

A theoretical dialogue between a Muslim and a Christian (part 1 of 2)

Abdullah: Hello there! How are you man?

Derek: Hello! Well, how are you?

Abdullah: I'm fine and you?

Derek: I'm fine, thanks.

Abdullah: Where are you from?

Derek: I'm from L.A. (Los Angeles).

Abdullah: The land of Hollywood!

Derek: Well, that's right. Have you ever been to L.A.?

Abdullah: No, never. Why are you calling yourself 'Black Magic'?

Derek: It's just a nickname, man!

Abdullah: I see.

Derek: Where are you from? Are you an Arab?

Abdullah: Yes, I am from Saudi Arabia but I'm in Qatar now. What is your name?

Derek: My name is Derek. What's your name?

Abdullah: My name is Abdullah.

Derek: What does Abdullah mean?

Abdullah: Abdullah means the servant of Allah and it is the function of each individual on the face of the earth to serve God according to what God wants from us. By the way, Allah is the proper name of God.

Derek: How do we know what God or Allah wants from us?

Abdullah: All of this is outlined in the Quran and the Sunnah (traditions and approved actions of Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him). These are the two major sources of guidance in Islam. Could you please tell me more about yourself? How old are you?

Derek: I am 19 years old, black and very much interested in knowing more about Islam. First of all, what should a person do or believe in, to become a Muslim?

Abdullah: Very easy brother, you just say that there is no one worthy of worship but God and Muhammad is His Messenger, and you become Muslim.

Derek: You mean Muhammad is his apostle? But as a Christian or non-Muslim, this sentence is not enough to make it clear to me.

Abdullah: O.K. God sent Muhammad, as His last Prophet and Messenger and revealed the Quran to him as the final revelation to mankind. God said that He perfected His religion and called it Islam (see Quran 5:3). Islam means peaceful submission to the Will of God.

Derek: I see.

Abdullah: Yes, and unfortunately, most Christians don't know or they deny that the coming of Prophet Muhammad, is foretold in their scriptures (See Deuteronomy 18:18; 21:21; Psalms 118: 22-23; Isaiah 42:1-13; Habakuk 3:3-4; Matthew 21:42-43; John 14:12-17, 15:26,27; 16:5-16). Muslim theologians have stated that the person who is described by Jesus to come after him (in the above verses) is Muhammad.

Derek: O.K. Fine, but why was there a need for another Prophet after Jesus and another revelation after the Bible?

Abdullah: All of the Prophets came to teach their peoples the Oneness of God. In the case of Jesus he was only sent as Messenger to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (see Matt. 15:24). What happened was that all of these Prophets were not well received by the majority of the people. For instance, they started tampering with the teachings of Moses and Jesus, may God exalt their mention (see Quran 2:79). That is why God sent Muhammad, with the last Message, (i.e., the Quran), to bring all of mankind back to the belief in and worship of One God, without partners or intermediaries.

Derek: Is the Quran similar to the Bible? I mean, what is it composed of?

Abdullah: The Quran came as the last code emphasizing the same pure monotheistic teachings of Jesus defending all the previous pure teachings of monotheistic beliefs and clarifying who Jesus was and who his mother was, showing that they were no more than great people.

Derek: O.K then, how can we be sure that the Quran has remained the same since the time of Prophet Muhammad, ?

Abdullah: God Himself has guaranteed that He would guard the Quran and keep it free from corruption (see Quran 15:9). Hence, the real and pure words of God are found in the Quran which was revealed in Arabic, the language of the people of Muhammad. Since then, not

an iota has changed. This is unlike what has happened in the other religions. For example, if you look at the Bible you find a lot of versions; the name Bible itself is indicative of those changes because Bible means a collection of books from different writers.

Derek: But didn't God call it the Bible?

Abdullah: God calls the Scripture revealed to Jesus "*Injeel*" in the Quran, for which the closest name in the Bible would be the word Gospel. The Bible was written many years after the time of Jesus in a language that was alien to Jesus -- it was Latin Vulgate, a language that he never spoke. Isn't this strange? Interestingly, most of what was written in the New Testament was authored by Paul, who, according to James, the brother of Jesus in the Bible, had a polluted mind because he changed and contradicted most of the teachings of Jesus .

Derek: I think you know more about Christianity than the Pope does!

Abdullah: You are wrong by saying that I know more than the Pope. I have simply investigated the Bible with an inquiring mind, which is something that all Christians should do.

Derek: Is there any English version of the Holy Quran?

Abdullah: There are many translations of the meanings of the Quran. The Quran was revealed in Arabic, which means that the words of Allah are in Arabic. The translations are the words of human beings relating to the meanings of the Quran to the non-Arabic speaking masses.

Derek: How does the Quran define God to mankind or how does the Muslim perceive God?

Abdullah: God is the One and Only True God, and the Creator of all. He does not beget nor is He begotten. He is unlike His creation in every respect. He is the All-Knowing, The Powerful, The Merciful, The Irresistible, and The King of kings.

Derek: But it is somehow difficult for me to perceive God as being the same as His creatures.

Abdullah: You are absolutely right to have difficulty perceiving this, because human beings have a limited capacity. This is why God sent revelations to His Prophets and Messengers to tell us who He is. So if you want to know who God is, just read the Quran.

Derek: Christians believe that Jesus was sent for the salvation of all mankind. If this is not true, then the foundation of Christianity is faulty. Right? What do you think?

Abdullah: That's correct. The Christians of today are following what Paul taught and also tend to follow what the priests tell them to do instead of following what Jesus said.

Derek: Kindly explain the concept of salvation through the crucifixion of Jesus.

Abdullah: In Christianity, the Doctrine of Original Sin is the reason that there is a need for salvation through Jesus' crucifixion. However, this doctrine was invented by Paul and it is strongly negated in the Old Testament (see Ezekiel 18:20, Jeremiah 31:30, Deut. 24:16). This doctrine is an attempt to escape the responsibility of righteousness with the belief that punishment is given to someone else to release us from our burden of sins (see Ephesians 1:7, Romans 4:25, 10:9, Corinthians 15:21). In the Quran, every soul is responsible for its own deeds, good or bad (see Quran 74:38, 41:46, 3:25, 6:154).

Derek: What about the crucifixion itself?

Abdullah: The Bible says Jesus cried out in a loud voice beseeching God for help on the cross: **“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”** (Matt. 27:46) Does that sound like Jesus to you?

Derek: No, then what about Jesus' appearance to his disciples after the crucifixion?

Abdullah: Jesus didn't die on the cross nor was he resurrected. If he were resurrected, then he would have come to his disciples in a spiritual body. As shown in Luke 24:36-43, he met them with his physical body after the event of his alleged crucifixion. In the Quran, it says that Jesus was not crucified, but it was someone else who was made to look like him (see Quran 4:156-158).

Derek: How did the story of the crucifixion of Jesus get into the Bible then?

Abdullah: Once again, Paul was responsible (see Timothy 2:8 and Romans 5:10).

Derek: Well, I very deep in my heart, believe that God can never look like His creation nor does He do what they do. What I believe is that God is the Perfect One who is very much different from everything we see or touch. In other words, I think the writer can never look like his book.

Abdullah: You are right. There is nothing comparable to God (see Quran 112:4). The Prophets came with a very clear message to worship God alone, without any partners or intercessors. However, Paul took pagan beliefs and practices from the Romans and mixed them with the teachings of Jesus. Consequently, Paul was mostly

responsible for elevating Jesus to the status of Son of God (see Acts. 9:20) and god.

Derek: Yes. Now I remember. The first Commandments is: **“Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is One Lord.”**

Abdullah: You’re right. That’s in Mark 12:29. Moreover, the Quran confirms that God is One (which means): **“Say He is Allah, the One and Only (God).” (Quran 112:1)**

Derek: What you are saying makes perfect sense. This is just incredible! You mean that for almost 2000 years what the Christians have been following is wrong?

(part 2 of 2)

Abdullah: Yes, especially their misunderstanding of who Jesus was.

Derek: Oh my God! I’ve been deceived! Really, I feel religiously raped. I have been fooled simply because I followed blindly the religion that I was born with and didn’t take care to investigate it thoroughly. But still inside me there is something holding me back from accepting Islam, even though Islam is clearly the True Religion.

Abdullah: Your last comment shows that you are a Muslim not a Christian and if you really love God and His Messenger Jesus you will follow Islam and Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him. Break this barrier inside you and come back to the way of your ancestors. You are now free because you are looking for the Truth and our great Prophet Jesus, told us that we should look for the Truth and the Truth will set us free. So you will be a free man as soon as you accept it. Be strong enough to accept Islam as the Truth, without any hesitation on your part and you will taste real freedom and real happiness that you have never tasted before.

Derek: Frankly, I am concerned about the negative way Islam and Muslims are shown in the media. In the West, there is a stigma attached to being a Muslim and I’m not sure I’m ready to live with that stigma.

Abdullah: This is why I have chosen to tell people about the right picture of Islam.

Derek: Then, what is the right picture of Islam?

Abdullah: The right picture of Islam is conveyed in the Quran which is exemplified by Prophet Muhammad. The reality is that it is not

fair to judge a religion by the actions of its followers alone, because there are good and bad followers in every religion. The correct thing to do is to judge a religion by its documented revelation from God and the Prophet who brought that revelation.

Derek: I see. I agree with you, but I'm still concerned about the reaction of my family and friends if they know that I am a Muslim.

Abdullah: Brother, on Judgment Day, no one will be able to help you, not even your father, mother or any of your friends (see Quran 31:33). So if you believe that Islam is the true religion, you should embrace it and live your life to please the One Who created you. Be an illuminating torch for them. Do not delay your coming to Islam. If you die before becoming a Muslim, then it's too late (see Quran 2:132, 3:102, 3:85). So grab this opportunity now. You can only remedy this pain inside you by becoming a Muslim and being able in the future, God willing, to come and perform pilgrimage (Hajj).

Derek: You are very wise man. I want to say that when I sometimes see on the satellite, especially in the season of Hajj, people of different colors and different races sitting side by side and praying to God, I feel a pain deep inside my heart and I feel something urging me to talk with someone to know more about that great religion that can gather all the races in the same place. Thanks to you, I have found that person. So please help me become a Muslim!

Abdullah: Brother, let us take it step by step. First, enter Islam by saying: *I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except God (Allah), and I bear witness that Muhammad is his servant and Messenger. I bear witness that Jesus is His Prophet and Messenger. Let us say this again: I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except God (Allah), and I bear witness that Muhammad is his servant and Messenger. I bear witness that Jesus is His Prophet and Messenger.*

Derek: I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except God (Allah), and I bear witness that Muhammad is his servant and Messenger. I bear witness that Jesus is His Prophet and Messenger

Abdullah: By the way, Jesus' name is not Jesus. It is a Latinized name. His real name is 'Eesaa. Now you will say the same thing in Arabic, the language of the Quran. I will transliterate for you: *Ash'hadu an laa ilaahaa illAllah, wa ash'hadu anna Muhammadun rasoolullaah, wa ash'hadu anna 'Eesaa 'abdullaahi wa rasooluhu.*

Derek: *Ash'hadu an laa ilaahaa illAllah, wa ash'hadu anna muhammadun rasoolullaah, wa ash'hadu anna 'Eesaa 'abdullaahi wa rasooluhu.*

Abdullah: Brother, say God is the greatest because you are a Muslim now. You are not a Christian anymore. You are in the House of Islam. If I were with you, I would hug you as my brother in Islam. How do you feel now? A burden has been removed from you and you feel like you are so light. Isn't this right?

Derek: If you were with me now, you would have seen my tears reaching my neck. You are a great brother. I feel that I have just come to life. This is exactly how I feel from now. I don't have to listen to the words of the priests in the church, who knowingly or unknowingly lead people astray. I hope to be a good servant of God.

Abdullah: You know what came out of you was disbelief and it was replaced by belief. You are so clean now, because when someone embraces Islam sincerely, God forgives all of his past sins. So, go to an Islamic center that has Muslims from all over the world and announce your Islam there and continue to learn more about Islam from them. In addition, find a book on prayer in Islam and practice it. This is essential. Now after you are through with me, you must take a shower to purify yourself from previous wrong beliefs. Remember to stay away from bad company and be with righteous Muslim people. Also, beware of those so-called Muslims who call to nationalistic ideas or racial thoughts, which are rejected in Islam. I love you as a brother in Islam and I hope one day I will see you and hear your voice.

Derek: I will for sure do what you have asked. And tomorrow I will go to the Islamic center. Thank you for showing me the Truth. I will do my best to meet people who know about Islam for sure. May God help you guide more and more people to the true word of God. There is no god but God (Allah) and Muhammad is his Messenger. Well it is as difficult for me as it is for you to leave you.

Abdullah: Well brother, you will not leave me for a long time. I will soon be with you through my supplications, God willing. Pray for me, brother.

Derek: Well, I thank you, I love you although I do not know you yet. But it is enough for me to remember that one day, a very dear man has picked me up from the mud of life. Please teach me another Islamic word in Arabic so as to make use of it in the Islamic center.

Abdullah: *As-Salaamu ‘Alaykum Warahmatullaahi Wabarakaatuh
and Astaghfirullaah.*

Derek: What do they mean?

Abdullah: May the Peace, Mercy and Blessing of God be upon you. This is used as a greeting to all Muslims. The last word means, God forgive me. Well, I have to leave you now but be sure it will not be for long.

Derek: Assalaamu ‘Alaykum Warahmatullaahi Wabarakaatuh and Astaghfirullaah for being astray from the Truth all those years. May God bless you. You have occupied a great place in my heart and I will never forget you. Bye and talk to you later. Your brother in Islam, **Derek**, but I will call myself ‘Eesaa from now on.

Abdullah: O.K. ‘Eesaa. I will leave you some final words of inspiration. Certainly, the ultimate goal of every individual is to be in Paradise forever. This reward of Paradise is too great to not have a price. That price is true faith, which is proven obedience to God and following the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad. This is the road to Paradise. Let’s stay in touch! Assalamu Alaykum!

Derek: O.K. Assalaamu Alaykum Warahmatullaahi Wabarakaatuh.