

Where Islam and Christianity Agree Concerning Jesus, Son of Mary

It is an essential part of Islam's teachings to believe in all of Allah's prophets and Messengers, including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Lot, Isaac, Ishmael, Jacob, Moses, David, and the many other Prophets that Allah sent down to different communities at different times.

Islam also advocates the holiness of Jesus, son of Mary. A Muslim's faith is not complete until he or she reveres Jesus and believes in his holiness, and that he lived in this world as a pure person free of any sin. Allah's book, the glorious Qur'an, declares

When the angels said: "O Mary! Surely God gives thee good news of a word from Him whose name is the Messiah, Jesus, Son of Mary, worthy of regard in this world and the hereafter, and of those who are highly accepted by God." [3:45]

Islam also declares the holiness of Mary, the mother of Jesus. No Muslim can doubt the decency and purity of Mary. She, according to the Qur'an, was among the noblest and most virtuous noble women of all time:

"And when the angels said: 'O Mary! Certainly God has chosen thee and made thee pure and has preferred thee above the women of all nations. 'O Mary! Be obedient to thy Lord, prostrate thyself and bow with those who bow (in worship)'" [3:42-43]

Islam also declares that Jesus was miraculously born from a virgin mother with no father. From the Holy Qur'an:

And make mention of Mary in the Scripture, when she withdrew from her people to an Eastern place, And chose seclusion from them. Then We sent unto her Our Spirit and it assumed for her the likeness of a perfect man. She said: Lo! I seek refuge in the Beneficent One from thee, if thou art Allah-fearing.' He said: "Nay, I am only a messenger from thy Lord, (to announce) to thee the gift of a holy son. She said: 'How can I have a son, and no mortal has yet touched me, nor have I been unchaste?' He said: 'So (it will be). Thy Lord says: "It is easy for Me; and that We may make him a sign to men and a mercy from Us. And it is a matter decreed. Then she

conceived him; and withdrew with him to a remote place. And the throes of childbirth drove her to the trunk of the palm-tree. She said: 'Oh, would that I had died before this, and had been a thing quite forgotten. So a voice came to her from beneath her: 'Grieve not, surely thy Lord has provided a stream beneath thee. And shake towards thee the trunk of the palm-tree, it will drop on thee fresh ripe dates. So eat and drink and be pleased.'" [19:16-26]

The Holy Qur'an attributes to Jesus many of the miracles mentioned in the Gospel:

... and He (Allah) will make him (Jesus) a messenger to the children of Israel (saying): "I have come to you with a sign from your Lord that I fashion for you, out of clay, the likeness of a bird, and I breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by Allah's permission. I heal him who was born blind, and the leper, and I raise the dead by Allah's permission. And I announce unto you what ye eat and what ye store in your houses. 'Lo! Verily this is a sign unto you, if ye are to be believers.'" [3:40]

The Holy Qur'an also ascribes to Jesus a miracle that is not recorded in the gospels: Jesus spoke clearly while he was in the cradle:

Then she came to her people with him, carrying him. They said: 'O Mary, thou hast indeed brought a strange thing. O sister of Aaron, thy father was not a wicked man, nor was thy mother an unchaste woman.' But she pointed to him. They said: 'How should we speak to a one who is a child in the cradle?' He said: 'I am indeed a servant of God. He has given me the Book and made me a prophet; and He has made me blessed wherever I may be, and He has enjoined on me prayer and purity so long as I live. And to be kind to my mother; and He has not made me insolent, un-blessed. And Peace be on me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I am raised to life (in the Hereafter). [19:27-33]

Where Islam and Christianity Differ

Islam is uncompromising in its Monotheism. Although Islam accepts the holiness of Jesus, it categorically rejects his divinity. God is only One, and there is no God but He, the Almighty, the Ever-Living, the Self-Subsistent, the Infinite in

life, knowledge, and power. Muslims believe that he is worthy of reverence and great respect, but that he was not God, nor was he united with God. Jesus is not ever-living. He was born less than 2000 years ago, and according to the gospels, he died after a very short life. He is not almighty because he was a subject of persecution. Jesus could not be the Creator of the world because the world is over four billion years old, while Jesus was born less than two thousand years ago. The Gospels show that Jesus considered himself only as a servant of God [Matthew 12:18, Acts 3:13, 4:27] and prostrated himself humbly before Him on many occasions.

Neither could Jesus have been the son of God. Allah has no need for a son nor is it befitting of his exalted nature to attribute a child to him. Bodily parenthood is inconceivable for Allah because He is not physical. Spiritual parenthood is similarly inconceivable because He is the Creator of every spiritual and material being. The Holy Qur'an is clear on this point:

And (they) impute falsely, without knowledge, sons and daughters unto Him. Glorified be He and high exalted above (all) that they ascribe (unto Him). The Originator of the heavens and the Earth! How can He have a child when there is no consort for Him, when He created all things and is Aware of all things? Such is God, your Lord. There is no God save Him, the Creator of all things, so worship Him. And He taketh care of all things. [6:100-102]

Islam also rejects the crucifixion of Jesus on the cross:

And their saying: Surely we have killed the Messiah, Isa son of Marium, the messenger of Allah; and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so, and most surely those who differ therein are only in a doubt about it; they have no knowledge respecting it, but only follow a conjecture, and they killed him not for sure. Nay! Allah took him up to Himself; and Allah is Mighty, Wise. [4:157-158]

The Holy Qur'an clearly states that Jesus was not crucified, but that it was made to "appear so unto them." This claim is supported by evidence from the gospels themselves. The gospels state that Jesus did not remain long on the cross. It was the custom of the Romans to break the legs of the crucified, yet Jesus' legs were not broken. Moreover, he was taken down hastily, as the Jews were preparing to

celebrate Passover and did not want him to remain on the cross on the day of the Sabbath.

The gospels also state that after Jesus was assumed to be dead, a man struck at his body with a lance, causing blood to gush out from his body; Yet, it is known that blood does not flow from a dead body. This indicates that Jesus was still alive. The gospels go on to state that a heavy stone was laid over Jesus' tomb, but that by Sunday, the stone had been removed and that Jesus' body was found missing. It is easy to conclude that some of his disciples removed the stone and rescued him. The removal of the stone indicates human, not divine activity. Were Jesus miraculously resurrected, there would have been no need for removal of the stone. God, for Whom all things are easy, would have been able to raise him from the grave and keep the stone where it was.

In addition, the gospels also state that Jesus appeared several times to his disciples after the event of crucifixion. These appearances took place in secrecy, away from the public. Were Jesus miraculously resurrected, and had attained "eternal life," he would have had no need to hide from his enemies.

The notion that Jesus was crucified leads to all sorts of absurdities. If Jesus was God, could he not protect himself from the people? How could God die? If Jesus was God, why did he cry out to the Almighty "Eli Eli Lama Sabachthani" while on the cross? Who was Jesus calling out to?

An Appeal to Reason

O People of the Scripture! Do not exaggerate in your religion nor utter aught concerning Allah save the truth. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a messenger of Allah, and His word which He conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in Allah and His messengers, and say not "Three." Desist, it is better for you - Allah is only One Allah. Far is it removed from His Transcendent Majesty that He should have a son. His is all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. And Allah is sufficient for a Protector. [4:171-2]

Say (O Muslims): We believe in Allah and that which is revealed unto us and that which was revealed unto Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus received, and that which the prophets received from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have surrendered. [2:136]

Criterion for Truth

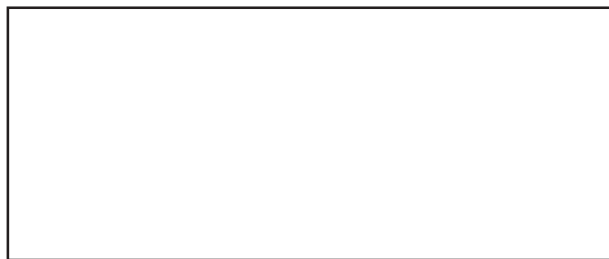
In light of the wisdom of Islam that has just been presented, take some time to consider the following:

- Are the teachings of your belief system rationally tenable?
- Is your belief system universally applicable?
- Does your belief system enhance your progress towards spiritual perfection?
- Who is the creator of your belief system? Is he a creation or is he the Creator?
- Has your belief system been corrupted by superstitions, myths, or man-made philosophies?
- Does your belief system concur with the discoveries of modern science?
- Could a human being have invented your belief system?

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At a Glance



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