terminology "an Islamic state", he is offered many rewards by Allah. In the Quran Surah AL-DOKHAN (smoke) 44: 51-56 say :

51 "Lo! those who kept their duty will be in a place secure
52 Amid gardens and water springs,
53 Attire in silk and silk embroidery, facing one another
54 Even so (it will be) . And we shall wed them into fair ones
55 with wide, lovely eyes (in original hoorine)
56 They call therein for every fruit in safety
57 hey taste not death therein, save the first death and Hehath saved them from the
doom of hell."

Similarly in Surah AL-TOOR (The Mount) verses 52: 17-20, Allah has promised to wed his faithfuls in heaven with hoorines . It says :

17. "Lo! those who kept their duty dwell in gardens and delight.
18. Happy because of what their Rub (God) hath given them, and (because) their
God hath warded off them the torment of hell-fire.
19. (And it is said unto them) Eat and drink in health (as reward) for what we used
to do .
20. Reclining on ranged couches . And we wed them unto fair ones with wide ,
lovely eyes. (hoorines)"

In another Surah entitled AL -WAQIAH (The Event) verse "17" is note worthy. This particular verse brings up a question: Are young boys mentioned here, as a sex symbol like Hoorine or are they just

serving waiters? In the same Surah verse 12-24 are almost the repetition of the above mentioned scenario except verse "17" (questioned above). These verses read:

- 12 "In garden of delight:
- 13 A multitude of those old
- 14 And a few of those of later time,
- 15 On lined couches
- 16 Reclining therein face to face.
- 17 There wait on them immortal youths
- 18 With bowls and ewers and a cup from a pure spring
- 19 Wherefrom they get no aching of the head nor any madness
- 20 Any fruit that they prefer
- 21 And flesh of fowls that they desire,
- 22 And (there are) fair ones with wide, lovely eyes (hoorine)
- 23 Like into hidden pearls,
- 24 Reward that they used to do."

Christianity has a very clear view of this world and eternity. Jesus taught that people should not accumulate wealth on this earth (Matt. 6:19-21). Why? The reason is furnished in the same chapter, verses 24 -25 and also he warns us- "What is a man profited if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits his very self (Luke 9:25)?"

About love of the world verses in 1 John 2 :15 -17 are the strong hold of Christian faith. Contentment with godliness is great gain, 1 Tim 6:6-7. We Christians are here on this planet as aliens and strangers (1 Pet 2 : 11). In the book of James in 4;4, in a very strong expression, we are warned that the friend of this world is an enemy of God.

Now, a few facts about eternity. Christians will have their eternal dwellings (John 14:2). They will have glorified bodies (Phil 3:21). Perishable things will be clothed with imperishable and mortal will become immortal (1 Cor. 15:53). And Jesus Himself will come to take us home (1 Thess. 4: 16-17) . We will be in the presence of God Almighty. In this absolute holy atmosphere of eternity, surrounded by the everlasting presence of Almighty Holy God, who could urge for the "fair ones, with wide lovely eyes" or who could feel hungry for exotic foods or drinks? Rev. 7:16 tells us that in eternity, there will be no hunger or thirst.

In about A.D. 613 the eastern Roman Empire was defeated by Persians and all territories near Arabia had fallen into their hands. Jerusalem and Damascus were captured within a period of almost one year. This political shifting and maneuvering which took place almost 6 or 7 years before Hijrah, the turning point in the history of Islam, surely influenced the Prophet Mohammad. The political struggle along with the religion, which was started by the Prophet after Hijrah is still on. Muslims are still fighting for territorial and political victories to establish "Dar-ul-Salaam." Their main weapon for pursuing their victories along with their strategies is "Jihad" commonly known as "holy war."

In the Quran Surah AAL IMRAN (The family of Imran), there are various verses which are directly attributed to the above mentioned subject, and were said to be revealed by Allah through Prophet Mohammad. The time for the revelation to be fulfilled was "The Battle of Uhud." This battle took place in the third year of Hijrah and Muslims were defeated in it after the glorious victory of Badr. In the above mentioned Surah, verse 136 talks about reward. It says:

"The reward of such will be forgiveness from their Rub (God) and gardens underneath which river flow, wherein they will abide forever - a beautiful reward for workers"

In the same chapter verses 157 and 158 talk about martyrdom and read:

157- "And what though ye be slain in ALLAH's way or die therein? surely pardon from ALLAH and mercy are better than all that they amass.

158- What though ye be slain or die, when unto ALLAH ye are gathered."

In the same context in the same chapter verse 169 reads:

"think not of those, who are slain in the way of ALLAH as dead. Nay, they are living. With their Rub (GOD) they have provision."

The whole philosophy of Islam rotates around the idea of monotheism, i.e. there is one God and none else is His partner. Torah and all mosaic laws, on which Shariah (Islamic Law) is mostly based, teach the same. In it, the proper name of The Supreme Deity is usually mentioned as God, which is considered to be the direct translation of "ELOHIM" the plural of "ELOAH." In Ex. 3:14 and Is. 42:8, the proper name of Almighty is mentioned in these four letters-YHWH, which later on have translated as YAHWEH. The Jews, to show the reverence, have never pronounced the name of ALMIGHTY GOD, but when Lord Jesus came, He made it easy for all of us to address Him as "Our Father," (Matt. 6 :9), which gives the sense of closeness and establishes His complete relationship with the human race through Jesus Christ. (John 14:6). Jesus, answering Philip, says, "Don't you know me, Philip, even though I have been among you for such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father." (John 14:9.)

At the feast of dedication in Jerusalem, while Jesus was in the temple, Jews gathered around Him and asked Him, "If you are the Christ tell us plainly." Jesus, knowing their unbelief, answered them and told them, "I and the Father are one." (John 10:30).

In the Quran, one can find material and names which are non existent and also there are writings which contradict each other; one we have already discussed is about the death of Jesus Christ. Even about Jesus there is material which is a surprise to the student of Gospel .

Every Christian believes that the Bible is an inspired word of God:

"All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

Islam negates the Deity of Lord Jesus. When He is mentioned as the "Son of God" Muslims interpret this expression, based on the male and female relationship and call it "shirk". They stamp the Christians as "mushrikin" (polytheists) and infidels.

In this day and age, there are people among Muslims who are quite ignorant of the teaching of the Bible and are not even fully aware of their own religion. The majority of these Muslims are under the impression that the contents of the Bible and the Quran are the same and that both of these books lead toward the same God. They are told that Ahal kitab (The people of the book, i.e, Jews and Christians) have done "Tahrif" (tampered with the scriptures). What a good idea to account for the discrepancies and contradictions? This baseless allegation is passed on to every Muslim in his or her inheritance.

Muslims consider that "Tauhid" (to believe in one God) is the strong hold of their religion and whosoever doesn't believe in their type of tauhid is outside of the plan of salvation. While the Bible tells us that to believe in their type of one God is not a truth to be grasped because demons also believe in one god and shudder - (James 2:19.) The conception of one God alone can't lead one to salvation. Believing in one God and excluding Jesus, is a human body without soul. Jesus has very clearly emphasized that no one comes to the Father without Him. (John 14:6) Moreover, The Scripture says that there is one God and one mediator Jesus. (1 Tim 2:5) And also 1 Cor. 8:6 explains the bases and reasons for Christians believing in one God.

In these days, even among many so-called Christians, there are various schools of thought which interpret the Deity of Jesus according to their own human wisdom which can't compete with the infinite wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:20-21). According to actual Christian faith, God is sovereign. His ways are His ways. He has created this universe according to His plans, not our plans. He doesn't have to search for us, we are always in His sight. We are duty bound to find Him, though He is not far from any one of us. (Acts 17:27). One fact is certain, that God Almighty loves His creation so much that He sent His Son to this sinful world to make an atonement for this wicked human race (John 3:16). God didn't send Jesus for any one to stumble over because He Himself made it clear that Jesus is the only way of salvation. (John 14:6).

Islam, along with the many other objections mentioned before, doesn't believe in the Deity of Lord Jesus. According to the Quran, Jesus has shown many signs and miracles from His early childhood, while keeping the profile being as an ordinary prophet. The Bible is quite clear on this subject and it tells what and who Jesus is. John's Gospel opens with the description of His Deity. The opening three verses are self explanatory:

- 1- "In the beginning was the Word, and The Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- 2- He was with God in the beginning.

3- Through him, all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made."

Similarly, in the same chapter verse 14 reads as follows:

"And 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."

There are other verses too, which can be quoted on this subject. When the Lord Jesus was physically on this earth, all of His works spoke for themselves. He was in essence, God in human flesh. When Islam talks about His works, it talks about His miracles. According to my understanding, God doesn't need to show miracles. All those works which He does are His very nature. A human being can't forgive sins, can't restore life in a dead body, can't feed thousands of people without a large quantity of food, can't give sight to the blind, can't restore legs to the lame, can't rejuvenate health to a sick body just by saying a word. He had a power even to calm down the wind and the fierce waves of water. You name it. Jesus did every thing which God Almighty does. Why and how? Because He is Emmanuel (God with us) Have you ever seen a human being walk on water? What about His dealings with the demons? Isn't the power of God demonstrated through Jesus?

In the Quran Surah AAL IMRAN (The family of Imran) 3 : 49 , ALLAH, talking to Mary through an angel, about Isa (Jesus), says:

"...And will make Him a messenger unto the children of Israel , [saying] lo : I come unto you with a sign from your Rub (God). Lo: I fashion for you out of clay the likeness of a bird and I breath into it and it is a bird, by ALLAH's leave. I heal Him who was born blind, and the leper, and I raise the dead, by ALLAH's leave. And I announce unto you what ye eat and what ye store up in your houses. Lo: Herein verily is a portent for you, if you are to be believers."

The Bible doesn't show us anywhere that Jesus ever took permission from "ALLAH" at anytime before helping any needy human being. He did not say to any dead body "Qum be-izn-allah" before restoring life in Him. Take the well-known example of Mary and Martha's brother Lazarus, who had been deceased for four days. To him Jesus commanded, "Lazarus come out" (John 11:43) and he came out of his tomb with his hands

and feet wrapped with strips of linen and a cloth around his face."

(John 11:44). Similarly, He made a dead girl alive by just saying a word. (Matt. 9:24-25; Mk. 5: 41-42; Lk. 8:53-54)

Among the twelve apostles of Jesus, Thomas who is mentioned in the gospels only three times, has also made such a confession of truth which is hard to ignore. After his ascension, when the Lord Jesus appeared to his disciples who were sitting behind closed doors, he told Thomas, who had not believed that the other disciples had seen Jesus, "stop doubting and believe" (John 20:27). Thomas bowed down and worshiped Jesus while making a confession which should be a guideline for every human being for salvation.

Titus 2:13 is another verse which establishes the Deity of our Lord: "While we wait for the blessed hope - the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." And similarly, Phil 2:6 can also be quoted in this connection. This verse reads: "Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped."

God Almighty is spirit , (Jn. 4:24) and He sent His Son, who is the brightness of God's glory and the complete image of His person.

In the very beginning of this article, I used the words- "fullness of God", so to prove His fullness, we have to take into consideration the third essential part of Deity also and that is the Holy Spirit. Then to talk about the fullness of God, the equation will be the Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit. In theology, this expression is known as tri-unity or "trinity", but I have expressed it as "the fullness of God". For Muslims and many others, it is hard to understand that if Christians believe in the trinity, then how can they claim that they believe in One God? The well-known evangelist of the sub continent of India, Sadhu Sunder Singh in one of his books has answered this question. He has used an analogy of the sun. He says that there is the one sun and it gives off heat and light . Such is our Almighty God .

After the ascension of Jesus, we see that as He had told to his apostles, the Holy Spirit worked extensively through them .

In the Gospel, The Holy Spirit is known as the Counselor or helper (Jn. 14:16), and in verse 17 of the same chapter, Jesus explains to his disciples how this Spirit of truth will be with them for ever. We see a similar promise extended to all believers on the day of Pentecost when the Apostle Peter declared to the Jews, who were gathered from all nations under heaven (Acts 2:5),"Repent and be baptized, for the forgiveness of your sins and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38 & 39).

All of the apostles, including Peter, confirm that they and the Holy Spirit were witnesses of the treatment Jesus met from the hands of Jews. (Acts 5:32) In the same chapter we note that the apostles, after receiving the Holy Spirit healed the sick (Acts 5:15-16 & 9:32). Peter and Paul even raised the dead. (Acts 9:40 and 20:12 respectively. In this connection Acts 8:14-17 , Acts 19:11-12 are also note worthy. During Paul's preaching ministry we see how The Holy Spirit guided him on various occasions (Acts 16:6 -8) . It is noticeable that the words "Holy Spirit" and "Spirit of Jesus" are interchangeable (Acts 16:7) and also we see that after His ascension the Lord Jesus reappeared and breathed on His apostles and gave them the Holy Spirit. (Jn. 20:21-22) The Holy Spirit nurtures those qualities in Christians which they are incapable of developing among themselves. These qualities in the biblical expression are known as the fruit of the Spirit . (Gal 5 : 22) . Jesus has warned us in Mark 3 : 28 -29, saying - "I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. But whoever blasphemes against The Holy Spirit will never be forgiven, he is guilty of an eternal sin."

Once our sins are washed by the blood of Jesus, our spiritual understanding enhances and we start grasping clearly the fullness of our God . He is the One, all in all, none else is worthy to be praised. He is the one who sent His Son to reconcile us through His death. The Holy Spirit is His Spirit. He lives within us. In Islam we don't find God's physical presence anywhere . One has to rely on an imaginary

God (ALLAH) who speaks from time to time through Prophet Mohammad and it is acclaimed, that Allah's sayings are compiled in their holy book, the Quran.

According to The Bible, Jesus' ascension did not relieve Him of the work which He started on this planet. He is still sitting on the right hand of God and interceding on our behalf until He comes back to take us home. The following few verses from 1 Cor. 15:24-48, which are self explanatory, concludes this booklet:

24- "Then the end will come, when He hands over the Kingdom to God the Father after He has destroyed all dominions, authority and power.

25- For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet .

26- The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

27- For he "has put every thing under His feet "Now when it says "everything" has been put under Him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ.

28 - When He has done this, then The Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all."