

The Basic Ideas of 'Islam' (which means 'Submission').

Muslims see all religions in the light of how they are presented in the Quran. They ignore all archeological evidence, and all the known facts of history. On the whole they do not study other religions so as to find out what they genuinely teach, but accept the Quran's version of them, and judge them solely on that basis. They have thus a very strange idea of what other religions, and especially Christians, teach. Now that they are mixing with the West some of their propagators are trying to understand it better, they do it in a vague kind of fashion. Their tendency is to totally misrepresent what it teaches, and then knock down that cruder version of it, (whether deliberately or accidentally).

Muhammad had heard certain stories related to Christianity and clearly confused them, and he gathered his information from Christian heretical sects.. Thus he was confused about the account of Zacharias receiving news in the Temple of the birth to his wife of a son, John the Baptist, and thought it related to the birth of Jesus. He also obtained some of his ideas, possibly from travelling storytellers, by hearsay, and these were partly taken at some point from the fake pseudo-Gospels of the second century AD onwards (for example, that Jesus spoke at birth, that he turned clay birds into real ones, and so on). If he met people who claimed to be Christians they were clearly ill-taught and naive. Mohammad could not read or write.

But these contacts stirred his latent 'prophetic' spirit and he began to have vivid experiences in which he felt that God was speaking to him. However if it really was God who gave him the revelation surely He would have known what real Christians believed, and Muhammad's view of what they believed was naive in the extreme. We can understand Muhammad getting the wrong idea, but his ideas were supposed to be given to him by Allah (God) and his angel in a way that was without error. Did not Allah (God) then know what the orthodox Christian view was?

He certainly gathered a very naive and earthy view of the doctrine of the Trinity. He was seemingly totally unaware of the actual teaching of true Christians about the oneness of God, and the pre-existence of Jesus as the Son from eternity, and instead thought that Christians believed in three gods, and that those three gods were the Father, the virgin Mariam (actually Miriam, the sister of Moses, for they relate her to Aaron and Moses) and their son 'Isa, who until that time had had no pre-existence, and was produced from the virgin Mariam by a created 'spirit'. Thus from what Muhammad learned from the storytellers 'Isa (Jesus) did not exist until he was born as a man through Mariam. There is no wonder that he found it difficult to accept this rather crude idea (as he saw it) of another god being born long after creation, and along with Mariam joining a family of gods. But it was polytheism, not Christianity.

So what he rightly rejected was the heresy that had grown up that saw the Virgin Mary as in some way divine, and the consequence that followed it. Sadly he never heard the real teaching of Christianity about the Triune God, Who was God from all eternity and consisted of three inter-personal, and inter-communicating, relationships within the Godhead. As the Athanasian Creed reads, "We worship one God in threeness and Threeness in Unity; neither dividing the substance nor confusing the persona (inter-personal and inter-communicating 'persona' but not individual persons)." And as Paul says, 'For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"), yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live' (1 Corinthians 8:5-6; cf. Ephesians 4:4-6).

We will now consider some of what he said about Jesus. And remember it was supposed to be

God Who was saying this. In the following quotes what is in brackets and italics are our notes.

(The Birth of 'Isa (Jesus)).

(Allah approaches Zachariah and tells him that he will, instead of a child from his wife, have a special child born from a virgin mother, his protégé Mariam. Compare Luke 1.5-25 of the birth of John the Baptist, and 1.26-45 of the birth of Jesus, which the writer in the Koran telescopes together, as possibly the storyteller from whom he received it had also done).

Quote.

Mariam "19.2": A mention of the mercy of your Lord to His servant Zakariya. "19.3": When he called upon his Lord in a low voice, "19.4": He said: My Lord! surely my bones are weakened and my head flares with hoariness, and, my Lord! I have never been unsuccessful in my prayer to Thee: "19.5": And surely I fear my cousins after me, and my wife is barren, therefore grant me from Thyself an heir, "19.6": Who should inherit me and inherit from the children of Yaqoub, and make him, my Lord, one in whom Thou art well pleased. "19.7": O Zakariya! surely We give you good news of a boy whose name shall be Yahya: We have not made before anyone his equal. "19.8": He said: O my Lord! when shall I have a son, and my wife is barren, and I myself have reached indeed the extreme degree of old age? "19.9": He said: So shall it be, your Lord says: It is easy to Me, and indeed I created you before, when you were nothing. "19.10": He said: My Lord! give me a sign. He said: Your sign is that you will not be able to speak to the people three nights while in sound health. "19.11": So he went forth to his people from his place of worship, then he made known to them that they should glorify (Allah) morning and evening.

(Comments are now made on the coming birth of the child. We should note here that he was to die and be raised to life).

Note that Yahya is John the Baptist, "19.12": O Yahya! take hold of the Book with strength, and We granted him wisdom while yet a child "19.13": And tenderness from Us and purity, and he was one who guarded (against evil), "19.14": And dutiful to his parents, and he was not insolent, disobedient. "19.15": And peace on him on the day he was born, and on the day he dies, and on the day he is raised to life

(Mariam goes aside to have the child).

"19.16": And mention Mariam in the Book when she drew aside from her family to an eastern place;

(The angel appears to her)

"19.17": So she took a veil (to screen herself) from them; then We sent to her Our spirit, and there appeared to her a well-made man. "19.18": She said: Surely I fly for refuge from you to the Beneficent God, if you are one guarding (against evil). "19.19": He said: I am only a messenger of your Lord: That I will give you a pure boy. "19.20": She said: When shall I have a boy and no mortal has yet touched me, nor have I been unchaste? "19.21": He said: Even so; your Lord says: It is easy to Me: and that We may make him a sign to men and a mercy from Us, and it is a matter which has been decreed.

(The child is born and speaks to his mother and comforts her).

"19.22": So she conceived him; then withdrew herself with him to a remote place. "19.23":

And the throes (of childbirth) compelled her to betake herself to the trunk of a palm tree. She said: Oh, would that I had died before this, and had been a thing quite forgotten! "19.24": Then (the child) called out to her from beneath her: Grieve not, surely your Lord has made a stream to flow beneath you; "19.25": And shake towards you the trunk of the palmtree, it will drop on you fresh ripe dates: "19.26": So eat and drink and refresh the eye. Then if you see any mortal, say: Surely I have vowed a fast to the Beneficent God, so I shall not speak to any man today.

(Mariam brings her child to the people).

"19.27": And she came to her people with him, carrying him (with her). They said: O Mariam! surely you have done a strange thing. "19.28": O sister of Haroun! your father was not a bad man, nor, was your mother an unchaste woman.

(In justifying herself Mariam points to her baby who miraculously gives a full explanation of the situation).

"19.29": But she pointed to him. They said: How should we speak to one who was a child in the cradle? "19.30": He said: Surely I am a servant of Allah; He has given me the Book and made me a prophet; "19.31": And He has made me blessed wherever I may be, and He has enjoined on me prayer and poor-rate (*Editors note: money set aside for the poor*) so long as I live; "19.32": And dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me insolent, unblessed; "19.33": And peace on me on the day I was born, and on the day I die, and on the day I am raised to life.

(A comment saying that Allah could not have a son born at this time long after creation, and born at this time to be a god).

"19.34": Such is 'Isa, son of Mariam; (this is) the saying of truth about which they dispute. "19.35": It beseems not Allah that He should take to Himself a son, glory to be Him; when He has decreed a matter He only says to it "Be," and it is.

End of quote.

So it is clear that Muhammad had no real conception of what Christians actually teach or believe in, no conception that they taught the eternal pre-existence of the Son, and no idea at all about what the Bible speaks of when it speaks of 'the Spirit of God' which in all cases refers to God directly in action. He confused the Spirit with angels. He thought that the idea was that a new god had come into being who had been born to Mariam, with Mariam also to be seen as a goddess.

Mohammad further thought that 'Isa's (Jesus') mother Mariam was the daughter of 'Imran, (Âl 'Imran 3:34,35) — compare the Amram of Exodus 6:20 — and the sister of Haroun (Aaron, and thus of Moses). (Mariam 19:28 above). She was looked after by Zachariah (father of John the Baptist) who because his wife was barren was told that instead of a son born to his wife (who was in fact Yahya) a miraculous son would be born to Mariam (Âl 'Imran 3:36) while still a virgin (Al-An'am 6:12; Mariam 19:19-21) Mariam gave birth to 'Isa alone in a desolate place under a date palm tree. (Mariam 19:22ff). It is thus also clear that Muhammad had no realisation of the 1200 years that had passed between the life of Moses and the birth of Jesus. So he thought that 'Isa would propagate what he saw as the fairly recently given Torah of Moses. (Jesus would, of course, proclaim and expand on the Torah, but not as Muhammad intended it).

(Quote).

The Family of Imran (Al Imran)..

The birth of Miriam From Amran (1200 yers before Jesus). "3.35": When a woman of Imran said: My Lord! surely I vow to Thee what is in my womb, to be devoted (to Thy service); accept therefore from me, surely Thou art the Hearing, the Knowing. "3.36": So when she brought forth, she said: My Lord! Surely I have brought it forth a female -- and Allah knew best what she brought forth -- and the male is not like the female, and I have named it Mariam, and I commend her and her offspring into Thy protection from the accursed Shaitan (Satan).

(Mariam was seemingly looked after by Zechariah in the Temple where she was miraculously fed by Allah. Instead of a child to Zechariah Allah will give a child to the virgin Mariam).

"3.37": So her Lord accepted her with a good acceptance and made her grow up a good growing, and gave her into the charge of Zakariya; whenever Zakariya entered the sanctuary to (see) her, he found with her food. He said: O Mariam! whence comes this to you? She said: It is from Allah. Surely Allah gives to whom He pleases without measure. "3.38": There did Zakariya pray to his Lord; he said: My Lord! grant me from Thee good offspring; surely Thou art the Hearer of prayer. "3.39": Then the angels called to him as he stood praying in the sanctuary: That Allah gives you the good news of Yahya verifying a Word from Allah, and honorable and chaste and a prophet from among the good ones. "3.40": He said: My Lord! when shall there be a son (born) to me, and old age has already come upon me, and my wife is barren? He said: even thus does Allah what He pleases. "3.41": He said: My Lord! appoint a sign for me. Said He: Your sign is that you should not speak to men for three days except by signs; and remember your Lord much and glorify Him in the evening and the morning. "3.42": And when the angels said: O Mariam! surely Allah has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the world. "3.43": O Mariam! keep to obedience to your Lord and humble yourself, and bow down with those who bow. "3.44": This is of the announcements relating to the unseen which We reveal to you; and you were not with them when they cast their pens (to decide) which of them should have Mariam in his charge, and you were not with them when they contended one with another. "3.45": When the angels said: O Mariam, surely Allah gives you good news with a Word from Him (of one) whose name is the Messiah, 'Isa son of Mariam, worthy of regard in this world and the hereafter and of those who are made near (to Allah). "3.46": And he shall speak to the people when in the cradle and when of old age, and (he shall be) one of the good ones. "3.47": She said: My Lord! when shall there be a son (born) to I me, and man has not touched me? He said: Even so, Allah creates what He pleases; when He has decreed a matter, He only says to it, Be, and it is. "3.48": And He will teach him the Book and the wisdom and the Taurat (the Torah) and the Injeel (the Evangel/Gospel).

What her son 'Isa (Jesus) is to accomplish

"3.49": And (make him) an apostle to the children of Israel: That I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I determine for you out of dust like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird with Allah's permission and I heal the blind and the leprous, and bring the dead to life with Allah's permission and I inform you of what you should eat and what you should store in your houses; most surely there is a sign in this for you, if you are believers. "3.50": And a verifier of that which is before me of the Taurat

(Torah) and that I may allow you part of that which has been forbidden to you, and I have come to you with a sign from your Lord therefore be careful of (your duty to) Allah and obey me. "3.51": Surely Allah is my Lord and your Lord, therefore serve Him; this is the right path.

'Isa appoints disciples.

"3.52": But when 'Isa perceived unbelief on their part, he said Who will be my helpers in Allah's way? The disciples said: We are helpers (in the way) of Allah: We believe in Allah and bear witness that we are submitting ones. "3.53": Our Lord! we believe in what Thou hast revealed and we follow the apostle, so write us down with those who bear witness. "3.54": And they planned and Allah (also) planned, and Allah is the best of planners.

Allah raises 'Isa up to His presence. In view of 19.15 and 19.33 it would seem that this was after dying.

"3.55": And when Allah said: O 'Isa, I am going to terminate the period of your stay (on earth) and cause you to ascend unto Me and purify you of those who disbelieve and make those who follow you above those who disbelieve to the day of resurrection; then to Me shall be your return, so I will decide between you concerning that in which you differed. "3.56": Then as to those who disbelieve, I will chastise them with severe chastisement in this world and the hereafter, and they shall have no helpers. "3.57": And as to those who believe and do good deeds, He will pay them fully their rewards; and Allah does not love the unjust. "3.58": This We recite to you of the communications and the wise reminder. "3.59": Surely the likeness of 'Isa is with Allah as the likeness of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him, Be, and he was. "3.60": (This is) the truth from your Lord, so be not of the disputers.

(End of quote).

So Muhammad had heard that Jesus taught the Torah and gathered disciples, and he had heard of the resurrection in vague form but clearly did not understand it. He describes the doctrine of the Trinity as follows:

Quote.

"4.171": O followers of the Book! do not exceed the limits in your religion, and do not speak (lies) against Allah, but (speak) the truth; the Messiah, 'Isa son of Mariam is only an apostle of Allah and His Word which He communicated to Mariam and a spirit (Ruh) from Him; believe therefore in Allah and His apostles, and say not, Three. Desist, it is better for you; Allah is only one God; far be It from His glory that He should have a son, whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His, and Allah is sufficient for a Protector. "4.172": The Messiah does by no means disdain that he should be a servant of Allah, nor do the angels who are near to Him, and whoever disdains His service and is proud, He will gather them all together to Himself.

End of quote.

And again

Quote

"5.72": Certainly they disbelieve who say: Surely Allah, He is the Messiah, son of Mariam; and the Messiah said: O Children of Israel! serve Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Surely whoever associates (others) with Allah, then Allah has forbidden to him the garden (Paradise), and his abode is the fire; and there shall be no helpers for the unjust. "5.73": Certainly they disbelieve who say: Surely Allah is the third (person) of the three; and there is no god but the

one God, and if they desist not from what they say, a painful chastisement shall befall those among them who disbelieve. "5.74": Will they not then turn to Allah and ask His forgiveness? And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. "5.75": The Messiah, son of Mariam is but an apostle; apostles before him have indeed passed away; and his mother was a truthful woman; they both used to eat food.

End of quote

And again

Quote

"5.116": And when Allah will say: O 'Isa son of Mariam! did you say to men, Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah.

End of quote

So Mohammad is rightly appalled at the thought that Mariam and her son should be put on the same level as Allah so that there are three gods. He had clearly heard of heretical Christians who worshipped the Father, the Virgin Mary and her son Jesus as three Gods in a kind of divine family which came into existence after the time of Moses. He was right in what he rejected. Where he was led astray was in not knowing that this was not what Christians really believed, or what Jesus taught. He did not realise that the doctrine of the Triune God was of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, One God existing through all eternity.

Now we can understand a Mohammad who had met heretical Christians or had listened to storytellers thinking like this, but certainly we cannot understand the living God thinking like this, and yet their claim is that Mohammad received this as a direct revelation from Allah. It is quite clear therefore that that claim is wrong, or that Allah was wrong.

He goes on to speak of the life of Jesus which he learned from stories taken partly from the Gospels and partly from the pseudo-Gospels of 2nd century AD and later. He again refers to the giving of life to clay birds (from the pseudo gospels), and then to the miraculous feeding, although not appreciating its significance.

"5.110": When Allah will say: O 'Isa son of Mariam! Remember My favor on you and on your mother, when I strengthened you, I with the holy Spirit, you spoke to the people in the cradle and I when of old age, and when I taught you the Book and the wisdom and the Taurat (Torah) and the Injeel (Evangel/Gospel); and when you determined out of clay a thing like the form of a bird by My permission, then you breathed into it and it became a bird by My permission, and you healed the blind and the leprous by My permission; and when you brought forth the dead by My permission; and when I withheld the children of Israel from you when you came to them with clear arguments, but those who disbelieved among them said: This is nothing but clear enchantment. "5.111": And when I revealed to the disciples, saying, Believe in Me and My apostle, they said: We believe and bear witness that we submit (ourselves). "5.112": When the disciples said: O 'Isa son of Mariam! will your Lord consent to send down to us food from heaven? He said: Be careful of (your duty to) Allah if you are believers. "5.113": They said: We desire that we should eat of it and that our hearts should be at rest, and that we may know that you have indeed spoken the truth to us and that we may be of the witnesses to it. "5.114": 'Isa the son of Mariam said: O Allah, our Lord! send down to us food from heaven which should be to us an ever-recurring happiness, to the first of us and to the last of us, and a sign from Thee, and grant us means of subsistence, and Thou art the best of the Providers. "5.115": Allah said: Surely I will send it down to you, but whoever shall disbelieve afterwards from among you, surely I will chastise him with a chastisement with which I will not chastise, anyone among the nations. "5.116": And when Allah will say: O 'Isa son of Mariam! did you say to men, Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah, he will say: Glory be to Thee, it did not befit me that I should say what I had no right to (say); if

I had said it, Thou wouldst indeed have known it; Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I do not know what is in Thy mind, surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things.

"5.117": I did not say to them aught save what Thou didst enjoin me with: That serve Allah, my Lord and your Lord, and I was a witness of them so long as I was among them, but when Thou didst cause me to die, Thou wert the watcher over them, and Thou art witness of all things. "5.118": If Thou shouldst chastise them, then surely they are Thy servants; and if Thou shouldst forgive them, then surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise.

End of quote

Mohammad was right in suggesting that Jesus would reject such a crude idea of the Trinity. The naive heresy of the worship of Mary produced a sad harvest.

Islam's Teaching on Sin and Human Nature.

In contrast to the Biblical description of the predicament of mankind as being tainted by sin Muslims deny that human beings are born with a sinful nature. Abdullah Yusuf Ali in his book, *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary* comments on Surah 30:30 as follows, 'As turned out from the creative hand of God, man is innocent, pure, true, free, inclined to right and virtue, and endued with true understanding about his own position in the Universe and about God's goodness, wisdom and power. That is his true nature ... But man is caught in the meshes of customs, superstitions, selfish desires, and false teaching.'

Hammudah Abdalati (*Islam in Focus*) confirms this, 'The idea of Original Sin or hereditary criminality has no room in the teachings of Islam. Man, according to the Qur'an (30:30) and to the Prophet, is born in a natural state of purity or fitrah, that is, 'Islam' or 'submission' to the will and law of God. Whatever becomes of man after birth is the result of external influence and intruding factors ... Sin is acquired not inborn, emergent not built-in, avoidable not inevitable.'

Surah 30.29-30 reads

Quote.

"30.29": Nay! those who are unjust follow their low desires without any knowledge; so who can guide him whom Allah makes err? And they shall have no helpers. "30.30": Then set your face upright for religion in the right state -- the nature made by Allah in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allah's creation; that is the right religion, but most people do not know --

End quote

Salvation in Islam

Islam on Salvation. Good and Bad Works.

Logically related to the Islamic view of human nature is the teaching of the Quran that the ultimate question for human destiny is whether one's good deeds are greater than one's evil deeds.

Quote

7.8-9 And the weighing on that day (Day of Resurrection) will be the true (weighing). So as for those whose scale (of good deeds) will be heavy, they will be the successful (by entering Paradise). And as for those whose scale will be light, they are those who will lose their own selves (by entering Hell) because they denied and rejected Our Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations). (Qur'an 7:8-9)

21.47 And We shall set up balances of justice on the Day of Resurrection, then none will be

dealt with unjustly in anything. And if there be the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it. And Sufficient are We to take account. (Qur'an 21:47)

End of quote

So to the Muslim it is ultimately a man's own righteous deeds that determine his eternal state of happiness or harm. Thus Muslims reject the idea of Jesus' atoning work on the cross, as well as the historical reality that Jesus even died on a cross. They do not consider such atonement necessary.

Now it will be apparent that Islam teaches what a good many ordinary people believe, and that is that they are not really born sinful, and that when they stand before God their good deeds and their bad deeds will be weighed, and if the good are heavier they will be fine (and they always assume that their good deeds will be the heavier). It is the same belief as that held by many Egyptians in the times of the Pharaohs.

For the fact is that Islam concentrates on the need to keep the Law of God as contained in the Quran. It is a religion of works. There is no thought of a Redeemer or Saviour. All is concentrated on submission to the teaching of the Quran.

But the Bible is more realistic. It states that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Roman 3.23), and that there is none righteous, no not one (Romans 3.10), and that the fact that all men die shows that all are tainted with sin (Romans 5.12-21) and need to be 'saved'. And it speaks of One Who came to save men from their sins and make them right with God. It speaks of a Saviour.

The Death of Jesus.

The Quran denies that Jesus died at the hands of the Jews. Describing a potted history of Israel it says

Quote

(The Making of the Covenant at Sinai)

"4.154": And We lifted the mountain (Sainai) over them at (the taking of the covenant) and We said to them: Enter the door making obeisance; and We said to them: Do not exceed the limits of the Sabbath, and We made with them a firm covenant.

Israel's Breaking of the Covenant and Slaying of the Prophets

"4.155": Therefore, for their breaking their covenant and their disbelief in the communications of Allah and their killing the prophets wrongfully and their saying: Our hearts are covered; nay! Allah set a seal upon them owing to their unbelief, so they shall not believe except a few.

Israel's Calumny On Mariam

"4.156": And for their unbelief and for their having uttered against Mariam a grievous calumny.

Israel's Claim To Have Killed Jesus

"4.157": And their saying: Surely we have killed the Messiah, 'Isa son of Mariam, the apostle

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. "4.158": Nay! Allah took him up to Himself; and Allah is Mighty, Wise.

End quote

What this means is not clear. Muslims have interpreted it to mean that Jesus was not crucified. All it may however mean is that it was not the Jews who killed Him but the Romans. For if Jesus did not die for our sins and rise again we are without hope. Muslims seek to rob us of the glory of our Saviour.

The People of the Book.

The following passages in the Surahs show the Surahs as telling Jews and Christians to read their own writings in order to learn the truth. But modern Islam claims that all those writings had already been corrupted. How then could Muhammad in the Surahs tell them to read them in order to learn the truth? It is clear that when the Surahs were written the Christian and Jewish writings (the Old and New Testament) were seen as uncorrupted and thus as telling the truth. And today we have manuscripts from long before the time of Mohammad which carry the same message word for word as today's texts of the Gospels. Thus Muslims contradict their own Surahs when they say that the Gospels have been corrupted.

Quote.

"Say ye: We believe in Allah, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses, and Jesus, and that given to all prophets from their Lord: we make no difference between one and another of them." (Surah al-Baqara 2:136)

"It was We who revealed the Taurat (Torah - Law - to Moses); therein was guidance and light ... If any do fail to judge by the light of what Allah hath revealed, they are (no better than) unbelievers. ... We sent Jesus, the son of Mariam, confirming the Taurat (Torah - Law) that had come before him: We sent him the Injeel (Gospel/Evangel): Therein was guidance and light ... a guidance and an admonition to those who fear Allah. Let the people of the Injeel (Gospel/Evangel) judge by what Allah hath revealed therein. If any do fail to judge by the light of what Allah hath revealed, they are (no better than) those who rebel. Judge what Allah hath revealed, and follow not their vain desires." (Surah Ma-ida 5:47,49,50,52)

"Say: we believe in the revelation which has come down to us and that which came down to you." (Surah al-Ankabut 29:46).

Thus Muhammad was telling the Christians of his day to read the Gospels (Injil). But why would he say that if they had been corrupted? Rather it demonstrates that they had not been corrupted then, and are uncorrupted now.

The Quran.

Muslims now teach that the Koran in its entirety has been preserved without error from the time of Mohammad. However, this was not what the early Muslim teachers said. They made it quite clear that there were a number of differing versions of the Koran, and that they differed quite specifically. Mohammad wrote nothing down. Pious followers eventually wrote his words down as they had remembered them and there were a number of different versions. And coinage of the time which has on it quotations from the Koran also differ in their quotations from the modern Koran. Furthermore recently discovered manuscripts from those early days show quite clearly that there are discrepancies between copies. It is quite obvious

therefore that these claims are unjustified. (See for this our other articles on The Origins of the Koran and Archaeological Discovery and the Koran and Different Traditions of and Contradictions in the Koran).

The Distinctive Attitudes of Jesus and Mohammad.

We only have to look at the approach to life of Jesus and Mohammad to realise the great difference between them. Jesus disapproved of violence in matters of religion and refused to allow His followers to engage in it. The activities of the Crusaders would have been just as abhorrent to Jesus as they were to Muslims. Equally the violent behaviour of the Muslims would also have been abhorrent to Him. He taught that men should love their enemies (behave towards them for their good even when their enemies were doing the opposite) and should bless those who cursed them, and do good to those who hated them. Muhammad in the end is represented as having taught the slaying of all who would not turn to Islam. This, of course, appealed to the savage tribespeople among whom he lived, as it sadly appeals to many of them today.

Compare Jesus teaching, 'It has been said, You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy, but I say to you, Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you.' (Matthew 5.43-44) with that of Muhammad

Quote

"2.193": And fight with them until there is no persecution, and religion should be only for Allah, but if they desist, then there should be no hostility except against the oppressors.

"2.194": The Sacred month for the sacred month and all sacred things are (under the law of) retaliation; whoever then acts aggressively against you, inflict injury on him according to the injury he has inflicted on you and be careful (of your duty) to Allah and know that Allah is with those who guard (against evil).

"9.29": Fight those who do not believe in Allah, nor in the latter day, nor do they prohibit what Allah and His Apostle have prohibited, nor follow the religion of truth, out of those who have been given the Book, until they pay the tax in acknowledgement of superiority and they are in a state of subjection.

End of quote

And let us be in no doubt that Mohammad carried this into practise. Even his closest admirers admitted that he could be very cruel.

Consider this example.

Quote

"A group of eight men from the tribe of 'Ukil came to the Prophet and then they found the climate of Medina unsuitable for them. So, they said, 'O Allah's Apostle! Provide us with some milk.' Allah's Apostle said, 'I recommend that you should join the herd of camels.' So they went and drank the urine and the milk of the camels (as a medicine) till they became healthy and fat. Then they killed the shepherd and drove away the camels, and they became unbelievers after they were Muslims. When the Prophet was informed by a shouter for help, he sent some men in their pursuit, and before the sun rose high, they were brought, and he had their hands and feet cut off. Then he ordered for nails which were heated and passed over their eyes, and they were left in the Harra (i.e. rocky land in Medina). They asked for water, and nobody provided them with water till they died." (Hadith, Sahih Bukhari, Volume 4, Book 52, Number 261: Narrated by Anas bin Malik.)

End of quote

The oldest still-available biography of Muhammad is called the "Sirat Rasul Allah" ("Life of the Prophet of Allah"). This book was written by Ibn Ishaq a century before any of the major

works of the Hadith. "Sirat Rasulallah" is considered the most authentic biography of Muhammad. On page 515, we read of an event that took place about three years before Muhammad's death.

This specific narrative tells of Muhammad's conquest of Khaibar, a large Jewish settlement with some of the best date palms in the region. The Jews of Khaibar were prosperous merchants, craftsmen, and farmers. Kinana al-Rabi, who was said to have had the custody of a certain hidden treasure, was brought to Muhammad who asked him about it. Kinana denied that he knew where it was. A Jew came to the apostle and said that he had seen Kinana going round a certain ruin every morning early. When the apostle said to Kinana, "Do you know that if we find you have it I shall kill you?" he said "Yes." Muhammad gave orders that the ruin be excavated and some of the treasure was found. When he asked Kinana about the rest of the treasure he refused to produce it, so the apostle gave orders to al-Zubayr Al-Awwam, "Torture him until you extract what he has." So he kindled a fire with flint and steel on his chest until he was nearly dead. Then Muhammad delivered him to Muhammad b. Maslama and he struck off his head.

Now in view of what he and they had suffered we can understand Mohammad wanting his people to defend themselves, but he unquestionably went far beyond that. Can anyone imagine Jesus behaving in the same way? If there is a choice between these attitudes which do we see as being of God? Mohammad was a man of his times, and he lived in a violent part of the world in violent times. That is one thing. But to claim that Allah has given him an inspired word that encourages violence is quite another. The idea of the Jihad, the holy war against the unbeliever, is interpreted by many Muslims as only referring to defence when attacked, but few Muslims dare to raise their voices to declare that the young men who in the name of Allah kill their fellow Muslims as well as unbelievers in the name of Jihad will not be going to Paradise. We have never heard it said once by any prominent Muslim. Such young men are soon converted, for once they are dead instead of being in Paradise they discover the truth. That deliberate murder results in the wrath of God.

So we complete our brief survey of Islam. Let us not forget that they believe in One God like we do, the problem is that they have failed to understand the full revelation in Christ Jesus. Let us also not forget that like all true Christians large numbers of them believe in moral living and shudder at the behaviour of the modern world, although we would not always agree with their expression of it. The large majority are not our enemies. We should be able to exchange our views without bitterness and show love for one another. But it is impossible to be a Muslim without rejecting the Jesus Christ revealed in the Bible, and to the heart by faith. This is why in the end we have to say that they are wrong. Mohammad turned from a false presentation of God back to the One God. Sadly he failed to realise the fullness of what that One God had revealed in Jesus Christ.