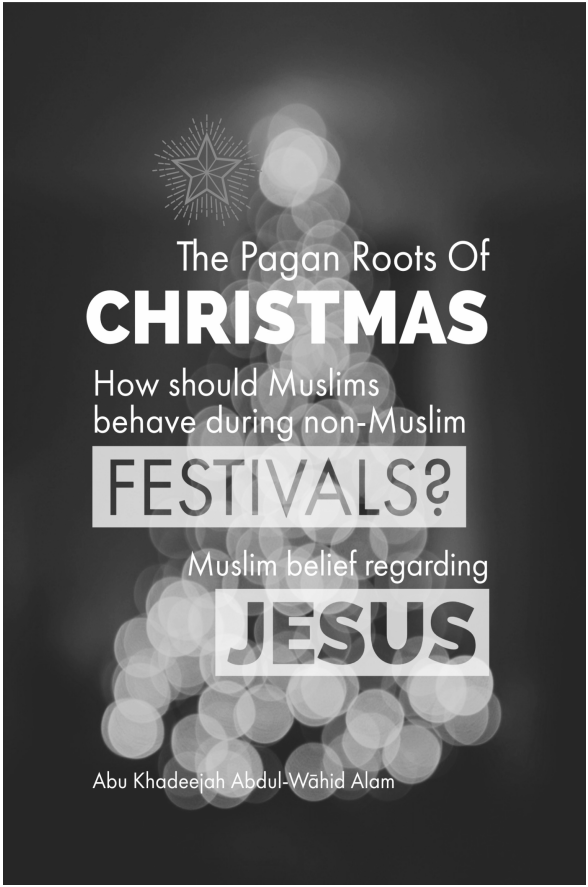
The Pagan Roots Of
CHRISTMAS
How should Muslims behave during non-Muslim
FESTIVALS?
Muslim belief regarding
JESUS
Abu Khadeejah Abdul-Wāhid Alam

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Salafi Bookstore
472 Coventry Road, Birmingham, UK, B10 0UG
t. 0121.773.0003 t. 0121.773.0033 E:
info@salafibookstore.com

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Twitter:
@salafipubs
@salafibookstore
@salafimasjidcom

Author:
abukhadeejah.com
facebook.com/abukhadeejahSP
@abukhadeejahSP

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The Pagan Roots of Christmas

The word 'Christmas' means 'mass of Christ' which later became shortened to 'Christ-mass'. It was the Roman Catholic Church who spread the term among other Christian denominations and non-Christians. So where did the Catholic Church get the celebration from? It is not in the New Testament, and certainly not in the Old Testament since that pre-dates the arrival of Jesus, the son of Mary, by several hundred years. The truth is that the practice in its earliest form began well over three hundred years after Jesus (peace be upon him). Christmas was not practiced by the disciples of Christ or his early followers. The celebration was a pagan practice introduced into the Christian faith by the Catholic Church. The 1911 edition of Catholic Encyclopedia itself states, **"Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the church. The first evidence of the feast comes from Egypt… Pagan customs centering around the month of January gravitated to Christmas."**

So, this was centuries after Jesus (peace be upon him) was taken up into the Heavens. In the same

Catholic Encyclopedia under the heading, 'Natal Day', the early Catholic father, Origen stated, **"In the Scriptures, no one is recorded to have kept a feast or held a banquet on his birthday. It was only the sinners who made great rejoicings over the day in which they were born into this world."** In the 1946 edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, it states, **"Christmas (or the Mass of Christ) was not from the earliest festivals of the church."**

It is clear from these short references that this well-known festival has no basis or authority in Scripture. The 1944 edition of Encyclopedia Americana states, **"Christmas: It was, according to many authorities, not celebrated in the first centuries of the Christian Church."** Elsewhere the Encyclopedia states regarding Christmas, **"A feast was established in memory of this event (i.e. the birth of Jesus) in the fourth century. In the fifth century, the Western Church ordered it to be celebrated forever on the day of the old Roman Feast of the birth of Sol, <u>as no certain knowledge of the day of Christ's birth existed</u>."**

Sol was the solar deity in the Ancient Roman religion. According to at least one ancient source dating back to 354 CE, the Romans held a festival on 21st December called, "the birthday of the unconquered one" which refers to *Sol*, the solar deity. The winter solstice (or midwinter) marks the day with the shortest hours of daylight and the longest night of the year. The day after is the day when the sunlight hours start to extend once more, so they saw this as a great day to be celebrated.

Julius Caesar introduced his own calendar in the year 45BCE, and he marked the winter solstice as December 25th, though it is actually the 21st or 22nd of the month. Nevertheless, it is this 25th day of December that eventually found its way into the Christian Religion and is celebrated across the world by ill-informed and unlearned Christians, as well as many clueless Muslims and people of many other religions.

So, for the first three hundred years after Jesus (may God's peace be upon him), the celebration had no connection to Christianity, then in the fourth century it was instituted, and in the fifth, it

was ordered by the Western Church. This is similar to what some Muslims have done by introducing a celebration in memory of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). These practices have no basis in scripture or revelation, rather they are latter-day innovations rooted in pagan festivals.

Once this information is absorbed and understood, we can clearly see that Christmas has nothing whatsoever to do with Jesus (peace be upon him) or the message he was sent with. Islam is very clear about such celebrations; they have no place in the lives of Muslims. Even Christians should distance themselves from such practices and really study the life of Jesus (peace be upon him) as reported in the Quran because it is clear that Christian leaders after the fourth century practically re-wrote the mission of Jesus Christ to suit their own doctrines, sectarian goals and ambitions.

Should Muslims Participate in Non-Muslim Festivals and Rituals?

The Messenger of Allah Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was the final Prophet of Almighty God. He was sent as a mercy to all of creation, a bringer of glad tidings to the pious who followed the Scripture and a warner to the wrongdoers who opposed it. Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) followed the footsteps of the Messengers and Prophets before him. The Companion, Abdullāh Ibn ‘Amr (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stated,

إِنَّهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ نَبِيٌّ قَبْلِي إِلاَّ كَانَ حَقًّا عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَدُلَّ أُمَّتَهُ عَلَى مَا يَعْلَمُهُ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ وَيُنْذِرَهُمْ مَا يَعْلَمُهُ شَرًّا لَهُمْ وَإِنَّ أُمَّتَكُمْ هَذِهِ جُعِلَتْ عَافِيَتُهَا فِي أَوَّلِهَا وَإِنَّ آخِرَهَا سَيُصِيبُهُمْ بَلاَءٌ وَأُمُورٌ يُنْكِرُونَهَا

“There was not a Prophet before me except that it was a duty upon him to guide his people to whatever he knew of goodness for them and to

warn them from whatever he knew of evil for them. Indeed, this nation of yours, its wellbeing is in its first part and its latter part will be afflicted with tribulations and things you will hate."[1]

Through the final Prophet, Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) perfected the Religion, completed His favors and chose for mankind the Religion He was pleased with for them.

الْيَوْمَ يَئِسَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِن دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِ ۚ الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا ۚ

"This day, those who have disbelieved have given up all hope of your religion, so fear them not, but fear Me. This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion."[2]

This Revelation that was sent to the Prophet Muhammad (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is protected from loss

[1] An-Nasā'ī, no. 4191.

[2] Al-Mā'idah, 5:3.

and corruption. So no matter what individuals from the Muslim community engage in of misguided practices, they will never be able to alter the true message of Islam. It will remain as a preserved source for all those who seek guidance. The Revelation itself, whether the Qur'an or the Sunnah cannot be contaminated or corrupted because every assertion and claim can be measured against the original protected Revelation. Allah, Most High, said:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

"Indeed, it is We[3] **who sent down the Revelation and indeed, We will be its preserver."**[4] And any incursion into this final Revelation is rejected just as the Prophet (ﷺ) said, **"Whoever innovates a practice into this Religion of ours which is not from it will have it rejected."**[5]

[3] Almighty Allah often uses the term 'We' to refer to Himself. It is called 'the majestic plural' and, in mankind, is used by monarchs to refer to themselves.

[4] Al-Hijr 15:9.

[5] Reported by Bukhārī and Muslim.

Islam forbids imitating the practices of other religions or to participate in their festivals. The Prophet's Companion, Anas (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) stated that when the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) migrated to Madinah, he saw that the people celebrated two specific days annually. Some scholars have stated that they were the holidays of the Persians. So, the Prophet asked, **"What are these two days?"** They informed him that these were days of celebration before the advent of Islam[6]. So, he said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَبْدَلَكُمْ بِهِمَا خَيْرًا مِنْهُمَا يَوْمَ الأَضْحَى وَيَوْمَ الْفِطْرِ

"Indeed, Allah has replaced these days with days better than them: the Day of Adhā and the Day of Fitr."[7]

The Day of Adhā is the 'Eid celebration after the annual Hajj pilgrimage, and the Day of Fitr is the 'Eid celebration after the fasting month of Ramadān. Islam does not allow for newly introduced practices borrowed from other

[6] i.e. jāhiliyyah (pre-Islamic ignorance).
[7] Abu Dāwūd, no. 1134.

religions because it considers those religions to be either manmade or a distortion of the messages of previous prophets as is clearly the case with the Christian religion and its celebration of Christmas.

Any person who pursues the practices, festivals and devotions of other religions, Allah will not accept them:

وَمَن يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْـــلَامِ دِينًا فَلَن يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

"And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter, he will be one of the losers."[8]

So, any religious practice or celebration that is not specifically referred to in the Islamic texts is not accepted by Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ), no matter how much the people seek to justify its practice. Some unlearned Muslims state that they celebrate these festivals as a part of their integration into the host country and its culture. However, Islam forbids any act

[8] Āli 'Imrān 3:85.

that involves borrowing practices that are specific to other religions. That is because Islam has its own unique identity and law that has been laid down in the Qur'an and Sunnah. It is for that very reason that the Prophet (ﷺ) exchanged the days of celebration that were practiced in Madinah with uniquely Islamic celebrations. And whoever opposes the guidance of the Messenger (ﷺ) and the early believers, then for them there is a severe threat in the Qur'an:

وَمَن يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِن بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصْلِهِ جَهَنَّمَ ۖ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا

"Whoever contradicts the Messenger after the right guidance has been shown to him, and he then follows other than the path of the believers, We shall leave him in the path he has chosen and burn him in Hell – what an evil destination."[9]

So, integration into any society should never entail a Muslim contradicting the commands of the Messenger (ﷺ), nor his guidance. When a

[9] An-Nisā 4:115.

Muslim seeks to resemble the non-Muslims in such matters it shows that he is not confident about his own religious identity and seeks the favour and approval of other faiths — and he gets that through imitating their religious practices. The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

مَنْ تَشَبَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ

"Whoever imitates a people is from them."[10]

The more a person imitates a group of people, the more he is counted among them. The Prophet (ﷺ) informed the Muslims, **"You will surely follow the ways of those who came before you, handspan by handspan, cubit-length by cubit-length such if one of them enters into a lizard's hole, you too will enter it."** They asked him, **"Do you intend the Jews and Christians?"** He (ﷺ) replied, **"Who else?"**[11]

[10] Abu Dawūd, no 4031.

[11] Bukhārī and Muslim.

This narration perfectly fits the condition of those who follow the crowds in their celebration of Christmas, because it involves following them blindly, without thought or reference to Islam and the Revelation. They mimic without reflecting over the following facts:

Firstly, Christmas is not rooted in the teachings of Jesus (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Secondly, it is an ancient pagan practice that revolved around the worship of the Sun and its deification.

Thirdly, the Christians innovated this practice devoid of guidance and scripture.

Fourthly, the clueless Muslims follow them just as the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) foretold they would.

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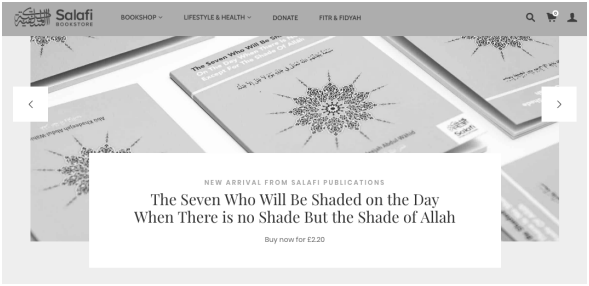

How Should a Muslim Behave During Non-Muslim Festivals?

A Muslim should remain aloof from the celebrations of the non-Muslims and explain to them that Islam is the Religion of God with its own unique heritage and distinct identity that does not allow us to indulge in un-Islamic practices and celebrations that are not explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an and Sunnah. If a person asks where is the evidence that disallows Muslims to participate in non-Muslim festivities? Then he should cite the clear statement of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), **"Indeed Allah has replaced these days with days better than them: The Day of Adhā and the Day of Fitr."** After this saying, the other days of celebration were no longer observed. Added to this are the various other proofs that forbid imitating the practices of other religions.

It is obligatory for a Muslim to avoid gathering at non-Muslim places of worship and where they hold mass or other events. The Prophet's

Companion, Abdullah Ibn 'Amr (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said, **"Whoever settles in the lands of the non-Muslims, then he celebrates their festivals of *Nayrūz* and *Mahrajān*[12], and imitates them and then dies whilst in that state, he will be gathered alongside them on the Day of Resurrection."**[13]

Similarly, the Companion, 'Umar Ibn Al-Khattāb (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said, **"Do not visit the polytheists in their churches on the days of their celebrations because that is when Allah's anger descends upon them."**[14]

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[12] These are the Persian days of celebration that were adopted by the Arabs before the Prophet's arrival to Madinah. He disallowed their celebration and replaced them with uniquely Islamic days of happiness.

[13] *Sunan Al-Kubrā* of Al-Bayhaqī, 9/234, Ibn Taymiyyah stated that its chain of narration is authentic in *Iqtidā As-Sirāt Al-Mustaqīm*, 1/457.

[14] *Sunan Al-Kubrā*, 9/234, Abdur-Razzāq in *Al-Musannaf*, no. 1609, Ibn Taymiyyah stated that its chain of narration is authentic in *Iqtidā As-Sirāt Al-Mustaqīm*, 1/455.

Shaikh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ) stated after citing several narrations concerning this topic, **"So if the anger of Allah descends upon them on the day of their festival due to their practices, then whoever joins them in their practices or in some of their practices, then is he not also subject to the same punishment?"**[15] Ibn Taymiyyah (رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ) proceeded to explain that the texts prove that the greater one's participation in the celebrations of the non-Muslims, the more he exposes himself to Allah's anger.

Celebrating the so-called birthday of Jesus, the son of Mary (عَلَيۡهِمَا ٱلسَّلَامُ) carries, along with it, huge amounts of doctrine that contradict the core message of Islam such as their claim that **"<u>Jesus Christ, the only begotten son of God, was born on this day</u>."**

Allah, the Lord of all creation, stated, **"They have disbelieved who say: God is the Messiah son of Mary."**[16] The Christians worship him as a God and

[15] *Al-Iqtidā*, 1/458.
[16] Quran 5:72.

count him in the Trinity about which Allah said, **"They have disbelieved who say: God is the third of three [in a Trinity]."**[17] So this fundamental Christian doctrine is considered to be polytheism and contrary to monotheistic Islamic teachings. Therefore, Muslims should avoid the celebrations of the non-Muslims and instead, be pleased with the blessings and bounties that Allah has granted them in Islam.

[17] Quran 5:73.

Exchanging Gifts at Christmas

Ibn Taymiyyah (رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ d.728 AH) said, "Whoever gives to the Muslims a gift on these days of celebration that is different to normal everyday practices outside of this celebration, then the gift is not accepted – especially if the gift is something that is used to aid in resembling them (in their religion) like the gift of candle wax and so on, on the birthday [of Christ], or egg, milk and sheep on the Thursday at the end of their fasting days [i.e. Lent]. Also, the Muslims should not exchange gifts on these festivals due to it being a festivity [of the non-Muslims], especially if it is something that will aid in resembling them as we have mentioned."[18]

Ibn Nahās (رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ) said, **"And know that from the ugliest of innovations and the worst of them is the agreement of the Muslims with the Christians in their annual celebrations, in imitating them in their foods, actions, giving them gifts, and receiving gifts from them of food during their festivities. And this innovation is something**

[18] *Iqtidā as-Sirātil-Mustaqīm,* 2/12.

experienced and practiced by the people of Egypt—and in this, there is a weakness in one's Religious adherence."[19]

The Permanent Committee of Scholars in Saudi Arabia stated, **"It is not permitted for the Muslim to eat that which was prepared by the Jews and Christians or idol-worshippers specifically for their days of festivities. And it is not permitted for the Muslims to accept a gift from them in celebration of those festivities because that contains honoring and cooperating with them in making apparent their religious symbols and furthering and promoting their innovations and partaking in the happiness of their festivals. And this may ultimately lead to taking on their festivals as our own festivals…"**[20] This stance of the Muslims refers to the religious festivals and rituals of the non-Muslims. It does oppose the general kind treatment that is required from a Muslim towards the non-Muslims.

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[19] See *Tanbeeh al-Ghāfileen* of Ibn Nahās, pp. 307-310.
[20] Fatwa of *Al-Lajnah ad-Dā'imah*, with Shaikhs Ibn Bāz, Abdur-Razzāq 'Afīfī, Abdullāh Al-Ghudayān and others. See 22/398-399, Fatwa no. 2882.

Shaikh Ibn Uthaimīn (رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ) was asked, **"What is the ruling on congratulating the unbelievers during their Christmas celebrations? How are we to respond to them if they congratulate us with Merry Christmas?"**

He answered, "**Congratulating the non-Muslims during their Christmas celebrations or other religious celebrations is forbidden by consensus** which was cited by Ibn Al-Qayyim (عَلَيۡهِمَا ٱلسَّلَامُ) in his book, "*Ahkāmu Ahl-Adh-Dhimmah*".

So, if they congratulate us during their celebrations, then we do not respond it because it is not our celebration and it is a celebration that Allah is not pleased with. That is because either it is a celebration that they have innovated into their religion or it is one that is legislated in their religion but was abrogated with the advent of the religion of Islam which the Prophet Muhammad (صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيۡهِ وَسَلَّمَ) was sent with to the whole of mankind. It was regarding this that Allah said, **'And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted from him, and in**

the Hereafter, he will be one of the losers.'[21] Therefore, to accept an invitation from them at Christmas is forbidden because to participate with them [in a Christmas meal] is worse than congratulating them."[22]

So, when a situation arises where a Muslim is congratulated with the words, "Merry Christmas" or "Happy new year", then he or she should simply respond with, "Good day", or "Good morning," or "Good evening," followed by, "Christmas is not my religious festival, I am a Muslim." If they seek further clarity, then explain to them what is stated in this booklet. In a society where it is claimed that religious freedoms are respected, then Islamic practices should also be respected.

At this time of year, it is always good to have a few leaflets with you (in your bag or pocket) so that you can help non-Muslims understand Islam and the Muslim position towards Christmas. This

[21] Āli 'Imrān 3:85.
[22] *Majmū' Fatāwā* 3/45-46, abridged.

booklet itself is a useful read for Muslims in general and any non-Muslim.

The Status of Jesus (عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ) in Islam and Christianity

Christians and Muslims have differed for centuries over the nature and status of Jesus Christ (peace be upon him). Both religions revere him, and both believe him to be of virgin-birth. Both religions claim to know his true nature and purpose. Muslims believe that Christian leaders of the past altered the scriptures in order to redefine the status of this noble and virtuous Prophet of Almighty God. In fact, eminent Christian theologians readily admit that the Bible has been altered throughout the ages, so in that respect, there is no disagreement. The renowned Biblical scholar, Dr Bart Ehrman, formerly the president of the Southeast Region of the Society of Biblical Literature stated: "One of the most amazing and perplexing features of mainstream Christianity is that seminarians who learn the historical-critical method in their Bible classes appear to forget all about it when it comes time for them to be pastors. **They are taught critical approaches to Scripture, they learn about the discrepancies and**

contradictions, they discover all sorts of historical errors and mistakes… They find that there are other books that were at one time considered canonical but that ultimately did not become part of Scripture, they come to recognize that a good number of the books of the Bible are pseudonymous[23], that in fact we don't have the original copies of any of the biblical books but only copies made centuries later, all of which have been altered."[24]

The altering of the original message of Jesus (عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ) is stated in the Islamic texts of the Quran and Prophetic tradition. Muslims believe that God sent a final Prophet after the Prophet Jesus, whose coming was foretold in previous scriptures such as the Torah revealed to Moses (عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ) and in the Gospels that were revealed to Jesus

[23] i.e. written in the name of an apostle by someone else.

[24] See: Bart D. Ehrman, *Jesus, Interrupted, Revealing the hidden contradictions in the Bible and why we don't know About them.*

(عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ). This final Prophet was Muhammad (صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). Allah stated in the Quran:

"Say O Muslims: We believe in Allah (the one true God worship of worship), and that which has been revealed to us, and that which has been revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and to the Tribes of Israel, and that which has been given to Moses and Jesus, and that which has been given to the Prophets from their Lord. We do not discriminate against any of them, and to Him (Allah) we have submitted."[25]

Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) also informed mankind that the previous scriptures have been changed, altering much of the original message, and can no longer be relied upon. So, from Allah's Mercy, He sent the final Prophet, whose name was Muhammad (صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) with the final revelation, the Quran. Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) protected it from corruption and alteration. The following are some important points of belief with respect to Jesus (عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ):

[25] Quran 2:136.

One: Miraculous Birth and the Virgin Mary (عَلَيْهَا ٱلسَّلَامُ)

Muslims believe that Jesus (peace be upon him) was born of miraculous birth: Allah (the Most Merciful) said in the Quran: **"The example of Jesus in the sight of Allah is like the example of Adam. Allah created him from clay and then said to him: "Be!" And he came into being. This is the truth from your Lord so do not be from those who doubt."**[26] From the outset it must be made clear that Muslims believe that Jesus is a Prophet of Allah (the Most High), born from virgin birth, from a noble mother, Mary (peace be upon her), who was untouched by any man. The Angels said to Mary, **"O Mary, verily Allah has chosen you, purified you from unbelief and immoral conduct, and chosen you above the women of creation."**[27] Then she was informed that she would have a son, **"O Mary, verily Allah gives you the glad tidings of a word spoken by Him. His name will be**

[26] Quran 3:59-60.

[27] Qur'an 3:42.

the Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, held in honour in this world and in the Hereafter, and of those brought near to Allah."[28]

She was a virgin, untouched so she asked, **"O my Lord, how shall I have a son when no man has touched me?"** He replied, **"So it will be, for Allah creates what He wills. When He has decreed something, He only says to it, 'Be!' and it is."**[29] So Jesus (عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ) was created by a command from Almighty Allah, he is not the son of Allah and nor is Mary "the mother of God." In defence of the accusations against Jesus's mother, Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) promised Mary that Jesus (عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ) would speak whilst still a baby in his cradle, **"He will speak to the people in the cradle and in manhood, and he will be one of the righteous."**[30]

[28] Qur'an 3:45.
[29] Qur'an 3:47.
[30] Qur'an 3:46.

Two: Jesus (عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ) is the Prophet of Allah and not His Son

Muslims believe Jesus was a Prophet sent by Allah, not the son of Allah, nor part of a Trinity. After Jesus was taken into the Heavens, Christians incorrectly began to believe that since Jesus had no worldly human father, then God must be his *literal* father, and so the author of the Gospels of John who never met Jesus, stated almost a century after Christ: **"For God so loved the world, that He gave His <u>only</u> begotten son."**[31] The vast majority of Christian scholars do not believe that John or any of the Apostles wrote these words.

These are clearly not the words of God, nor the words of Christ. However, this narrative ultimately led to the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) himself being worshipped by later Christians. Consequently, this was the introduction of the worship of other beings besides Allah into Christianity. Islam categorically forbids this

[31] 1 John 4:9.

attribution of a son to God: **"Say: He is Allah, the One. Allah is the Self-Sufficient He begets not, nor was He begotten, And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him."**[32]

Indeed there is no proof to show that any of the disciples of Christ worshipped Jesus because they knew that to worship anyone other than God (who the Muslims call Allah) would be a clear violation of the first and most important of all the commandments in the Bible: **"You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourselves any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down yourselves to them, nor serve them."**[33]

Therefore, to direct worship of any sort towards the Prophet Jesus or his mother (عَلَيْهِمَا ٱلسَّلَامُ) is a clear violation of this universally agreed-upon commandment. God commands similarly in the

[32] Quran 112:1-4.
[33] Exodus 20.

Quran: **“And from His signs are the night and the day, and the Sun and Moon – so do not prostrate to the Sun or the Moon but prostrate to Allah alone, the one who created them if it is He whom you truly [claim to] worship.”** [34] Furthermore Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) stated: **“They have disbelieved who say: God is the Messiah son of Mary.”** [35] And: **“They have disbelieved who say: God is the third of three [in a Trinity].”** [36]

Three: Jesus the Messiah and his Mother were Servants of God

Muslims believe that Jesus and Mary (عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَامُ) were righteous humans, servants of Allah and not objects of worship. As such, Muslims revere the Prophet Jesus, and they likewise they revere Mary, the mother of the Messiah (peace be upon them). Allah (the Most Merciful) stated in the Quran: **“The Messiah son of Mary is but a**

[34] Quran 41:37.
[35] Quran 5:72.
[36] Quran 5:73.

Messenger of Allah and Messengers before him passed away, and his mother was a truthful woman – they both used to eat food."[37] In this verse Allah makes clear that Jesus (عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ) is a Messenger of Allah, Mary is a truthful woman and both were human beings because they ate food which was provided to them from their Lord – showing that they were reliant upon Allah. For any Muslim to direct worship to a Prophet or any other being besides Allah (the Most High) is considered to be polytheism.

Four: Jesus (عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ) Invited People to Worship Allah Alone

Jesus was a sincere and humble servant of Allah: **"And behold! Allah will say on the Day of Judgment: 'O Jesus son of Mary! Did you say unto men, worship me and my mother as gods instead of Allah?' He will say: 'Glory to Thee! Never could I say what I had no right to say. Had I said such a thing, You would indeed have known it. You**

[37] Quran 5:75.

know what is in my inner-self, though I know not what is in Yours. For You know in full all that is hidden. Never did I say to them anything except what You commanded me to say: 'Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.' And I was a witness over them while I lived among them. When You took me up, You were the Watcher over them, and You are a witness to all things'"[38]

Even in the Bible there are clear statements showing that Jesus (peace be upon him) directed worship to Allah. Read here a verse from the Christian Bible read by all Christian Arabs: **"And Jesus said to him: Why do you call me good? No one is good except Allah alone!"**[39] Here, Jesus distinguishes himself from God, i.e. that he is the worshipper and Allah is the one to be worshipped.

In the Old Testament of the Arabic Bible, we find the following: **"In the beginning Allah created the Heavens and the Earth."**[40] Many Christians in the West become astonished when they read these

[38] Quran 5:116-117.
[39] Mark 10:18.
[40] Genesis, verse 1.

words, because they imagined that Allah is exclusively the deity of the Muslims, but the reality is that Allah is the Lord and God who created Adam (عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ) and made him the first Prophet, He is the same God who sent Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, Jacob, Moses, John, Jesus and Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon them all). Many people in the West perceive Allah to be a "foreign" god of the Arabs. But now you can see that the name Allah refers to the One God, Lord and Creator of all existence, who has the sole right to be worshipped.

Five: Jesus was not Crucified

Muslims believe that Jesus was not crucified but rather he was taken up into the Heavens before he could be harmed: **"They said in boast: 'We killed the Messiah Jesus son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah.' But they killed him not, nor did they crucify him – but it was only made to appear as such to them."** [41] The Quran informs us: **"And recall when Allah said: 'O Jesus, I will take you**

[41] Quran 4:157.

and raise you to Myself and clear you from the forged statements of those who disbelieve.'"[42]

So he was raised to the Heavens before they could capture him and kill him. Then Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) placed Jesus's image on another who was killed in his place. This further leads to the Islamic belief that he was not resurrected after death because he did not die.

The Prophet Muhammad (صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ) stated that Jesus (عَلَيْهِٱلسَّلَامُ) will descend before the Last Day to establish God's worship and justice on earth, he will then die as others die. This ascension of Jesus into the heavens is also mentioned in the Bible:

"And while they were gazing into heaven as Jesus ascended. Behold, two men stood by them in white robes (i.e. Angels), and said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into

[42] Quran 3:55.

heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.'"[43]

Christian scribes however decided to make this ascension seem as though it occurred after the so-called resurrection so as to fit in with later Christian doctrine which prescribed that Jesus "the son of God" died for the sins of mankind. So, without the death and subsequent resurrection of Christ, this doctrine would have no validity. Islam teaches that each individual carries the burden of his own sins or the sins he teaches others – and Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ) readily accepts the repentance of the believing servant when he seeks forgiveness by calling upon Allah directly and seeking His Mercy without any need of intercessors. Islam is vehemently monotheistic and regards any act of worship directed towards other than Allah to be polytheistic. So, worship such as supplication, prostration, seeking refuge, seeking divine aid, assistance and support, seeking forgiveness and deliverance and so on can only be sought from the one true God, Allah.

[43] Acts 1:11.

Six: The Miracles of Jesus, Moses and Muhammad (عَلَيْهِمُ ٱلسَّلَامُ)

Muslims affirm and believe in the Miracles of Jesus (peace be upon him) that took place by the permission of Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ): **"O Jesus son of Mary! Remember my favour to you and to your mother when I supported you with the Angel Gabriel so that you spoke to the people from the cradle as a baby and in maturity. Behold! I taught you the Book and the Wisdom, the Torah and the Gospel. And you made out of clay the figure of a bird and you breathed into it, and it became a living bird by My permission, and you healed those born blind, and the lepers by My permission. And behold! You brought forth the dead by My permission. And when I restrained the Children of Israel from you when they resolved to kill you after you came to them with clear proofs and those who disbelieved among them said, 'This is nothing but magic.'"**[44]

[44] Quran 5:110.

These miracles were performed by the permission of Allah as a sign for the people of his Prophethood and truthfulness. Many of the Prophets were given miracles by the permission of Allah: Moses (عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ) parted the Red Sea by Allah's permission, Muhammad (صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) split the Moon in two by Allah's permission and so on.

Seven: The Prophets of Allah (عَلَيْهِمِ ٱلسَّلَامُ) are Brothers

Jesus is the brother of the Prophets. The Prophet Muhammad (صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: **"I am the closest of all the people to Jesus the son of Mary in this life and in the life after death."** His disciples asked him: **"How is that O Messenger of God?"** He replied: **"The Prophets are paternal brothers – their mothers are different, but their Religion is one, and there was no Prophet between me and Jesus."** It is established by way of the Torah, the Gospels, the Quran and the authentic Prophetic tradition that the lineage of Muhammad and Jesus goes back to the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). Abraham had two sons: Ishmael and Isaac.

Isaac's son was Jacob (عَلَيْهِمَاٱلسَّلَامُ) also known as Israel. Jacob had twelve sons from whom emanate the Children and tribes of Israel and its Prophets. From the lineage of the Prophet Ishmael (عَلَيْهِٱلسَّلَامُ) descended the Prophet Muhammad (صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ) through the Arab tribes. All of mankind are obligated by these revealed texts to accept Muhammad (صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ) as the final Prophet and the Quran as the final revelation that has abrogated all previous revelations. Allah (سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى) commanded humans to testify that, **"There is no deity worthy of worship in truth except for Allah; and Muhammad is His servant and Messenger; and Jesus the son of Mary is His servant and Messenger."** You too can testify to this right now.

Eight: The Plots to Kill Jesus (عَلَيْهِٱلسَّلَامُ)

The unbelievers plotted against Jesus in his life to have him killed but Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) saved him. Allah (سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى) said in the Qur'an, **"Meanwhile the disbelievers plotted to have Jesus killed, and**

Allah plotted in response, and Allah is the best of plotters."[45] The unbelievers plotted to kill Jesus (عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ), but Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) plotted against them in response. So, this made the plot of Allah a praiseworthy attribute because it established justice.

Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ) changed the form and features of one of the people present so that he looked just like Jesus (عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ). It is said by the scholars that one of those who plotted against Jesus was changed by Allah to look like Jesus, and was executed in his place, though he pleaded that he was not Jesus (عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ). He left out to get Jesus killed but found himself being arrested and executed. So that sealed the plot of Allah against them in the best way.

Another saying is that when the unbelievers came to seize Jesus (عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ), Jesus asked his disciples who wished to take his place to be seized and killed, and in turn receive the promise of Paradise for his sacrifice. So, one of his Disciples stepped

[45] Qur'an 2:54.

forward, was seized and executed. In this is the fruition of the plot of Allah in response to the plots of the unbelievers because they were not able to kill Jesus. Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) stated, **"They say in boast, 'We killed the Messiah Jesus son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah.' But they killed him not, nor did they crucified him, but the resemblance of Jesus was put over another man."**[46]

Nine: Jesus will (عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ) Return at the End of Time

Muslims believe that Jesus (peace be upon him) is the anointed Messiah who will return at the end of time and fight and kill the Anti-Christ[47]. The Prophet Muhammad (صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, **"By Him in whose Hand is my very soul, Jesus son of Mary will soon descend among you as a just judge. He will break the cross, kill the swine, abolish the jizyah (the duty paid by non-Muslims living under the protection of a Muslim country), and wealth**

[46] Qur'an 4:157.

[47] The Anti-Christ is the False Messiah, the Dajjāl.

will pour forth to such an extent none will accept charity."[48]

The cross is not but an object of torture and execution used in ancient times, it is not a symbol of God or Christ. So, it is strange that centuries after Christ, it was used as a charm, kissed, revered and worshipped – would Jesus recognise this strange practice to be a teaching that he taught his disciples?

Furthermore, Jesus himself was not crucified so it has no connection to him, even symbolically. The Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said, **"There is no prophet between me and Jesus (peace be upon him). He will descend to the earth, and when you see him, you will recognise him as a man of medium height, reddish fair, wearing two light yellow garments, he will look as if drops were falling down from his head though it will not be wet… He will kill the Antichrist and will live on the earth for forty years and then die. Then the Muslims will pray the funeral prayer for**

[48] Bukhārī no. 2222.

him."[49] So the true followers of Jesus (عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ) today believe also in Muhammad (صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) as a Messenger and devoted servant of the same God who sent Jesus.

Ten: How to Become a Muslim which includes Believing in Jesus

Choose Islam today: The Prophet Muhammad (صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said,

"Whoever says, 'I testify that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah alone, He has no partners in worship – and Muhammad is His devoted servant and Messenger, and Jesus is His devoted servant, the son of His maid-servant Mary, he was God's Word which He announced unto Mary and His spirit'. And he testifies that Paradise is true, and Hellfire is true, then Allah will enter him into Paradise through whichever of the eight gates of Paradise he pleases."[50]

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[49] Abu Dāwūd, no. 4324.

[50] Bukhārī, no. 3435.

This single utterance spoken sincerely and truthfully will enter you into the Islamic fold and put you on a path to Paradise and God's eternal pleasure.

Authored by, Abu Khadeejah 'Abdul-Wāhid Alam