Engaging Muslims

• Two ways:
  – Confrontation/ Polemic
  – Peace/ Irenic
• Proverbs 27:6 “Wounds from a friend can be trusted.”
• Be prepared to explain true Christian faith
• Just as there are myths about Islam, so to Muslims have many misconceptions about Christianity. Be prepared to explain these concepts in detail. It would be helpful, when talking to your friend, to find out his/her views on Christianity and understanding of its basic truths. At the same time, get to know his/her level of understanding of Islam; get to know how seriously they follow Islam and what their beliefs and traditions are.

• Crucial to Understand the Cultural Differences
• Collectivistic Culture Vs. Individualistic Culture
  – Eg. of Pakistani Families in the UK
• Personal Decisions Vs. The Decision of the Umma
  – The word Ummah refers to "the people" in Arabic, more specifically to Muslim people with a common ideology and culture. "Ummah" is also said in the Quran by Allah referring to Muslims. It is more commonly used in Islamic countries.
• Center Vs. Going out
  – Role of Language
  – Guiding Philosophy (Babylonian vs. God’s)

  – WHAT DO THEY KNOW/THINK ABOUT US?
Major Contradictions and Objections

- **THE SCRIPTURES ARE CORRUPTED?**
  - Islamic teaching is internally contradicting. On the one hand, it gives very high regard to the Scriptures, and on the other hand, it claims they are corrupted.
  - The Qur’an gives the Judeo-Christian Scriptures such noble titles as,
    - ‘the Book of God,’
    - ‘the Word of God,’
    - ‘a light and Guidance to man,’
    - ‘a decision on all matters,’
    - ‘the Gospel with its guidance and light confirming the preceding Law,’ and
    - ‘a Guidance and warning to those who fear God.’

- Sura 5:43 ‘How come they to you for judgement when they have the Torah, wherein are contained the commandments of God?’
- Sura 5:44 ‘We [God] did reveal the Torah, wherein is guidance and light...’;
- Sura 5:46 ‘We sent Jesus...confirming that which was revealed before him in the Torah, and We bestowed on him the Gospel wherein is guidance and light...’;
- Sura 5:68 ‘[Jews and Christians] have no guidance until you observe the Torah and the Injil [Gospel];
- Sura 4:136 ‘Believe in God and His messenger [Muhammad], and the Scripture which He revealed to His messenger [the Qur’an] and the Scripture which He revealed aforetime [the Bible];
- Sura 10:91 ‘If you [Muhammad] are in doubt concerning that which We reveal unto you, then question those who read the Scripture (that was) before you’;
- Sura 15:9 ‘We reveal the Reminder, and Lo! We truly are its Guardian [i.e. the Bible is guarded against corruption by God];
- Sura 6:34 ‘There is none to alter the Words of Allah’;
- Sura 10:64 ‘There is no changing of the Words of Allah.’
• **Questions to Ask**
  • If the Bible was changed why does the Qur’an call Muslims to believe/consult the *Taurat* [Torah], *Injil* [Gospels], and *Zabur* [Psalms]?  
  • Allah has commanded Muhammad to judge Jews by Torah, and judge Christians by the Injil (Sura 5:43-48)?
    - “Muslims must ask Christians” (Suras 10:94; 21:7)
    - “Dispute not with the Christians” (Sura 29:46)
    - “Muslims are to believe in the Bible” (Sura 4:136)
    - “Christians are to believe in the Bible” (Suras 5:46-47, 68)

• Allah claims that no-one can change his Word. (Suras 3:2,78; 4:135; 6:34; 10:64; 18:26; 35:42; 50:28-29).  
  • Question to ask:  
    • *If God wished, could He have preserved His Word?*  
    • *If God did not, or could not, preserve His Word (the Bible), how and why should we believe that He has preserved the Qur’an?*

• Where is it *expressly* written in the Qur’an, that the earlier Holy Books were changed in their written form?
  
    - No warning against its corruption. In fact the argument did not exist until Ibn Hazam (1064), showing that it is a 11th century Muslim polemic.
Question to ask:
• If the Bible was corrupted, was this before or after Muhammad?
• If before, why does God tell Muhammad to refer to a corrupted Scripture for guidance, and why does he say of the Torah and Gospel ‘wherein is guidance and light’ rather than ‘wherein there used to be before they were corrupted’? If after, why does the Muslim not accept the Bible, since current translations are all based upon manuscripts that predate Muhammad?

• If the Bible was changed after Muhammad's life, what do we do with:
  • (1) 24,000 Manuscripts: in Greek, Latin and other languages, 230 MSS before 6th century.
  • (2) 19,000+ translations: Latin, Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Gothic, Georgian, Ethiopic, Nubian,
  • (3) 2,135 lectionaries from the 6th century,
  • (4) 86,489 quotations of N.T. in early church father's letters 36,000 before 325AD (recreating all the N. Test. but 11 verses)

• Who did it, Jews or Christians? How do they have identical scriptures?
• If Christians and Jews have two different religions, what’s the purpose of their conspiracy? Why would Christians corrupt their own Bible?
• If changed then why not expunge embarrassing stories (i.e. Peter’s denial of Christ Matt.26:69-75; Paul’s disputes with Barnabas = Acts 15:39)?
• When, and up to what time was the true uncorrupted Bible in circulation? Where is the original one now?
• Why would Christians die for a book they know is corrupted?
• **Historical Contradictions**
  
  • Sura 20:85-87, 95-97 reveals that a Samaritan molded the calf that the Israelites worshiped in Moses’ time.
    – This is an historical impossibility as Samaritans wouldn’t exist for another 500-700 years.
  
  • Sura 28:38 states that Haman was a chief minister of Pharaoh in Egypt. Historically, Haman was the minister of a Persian King, Ahasuerus, called King Xerxes I by the Greeks. He lived about a thousand years **after** the time of Moses, but the Qur’an says this Persian minister, Haman, lived in Egypt at the time of Moses.

• Sura 66:12 reveals that Mary [the Biblical Miriam and sister of Aaron and Moses] is the same as the virgin Mary [the mother of Jesus].
  
  – Some Muslim scholars try to explain that Mary was only a sister/ daughter in a figurative sense because Aaron and Mary were both saints. To the ill-informed, it sounds plausible, but in fact this is not the case at all.
  
  – Sura 3:32-35 relates that Imran’s [the father of Aaron] family was one of the preferred above all creation. Imran’s wife fell pregnant and gave birth to Mary, who became mother of Jesus. More than 1500 years separated Mary the mother of Jesus, and Miriam [Aaron and Moses’ sister].
• **THE STUMBLING-BLOCK: HOW CAN GOD BE ONE AND A TRINITY?**

• Qur’an stands against ‘Christian’ polytheism (S.4:17;5:73), but it has mistaken trinity, as it includes Mary (Sura 5:116)

• Sura 5:116; 4:171 and 5:73 reveal that Christians allegedly believe that there are three gods: God, Mary and Jesus.

• However, no Christian believes that there are three Gods. In fact, they expressly deny it, while affirming their belief in the Trinity.

• The word ‘Trinity’ is not in the Bible, nor ‘Tawhid’ in the Qur’an?

• Islamic trinity = Allah (S.13:16; 14:10), Ruh (S.50:16; 56:83), & Eternal tablets (S.85:22)

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Jesus of Quran (Isa)
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- Jesus is mentioned in 93 ayas (verses) in Quran
- A very great prophet, second only to Muhammad. Jesus is not the son of God (Surah 9:30) and certainly is not divine (Surah 5:17, 75), and he was not crucified (Surah 4:157).
- The Quran states that people (i.e., the Jews and Romans) sought to kill Jesus, but they did not crucify nor kill him, although "this was made to appear to them". Muslims believe that Jesus was not crucified but instead, he was raised up by God unto the heavens.

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<td>3:55</td>
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• **HOW CAN JESUS BE THE SON OF GOD?**
  • S. 6:101; 5:17 = biological vs. inheritance birth - Lk.2:49 = ‘begotten’ = monogenes = one & only (unique), not ‘genao’ = birth
  • Helpful pointers include Sura 2:177 in which the Arabic *ibni-sabili* literally means ‘son of the road’ but is translated ‘wayfarer’ – just as Jesus is not literally a physical son of God, so a wayfarer is not literally fathered by a road.
  • Qur’an allows possibility of God’s son
  • Sura 39:4 “If Allah had intended to take a son, He could have chosen from what He creates whatever He willed. Exalted is He; He is Allah, the One, the Prevailing.”

• **HOW IS ISA (JESUS) DIVINE?**
  • Issa - Jesus = God’s Word (S. 4:171; John 1:1) God’s Word = uncreated: Sura 85:22 (uncreated eternal tablets = mother of books S.43:4)
  • Jesus = ‘Spirit proceeding from God’ (S. 4:171), ‘supported by the Holy Spirit’ (S. 12:87; 58:22), Spirit = Essence of God (S.2:253)

• **HOW CAN GOD BECOME A MAN?**
  • Not man becoming God ↑, but God becoming man ↓ (Phil.2:6-8)
  • Can God do anything, in his omnipotence? Thus, can he become a man? Yes! So not how, but why!
  • When a Muslim says that there can be no Trinity he is limiting God, since God is able to do all things (sura 5:17, 19). In fact in sura 27:8 we read that God appeared to Moses in a burning bush (cf. Ex 3:2). If God can lower Himself to the extent of appearing as a fire, surely He can humble Himself to appear as a man (Phil 2:7) – after all, a human is much greater than a fire. The question then becomes not, How could God become a man, but Why did He?
  • God called His creation good!
• **DID JESUS REALLY DIE ON THE CROSS?**
  - Qur’anic Confusion: Sura 19:33,15 “Blessed be on me, the day I was born, the day I Die, and the day I rise again” (Jesus & Yaxya)
  - Extra-Biblical evidence: (Thallus = 50AD, Josephus 80-90AD, Tacitus 80AD, Pliny the Younger 112AD)
  - Eye-Witnesses needed to corroborate what happened. Three eye-witnesses vs. one supposition 700-900 years later (4 gospels vs. 1 Quran), who do you believe? Eyewitnesses
  - Moral Confusion: (Sura 4:157-158) Is God deceitful, since he uses another man to die in Jesus’ place?

• The Defense of Resurrection

• **OBJECTION AGAINST SACRIFICIAL DEATH**
  - Theological Confusion: (S.6:164; 53:38)? Can one pay for another’s sin, since this goes against the Qur’anic objection on atonement
  - Sahih Muslim 6666—Allah’s Apostle said: *No Muslim would die but Allah would admit in his stead a Jew or a Christian in Hell-Fire.*
  - Objection: God wouldn’t allow His prophet to be disgraced.
Why Sacrifice?

• In 37:107 we read that Abraham’s son was ‘ransomed by a momentous sacrifice’, referring to the substitution by God of a ram instead of the boy in Gen 22:13-14. Why was it necessary for God to provide a substitute to save the boy’s life? More importantly, why was the ram described as momentous (Arabic al-Azzim – this is one of the ninety-nine Names of God in the Qur’an). How could a ram be greater than a human being, unless it was a representation of an altogether greater sacrifice to come, that of Jesus Christ? (Note: the Qur’an maintains that it was Ishmael, not Isaac who was to be sacrificed. When discussing this story with a Muslim do not get sidetracked onto the issue of which of Abraham’s sons was involved since this is a red herring. It is far more important to ask why the sacrifice was needed, and why a ram is described by a word that is a title of God Himself.)

The Two Kingdoms

• Islamic Khilafa
  • identified as a visible, political, geographical state
  • melds the sacred with the Secular
  • based on 7th c. Arab rules and regulations
  • modeled on 7th Century, fixed, Arabic culture
  • focus is here (theocratic state)
  • Could be established by force
  • Could be imposed on the unwilling
  • Power represents the higher value
  • created & maintained by man

• Christian Khilafa
  • identified as an invisible, personal relational entity
  • separates the sacred from the Secular
  • based on universal principles
  • modeled on a contextual, fluid, universal, transcending culture
  • focus is there (sojourners)
  • established by choice
  • imposed on no-one (voluntary)
  • survives & thrives on weakness
  • created & maintained by God
Engaging Muslims

• **Pre-Evangelism**
  • Pray. Prayer is vitally important to protect your own mind and heart; for getting wisdom; and remembering that it is the righteousness of Jesus Christ that redeems and clothes you. Pray also for the commitment that it will take to follow this through. Pray for love (I Corinthians 13:1) for the person with whom you share the Gospel.
  • I Corinthians 13:1, “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.”

• **Pray** that the Holy Spirit will:
  – enlighten the mind of your friend(s) to the truth;
  – free them from spiritual, cultural and social bondages that will prevent them from following the truth;
  – convict them of their need of a Savior, and the righteousness of Jesus Christ;
  – free you from fear of Muslims and give you a love for them; and
  – give you boldness, wisdom and opportunity in sharing the truth.
• **Some other pointers:**
  • **Do not enter a debate** - for the simple reason that it becomes a *contest of wills*. Discuss, answer his/her questions, but do not argue; in winning an argument, you may lose a soul.
  • **In general share with people of the same sex** (i.e., male to male and female to female). Muslims often already view Christians as sexually immoral, so do not put yourself in such a compromising position; we are to avoid even the *appearance* of evil.
  • **Train yourself to answer from the Qur’an** and not just from logic or the Bible. Provoke him/her to think.

• When asked what you think about his/her beliefs, **be very wise and ensure you don’t compromise the Gospel**. Avoid insulting Muhammad, Islam, Allah etc.
  • **Show respect** even though you may not agree with what he/she believes. Muslims usually want to know God; this is your opportunity to share the love of God.
  • **Do not be arrogant**; it is not the strength of your arguments that will win the person, but the conviction of the Holy Spirit.
  • **Discuss and do not just preach at people**. Muslims have many misunderstandings, so clarify rather than preach. Remember that most Muslims will not have the years of learning, teaching and terminology that you have, so don’t use complicated terms.
• **Salvation**
  • Do you have assurance that God will accept you?
    – Muhammad had no assurance (Sura 46:8-9)
    – Abu Bakr had no assurance
    – Allah only forgives whom he wants to forgive (Sura 2:284; 3:129 etc)
    – Allah sends astray whom he wants (see tracts on *The Straight Path, Sin, and Truth*)
    – Good deeds bring no assurance (Bukhari, Vol. 7, Hadith No. 577 and Vol. 8, Hadith No. 474)
  • May I tell you what the Bible says on these things?

• [http://www.alwaysbeready.com/islam](http://www.alwaysbeready.com/islam)
• [http://www.answering-islam.org](http://www.answering-islam.org)
Books

- Coplestone, F.S. *Jesus Christ or Mohammed?* Christian Focus 2000.