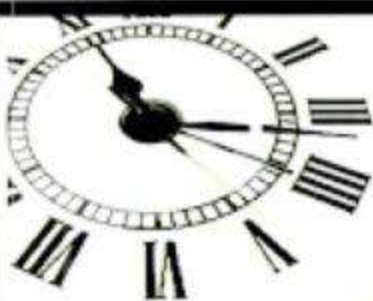


Tawfiq Al Refaie



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*Cracking the codes
between Muslims,
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Tawfiq Al Refaie

*In the Name of Allah
The Most Beneficent,
the Most Merciful*

Decision

My dear friend,

If you have enough courage – as I think you do – then read this book, so that you can decide. If you do not have enough courage to decide, then you will have that courage after you read this book.

If you do not have enough courage to decide after you read this book, then you will decide after you read it again.

I am concerned that you may turn away from reading this book because you think that it is like what you have read before. But then you will miss out on a great deal, and you will miss out on making the decision!

I am concerned that you may be reluctant to read this book because you give a religious, regional or racial label to its author, and thus you will be deprived of the opportunity to decide.

No one can make the decision for you. It is your decision, and as such, I do not think that you will decide anything but that which is in your best interests. You will decide.

Let us wait until the last line of the last page, before we listen to the most serious decision.

I am concerned that you may not understand, and you may choose not to read when you see names that you do not recognize, and thus you may doubt its integrity.

So put the names that you want, or put your own name, or put numbers or letters or symbols. Or ignore all of that and just look at the meanings, at the discussion, at the evidence. Put emotion aside and let your reason decide.

Nevertheless, you should know that the men and women in these dialogues are real people, and that the dialogues in this book are real.

The aim of being fair to all parties is a sincere aim.

The high academic and social status of the people involved in the dialogues in this book is real.

The seriousness of these dialogues and the strength of the evidence presented are real.

What I have added of questions, answers and evidence, is aimed only at serving the truth, regardless of which party is involved.

One final touch:

The decision is up to your desire for the truth, or if you wish, you may say that it is up to your rational judgement, or your judgement on the basis of truth.

Be assured that your reason is able to pass judgement and declare the truth.

Give your reason a chance, give it time, and you will see its real ability to make the greatest decision.

Author

What if these ideas of patients' autonomy
and autonomy are aimed only at serving
the public reputation of a health care system?

(The main point)

The decision is up to you, doctor, for the
benefit of your patient. You may say that
it is up to your medical institution for your
management on the basis of law.

The argument that your reason is not to
pass judgment and decide the truth.

Give your patient a choice, give it up,
and you will see his real position to make
the perfect decision.

A. Chou

The First Gathering

A Conversation among dear friends on the Seine

From the
Emirates
to Paris

How long did I live with her, loving one another, attracted to one another and living in harmony together, until we were split by differences of religion.

No, our love did not end, and our meetings did not cease, although our ideas and thoughts grew apart.

Then we met again after I had changed.

We met in a gathering one evening on the Seine, during a beautiful French summer, in that beautiful and splendid capital. But the most marvellous thing in my view was the strangest in theirs, my legitimate wife Umm Haamid.

No subject provoked more debate than the *hijab* of Umm Haamid, and the conversation moved from *hijab*, to woman, to the family, to society, to history, to God...

After the mixture of French and Arabic greetings, this meeting led to feelings of

sincere love. It was a meeting that deserved to be witnessed by masses of men and women, and I wish that the number of those who hear it would surpass six billion.

This was the introduction that led to the first question, after we had travelled five thousand kilometres, from Dubai Airport to Charles de Gaulle, suspended between heaven and earth for six and a half hours.

Abu Haamid: No one else on that Emirates plane that was heading for Paris – with more than three hundred passengers on board – was wearing the *ghutrah* and *iqaal* (Arab man's head-dress), but there were many women on board who were wearing *hijab* and *niqab*. I knew that many of my fellow Arab men had changed their clothing and were hiding themselves in your type of clothing.

My wife, Umm Haamid: In fact I have not seen any of the French trying to annoy me with even a single word or look.

But I saw astonishment in the eyes of men and women when I landed at Charles de Gaulle airport, in Parisian parks and in French hospitals and clinics, and they

have not stopped until this moment.

Isabella, with a look of astonishment: This is something natural. You have to realize that most people in our society have never in their lives seen a woman dressed like that. They may or may not have seen it on television.

How would a woman feel if she sees a woman like her covered up in black or white, showing only her face and hands, or sometimes only her eyes, like you, Umm Haamid?

This is a natural reaction resulting from the questions that arise in people's minds, wondering why, why would she do that to herself?

Did she think it was a masquerade? Or was she afraid of the world?

Was she trying to escape reality? Or hiding an ugly face?

Or was it none of these reasons? Was she forced by her husband or the authorities?

This is what crossed my mind when I came to Dubai for the first time, and saw Umm Haamid and others like her, so how

about one who has never left France, then sees women like you for the first time?

Dr. Katherine: Yes, our society is one of freedom. And we would like to exercise freedom here in this marvellous gathering, by means of free debate of everything that comes up. Hence I will start with you, Umm Haamid, with a blunt question. I hope you will bear with me. What happiness can there be for a woman who covers her face and hides her charms from the world?

What happiness can there be for a woman who regards everything and everyone as suspicious?

What inner happiness can there be for a man who fears everything for his wife and is always suspicious?

What about openness?

What about adornment?

What about life?!

Dr. Drima: Before you answer, Abu Haamid, I want you to know that I have tried hard to think about this matter, and I said: Would I ever be able to accept my wife looking like that?

How could she greet my friends and how could they greet her?

How could I kiss their wives and how could they kiss her if they were wearing this *niqab*?

How would the Parisian streets look if they were filled with women dressed like Umm Haamid?

How would we live in our houses?

How would we breathe?

Madame Drima, looking with pity mixed with shyness, and looking at her friends and husband as if they had gone too far: Perhaps we have overburdened Abu Haamid and Umm Haamid, and they are our guests. Is this what they came here for?

Abu Haamid¹ : I think that the most im-

1: The reader may feel that the responses of Abu Haamid are longer than those of the others. This is for a number of reasons, such as the fact that the answers are naturally longer than the questions, and Abu Haamid is usually the one to whom questions are directed. The one who is accused in these debates is Abu Haamid, and the defence of the accused is usually longer than the argument presented against him. The reader should not imagine that the length of the answers is any indication of bias, rather what I have mentioned is what actually

portant thing on which our relationship should be based is honesty and frankness. Hence I say to you:

Believe me, I want our discussion to be sincere and honest, not hiding anything in our hearts, with no limit to its frankness and broadness of scope, with no restrictions.

This is the best topic we could discuss in our meeting. How good the meeting is when our friendship is sincere and fruitful.

Brushing
aside
customs

Let us agree on something that no two people can dispute, that is the aim of all of us: happiness. Everything that can lead us to true happiness, we should adopt, because that is the true road that leads towards our goal, regardless of whether it is a social custom for us, for you or for anyone else. So we should not make social customs the basis of our judgement as to whether something is true or false. Customs are a relative matter, and what is relative cannot be the measure of what

happened, because Abu Haamid was surrounded by a group of western men and women, and most of the discussions were with the French and others like them, so he was faced with their questions and arguments.

is true or false, because it is not fixed.

Let us give some examples of what we are saying:

If a woman among you – who regard the *abayah* and covering the head as something objectionable – went to an Arab village where the women cover their faces, would you, O French woman with bare arms and legs, be in the right when you walked in the alleyways of that village appearing very odd and strange, or would the community where everyone agrees on covering up and have lived all their lives like that be in the right?

So let us not resort to customs when we differ, whether it be in the streets of Paris or the alleys of a conservative Arab village.

Isabella: Excluding different customs as the measure of things is something that I don't think any of us or you will disagree with, because if you ask us to refer to your customs, we will ask you to refer to ours, and in that case, we will be demanding of you what you demand of us, and we will be going around in a vicious circle. But my question is: What are we going to turn to for judgement?

Not
taking
religious
texts as
evidence

Are we going to turn to the Torah, the Gospel or the Qur'ân? In that case we will demand of you what you demand of us, and we will be going around in a vicious circle.

When will we find the right measure?
How can we find the way to happiness?

Abu Haamid: What do you think if we choose as a judge – with regard to *hijab* and all other issues – something that we and you will not differ on, and regard this as the reference point in all our debates?

Electing
reason as
judge

What do you think if we refer to reason? Because reason is something that all people have in common, so what our fair reason agrees upon, we will all declare to be truth, and what is contrary to reason we will all declare as false.

Dr. Drima: Amazing! You are a man of religion but you are agreeing to overlook religious rulings in favour of rational rulings!

I would like to take the initiative of claiming reason to be on our side, and I say that this uncovering of women which is widespread among us shows the beauty of women, and not showing adornment

is contrary to women's nature, because women are naturally inclined to love adornment and beauty, and this is in accordance with reason.

Moreover, one of the tried-and-true principles of reason is that what is banned becomes desirable; giving people freedom to dress as they like could remove complexity from the issue of sex and reduce people's desire for it, contrary to what happens when adornment is very rare in a conservative society, where the desire for adorned women becomes very great and there are bestial attacks upon them.

Abu Haamid: I shall prove to you that what you are saying is wrong, based on visible evidence that you can see morning and evening with your own eyes, and not only on the basis of your reason.

Katherine: If you can offer me visible evidence for a rational issue, then you will have proven the point completely, once and for all. But how can you do that?

Abu Haamid: Is there any woman among you who is purer and better than the Virgin Mary?

Katherine: Absolutely not. And I think that you also regard her as pure.

Abu Haamid: Undoubtedly, but do you have any image of the Virgin Mary in which she is uncovered?

Katherine: No.

Tangible
evidence

Abu Haamid: Is this not visible evidence that covering is in accordance with sound human nature, and in accordance with reason, and that ultimately it is right?

Another example: I will ask you of the greatest example of a lack of reason. Do you have a greater image of the opposite of the human image than that of an animal?

Answer: Absolutely not. Hence man hates to be likened to an animal.

Based on these two visible examples, women are either of two things. Either they are at the level of maturity and reason on the one hand, at the pinnacle of which is Mary and those who are like her; or on the other hand they are at the level of animals. The more a woman covers up, the closer she is to the level of the Virgin Mary in position and status. The

more she uncovers, the more she comes down to the level of animal. What makes us think this way is in fact reason, which we have agreed to appoint as arbiter.

The more a woman listens to the voice of reason, the more her appearance will become like that of Mary. The more she resembles animals, the more her reason will become like that of animals.

So if she sheds her clothing like an animal, she also sheds her reason like an animal, or more so.

Dr. Drima: But didn't God create Eve, the mother of mankind, and make her and our father, Adam, naked in Paradise? This indicates that woman was originally created naked, and that this was the case with regard to our mother, and there is nothing better for a human being than to follow in the footsteps of his father and mother.

Misconception that Adam & Eve were naked

Was Eve irrational?

It is sophistry for anyone to assume something and expect people to believe it.

I do not know whether the connection between the *hijab* and reason is because

the *hijab* is worn on the head which is the seat of reason, or it is because of something that we do not know.

In fact we have had enough of sophistry for a long time, and we have begun to react against this approach. If you have any visible evidence of this, bring it forth, otherwise it is impossible for us to be convinced of this argument.

Abu Haamid: How do we know that Adam and Eve – peace be upon them ² – were naked in Paradise? What is the source? Is it movies and fables?

One of the things that we are agreed upon is that the source of these stories is the Books of divine origin. The story of our father Adam and our mother Eve is found in different versions, in the Qur'ân for us, and in the Bible for you. But what all the reports of the Books of divine origin are agreed upon, is that Adam and Eve, before they ate from the tree and disobeyed God, were not aware of their nakedness, but after they were tempted and deceived by Satan, they became aware of

2: As a Muslim I am obliged to pray for peace and blessing whenever the name of any Prophet is mentioned.

their nakedness, and were ashamed of it, so they began to gather leaves to put on their bodies and cover themselves.

Which scenario is more in accordance with reason, and which is closer to perfection? Is it the state of our parents before they sinned, or their state after they sinned?

Which of the two is closer to human perfection?

Isabella: No doubt it is their state before they fell prey to Satan's deceit, but how is this in accordance with reason?

Abu Haamid: Didn't they only disobey God and follow Satan after he caused them to lose their reason and made them forget the first covenant that they had made with their Lord, promising not to eat from the tree? Wouldn't a rational person choose a higher status in Paradise?

When a person follows his whims and desires in all things, is that not only after he has lost his reason, hence they warn against the loss of reason when desires are inflamed?

Here I must explain this issue further,

which is how the mixing of desire and reason affects us through visible evidence, all of which says that when reason increases, covering increases, and when reason decreases, covering decreases. The ratio between animalistic desires and reason is an inverse ratio.

Look at man and think. Is his reason now as it was when he was in his mother's womb, or is it greater? Go back now and you will find this natural truth: the day when he was devoid of reason, his body was naked, when he was in his mother's womb, but his reason continued to increase as he grew older, and his covering up increased as his reason developed.

Look at another example of evidence from real life. You will find that those who use their reason the least in all countries in the world are adolescents.

Usually they are the people who most follow their whims and desires. Statistics show that the age at which people are most reckless and immature is the age of adolescence.

Look at a third example: look at the one who is sleeping. Do you think that anyone will blame him if his private parts

become uncovered?

Answer: No, because his reason is not with him, but if he were awake they would rebuke him.

I will give an example that I have seen with other shoppers, and an example that has been seen by millions.

The first example is: whilst I was shopping in a Parisian branch of Carrefour, I saw a woman taking off all her clothes in the store, even her pants, then she started walking among men and women in the store, calmly looking at one shelf then walking to another. People were looking at her oddly and giving her disapproving looks, until one of the salesmen noticed her and called a security guard, who arrested her and took her to a special room.

The second example is one that has been seen by millions, during a match played by the Barcelona football team which was transmitted live. One of the fans came onto the pitch naked, and tried to run across the field. He was determined to greet the Brazilian player Ronaldo. Millions of human beings objected to that, whether they were watching on

TV, or were standing on the terraces. But they all excused this naked man and this naked woman when they found out that they were both insane, and their astonishment and disapproval turned to excuses and pity. Everyone said of this woman, "Poor thing, she has no reason; we wronged her, because the one who has lost his reason is not to be blamed, rather it is the rational people who let her go out of the house or the clinic who are to be blamed."

Frankly...

Dr. Anne: What you have mentioned is all theoretical. I mean that reality is one thing, and what you are saying is something else. Your words are theoretically 100% correct, but in real terms they are 0% correct. Please excuse me for being blunt.

Does human reason say that humans have to be like angels in heaven?

Or does it say that women have to be like the Virgin Mary?

Or does sound education mean isolating children and preventing them from indulging in desires until they get married, as is the case in the East?

Or that those who are unmarried must protect themselves from all desires until they die?

In addition to being realistically impossible, this is contrary to logic, and logic is reason. Is that not so, Umm Haamid?

Umm Haamid: I regard these words of Dr. Anne as being very important, because they are in accordance with reason, and they are in accordance with the natural human needs of anyone who has any kind of desire. This desire was only created in man in order to be fulfilled. Hence the angels, as Dr. Anne said, do not need to fulfil desires because they have no desires in the first place. No one who has even an atom of reason will disagree with this logic, but what we disagree about is how these desires are to be fulfilled.

Abu Haamid: I will interrupt Umm Haamid here, if she will let me, and I will give her my turn later and remind her of what she said last.

Umm Haamid: Go ahead.

Abu Haamid: I have taken her turn to speak, so that I may remind Dr. Anne of

Relationship
between
reason
and
desire

our agreement, which is to exclude our customs and your customs as arbiters, and go back to reason as the standard in all matters we discuss.

I do not think that the main problem is people's inclination towards immoral actions. No, the main problem is the inclination of human reason to accept and justify immoral actions. This is what prepares society to accept that which is more immoral; reason goes down to that level and sets out rules and regulations for immorality, and justifies it to society, and thus the entire society goes down that slippery slope to an even lower level, and the leadership turns from reason towards sexual desires.

So every time society descends to a lower level, reason sets out rules to justify and regulate desire; thus reason is bringing up the rear whilst people's immorality is in the vanguard. If you wish, you could say that people put their desires in the driving seat and leave reason in the back seat. The real victim is reason.

The greatest mistake that military leaders can make is to follow the ideal prescription for defeat, by putting their headquar-

ters within range of enemy fire. What they should do is isolate their headquarters from the battlefield completely, then no matter how many troops, strongholds or forces fall, no matter what losses they incur, the position concerning which there can be no negotiation and no compromise is the headquarters and command centre, because things may take a turn, and a defeat may become a victory at any moment. Does man have any command centre like reason?

If people in your country merely did not use their reason, it would not be so bad, but they have started to use their reason to set up rules and regulations for immorality, and to defend the sins of their private parts, thus reason has become a slave to their private parts.

The level at which you are living nowadays is probably – partially but not entirely – the level at which Arab societies were living before Islam came, after the time of Christ (peace be upon him), but the Qur'ân rebuked them in numerous verses. But anyone ponders those verses that speak of immorality on a rational basis will realize, that they are focused on protecting reason, even if the private

parts commit immoral actions. In *Soorat al-A'raaf*, Allaah says:

“And when they commit a *Faahisha* (lewd act), they say: ‘We found our fathers doing it, and Allaah has commanded it on us.’ Say: ‘Nay, Allaah never commands *Faahisha*. Do you say of Allaah what you know not?’”
[*al-A'raaf* 7:28].

When the Qur'ân stated that Allaah does not enjoin evil deeds, it meant to protect their reason from setting out rules allowing evil deeds in the name of Allaah. Prescribing laws governing immorality is even worse and more dangerous than committing the immoral acts themselves.

Hence it became essential to protect reason, even if it is not possible to protect the private parts, and to put our reason at a higher level than using it to find excuses for the one who indulges in desires, or to make excuses for him, or to set rules for him.

If we agree on this point, and protect our reason from sinking to the level of justifying sinful desire, then we will be able to discuss the matter with ease, and find-

ing the truth will not be a problem at all.

I would like to confirm that by quoting the verse, I was not using it as religious evidence against you; rather it was because it fits the context and explains the importance of reason. Have we used anything but reason here?

Here I would like to tell you a beautiful and clear true story.

It was narrated that Abu Umaamah al-Baahili (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: A young man came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and said: "O Messenger of Allaah, give me permission to commit fornication." The people turned to him and rebuked him, telling him to be quiet.

But the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to him, "Come closer."

So he came close to him and sat down, and the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Would you like it for your mother?"

The young man said: "No, by Allaah, may Allaah cause me to be ransomed for you."

Remedy
for a man
who sought
permission
to fornicate

The Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "And people do not like it for their mothers. Would you like it for your daughter?"

The young man said: "No, by Allaah, may Allaah cause me to be ransomed for you."

The Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "And people do not like it for their daughters. Would you like it for your sister?"

The young man said: "No, by Allaah, may Allaah cause me to be ransomed for you."

The Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "And people do not like it for their sisters. Would you like it for your paternal aunt, or for your maternal aunt?"

The young man said: "No, by Allaah, may Allaah cause me to be ransomed for you."

The Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "And people do not like it for their paternal or maternal aunts."

He put his hand on him and said: "O Allah, forgive his sin and purify his heart and guard his chastity."

And after that the young man did not pay attention to anything (of that nature).³

If you think about this prayer, you will find that there is great wisdom in the order of its words. In the first phrase, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prayed that his former sins would be forgiven. Then he prayed that Allah would purify his heart, before praying for his chastity to be guarded. That is because the heart is the centre of thought and control in man, and if the centre of control is purified then everything else will be purified too, so it is mentioned first in prayer because of its importance.

I do not want to quote this incident to prove a religious ruling. No, that is beyond the agreement that we made at first. Rather my aim in quoting this story is to point to the importance of protecting reason from changes. This young man was frank and audacious, and specific

3: Narrated by Imam Ahmad (5:256-257). Its chain of narrators is *saheeh* (sound). See *al-Silsilah al-Saheehah* (1:645)

in his request. His request to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) for permission to commit fornication was bold, frank and extremely odd; he knew that the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) had forbidden it, had announced that prohibition and would punish for it.

Even more amazing than that was the response of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). He did not tell him not to commit fornication, or that fornication was unlawful, or that he would incur the wrath of Allaah, or just issue a brief warning or exhortation that would soon evaporate in the flames of desire on an individual or social level. Rather he referred the man to a principle that he believed in, a social principle that still existed, and that immoral actions could not change in their society, no matter how many they were. This is the moderate principle of *ghairah* or protective jealousy.

The secret behind the success of the advice given by the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was that its philosophy was based

on the fact that when desire overwhelms a person, it distracts him from all other principles, and causes his mind to ignore all women other than the one whom he sees; his thoughts go no further than the object of his desire. Hence the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) directed this young man to look further than the object of his desire and love, and he saw something that he was not expecting!

If you like, you may say that he reversed the way he looked at things, so this young man got a shock.

It was the same image, the same action, but with different people. He presented it to this young man and it came as a shock when this young man was replaced with another, and the woman with whom he wanted to commit fornication was replaced with this young man's mother or sister or aunt. This young man experienced a major rational shock.

This new image provoked a sense of *ghairah* or protective jealousy in the young man who had wanted to commit fornication, and who was prepared to follow whatever Muhammad (peace and

blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, except in the case of fornication. Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) referred him to a principle that is still sound; regardless of what sin his private parts led to, that principle was not affected, and that rational way of thinking was not damaged, and it became possible to correct these wrong actions.

Another advantage of reversing this image, was that every time this young man's desire grew strong, this reversed image would have an effect on him. If his desire was provoked by just imagining, then every time he imagined himself committing fornication with that beautiful woman, the opposite image, of another man with his mother or sister, would put him off, which would be guaranteed to erase the first image and bring him back to his senses.

An even greater advantage of this image is that it makes everyone in society feel a sense of protective jealousy towards one another, just as an individual would feel that sense of protective jealousy towards his sister, mother or daughter.

I shall pause before I get carried away

in describing other things that we learn from this incident, and go back to what Dr. Anne said about the danger of putting the cart of desire before the horse of reason, which will not leave any barrier of sound principle without breaking it. This is what is happening in your societies, and this is clear, practical, rational evidence.

Dr. Anne: For God's sake! Where is the clear evidence that desire can sweep away principles? It seems that every society designs principles according to what it thinks and desires. We have probably given you tangible evidence of that. You have seen for yourself the innocence of our men and women kissing one another – as Europeans – when we met tonight; even if you did not take part in that kissing, you saw us, and I do not think you regarded us with suspicion, just as we do not regard you with suspicion. But what we truly feel in our hearts as westerners is that we do not think positively of one who does not look at our beauty, because the one who does not look is hiding desires in his heart and fears that he may be tempted if he keeps looking at us. If he does not keep looking, then this means

Shaping
the
principle
to serve
desire

that he is determined, or at least is prepared, to have intercourse whenever he has the opportunity or is alone with a woman, which is why being alone with a woman is forbidden for you – as far as I know from my husband – whereas for us, being alone with a woman does not mean anything, so there is no need to prevent it in the first place.

It seems to me that what has created this psychological condition among you is your religion, which is still stirring up doubts about desire and the like in your souls. Hence when you have the opportunity to do what we would not, you do it with an unnatural appetite!

Look at the numbers of Muslims – who are suppressed in their own countries – what do they do when the door is opened to them? They come here and drink to excess, overindulge in fornication and in every immoral action.

Is this not your reality? I am sure that one of the reasons is your religious education. Is it in accordance with reason or opposed to it?

Abu Haamid: I promised Umm Haamid that I would give her back her turn to

speaking after I finished, but Dr. Anne is insisting on prolonging the discussion and I am still promising Umm Haamid that I will let her speak.

But with regard to Dr. Anne's argument, I can say that she has summed up your reality in a single phrase, which is: shaping the principle to suit the desire.

This is the secret, and this is the problem! The problem that all western societies have fallen into is that they shape the principles to suit their whims and desires, and they do not shape their actions and lifestyles to suit the principles.

We do not accept any of the evidence that Dr. Anne has stated against us, such as using as evidence the innocence of the kissing that we have seen here tonight, or the innocence of the hugs between men and women, or the lowering of the gaze on our part and our refraining from shaking hands, or what some Arabs and Muslims do when they leave their countries and go to the west and commit immoral actions, and go to extremes in indecent behaviour and drinking alcohol. I do not disagree with these facts, but unfortunately they all count as evidence

Innocent
kisses

against you on the basis of reason which we agreed today will be the standard by which we judge.

How can Dr. Anne count the kisses that happened tonight as being in accordance with reason, when we had already agreed that we would put aside our customs and your customs, and not use them as evidence to show what is right and what is wrong?

Moreover, you know that these practices are wrong and deceitful, but you do them for one reason, which is that you are overwhelmed by desires.

But they cheated you when they gave you the impression that your entire society dislikes chastity and that everyone in society is sexual, and you started to defend immorality without realizing, even though society is not like that and there is still a lot of good in common sense.

There was a strange opinion poll on the CNN⁴ website, and I hope that you will

4: www.cnn.com/allpolitics/1998/08/20/adultery.poiv

I have tried my best to ensure that all the data mentioned in this book is attributed to its source, and that all sources are non-Arab and credible to westerners. Most of the data is based on a great deal of

look at it and find out the truth of the matter in terms of percentages and numbers. This telephone poll was carried out on 1523 adult men and women.

... **Question 3:** Do you regard it as cheating on your husband or wife if:

(a) you kiss someone else?

Yes 67%, No 28%

(b) you engage in phone sex?

Yes 66%, No 32%

(c) you engage in internet sex?

Yes 64%, No 33%

Question 4: Do you regard it as cheating on your husband or wife if you hold hands with someone?

Yes 43%, No 53%

Question 5: Do you regard it as cheating on your husband or wife if you make a sexual gesture to someone else?

research, otherwise most of what is found on websites is useless! I have left the abbreviations of non-Arab agencies as they are, so that it will be easier to refer to them for anyone who wants to know more.

Yes 34%, No 64%

Question 6: Do you regard it as cheating on your husband or wife if you visit a strip club?

Yes 45%, No 55%

Question 7: Do you regard it as cheating on your husband or wife if you think of another person with desire?

Yes 38%, No 50%.

After this, Dr. Anne, can you picture in your mind the France of one hundred years ago?

Try to remember well. Was it something common for a man to kiss his friend's wife, or for a friend to kiss someone else's wife?

Dr. Anne: No.

Abu Haamid: Was kissing someone regarded as objectionable, or acceptable, as you think it is nowadays?

Dr. Anne: No, rather kissing was seen as something odd, and was not done except by certain classes of people who were regarded by society at that time as doing something wrong.

Abu Haamid: So what happened to change that which was objectionable yesterday to that which is common nowadays, and turned that which was common yesterday to something that is regarded as odd nowadays?

This matter has to do with time. The well established custom in society was to object to anyone other than the husband kissing his wife, daughter or sister, and people remained like that for hundreds of years, until this custom was lost and society began to slip down the slope of widespread kissing, but it did not reach this stage all in one go, rather it began slowly, with just a few people, until it became a general custom, and the one who does not do it is regarded as the odd one out, so how about the one who denounces society for that?

Let us reiterate: Does the fact that it is a widespread custom indicate that it is sound and that reason dictates its soundness? The only definitive answer can be No. Therefore we ask: Is it going to stop at this level – I mean the level of widespread kissing? Is this decline going to stop at this point, or are there lower levels? The logical answer which is borne

out by reality and history is that moral decline will never stop at this point, rather people will move on from kissing openly to openly doing that which comes after kissing, such as hugging and lengthy kissing, then they will move onto committing fornication and adultery, and doing so openly without the slightest objection; in fact it is the one who objects to it who will be denounced at that time. Clear indications of that are already being seen. Anyone who looks at French society will see that kissing has become common and no one sees anything wrong with it; in some cases embraces are lengthy, especially when meeting people or bidding farewell at train stations and airports; it has become something widespread. Openly committing fornication is also becoming visible. It was something that was rare, but it has reared its head and it will gradually become more visible, because the signs are there.

Warning
of
investigation

What I have mentioned is logical, because it is following a gradual course that is known from history. Every step, as we have seen, inevitably leads to the next, and as the steps come one after another, the speed increases and each stage is

passed quickly. In addition to being what is dictated by reason – which is what we agreed to refer to for judgement in the first place – we also have proof of that in the words of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). If you wish, I can quote his words to you, otherwise, reason is sufficient witness to that.

Dr. Lutfi: I wish you could tell them so that they might believe that the words of this Messenger did not come from his own self, rather they came from Allaah.

Abu Haamid: The *hadith* is what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said more than fourteen hundred years ago. He said: “By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, this nation will not cease to be until a man has intercourse with a woman in the street, and the best among them on that day will be the one who says: You could have concealed her behind this wall.”⁵

5: Narrated by Abu Ya'la in his Musnad (2:2915) from Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) in a *marfoo'* report (i.e., one that is attributed to the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). Al-Haythami said in *Majma' al-Zawaa'id* (8:331): “There are corroborating reports.” It was also classed as *saheeh* by al-Albaani.

According to another *hadith*, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "The Hour will not begin until they commit indecent acts in the street like donkeys." I [the narrator] said: "Will that really happen?" He said: "Yes, it will really happen."⁶

Kidnap
of reason

Isabella: What I think is that all peoples have to live at the stage they are at, and each generation has to be responsible for its rational choices. Just as our parents bore responsibility for their choices, we also have to bear responsibility for our choices, and those who come after us will have to bear responsibility for their choices. As we have agreed to refer to reason for judgement, this is the ruling of reason for these people.

Dr. Anne: Perhaps, Isabella, you have forgotten that Abu Haamid highlighted an important fact, which is that this was not the conclusion of their reason, rather it was the result of their desire, and this is evidence that desire has overcome reason, so reason – unfortunately – has become like a snow plow that moves the snow out of the way of cars and other

6: See *al-Silsilah al-Saheehah* (481)

vehicles, or it may become like a dog sled that is pulled by many dogs over the snow. In either case, it becomes a servant of desire, whether it is put in front or behind. This is what is happening; reason has been kidnapped by desire, or has fallen into the lap of desire.

Abu Haamid: Thank you, Dr. Anne, for this summary of the right meaning at the right time.

Story of
a brother
with his
sister

Now I would like to mention a true story that happened in French society and has often been repeated:

It is the story of a liberal family; like most of French society, they had sons and beautiful girls, between the ages of seventeen and twenty-five.

Jacques was twenty years old, Jean was twenty-two, and Maria was sixteen. Both boys had girlfriends, and Maria had a boyfriend. Each of the boys was too shy to bring his girlfriend home, and their sister was also too shy to bring her boyfriend home.

But as time went on, Jacques started to bring his girlfriend home and stay with her in his room, and have intercourse

with her in his bed. Then Jean became bold enough to do the same thing. But their sister Maria did not do that with her boyfriend. For a whole week, Jacques did not speak to his girlfriend, or bring her home, or have intercourse with her. One, two, three months went by, and they had many arguments, because Jacques felt jealous about her.

One evening, Jean told his brother and sister that he was going out, and he left. Then their parents went out because they were invited to dinner, and Jacques was left alone in the house.

Whilst Jacques was wandering around on his own in the house, he saw Maria in her underwear through a crack in the door, and he saw her beauty as she was getting ready to go out for the evening. He stopped without realizing, then he walked on, thinking about his girlfriend. He called her but she put the phone down on him. Jacques continued walking about the house, but his desire had reached an unbearable level. He smelled Maria's perfume and he peeped through the crack of the door, and saw her as beautiful as a bride on her wedding night.

He said to himself: She is my sister and someone else is enjoying her. Is all this beauty being wasted on people in the street? He dared to enter the room and said to her, with his voice trembling: What is this beauty?

She laughed and did not answer him.

He looked at her again, and she said, looking at him in the mirror: What is the matter with you tonight?

He said: I am alone in the house. So she kissed him to console him, and he kissed her warmly. He let her go, then he came back and embraced her warmly. She got suspicious and pushed him away.

Jacques said: You will not get away from me tonight. Please, I am dying. Save me, then go away if you wish. Tonight only, and never again.

His sister agreed, and she gave herself to her brother, and he got what he wanted. The brother had intercourse with his sister.

It is a true story that really happened to a family that was not morally dissolute, and not decadent according to French standards.

And this true story is not the only one that has taken place in French society, rather there are many other stories of intercourse with sisters, aunts and even mothers.

But the point here is that the sister gave herself to her brother because she felt sorry for him, whereas the brother only did that because his desire overwhelmed his reason.

Here I will come back to Isabella's objection. She says that reason dictates that people should live at the stage they are at and that their reason is what brought them to that stage. Based on that, I would like to ask Isabella:

Isn't intercourse with one's sister something that is naturally abhorrent and repulsive?

Isn't intercourse with one's mother even worse and even more repugnant?

Hasn't this thing, which we call objectionable, begun to happen more in your society, more than before?

Excuse me, but would you accept it happening in your house?

Isabella: Of course not! But this story is very strange and very distressing.”

Abu Haamid: “I realize that a family that is brought up in an atmosphere of modesty will find it very difficult to imagine that such things could happen in other families, because they view other families as they view themselves.

In order to be more realistic, I should remind you of what we see in the pages of the daily paper every day, in the reports on court cases, police activity and crimes. Then we would say that what Jacques did was a kind of modest crime.

Nevertheless, I shall switch to the language of numbers and statistics which no one can reject because it is official and is from your own societies.

It has been reported⁷ that one in every

7. Finkelhor, D., Mitchell, K., & Wolak, J (2001, March). Highlights of the Youth Internet Safety Survey. US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Programs.

US Department of Justice (2001). Internet Crimes Against Children. OVC Bulletin.

Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime.

four girls has been sexually abused before the age of eighteen, as has one in every six boys.

It has also been reported that 30-40% are abused by a family member, and 50% are abused by someone outside the family, but by someone whom they knew and trusted.⁸

So one in every four women has been sexually abused before the age of 18! In other words, one quarter of society. Isn't this alarming?!

Between 30 and 40% of them are abused by a family member, i.e., in the same household, and 50% are abused by someone outside the family, but all of them by

8. Abel, G. & Harlow, N. (2001). Stop Child M - lestation (book)

Kilpatrick, D., Saunders, B. & Smith, D. (2003). Youth Victimization: Prevalence and Implications. US Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice report.

Snyder, H.N.. (2000). Sexual Assault of Young Children as reported to Law Enforcement: Victim, Incident and Offender Characteristics. National Center for Juvenile Justice. US Department of Justice.

Statistics Surrounding Child Sexual Abuse. <http://www.darkness2light.org/KnowAbout/statistics-2.asp>

someone whom they knew and trusted, be it an uncle or a trusted friend.

Let us read these statistics: 60% of the firstborn babies of teenaged mothers are the result of seduction or rape. The average age of the transgressor is 27 years. Seventy-five percent of teenaged prostitutes were abused when they were small.⁹

Fifty percent of women in prison were abused when they were small, and 75% of persistent child rapists were themselves abused in childhood.¹⁰

With regard to rape in the United States, in a report by the FBI's Crime Reporting Unit¹¹ dated 2003, they say:

93,433 cases of rape by force, i.e., 2.63

9. Kellogg, N.D., Hoffman, T.J. & Taylor, E.R. (1999). Early Sexual Experience among Pregnant and Parenting Adolescents, 43. 293, 303.

Noll, J.G., Trickett, P.K., Putnam, F.W. (2003). A Prospective Investigation of the Impact of Childhood Sexual Abuse on the Development of Sexuality. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 71, 575-586.

10. Statistics Surrounding Child Abuse. <http://www.darkness2light.org/KnowAbout/statistics-2.asp>

11. <http://www.fbi.gov/pressrel/pressrel04/crime-tat102504.htm>

in every 100,000 females were subjected to rape.

Although these numbers are frightening, you should realize that these are the official figures, and that the unofficial figures may be much greater than that. These are cases of rape by force; as for cases of mutual consent, these are considered normal, and nearly everyone does it!"

Isabella: "It is indeed frightening. I cannot imagine French society being as affected as America, although undoubtedly many things like that happen. But for us as a family, it is as you said; we are a modest family and would not allow such things."

Abu Haamid: But if you regarded French or Portuguese society as you regard your family, you would not accept such things happening in society. Yes, you can say that this is not happening in society, in the sense that it is not happening in public places, or even in brothels, rather it is happening behind the walls of people's homes, and this is the matter of each family's own tastes and level of decadence.

But here we should ask a question: Isn't society no more than an agglomeration of families? Isn't the family no more than one of the building blocks of society?

Is it to be expected that the brother would have intercourse with his sister outside the house, or that a son would do that with his mother in the street? No, that happens inside the home!

But what do you expect in a society where a son sleeps with his mother? Is there anything more bestial than that?

Is there any sanctity left that can be violated after that?

Is there any value left, once the value of the mother is lost?

It is well known, Isabella, that no generation is separate from the generation that came before it and the generation that comes after it. They are more closely connected than a conductor to an electrical wire.

The problem is that you are not far away from this stage. Go back a few steps from what we have mentioned and you will see the gradual, logical steps towards the abyss that you will soon reach. Incest has

reared its head among you.

When people reach a level where promiscuity is widespread, they will inevitably sink to a lower level, and what is lower than incest, and what is worse than incest with one's mother, after which there is no protection whatsoever for honour?

Respected ladies, let each of you imagine – just imagine – a moment when her son could have intercourse with her. Just imagine! Then you will realize that this is not farfetched; rather it is the last step on the way to the end. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) told us: “There will come to my nation what came to the Children of Israel, one by one, step by step, until if there was someone among them who had intercourse with his mother openly, there will be people like him among my nation.”¹²

Dr. Anne: The analysis that you mention is rational and frightening, and the gradual progression that you describe is logical, because it is true that there are

12: Narrated by al-Haakim (1:218, no. 444) and Ibn ‘Asaakir (13:98) from ‘Abd-Allaah ibn ‘Amr (may Allaah be pleased with him).

real signs of it, as is borne out by reality. As Abu Haamid was speaking to us about immorality, I imagined it coming to us on a train that had carriages of different types. The carriages have come to us one after another, and there remain one or two carriages that will inevitably reach us. Do you know what those two carriages are?

They are the incest of our daughters' sons with our daughters. Thank God that this carriage has not arrived yet and that our generation is safe from it. But it will undoubtedly come to us as a society. Just as I have seen the first carriages, they will keep on coming until we see the last carriages. But what is amazing is this report which you quoted from your Prophet Muhammad, who told of this matter so long ago.

I have one last question, which is: Is it not rational and logical for a man to fulfil his desires within moderation, and that this cannot be done unless he has moderate jealousy, which is the basis of all of that?

This is what we are calling for. But for a man to be deprived all his life of a kiss

to comfort him and extinguish his desire until he gets married – this is impossible!

Is it possible from a realistic point of view for a man to put up with his desires being provoked and not be able to respond to them? Can he cross the ditch of fire that is adolescence without the flames taking their share?

Moderation in protective jealousy

Abu Haamid: These are words that no rational person can object to. The proper way is the human way that pays attention to human needs within moderation, without going to either of two extremes. But is it moderation in jealousy for a man to accept his wife being kissed by his friend on one occasion, then on another occasion he may accept that friend sleeping with her?!

Yes, he has to accept that, and do you know why? Because he kissed the wife of that friend in front of him, and in other circumstances he slept with her. He cannot object because his wife knows that he sleeps with others' wives.

This is the reality of moderate jealousy as you say.

So what is meant by moderate jealousy in the west is: take a little of my jealousy and I will take a little of your jealousy – is that not so? Then you become less jealous of me and I reciprocate, until perhaps we lose jealousy altogether.

You can imagine the results of a poll carried out by CNN.¹³ Here is what the poll said:

Most Americans think that adultery between married people is morally more wrong than fornication among adolescents or working as a prostitute.

Question 1: Do you know a married man who has engaged in adultery?

Yes: 69% No: 30%

Question 2: Do you know a married woman who has engaged in adultery?

Yes: 60% No: 38%

So it seems that the ratio of spouses who are guilty of cheating is 80%.

-The percentage of those who remain married after betrayal is 64%, of

13: www.cnn.com/allpolitics/1998/08/20/adultery.poiv

whom 78% describe their marriages as unhappy and empty.

-The percentage of people in America who described their first marriage as very happy was 54% in 1976 and 38% in 1996.

It is quite natural that the number of those who remained married after betrayal would reach 64%, because the betrayal was mutual. Did the level of cheating on the part of husbands reach a level of 80%, unless it was with married and unmarried women?

But what is strange here is that this jealousy does not come after marriage, rather jealousy is present during the days of courtship. A lover is very jealous for his beloved, as we see in real life and in movies, but when they get married, that jealousy diminishes.

Hence one of the worst evils in your view is when a man takes a second wife openly and legitimately, even if that is done to protect marriage and to protect the rights of both spouses, as well as lineage and wealth, whereas a wife will accept it if her husband has a mistress, so long as she does not become a wife!

What is the difference?

The difference is legitimacy. The thing is that is legitimate and is in harmony with reason and jealousy is forbidden, whereas the opposite is permitted and encouraged.

As for what Dr. Anne said about it being impossible to cross the ditch of adolescence that is filled with flaming desire, this is true for you in most cases, on the grounds that the entire society is inflamed with desires, and the system protects those who commit mistakes under the influence of desires. Desires are provoked in the street, by the media, by advertisements, in schools and colleges...

Young men and women are part of this inflammatory set-up. And here we can see the greatness of the principle which protects young men and women and enables them to cross this ditch without falling into it or being burned by desire, as well as the ignobility and baseness of every principle and system that is pushing young men and women to fall into this frightening ditch. We can see the greatness of the principle and system which, if one of its followers does fall in,

does not push him further down, rather it pulls him out and treats him so that he will not fall again, but if he does fall in again, it pulls him out again, and so on. It is like a mother with her child, never tiring of correcting his mistakes no matter how often they are repeated.

Here we see the greatness of the principle which makes reason and emotion stand guard lest the person fall into error at the most dangerous stage of his life, until he has passed that dangerous stage.

Here we see the greatness of the principle which makes a person guardian of himself, with no need for punishment imposed by an external law. I do not know when the idea that a kiss extinguishes desire or that one act of fornication or adultery extinguishes desire became acceptable logic!

Not unless we say that adding more fuel extinguishes a blazing fire!

Finally, let me tell you about a poll which exposes the hidden facts among you.

The problem is that you imagine that your society is promiscuous and is demanding more uncovering and more in-

dulgence, and that it wants every sacred limit to be violated and all jealousy to be banned. But is this really true?

CNN¹⁴ carried out a poll which shows the real opinion of western society. The question and results were as follows:

Question: Is sex regarded as morally wrong?

No.	Type	Now	1977
1	Sex outside marriage	86%	70%
2	Prostitution	79%	61%
3	Sex among adolescents	72%	63%
4	Indecent pictures	63%	-----

Isabella: These are logical words, but do you agree with me, Umm Haamid, that the strange thing about your jealousy is that a woman among you is jealous if her husband marries another wife, even though she admits that it is something that is permitted according to you, and very often this jealousy causes problems in the original family and in the new family?

Whereas if men take mistresses, it does

Co-wives
and
mistresses

14: www.cnn.com/allpolitics/1998/08/20/adultery.poiv

not cause any jealousy or any problems, but it does satisfy desire.

On the other hand, if someone goes to extremes in that then it is his fault, not the fault of the system.

Umm Haamid: The woman's jealousy if her husband takes another wife is a natural kind of jealousy, as is jealousy regarding possessions and the like. But the difference between us and you is that even though we may not like it because of jealousy, we cannot regard it as equivalent to having mistresses at all, because no one among us has mistresses except deviant individuals, and the entire society denounces it and denounces those who do it. Those who do that do it in secret, when traveling and so on.

Whereas having mistresses in your society has become as ordinary as marriage; it is acknowledged by society and not denounced; the wife may even know it and not denounce it. How can she denounce it when she knows that her daughter has a lover, and she herself may have had a lover before marriage, and her lover may have been someone other than this husband, and there may have been more

than one?

How much is a girl criticized and made to feel ashamed if she remains a virgin until the age of marriage!

The one who has a mistress may have had other girlfriends. Does reason permit him to be jealous? Can there be any jealousy left in such a case?

My reason as a woman makes me prefer to choose for myself and my society a system of purity, and to choose for my husband a woman who has the same rights and duties as me.

I don't know how a woman can accept an unlimited number of mistresses, or how a man can accept his wife or daughter having an unlimited number of lovers, or even one lover!

Should I accept to live with a husband who may have had intercourse unknowingly with a woman who has AIDS, so that he can then transmit the virus to me, or a husband who chooses one pure, clean woman?

Which of the two jealousies is in my interests?

Why shouldn't I control my jealousy with regard to this clean woman who is openly and legitimately married to my husband, and accept her in my house and in my life, as a businessman accepts a new partner in his company, and as a brother accepts a new brother or sister who will share his inheritance and so on?

Is it rational not to be jealous of innumerable women with whom my husband does whatever he wants, then to be more jealous of an honest marriage which protects everyone's rights?

Wives'
initiatives

Abu Haamid: A friend of mine called 'Ali said to me: My wife and the wife of my brother Muhammad realized that we were going to marry other women, so they themselves went to our female cousins, then they told us what they had done for us and said: What do you think? And we accepted it. In fact we wanted to marry those two girls. Our wives went and prepared everything, and they made arrangements with the banquet hall, and they made a big party for us. Can you imagine the soundness of these women's reason?

When they were asked why they did that,

they said:

We love our husbands, but we realized that our husbands were going to take other wives whether we wanted it or not. If they did not get married, they would do evil deeds at home and abroad, with prostitutes and street women. Which is better for us, to arrange marriages with women who we know and who are of the same level as us, or to let them arrange marriages themselves and perhaps end up with low-class women who would mistreat us and steal our beloved husbands from us with their crafty ways?

Should we look for two clean women or leave them to mingle with prostitutes who have AIDS – and how many of them there are in the streets! If a husband is left to his own devices in such a situation, it will lead to a risk for me and my children, and the price may be our happiness.

How many companies belong to just one person, who may be faced with the option of losing it all or bringing in a partner so that his company may survive and grow and become better. Of course, bringing in a partner is better, but what is more

important is choosing the partner who can save the company. Moreover, these girls are our cousins and they are the best to protect our children, during our lifetimes and after we die. And these girls are more deserving of being saved from spinsterhood and loss.

They always visit us, so why shouldn't we make them live with us?

What is wrong with it if my husband spends one night in a room next to mine, in an honourable and legitimate fashion? Hence I have stipulated that his new wife should live in the same house.

Isabella: This is very convincing, by God, but it is also very strange. But let us go back to the issue we were discussing: jealousy over a kiss – even a kiss!

Umm Haamid: Yes, and even his shaking hands with a woman, or a woman shaking hands with him. In fact this is in my interests rather than his. I feel that I am entrusted to him, and that just as he protected me in the days when we were lovers, I want him to protect me even more today, because true love is that which comes after marriage and his greater loyalty to me is after marriage.

Even
shaking
hands!

It is not rational for him to be loyal to me before we live under the same roof, then when we become husband and wife and have so much in common, he betrays me!

My dear Isabella, what is there in common between one who is entrusted with a euro then steals it, another who is entrusted with a thousand euros then steals them, and a third who is entrusted with a million then steals them?

Isabella: What they have in common is that they all share the same characteristic, which is treachery. But the first one is of a lesser degree, the second is moderate and the third is the greatest betrayal.

The one who stole only one euro was not content with that because he was satisfied with only that, but because he could not find anything else. The one who risks his reputation for the sake of one euro would be more daring by stealing a thousand, because that requires greater risk, but the one who steals a thousand would probably not risk his reputation for the sake of one euro."

Umm Haamid: The one who kisses a woman who is not his wife but is permis-

sible for him to marry has betrayed his wife like the one who stole one euro. The one who goes beyond that to hugging her is like the second man, and so on.

Scientific studies have proven that the heartbeat of a woman doubles when she is alone with a man.

They have also proven that when a man shakes hands with a woman, electrical charges stir up desire in the body.

Is there any position that reason could adopt except to support science? In fact the hands are part of the body, and the thumb occupies more space in the brain than the entire foot.

What signals will the entire hand send to the brain when it meets another hand, if the message of that hand is that everything that follows it of the body is permissible for it?

The number of those who may be provoked by a handshake to go further along the road of desire is not few. We should not get confused between those who may be provoked by a handshake and those who may not, or whether desire is provoked in us or not.

This is because provocation is a relative matter. Some men and women may be provoked by a handshake, and others by a kiss or hug or dancing, and others may not be provoked by anything! But it remains true that some people may be provoked by a handshake.

Is it not logical to close a door to the danger of which some people have been exposed?

Moreover, what harm does it do to a woman if she does not shake hands with a man whom it is permissible for her to marry? Why should a man or woman be thought badly of for refraining from shaking hands?

Despite that, I say that this is not one of the basic matters of our religion, rather it is a minor issue. If you had not brought it up, we would not have discussed it. It is not a priority.

A minor
issue

Dr. Anne: What about even kissing?

Umm Haamid: I will tell you why, my friends.

Even
kissing

The means of fulfilling desire are gradual steps. A touch is one step, a kiss is a further step, an embrace is a further step,

dancing is a further step, and intercourse is the ultimate step. How could I be confident as a wife of this man if my husband indulges in a passionate kiss with a woman? Doesn't that happen? It is a natural channel that leads to this result.

By the same token, in fact, my husband cannot be certain that I will not find a younger, stronger man who may attract me and open the door with a kiss. Doesn't that happen?

The saying goes that the new one is more beloved. Everyone other than me is new to him, and he is new to her. Isn't a kiss risky between two new people? The answer is yes, because it is the first step on a risky road. Even if I suppress the feelings that accompany a kiss, it is still a kiss. Just as my husband is responsible for me, I should be responsible for myself too. How can I betray him with a kiss? In return, I should be very happy that I have found someone who will feel jealous concerning me and protect me and look after me. Otherwise, is he the same as someone who does not care about his wife? If she were an animal or a dog, she could be able to tell the difference between an owner who takes care of

her and protects her, and an owner who is negligent.

My philosophy with regard to this is that I think of myself as a fragrant flower in the garden of a private house, and the centre of this flower is him and my two children.

Kissing a
rose

Yes, a passer-by may smell the fragrant smell from afar, but if he comes closer then it is the duty of the householder to prevent him even from touching it, otherwise the flower will fade away. A passer-by may like its fragrance and pick it, then even if the householder comes out and catches him and takes it back, it will never be sound as it was when he picked it, and even if he puts it back in its place on the tree, the tree will not accept it. My sensitivity with regard to honour and jealousy is greater than the sensitivity of this flower.

Abu Haamid: We all know that the most beautiful women are the most attractive to men, just like this flower, so they are the ones who most often fall into *zina* (fornication). Hence they are the most dangerous of women to other women. Do you know why? Because they carry

more diseases.

They are more like beautiful garbage trucks, unless they are modest like you.

Isn't this how they really are?

You have the right to examine all the statistics about sex and sexual diseases, and to identify their causes. But you have to work out, in terms of percentages, a specific figure for the kiss as an introduction to fornication or adultery, and as a cause for each of these diseases, with no exception. Who can say that a kiss was not a stage that led to all these crimes and diseases?

Who can say that if we close the door to shaking hands and kissing, we will not have closed a major door to fornication and adultery?

This is one aspect. From another, rational point of view, I asked you about feelings of desire during a kiss – do you feel them or not?

If you say that there is no desire involved, and it is just a kiss, it is just lips meeting one another, or lips meeting a cheek, this indicates that the basic purpose of the kiss is no longer present in men towards

women who are unrelated to them. When kissing loses its purpose and spirit with regard to women, then why shouldn't my wife lose her desire with me? If desire is taken away from kissing, it is not a healthy thing; rather it is unhealthy, because the difference between a kiss with desire and a kiss without desire is the difference between natural fruit and artificial fruit. A kiss is a message that carries meanings; what meanings are carried in that kiss that you give to that woman, and vice versa?

It is a message, so what exactly is your interpretation of this message, if male lips meet female lips when there is no marriage and they are not closely related to one another?

Isabella: They do not carry anything but meanings of friendship with a clean heart, and occasionally desire.

It is unacceptably idealistic to forbid kisses between males and females no matter who they are.

They only kiss one another willingly. Moreover it is regarded as a greeting, and greetings are of different degrees. The first level of greeting is verbal, the

second is a handshake, the third is kissing. If we omit kissing as a greeting, it is as if we are omitting the highest level of greeting. I do not feel what you describe, and I think that all women among us do not feel that way, and neither do men.

Abu Haamid: Count as many meanings as you want, but do not ignore the basic meaning of the message of a kiss between male lips and female lips, which is what comes at the head of any list of meanings; it is a meaning of desire.

The evidence for that is that kisses are of different types, and the explanation of each type of kissing is based on reason. Reason connects it to the person whom you are kissing and his status with regard to you.

Is it rational to explain the kiss given to an infant as one of mercy, and the kiss given to a child as emotion, and the kiss given by a man to a man or a woman to a woman as friendship, then to leave the kiss given by a man to a woman with no explanation, or to leave this message with no meaning?

Can we deny that a kiss is one of the causes that provoke desire, on the ba-

sis that some may not be provoked by a kiss?

Answer me truthfully, Isabella: what is the first step on the path of serious desire that a man does with a woman and a woman does with a man? Is it not the case that a kiss may be a serious message, if not the final message, before a man has intercourse with his wife, or commits adultery with another woman? Even animals use *their mouths, faces,* and so on, before mating. After this, can anyone deny that a kiss is one of the causes of fornication or adultery, or one of the things that lead to it?

Is it correct to say that alcohol is not an intoxicant because some men do not get drunk from half a glass of wine, for example? Is this acceptable logic? The same applies to a kiss.

It is your right, Isabella, to deny that there is any milk in a covered pan that is filled with milk on the basis that you cannot smell the milk or see the steam that comes from it for no other reason than that it is cold milk. But as soon as you turn on the stove, within a few minutes the milk will begin to boil and you may

Milk in
the pot

see its steam, and the milk may boil over in the pan. How great is the resemblance between desire and milk.

Assume that you try a second and third kiss with a handsome young man in an isolated place. Won't desire begin to boil like milk, and may even go beyond its limits and boil over?

What was the practical starting point, beyond mere looking and attraction? What was the spark that lit the flame? Wasn't it that kiss?

Then when kissing became widespread in that manner, those who were most harmed by it were wives, because the wife became the last one to provoke her husband's desire, and kissing him was least likely to provoke him. Indeed, it became impossible for him to approach her except under the influence of intoxicants which caused him to lose his reason, so that he could no longer distinguish between her and other women, or under the influence of aphrodisiacs.

I do not know how a woman can argue in favour of something when she is the one who is most harmed by it.

We must allow our reason to judge.

Perhaps many of you now think that your society goes against this logic.

The harm caused by leniency with regard to these doors which are open to fornication or adultery, go beyond married women and go beyond issues of psychological harm and trust, etc.

You are people of justice and reason. Look again at the poll carried out by CNN ¹⁵, then decide.

Examine these alarming numbers from the most civilized and technologically advanced society – American society – which I am quoting as published by the BBC, without any comment:

Sexually-transmitted diseases are widespread among teenage girls.

An American study concluded that one in four girls in the United States is infected with a sexually-transmitted disease.

The study – which was carried out by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – discovered that the rate of infec-

15: www.cnn.com/allpolitics/1998/08/20/adultery.poiv

tion for this kind of contagious disease is particularly high among African-American girls.

The experts questioned a sample of 838 American girls whose ages varied from 14 to 19 years.

The study found that the virus which causes uterine cancer (HPV) is the most widespread, as it was discovered in 18 percent of the girls who were included in this study.

The organization which supervised the study said that this was the first time that a study on sexually transmitted diseases had focused on teenage girls.¹⁶

What sort of generation of mothers can society expect? What sort of generation of fathers?

What will happen to the children if this is the case with their mothers and fathers?!"

Polyandry

Isabella: "Umm Haamid, believe us – and I have always thought of you as sincere and honest since I met you in Dubai. Would you agree to Abu Haamid taking

16. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/arabic/sci-tech/new_id-7291000/7291126.stm

another wife? But beware of saying yes, because I will say to you: Then why is it not permissible for a woman among you to marry more than one man?"

Umm Haamid: "I will answer you as a rational woman, regardless of the ruling of my religion, which I fully believe to be the truth.

I will not conceal from you the fact that part of my jealousy with regard to my husband is the fact that I want him to myself and I would not like him to take another wife, even though I accept the religious ruling. But, on the other hand, I would be more jealous if my husband took mistresses.

The real facts which are seen in your society and our society, and every society on earth, is that if a man does not take another wife in a legitimate manner, he will fall in love with a woman other than his wife, and may have intercourse with her. Another fact is that this does not happen only once, rather it happens repeatedly, and often. A third fact is that the wife cannot usually prevent her husband from doing that all the time. A fourth fact is that a woman may be sexually satisfied

with one man, whereas a man may not. Is it not the case that infertility occurs more often in women than in men?

Should I be so selfish that I make my husband fall ill or fall into the lap of a woman who does not deserve him, so that I can keep him for myself?

A new mistress for the husband is like a new lover for the wife; the woman who accepts the one must inevitably accept the other!

A new mistress may tear apart the old family because she is stealing the head of the household, and because there are no rights or commitments in such a relationship, and no children, no inheritance and so on.

Whereas with a new wife, the family is enlarged, strengthened, and the number of children increased. Moreover these additions to the family are legitimate, and the children's lineage is part of that, and there are financial rights and rights of inheritance, and so on.

Wouldn't any mistress be jealous about her lover if he takes another mistress, and perhaps try to disrupt that relationship?

We read of such incidents in the newspapers every day, and we see them referred to in court cases. Why did you object to jealousy when it is focused on preventing something prohibited, and overlook it when it is between mistresses?

In addition to the negative consequences involved in taking mistresses, such as the spread of disease, division, and confusion and so on, it leads to chaos in all senses of the word. Whereas marrying a second or third or fourth wife brings order in the truest sense.

Have you seen these large numbers of girls who are scattered about in society? How would it be in a specific system if they were taken off the streets to a marital home, whether as a first or fourth wife, so that instead of being women with no beneficial societal purpose, they would be wives who were responsible for raising children, and were cared for?

I know, as a woman, what could happen to me, or to any woman, if she saw her husband running around between various mistresses. What could happen to her if he took a second wife, for example? She will be affected for the first few nights

when he stays away from her home with the second wife.

But she will quickly organize her life and that of her children on that basis, and finally she will accept it.

Hence we can realize that true protective jealousy is in accordance with sound reason, and that a lack of such jealousy is a lack of reason, and an excess of such jealousy is a shortfall of reason.

On the other hand, if I did not accept having a second wife alongside me, or a third or fourth, if I reduced my jealousy to a moderate level, I would find that his matter is completely in accordance with reason. Focusing on oneself is selfish and contrary to reason, because the issue of plural marriage is not a purely personal matter. If we want to reach a sound ruling, we must forget about emotional selfishness or selfish emotion as women.

If every woman dealt with this society on the basis that it is her greater family, and regarded herself as a member of this society or this greater family, then in most cases she would see that this is a duty upon her and others like her. Yes, to that degree!

The West has to realize that this is not only the matter of a small family.

It is a mistake to regard society within the narrow framework of "my family," because if my family is successful, I will think that society is successful too, and if my family is a failure, then I will think that all of society has failed, like one who views the outside world and sees it coloured with the tint of his glasses.

It is a very serious matter, and it is the greatest selfishness for one generation to accept passing on its problems to the next, without solving them when able to, and for a family to pass down the problems caused by its selfishness to its children, without realizing it.

This matter will not be solved by mere optimism or by mere emotion. The statistics are frightening, and they warn of immense and certain collapse, unless the present generation does something about it.

I hope that you will think realistically, and in terms of numbers.

Doesn't the ratio of females born surpass that of males in our society in particular,

or on a global scale? What is to be done with these extra females? Should they be burned or killed at birth as the Chinese do, when they kill some of their children at birth every year?

Should they be left to wander the streets, or be neglected?

Don't they have the right to form families and become mothers and grandmothers like all of us?

Don't we all have daughters? Would any of us prefer her daughter to live as a mistress of this man or that, and miss out on life until she becomes a widow before even getting married?

What is the remedy for European societies that are being eroded by the death of seniors and a low birth rate, to such an extent that they are threatened with extinction within a few years, as is the case in Denmark, the Netherlands and elsewhere?

What is the correct response to the many calls for help and the frightening increase in the numbers of divorcees, young and not-so-young?

Should we ignore them, turning a deaf

ear to their cries, or listen to them, or what?

Which is better for society, having more mistresses or having more wives?

Which is cleaner and freer of disease for society, having more illegitimate relationships or more legitimate ones?

Which is sounder for raising the next generation of society, for children to grow up seeing their parents engaging in proper conduct, or seeing their father in an illicit relationship with someone other than their mother, or their mother in an illicit relationship with someone other than their father?

How will the new generation classify these relationships? What will a child call this woman, and what will he call this mother?

Will this relationship be regarded in principle as a family, or what?

How will a young girl who grows up in such a family regard this stranger who enters the house to be intimate with her mother, or what will she think when she sees her mother going out with a stranger?

What words will be of any benefit in disciplining her, when her mother destroys any advice with her actions?

Tell me, what harvest will any of our daughters reap when her beauty fades and her strength diminishes, and she becomes a prisoner in her house despite herself, if she has no husband, daughter or son?"

Isabella: "I have a question which may seem embarrassing to you, but it is something that is discussed among us in forceful terms and frequently, and it is supported in some questions. This question is: why can't a woman marry two men instead of one? What is there to prevent that? I myself attended a wedding in Denmark to which some friends invited me. A woman in her thirties was sitting on the dais with her husband of Danish origin on her right, and on her left was her husband of African origin who had Danish nationality.

I asked about each husband, and I was told that the Danish husband was for raising the children and the African was for sex!"

Umm Haamid: "This is something that

I would not like for myself, and none of you ladies would like it for herself. Why? Because it is contrary to the ruling of reason and common sense, and it is contrary to the dignity of women.

With regard to your question about why you should not marry more than one man, this is something that I would not want for myself, and no woman would want for herself, and why not?

That is because it is contrary to sound human nature. It is also contrary to the dignity of women.

Have you seen those animals and insects where the female has more than one male at the same time? Have you seen the bee and how the males fight to be the only male who will fertilize the queen?

With animals the issue is that the female changes her mate every season. But at some specific point the male takes responsibility for the female and does not accept anyone sharing her with him, and becomes as jealous as can be over his female, offspring and home. But what marital value can there be in animals if the head of the family does not feel protective jealousy concerning the mother

of the family? This is the principle that all creatures have in common.

It is protective jealousy, and it is sound human nature.

Moreover, I ask you: why can't there be two captains on a ship, or two rulers in a country, or two leaders for every group?

The answer is: because that is unrealistic and contrary to the system of leadership.

If a woman has two husbands, which of the two men will be in charge?

Or will the woman be in charge of the two men?!

There remains what was mentioned previously about the number of women being greater than the number of men – if we exclude the situation in China – and this is what will make the issue more critical in the future, rather than resolving it.

If it is permissible for a woman to marry two men, then why is not permissible for her to marry four?

If we know that the woman usually loses her libido before the man, then what would a woman do with two men?

If the woman gives birth to a child, then to which of the men is he to be attributed?

What if he is attributed to one of them, then it is found out that he is infertile?

What would she do in such a case?

What certainty could there be in social ties in a society where there is no certainty that a child belongs to his father?

Who will be his paternal uncles, maternal uncles and kin? Would there not be a lot of court cases and demands, especially if the cases have to do with material gains or fame and the like?

What if one of the two men dies? How will the estate be divided? From whom will the child inherit? Do you think that the child could inherit from both men as fathers?

How could the jealousy of one of the men towards the other be regulated? Wouldn't this cause disputes to turn into hatred and then revenge?

If one husband can usually control women's jealousy, would a woman be able to stop the jealousy of all her husbands,

with all the physical strength, and violent and criminal tendencies that they may possess?

How can women who are by nature tricky be able to put pressure on this husband or that?"

Madame Drima: "Umm Haamid's words are very convincing. At this stage in my long life I have seen many prominent families in France, families which are conservative like Muslim families, or very close to that. In these families, honour was protected and principles were kept alive, and they did not have the decadence and promiscuity that are so prevalent among us nowadays.

I think that this is the example that we want to go back to. Even though the problem is huge, as statistics show, and we are certain that those who are responsible for social statistics are institutions that are at the pinnacle of specialized knowledge, why do we see that social decline is on the increase?"

Abu Haamid: "I know that many French people and Westerners, like you, greatly admire the social system in Muslim countries. Many people think that if

some families in your country are conservative, that makes them like Muslim societies or Muslim families.

I would like to tell you frankly that the reason for the strength that you see in the social system of Muslim countries, despite the backwardness of the social and economic system, is not only due to the soundness of the social system, not at all.

The evidence for that is that if you were to take the same system and apply it in your country, it may fail utterly. Yes, the system is top quality, but what makes it effective in society without it being imposed or supervised by any authorities or otherwise, is that this system is connected to Islamic beliefs.

I have no objection to discussing this matter on a rational basis, not on the basis of religious belief. If it agrees with reason then accept it, otherwise reject it regardless of whether it is religious or not.

Don't you know that from ancient times up until today, among all nations, the marriage contract has a certain religious sanctity, regardless of the soundness or otherwise of the rituals involved?

So, the connection between belief and marriage is something on which all nations are agreed. So we should not be put off by the connection between marriage and Islamic religion; is that not so?

This is the first rational step. As for the second step, as you have admitted, the social system in the Muslim world has succeeded in an unparalleled way. You should realize that this testimony on your part is direct testimony to the success of our religion, at least in this aspect, and it is indirect testimony to its success in other aspects. That is because if you were to ask us who prescribed this system which you have testified is perfect, we would tell you: It is the One Who created other systems, namely Allah."

Dr. Drima: "Yes, but how can you say that when it is the matter of the unseen?"

Abu Haamid: "We and you believe in the existence of God. This is a fact. Indeed, it is the greatest fact. When it was denied by atheist theory and the whole of Eastern Europe was based on that, it had the shortest lifespan of any nation on earth and quickly passed away, to

the point that its lifespan did not equal that of a human being. Now you say that you turn to God at times of calamity, is that not so? Does this mean that you are exaggerating about the role of God with regard to calamities?

Is this not a testimony on your part that God is able to save you, and a testimony that He hears you, and testimony that He has power? Moreover, when you want to do something, you say "God willing". Aren't you certain of your actions? Our answer is simply that you have made the preparations to do something, and you have got everything ready, and there is nothing left but to do this action. The question here is: isn't it possible that a person may die suddenly?

If you were to say: where can we find this system of Allah? We would tell you: You can find it in the Qur'ân and in the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). We will add, after all this, that the One Who created this system and revealed the Book which is the source of this successful system, is the One that is in control of all other systems."

Dr. Drima: "If what you say is correct, then why is there no corresponding success in the political or economic fields?"

If the Islamic social system is successful, how is it possible that we see your countries at such a level of weakness and backwardness that they are no more than colonies of advanced countries, even if they are not actually called colonies?

Or do you want to tell me that you are the advanced countries and that we are the third world?

Isn't your economic system one of the worst?

Haven't your countries become like a platter from which anyone may eat?

So don't try to jump to the conclusion that because your family system is successful, other systems are also successful. Isn't this rational evidence based on the reality of Muslim countries?

So the reason for your success in social organization is not Islam as you think, rather it is customs and traditions. Therefore Islam is the reason for your backwardness in all other fields."

Are
customs
and
traditions
the secret
behind
our
success?

Abu Haamid: "I hope that we can allocate a separate time for discussing the Islamic economic system and other systems. But now let us discuss the social aspect so that we do not go off track.

Pope Shenouda – and you know who Pope Shenouda is, he is the leader of Christians in the East and the head of the Coptic Church in Egypt – submitted this document to the Egyptian government, and this is what he said in it. 'At the request of the church and with the agreement of the Copts concerning the solutions offered by Islamic law to the problems of Christian families, the most significant of which are divorce (initiated by women), custody of children, missing husbands and inheritance, because of the lack of any clear text that deals with these issues in the Gospel...' ¹⁷

Is this an acknowledgement from a Muslim or from a non-Muslim? Is it recognition of customs and traditions, or a recognition of Islam?

17. Quoted from *al-Qur'ân yatakallam wal-Injeel yuthbit ma yaqooluhu Deen al-Haqq*. This report appeared in the *Rose al-Yoosuf* magazine, issue no. 3850, 9-15 Muharram 1423 AH/23-29 February 2002 CE.

Moreover, are the Qur'ân and reports that are narrated from Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) customs and traditions, or are they sources of legislation in Islamic religion?

If the family system is mentioned in precise details, sometimes in the Qur'ân and sometimes in the *hadiths* of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), is it fair to attribute this to our customs and traditions?

Moreover, every society has customs and traditions, so why are they successful among us, but they fail among others?

Why didn't these customs and traditions succeed among the Arabs before Islam?

If you study this matter rationally, you will find out that what you have mentioned is a logical result, because the reason for the Muslims' success in the Islamic social system despite their backwardness in other areas is not based on the source but on the application.

When the implementation of the social system was made an obligation upon society as individuals, families and rela-

tives, people strove hard to implement it, and the results appeared from that time until Muslims became politically, economically and militarily weak, and they became weak in other aspects of life.

When implementation of political and other systems was neglected because of the people in authority in some of the Muslim states, you saw the shameful results. It is not due to anything other than lack of implementation.

The evidence for that is that you see that when some Muslim businessmen and organizations began implementing some Islamic banking systems, they succeeded in an astonishing way and now those systems are becoming increasingly widespread.

Do these results call for abandoning Islamic systems altogether, or do they call for more implementation so that we may achieve greater successes in the social system?

What does reason say?

The great advantage of our system is that it has the quality of being divine, which lends sanctity to the rulings in their ac-

ceptance and implementation, and – at the same time – gives reason plenty of space to think, try to understand and reach conclusions. Marriage, for example, is done with a single word, and divorce is done with a single word.

Here I will quote to you some Qur'ânic texts, not for the purpose of worship but to confirm facts and prove the reality, which is, that the reason for the preservation of our social system is not due to customs and traditions.

You will learn the secret if you read the Qur'ân. You will see that the practical family rulings, for example, are connected to belief and are an important part of faith. You will see that the rulings on divorce, for example, are connected to the attributes of Allah. Look quickly at these verses from *Surat al-Baqarah*:

222. “They ask you concerning menstruation. Say: that is an *Adha* (a harm, discomfort), therefore, keep away from women during menses and go not unto them till they are purified (from menses). And when they have purified themselves, then go in unto them as Allah has ordained for you.

Truly, Allah loves those who turn unto Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves.

223. Your wives are a tilth for you, so go to your tilth, when or how you will, and send (good deeds) for yourselves beforehand. And fear Allah, and know that you are to meet Him (in the Hereafter), and give good tidings to the believers.” [*al-Baqarah* 2:222-223].

And Allah says:

“241. And for divorced women, maintenance (should be provided) within reason. This is a duty on the pious.

242. Thus Allah makes clear His *Ayaat* (Laws) to you, in order that you may understand.

243. Did you not think of those who went forth from their homes in thousands, fearing death? Allah said to them, “Die”. And then He restored them to life. Truly, Allah is full of bounty to mankind, but most men thank not” [*al-Baqarah* 2:241-243].

Similarly the rulings on all other aspects of life are related in this great manner; the rulings derive their strength, respect,

awe and weight from the attributes of Allah, as well as their depth and abundance of meanings when they are studied and researched, as they lead to proper implementation. Allah says in the Qur'ân:

278. "O you who believe! Be afraid of Allah and give up what remains (due to you) from *Riba* (interest, usury; from now onward) if you are (really) believers.

279. And if you do not do it, then take a notice of war from Allah and His Messenger but if you repent, you shall have your capital sums. Deal not unjustly (by asking more than your capital sums), and you shall not be dealt with unjustly (by receiving less than your capital sums).

280. And if the debtor is in a hard time (has no money), then grant him time till it is easy for him to repay; but if you remit it by way of charity, that is better for you if you did but know.

281. And be afraid of the Day when you shall be brought back to Allah. Then every person shall be paid what he earned, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly" [al-Baqarah 2:278-281].

And He says in *Surat an-Nisa'*:

“There is no good in most of their secret talks save (in) him who orders *Sadaqah* (charity in Allah’s Cause), or *Ma’ruf* (Islamic Monotheism and all the good and righteous deeds which Allah has ordained), or conciliation between mankind; and he who does this, seeking the good Pleasure of Allah, We shall give him a great reward” [*an-Nisa'* 4:114].”

Dr. Drima, interrupting: “We agreed that we would not quote anything from the holy Books, whether it is the Qur’ân or the Gospel or the Torah or the Psalms. Hence I think that this is a breach of that condition and contrary to reason. I am just pointing that out.”

Abu Haamid: “I will give you the choice between quoting from the holy Books or that which was narrated from the Prophets, and not quoting. But before we agree to your request or not, I would like you to understand fully why I am quoting verses from the holy Books.

When I quote verses from the holy Books, I am judging them by the standard of reason, to see whether they are in

Do not go
beyond
reason

accordance with reason or not, just as we are examining everything in this discussion by the standard of reason. This is the first point. Secondly, when you say that quoting verses of the Qur'ân is contrary to reason, this is prejudice, judging something before listening to the evidence. But we agreed that we would not rely on previous judgements or judge on the basis of prejudice. Perhaps this belief springs from what you know of the verses of your holy Book that go against reason.

Thirdly, when I give you the verse, I am giving you something that you could use against me and either condemn me because of it, or agree with me.

Fourthly: When I tell you that this is the ruling of Islam, your answer may be: What is the evidence for that? This is your right, and if you give up your right, that's up to you. But in return, you should realize that this means accepting what I say. But I will not give up my right, and I will ask you for evidence for every claim you make, from the Torah, Gospel and Psalms, from these same holy Books. It is your right too, if I tell you of some problem in Christianity, to ask me for

evidence.

Fifthly, you can imagine how shallow the discussion would be if it were not based on evidence, but mere claims. Let me give you an example. If I said to you: Have you seen this new scientific fact that was discovered a hundred years ago, but the Qur'ân mentioned this same fact 1400 years ago, would it not be your right to ask me where the Qur'ân mentions it? Thus I am requested to provide evidence. And I will make the same request of you if you mention something in the Bible."

Dr. Drima: "If that is the case, then I have a request and a condition for you. My condition is that you should give more evidence from the Qur'ân, and I don't doubt that I will find many contradictions.

Now I hope that you will go back to where you left off, to your comments on the Qur'ânic verses that speak of the relation between the rulings and beliefs."

Abu Haamid: "I realize that you may think that these words are theoretical, with as big a gap between them and their implementation as that between heaven and earth. Here I find myself forced to

Are these
theoretical
words?

prove to you that these things may be implemented. Indeed they have been implemented, and that everyone who implements them is practically following the example of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), because he was the best one who implemented them.

It is not just the matter of verses to be read or looked at. No, you will also be surprised when you study the biography of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and how he put these words into action, and how he was a clear example for everyone in this field. But what I hope is that you will notice the value of women at the time when Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) brought these teachings, and he implemented them in that society.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) made the relationship between the spouses the greatest arena for worship when he said: "The best of you is the one who is best to his family, and I am the best of you to his family." The best of the entire society is the one who is best to his wife,

children and family. Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is the example, and he is the foremost. Is there any contest in the field of good deeds that is greater than the contest in this field?

But I must point out, that I am not telling you these *hadiths* of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) except for the purpose for which I told you that I was quoting Qur'ânic verses. so remember that.

It was narrated that 'A'ishah¹⁸ (may Allah be pleased with her), the wife of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), said: "The Abyssinians came into the mosque to play, and he said to me: 'O Humayra' (a nickname of 'A'ishah), do you want to watch them?"

18. Before every *hadith* that was narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), I will mention the name of a man or a woman that narrated the *hadith* from him. This is the last link in the chain of narrators, each of whom heard from another. They are known, and their biographies may be found in the reference books of this branch of knowledge, as we shall also see. But we do not list them all in books like this, for the sake of brevity. However, I must state that their biographies are available, for the purpose of authenticating this information, for those who want to refer to them.

I said: 'Yes.' So he stood at the door, and I came and put my chin on his shoulder, and leaned my face against his cheek. Among the things they said that day was: 'Abu al-Qasim [i.e., the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)] is a good man.' The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'Have you had enough?' I said: 'O Messenger of Allah, do not rush me.' So he stood there for me, then he said: 'Have you had enough?' I said: 'Do not rush me, O Messenger of Allah.' It was not because I liked watching them. Rather I wanted women to know how long he stood for me and my position with him."¹⁹

Imagine the scene with him and his wife 'A'ishah, with her resting her chin on his shoulder from behind, while these Abyssinians were displaying their fighting skills with their spears, and doing their special dance in the mosque, and he patiently waited until she had enough.

19. Narrated by al-Nasa'i in *al-Kubra* and classed as *sahih* by al-Hafiz in *al-Fath*. He said: Its chain of narration is *sahih* but I have only seen the mention of Humayra' in this *hadith*. The two *Shaykhs* (al-Bukhari and Muslim) narrated a similar *hadith*.

‘A’ishah also narrated how he treated her when she accompanied him on one of his journeys. She said: “I was with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) on a journey, and I raced with him on foot and beat him. When I had gained weight, I raced him and he beat me, and said: ‘This is for that race.’”²⁰

Think about this race, concerning which his wife narrated this report. Think about it, bearing in mind the realistic approach of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the harmony of his marriage, and the way in which he paid attention to physical well being and fitness. When he was younger, she beat him, but when he was older, he beat her in the race.

Whereas some religions isolate women at the time of their menses because they are unclean – or so they say – ‘A’ishah says: “I used to drink, when I was menstruating, then I would pass the cup to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and he would put his mouth on the place where my mouth had been, and drink. And I would eat some meat from a

20. Narrated by Abu Dawud (2578), Ibn Majah (1979) and others.

bone when I was menstruating, then pass it to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and he would put his mouth on the place where my mouth had been.”²¹

His daughter's husband, 'Uthman bin 'Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) said in a sermon: “By Allah, we accompanied the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) on journeys and at home, and he would visit our sick and attend our funerals, and go out on campaigns with us, and share with us whether he had a lot or a little.”²²

After the death of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), a man came to 'A'ishah and asked her: “Did the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) work in his house?” She said: “Yes. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to mend his shoes, sew his garment, and work in his house like one of you works in his

21. Narrated by Muslim (300) and others.

22. Narrated by Ahmad in his Musnad, no. 504. Shaykh Ahmad Shakir said: Its chain of narrations is sahih. It was also narrate by others.

house.”²³

It was narrated from ‘Uqbah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The conditions that are most deserving of being fulfilled are those by means of which intimacy becomes permissible for you.”²⁴

I affirm to you that you can never understand the strength of family ties in the Muslim family, *unless you understand* how the Arab family was before Islam, and how it changed after Islam came.

When
will you
discover
the Secret?

You can never understand the strength of these ties in the Muslim family, *unless you compare families throughout the world, and search deeply for the secret behind these ties.*

You can never understand the secret behind that, if you do not study the Qur’ân itself, and the *hadiths* of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) which speak of the family system.

The day you become a father in a Muslim

23. Narrated by Ahmad (25380). Al-Hafiz al-Iraqi said in *Takhreej Ahaadeeth al-Ihya’* (5/294): Its men (narrators) are the men of sahih.

24. Al-Bukhari – *al-Fath* 9 (5151).

family, you will be living these words for real, and you will see your children competing to honour you, each according to his abilities.

You will see how they rush to serve you in the true sense of the word, and the lucky one among them is the one who fulfils your command first. In fact the lucky one is the one who finds out that you need something before you speak, whether you are the father or the mother, and he wishes that you will accept some of the money that he offers you from him.

They do not do this just because you are the cause of their existence, or because you are their father or mother. Rather the reason why they do that is to seek the pleasure of Allah, and the pleasure of the father and mother with the child. It is an amazing balance. Each party feels a sense of pleasure in doing his job. You are pleased when you are a child, then when you become a father; you enjoy your child's serving you even more.

I confirm to you, that these are not theoretical rulings. Rather they are practical rulings which are implemented to the fullest extent. Many of them are imple-

mented in Muslim families, and are applicable at all times and in all places. What you see of them being implemented in Muslim families today is only the partial effect of these verses and *hadiths*.

Look at it through the lens of your reason.

Abu Hurayrah – one of the most famous narrators of *hadith* from the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) – narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “When one of you is brought food by his servant, and his servant has taken care of preparing it and put up with its smoke, let him make him sit down with him, and if he does not make him sit down with him, let him give him a morsel or two, because he is the one who put up with its heat, and took care of preparing it, and put up with its smoke.”²⁵

It was narrated from Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) that when a woman among them menstruated, the Jews would not eat with her or live with her

25. Narrated by al-Bukhari (5144) and Muslim (1663)

in their houses.²⁶ The companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked him about that, and Allah revealed the words:

“They ask you concerning menstruation. Say: that is an *Adha* (a harm, a discomfort), therefore, keep away from women during menses and go not unto them till they are purified (from menses). And when they have purified themselves, then go in unto them as Allah has ordained for you. Truly, Allah loves those who turn unto Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves.” [*al-Baqarah* 2:222].

And the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Do everything except intercourse.” News of that reached the Jews and they said: “This man does not want to leave any of our affairs but he differs from us therein. Usayd bin Hudayr and ‘Abbaad bin Bishr came and said: “O Messenger of Allah, the Jews are saying such and such; why don’t we have intercourse with them (women)?” The face of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings

26. i.e., they would not mix with them or stay in the same house with them.

of Allah be upon him) changed, until we thought that he was angry with them, and they went out, and they saw a man bringing a gift of milk to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He sent someone to bring them back to him, and gave them (some of that milk) to drink, and they knew that he was not angry with them.²⁷

It was narrated that Anas bin Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "Safiyah heard that Hafsah said: 'Daughter of a Jew,' and she wept. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) entered upon her when she was weeping and asked: 'What is making you weep?' She said: 'Hafsah said that I was the daughter of a Jew.' The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'You are a daughter of a Prophet, your paternal uncle was a Prophet and you are married to a Prophet, so why is she boasting to you?' Then he said: 'Fear Allah, O Hafsah!'"²⁸

A woman's value goes beyond the fam-

27. Narrated by Muslim (302) and elsewhere.

28. Narrated by Ahmad (12419) and al-Tirmidhi (3894), who said it is *hasah sahih ghareeb* (good, correct, rare).

ily. Women may be consulted about the most difficult matters, and their opinions may be taken into account concerning momentous issues, as when the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) followed the advice of his wife Umm Salamah with regard to a problem that nearly became a great calamity. It is narrated that Bilqis the Queen of Yemen led her people through a difficult period, and then took the right decision to follow divine guidance.”

Where
is a
woman's
place?

Jean-Louis: “Don’t try to bridge the gap between us and you, Abu Haamid. The differences concerning women are deeply rooted, and they are differences in concepts, not in opinions. How can we accept a religion that does not regard men and women as equal?

Yes, perhaps your religion was ideal for women at a time when they were oppressed and treated as objects to be bought and sold, or enslaved and set free, but not now.

You Muslims are still saying that a woman’s place is in the home, and she shouldn’t work. Don’t you have verses of your Qur’ân that say “**And stay in**

your houses” [*al-Ahzab* 33:33]?

The reason for the lack of development in your societies is that you have kept half of your society from working, or taking part in the building of your nation.

Hence, I will offer you my advice, and you will see good results if you follow it. Release women from their bonds and you will see how your societies will rise, but you will never be able to loosen their bonds until you give up your religion, even if it is only in this aspect.”

Abu Haamid: “I hope that if you offer objections, you will make room in your mind, no matter how small, for the possibility that you are not correct all the time. I hope that you will judge Islam from within as it is, and not as it is presented to you, wrongly by some who bear it ill will, because you do not accept injustice.

I hope that you will ask the woman who is committed to Islam; ask her: is she forced?

Does she feel that she has lost her rights as a woman in Islam?

Does she wish to be like western wom-

You
could be
wrong

en?

The committed woman is most able to give a sound judgement because she knows. If you ask a woman who is not committed, she will not be able to judge, because she does not know.

How can you judge Islam?

I say this, as an introduction to your objection.

Equality
or
justice?

Dr. Jean-Louis: The basis of the problem is in people's minds, not in reality.

The basis of the problem is that some have presented this image to you and you believed it.

They gave you the impression that there is a conflict between women and men, and that the prevailing party throughout past times has been men, and that women were suppressed throughout history, and that now they must liberate themselves, and we must help them to liberate themselves.

We are not defending the heavy and unjust burden that women have borne throughout history. Rather we are defending the truth. Is Islam part of this

heavy historical burden that women have borne, or did it lift that burden from them and liberate them, as it liberated men from the absolute authority of rulers, and slaves from the absolute authority of masters, and wealth from undefined rules of inheritance, and the absolute control of the powerful, as it liberated rulers and legislation from the absolute authority of their makers, and liberated the poor from enslavement to the rich, and liberated female children from being buried alive and being sold?

I can explain every one of these points clearly to you, but I would like to focus on women and not be distracted from the other points. I hope that you will think a little about the arguments which you accept as facts. Are they good arguments or are they just illusions? Are they facts which should be considered non-negotiable, or are they arguments which are fundamentally flawed?

Is it true that women are really equal to men? If that is true, then is it true to say that a man is equal to a woman in everything? Do you – doctors – believe that a woman is completely equal to man, physically?

Is a woman equal to a man according to geneticists? Is she equal to him according to embryologists? Is a woman equal to a man according to psychologists?

Is your father like your mother? Are you like your wife? Is your son like your daughter? Are you like your sister?

Based on these assumptions, can any reasonable person say that a woman is like a man, or that a man is like a woman? After all these natural, psychological and physical differences, can the result be equality in all things?

Is it in women's interests – in the first place – to make a woman equal to a man in all things?

We are not trying to base any injustice on this, rather we are saying this in order to establish justice, and save women from oppression.

Is it not a form of justice to give each person the tasks that he or she is qualified to do?

Does it make sense – on the grounds of equality among students – to give them all the same exam in different specialties, on the basis that they are all the same age

and at the same stage of education? Does this make any sense on the grounds of equality? Or does it make sense to make tenth-grade students sit in an eleventh-grade or twelfth-grade exam, if they are the same age as those students, because some were held back a year and others skipped a year?

But if they are all in the same grade and taking the same specialty, is it not wise to make them all sit in the same exam, for no other reason than that they have the same characteristics and specialty, so the results will be fair?

Indeed, if you were to take the secretaries, accountants, marketing executives, research and development staff and security guards of a single company, it would not be fair to treat them all equally by asking them all the same interview questions, or giving them all the same employment tests.

Just as the company is one, the house is also one. Just as jobs within the company vary, so too jobs within the home vary. The specialties of the female are not like the specialties of the male, even though there is a great deal of common ground.

Similarly, society at large is one, and the specialties of women are not like the specialties of men.

Imagine if you were to give a woman all the jobs of a man and vice versa in a single family. The inevitable result would be destruction of the family! Why?

Because you have gone against the basis of sound human nature, and thus you will destroy society. As simple as the matter is, overlooking it becomes dangerous and destructive.

Demanding equality of women with men has become a very serious issue among you and also a very negative one, to such a point that if a person thinks of correcting matters and restoring the correct balance – i.e., from equality to justice – it is as if he is thinking of the impossible.

You have invented the principle of equality between men and women, and on that basis you have obliged women to become like men in terms of social rights and work.

Respecting the physical characteristics in which man has no say is one of the requirements for an easy flow of life. You

cannot move the eye to where the ear is, or move the brain to between the legs, or move the feet to where the hands are.

You are not doing any favour to the fish if you move it to dry land to make it equal with other creatures, rather you are killing it.

What is strange is that you are the furthest from achieving equality of women with men, except for the purpose of corrupting women. But in terms of jobs, rights and so on, there is no equality.

There was a study on the internet²⁹ of the difference in salaries of men and women, at different levels on the occupational hierarchy, comparing company and financial strength or the lack thereof. Here are the results of this study:

- The difference between men and women's salaries is approximately 35%.
- Men get salaries that are approximately 25.6% higher in non-profit organizations.

29. www.philanthropy.com/free/articles/via/i19/01002801/htm,
www.credittoday.net/public/1943.cfm,

- The ratio of female managers is approximately 57% in non-profit organizations with a budget of less than 1 million dollars, and 36% in larger organizations.

In France, in 1939, the law did not allow women to dispose of their wealth without the husband's permission. Then the law was altered to give women some freedom in disposing of their wealth, but there were still some restrictions. In West Germany, the law did not give women the right to own property until 1957. Indeed, the system, or work and wages in Europe and America still, until now, pays women lower wages than men. In Britain, for example, a woman's wage is 85% that of a man, even though they are doing the same job and the same type of work."³⁰

General Victoria: "Is the point of this complicated argument that the working woman should give up her job?

Is she required to remain a prisoner for a man to spend on her?

30. *Majallat al-Bayaan*, no. 8, p. 51. Article entitled: *Dahd al-Shubuhaat hawla Nizam al-Usrah fi'l-Islam*, by Dr. Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah al-Salman.

Is it required for her husband to imprison her so that he can spend on her in his house, after guaranteeing that she is disconnected from her family's house, and maybe even that she will not be able to work after that? Undoubtedly there is a great deal of convincing evidence in what you say, but applying it would cancel out what you say."

Abu Haamid: "First of all, let me tell you that Islam does not forbid women to work.

Islam does not tell a woman when she gets married: Give your husband your wealth and spend on your family.

Islam does not tell a man: You are entitled to a cent of your wife's wealth without her permission; and it does not tell the husband: Your spending on your wife is a favour from you to her.

Islam does not say to a man: You are more entitled to a job than a woman, not at all. By way of justice, they should not be equal in terms of work and roles. By way of justice, each of them should be given work that suits him or her.

Let these points be clear in your mind, so

that you do not keep arguing about them. I will give you evidence for each point, and you can let your reason decide.

In *Surat an-Nisa'*, Allah addressed fathers, forbidding them, let alone husbands, to consume anything of their daughters' wealth and dowries, for the dowry is the woman's right and private property: it is just for her and no one else. Allah says:

20. "But if you intend to replace a wife by another and you have given one of them a *Qintar* (of gold, i.e. a great amount as *Mahr*), take not the least bit of it back; would you take it wrongfully without a right and (with) a manifest sin?

21. And how could you take it (back) while you have gone in unto each other, and they have taken from you a firm and strong covenant"

[*an-Nisa'* 4:20, 21].

This verse is referring to the dowry taken by woman similar to her, and no more.

A great story is narrated concerning this matter. 'Umar bin al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) ascended the

pulpit of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then said:

“O people, why are you increasing women’s dowries so much? The dowries among the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Companions were four hundred *dirhams* or less. If making dowries so high was piety to Allah, or something honourable, they [the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Companions] would have done that before you. For certain I do not know of any man who gave more than four hundred *dirhams*.” Then he came down (from the pulpit) and a woman of the Quraysh intercepted him and said: “O commander of the faithful, have you told the people not to give women dowries of more than four hundred *dirhams*?” He said: “Yes.” She said: “Have you not heard what Allah revealed in the Qur’ân?” He said: “What is that?” She said: “Have you not heard that Allah says **‘and you have given one of them a *Qintar* (of gold, i.e. a great amount as *Mahr*), take not the least bit of it back; would you take it wrongfully without a right and (with) a manifest sin?’** [an-

Nisa' 4:20]?"

He said: "O Allah, forgive me; all the people have more understanding of religion than 'Umar." Then he went back and ascended the pulpit again, and said: "O people, I told you not to give women more than four hundred *dirhams* as a dowry, but (now) whoever wants to give whatever he wants of his wealth, willingly, may do so."³¹

One of the most famous of Arab women came and complained to Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) about her husband's stinginess towards the family, and he was one of the most famous leaders of the Arabs. Listen to the story: Hind bint 'Utbah said: "O Messenger of Allah, Abu Sufyan is a stingy man, and he does not give me what is sufficient for my child and I, except what I take from him without his knowledge." He said: "Take what is sufficient for you and your child, on a rea-

31. Narrated by al-Bazaar in *Majma' al-Zawa'id* (4/328). He said: It was narrated by Abu Ya'la in *al-Kabeer*; its *isnaad* (chain of narrators) includes Mujalid ibn Sa'id in whom there is some weakness but he was regarded as trustworthy.

sonable basis.”³²

So the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enjoined that every woman is entrusted with her husband's wealth if she takes from him. If she takes more than she needs, then she has betrayed the trust. But if she takes on a reasonable basis, then she has taken what is her due, without the husband doing her any favours.

If the woman gives her husband some of her wealth, then she has given him charity, and she will have a multiple reward from Allah.

And, at the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), it did indeed happen that there was a rich woman whose husband was poor, and she was a woman who liked to spend on the poor and needy, seeking reward from Allah. But she did not know whether the money she spent on her husband would bring her a reward or not.

This question arose in her mind after she listened to a sermon of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon

32. Narrated by al-Bukhari (5049) and Muslim (1714).

him). She herself told this story which is documented in the *hadith*:

It was narrated that Zaynab, the wife of 'Abdullah, said: "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'O women, give in charity, even if it is some of your jewellery.' So I went back to 'Abdullah and I said: 'You are a man of little wealth, and the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has commanded us to give charity. Go to him and ask him if it will be sufficient for me (to give it to you), otherwise I will give it to someone else.' 'Abdullah said to me: 'No, you go.' So I went, and there was a woman from among the *Ansar* (Helpers) at the door of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who had come to ask the same thing. We felt too shy to speak to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Then Bilal came out and we said to him: 'Go to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and tell him that there are two women at the door who want to ask him if it will be sufficient for them to give charity to their husbands and to the orphans who

are under their care? But do not tell him who we are. Bilal went in to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and asked him. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Who are they?" He said: "An *Ansari* woman, and Zaynab." The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Which Zaynab?" He said: "The wife of 'Abdullah." The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to him: "They will have two rewards; the reward for upholding ties of kinship, and the reward for giving charity."³³

With regard to women working, I think that you realize that Islam does not forbid them from doing work that is suitable for them. Rather it regards this as obligatory in some cases for the one who is able to do it. But the difference between Islam and you is in priorities. You make work an absolute priority, whereas Islam makes the home the priority. The reason why you give priority to work is the fear that a woman may be faced with need

33. Narrated by al-Bukhari (1397) and Muslim (1000)

and loss otherwise, whereas Islam takes the opposite view.

Let us look at it rationally and realistically. Which of the two priorities should we put first? Which of the two ways leads to loss of women's interests and future?

Do not ask me about my opinion. Rather ask your small child – which lap does he want? Does he want your lap in the morning and evening or does he want the lap of the servant or babysitter?

If he wants your lap, but then you leave, this is a calamity. If he started to prefer the babysitter's lap over yours, this is a greater calamity.

Sit next to the servant and let him crawl towards you and choose. You will see that he will never choose anyone but you, so how can you leave him when you are his first choice?

Let him have the choice, and say to him: Which milk do you prefer, milk from my breast or milk from a bottle? You are mistaken if you think that he does not understand or feel because he cannot speak.

He is a mass of feelings.

Ask the doctors who are present. How much is lost by giving the child artificial milk instead of your breast milk?

How much is lost of his immunity, health and growth when he misses out on the nourishment of your milk?

How much does it cost in health insurance because of this lack of immunity due to negligence and failing to breast-feed him?

How much is he deprived, in emotional terms, because he is far from your lap?

Can a job make up for this physical and psychological weakness with which the child grows up?

Is there any loss that is greater than loss for the young?

It is no wonder, if a child who was not breastfed by his mother and did not grow up in his mother's care, is not loyal to his mother. If he is not loyal to his mother, do you think he will be loyal to anyone other than his mother, let alone his society? A mother who left her child in the care of someone else should not be shocked by his disobedience.

This applies if the servant or babysitter is good, but how about if she is not good? You may refer to the statistics which show the suffering that children go through at the hands of servants in the absence of their mothers, which often reaches the level of killing by the most abhorrent means.

As for the money that the working woman thinks she is acquiring for herself through her job – look at how much of her wages she spends on cosmetics and how the brightness of her skin is ruined by all these substances that it absorbs every day. Look at how much she neglects her husband's rights when she does not adorn herself for him, because during the time that she is at home she is letting her skin rest from these colours, until the next day at work. Look at how much she neglects her position as a wife, so she does not beautify herself for him, but she beautifies herself for her coworkers. Look at how much she neglects her husband who sees her at home, less attractive than her colleagues at work see her, and she neglects her husband who sees women like her, and more beautiful than her, in his own workplace. Look at

how much money she wastes on clothes, so that she can wear something different every day at work.

How much do each of these points and others cost in material terms?

I ask you, General Victoria, on the basis of your previous military experience, what must a commander do if he wants to enter into battle, after he has prepared his army?

Does he not have to protect his supply routes and ensure secure logistical support?

Doesn't he then have to secure the internal front to which he will resort if his army loses the battle?

Is that not so?

Isn't the greater loss to be cut off from logistical support in the midst of battle, or, if he resorts to his family and city to regain strength and regroup, but he does not find any family or city on the internal front?

The
greater
loss

This is what happens when both the man and woman go out to work and leave the house, and they forsake rearing the next

generation and building the bedrock of society.

What benefit is there in constructing lofty buildings if there is no solid foundation?

Is it true that by going out to work, women are securing their future, if they are trying to protect themselves against any problems in the future, while they are actually destroying their present life and their future?

It is an evil trick by means of which women's enemies have made women think that the price of protecting one's future is destroying one's present by forfeiting their child's care, emotional well being and maybe even his life, also by destroying the husband's trust when life becomes a dubious competition between spouses to secure the future.

What can be expected of family life when its pillars are based on enslavement to materialistic gains and negative thinking, and selfishness?

Why do you not regard the mother's staying at home as work?

Is there any job greater than the job of rearing the next generation?

Can the mother be replaced in this job?

Think about how many women are doing jobs that men could do.

Then think about how many men are out of work for this reason.

Then think about how many work hours are lost every year due to maternity leave.

Then think about how much loss and destruction of public facilities is caused due to unemployed youths being unable to find jobs, and how many may end up killing or being killed, because of having too much spare time on their hands.

Then, think about how many of these unemployed end up in prison, how much of their energy is wasted, how much is spent on their maintenance, and how much loss of productivity results from them not playing their proper roles.

Then think about how much families spend annually on servants and nannies who act as alternative mothers in these homes?

Then think about how much working women spend on tranquillizers because

of the pressures of work in general.

If you calculate the losses incurred as a result of making women work as a priority, in material terms rather than religious terms, you will find that the greatest losers in material terms are women themselves. Related to this is the fact that one of the most important matters that have an impact on presidential elections is unemployment, which is due to women working outside the home.

Why don't we calculate all these losses, then change the way we calculate it, so that we regard women staying at home as a natural job, and pay them wages in return for that, so that we can combine saving losses, and guaranteeing the future of the coming generation?

I hope that you will not be hasty, and that you will wait and let me explain the figures to you, in addition to the previous factors.

The fact that priority should work in the home is not my opinion as a Muslim, rather – as you said yourself – it is the view of the Qur'ân. What is really strange is that it is also the opinion that western women have come back today,

after experiencing the consequences of going out of the home.

The Mothers' Institute, which was founded in 1938 in the United States of America, stated that more than 15,000 women have joined the institute after leaving work voluntarily.

The
Mother's
Institute

In a poll published in 1990 by the Market Research Institute, which involved 2.5 million girls through *Marie Claire* magazine, 90% of the girls wanted to return to the home so as to avoid ongoing stress at work, and they said that they were unable to see their husbands and children except when eating dinner.

In the United States, 40% of working women, in Sweden 60%, in Germany 30%, in the former Soviet Union 28%, are suffering from stress and anxiety. Seventy-six percent of tranquillizers are prescribed to working women.

In the former Soviet Union, the former president (Gorbachev) said in his book about *perestroika* that after working in the fields of production, services and construction, and taking part in creative activities, women no longer have any time to do their daily duties of house-

work and raising the children.

He added: We have discovered that many of the behavioural problems in our children and youth, and with regard to our morale, culture and productivity can all be traced to the decline in family relations. This is the natural result of our persistent desire, which was politically justified as the necessity to make women equal with men.³⁴

Alternate
guarantee

By now you should realize that these losses which I have mentioned to you, and these figures for cases of stress and the like, are not mentioned just for fun. Rather they have serious and immense consequences on the workplace and the family alike. A reliable study states that 94% of company directors regard domestic violence as posing the greatest danger to work, and 60% of executive directors believe that domestic violence has an impact on productivity. Between 85% and 90% of victims of domestic violence are women, and two million work days are lost every year as the result of domestic

34. Al-Bayan Magazine, issue no. 149, p. 62, article entitled *Madha yureedoona min al-Mar'ah* by Mahmoud Karam Sulaymaan

violence across the United States.³⁵

Despite all of this, I would like to confirm that these figures will get worse as time goes by, and the number of victims increases. It is essential to know that the solution for your problem is not making women stay at home in the situation as it is today, because society is not prepared for that right now, even though it is less harmful. Rather the solution lies in establishing new rules and principles in people's minds before reality can be changed.

Islam does not enjoin women to stay at home until after a complete system is in place, which protects women in material terms, and protects their dignity in moral and social terms. When Islam enjoined women to stay at home, it made it obligatory for husbands to spend on them. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "It is sufficient sin for a man to withhold provision from the one whose provision he controls."³⁶

35. www.endabuse.org/programs/printable/display.php3DocID=00001

36. Narrated by Muslim (996), from the hadith of 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr (may Allah be pleased with

He also made it obligatory for the husband not to favour himself over his wife in terms of clothing, food, or medicine. He said: "Their [wives'] rights over you are that you should feed them from what you eat, and clothe them with what you wear."

After that, he described the best of people as being the one who is best to his family. He said: "The best of you is the best of you to his family, and I am the best of you to his family."

He made spending on the child obligatory upon the husband, not on the wife. He said: "It is sufficient sin for a man to neglect those he is responsible for."

He raised the status of a man's spending on his family to the level of charity or a gift and the like. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "The best of spending is what you spend on your family."

He ruled that a woman's property is exclusively hers, and the husband has nothing to do with her property at all.

But if the man spends on his wife, he

him).

ruled that this is an obligation, but what the wife spends on the husband is an act of charity from her to him, as we have seen in the story of Zaynab who asked Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) about her spending on her husband, and whether she would be rewarded for that or not.

He ruled that the greatest protector of the mother is her children, whether they are male or female, during their father's life or after he dies. The child's honouring his parents is obligatory, but someone came and asked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) about the priority of duties.

The
greatest
protector

According to the *hadith*, a man came to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said: "O Messenger of Allah, who among the people is most deserving of my good treatment?" He said: "Your mother." He said: "Then who?" He said: "Your mother." He said: "Then who?" He said: "Your mother." He said: "Then who?" He said: "Your father." Thus the children must sponsor their parents if they become incapacitated, or elderly, or poor, or weak.

When a man dies, his wife inherits from him, and she is not deprived of her share, even if he had sons and daughters. The most important thing is that her share is fixed. It is one-quarter if the deceased husband did not leave any sons or daughters, but if he did have children, then her share is one-eighth of the estate, no matter how large the estate is.

He ruled that it is the woman's right to ask the judge for maintenance or divorce if the husband is stingy, and the judge may oblige him to do one of two things: Either spend on her on a reasonable basis, or divorce her and treat her kindly.

Yes, Islam gives the daughter half the share of her brother when it comes to inheritance, so if the father dies and he has a son and a daughter, the son gets two-thirds and the daughter gets one-third."

To the male, a portion equal to that of two females

Isabella: "You have said some nice words and presented rational arguments, accompanied by religious evidence, to show that your religion honours women. For me, as a woman, the matter has become sufficiently clear, but what you said is spoiled by a Qur'ânic verse which clearly differentiates between men and

women, as it states that the man gets two shares of the estate and the woman gets only one share. Can this obvious differentiation in the inheritance system be denied?"

Abu Haamid: "I want to present to you a number of questions in order to demonstrate to you whether this Islamic system, which is mentioned in the verse which says **"to the male, a portion equal to that of two females"** [*an-Nisa'* 4:11], is unfair to women or absolutely just? I will answer these questions, because I do not want this discussion to sound like a police interrogation. Nevertheless, if my answer goes against your convictions, then you should voice your objections immediately, without any delay.

When Allah said in the Qur'ân **"to the male, a portion equal to that of two females"** [*an-Nisa'* 4:11], did He define the female's rights or did He not give her any rights?

The answer is undoubtedly that He defined the female's rights.

The second question is: Does anyone have the power to cancel this right which Allah defined for the female?

Answer: No one has any such power, not even the testator himself, if he wants to deprive her. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) issued an emphatic warning concerning this, saying: "A man may do the deeds of the good for seventy years, then when he makes his will, he is unfair in doing so, and thus he ends his deeds with evil and enters the Fire..."³⁷ Rather he ruled out any differentiation between the heirs by saying "There is no bequest for an heir." A bequest made to one who is an heir is invalid and cannot be executed, whether it is aimed at giving him more or less [than the share already allocated in the law]. On the other hand I would like to ask:

Does the testator in your system – European, American and so on – have the power to deprive daughters of inheritance by means of a specific will, or not?

The answer is that he definitely has this

37. Narrated by Ahmad in his Musnad (2/287). Its chain of narrators includes Shahr ibn Hawshab, who was classed as weak by more than one scholar, as was stated by al-Arna'ut. He was also classed as weak by al-Albani, but Ahmad Shakir classed this chain of narration as *sahih* (sound).

power, because you regard him as disposing of his own wealth.

Does the testator have the power to deprive his daughters, or some of them, on the basis that they married strangers, or left him or moved far away – as is usually the case – or because he does not feel like giving them anything, and he can give their rightful share to his pet dog on the basis that the dog is his faithful companion, as is your custom, or does he not have that power?

The answer is yes, and such cases have happened. The testator also has the power to give his entire estate to charity, or to whomever he wants, and to deprive his heirs.

The next question is: when Islam prescribed this right for women, did women at that time have any right to inheritance?

Answer: the history books tell us that women were not only deprived of any share of inheritance, rather they were also regarded as a part of the estate and the inherited property!

Concerning that, it was narrated that

Saving
women
from
deprivation

when Abu Qays bin al-Aslat died, his son Muhsin regarded his father's wife as his share of the inheritance, and he did not allow her to inherit anything. She could not put up with that, so she went to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and told him about her situation, then Allah revealed the verse concerning her: **"O you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will"** [*an-Nisa* '4:19].³⁸

It was also narrated that when Sa'd bin al-Rabi' (may Allah be pleased with him) was martyred, he left behind two daughters and a wife, but his brother took his wealth. His wife came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said: "Sa'd was killed (in a battle) with you, and he left behind two daughters, but their uncle has taken what was theirs, and no one wants to marry women unless they have some wealth." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Allah has not revealed anything concerning that." Then the impact of Revelation showed on him,

38. See *Tafseer al-Tabari* (3/646). Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar classed the chain of narrators for this story as *hasan* (good). See *Fath al-Bari* (8/247).

and when it was over, he said: "Seize the wealth of Sa'd [i.e., do not let it be disposed of by his brother], for Allah has revealed that which, as soon as He made it clear to me, I am making it clear to you." And he recited the verse: **"There is a share for men and a share for women, from what is left by parents, and those nearest related, whether, the property be small or large — a legal share"** [*an-Nisa* '4:7].

Then Allah revealed the words: **"Allah commands you as regards your children's (inheritance): to the male, a portion equal to that of two females"** [*an-Nisa* '4:11]. So the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) summoned the brother of Sa'd and ordered him to give the two girls two thirds, and to give the wife one eighth, and he could have what was left.³⁹

I hope that you and everyone present will think – to himself – is this a quantum leap for women or is it not? Isn't it restoring women's legitimate rights and confirming them? What is greater than the fact

39. See the report narrated by Abu Dawud (2891), which was classed as *hasan* (good) by al-Albani.

that the judge in this case was Allah?"

Isabella: "Yes, I can confirm to you that it is a quantum leap. Women in our European societies may be in a worse situation now than women were in your Arabian societies in the Middle Ages, when Muhammad appeared almost in the middle of the Middle Ages. But don't you agree with me that what Islam did by giving the woman half of the man's share was organizing unfair treatment of women, as unfair treatment of women at that time was carried out in a chaotic manner? Yes, if Islam had lifted women up to be equal to men in terms of inheritance, we would say that this is absolute justice. But to define woman's inheritance as being half that of the man is tantamount to saying that a woman's value is half that of a man, and what discrimination can be greater than that?"

Abu Haamid: "I thank you for your objection, which will make me explain matters that I may have omitted otherwise. You and all those who object think that when Islam states that the woman has half of the man's share of the inheritance, it means that Islam is reducing their human status to half that of the man's. Is

that not so?

The answer is yes. And I tell you that I would believe the same as you, if the matter was as you think. But how about if I tell you of some cases where the woman inherits a share like that of the man? Would you think that Islam made the value of a woman like that of a man? How about if I cite to you cases in which Islam makes a woman's inheritance double that of a man? Or cases where the woman inherits three times as much as a man? Would you say – in that case – that Islam prefers women over men? What if I tell you of a case in which the woman inherits and the man does not? Would you say that men have no value in Islam?

What if I quote to you all these facts and figures, with evidence from the Qur'ân and the *hadith* of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) – would you say that Islam raised the value of women over that of men on the basis that increasing the value of the share of inheritance is increasing the value of the person, as you believe?

Think about it. If the testator leaves behind a father, mother and two daughters,

how much does Islam give to each of these males and females? It gives the father one sixth, the mother one-sixth, and the two daughters two thirds. So in this case, male and female are treated equally, namely the father and mother, and it gives each of the daughters one third, so each of them takes double what the father gets, although he is male, even if they are babes in arms. Does this mean that the value of the two female infants is greater than the value of the parents?

The answer is no, but in a case like this, Islam pays attention to the future that awaits the new generation and its consequences. It is undoubtedly greater than the future which awaits their grandparents, because Islam pays attention to the long-term future needs of the new generation, even though there may be some isolated cases in which the grandparents outlive the little ones.

There is another case in which the testator leaves behind a son, a daughter, a brother and a paternal uncle. In this case the entire legacy goes to the son and daughter, and not to the uncle and brother, even though they are male. If you ask about the reason for this, we will tell you

that the reason is that Islam pays attention to how closely or distantly people are related to the deceased, and this is another principle according to which the estate is divided.

There are many examples, but by studying the way in which the estate is divided in Islam with regard to the shares of males and females, the following points become clear:

- There are only four cases in which the woman inherits half of what the man inherits.
- There are many more cases in which the woman inherits exactly the same as the man inherits.
- There are ten cases in which the woman inherits more than the man.
- There are some cases in which the woman inherits but her male counterpart does not.

In other words, there are more than thirty situations in which the woman takes the same as the man or more, or she inherits, whereas her male counterpart does not – as opposed to only four specific cases in which the woman inherits half of what

a man does. After all this, does it make sense to depict inheritance in Islam as being based on masculinity or femininity?

No doubt you will go back to the same question: where does the idea of women getting half the share of a man come from? Does it stem from differences among people, or is it from the Qur'ân itself?

Isn't there in the Qur'ân a verse which says: **"to the male, a portion equal to that of two females"** [*an-Nisa* '4:11]

The answer is: if you study this verse itself and just look at the words which come before these two phrases, you will know the facts.

Immediately before these phrases, Allah says: **"Allah commands you as regards your children's (inheritance): to the male, a portion equal to that of two females"** [*an-Nisa* '4:11]. So this has to do with your children only, i.e., offspring. This means that the matter has nothing to do with masculinity and femininity as some people depict it. All of them are "your children", whether they are male or female. There is another reason you

have to consider to understand why in this particular place the share of our sons is made double the share of our daughters. It is a division which does not require deep insight in order to fathom the wisdom behind it, and why Allah made the share of the son double the share of his sister.

If you can imagine a case where a man dies and leaves behind a son whose name is Ahmad and a daughter whose name is Mary, for example, and he left behind an estate – who is obliged to spend on the other at times of need?

Islam obliges the brother, Ahmad, to spend on his sister Mary. As for the money that the sister inherited, it is set aside for her, and she may invest it in business and the like, whereas her brother Ahmad is obliged to spend on Mary, even if his inheritance is used up. If that money runs out then he is obliged to spend on her from his own wealth.

Moreover, when Ahmad and Mary grow up, if Ahmad wants to get married, who will bear the burden of marriage expenses? Isn't he the one who is obliged to sponsor his own marriage? So in this

Ahmad
and Mary

case Ahmad is obliged to spend on these expenses from his own wealth or from what is left of his inheritance. As for Mary, the wealth that she inherited is still hers, and added to that is the wealth of the new dowry which is completely hers, and no one has any right to touch it, not even her father or husband.

Allah addresses men in the Qur'ân with regard to the woman's dowry, as He says:

"And give to the women (whom you marry) their dowry with a good heart" [*an-Nisa'* 4:4].

So here is a binding command from Allah, obliging men to give women the dowry completely, without stinting. If she foregoes it, or gives it away willingly, that's fine, otherwise it is not, exactly as the verse quoted above states.

Moreover, if Mary gets married and becomes a mother, and Ahmad becomes a father and each of them have children, who is obliged to spend on the children of Mary? Is it not her husband? And isn't Ahmad in charge of spending on his wife and on his children?

Let us assume that Ahmad's children grow up and he becomes poor and needy, and unable to spend, even on his poor wife, and his maintenance becomes the duty of his children, but his children can only afford to spend on one parent. Who takes precedence? The answer is that they will give precedence to spending on their mother. A man came to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said, "O Messenger of Allah, who is most deserving of my good treatment?" He said, "Your mother." He asked, "Then who?" He said, "Your mother." He asked, "Then who?" He said, "Your mother." He asked, "Then who?" He said, "Your father."⁴⁰

So Mary is guaranteed support until the end of her life, and what she has taken (of inheritance) remains purely hers. Now do you see the wisdom in the verse **"Allah commands you as regards your children's (inheritance): to the male, a portion equal to that of two females"** [*an-Nisa* '4:11]?

If you have two drivers in your company, one of whom drives 100 km every day,

40. Narrated by al-Bukhari (5/2227, no. 5626); Muslim (4/1974, no. 2548).

and the other drives 200 km, and your company system obliges you to cover fuel expenses for them, is it right for you, on the basis of equality, to give them equal money to cover fuel expenses? Or does fairness dictate that you should give each of them according to the number of his trips and workload?

Imagine if we were to follow this principle – the principle of equality regardless of expenditure – with regard to fuel for airplanes and trains and so on, on the basis of equality regardless of differences in journeys and costs. Wouldn't we destroy the world?

Can't you see what I said before about Islam, that it does not contradict reason in any of its teachings, whether it has to do with a major or minor issue?

The system of inheritance in Islam is amazing in the true sense of the word. It is a system that is unique among other systems, since Allah created mankind, up until this moment and until the Day of Resurrection. When a person studies the inheritance system in Islam, he can do no more than admit, regardless of how deep his knowledge of law is that it is utterly

fair-minded.

An Egyptian law professor who works in an American university said: "We were having a debate about law, and there was a Jewish law professor with us. He started to criticize Islam and Muslims, and I wanted to silence him so I said: 'Do you know the extent of laws of inheritance in American law?' He said: 'Yes, there are more than eight volumes.' I said to him: 'If I show a law on inheritance that is contained in no more than ten lines, will you believe that Islam is a valid religion?' He said: 'That is impossible.' I presented to him the verses of inheritance in the Qur'ân and he came to me a few days later and said to me: 'No human mind could list all types of relationships in such a comprehensive way and not omit any one, then distribute the inheritance to them in this just manner in which no one is wronged.' Then that man became Muslim."

Do not think that the verses of inheritance, which may be no more than ten lines, could omit a single issue of inheritance in any human family.

Tell me any scenario of inheritance you

want, in any family, eastern or western, involving any amount of wealth and any number of heirs and inter-relationships. You may ask me for evidence in every case, and I will give a solution, with evidence, straight away. This solution is not from me; rather it is from the Qur'ân and the *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). I have a friend whose name is Dr. 'Awaad al-Khalaf, who has introduced important social innovations in several fields. He has invented a system to divide the estate over the phone, which he calls the Estate Share Calculator via Mobile Phone, pat. No. 60912718.

You simply enter the initial information for any estate and it will give you the answer in accordance with the Islamic texts without differing by even one cent. Is it possible that such a comprehensive system that includes all human networks so simply could have been invented by a human being?

But the fact that the female gets half the share of the male is in fact just and fair. It is fair to the female who prior to that was not given any share of inheritance. It is fair to her because she takes her share and

can invest it however she likes. Whereas her brother takes his share and may give some of it as a dowry, or spend on his family, and other financial duties that are obligatory for him. In addition to the fact that she is not obliged to do any of these things according to the law, she is also entitled to the dowry if she wants to get married, and her husband is obliged to spend on her and on her children.

These rights were not granted even by man-made laws in Europe, which claims to be civilized. In France, until 1939 the law did not allow a woman to dispose of her wealth without the permission of her husband, then the law was altered to give women a little freedom in disposing of their wealth, but there were still some restrictions. In West Germany, the law did not give a woman the right to own property until 1957. Until now, the system of work and wages in Europe and America gives women lower wages than men. In Britain, for example, a woman gets 75% of a man's wage for doing the same job."

General Victoria: "Perhaps Abu Haamid cannot imagine what extent our demands reached. Women today in our

country are calling for complete freedom to do whatever they believe in, regardless of whether it is sound or not, whether it is in accordance with society's traditions or not, and they are demanding the right to be protected in doing so.

Women are saying that instead of being connected to one husband, a woman should be connected to a lot of men. Instead of bearing the responsibility of children and a family as a tax for physical pleasure, she should take her enjoyment free of any tax, in any place and at any time!"

Abu Haamid: "I would like to ask these people a frank question. Do not be offended or upset, because the aim is to seek clarification. Would the General be able to exist now if the principle of sexual pleasure without the requirement of marriage was implemented (in the past)?

Would it be an honour for her if she had come into existence through a route other than marriage?

The answer is undoubtedly and definitely no.

So how can these women accept for

other women in society that which illegitimate women would not accept for themselves?

Moreover, is this something that leads to a strong and sound society?

Are you, General, convinced that these women want to restore women's rights from the domination of men?

The goal of getting women out of the house and into the street means taking a woman away from her legitimate man (husband) and handing her over to illegitimate men!

Isn't the aim clear?

Is this in the interests of women?

If a woman finds someone in the street to take her in when she is young, will she find someone who will pay any attention to her when she is old and her youth has faded?

I ask again: is this in the interests of women?

Should a woman change from being a wife with a husband who shares with her some of the responsibility for raising the children, into what you call nowadays

“single mothers” who are raising their illegitimate children? Is the one equivalent to the other?

Is that in the interests of women?

Is it not possible that a woman’s achieving physical pleasure in the most sublime and purest way with a husband who limits himself to his wife only is better for the woman? Or should she accept the advances of anyone who approaches her? Is that in the interests of women?

Is it in the interests of a woman to remain friendless in her old age, with no company except dogs and cats?

I hope that every time you go into your streets or marketplaces, you will watch the different types of pedestrians you see there. You will find – very often – old men and old women together, or two very old people together.

Go to the hospitals and look at the different types of people who are checking in, and you will see the same scene. Doesn’t this bring a particular question to mind? Where are their children?

Such scenes have become a phenomenon. This is the fate that awaits the cur-

rent generation.

This is what robs them of any joy.

Disobedience to parents is knocking at the door.

It is isolation and severing of ties. When he realizes that he is still alive, he wonders why his children do not visit him.

As a man finds his comfort in going back from work to his home at the end of the day, he will wish to find his comfort with his own family taking care of him at the end of his life.

Where were the families of fifteen thousand old French men in the summer of 2003, who died in seniors' homes? Seniors' homes often cannot find families and children who are willing even to bury their grandfather or grandmother, and they leave them between the graveyard and the mortuary.

Is it in the interests of a woman to live as a stranger, so that anyone who wants to may toy with her, then she dies alone in a seniors' home or suffers the agonies of death alone, until the stench of her corpse is detected by the neighbours or the mail carrier?

Is it in the interests of a woman to be cheated by pleasure, accumulation of material gains or acquisition of degrees, then the years pass by when she is pre-occupied with these things, until she reaches old age and realizes the truth and cries, "Take all my degrees and give me the word 'Mama'."

* * *

Conclusion

Yes, the people in this gathering differed fundamentally, but they parted as if they had never disagreed, with laughter and warm hugs, because their hearts were pure and their minds were open.

More importantly, none of them felt upset after the gathering, and none of them felt like running away, because of one thing; they were seeking the truth. Hence their longing for another rational debate was great indeed.

But it should be noted that many of the people present in the first gathering were not present in the second, because it was held in the city of Lyons by special invitation. But you, the reader, will attend all the gatherings, by reading this book to the end.

* * *



Second Gathering

Introduction

Although differences arose between you and I concerning everything that we discussed, let us be friends so that we may achieve what we are living for.

Although our sources may be fundamentally different, we are both seeking fresh, sweet water.

Although we have walked for a long time on different routes, thinking that there will never be any meeting or agreement, it is the broad route that will bring us together. It is the route of reason, and if we know how to travel it, then we will be able to say, that from today, there are no differences between us.

If our differences are caused by differences among our forefathers, then we have in common the father of our forefathers and the mother of our foremothers, Adam and Eve. We also have in common the essence of humanity and the source of its control – reason. With this mentality and attitude we can reach the land of

reality.

We sat together in a close circle like one family in the salon of Dr. Lutfy, with the implicit message that hearts are wider and more spacious than houses.

The
story of
Charles'
marriage

I began by congratulating Charles on the occasion of his marriage to his new and only wife, but **Dr. Drima** interrupted, as is his wont, to stir up the debate and enliven it by saying: "Don't you forbid the husband to get to know his wife before he enters upon her (on the wedding night) knowing nothing about her?"

Abu Haamid: "If this idea were true, I would have admitted it, but it is a fabrication against us. I will tell you the truth and you can judge on the basis of your reason whether our way is correct or not.

But before I answer your question, I want you, Charles, to tell us without any embarrassment, the story behind your marriage up to the present moment, but you may omit any details you want to."

Charles: "In fact my relationship with her started before I thought of marrying any woman, because we were together in school from the preparatory stage. I felt

inclined towards her more than any of the other female students, and I sensed that she felt the same way towards me. There were conversations, then a few meetings, and then hardly a day passed without us meeting. The relationship grew stronger with more meetings, and then became solid and unbreakable, and she and I had no option but to get married legally.”

Dr. Drima: “For your information, what my son said is what happens with all people in French society, and it is what happened with his mother and I, but you should realize, Abu Haamid, that my son’s relationship with his fiancée took place with our knowledge, whereas among you, the boy marries the girl whether she agrees or not.”

Abu Haamid: “The engagement among us is when the boy gets to know the girl directly or indirectly. The young man tries to get to know her better, and look at her with the aim of marrying her, so the girl’s family prepares a suitable atmosphere for him to meet his fiancée in the presence of her mother or some of her family. He stays for as long as he wants, then he leaves, so both of them can think about the decision that they are going to

Is there
any
getting to
know one
another
before
marriage?

make. But as marriage is a relationship between two families, the family of the woman and the family of the man – not just between two individuals – it is reasonable and logical that their families should play a part in a serious decision such as this. Then when they reach a decision, the girl's family tells the man's family that they have decided to give their daughter to their son in marriage."

Charles: "Why all these complications when the matter is simple? It is just a relationship between two individuals. They love one another, they make the decision, and they are responsible for their decision. What does society have to do with such a matter?"

Moreover, why this long, drawn out approach to a matter that has already been decided? Do you think that it is possible for the two families to prevent the marriage of two who love one another? Or do you think that they will make two who hate one another get married, or what?"

Abu Haamid: "The truth, Charles, is a bitter reality, even if you try to hide it behind a facade of love and happiness. The real issue is the parents, and removing the parents from taking an active

part in this decision after they brought you up, exhausting themselves taking care of you, staying awake during the night for your sake, and hoping – after all that – for what the farmer hopes for of crops and more. But after all that, they are shocked by their son's girlfriend coming into the family despite them, and they may be shocked by their son leaving them. They have no right to prevent him leaving, let alone prevent him from marrying! Is this fair to parents? Does sound reason say this? Let Charles's father answer me frankly."

Dr. Drima, father of Charles: "Frankly, in fact, I agree with everything you have said. This is how we feel inside as parents, regardless of whether Charles's wife is good or not. Yes, as a father I will never object, because I cannot stand in the way of my son's happiness, but I think that as a gesture of respect and goodwill, his mother and I should be consulted, even if it is at the end of his stay with us, before he leaves us. It is a kind of disloyalty, and leaves a bad taste in the mouth, if this son of ours ends his stay with us with a decision made on his own that smacks of ingratitude."

Why
does the
parents'
opinion
matter?

Abu Haamid: "As for Charles saying that it is a personal decision because it is a relationship between two people, this is the natural result of a fragmented society, where every new family is a separate entity that is disconnected from its origins.

Perhaps, Charles, you know that the most expensive hourly wages are those of legal and scientific consultants, and the like. Here we have two parents who do not want anything for their advice. All they want is to offer their experience for the happiness of their son or daughter. Is it reasonable to ignore the advice they offer when it is based on a mixture of experience and love?

How can the two families bear the consequences of a dispute if one should arise in the future, when they had no say at the beginning of the marriage?

How can their children bear the family name when the family is not consulted?

Do you think that a well-known commercial company would consent to having something attributed to it against its wishes?"

Dr. Drima: "These are logical words that are not unreasonable with regard

to our sad reality. But how can they get to know one another when the girl does not go out in the first place? Moreover, what is the fate of the marriage if it is not based on deep, deep love? Personally, I do not endorse either view. I prefer a middle approach."

Abu Haamid: "You should realize that involving the two families in the decision about the new marriage of two individuals, strengthens each individual on his or her own before strengthening the two families, and there is no transgression against the individuals. This involvement indicates that the new husband is not an individual who is being grafted from a wild tree. Rather he belongs to a group that supports him, so he cannot be exploited or fooled. The same may also be said of the wife. You all know how easy it is to exploit or fool the one who is emotional, and the emotional peak of both is reached at this stage, where emotion and adolescence are put together to make the decision.

The involvement of both families does not put pressure on them. Rather it forms strong logistical support that is available to them.

What is to be expected of emotion alone, if it takes on the responsibility of making a decision during adolescence?

Isn't it the most important duty of the skilled builder to place the bricks well in the proper sequence?

But what if this man has no experience of building? What if this is his first experience? Will the structure rise up tall? Will the wall be straight?

Isn't this new family a new brick in the future social structure?

How will the social structure be if every brick is crooked?

Think of this big family as a big ship in the midst of many other ships in the sea. Doesn't this ship have a captain?

Isn't it a sign of disrespect towards the captain if every sailor acts as a captain?

Isn't it the duty of every sailor to ask the captain's permission so long as they are crew members on board that ship?

Do not say that he will become a captain when he gets a new ship. Yes, he can do that, but before he gets a new ship, he is still a sailor, so how can he leave his

captain without his permission?

If he gets his own ship, shouldn't he join the larger fleet at sea so that the life of the whole navy may be organized according to the existing system, in addition to the protection and strength that he will get from that, because the strength of the fleet is the strength of every ship in it?

If he doesn't care about that, then he should not blame the other ships if they hear his cries for help and see his ship sinking, but they do not come to his rescue.

Could a person be a ruler and not be consulted with regard to the affairs of his realm? If a guard is guarding a place, could anyone enter that place without his permission? Could a man be a father and his son not consult him? Is the status of the guard, and the like, more significant than the status of the parents? What value can there be in any status if the status of parents is lost?

Moreover, if what Dr. Drima says about having known that his son's relationship with his fiancée was inevitable, regardless of the father's opinion, then what role is there left for the parents' opinion

after all of these steps and decisions have been made?

What is the point of letting him know if he has no say in the matter?

How great must his sorrow be, if he has a different opinion and he sees himself unable to change a thing?

If you care about society, then you have to care about the new marriage.

The one who imagines that marriage is just a relationship between two people is ignoring society and the role of society. If you imagine how many new families are formed in French society every day, you will realize that this is not a personal matter. It is not just one brick. Rather it is many bricks that are produced by society. Indeed, it is the matter of a new society and a new generation."

What families are based on love?

Charles: "Is it possible that if I see a beautiful girl of good character and feel attracted to her, but her family comes and objects, then I should accept that? Is it possible that if she feels attracted to me or to someone else, her family can come and stop her?

Love is the foundation.

Hence for us, the family is based on love from the outset, but I do not think that the issue for you is as idealistic as you are presenting it to us. The boy's family, or the girl's family, may refuse, and thus the lovers will be deprived of their wish. Which is better – for the first brick of society to be based on love or on force and compulsion?"

Abu Haamid: "Before I start to answer what Charles has brought up, I would like to explain two serious matters. Firstly, I do not care whether you call it idealistic or otherwise. Perhaps in one place it would be called idealistic and in another place it would be called very realistic. Perhaps one generation would regard it as realistic, and then they would be followed by a generation that regards it as idealistic.

But credibility is that which compares theory and practice, principle and application.

Secondly, I hope that you will remember our original agreement, which is that our conversation is to be based on reason, and addressed to reason and judged by reason, without bringing religion into it.

Even what we quote of holy texts – ours or yours – in our discussion, it is to be subjected to rational judgement, so that the judge of reason will issue its judgement, as we did before. This cannot be done by merely quoting the teachings or our religion and yours on marriage. Isn't this logical?

Relationship between two families

Charles, your father Dr. Drima, told me that you work for a media company. I think that when you wanted to get a job in this company, you did not submit your application papers in the street. Instead you went to the company's human resources office to submit your application. Then the application was transferred to the hiring committee, who then gave their opinion to the company owner. Is it the right of the owner to refuse your application or not?"

Charles: "Yes."

Abu Haamid: "You are a nation that respects systems. Is it that the systems of financial, manufacturing and commercial companies are respected among you, but the family system does not deserve respect?"

Isn't the family system the basis of life

for all people? If you want to enter a country, you have to submit papers in order to enter. Then if you are admitted, all well and good, otherwise they have the right not to admit you to their country, without telling you the reasons, even if you have a great love for their country.

How can the head of a family be obliged to admit you to his family just because you long to enter that family through his daughter?

I would like to put this realistic question to you, and let you be the one to decide.

Does a man who lives in a country where drugs are banned, on land and in the air, have the right to travel to another land in order to take drugs there?"

Dr. Drima: "Yes."

Abu Haamid: "But what do you say if he travels in order to take drugs abroad, but his craving for them is so strong, he takes some before he crosses the borders of his own land, on the grounds that he is going to leave its borders in a few hours' time or after a few kilometres?"

Does he have the right to object to his government if they apply the law to him

because he transgressed his country's rules, on the grounds that he intended to leave, or that he had begun his journey, but had not yet crossed the border?"

Dr. Drima: "This is exactly how it is among us. He is transgressing the limits of marriage before he is even married.

The girl still belongs to another family, and the legal marriage contract has not yet been done, and the man is not yet a husband. He is not called a husband and the girl is not called a wife. Yet they have relations like those between a husband and wife.

The problem, Abu Haamid, is in the system! The system is what prevents you from preventing your son or your daughter from such relations.

It is the system that protects the one who does these things before marriage, so long as the partners in the relationship are consenting.

In fact, as parents we do not agree with this deep down in our hearts, but we cannot object to the system, especially since one day we were like that and we did that – frankly – seeking protection from the system, knowing that our parents were

not pleased with the decision.”

Abu Haamid: “Do you know that when the system protects wrongdoers, and the people submit to it, and people abuse it badly, the punishment that will befall them will be greater than the punishment of the system? This is something logical. If people make up systems that are contrary to the system of the universe and life, a punishment will inevitably befall them, and it will be greater than the punishment of their lesser system by means of which they went against the greater universal system.

Punishment for going against the system

Perhaps you will ask me at this point: what is the punishment that has befallen us on the basis of our going against the greater system of life? The answer is that this punishment is the opposite of what you were seeking. It is the failure of married life, the loss of marital happiness and the rise of the divorce rate among the recently-married. Isn't this punishment enough?

This punishment has spread throughout society until it has become disconnected and fragmented and, in brief, a failure.

The new couple is also punished by a

lack of support from the society around them, because they chose to separate themselves from their families and the relatives around them.

So when a problem arises, the attitude of society is to stand and watch like spectators.

Do not be distracted by the executive and military power of your state, for the wise man does not boast about swords and machine-guns until he finds out about the brave and wise hands that hold them, and the intention behind them, because they may be among the best and most lethal of weapons, but they may be aimed at you without you realizing it!

Using up
all one's
reserves
of love

Marriage has its respected limits, and the sanctity of the limits of marriage are greater than the sanctity of this land or that, as in the example of taking drugs before crossing the border.

Over and above that, if two people do what married couples do before getting married, then they are punishing themselves thereby. Because they are using up the stock of love, that is saved in human nature, for feathering the nest of marriage before getting married. So they come to

marriage after exhausting all that they were entrusted with. If their marriage lasts, it will survive without any love or soul, otherwise divorce will be their fate, as it is the fate of many newly-married couples when the seed of love fades away, until it disappears completely. The natural outcome is that young men and women are no longer interested in marriage. Whatever a young man wants in terms of sexual desire he will find it in the easiest, most pleasurable manner, without any responsibilities.

Recently there appeared an organization among you called the Organization for Preservation of Chastity, which was formed after they realized the dangers of intimacy before marriage.

I shall quote to you some statistics to prove what I am saying:¹

Percent distribution: Males

	Total	Never Mar- ried	Mar- ried	Wid- owed	Di- vorced
1900	100.0%	40.3%	54.6%	4.6%	0.3%
1910	100.0	38.8%	55.9	4.5	0.5

1. Marital Status of the Population by Sex, 1990-2006

1920	100.0	35.1	59.2	4.8	0.6
1930	100.0	34.1	60.0	4.6	1.1
1940	100.0	33.2	61.2	4.3	1.3
1950	100.0	24.9	68.9	4.2	2.0
1960	100.0	23.2	71.1	3.5	2.2
1970	100.0	26.4	67.7	3.1	2.8
1980	100.0	30.0	62.0	2.6	5.4
1990	100.0	30.7	59.3	2.5	7.4
2000	100.0	30.3	58.6	2.5	8.6
2002	100.0	32.0	57.4	2.5	8.1
2003	100.0	27.9	60.7	2.6	8.8
2004	100.0	28.5	60.3	2.5	8.6
2006	100.0	28.6	59.9	2.5	9.1

Source: Statistical Abstract of the United States 2007 –

Females:

[Unable to place the “years” column next to the other columns for some reason]

	Total	Never Married	Married	Widowed	Divorced
1900	100.0%	31.2%	57.0%	11.2%	0.5%
1910	100.0	29.7	58.9	10.6	0.6
1920	100.0	27.3	60.6	11.1	0.8
1930	100.0	26.4	61.1	11.0	1.3
1940	100.0	25.8	61.0	11.5	1.7
1950	100.0	18.5	67.0	12.0	2.4

1960	100.0	17.3	67.4	12.4	2.9
1970	100.0	20.6	62.8	12.7	4.0
1980	100.0	23.0	57.4	12.4	7.2
1990	100.0	23.4	55.1	12.0	9.5
2000	100.0	24.1	54.6	10.5	10.8
2002	100.0	25.2	54.2	10.0	10.7
2003	100.0	21.2	57.1	10.3	11.5
2004	100.0	21.3	57.1	10.0	11.5
2006	100.0	22.0	56.5	9.9	11.6

Source: Statistical Abstract of the United States 2007

I would like to remind you of what we discussed before, in our first gathering, about what happens before marriage, that one in every four girls is sexually molested before the age of 18.

And 60% of first children born to teenage girls are the result of seduction or rape. Is there anything new that marriage will bring to a girl like this, or a young man like this, except heaping the demands of life on their heads?

Despite all that, I say: although the system is wrong, you should not blame the system, because you made the system a cover for your desires and a shield to protect you from the authority of your

parents in that regard.

The law in this case is like a policeman in a nudist club. This policeman does not force you to enter the club, but if you do enter the club, you do so under his protection, otherwise all people would pass by and only a few would enter.

Does the law oblige you to do that?

The law says: "If you do that," it does not say: "Do that." But as soon as you discovered this phrase, "If you do that", you took hold of it and said, "We will do that!"

Yes, it was a door that was opened by the law, but will you enter every open door?

Here I will reiterate that the law is at fault here, because the law knows that this is desire, and its motive is irresistible in man. So the law justified doing it.

But you can imagine, if the law forbade fornication before marriage, how the people would adhere to that law, because it is your habit to adhere to the system. So it is to be expected that the one who did that would be regarded as odd, not that doing it would be regarded as natural, and not doing it would be regarded

as odd.

But now, after a long time has passed and people became used to this deviation, if the law were to be put to the vote in Parliament, it is to be expected that there would be demonstrations against this law by young men and women, lawyers and unions.

Can you see the level the decline has reached?

As for your claim that the law protects girls against being forced into marriage by their parents, you are looking at compulsion from your own point of view. You are not paying attention to the greater compulsion that forces two families to accept something they do not want.

The human body can reject foreign cells which have been implanted medically, and other faculties that are installed in it. Hence it is given a number of medications that suppress its immunity to a large extent, so that the body will accept the new matter. But if the human body persists in rejecting the foreign material, the doctors are left with only one of two choices: either removing the foreign material, or accepting the problems and

Honouring the father or honouring both parents?

negative consequences until the patient dies.

Can our bodies reject foreign matter while you want to force the family to accept what they do not want? Isn't this true compulsion and force?

Tell me: which compulsion is worse, rejecting the opinion of a single individual, or rejecting the opinion of an entire family?

Which rejection is worse, rejecting a member which has not yet become a part of the body, or removing a part of the body by force?

Which of the two opinions, usually, is closer to being correct – the opinion of the group or the opinion of the individual?

Reason dictates that if this fiancée is not from a decent family, she may be proposed to directly, and if her father and mother are not known, she may be proposed to directly without the knowledge of her father or mother."

The best choice is the middle way

Charles: "You said that the best way with regard to this issue is the middle way, but I do not think that you have left

any middle way, rather you have chosen to side completely with the parents and rejected the children's right to choose. Is the "middle way" just a claim with no basis in reality, or what?

Show us your middle way!"

Abu Haamid: "I will tell you a story which I believe completely. So listen to it and remember the date when it happened in our history and in the history of Europe, because it is a period which you call the Middle Ages or the Dark Ages, but we call it the Dawn of Islam. This story says:

It was narrated that 'A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: "A girl came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said: 'My father gave me in marriage to the son of his brother so as to raise his status.' The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said it was up to her, and she said: 'I consented to what my father did, but I wanted women to know that their fathers have nothing to do with it.'"²

2. Narrated by Imam Ahmad (6/136) and al-Nasa'i (6/86) and Ibn Majah (1874). It was also narrated by al-Bayhaqi who said: This is mursal.

Charles: "This is a very important meaning, but even more importantly it should be noted that this meaning came at that dark and backward time. I do not want to burden you with proving the soundness of the story, as it is a story that may or may not be true, although it is of great significance."

Abu Haamid: "I would like you to know, Charles, that every story or *hadith* from the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that I tell you here is proven to have taken place, and I am fully prepared to defend the authenticity of each and every one of these stories.

Charles, if you heard a story about your grandfather, you would – in most cases – believe it even if you were born after it happened. Why is that?"

Charles: "Because the one who tells it to me is my father, and I trust my father, and I know that he does not tell lies. My father is telling it to me from my grandfather, and my father regards my grandfather as honest, thus I know that the story is true."

Abu Haamid: "But if a story is told to

you about your tenth great-grandfather, would you believe it?"

Charles: "I would not believe it in most cases. I would just regard it as entertainment and chitchat, because verifying its authenticity would be very difficult in most cases."

Abu Haamid: "This is an excellent point. But what if I could verify the authenticity of every one of your forefathers who narrated the story, all the way back to your tenth great-grandfather?"

Charles: "I would believe it and be proud of it."

Abu Haamid: "What I said is what we do with every *hadith* that is narrated from the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). You do not know that we are more strict about accepting a story or *hadith* from the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) than you would be about accepting a story that came to you from your grandfather or I would be about verifying a story that I tell about my father or grandfather.

We have a special science or branch of knowledge called 'the science of dis-

Judging
narrators
of
hadeeth

paragement and endorsement,' which sets out the strictest conditions for every narrator who narrates a *hadith* from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and applies these rules to every narrator. These rules are not applied only to the one who heard it from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), but to the one who narrated it from the one who heard it from him, and the one who came after him, and the one who came after him, and so on, until this moment, or until the moment when the story was recorded in the book. Then we examine the soundness of attributing this book to its author.

Once we have ascertained all of that, we know whether the *hadith* is sound or not. It is a very sensitive scale, more sensitive than the scale that is used to weigh gold. It is an examination that is more critical than the examination of a skilled banker who can detect forged currency.

But to go back to our original topic:

No
forcing
the girl
or the
boy

Now you are speaking on the basis of youth, because you are young, but when you become a father, you will see your daughter's absolute freedom in marriage, which you are defending now, as your

beloved daughter's being taken by force from your hands with the protection of the law. You will be forced to accept her fiancé reluctantly, especially if she insists, as girls tend to do.

Do not think that I support the other idea, that of giving families the right to force their girls into marriage! There should be no force on either side; rather I think that there should be moderation and a middle way, the basis of which is taking all parties into account, first and foremost, and most deservingly, the parents. Although you may be suspicious about anyone, you have no right to be suspicious about the parents when it comes to their children, even in the animal kingdom, so how about with human beings?

Are those who strove hard night and day for the sake of the child – without seeking any material recompense – to be regarded with suspicion? Are those whose greatest reward for their efforts is the happiness of their son or daughter to be regarded with suspicion? Is there anyone in the world who would want someone else to be better than him, and boast about that, except parents with regard to their children? So how can they be regarded with

suspicion and jealousy?

Is the opinion of those who did all that and hoped for all that to be pushed aside? Are they to be thought badly of, and forced to accept what their hearts cannot accept?

Is it not their right to offer the benefits of their experience in raising their sons and daughters?

Although parents may hide all their failed experiments in life from everyone, they cannot hide them from their children.

Their consolation is to be able to say in all sincerity: "O my son, we made a mistake, beware of doing the same."

Nevertheless, I reiterate that what is essential is the middle way.

With regard to achieving this middle way in real terms, it may take many different forms in reality, of which I will mention one:

A young man may get to know a young woman directly, such as studying with her in the same school, or meeting her in some place. Or he may get to know her indirectly, such as if a member of his family, or someone else whom he trusts

Ways of
getting
to know
one
another

tells him about her. Then he discusses the idea of marrying her with his family, or he suggests it to the girl first, then if they agree to that, a representative of his family goes and proposes to that girl's family. Then her family takes enough time to ask and consult others about it. Usually her family delays giving consent for no less than three days, so that they can make enquiries about the young man and his family, and consult the girl, then they let the girl decide her fate. After that, the girl's family gives their answer to the suitor's family, whether an agreement or a refusal. For your information, this proposal is not binding. It is just an offer, an expression of the wish to marry.

If the girl's family agree, the two parties concerned – the man and woman – meet face to face, and they take enough time to decide whether to go ahead and start a new life, in a circumspect manner. That protects the dignity of both families and the reputation of both the man and the woman. When an agreement is reached, a bond is formed between the two families through the bond between two individuals. There is also a bond between relatives of the two families. Thus

these two people become the connection between two groups in society. So each new marriage creates bonds between groups of relatives and strengthens and revives those bonds. The old lineage is preserved by means of the new family.

The actual marriage after that is a cause of further strengthening these bonds, through visits and ongoing contact. All of that is to the credit of the new family and protects it against collapsing if troubles arise that lead it to that point."

Charles: "Abu Haamid, do not try to convince us of something that is well-established in your case. It is the case of taking away the girl's freedom of choice and freedom of expression. It is oppressing her and giving males precedence over her from the cradle to the grave!

Is it possible, when the time for marriage comes, for you to give her the right to choose her husband?

Yes, perhaps we have gone too far in our societies when it comes to freedom. But you are at the opposite extreme. You are not in the middle!

You should realize that this is not just my own opinion. This is the opinion of eve-

ryone in our society with regard to your society and religion.

It may be that following the middle way of letting both parties see one another is a way that is specific to your small family, because you are well educated. But as for what really happen in your Muslim societies or what is prescribed by your religion – no, a thousand times no!

This is what I have heard before about your religion. Hence I hope that you will not be shocked to find that this idea about your religion and how it treats women is what is widespread in our western society.

It is a given in our society that women are denied their rights among Muslims. When she is small, her older brother is given precedence over her. When she is a wife, her husband takes her rights away from her. When she is a mother, the father is given precedence over her. She does not have any rights at all!”

Abu Haamid: “I can decisively tell you that these guidelines are clearly stated in our religion, and these principles are applied in most Muslim societies even today. Although some families go against

the teachings of our religion and deal in a very narrow-minded way with the one who wants to marry their daughter, to the point that they do not allow him to see her until after the marriage contract is done, and in some cases the girl is not even consulted, and so on. But this usually happens in regions where there is a great deal of ignorance about religion. All of that was forbidden by the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and I will tell you some proven *hadiths* concerning that, not for the sake of religious argument on this topic, but in order to prove that this view, which is the ruling of reason and the middle way, is what Islam brought, and that the practices of some Muslims that go against that, have nothing to do with Islam. On the other hand those people are to be blamed for them.

You may think that now I am going beyond our agreement to refer to reason, when I quoted some *hadiths* and stories that are proven to have happened. But I am prepared to explain how everything that I say is in accordance with reason, so that you will have a correct and sound idea about our religion. Moreover, what

do you have to lose if you come to know something new from one of its sources?

Can you imagine that the Prophet Muhammad himself went to intercede with a man who loved a woman, so that she would stay married to him, knowing that this man was a slave and that the woman had herself decided to leave him. So this man began walking in the streets, following his beloved in front of the people, hoping they would make his wife go back to him, until he finally went to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Listen to the story as it was narrated from the sources, without adding or taking away anything.

It was narrated from Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) that Mugheeth was a slave. He said: "O Messenger of Allah, intercede for me with her." The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "O Bareerah, fear Allah, for he is your husband and the father of your child." She said: "O Messenger of Allah, are you commanding me to stay married to him?" He said: "No, rather I am interceding." She said: "I have no need of him." His tears were flowing down his cheeks and the Messenger of

The love of Mugheeth and the Prophet's intercession for him

Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to Al-'Abbas: "Aren't you amazed by the love of Mugheeth for Bareerah, and her hatred for him?"³ Do you think that if he had not understood the feelings of this man, he would have gone and interceded for him, when he was the Prophet?

Moreover, this woman rejected the intercession of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), when he was the ruler and he was the Prophet at the same time. More importantly; he advised her, but he did not oblige her.

Before the coming of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), some of the Arabs would kill little girls, for fear of poverty and shame. The image of a father taking his daughter far away from the home, away from her mother, then digging a hole and throwing her in, alive, then burying her with rocks and earth and returning...

You can confirm what I have said by referring to the Qur'ân, to the *Surah* called *at-Takweer*, in which there is a frightening warning to the one who buries girls

3. Narrated by Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhi, Ahmad and al-Daraqutni

alive. Allah says:

“And when the female (infant) buried alive (as the pagan Arabs used to do) is questioned: For what sin was she killed” [*al-Takweer* 81:8-9]

What this means is that Allah will bring this girl who was buried alive back to life, and ask her what sin she committed that she deserved to die, although she committed no sin at all. That will happen on the Day of Resurrection when Allah will resurrect all people.

Do you know what the value of a woman was in those years? Go back to 600 years after Christ, as you call it, and you will see that she had no value when she was small, no opinion when she was a young woman, no right to make any decisions about her marriage or her affairs in general. If her husband died, she was like chattel to be inherited. There were no leaders among Arab women, no teachers, no learners. When Islam came, it raised women's status, so that they became equal to men in some respects, and even superior to men in others, and in some aspects men were made superior to them. The basis for that is the inherent and physical characteristics of each sex.

Allah says:

“And they (women) have rights (over their husbands as regards living expenses) similar (to those of their husbands) over them (as regards obedience and respect) to what is reasonable” [*al-Baqarah* 2:228]

“There is a share for men and a share for women from what is left by parents and those nearest related, whether, the property be small or large — a legal share” [*an-Nisa* '4:7]

If you opened a small hole in the black mask of arrogance which bases its pride on this civilization, you would discover the alarming truth.

Today women are dressed in the most attractive manner, but they have been brought out of the authority of the home into the anarchy of the street.

Women are no longer buried alive in the ground, but people are still killing girls, either by means of abortion or by infanticide at birth. Can you imagine the numbers of girls who are killed every day in our own time? According to the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the number of females killed annually, worldwide, is

approximately one hundred million. An estimated fifty million girls are killed in China alone. The magazine questioned the consequences of such a policy in the coming decades, and said that it would exacerbate the problem of trafficking in women, which will harm developing societies more than others.

It also indicated that a surplus of males may result in regional turmoil, which may spread to the point of forming an international security problem.

In this context, it quoted the writers Valerie Hudson and Andrea den Boer, as saying in their book *Bare Branches: The Security Implications of Asia's Surplus Male Population* that a surplus of males in any region, often leads to the spread of violence, whether in the form of assaults, demonstrations or joining the military or armed groups."

Charles: "In fact I never imagined that Islam could be so fair towards women. All that we imagine about Muslim women is blackness, both outward and inward. I am not trying to shed doubts on Abu Haamid, but for every claim he makes, he should provide evidence. How do we know that Abu Haamid isn't just defend-

ing his religion and his beliefs because he thinks that he was doing a favour for us and to his religion, when he said what he said? In brief, there must be proof."

Abu Haamid: "You may listen to these *hadiths* which speak of woman as a child, a wife and an old woman, all of which are proven from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Exhortation to be kind to women in the most famous of sermons

The most famous and most comprehensive sermon of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was the Farewell Sermon; among the greatest advice in this sermon was advice concerning women. He said:

"Treat women well, for they are prisoners with you, and you have no other rights over them except that, unless they commit blatant indecency. If they do that, then forsake them in their beds, and hit them in a way that does not cause pain. If they obey you then do not seek a means of annoyance against them. You have rights over your women and your women have rights over you. Your rights over your women are that they should not let anyone sit on your furniture whom you dislike, or allow anyone into your houses whom you dislike. Their rights over you

are that you should treat them kindly in clothing and feeding them.⁴

In fact Islam gives special attention to the female and connects that to increased reward, because Allah knows that she needs that, and how serious it will be if she does not get it. In the *hadith* the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever has a daughter, and he does not upset her or humiliate her or prefer his son to her, Allah will admit him to Paradise."⁵

It was narrated from Abu Sa'eed (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever has three daughters or three sisters, or two daughters or two sisters, and treats them kindly and fears Allah with regard to them, Paradise will be his."⁶

It was narrated that 'A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: "The Messen-

4. Narrated by al-Tirmidhi (3087) who said it is hasan sahih. Also narrated by al-Nasa'i in al-Kubra (4100) and Ibn Majah (3055).

5. Narrated by Ahmad (1957); al-Hakim (7348) who said its chain of narration is sahih; Abu Dawud (5146).

6. Narrated by al-Tirmidhi (1977). al-Mundhiri said: Its chain of narration is sahih

ger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'A sign of a woman's being blessed, is that her proposal is easily accepted and her dowry is affordable, and she bears children easily.'"⁷

It was narrated that 'A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) entered upon me, and there were two girls singing the song of Bu'aath. He lay down on the mattress and turned his face away. Abu Bakr entered and rebuked me. He said: 'Musical instruments of Satan in the house of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)!'. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) turned to him and said, 'Let them be.' When he was not looking, I gestured to them and they left.

On the day of 'Eid, the Ethiopians were playing with shields and spears. Either I asked him, or he said, 'Do you want to watch?' and I said, 'Yes.' He made me stand behind him with my cheek against his, and he said: 'Carry on, O Banu Ar-fidah.' When I got bored he said: 'Have you had enough?' I said: 'Yes.' He said:

7. Narrated by Ahmad (6/91, 77)

‘Then go.’”⁸

‘Awn ibn Abi Juhayfah narrated that his father said: “The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) established (a religious bond of) brotherhood between Salmaan and Abul-Dardaa’. Salmaan visited Abul-Dardaa’ and noticed that Umm al-Dardaa’ appeared scruffy and unkempt (this was before the verses about veiling were revealed). He said to her, ‘What is the matter with you?’ She said, ‘Your brother Abul-Dardaa’ has no need of this world.’ Then Abul-Dardaa’ came (to visit him). He made some food for him, and said, ‘Eat.’ [Abul-Dardaa’] said, ‘I am fasting.’ [Salmaan] said, I will not eat until you eat.’ So he ate. When night came, Abul-Dardaa’ went to pray a voluntary night prayer, but [Salmaan] said to him, ‘Sleep,’ so he slept. Then he wanted to get up for voluntary prayer, but [Salmaan] said, ‘Sleep.’ When the last part of the night came, Salmaan said, ‘Now get up.’ So they prayed, then Salmaan said to him, ‘Your Lord has a right over you, your soul has a right over you, and your wife has a right over you, so give each one his due.’ He [Abul-

8. Al-Bukhari, *al-Fath* 2 (949-950)

Forced
marriage
leads to a
relations-
hip based
on hatred

Dardaa'] went to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and told him about that. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, 'Salmaan is right.'"⁹

Charles: "But what I said to you before, you did not answer. I said that when the family forces the daughter to marry, it is based on compulsion. What do you expect of a family that is initially based on the parents forcing the daughter to marry this young man or that, or forcing the young man to marry this girl or that? I think that restoring authority to the parents will result in a conflict between the young and their parents. What father will agree to a girl whom you got to know in the street or in a café or on the internet, or in school when you were young? Who will guarantee that my attitude will be the same as my father's?"

Abu Haamid: "As for your saying that the family that is based on love is better than one based on compulsion – what compulsion in your society are you talking about? What love, for that matter? What do you expect in the life of two people who spent all they stored of love

9. Al-Bukhari, al-Fath 10 (6139)

before marriage, including intimacy? What do you expect of someone who got married before marriage?

Moreover, what value do the couple have left for marriage if they did everything that married people do during their engagement including intimacy? In some cases they even have children during the engagement period?

What does the marriage certificate add to a marriage that is already complete in all aspects apart from this piece of paper?

What the marriage contract adds is the rush to divorce!

Statistics bear witness to this. So it is funny, yet sad, to find engagements that last for two years or more, but two months after the marriage is announced, disaster strikes and divorce takes place!

The man ends up bearing the burden of all expenses, and the woman ends up despairing of ever getting married again.

World Divorce Statistics*	
Percentage of New Marriages which end in Divorce, in Selected Countries (2002)	
Country	Divorces (as % of marriages)
Australia	46
United States	45.8
United Kingdom	42.6
Germany	39.4
Russia	43.3
France	38.3

Source: Americans for Divorce Reform

Divorce Rate of Selected	
Divorce Rate of Selected Countries (2002)	
Country	Divorce Rate (per 1,000 population per year)

*<http://www.divorcemag.com/statistics/stats-World.shtml>

United States	4.1
United Kingdom	2.6
Australia	2.6
Germany	3.2
France	2
Russia	4.3

How can the husband trust a wife who betrayed her family with regard to the most private of her affairs? How can he trust her, if she is alone with one of his friends after marriage, or if he is away from her, or she is away from him?

How can he trust her?

How can he be sure that these children are his and that he is not raising someone else's child without realizing? You are talking about love in an atmosphere where trust is weak, and may even be non-existent.

As for what you say about the family possibly refusing, and thus denying the lovers' wish in this life, I admit that it is possible that the family may refuse. Otherwise what is the value of the family if their role is merely routine? Is the family an office that is expected to rubberstamp paperwork that has already been checked by the chief executive, or what?

But the family's refusal must be given via the girl's guardian, and it is not the right of any member of her family to block a project like this.

If the suitor is a righteous man and the guardian refuses him with no acceptable justification, or the father is not of sound character, and the girl wants to marry him, then the girl may refer the matter to the judge. If the judge thinks that the father is wrong, he may give the girl in marriage without the father's consent. This offers protection against some fathers' abuse of their personal power.

So why do you assume that they are going to refuse in the first place?

They are not choosing for themselves, rather they are choosing for you. As that is the case, what matters to them is what makes you happy and what you want, not what you dislike.

Or do you believe that if someone shows respect to another, and consults him, the aim of the one who is consulted is only to reject him, or will he appreciate this approach and give sincere advice with sincere love?

Especially when they are the dearest of

people: his father and mother?

Moreover this is what is applied among us, and it did not cause any conflict. Everything is for the purpose of protecting the couple and their happiness, and ensuring the survival of their marriage, but there is an exception to every rule.

Statistics show that the negligent attitude towards marriage is that of the children, not of the parents. The wrong choice is always preferred to the right one. Therefore authority should be restored to where it belongs, to the head of the family, to the father, and anything else should be regarded as dissent towards the family system and the public system.

For this reason I shall mention to you this study¹⁰, so that you may see where the problems resulting from recklessness are concentrated:

Total Arrests by Age, 2006		
	Number of arrests	Percent distribution
Total, all ages	10,472,432	100.0%
Total, under 18	1,626,523	15.5
Total, under 15	474,555	4.5

10.<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0004898.html>

18	488,119	4.7
17	431,876	4.1
16	395,741	3.8
15	324,351	3.1
13-14	362,968	3.5
10-12	98,167	0.9
Under 10	13,420	0.1

Note: Because of rounding, the percentages may not add up to total.

Source: Crime in the United States, 2006, FBI, Uniform Crime Reports.

How often disputes come one after another and escalate in these families, and they find no one to stand by them among their relatives. Divorce occurs after one, or two children have been born, and often there is no official marriage contract (i.e., common-law) and they produce children, then divorce takes place.

A precise study has shown that this type of household, which is called a fatherless household, has many problems. It showed that:

63% of youth suicides occur in such families

90% of runaways who end up on the

streets come from such families

85% of cases of bad behaviour come from such families

71% of those who do not complete their studies (dropouts) come from such families

85% of those who end up in jail come from such families.¹¹

However, you should realize that the methodology applied in this system prevents disputes from arising. If a dispute should occur, it is essential to resolve it by mutual agreement. If that is not possible, then the matter should be referred to the ruler or his deputy, namely the judge, as I mentioned to you. No doubt the judge's ruling is based in principle on justice and fairness, whereas the father's ruling is based on justice and love. There is a big difference between the two.

Just as the judge may make mistakes, the father may also make mistakes, but what comparison can there be between the mistake of an employee and the mistake of one who loves another? Just as there may be the odd judge who does wrong, there may also be the odd father who

11. www.divorcemag.com

does wrong, but should we shut down the courts and abolish the entire judicial system because of the odd behaviour of a few unjust judges? Should we abolish the rights of all fathers over their children because of the odd behaviour of a few oppressive fathers?

But what loss can be greater than the loss of social power that could have been at your disposal in your coming social life?

What loss can be greater than a farmer's loss of the fences around his farm in a dangerous area?

What loss can be greater than the loss of a stronghold where you were able to seek refuge if you were faced with danger or urgent need?

What loss can be greater than the loss of the mature reason of those who love you and let you benefit from their experience for nothing in return?

What loss can be greater than the loss of two hearts that loved you when you were small, and this love continued to grow as you grew?"

Charles: "Listen to me, Abu Haamid, when I tell you that you have exagger-

ated greatly about the rights of parents. Yes, they have the right to respect until the end of their lives, but as for extending the right to respect to the extent that they can impose their opinions, no way!

I do not blame you at all when you talk about parents and the necessity of taking advice from them with regard to marriage. I do not blame you because of the fact that democracy is absent from your lives. So there is nothing strange about this family oppression which, if our lives were based on it, our social and political system would collapse and we would become like you.”

Abu Haamid: “I am very surprised at how you – sons and daughters – justify your disobedience to your parents, and how you defend the disobedience of your own future children to you, and how you have made this disobedience to parents a heritage that you recommend to one another.

Parents or
idols?

The conclusion of what you say is that you want parents to be like idols in the home of idol-worshippers. There are as if they are two works of art that are set up to seek blessing from them, or like rubber stamps that are used as a seal of

approval.

Right now you do not want anyone in the universe to be like you, but you will wish that for just one person on the day you become a father. You will wish that for your son, and you will wish that he will become better than you, so that you can boast about him.

You will understand, on the day you become the father of an adolescent, the extent of selfishness and insensitivity with which you used to treat your parents.

You will see the extent of pain and suffering that your father went through when he saw the lack of loyalty in the apple of his eye.

If democratic elections were held in this land to determine who among men loves you most, the definite answer would be your father, with no competition. If the same was done to determine who among women loves you most, the definite answer would be your mother, with no competition.

It would be the same outcome if this was done with all people.

Solution

If a king carried out a coup against an-

other king, that would be sad for the first king. But for this coup to be carried out at every moment in your house without you realizing it, would be ingratitude. Moreover, if the ones who are carrying out this coup are the sons and daughters, against their parents, that is harder.

Moreover, if the one who carries it out today will have the same thing done to him tomorrow, that is even harder. If the entire society is based on that, and the new generation defends that before tasting its bitterness, then this is unparalleled selfishness.

Yes, it would be expected that we would go down to the same level as you, were it not for the fact that Islam protects the parents' rights completely, to the extent that it raised honouring one's parents to the level of being a means to worship Allah. It placed this kind of worship just below the worship of Allah in status."

Dr. Drima: "You are hitting the sensitive spot in our lives!

The pains we are trying to forget have affected us, and they are stinging us at every moment. I don't doubt that a man like you realizes how much we miss this

honouring of parents and how great our need is for it, and that is why you have raised this issue.

But your approach is emotional at the time when we are talking about something intellectual, and this is contrary to reason. Moreover, you may find non-Muslim families in some societies on Earth where parents are honoured as among Muslims, or more, so what are you boasting about?"

All the
good
qualities
of
societies
combined

Abu Haamid: "I would like you to know that the fact that non-Muslims in some societies here and there on Earth are like us, does not undermine us in the slightest, rather it helps us to adhere more strongly to our religion. Because whatever is the best that people have, we have something like it, or better.

When a woman among us honours her husband and you find women on Earth who also honour their husbands, this is a source of pride for us.

The younger child respects the elder, and this is also a source of pride for us, if that is also the way of others.

When a person treats a servant as he treats himself, this is also a source of pride for

us. And so on and so forth.

But despite that, we differ from these people and others in honouring parents, because we regard honouring parents as an act of obedience to Allah alone. In order to prove to you that honouring one's parents is of a status which is surpassed by nothing but the worship of Allah alone, and that what I am telling you is not based on my own ideas, rather it is a religious trust that I have nothing to do with, I will quote to you this text, and I hope that you will think about it and read it in any spirit you want. If you read it in the spirit of the parents, you will find it sufficient and great. If you read it in the spirit of the child, you will find it likewise.

Status of
parents

It is a passage from *Surat Luqmaan* in which Allah says:

12. "And indeed We bestowed upon Luqmaan Al Hikmah (wisdom and religious understanding) saying: "Give thanks to Allah. And whoever gives thanks, he gives thanks for (the good of) his own self. And whoever is unthankful, then verily, Allah is All Rich (Free of all needs), Worthy of all praise.

13. And (remember) when Luqmaan said to his son when he was advising him: O my son! Join not in worship others with Allah.

Verily, joining others in worship with Allah is a great *Zulm* (wrong) indeed.

14. And We have enjoined on man (to be dutiful and good) to his parents. His mother bore him in weakness and hardship upon weakness and hardship, and his weaning is in two years — give thanks to Me and to your parents. Unto Me is the final destination.

15. But if they (both) strive with you to make you join in worship with Me others that of which you have no knowledge, then obey them not; but behave with them in the world kindly, and follow the path of him who turns to Me in repentance and in obedience. Then to Me will be your return, and I shall tell you what you used to do” [Luqmaan 31:12-15]

I want to explain a few points mentioned in these verses:

Firstly:

This passage makes honouring parents

second in status only to worshipping Allah alone. Is there any status higher than that in religious terms? This means that the reason why honouring parents is still adhered to in Muslim societies, is due to the status that Islam gives them. Islam turns honouring parents, from merely being a natural feeling which found in all humans, into a daily practice bringing the reward of actual worship, and more.

So it is Islam that has preserved the natural feelings of respect for one's parents and regulated them in our lives. But because your feelings remain without religion to regulate and guide them, they have been lost in your societies. Therefore you can see your father's generation still honouring parents in various ways, whereas the current generation has become very disobedient towards their parents, and it is expected that the decline will continue during your children's generation.

Secondly:

The verse mentioned the greatest form of parents' transgression against their children, which is when the parents are polytheists, i.e., non-Muslims. Not only that, they are ordering their son to leave Islam and associate others with Allah.

Additionally they are striving to make him do that. Yet despite that, Allah did not order him to respond to their transgression against Him, with transgression against them. On the other hand He enjoined the son to behave with them in the world kindly, while not obeying them in this reprehensible action. Listen while I quote the verse again: **“But if they (both) strive with you to make you join in worship with Me others that of which you have no knowledge, then obey them not; but behave with them in the world kindly.”** [*Luqman* 31:15]

So the verse is very realistic when it mentions the differences that may occur between children and parents, even in the highest and most serious matters, and which the parents may escalate to the highest levels. Despite all that, it is essential not to mistreat them.

So how about differences that are less serious than that? Look at this text in whatever way you want, from the point of view of a father or of a child.

If you look at it from a child's point of view, this is you today. If you look at it from a father's point of view, this is you tomorrow.

If you want to look at it from the viewpoint of an adviser or planner, then you will look at it from a viewpoint of fairness and balance.

When you do away with this principle, you have in fact decided to do away with the only system for lasting family happiness, for you and your family and your offspring.

If you want to know more, then look at another passage from the Noble Qur'ân, in *Surat al-Isra'*, which describes the required level of honouring parents:

23. "And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honour.

24. And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was young'" [*al-Isra'* 17:23-24].

This is the required level of honouring parents.

Here the parents have reached old age, and old age is a burden and hardship. In some cases it is senility and abuse. Sometimes it is mistreatment of your children and wife, and so on. The forms it may take are well known and never ending. But despite all that, Allah says: **“say not to them a word of disrespect.”**

The commentators said: If there were a word in Arabic that is less than the word “*Uff*” (translated here as “a word of disrespect”), the Qur’ân would have mentioned it.

It is not only required to ignore their mistreatment, rather the matter is more serious than that: **“say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honour”**

You have to lower the wing of honour for them. No, not just that, you have to lower the wing of humility for them, which stems from mercy. If humility in principle is something low, then what is required is to lower it further and further. Moreover, this wing of humility stems from mercy, not only from obligation and effort.

Finally, the verse speaks of a level which

most people cannot reach, which is: **“and say: ‘My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was young.’”** It is as if man is unable to reach the right level of honouring them, hence he should pray to Allah to help him to honour them, by saying in his supplication: **“Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was young.”**

What is the difference between your father's kindness to you when you were young, and your kindness to him when he grows old, if you treat him kindly? The difference was understood by one of the scholars, when a man asked him about his mother who had grown old, and he washed her as she used to wash him when he was a child, and he did everything for her when she was old that she did for him when he was small. Then he took her for *Hajj*, carrying her on his back, and he carried her on his back around the *Ka'bah*, and he said: “Have I repaid her?”

He said: “No.”

He said: “Why not?”

He said: “Because you are doing that

with the hope of relief, even if it comes through death, whereas she did that with the hope that you would live a long life, even if it was at the expense of her own.”

Finally, I would like to explain to you that it is not merely the matter of feelings towards one's parents. Rather it is the matter of practical actions that are obligatory at all times, unless it involves disobedience towards Allah. In the sense that you must obey them in all things, unless they tell you to do something that Allah has forbidden or to transgress against other people.

Feelings
and
actions

Believe me, Charles, I lived all my life accompanying my father except, for the period of my studies abroad and his fishing trips, because that was his work, and I never went against his command in anything. The same is true of all my brothers, and he died when he was totally pleased with us. I could not sleep a single night with my wife and children if I felt that he was upset with me at all, until I went to him at night and sat with him and kissed his feet, hands and head, and I felt that he was totally pleased with me. Then I would go back and sleep, feeling

totally at ease. The same is true of all my brothers.

By God, I still feel deep regret in my heart when I think that I was able to be more kind, but I did not do it. I have written a book which tells of the wisdom behind honouring one's parents, and the bad consequences of being disobedient towards them, and I called it *Hakadha rahala Abi*, which means; 'Thus my father passed away.' I am going to publish it soon, but I do not think that I will translate it into your languages. The way we used to treat our father, we do for our mother, and more.

Now I find my children behaving towards me in the same way, when I have reached this age, because they have been educated in the same school. Just as we hope for reward from Allah, we fully believe that honouring and disobedience of parents are something that is inherited. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) taught us – and we have seen with our own eyes, that what he taught us is true and real – that punishment for disobeying parents is hastened in this world. He said: "There is no sin more deserving of Allah's hasten-

ing its punishment in this world, before the Hereafter, than disobedience to parents and severing of family ties.”

I will leave you to think about these *hadiths* which I have quoted from the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), so that you can realize the reason why honouring parents has survived in Muslim societies. As you know, we are not entirely happy with the level of honouring parents that we have reached, and we are still hoping for more.

(i) It was narrated that ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “I asked the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): ‘Which deed is most beloved to Allah?’ He said: ‘Prayer offered on time.’ I said: ‘Then which?’ He said: ‘Honouring one’s parents....’”¹²

(ii) It was narrated that Mu‘awiyah ibn Haydah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “I said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, whom should I honour?’ He said: ‘Your mother.’ I said, ‘Then whom?’ He said: ‘Your mother.’ I said, ‘Then whom?’

12. Al-Bukhari – al-Fath 10 (5970); Muslim (85)

He said: 'Your mother.' I said: 'Then whom?' He said: 'Then your father, then the next closest and the next closest.'"¹³

(iii) It was narrated from Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) that a man came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said: "I have committed a great sin; is it possible for me to repent?" He said: "Do you have a mother?" He said: "No." He said: "Do you have a maternal aunt?" He said: "Yes." He said: "Then honour her."¹⁴

(iv) It was narrated from 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "While three men were walking, it began to rain, and they found shelter in a cave in a mountain. Then a rock from the mountain fell over the mouth of the cave, and they were trapped. They said to one another: See if you have done any righteous deeds for the sake of Allah, and pray to Allah by virtue thereof, so

13. Al-Tirmidhi (1897), he said it is a hasan hadith; Abu Dawud (5139)

14. Sahih Sunan al-Tirmidhi (1554) and al-Hakim in al-Mustadrak (2/155); he said its chain of narration is sahih, and al-Dhahabi agreed with him.

that He might remove the rock for you. One of them said: 'O Allah, I had my parents who were old, and my wife, and I had young children. I used to graze the sheep for them, and when I would come back in the evening, I used to milk (the sheep); and I would start with my parents, and give them to drink before my children. One day I was delayed and I did not come back until evening, and I found that they had gone to sleep. I milked (the sheep) as usual, then I brought the milk and stood by their heads, but I did not like to wake them from their sleep, and I did not like to give milk to the children before them. The children were crying at my feet, and I remained like that, and they remained like that until dawn came. If You know that I did that seeking thereby Your Face, then open it a little for us, so that we may see the sky. Then Allah opened it a little for them, and they could see the sky...'”¹⁵

(vii) It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'No son can repay his father unless he

15. Al-Bukhari – al-Fath 6 (3465) and Muslim (2734)

finds him enslaved, and buys him and manumits him.”¹⁶

Charles: “Let me go back to the lofty position of women which you claim was brought by Islam, because I can see that it is diametrically opposite to the actions of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself, based on my reading of history. I have read in the biography of Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that he married nine women, is that true?

Is this honouring women? Isn't this a kind of abnormal lust?

Why does Islam allow a Muslim man to have four wives, but it allowed him alone to have nine?

You can say anything, but you cannot deny that the one who does that is doing it only for the sake of physical pleasure. No one would believe you if you say otherwise.”

Abu Haamid: “I am going to answer you on the basis of reason, not Islamic law, and it will not take too long. What do you think?

16. Muslim 1510

Yes, it is true that the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had nine wives at one time, but if you think deeply about the matter, you will find that this was the greatest honour for a woman, and it was not the matter of physical desire. Do you know why?

I ask you, Charles, were these nine women virgins, or were most of them virgins, so that we can claim that it was the matter of desire?

The answer is that there was only one virgin among them; 'A'ishah.

I think that you will agree with me that all the daughters of the Arabs wished that they could marry the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and you will agree with me that the families and tribes whose daughters Muhammad married increased in standing and honour above other tribes, is that not so?

So, why did he only marry nine women if he was following lusts, when all the daughters of the Arabs were available for him to choose from?

Why did he marry his first wife when she

was forty years old and he was twenty-five, if he was following his lusts? A woman of that age is not usually desirable to a young man of the age he was, and the lustful young man would not waste the age of energy and strength with a woman of that age!

Why didn't he take a second wife until he had passed the age of fifty-three?

Moreover, does desire usually increase or decrease after the age of forty, so that we could say that he married for the sake of lust? Would a lustful man waste his life in marrying previously married women, some of whom had dependents with them, when he was able to marry virgins, of whom he married only one?

You will find that the answer is: he only married them out of compassion towards them, to save them from loss, and to encourage his companions not to forsake divorcees and widows, and to protect their children from loss. If you look today at prisons for young offenders, you will find that the largest number of prisoners are children of widows and divorcees.

Moreover, Muhammad was going through hard times, and striving against

his enemies. His marriages encouraged others to sponsor the children of the martyrs. Would anyone who desires women marry women with problems and children?

He married the daughters of some of his enemies, thus drawing their families closer to him, and breaking down some psychological barriers among their (the wives') people. He married Ramlah, the daughter of his chief enemy Abu Sufyaan ibn Harb, before the latter entered Islam. He married the daughter of the Jewish leader, whose name was Safiyyah bint Huyayy ibn Akhtab. In every case, we see great wisdom behind his marriages. The woman's beauty or wealth or lineage and the like played no part in his choices.

So there were only nine women. Yes, I say "only," and why?

Because you are the most likely to know how many the Prophets before him married. You know that Gideon, who, according to the Bible, was one of the Prophets of the Children of Israel, had many wives, as it says in the Book of Judges:

"[Gideon] had seventy sons of his own, for he had many wives." [Judges 8:30]

David had innumerable women available to him, as it says in the Bible: *"This is what the Lord, the God of Israel says: '... I gave ... your master's wives into your arms...'"* [II Samuel 12:7-8]

Concerning Solomon, the Bible says: *"He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines."* [I Kings 11:3]

Why is this regarded as shameful in the case of Muhammad when it is the way of the Prophets?

So I say nine wives only, because any Muslim who marries four wives may divorce them and marry others, no matter what the number reaches, so long as the number at any given time does not exceed four. But the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is the only one whom Allah forbade to marry any more wives after these nine, even if he were to divorce them all. There is a verse in the Qur'ân which indicates that, in *Surat al-Ahzab*:

"It is not lawful for you (to marry other) women after this, nor to change

them for other wives even though their beauty attracts you, except those (slaves) whom your right hand possesses. And Allah is Ever a Watcher over all things” [*al-Ahzab* 33:52]

Even you, Charles, can marry one and then another, if you wish, as wives and not as mistresses. The law does not forbid you to do that. Moreover, in your societies you practice polygamy all your lives in the worst manner. There is hardly any man among you who has not had many girlfriends, or any woman who has not had many boyfriends.

Which is the way of those who are crazed by lust?

Have you heard that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) took a mistress in secret?!

If you look at the life of the Muslim family today, you will see that the greatest reason for its survival is the marriage of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to these women, because each one of them was obliged to convey to the outside world what she saw of the sayings and deeds of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in

the house. This very matter is mentioned in the Qur'ân, where Allah says in *Surat al-Ahzab*:

“And remember (O you the members of the Prophet’s family, the Graces of your Lord), that which is recited in your houses of the Verses of Allah and *Al Hikmah* (i.e. Prophet’s *Sunnah* — legal ways, so give your thanks to Allah and glorify His Praises for this Qur’ân and the *Sunnah*). Verily, Allah is Ever Most Courteous, Well Acquainted with all things” [*al-Ahzab* 33:34]

So each of his wives became a reference point and source of knowledge, hence knowledge spread among the women of this nation by virtue of these women and others like them. If he had only one wife, would she have played this great role?

If you study the life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), you will see that they narrated everything from him, yes everything, with all honesty and eloquence.

Moreover, how can this have been a humiliation for them, when they were raised by these marriages to the status of mothers in the Qur'ân, whereby they were

given the title; Mothers of the Believers? Is there any status higher than that of mother? And their status in knowledge was also raised, as they became teachers and examples for the believing women. Is there any humiliation in the position of teacher?

For your information, their life was not theoretical and idealistic, rather it involved all kinds of ideals, problems, desires, mixing with people, sleeping and waking, and so on. There was no aspect of the life of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that remained hidden.

By means of them, it became entirely possible to follow his example in family life as well as in economic and political life, and all other aspects of life.

If you divide a man's life into hours, and work out how much time he spends at home, and how much time he spends outside the home, you will find that the time he spends in his home is not less than one quarter of his day, i.e., six hours. If those who narrated about the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) outside his home numbered in the thousands of his

companions, when that represents three quarters of his day or eighteen hours, then how many narrators should there be of his *Sunnah* during the rest of the time (i.e., the time that he spent at home)?

Moreover, the Companions who saw him were more than one hundred thousand, men and women, and they transmitted everything from him. Would it be appropriate for only one woman to transmit details of his private life at home? How unjust that would be for women afterwards.

Forget about this entire answer of mine if you wish, and listen to the answer of an Italian academic, whose knowledge and fairness no one doubts. She is also a non-Muslim. Her name is Laura Ficcia Faglieri, and she says in her book:

“The enemies of Islam insisted on depicting Muhammad as a person ruled by desires. In his many marriages, they tried to find a weak character who was not in tune with his message. But they refuse to take into consideration one fact, which is: throughout his youth, when sexual desires are at their strongest, despite the fact that he lived in a society where marriage, as a social institution, was virtually

non-existent and plural marriage was the rule, and divorce was very easy, he married only one woman, whose name was Khadijah. He did not marry any other woman until after she had died, and after he had passed the age of fifty. For each of his marriages there was a social or political reason. His aim was to honour women who were pious, or to establish ties through marriage with certain clans and tribes, seeking to open new avenues for the spread of Islam.

With the exception of 'A'ishah, Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) married women who were neither virgins, nor young, nor beautiful. Does that suggest motives of lust? He was a man, not a god. It may be that the desire for children was what motivated him to marry again. But he always adhered to complete equality for all of them.

He followed the example of the Prophets of old, such as Moses and others concerning whom, it would seem, no one objects to their plural marriages."¹⁷

17. *Nubuwwat Muhammad fi'l-Fikr al-Istishraaqi al-Mu'aasir* by Dr al-Khidr al-Shaayib, p. 205. She is an Italian Orientalist who specializes in Arabic language and literature. Her books include *Islam and In Defence of Islam*. *Al-Mustashriqoon* 1/466

You should never think that the wives of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) lived like women in palaces. No, rather they are examples to be followed in their knowledge and actions. They lived a very hard life at home and they were not forced to live with him. When they wanted an easy life and more maintenance, Qur'ân was revealed from Allah, giving them the choice between staying with him in this life or leaving him. This is in *Surat al-Ahzab*:

28. "O Prophet! Say to your wives: "If you desire the life of this world, and its glitter, then come! I will make a provision for you and set you free in a handsome manner (divorce).

29. "But if you desire Allah and His Messenger, and the Home of the Hereafter, then verily, Allah has prepared for good doers among you an enormous reward" [al-Ahzab 33:28-29].

It was narrated that Jabir bin 'Abdullah said: "Abu Bakr came in, seeking permission to enter upon the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and he found the people sitting at his door, and he was not given permission to enter. Then 'Umar came

and asked for permission, and he was not given permission to enter. Then permission was given to Abu Bakr and 'Umar, and they entered, and found the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sitting, with his wives around him, and they were silent. 'Umar said: 'I am going to say something to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) which will make you smile.' 'Umar said: 'O Messenger of Allah, if you had seen the daughter of Zayd, the wife of 'Umar, asking me for more maintenance just now, and I poked her on the neck.' The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) smiled broadly and said: 'They are around me, as you can see, asking me for more maintenance.' Abu Bakr got up to hit 'A'ishah, and 'Umar got up to hit Haf-sah, and both of them said: 'Are you asking the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for that which he does not have?' The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told them to stop. They said: 'By Allah, we will never ask the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) again for something that he does not have. Then Allah re-

vealed Qur'ân, giving them the choice. He started with 'A'ishah. He said: 'O 'A'ishah, I want to suggest something to you, but I want you not to rush to answer until you consult your parents.' She said: 'What is it, O Messenger of Allah?' He recited this verse to her: **"O Prophet! Say to your wives: "If you desire the life of this world, and its glitter, then come! I will make a provision for you and set you free in a handsome manner (divorce). But if you desire Allah and His Messenger, and the Home of the Hereafter, then verily, Allah has prepared for good doers among you an enormous reward"** [*al-Ahzab* 33:28-29]. 'A'ishah said: 'Do I need to consult my parents concerning you, O Messenger of Allah? No, I choose Allah and His Messenger. But I ask you not to tell any of your wives what I have chosen.' He said: 'Allah did not send me to make things hard for people, rather He sent me to teach and make things easy. None of them will ask me what your choice was but I will tell her.'"¹⁸

Perhaps we have spoiled Charles's joy, but I am sure that I am speaking to peo-

18. Narrated by Muslim (3683) and others.

ple who have good understanding.

Finally, if Charles looks at the number of women that a man is allowed to marry, he will realize that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) limited plural marriage, and did not introduce it. Marriage was open-ended and a man could marry as many women as he could afford, whereas Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) limited it to the number mentioned.”

Conclusion of the first two gatherings¹⁹

Perhaps the reader has moved from one idea to another while reading this book, because the conclusion has not emerged clearly before his eyes.

But for a man to see his life passing before his eyes without caring about his destiny, he will never be able to reach any conclusion.

How can a man ignore the nights and days of his life when he is passing through them. How can he ignore his house, his

19. Perhaps the conclusion will present the author's view plainly and exclusively, without anyone debating with him, so it is part of trust and honesty for him to state his opinion clearly, and it is part of honesty to report the dialog correctly, as it happened.

street, his wife, his child, his parents?

That is totally impossible.

Even if a barefooted man can walk on coals, how can he be patient if his heart becomes a hearth full of burning embers? So it is essential to find a practical solution, with no false courtesy or delay. Here it is essential for my reason to make a decision, my decision by means of which the embers in my heart and the fire that threatens my family will be extinguished, and my future will be protected against a decision that would spell doom.

If the judge of reason cannot reach a decision until this moment, then let it go back to the dialogue that took place, because it contains evidence and documents which are more than sufficient to enable it to make that decision.

Otherwise he will have issued a ruling against himself, even if he feels that he is living at ease.

Being hung by a coarse rope is like being hung by a rope of silk. In either case you lose your life. But if you hang yourself and lose your life as a sacrifice to blind fanaticism, it may be said that it is his soul and he can do what he likes with

it. But as for hanging your son or your daughter, this is infanticide which Islam abolished.

For you women to continue showing your charms and selling your bodies at the side of the road, in business fairs, in the workplace, in advertisements and in the media, this is slavery which Islam abolished. As for taking away the high status of love for the mother and the father, to be replaced by personal interests, so that when the child no longer has any need for you, your authority vanishes, this is disobedience which Islam forbids.

* * *

Third Gathering

Survival between the Torah, Gospel and Qur'ân

Introduction

The first thing that attracted my attention when I entered the house of Dr. Drima was a huge old book lying open on a table. I said to him: "What is this book?"

He said: "This is the Torah." Then he pointed to a desk next to it and said: "This is the Gospel." Then he added: "And this is the Qur'ân that you gave me when I came to see you in Dubai."

In that tranquil atmosphere we came together again, academic minds from different specialities. You had the feeling that each of these minds contains enough knowledge to fill specialized libraries. There is sufficient evidence of the level of the people present and the topics discussed, in the fact that the one who interpreted between me and this group was Professor, Doctor Lutfi Noor al-Deen, the eminent cardiac surgeon who made

scientific discoveries about the valves of the heart. He sometimes took part in the discussion also. The topic that presented itself on this evening was the three books that lay before us in the room. They said what they said about the Torah and Gospel, and then Dr. Drima said: "I am very pleased with the gift of my brother Abu Haamid. When I visited him in Dubai, he gave me a copy of the Noble Qur'ân. Even though I have my own views about the Qur'ân, the gift is precious to me, hence I will fulfil the promise I made when I said to him: 'I will read all of it and think about it.'"

On a weekend evening, Isabella invited a group of compatible souls of widely diverging beliefs and different specialities, some of whom are heads of medical departments or in senior positions in the workplace.

In Dubai, I had invited Isabella and two of her colleagues to my house, and now she invited me and nine others, as if she was returning my hospitality threefold. She has my thanks and appreciation for her Portuguese hospitality, on French soil, on this pleasant night, in this beautiful room.

After welcoming us, **Dr. Drima** took something like a small diary out of his pocket, and said: "This was given to me by Pope Paul XVI when he visited Syria, and I was asked to check his health there. This diary contained a number of sayings about etiquette and morals that had been selected by the Pope himself from the Gospel. It is no secret that I love this man a great deal because he was my patient, and because he is a man of faith."

A gift
from the
Pope

Abu Haamid: "I know very well the way in which Dr. Drima introduces topics so that the people in the gathering will start discussing them and time will pass without them realizing, until the time ends, whether by day or by night. I could sense from these opening remarks of his that he wanted us to talk about the Gospel, and in fact that was my wish also, but I wished that we had a French priest with us during this wonderful evening."

Dr. Drima: "Do not worry, because the lady of the house, Isabella, has invited the gentleman sitting opposite you, whose name is Professor Bob. He is one of the senior specialists in Gospel studies in Portugal, and he speaks French and English very well. I would like to read

to you a few sentences from this diary which I was given by Pope Paul XVI."

Abu Haamid: "These words of wisdom that Dr. Drima has read to us from the Gospel are beautiful words with which no wise, rational person would disagree. I think it is most likely that they are from the Gospel that was revealed to Jesus (peace be upon him), but my question to Dr. Drima is: 'Is all of the Gospel of the same refined style? In other words: Can you read the Gospel with the utmost confidence that you will not come across irrational phrases or irreconcilable contradictions?'"

Dr. Drima: "Yes, you can read it and rest assured of the refined level with which the Gospel speaks. But these phrases that I read to you are phrases that touch people's hearts, and are in tune with their lives. Isn't the Gospel the Word of God? Would any man feel ashamed to read the Word of God?"

Why
should I
worry?

Abu Haamid: "My dear Professor, I wish that you would approach religious studies with the same academic, empirical research methodology that brought you to this elevated level of scientific knowledge."

I do not want to hide my inward feelings from you. As much as I admire the academic level that you have reached in the empirical sciences as Europeans, especially the French in the field of medicine, at the same time I am frustrated and amazed at the way in which you read the Gospel, and the way you research it and deal with it. I wish that you dealt with the Gospel in the same way as you research and study the sciences, with your eyes open, subjecting everything to critical analysis, sifting the reports, rulings and history contained therein, and overcoming the barrier of fear which often makes us wonder why you do not have an investigative approach to these issues.

Is this fear due to the memory of the Church burning the earliest scientists at the stake?

Or is it fear of confronting the masses?

Or is it due to the spiritual vacuum and lack of alternatives?

Or is it because you approach religion on the basis that it is no more than a relic, having nothing to do with real life, while life progresses, with or without it?

Or is it because you feel that you have to

stick with the Gospel when confronting Muslims and Jews?

The truth is too great to be limited to one land or country, or to belong to just one color, language, race or continent. Truth is the requirement of every person, every soul, everyone who loves the truth. You did not reach the truth and facts concerning the nervous system, and become one of the leading figures in this field, except when you adopted a neutral and serious approach in researching the facts. I hope that this approach applies here, and in all things.

If you notice what you said just now; Divinely-revealed Books. This implies that you believe that what was revealed from heaven is one book that was revealed from heaven to Jesus (peace be upon him) and no more, so how come in the church and marketplace there are four Gospels?

Why
four?

Which one of these four Gospels was revealed from heaven? The matter does not require any thought. These Gospels are not the Gospel that was revealed from heaven, and that's that! You may ask whoever you want. This is not only my view, it is also the view of your priests.

The story is very difficult and very sad.

The story is that the Gospel which Allah sent down to Jesus (peace be upon him) disappeared from that time until now. If you wish, you may say that it was hidden."

Dr. Drima: "What is the evidence that it has disappeared? Why don't you say that it never existed in the first place? Is it possible that we had the Gospel in the name of Jesus (peace be upon him) then we took it and hid it? What interest would be served by doing that? Is it in our interests to break our ties with Jesus? We might as well break our ties with Christianity altogether!

If you imagine that it is in our interests to conceal the Gospel, then perhaps it is in your interests to conceal the Qur'ân, or to conceal part of the Qur'ân!

I cannot imagine, even for a moment that the one who has the truth could conceal his documentary proof thereof."

Abu Haamid: "You have stated the answer yourself. What God revealed was one Gospel, as He revealed one Torah, one Zaboor (Psalms) and one Qur'ân. How come each of these Books remained

as one except the Gospel, which became four Gospels? Doesn't this issue deserve to be examined?

The issue does not need a great deal of research. Rather a quick look at the names will suffice. This is the Gospel of whom? The answer is: This is the Gospel of Matthew that is the Gospel of Mark, the third is the Gospel of Luke and the fourth is the Gospel of John. Aren't these four different people?

According to all Christians, with no dissent, these are human beings, and they are the writers of the Gospels. So these four Gospels are attributed to four human beings.

A quick glance at the contents of the Gospels will also show you that one is not like the other, and all four are different. The issue is clear and needs no more than a glance at the titles, without delving into the depths of history. In order to understand the facts, let us go back to the first question: Why did all the divinely-revealed Books remain as one, but the Gospel turned into four Gospels?

Ask whomever you want of the church scholars: Where is the Gospel of Jesus?

Take your time and look for an answer. But beware of ignoring your reason and accepting any answer.

You have gone straight to the heart of the matter with your question. Have you seen a man trying to hide his ID papers?

I say: Yes, hiding, his ID papers which prove that he is in the wrong, and that what he has is mostly distorted as we shall prove if we have time in this gathering, and we shall prove what exactly has been distorted."

Professor of Gospel Studies, Bob: "I hope that you will not exaggerate too much about this issue. The fact that you should know, which may solve every problem and answer all your questions, is that these Gospels are the Gospels that are regarded as true by us as Christians. As for that which is called the Gospel of Jesus, it is one of the illusions of the Muslims who wanted to cause confusion and doubt thereby. If you have any historical proof or any testimony that it does exist, then show it to our brothers and the people, so as to support what you are saying. A claim without evidence is a false claim, as you know!

Yes, each of these Gospels may be called the Gospel of Jesus, on the basis that their source was Jesus, but if we say that a specific Gospel was revealed to Jesus, and that other Gospels carry no weight – this is one of the illusions of the Muslims which they use to try to cast doubt in the minds of Christians with regard to their greatest source.”

Abu Haamid: “Could our stubbornness reach such a level that we deny that Jesus (blessings and peace be upon him) brought the Gospel? Isn’t this fact a given among all religions?”

What does the Professor, and all those who believe that the Gospel of Jesus does not exist, say about this testimony in the first chapter of the Gospel of Mark:

“After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God.

‘The time has come,’ he said. ‘The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!’” [Mark 1:14-15]

Which of the four Gospels that are extant now is Jesus referring to, at a time when no Gospel had been written? Was Jesus calling people to believe in the Gospels

of his followers when he said believe in the Gospel?

Another testimony appears in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, in the first chapter thereof:

"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. God, whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you."
Romans 1:8-9

Christ himself said that the Gospel was revealed to him from God, and the Angel Gabriel delivered it to him.

Where
is the
Gospel
of Jesus?

Christ said:

"I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence." John 8:38

"I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me." John 8:28

"These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me."
John 14:24

Moreover it says in Paul's second Epistle to Timothy:

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." II Timothy 3:16

So Christ indicated that he took the Gospel from God, and that it was not a message that he had prepared himself, when he said:

"For I gave them the words you [God] gave me" John 17:8

All these quotations, which you cannot reject, clearly mention the Gospel without attributing it to John or anyone else, because it is the Gospel of Jesus. That is because the Gospels were not known, or his followers did not have Gospels. Does it make sense for Jesus to have preached the Gospels and words of his followers?

Moreover, what value does the Gospel have at all if it was not revealed to Jesus (peace be upon him)?

What is the value of these four Gospels without Jesus (peace be upon him)?

Would you be satisfied to take away from Jesus (peace be upon him) the Book that was revealed to him, in order to justify your falsehood and make room for these

distorted Gospels?

Moreover, is a Prophet to whom a Book was revealed equal to a Prophet to whom no Book was revealed? So why do you seek to demote Jesus (blessings and peace be upon him) when you deny that he received a Book?

Isn't this the same methodology that was used by those who wronged Jesus (peace be upon him) and his followers, killing some of them and then concealing his Gospel forever?

I hope that you will pause before each and every piece of information, as you pause before a picture that you admire, and wonder: Why wasn't it examined thoroughly? How come you missed this essential observation? You will wonder how come you spent your entire life without examining this picture thoroughly. Why did this image remain in our minds of our Gospels, our beliefs, of Jesus (peace be upon him) and Mary (peace be upon her), and of our own minds too, while we were looking at it, and passing by it without realizing? Will we persist in adding to our days of heedlessness, or will we stop and wonder, starting from today?

When
was the
first
Gospel
written?

These facts that I am going to tell you are nothing new for most priests, and those who know about Christianity, but they are unknown to the Christian masses.

Do you know that the Gospels were not written at the time of Jesus (peace be upon him), rather they were written after he was raised to heaven, at different periods, between thirty and ninety-eight years after that. The latter is the date when the Gospel of John was written, give or take minor differences of opinion among the historians.

Where
are the
original
copies
of the
Gospels?

Do you know that the original sources of the Gospels that were written after the time of Jesus (peace be upon him) are not extant?

Ask whomever you wish about one Gospel written in the hand of its original author.

Ask whomever you wish about the Gospel of Matthew that exists now. What is the original language in which it was written? Was it the same language in which it has come down to us?

Will Durant says: "The reliable reports say that the Gospel of Matthew is older than the other Gospels. Irenaeus believes

that it was originally written in Hebrew – i.e., Aramaic – but it has only reached us in Greek. The critics are inclined to say that it was written by one of the followers of Matthew, and it is not the words of the tax-collector [i.e., Matthew] himself. Most of the scholars take its origin even further back to the years between 75 and 90 CE.¹ As the aim that Matthew sought was to guide the Jews, he relied more than other Evangelists on the miracles that are attributed to Christ, and is very keen, to the point of suspicion, to prove that many Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled at the hands of Christ.”^{2,3}

Wasn't it written in Aramaic? Is there one copy of it in this language anywhere in the world?

Is the name of the one who translated it from Aramaic to Greek known to any historian, or is it unknown?

Could I accept my belief and my religion

1. The difference of opinion among Christian writers over when this Gospel was written sheds doubt on its attribution to Matthew.

2. Qissat al-Hadaarah (the Story of Civilization), vol. 3, p. 207-208

3. Al-Asfaar al-Muqaddasah qabl al-Islam, Diraasah Jawaanib al-I'tiqaad fi'l-Yahoodiyyah wa'l-Maseehiyyah, by Dr. Saabir Tu'aymah, p. 256-257

from an unknown man?

Would that the matter were like that and no more. But just as the Gospel of Jesus (peace be upon him) was lost, the original copies of the four Gospels have also been lost. Just as those Gospels have been lost, the original copy of the Gospel of Matthew, which was written in Aramaic, has also been lost and there is only a translation of it into Greek.

Do you know that the number of Gospels written after the time of Jesus (peace be upon him) is more than one hundred?

All of those Gospels were destroyed except for these four. That occurred at the Council of Nicea, the most important Christian Council, which was held on the orders of the Emperor Constantine the Great, in 352 CE.

Why did he destroy more than ninety-six Gospels, and leave these four in particular?"

Dr. Drima: "I hope that you will pause here, and show us what you mean by your accusation that in the other Gospels which were eradicated, as you claim, there is proof against us, and material that contradicts these Gospels. How is

that? Where do they differ specifically?"

Abu Haamid: "The only answer is that those Gospels at that time close to the time of Jesus (peace be upon him) had something in common, which was the call to belief in the Oneness of God, and the view that Jesus (peace be upon him) was entirely human. These four Gospels were kept because of a common factor that they shared, which was belief in the trinity, and the view that Jesus (peace be upon him) was divine. The historians know full well that there was a very strong call for belief in Divine Oneness at that time, which was contrary to the religious and political trends led by Constantine the Great. The most famous of those who called for belief in Divine Oneness and the view that Jesus (peace be upon him) was human was Arius.

Arius the
proponent
of Divine
Oneness
in
Christian-
ity

It is sufficient for you to know that the time when the Gospels were written was a time of persecution of Christians, when the followers of the Messiah and their followers were being killed; a time when some of them hid and some of them became hypocrites.

It is sufficient for you to know that among the historical facts that cannot be denied,

is the fact that this persecution of Christians grew worse from the end of Jesus' time and it continued without stopping, except briefly, for three hundred and thirteen years!

Permit me to briefly talk about that sad period in the history of Christianity, so that those who have forgotten may remember and then reach the right conclusions. I do not think that we will dispute about these points because they are a matter of history. They have been transmitted by your historians, and not by Muslim historians, but nevertheless, if anyone disagrees, let him say so.

The first persecution that befell the Christians happened at the time of the Messiah, and ended with the end of his time on earth. After that hardships befell the Christians along the same lines. Two Caesars came after Tiberius, the contemporary of the Messiah, who were very harsh towards his followers, killing many of them. During the time of the second of these two, Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew, and it was translated by John, the author of the Gospel, into Greek. Persecution during the time of these two Caesars did not come only from the Ro-

mans, but also from the Jews. The harm they caused was more severe, and their tampering with doctrine was more devastating, because they were of the same people and mixed with them and interacted with them, so they knew them very well.

The worst persecution that befell them occurred during the reigns of Nero (64 CE), Trajan (106 CE), Decius (249-351 CE) and Diocletian (280 CE). Nero stirred up a lot of trouble for them, inflicted persecution on them. He accused them of being behind the burning of Rome, so he punished them for that.

The last four years of his rule were particularly terrible for them. He and his supporters devised all sorts of methods of torture for them. They dressed some of them in animal skins and threw them to the dogs to tear them apart, crucified some of them, and daubed some of them in tar and set them ablaze to provide light. Nero himself walked in the light of these human torches.

During the reign of Nero, Mark wrote his Gospel in 61 CE in Egypt, and Peter who was in Rome copied it. Luke also wrote his Gospel during the reign of this

Caesar. His Gospel starts with a passage stating that he was sending it to his correspondent, Theophilus, to confirm to him the soundness of the words. During this period or after, John also wrote his Gospel.

During the reign of Trajan, persecution also befell them, because they had the habit of praying in secret for fear of persecution. Trajan ordered that their secret meetings be banned, and he inflicted torture and humiliation upon them for that reason, and because they were Christian, and they did not follow the religion of Caesar.

Let the Patriarch Alexander describe what he suffered at the hands of Decius, after having experienced some mercy from his predecessor. He says: "We hardly had any relief until fear overwhelmed us and danger surrounded us, when that king who had been more merciful to us and less evil than others, was replaced by another. As soon as he ascended the throne, he directed his attention towards us and started to persecute us. Our fears materialized when he issued a very harsh command and we became very scared, and some fled. He banned all Christians

from public service, no matter how intelligent they were, and he ordered that every Christian he was told about be brought immediately to the pagan temple and be asked to offer a sacrifice to the idol. The punishment, if he refused to offer the sacrifice, was that he himself would become the sacrifice, after they had tried to force him to do that by means of fear."

The calamity was not limited to Egypt. Christians were persecuted throughout the Roman Empire, wherever they were found. Decius was succeeded by another who inflicted persecution upon the Christians, but the worst of all of them in inflicting torture and persecution was Diocletian, who came to them after the persecution had abated somewhat, and they hoped that he would be good to them and would help them, because his head of staff was a Christian. But he was worse than others for the Christians, especially the Egyptians, because the Egyptians saw nations who had freed themselves from Roman rule so they followed their example, and started to seek freedom and independence. They appointed a leader from amongst themselves. Diocletian came to Egypt and inflicted persecution

Diocletian
the worst
oppressor

upon them, put a stop to their independence and reconquered them. Most of them at that time were Christian, so he ordered that their churches be destroyed, their books be burned and their pastors and bishops be arrested and thrown in jail. He oppressed the Christians, forcing them to give up their religion. During this period, many Copts were martyred, more than 140,000. Some historians put the number at three hundred thousand. Because so many were martyred, and because of the calamities that befell them, the reign of Diocletian became so serious for the Egyptians, that they made it the start of their calendar. That was in the year 284 CE.

Persecution at the hands of the Caesars of Rome continued until the time of Constantine, which was a time of blessing and ease for the Christians, but not for Christianity.⁴

After this painful glimpse of Christian history, I would like to remind you of some men who had principles, and who had power and authority. Then things turned against them.

4. *Muhaadaraat fil-Nasraaniyyah* by Imam M - hammad Abu Zahrah, p. 33- 34.

I would like to remind you of President Tito, or the Egyptian President 'Abd al-Naasir, or the Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Were their principles, decisions and writings when they were in power the same as when their positions became shaky? Was the protection of Saddam's principles at the time of his victory over Iran like his protection of them when Baghdad was about to fall, on the day when American forces entered the city for the first time and nineteen provinces fell in 1991?

Were his principles and writings protected after Baghdad fell and the man was arrested?

Did any protection remain for him after he was executed by hanging?

What befell the Messiah and his companions was far worse and far more deadly. Nothing was left of the principles, religion and symbols of the Messiah; rather they became top of the list of wanted men.

Can we say that those who killed the Christian scholars, made Christian people food for wild animals, and fuel for torches to light the way, came to protect

History
of
Christian
oppression

Christianity or to protect the Gospel?

If we can say that, then we can say that those who conspired against the Messiah or who wanted to protect his principles and preserve the Gospel are those who screamed at the Roman governor: 'Kill him and his blood will be upon us and our children.'"

Professor of Gospel Studies: "All the evidence that you have produced to show that the four Gospels are distorted is no more than an illusion. At best we can call it wishful thinking. There is not a single piece of certain evidence to prove that they are distorted. Moreover, this era that you mention ended with Constantine, who supported the Christians and brought Christianity into a stage of security.

But you ended your comments with a phrase that was either clever or sceptical, which is when you said concerning Constantine that "Persecution at the hands of the Caesars of Rome continued until the time of Constantine, which was a time of blessing and ease for Christianity, but not for Christians." What is this outrageous differentiation that you make, Abu Haamid, between Christianity and Christians?"

Abu Haamid: "I thank you for this question, because I kept quiet about what Constantine did to Christianity and did not explain it, because I thought it was well known to you. Yet I believe it is indeed well known to you, Professor, at least. This is not unlikely, because this is your speciality.

It is well known that Constantine reigned between 305 and 337 CE, and that he adopted a completely different policy to his predecessors. Instead of continuing the war against Christianity, he tried to mix it with idolatry during his reign, and to unite it in one religion to be adopted by the state, so as to unite the state and make it stronger, as historians mention. The Empire had one ruler or one Emperor until the time of Constantine's father, when it was divided in 285 CE into eastern and western halves. Each half was given an emperor and a deputy. The deputies in each of the two parts became independent. Each of them became an emperor, and thus for the first time in its history the Roman Empire came under the rule of four emperors, each of whom ruled over an independent area. Constantine came to power in 305 CE, and found

Constantine the most dangerous

himself confronted with three other emperors: Valerius Licinius and Maximinus Daia in the eastern half of the Empire, and Maxintius who was his counterpart in the western half.

Constantine came to an agreement with Licinius, who was related to him through marriage to his sister Constantia, and formed an alliance with him at Milan in 313 CE, before the final battle with his opponent and competitor in the east, Maximinus Daia. Constantine defeated Maximinus Daia, who was competing with him for rule of the western part of the Empire in the battle of Milvian Bridge in 312 CE. Then he helped Licinius to get rid of his opponent Maximinus Daia the following year. After that he fought against Licinius himself in a series of wars, from 313 until he defeated him and killed him in 323 CE. Thus he defeated the three emperors.

He was an idolater who believed in the worship of the sun god Sol Invictus, whom he regarded as the only god. He filled all the trappings of state, such as banners and coinage, with symbols of his idolatrous religion, and he erected statues to his god everywhere. All his life

he acted as the high priest of the religion of sun-worship. He called his reign the era of sun-emperorship. Yet he was also influenced by Christianity all his life, but it is proven that he was not baptized as a Christian except when he was dying in 337 CE, when perhaps advantage was taken of his weakness to resist, as he lay dying, as some researchers have suggested.

Constantine worked on an evil plot to mix religions and bring them closer together, and unite them, so that the state would have one cohesive, harmonious religion. The authors of *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail* say (p. 388 of the 1996 edition):

“Faith... was for Constantine a political matter; and any faith that was conducive to unity was treated with forbearance.” Constantine would build a church on one side of a city, and at the same time erect statues to the mother goddess Cybele and the sun god in another part of the city, as he did in Constantinople when he conquered it in 330 CE – i.e., after the Council of Nicea.

In order to win his approval, the Pauline Christian church went along with what

he wanted. They adopted Sunday, the day of the sun, as the weekly day of rest instead of Saturday (the Sabbath) which the early Christians, with their Jewish background, were still observing. Each day of the week was named after a heavenly body: Saturday was named for the planet Saturn, Sunday was the day of the sun, and Monday was the day of the moon.

In 321 CE, Constantine issued orders that the courts be closed on Sundays, which he regarded as the day of weekly rest, and the Christian church followed him in that. The church took the birthday of the sun, the winter solstice in the northern hemisphere, when the days begin to lengthen after they reach the point at which they are shortest – December 25 – as a festival marking the birth of the Messiah. That was originally an idolatrous festival in which the sun was regarded as divine and worshipped in Persia and Rome, as is proven and well known. Thus they followed in Paul's footsteps by hypocritically following the people of other religions and showing readiness to change their own religion in order to appease them. The hypocrisy concern-

ing Constantine went even further: the church acknowledged him as the awaited Messiah, the saviour who was to come at the end of time. The matter went so far that the pope in Rome, Eusebius, regarded Constantine as divine and stated that the Creator was embodied in him.

The authors of *The Messianic Legacy* quote comments on the words of Eusebius in the following passage:

“As Kee says, commenting on this address by Eusebius: ‘Since the beginning of the world it is to Constantine alone that the power of salvation has been given. Christ is set aside, Christ is excluded and now Christ is formally denied... Constantine now stands alone as the saviour of the world...’” It is the right of anyone who reads what the historians have written about how Jesus (blessings and peace be upon him) was deliberately ignored – even though he was regarded as divine – to regard Constantine as the enemy of Christ, even if he only takes the issue at face value without delving more deeply into it.

The strongest turning point for Christianity was when Constantine called for the Council of Nicea in 325 CE, where

a large number of Christian scholars, which some historians put at more than two thousand, assembled. But Constantine adopted the view of a minority (318 bishops) who believed in the divinity of Christ, and he intervened directly, even though he was an idolater, in composing the doctrinal text that was adopted by the Council of Nicea and imposed on all Christians in the Empire. Everything that went against it was regarded as heresy, not merely a difference of opinion. To highlight the serious damage that Constantine did to Christianity as a religion when he personally wrote the text of Christian doctrine during the Council of Nicea, I shall quote here the words quoted by the authors of *The Dark Side of Christian History*, which were written by Walter Nigg in his book, *The Heretics*: "Constantine dealt with the matter of religion from a political angle only, by expelling all the bishops who he expected would not sign the new declaration of faith, and in this manner he achieved the unity he wanted."

It was something completely unheard of for a comprehensive doctrine to be formed on the basis of an emperor's

authority, who was still a beginner in receiving the teachings of the faith, and who was not yet accepted by the holy class of bishops, and who was not at all qualified to rule on subtle matters of doctrine which he had not mastered. Yet not a single bishop said a word against this abhorrent action.

When the reader realizes that this doctrinal text written by Constantine himself, for the people who gathered at the Council of Nicea, still forms the foundation and reference point for the doctrine of all Christian groups, he will understand the extent of the distortion that Constantine wrought on Christianity. According to the most correct view, Constantine was still an idolater up to that point. At best, he was still a beginner, according to the author quoted above. Historians think that it was difficult for Christianity, which believed in Jesus (blessings and peace be upon him) as a human Messenger, to accept the religious mixture that Constantine was promoting, and that the doctrine that Jesus was the divine incarnate was completely in harmony with the beliefs of the idolatrous nations who prevailed at that time. Including the belief in sun-

worship (Sol Invictus) which Constantine supported, and which absorbed other religions, including Christianity, whose clergy accepted for it to flourish under the umbrella of sun-worship and coexist with its idolatry, and even to adopt many things from it which made it a new religion, which in fact belonged more to Constantine than to the early Christians. One of the most serious steps that he took came in the following year, when he issued a decree that all works and writings that opposed the decrees of Nicea were to be collected and destroyed. Then in 331 CE he ordered that a new version of the Bible be issued, which the authors of the book mentioned above regard as “one of the single most decisive factors in the entire history of Christianity, and provided Christian orthodoxy – the ‘adherents of the message’ – with an unparalleled opportunity.”

We should note here that the Emperor Diocletian had destroyed all Christian writings that could be found. The authors of the books referred to above believe that he gave free rein to the bishops present at Nicea to subtract from and add to the books whatever they thought

was in accordance with their beliefs. So that the reader will not underestimate the seriousness of this step, the authors mentioned above state that "Of the five thousand extant early manuscripts of the New Testament [the Gospels and Christian Epistles], not one predates the fourth century. The New Testament, as it exists today, is essentially a product of fourth-century editors and writers – custodians of orthodoxy, 'adherents of the message', with vested interests to protect" when they wrote the New Testament.

Constantine went even further than that; he established the papal system that still exists in Rome, and gave the church a fixed income and a centre based in the Lateran Palace in Rome. Concerning this, the authors of *The Messianic Legacy*, from whom I have also quoted many of the facts mentioned above, said: "It is fair to state that Christianity as we know it today derives ultimately not from Jesus' time, but from the Council of Nicea. And to the extent that Nicea was largely Constantine's handiwork, Christianity is indebted to him."

The extent to which Christian teachings were changed after Constantine is also

highlighted by what Burton L. Mack wrote in *The Lost Gospel*, where he said: "After Constantine, the Christ was depicted as one who had power over death, and as the ruler of the universe." The author mentions that before that, the image of the Christ had been that of a saviour of the people and of the nation, and one who would guide them to the Hereafter.

To sum up this discussion of the extent of the changes introduced by Constantine to Christianity, the most recent of the religions of divine origin at his time, we may note what the author referred to above said: "Christianity, as we know it today, is closer to the system of idolatrous beliefs than to its Jewish origins."⁵ My dear professors, what doubt can be greater or more serious than the fact that none of the Christians have a single copy of the Gospel that predates the fourth century CE? What an alarming interruption this is! Who can fill this frightening gap?

Do you know who confirmed the changes that Paul made by means of political decisions?

5. From *Tabaashir al-Injeel wa'l-Tawraat bi'l-I - lam wa Rasoolihi Muhammad -'alayhi al-salaatu wa'l-salaam*, by Dr. Nasrullah 'Abd al-Rahman Abu Talib, p. 61-65

The other, greater calamity – in addition to the fact that these Gospels were not written by Jesus (peace be upon him) – is that these four men who wrote these Gospels were not all disciples of Jesus (peace be upon him). Matthew and John alone were disciples of Jesus (peace be upon him). Luke was not his disciple and Mark was a student of Peter the Disciple. In fact John the author of the Gospel is not the same as John the Disciple and companion of Jesus (peace be upon him), as has been proven by Christian scholars themselves.

Can you imagine that?

Over and above all that, the original sources of these four Gospels do not exist.”

Dr. Drima: “Even if all these question marks that you have mentioned about the Gospels and their weakness are valid, mere doubt does not mean that they are invalid, and mere doubt does not cancel out reality as we see it in the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels. A certain book may be buried for a while, then that book emerges and the buried reality will be manifest.”

Abu Haamid: "But what if all this time passes and the hidden reality does not emerge?"

What if all these centuries have passed and the doubts have only increased in severity?

What is the fault of all these masses who have lived and died since the Gospels were altered until today, and they died without knowing this reality. Indeed they died having been deceived about the most important issue.

Is it right for us to close our eyes to all these important questions and definitive evidence of distortion, on the basis that doubt does not imply invalidity? Why don't you say that facts cannot be built on doubt, and rights cannot be given on the basis of doubt? Do you think that I have contradicted reason in any matter?

There is something that the Muslims have which does not have to do with the Qur'ân, rather it has to do with the narration of the *hadiths* of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). That is, that they do not accept anything that was narrated from the Prophet Muhammad unless it has a sound

chain of narrators, which means that they should know the chain of narration of the *hadith* in question: who narrated it from whom, from whom, from whom... and so on all the way back to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), in such a way that each of these narrators is known, according to a specialized science called *al-jarh wal-ta'deel* (of disparagement and endorsement), which we spoke about in our second gathering. If they were hesitant about a man, or they did not know whether he was honest or a liar, or there was some doubt or ambiguity involved, this *hadith* would be rejected no matter what its apparent value. This chain of narrators is called the *isnad*.

Where is the sound chain of narrators of those who memorized the Gospel by heart, and narrated it from Jesus (peace be upon him) to the disciples until it reached our own times?

Where is the chain of truthful, well known men who narrated the Gospel from its source until it was written down?

It is a given in the science of narration that two conditions must be met: every narrator should be trustworthy and the

chain must be continuous. If the narrators are trustworthy but the chain is interrupted, in the sense that they did not meet or were not contemporaries of one another, then the *hadith* is rejected. If one of the narrators was not trustworthy, even though they met, then the *hadith* is also rejected.

What do you think are the chances of the Gospels if they are subjected to these principles? They were not transmitted from trustworthy men, and there is no continuous chain of narration between Jesus (peace be upon him) and those who came after him.

Where are the four original versions?

If we give up all of these scientific conditions that are available when investigating matters, and we apply the rule of confirming sound attribution of any ancient book to a certain author, then the way to do that is to have at least one copy that was written in the author's hand or one copy that was written at his time, with his approval and agreement to what is in it. Does there exist a single copy of the four Gospels in its author's hand?

The answer is that no such original manuscript or even a copy thereof exists!

Should we close our eyes to the scientific principles of transmission so that this great and ancient theft might be ignored? Since when is the passage of time a reason to accept and affirm falsehood?

If your family's property was confiscated by a family of professional thieves whose skill was in stealing families' properties, and the second generation discovered the theft, should they have to take the matter to court in order to prove the theft, or should they accept the system of the passing of time?

This is the issue of the theft of hearts and minds in favour of false beliefs, which is even worse. The theft and alteration of the Book of God is the worst crime, worse than the theft of real estate or land and the like."

Professor of Gospel Studies Bob: "I can hardly disagree with the information that Abu Haamid has mentioned, but I have one point that is sufficient to demolish everything that he has said, which is that these four Gospels are inspired by God, and we have a great deal of evidence to show that. If your father advises you to do something in his will, will you carry it out or not?"

Are the
Gospels
divinely
revealed?

Abu Haamid: "What do you think, Doctor, if we examine this issue from the very beginning, and I quote to you the confession of the author of the Gospel that it is from him, the result of his own ideas, and it is not inspired to him or revealed to him. Will you be convinced?"

Open the Gospel of Luke to the first page and you will find these words:

"1. Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us,

2. Just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word.

3. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,

4. So that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught."

[Luke 1:1-4]

Did Luke leave any room for interpretation? Did he leave any room for defence or justification? Can there be any admission or confession after that? What is

your justification if the one who wrote the Gospel says that it has nothing to do with inspiration?

He clearly states that he is writing a story.

He states his source as those who came before, not God.

He highlights his own human efforts and said: "I myself have carefully investigated everything"; so it has nothing to do with inspiration.

He wrote this Gospel for Theophilus. Does God send letters to individuals?

Isn't this sufficient to rule out the idea that it was inspiration to Luke and the others?"

There is other definitive evidence too. Listen to what it says in the Book of Jeremiah:

"But you must not mention 'the oracle of the LORD ' again, because every man's own word becomes his oracle and so you distort the words of the living God, the LORD Almighty, our God."

Jeremiah 23:36

In the manuscript of the Old Testament

in the Catholic Mascone Academy, it says that the books of the Old Testament contain things that appear incomplete and temporary but it seems to be a real divine style!⁶

There is a clear admission of distortion in the American Encyclopaedia: No copy written in the hand of the original author of the books of the Old Testament has come down to us. As for the texts that we do have, they have come down to us through many generations of scribes and copyists, and we have ample evidence which shows that the scribes, intentionally or otherwise, changed the documents and manuscripts which it was their main job to write or transmit.⁷

Ellen G. White,⁸ acknowledging the existence of distortions, alterations and

6. See: *Wathaa'iq al-Majma' al-Mascone al-Vat-cani al-Thaani* (Arabic translation), p. 410

7. *al-Daa'irah al-Amreekiyyah* (American Encyclopaedia), 3/617. The author of the article is Arthur Geoffrey, Professor of Semitic Languages at Columbia University in New York.

8. She was a leader and prophetess in the Seventh Day Adventist Church, which is a Protestant group that worships Christ as the second Person of the trinity and regards Saturday as holy instead of Sunday. See: *al-Mawsoo'ah al-'Arabiyyah al-Muyassarah*, p. 100 and Ahmed Deedat, op. cit., p. 23

contradictions, says: "The Bible that we read today is the result of the word of many scribes who in most cases were able to do their job of writing proficiently, but they were not infallible, and God did not deem it necessary to protect them from error."

Professor Charles Juniper says: "Perusing the Gospels alone is sufficient to convince us that their authors came up with clearly contradictory descriptions of the same events and stories, which forces us to conclude that they were not seeking reality and were not inspired by a proven history that dictates a certain series of events. Au contraire, each of them was following his own whims and desires and his own agenda in organizing the contents of his book."⁹

In The Myth of God Incarnate, which was written by seven professors of Christian theology in British universities,¹⁰ it says:

9. Charles Juniper, p. 28

10. They are: John Hick, Professor of Theology at Birmingham University; Don Cupitt, Dean of Emmanuel College, University of Cambridge; Michael Goulder, Lecturer in Theology at Birmingham University; Leslie Houlden, Lecturer in New Testament Studies at the University of London; Dennis Nineham, Warden of Keble College, Oxford; Maurice Wiles, Regius Professor of Divinity and Canon of

Western Christianity ... accepted that the Books of the Bible were written by a variety of human beings in a variety of circumstances, and cannot be accorded a verbal divine authority.¹¹

Similarly, Father Benoit says: "The wording and form of description that result from a long evolution of tradition are not as authentic as in the original. Some readers of this work¹² will perhaps be surprised or embarrassed to learn that certain of Jesus's saying, parables or predictions of his destiny were not expressed in the way we read them today, but were altered and adapted by those who transmitted them to us."¹³

Professor of Gospel Studies Bob: "Forget about all the criticism you have of the Gospel, and I will put a practical question to you: Have you read the Gospel?"

Christ Church, Oxford; Frances Young, Lecturer in New Testament Studies at Birmingham University

11. *The Myth of God Incarnate: Ustoorat al-Ilaah al-Mutajassadah*, Arabic translation by Dr. Nabeel Subhi, p. 23

12. He is referring to the work he did with Father Boismard on theories of the sources of the Gospels, which is referred to above.

13. Quoting from Maurice Bucaille, *op. cit.*, p. 74

If you had read it, you would have seen divinity flowing through its phrases."

Abu Haamid: "The answer in brief is yes, I have read the Gospel.

Examples
of
contradictions

Here I would like to ask you a question: Isn't the Revelation one and the One Who revealed the Gospel one? So how can these Gospels differ from one another, if the one who revealed them is one?

I will give you three quotations from the Gospel, and you can imagine how many literal contradictions there are in this short story which occurred two days before Passover, in which a woman poured perfume on Jesus (peace be upon him), and the disciples objected to her extravagance. The story was narrated by Matthew 26:1-13, and John 12:1-8.

How many contradictions occur in a short story such as this between the Gospels?!

1. Difference in timing

Matthew says it happened two days before Passover (26:1). But John says that it was six days before Passover (12:1).

2. Difference in location

Matthew says that this story took place in

the house of Simon the Leper (26:2), but John says that it happened in the house of Lazarus.

3. Difference concerning the woman's name

Her name is unknown in Matthew, but John says that her name was Mary.

4. Difference with regard to which part of the body the perfume was applied to

Matthew says that she poured the perfume on Jesus' head, but John says that she anointed his feet and wiped them with her hair. (21:3).

5. Difference concerning who objected to that

Matthew says that the disciples of Jesus (peace be upon him) objected to her extravagance and got annoyed, and he does not mention the name of the one who got annoyed. John says that the one who objected was Judas Iscariot.¹⁴

These are only a few differences in just one story!

14. *Muqaaranah bayna al-Anaaqeel al-Arba'ah* by Dr. Muhammad 'Ali al-Khawli, p. 64-65

Give me any story from any page, then compare between the four Gospels; you will not find any agreement between them at all. How can the Revelation be one and the Lord be One and there be all these differences and even contradictions?

The Gospels differ in reporting everything – yes, everything.

I will give you unlimited time. Examine every story that is narrated in the four Gospels, then compare the wording, compare the numbers, compare the dates, compare the names mentioned in them... and you will realize for yourself whether the source of the Gospels is one, or whether it was revealed from God, or it was written by human beings.

Not even Jesus son of Mary is free from disputes about his lineage, his status, his stories, his beginning or his end. I reiterate that I will give you as much time as you want. But you will inevitably reach the truth before you pass away.

One narrates it in one way, and another narrates it in a different way. They differ even in names, even concerning the name of Jesus, and in narrating the story

of the end of his life.”

Dr. Drima: “Why don’t you make excuses for the Gospel as you make excuses for the Qur’ân?”

Why don’t you think positively?

Why do you reject it out of hand?

Why isn’t it possible that all these reports are based on one report? It may be that the story was narrated in one way, but each book told it in a different way.”

Abu Haamid: “It is enough for me that you have given me this answer. Do not think that by giving me this answer that this is your answer only. Rather it is the answer of popes and priests and all the Christians. This answer that you are all agreed upon can only imply one of two scenarios, both, or either of which we will accept from you. The first possibility is that each of the Gospel writers narrated what he heard or saw, and this is an admission that it is not from God, rather it comes from various sources. Thus it is proven that attributing the Gospels to God is false.

But if you say that it is a fabrication against God, then the issue that it is from

God is no longer valid.”

Dr. Drima: “But what is it that makes it reach this level of doubt, despite the fact that you agreed with us in principle that it is the words of God? Isn’t God able to preserve it?”

Abu Haamid: “Do you think that if a man wrote a book and some of his students took it from him, then they inserted their own ideas into it, and attributed it to their professor, then they changed and altered it, adding and subtracting, and opposed what their teacher said and fabricated lies against him – what would the professor do?”

The answer is that he would disavow this book, and prove what they added was false.

This is exactly what God did, because when they told lies about God with regard to His Books, God exposed them by making their lies obvious to everyone. He made their contradictions on one subject obvious to everyone. He made the most knowledgeable of people, like you, the weakest in defending this falsehood. He made the youngest followers of truth able to defeat the oldest among

Isn't God able to preserve the Gospel as He preserved the Qur'aan?

you who lived the longest, believing this falsehood, not because he is weak, but because he is defending a lost cause.

This is the first point. Secondly, do you have even one verse in which God guarantees to preserve the Gospel or challenges the people with regard to its preservation?

The answer is definitely no, so the natural result is that this book would be altered and lost, because there is no guarantee.

Have you seen a father complaining to God about the death of his son, or a son complaining to God about the death of his father, knowing that God did not guarantee to keep them alive forever?

What do you think if you have a caravan of goods that are not covered or insured, and you want to send it to your country, but you have to send it through an area where there are thieves, lawlessness and gangs of robbers? Do you think that the caravan will arrive safely?

The answer is that it will never arrive safely, because it is uncovered.

The same is true of the Gospel. It is not covered by the protection of Allah. It

does not have any divine protection or insurance.

What I said about the caravan is also what happened with the Gospel.

Moreover, the stages which the protectors of the Gospel and the disciples went through are stages where they were unable to defend themselves, or their Gospel, or Jesus (peace be upon him) himself.

Do you think that if the owners of the caravan were unable to defend themselves, they would be able to defend their goods?

They are going to abandon everything and seek refuge in the trees and caves in order to save their lives. Isn't this logical and rational?

Is anyone here unaware of what injustice befell the companions of Jesus and his disciples and their followers? It was persecution that began with the crucifixion of the one who was made to look like Jesus (peace be upon him). This era did not last for just one or two days, rather it went on for a long time. In fact it is still going on, but today it has taken on the form of intellectual terrorism, because no one is allowed to suggest the idea that Je-

sus was human or that he promoted pure monotheism, or that he brought a Gospel other than those which we know. That is not acceptable at all, and the one who says that may not be spared punishment if the church hierarchy or their political servants get hold of him."

Quoting
the
Qur'ân
in an
attempt
to prove
that the
Gospel is
valid

Professor of Gospel Studies, Bob: "Yes, this is not acceptable at all, and even your Qur'ân testifies that the Torah and Gospel have not been changed.

There are two verses in your Qur'ân which prove that. I have not memorized the two verses, but they contain clear evidence that God commanded the people of the Gospel at the time of Muhammad to judge according to the Gospel. This indicates that it was preserved until that time. Otherwise, how could He have enjoined them to judge according to a distorted Book? Moreover, in your religion there are commands issued during the life of Muhammad to all those who came after him, until the Day of Resurrection. Is that not so? This means that it is preserved until the Day of Resurrection, and this testimony alone is sufficient."

Abu Haamid: "You mean the two verses in which Allah says:

46. "And in their footsteps, We sent 'Isa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary), confirming the Tawrah (Torah) that had come before him, and We gave him the Injeel (Gospel), in which was guidance and light and confirmation of the Tawrah (Torah) that had come before it, a guidance and an admonition for the pious.

47. Let the people of the Injeel (Gospel) judge by what Allah has revealed therein. And whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed (then) such (people) are the rebellious" [*al-Ma'idah* 5:46-47]

Even though you are quoting the Qur'ân, I am not going to drift away from my commitment to hold a rational discussion with you. As for quoting this as evidence that the Torah and Gospel have not been distorted, one of two scenarios must apply. Either you believe in the Qur'ân, which is something that you denied altogether, or it comes under the heading of proving you wrong by means of what you said.

Based on this, you should quote other verses so long as you are speaking of the same topic. If you do not know it then

I will tell you, because your argument will be proven wrong, based on the same sources that you quoted. The Qur'ân itself proves that these books were distorted, as it says in the same *Surah, Surat al-Ma'idah*:

“O Messenger! Let not those who hurry to fall into disbelief grieve you, of such who say: ‘We believe’ with their mouths but their hearts have no Faith. And of the Jews are men who listen much and eagerly to lies — listen to others who have not come to you. They change the words from their places; they say, ‘If you are given this, take it, but if you are not given this, then beware!’ And whomsoever Allah wants to put in trial, you can do nothing for him against Allah. Those are the ones whose hearts Allah does not want to purify; for them there is a disgrace in this world, and in the Hereafter a great torment” [*al-Ma'idah* 5:42]

This is the first point. Secondly, think deeply about the verse where Allah says **“Let the people of the Injeel (Gospel) judge by what Allah has revealed therein”**.

Does the verse say judge by what the

Jews and Christians have tampered with thereof, or does it say judge by what Allah has revealed therein?

Thirdly: The verse says "let the people of the Injeel (Gospel) judge." Are those who distorted the Gospel people of the Gospel or enemies of the Gospel?

Listen carefully, my friend, for I am addressing you on the basis of the words in the same verse that you quoted to me.

Fourthly: Allah says: "by what Allah has revealed therein". So Allah alone is the one who revealed it, and the word *anzala* (revealed) indicates that it was sent down by Him from on high, to one who is below. In such cases Allah usually revealed to one of His slaves in order to raise him to the status of Prophethood. The Gospel itself acknowledges the servant hood of Jesus (peace be upon him) repeatedly when it calls him the "Son of Man," and it also acknowledges the Prophethood and Messengership of Jesus (peace be upon him).

In the Gospel of Matthew it says:

"When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked: 'Who is this?'"

The crowds answered, 'This is Jesus, the Prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.'"

[Matthew 21:10-11]

This is the testimony of those who saw him with their own eyes and saw his miracles. Not one of them said that he was God or the son of God.¹⁵

Similarly we find that in the Gospel of Luke it says,

"Soon afterwards, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him.

As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out – the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her.

When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, 'Don't cry.'

Then he went up and touched the coffin, and those carrying it stood still. He said: 'Young man, I say to you, get up!'

The dead man sat up and began to talk,

15. *Manaazarah bayna al-Islam wa'l-Nasraaniyyah li Munaaqashat al-'Aqeedah al-Deeniyyah bayna Rijaal al-Fikr min al-Diyaanatayn al-Islamiyyah wa'l-Nasraaniyyah*, p. 149

and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

They were all filled with awe and praised God. 'A great Prophet has appeared among us,' they said. 'God has come to help his people.'"¹⁶ [Luke 7:11-16]

Is this not sufficient evidence of the humanity of Jesus (peace be upon him)?

The word revealed confirms the route by which Allah revealed it to Jesus (peace be upon him), as He revealed it to the Prophets who came before him and He revealed after him to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Your quoting this verse as evidence obliged us to state that Jesus is a servant or slave of God, and one of the Messengers of God, and he is not God. Do you say this?

Fifthly: Do you know that the story which was the reason for revelation of this verse indicates that one of the rulings of the Torah was confirmed, as well as indicating that the Jewish scholars and leaders concealed it? It is proven that a Jewish man committed adultery with a woman, and this verse was revealed. I will relate the story to you as it was nar-
16. *ibid.*

rated with sound chains of narration:

A number of authors of books of *hadith*, including Abu Dawud, author of *Sunan Abi Dawud*, narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said:

“A Jewish man and woman committed adultery, and (the Jews) said to one another: ‘Let us go to this Prophet, for he is a Prophet who was sent to make things easy. If he issues a ruling that is less than stoning, we will accept it and plead on that basis before Allah, and say that it was a ruling from one of Your Prophets.’ So they came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) when he was sitting in the mosque with his Companions, and said: ‘O Abu’l-Qaasim, what do you think about a man and woman who commit adultery?’ He did not speak a word until he came to their school and stood at the door, then he said: ‘I adjure you by Allah Who revealed the Torah to Musa, what do you find in the Torah about the one who commits adultery?’ They said: ‘His face is to be blackened and he is to be paraded and flogged.’” – Paraded means that the two adulterers were to be seated back to

back on a donkey and taken around. – “A young man among them remained silent, and when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saw that he was silent he adjured him emphatically. He said: ‘By Allah, as you have adjured us, we find stoning in the Torah.’ The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: ‘When did you begin to take the command of Allah lightly?’ He said: ‘A relative of one of our kings committed adultery, so the ruling of stoning was waived in his case. Then a man from a common family committed adultery, and they wanted to stone him. But his people intervened and said: “Our companion will not be stoned until you bring your companion and stone him.” So they reached a compromise concerning this punishment.’ The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: ‘I will judge according to the Torah.’ And he ordered that they be stoned.”¹⁷

There is an incident which clearly shows that people concealed things and tam-

17. Narrated by Abu Dawud and classed as weak by al-Albaani. See *Irwaa' al-Ghaleel* (5/95) (1253). From *al-Jawaab al-Saheeh li man baddala Deen al-Maseeh* by Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah, ed. by Dr. 'Ali ibn Hasan ibn Nasir.

pered with the Torah and Gospel according to need:

It was narrated from Ibn 'Umar that the Jews came to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and told him that a man and woman among them had committed adultery. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to them: "What do you find in the Torah about stoning?" They said: "We disgrace them and whip them." 'Abdullah ibn Salam said: "You are lying. It mentions stoning." They brought the Torah and opened it. One of them placed his hand over the verse that mentions stoning, and he read what came before it and what came after. 'Abdullah ibn Salam said: "Lift your hand up." So he lifted up his hand, and there was the verse of stoning. They said: "He is speaking the truth, O Muhammad; there is the verse of stoning." The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ordered that they be stoned. 'Abdullah (Ibn 'Umar) said: "I saw the man shielding the woman from the stones with his body."¹⁸

18. Narrated by al-Bukhari (1329), Muslim (4456) and others.

If you ponder this *hadith*, you will see that all the Torah scholars who were present knowingly concealed their distortion of it, until that one young man spoke up.

Then Allah revealed these verses of the Holy Qur'ân:

44. "Verily, We did send down the Tawrah (Torah), therein was guidance and light, by which the Prophets, who submitted themselves to Allah's Will, judged for the Jews. And the rabbis and the priests [too judged for the Jews by the Tawrah (Torah) after those Prophets], for to them was entrusted the protection of Allah's Book, and they were witnesses thereto. Therefore fear not men but fear Me (O Jews) and sell not My Verses for a miserable price. And whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, such are the disbelievers.

45. And We ordained therein for them: Life for life, eye for eye, nose for nose, ear for ear, tooth for tooth, and wounds equal for equal. But if anyone remits the retaliation by way of charity, it shall be for him an expiation. And whosoever does not judge by that

which Allah has revealed, such are the wrongdoers.

46. And in their footsteps, We sent 'Isa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary), confirming the Tawrah (Torah) that had come before him, and We gave him the Injeel (Gospel), in which was guidance and light and confirmation of the Tawrah (Torah) that had come before it, a guidance and an admonition for the pious.

47. Let the people of the Injeel (Gospel) judge by what Allah has revealed therein. And whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed (then) such (people) are the rebellious to Allah" [*al-Ma'idah* 5:44-47].

Sixthly: The phrase "by what Allah has revealed" implies that it was obligatory to follow the Torah in the days of Moses (peace be upon him) and after that, then when Jesus (peace be upon him) came, and God revealed the Gospel to him, it became obligatory to follow both what was in the Torah and what was in the Gospel, because they were both "what Allah had revealed." If we differed concerning the ruling of God, we were to follow the latter, and we were not to use the

words of God against one another. Then when God sent Muhammad, it became obligatory upon mankind to follow all that God had revealed in the Torah, Gospel and Qur'ân. If there is any difference concerning a ruling, then the reference point is the last Book that God revealed. Is this not the verdict of reason and justice? This is the ruling that is in accordance with the text and commentary of the verse, but it does not mean that there is a contradiction between what God revealed first and what He revealed last, rather He says **"To each among you, We have prescribed a law and a clear way"** [*al-Ma'idah* 5:48].

Seventhly: Think about the Qur'ânic verse and the words of God: **"and We gave him the Injeel (Gospel)"**. The verse confirms beyond any shadow of a doubt that Jesus (peace be upon him) had a Gospel which God revealed to him. But where is that Gospel?

Eighthly: Is it sufficient merely to put the label of "Gospel" on rulings for them to actually become the Gospel rulings?

If that were sufficient, then anyone who wanted to, could attribute anything he wanted, and speak in the name of what-

ever he wanted, and others would have to believe him!

Whoever wanted to, could issue whatever rulings he wanted, and others would have to listen and obey.

If simply giving a name were sufficient, then the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would have believed the most knowledgeable of the Children of Israel with regard to the penalty of the married adulterer, because of the qualifications that they had, and because they were speaking in the name of the Torah, and he would not have believed that young man who had little experience.

What matters is not numbers or names; what matters is reality.

Ninthly: Yes, we say **“Let the people of the Injeel (Gospel) judge by what Allah has revealed therein”**, and I do not think that you will disagree with us concerning that. Will you agree to everything that God has revealed in the Gospel?

No doubt your answer will be yes.

So what would you say if I show you the command to follow the Prophet (peace

and blessings of Allah be upon him) in more than one place in the Gospels?

I will leave the matter to you to think about. Will you be able to say, after all of this, that the Qur'ân bears witness that the Gospel has not been distorted?"

The Gospel expert said: "I think that attributing distortion to the Qur'ân is rationally more likely than attributing it to the Gospel, because the Gospel is now written in more than seventy world languages, whereas the Qur'ân is written in only one language, namely Arabic.

The printing of the Gospel in seventy languages is evidence

What is written of the Qur'ân in other languages – apart from Arabic – is not presented to people as Qur'ân, rather it is presented as meanings of the Qur'ân. So the likelihood that the Qur'ân has been distorted is seventy times greater than the likelihood that the Gospel has been distorted. Isn't this correct in rational terms, as we agreed to accept the rule of reason?"

Abu Haamid: The opposite is true in rational terms, because printing the Gospel in seventy different languages makes it more vulnerable to distortion than the Qur'ân, which is written in only one lan-

guage. That is because of the following rational evidence:

1. The Qur'ân was revealed in Arabic, and has remained in Arabic, and will remain like that, whereas the Gospel was revealed in Hebrew. Then it was translated into several languages. That which has a fixed root is different to that which has lost its root. The difference between the two is like the difference between two identical trees, one of which remained in place and the other was uprooted from its place, leaving nothing but its seeds. Its seeds were taken and planted, then the seeds were taken and planted, then the seeds were taken and planted, and so on, seventy times over. Every time seeds were taken and planted, it got further and further away from its origin. Who can say that the one is like the other?

2. The source of the Gospel was lost and disappeared when it was translated from Hebrew into other languages, whereas the Qur'ân remained as it was, and thus its source was preserved. No matter how often it is translated, the source remains extant and fixed, and we know that what is translated of the Qur'ân is the meanings only. They cannot be taken as being

the Qur'ân, and the one who reads them is not regarded as reading Qur'ân *per se*.

If a man memorizes the Gospel in any other language, he is regarded as having memorized the Gospel, whereas if a man memorizes the Qur'ân in any language other than Arabic, he is not regarded as having memorized the Qur'ân, because memorizing applies only to the original. Similarly, if a man prays and recites the Gospel in the language into which it has been translated, his recitation is valid, but if a man prays by reciting the translated meanings of the Qur'ân, he is not regarded as having recited Qur'ân in his prayer, and therefore his prayer is invalid.

3. The likelihood of change in the book which is written in more than seventy languages, is seventy times greater than the likelihood of change in the Book that has remained in the language in which it was first revealed. Indeed the likelihood of tracking changes in a book with so many languages, editions and printings in seventy languages is non-existent. Who can compare the differences in all these seventy languages?

Who can compare the printing of the Gospel in one language with seventy

other languages?

According to the mathematical equation, the possibility of comparing the different versions, assuming that the Gospel is, as you say, printed in more than seventy languages only – let us assume that it is in seventy-one languages, i.e., one more than seventy. If we want to be certain that the Gospel has not changed in all these languages and that it is still similar, rather identical, you have to do the following calculation:

Multiply one by two, then multiply the result by three, and so on, until you reach seventy. Then we do the same calculation, multiplying seventy by all the numbers, starting with two, until we reach seventy. Then we do the same calculation, multiplying all the figures, starting with three this time, until you reach seventy. Then continue until you multiply sixty-nine by seventy, and then multiply all three figures, and so on, until you reach seventy-one. Can you imagine the final figure for this calculation?

Is there anyone who has done this calculation? Is it possible for anyone to make this comparison?

So finding out about the distortion of the Gospel, if it happened in any language, is something impossible!

But there is no need for this comparison when it comes to the Qur'ân, because it is in one language that has not been changed or become extinct, and the Qur'ân has not been translated into another language. If a single letter is changed, an enemy would know it before a friend. Stop saying that it is a matter of reason. Come and look rationally as a judge would examine a case.

If we assume that a commercial contract is being examined by a court with regard to some case, and this contract is written in a language that the judge does not understand, and he asks for it to be translated into his language, so that he may know what it contains. Can the judge rely on the translation without attaching the original document? The answer is definitely no, because a mistake in translation will lead to a mistake in judging.¹⁹

So it is impossible for anyone to pre-

19. Munaazarataan fi Stockholm bayna al-Daa'iyah Ahmad Deedat wa Kabeer al-Qasaawisah Stanley Shoberg, translated into Arabic by 'Ali al-Jawhar, Dar al-Fadeelah edition.

vent changes in the Gospel, even though there are numerous translations, unlike the Qur'ân. For it becomes more deeply rooted the more it is printed, because its language is one and every new printing reinforces what came before. The latest editions produced by modern machinery are like the first ever copy. No new printing is done until after it has been checked and examined anew.

4. (Based on the saying of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah): When the Gospel was translated from Hebrew into other languages, all its words and meanings were undoubtedly changed in translation, whereas the words of the Qur'ân have not been translated.

Every new language into which the Gospel is translated becomes an original in and of itself, but in the case of the Qur'ân, the original which was revealed is the abiding original which has not change, and it is not possible for it to change.

5. Its being written in more than seventy languages happened after the four Gospels were written. If any changes had been made in the Gospel, these alterations were reinforced in the other languages which number more than sev-

enty, and the distortion was spread more and more in those languages, because an angle becomes greater the further you travel from the centre.

But in the case of the Qur'ân, this does not apply.

I think that these differences are very clear. In order to prove what we have mentioned, so that it will not be lost in the heat of the discussion, I will put them in a table and I hope that you will study it."

Qur'ân	Gospel
All the Muslims affirm that it is the Word of God.	The Christians affirm that it is the words of its authors.
The first copy that was written in the Mus-haf is still extant. The Prophet did not allow any of his own words to be written down, so that the writing	No first copy of any of the Gospels is extant, and there is no chain of narrators for the Gospel at all. The Gospel was not written at the time of Jesus.

Comparison

of the Qur'ân would be distinct from other writing. The Qur'ân was transmitted by innumerable men from the days of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Forty of his companions took part in writing it down. The writing down of the Qur'ân started and ended during the lifetime of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

It was written in Arabic and has remained in Arabic.

It was written by four men, not one of whom was one of the Disciples. It was first written more than thirty years after the end of Jesus' time on earth.

It was written in Hebrew and was translated into many other languages, and the original writing has been lost.

The words have not been translated and it is not permissible to translate it.

Its words have been translated into a number of languages.

Its meanings have not changed because its words have not changed.

Its meanings have been changed because its words have been changed.

M u h a m m a d (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) spoke in Arabic and the Qur'ân is in Arabic.

Jesus and Moses spoke in Hebrew but the Gospel is in Greek.

The Muslims were in a position of strength and power from the time when the Islamic state was established and the writing down of the Qur'ân was completed, and that continued

The Christians were persecuted severely after the time of Jesus (peace be upon him), for almost three hundred years. During this period the Gospels were written.

for more than a thousand years.

It was transmitted from God to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and was attributed to God.

It was transmitted from Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to thousands of his companions.

Thousands of his companions transmitted it to those who came after them, so it was transmitted by innumerable people to innumerable people.

They transmitted it from the Prophet (peace and

Not all of it was attributed to God.

It was not transmitted from him except by two who saw him, not one of whom was among his disciples.

They wrote it, they did not transmit it from him.

It was first written more than 30 years after the end of Jesus' times on earth.

The writer wrote it based on his own ideas and

blessings of Allah be upon him), from his lips to paper.

As soon as he received Revelation, he summoned his scribes who wrote it down exactly as it was revealed straight away. He would call his scribes whenever anything of the Qur'ân was revealed to him, so they wrote it down from his lips straight away.

from his own memory, or quoting someone else.

The Qur'ân contains a challenge.

There is no challenge in it about its preservation.

The Qur'ân was memorized by heart by innumerable children, both Arabs and non-Arabs, but

It is not memorized by heart. Even most priests do not memorize it.

they memorize it in Arabic.	
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Specious
argument
about the
compilat-
ion of the
Qur'ân

Professor of Gospel Studies: "If you look at the way in which the Qur'ân was collected for the first time, you will realize that doubt entered it from all sides. The first example of that is that Muhammad was not able to check the authenticity of what was written because – as you admit – he was illiterate and did not know how to read or write.

Moreover, you admit that many reciters and those who had memorized the Qur'ân were killed after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, when some of the Arabs apostatized and the wars of apostasy took place. It was after the wars of apostasy that the Qur'ân was collected.

Moreover, you admit that the Qur'ân was collected again at the time of the third caliph 'Uthman ibn 'Affan, and the Qur'ân that is extant now is that which was compiled at the time of 'Uthman.

How do we know that 'Uthman compiled the Qur'ân that was revealed at the time of Muhammad? How do we know that the Qur'ân has not been changed from the time of 'Uthman until now?

Even you call it the *Mus-haf* of 'Uthman until now."

Abu Haamid: "My dear Professor, in fact the more you try to undermine the facts in one way, these facts become clearer and clearer. The facts defend themselves and become clearer and clearer the more they are criticized.

Now you affirm that the Qur'ân which is extant today is the same Qur'ân that was written down at the time of the third caliph 'Uthman ibn 'Affaan. So you acknowledge that the Qur'ân that we have today has been the same for fourteen hundred years, and has not changed at all, and that the early period during which you are criticizing its preservation is the period between the death of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the caliphate of 'Uthman, i.e., a period of no more than fourteen years. Is that not so?

Is this not sufficient testimony to the fact that the Qur'ân is preserved? Isn't a Book which has been preserved throughout a period of fourteen hundred years, as you admit, more likely to have been preserved for approximately fourteen years?

For your information, the caliph 'Uthmaan did not compile the Qur'ân from scratch, rather he ordered that it be copied from the original which was compiled at the time of Abu Bakr al-Siddeeq (may Allah be pleased with him), which he took from the wife of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) Hafsa (may Allah be pleased with her) and handed over to the scribes so that they could make copies, which he sent to the regions, so that each region would have its own copy. This collection was not a new compilation of the Qur'ân.

How can you criticize the preservation of the Qur'ân during the time when its followers were at the peak of their power and ruling by it, and there was numerous people who had memorized it by heart? Can the Book be free of criticism during the later periods but be criticized during its early period?

You are now affirming that the Qur'ân was written during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and that its writing down was completed while he was still alive, and everything that had been written down was collected for a second time

during the reign of the first caliph, and they never added a single letter. Does this second collection increase its authenticity or increase doubt about it?

Then when the second caliph died and the third caliph, 'Uthmaan ibn 'Affaan, came to power, he collected the Qur'ân for a third time.

Did that compilation differ from the first, even by a single word?

Did any fair-minded person before you say that there was a difference between the first compilation and the second or third?

This is in addition to the fact that those who wrote it down for the third time were those who had written it down the second time, and they were those who had written it down the first time, with the exception of those who had been killed in the wars of apostasy.

But the third time they copied it from what they had written the first time, at the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

But what happened in the case of the last compilation was that the caliph gathered

all those who had memorized it in one place, at one time, in continuous and uninterrupted work.

He also appointed the *hafiz* (memorizer) and scribe Zayd ibn Thabit in charge of them.

Is there any doubt about this action, or does it increase in certainty what is already certain?

This is one point. The other point is that the advantage of these *Huffaaz* (sing: *Hafiz*), is that they had written it down during the lifetime of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), immediately after the Revelation had come to him. Does this increase it in certainty or not? Over and above that, it was thoroughly checked by a group who had memorized the Qur'ân by heart at the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). They compared their memorization with one another and with what was written.

Moreover, all of it was based on these comparisons and they did not find any differences, not even in a single letter.

Furthermore, have you heard that any Muslim had another copy of the Qur'ân,

so that the matter could be disputed?

Have you heard that anyone had a *surah* that was different from those that are found in the Qur'ân?

How can there be doubt when there is no one who claims to have anything different?

How can there be any doubt when there was no confusion in the first place?

Can a case be referred to court concerning the property of a particular individual when no one else has claimed it as his in the first place?

As for the fact that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was illiterate, that has no bearing on the matter because he was surrounded with dozens of scribes among his Companions, who were competing to recite what was written and review it with him, so that they might recite its words as an act of worship and act upon its meanings.

Was the basic principle among the Muslims to memorize it by heart or to write it down and preserve it as lines on paper?

Yes, writing was important, especially the first writing, but because memoriza-

tion was the most important method that was followed, distortion became impossible. Those who could have distorted one or two copies or more existed in certain known places. So how could they change the memorization of countless people who taught its memorization to many more people, who taught its memorization to many more, then they spread throughout the world?

Moreover, these *Huffaaz* still recite the Qur'ân for the people in their prayers every day, and many groups of people listen to them. If there is any difference or mixing up the words, or the reciter forgets something, no matter how good his memory is, people will set his mistake straight. This is how it has been since the Qur'ân was revealed, throughout the length and breadth of the world, and it will remain so until the Day of Resurrection.

Another point is that the Qur'ân was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) piecemeal. It was not revealed all at one time, as we shall see below. This undoubtedly made it easier to memorize. Furthermore, it was not revealed at the

beginning of his mission, or in the middle, or at the end. Rather the revelation continued from the beginning of his mission until the end, over twenty-three years. This period was ample for the Qur'ân to be memorized. Today we see many children memorizing the Qur'ân very well in two years. It is sufficient for you to visit Qur'ân memorization centres, not only in the Arab world but also in the villages of Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Chad, Nigeria and other countries where Arabic is not spoken. You will see how children memorize the Qur'ân and compete in that. The fact that the revelation was ongoing and connected to events that took place on earth, as we shall discuss later on, made that which was memorized more entrenched in people's minds.

In addition to that, the piecemeal manner in which Gabriel brought down the Qur'ân ensured that revision and comparison were ongoing, between him and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and between the Prophet and his Companions. There is a subtle point to be noted, which is that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be

upon him) always led his companions in prayer and recited the Qur'ân for them. If there had been any difference between what they heard the first time and the last time, that would have been noted and would have caused a great deal of confusion. But, after the Qur'ân had been written down in order, and memorized and completed, Gabriel reviewed the entire Qur'ân twice with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) during his last Ramadhan.

Perhaps you have the right to object and say that quoting this as evidence is contrary to reason.

I hope that as you listened to the objection, you will also listen to the answer, and you will realize first of all, that this is not made up by Abu Haamid. Rather it is based on reports that are soundly attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and there is nothing in this that is contrary to reason, because we and you are basically followers of Books, and we believe that a Book was revealed to us and to you. Whether it is distorted or not is a different matter. We are speaking of the foundation of the religion. Hence if Gabriel

brought this Book down the first time, what rational reason is there to say that he did not come down numerous times with other parts of the Book? Moreover, what reason is there to say that he did not come down one final time to confirm what had come before and to bring together what had been revealed during twenty-three years?

Have you heard of a follow-up like this, or of a thorough review like this?

If it was possible for one distorted copy to be identical to another distorted copy, and so on, how could it be possible for the memorization of one here to be the same as the memorization of another there, and dozens like him, with thousands here and thousands there, without differing in even one verse?

How could the memorization of an Arab be identical to the memorization of a non-Arab, with no difference in any of the 6236 verses of the Qur'ân? How can the memorization of an Arab be the same as the memorization of an Indian who does not understand a word of the Qur'ân that he memorizes in its entirety?

There have been attempts to change the

Noble Qur'ân, but they were all doomed to be found out by the vast numbers of those who have memorized the Qur'ân."

Professor of Gospel Studies: "I have a final question which I hope you will answer with your usual frankness. I am surprised, Abu Haamid, that you have not once quoted the Gospel of Barnabas as evidence, even though the Muslims usually quote it as evidence and refer to what is narrated in it.

Do you believe as we do that it is a gospel that is falsely attributed to Barnabas, or do you believe, as many Muslims do, that it is a real Gospel?"

Abu Haamid: "In fact I do not want to quote anything that is disputed as evidence, in addition to the fact that I am afraid that the one who follows his whims and desires may blow away all the evidence we have mentioned in these soirees because of a single quotation from the Gospel of Barnabas. Even though I believe that the Gospel of Barnabas is the closest of the Gospels to the truth, just as there is a great deal of truth in it, there is also a great deal of folly and myth. Please note that I am able to tell the one from the other. However, I preferred to

keep it short and quote that which you believe is true as evidence. This is the principle which is in accordance with the logic of reason. Otherwise, how easy it would be for one of you to say to me: How can you quote to me that in which I do not believe? But he cannot say such a thing if the evidence that is quoted is not disputed, such as the Torah, the four Gospels and the Epistles of Paul.

* * *

Conclusion of the third soiree

The third soiree ended, and the participants dispersed from the house of Dr. Drima. Some were happy to have used their rational thinking in a matter where they were used to dealing with it by means of submission only. On the other hand, some of them were sad because it was as if they were implicitly saying: I wonder how the leaves of the Gospel, with all their beliefs, rulings and stories, could fall when subjected to reason, like the leaves of the trees fall when they are blown by the winds of autumn?

A serious question was formed in the minds of all the people present this evening.

But the hope of every Christian remains pinned on one thing, which is that trust will be lost in the Qur'ân in the upcoming soiree as it has been lost in the Gospel. The debate tonight took the form of attack and defence, defence and attack, but it did not overstep the mark of proper

etiquette among friends. The seeming harshness of a friend may be the harshness of a loving heart and of a concerned voice, even if voices are raised and words are harsh sometimes. But the gentleness of an enemy may be the gentleness of a hating heart and a malicious tongue using a soft voice. What a great difference there is between the two.

* * *



Fourth Gathering

Introduction

At sunset on Saturday, the same group of friends met again in the house of a (female) professor of history and comparative religion, where anyone who joined the gathering would feel that he was entering a cave that led to an antique painting with modern taste, in which the historical artefacts spoke of the specialty of their owner.

Professor of history and comparative religion: "It is very strange that you say that this Qur'ân is the word of God, like the Torah and Gospel, when in fact what you say about Muhammad contradicts that, because you say that Muhammad was the most eloquent in speech and the Qur'ân is the most eloquent in style. Thus it is befitting to say that the Qur'ân is the word of Muhammad.

Is the Qur'aan the word of Muhammad?

The eloquence of Muhammad was the natural result of a society whose greatest achievement was its eloquence. The Arabs are people of poetry and prose, they are people of rhetoric. Hence, Muham-

mad brought the Qur'ân to them on the basis that it was not his own words, but the word of God. He phrased it in such a way as to keep any doubt away from himself and made the focus of his message this Qur'ân.

The issue is, for me, very clear. It is the Qur'ân of Muhammad and not the Qur'ân of God.

Indeed, Muhammad was not an ordinary person who would give up when he first encountered objections. Muhammad was aware of the nature of his society, so he made the key to his religion just two phrases: "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." The first phrase means that there is none worthy of worship but Allah and the second part means that Allah sent him as a Messenger.

His people fought him, but he still called them to his religion. It was natural that his people would resist him and harm him, and they tortured his Companions until some of them died as a result of this torture. After thirteen years, he decided to migrate, and he left Makkah, his birthplace, for Madinah, hiding en route with his Companion. There his people

welcomed him and he established a state, and established treaties governing relations between him and the Jews, and between him and the Christians who lived in Madinah. His religion spread more in Madinah, and he fought his enemies. The first battle he fought was in 2 AH; it was called the battle of Badr. It was followed two years later by the battle of Uhud, then the battle of al-Khandaq (the ditch). Then there were more campaigns (that he led himself), and between these campaigns he also sent out expeditions (led by others whom he appointed). As time passed, his power increased and his religion became more widespread in an unparalleled fashion. In 9 AH delegations came to him from all the Arabian tribes, declaring their entry into his religion. At this point, he began to send letters to the kings and rulers of different nations and religions. In the tenth year following his *Hijrah* (631 CE), Muhammad died, surrounded by his Companions. Throughout this period, whether in Makkah or Madinah, he was bringing the Qur'ân. What he brought in Makkah is called *Makki* (Makkan) and he brought after that is called *Madani* (Madeenan).

The point I want to make is: if this Qur'ân was truly a miracle like the miracles of the Prophets, why didn't his people believe in him?

Why did they confront him – when he was one of them, of the noblest lineage amongst them? Why did they expel him and fight him, to the extent that many of them were killed, but they still did not believe that this Qur'ân was a miracle from God? Why?"

Why didn't the polytheists produce a Qur'aan like it?

Abu Haamid: "By presenting this view, you have also presented definitive evidence that this Qur'ân is not the word of Muhammad, rather it came from God. You have presented definitive evidence that his people were unable to respond to the challenge to produce something like this Qur'ân.

Don't you believe that there was no one keener to disprove Muhammad's claim that this Qur'ân came from God, than his enemies whom he confronted with this challenge?

Moreover, don't you believe that his enemies knew that if they accepted this challenge and produced something like this Qur'ân or some of it, then that would

give them a swift victory, and the call of Muhammad would be defeated because its secret would be exposed and become worthless?

So why did they not rise to this challenge? Rather they fought him, and many of their leaders were killed, and he defeated them in every battle except one. Yet he continued to challenge them with the Qur'ân. He challenged them repeatedly, yet they were unable to meet this challenge throughout this period. I wonder why?

Why didn't they produce a Qur'ân, or part of a Qur'ân, and put an end to the battle from the outset. Thus sparing their blood and stopping the loss of their position of leadership among the Arabs, which they could see was slipping from their grasp? Why?

Moreover, who can believe that among these eloquent Arabs, masters of poetry and rhetoric, whose language had many types and meters of poetry, who had special markets, where they would gather annually during the *Hajj*, to compete in presenting the best *qasidahs* and speeches that they had, so that history could record them, and they could be narrated

Where are the poems of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)?

to all the Arab tribes. Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) nevertheless was not known to have composed a single *qasidah*, or to have given a single speech before the Qur'ân came to him?

Give us – if you like – a book of poetry by Muhammad, or a book of his speeches before the age of forty, the age when he became a Prophet, or after!

The Arabs had the seven most eloquent *qasidahs* (*al-Mu'allaqat*) hung up inside the *Ka'bah* out of respect for them and their language. Did Muhammad write any of these *qasidahs*?

The answer is no. Muhammad did not compose a single short *qasidah* that was narrated from him by anyone before or after he became a Prophet.

Let us ask the question again. As the Arabs were prominent in that field, and were giants of linguistic achievement, why were they unable to produce something like the Qur'ân, if the Qur'ân was written by Muhammad or by any human being? Who could believe that, when the Qur'ân is in Arabic, which is their language?

Moreover, remember that the Qur'ân did not issue this challenge to them one at a time, rather it challenged them to come together and help one another to rise to the challenge.

If they had accepted the challenge, and a meeting had been held of all the enemies of Muhammad, poets and rhetoricians, all of whom were his enemies, and they had produced a Qur'ân, or part of a Qur'ân that was like it, then they would have attained great honour. By doing that, they would have put a decisive end to their problem, by proving that this Qur'ân was the word of a human being, and the challenge of Muhammad would have been thrown back at him.

Think with me as you wish, and you will reach the only rational conclusion. Namely that they were unable to meet this challenge because this Qur'ân came from God.

As for your saying that if this Qur'ân was true, his people would not have opposed it, I ask: Have you ever come across any Prophet throughout history whose people did not oppose him when he first came?

This objection is more deserving of

leading you to the new truth which was brought by the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Especially when you know for certain that the situation of the Arabs at that time was like the situation of your own people at that time, because the darkness of the Middle Ages overshadowed the Arabian Peninsula, just as it overshadowed your countries."

History Professor: "Prove to me that Muhammad challenged them to produce something like this Qur'ân, so that I can know that there was a real written challenge in the first place. But for you to assume something that probably did not happen in the first place, then base an argument on it long after the story has ended – this is something that happens a great deal, and it is basing too much on a flimsy foundation!

For us, this matter is more like a myth that is presented in the form of an exciting story, in order to base the greatest victory on it, when in fact it is only an illusion.

Before you tell us of the conclusion of the challenge, prove to us that there was a challenge in the first place. Isn't this

the logic and ruling that we agreed to accept as arbiter?"

Abu Haamid: "What the professor of history and comparative religion has said is rational and fair. I only mentioned this conclusion because I thought that you were aware of the challenge, so I apologize.

The
greatest
challenge

With regard to the challenge, it is in the Qur'ân that was revealed to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself, in more than one place therein. Based on your request, I will tell you these places, with the numbers of the *surahs* and verses, so that you can see the wording and level of the challenge.

The first challenge is mentioned in a *surah* called *Surat al-Isra'* or *Bani Isra'il*, which is the seventeenth *surah* of the Qur'ân, in verse number 88, where God says:

"Say: If the mankind and the *jinn* were together to produce the like of this Qur'ân, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they helped one another" [al-Isra' 17:88]

Have you ever heard a challenge like this? First of all, it is not only a challenge

to the people of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him); rather it is a challenge to all of mankind. Secondly, it is not just a challenge to mankind; rather it is also addressed to the *jinn*. Thirdly: It is not just a challenge to mankind and the *jinn* in just any sense, rather it is that they come together and cooperate in harmony. Can this challenge be issued by any but one who is able to follow through, one who has reached the ultimate level of confidence and ability?

That is because this challenge represents the greatest risk. It is risking everything. The Qur'ân was the only source for Muhammad. It was all that he had – so how could he take this risk?

What is even more amazing is that the challenge mentioned in this verse was not issued by Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him); rather it was issued by the One who revealed the Book to Muhammad. Muhammad was no more than the conveyor of this challenge.

I do not want to present the Qur'ân to you. I want our reason, which we agreed to appoint as arbiter, to decide. If I make a mistake then you must correct me, and

tell me frankly: What you say is contrary to reason.

This is not the only challenge that was issued to the enemies of Muhammad in the Qur'ân. A challenge that was much smaller than the first was also issued to them, challenging them to produce just one *surah* like a *surah* of the Qur'ân, whether long or short. In the longest *surah* in the Qur'ân, which is called *al-Baqarah*, He said to them:

The
stages
of the
challenge

“And if you (Arab pagans, Jews, and Christians) are in doubt concerning that which We have sent down (i.e. the Qur'ân) to Our slave, then produce a *Surah* (chapter) of the like thereof and call your witnesses (supporters and helpers) besides Allah, if you are truthful” [*al-Baqarah* 2:23]

If you think about this challenge, you will see in it something that you do not find in the first one. Here the level of the challenge is reduced, from **“the like of this Qur'ân”** to the challenge to produce **“a *Surah* (chapter) of the like thereof,”** any *surah* you choose. Here it is stated that the One who is making this challenge is not Muhammad, rather it is God.

Even more remarkably, this challenge is provoking them to the highest degree, by putting their credibility at stake. God gives them the choice: either they accept the challenge or, if they do not produce a *surah*, then they are liars.

Not only that, they are challenged to produce a recitation which could be however they wanted. What matters is that it should be a recitation. This challenge is found in *Surat al-Tur*:

33. “Or do they say: ‘He has forged it (this Qur’ân)?’ Nay! They believe not!

34. Let them then produce a recitation like unto it (the Qur’ân) if they are truthful” [*al-Tur* 52:33-34].

I think the verse is clear and does not need any explanation. This is the ultimate level of challenge. Here we see questions coming one after another, revealing the truth that cannot be concealed. Do you think that if these enemies had been able to respond to this challenge, they would have refrained? Do you think that if the source of this Qur’ân was human, they would have been unable to produce something like it?

Not only that, when the Qur'ân challenged them, it confirmed beforehand that they would never be able to produce anything like it.

Do you think that if Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was not certain of winning this challenge, he would have stated with such certainty that they were unable to meet it and were bound to be defeated? The verse says:

“But if you do it not, and you can never do it, then fear the Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the disbelievers” [*al-Baqarah* 2:24].

Since that time, and until the moment when these words were written, no one among his enemies has produced anything like it, and people have not heard of anyone who rose to this challenge. How do you explain this well established fact?

If we apply the theory of probability, you will find you have only one of two possibilities before you. Either they were able to do it, or they were not able, and there is no third possibility. But in either case, they did not do it, because if they had, it would have come down to us as their

Contradictory ideas with the same outcome!

Probability theory

poetry has come down. Their friends and supporters among the enemies of the Qur'ân would have narrated it to us, as would any remaining polytheists, or it would have been narrated by the Jews and Christian Arabs. What stopped them?

If they were not able to do it, despite their prominence in this field, and they failed to produce something like the Qur'an, then they were incapable of doing it. There is no other answer except that they were incapable.

Is this not a miracle?

Our history professor knows full well that the challenge came down to the polytheists when they were prevailing, and they had the upper hand over Muhammad. Also they were persecuting his companions to the extent that they tortured some of them to death. Yet despite that, they were unable to rise to the challenge, and they did not even try.

Then when war broke out between them, and Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prevailed over them and defeated them, they were still unable to do it, and they did not even try.

When they had the upper hand, and when the Muslims had the upper hand over them, and when they were at peace, and when they were at war – what does it mean when the polytheists were unable to do it in any of these cases? What can it mean except that the Qur’ân was a miracle?

This proves that it is not a theoretical matter. The verse that issued the greatest challenge is:

“Say: If the mankind and the *jinn* were together to produce the like of this Qur’ân, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they helped one another” [*al-Isra’* 17:88]

Hence, we know the secret behind their choosing the challenge of war and fighting, of killing and being killed, over the challenge of producing something like this Qur’ân.

It is because their defeat in war was not something certain, whereas their defeat in this challenge was definite.

If you study the verses which speak of the challenge, you will find that this challenge is not limited only to the time when the Qur’ân was revealed. All eras

A
challenge
to all
generati-
ons

are included in this challenge, including our own time. You and others like you are invited to meet this challenge, can you imagine that?

Moreover, you see the weakness of Muslims at present, and the domination of other nations over them. Why don't they all come together to produce a Qur'ân like it? Why not?

Why don't they collect all the Arabic letters and the words in all the Arabic dictionaries, and the most eloquent poetry and rhetoric of the Arabs, and all the scientific technology, and feed whatever instructions they want into the computers, using all their mental powers and literary ability, to produce a Qur'ân like it, or a *surah*, or a single recitation like it?

Is it a
challenge
for the
Arabs
only?

Can the mind reach any conclusion, other than saying that this Book is above and beyond the capability of all people, and all creation, and that behind this Book is a power that cannot be defeated by the power of all creation? For it is the power of God, Who is the Author of the challenge?

These are not the words of religion; rather they are the words of reason and

logic.”

History Professor: “Why are you trying to exaggerate so much about this issue and exaggerate about this challenge? Isn’t the Qur’ân in Arabic?

Wasn’t it revealed to the Arabs alone?

So the miracle of the Qur’ân is limited to the Arabs only, because it is a linguistic miracle, therefore we Christians and Jews are not addressed by this challenge. Isn’t this logical?”

Abu Haamid: “When you say that the miracle of the Qur’ân is a linguistic miracle, this makes me happy and does not bother me, because you have confirmed something that most of your people never even admit. You realize that the language in which the Qur’ân was revealed is not just letters put together to make words and sentences, and no more than that. No, these sentences discussed various topics and branches of knowledge. If someone says to you that a certain book is good, you will ask him what topic does it talk about, or what branch of knowledge does this book deal with?

If you realize that the Noble Qur’ân speaks of all topics, you will realize that

the challenge of the Qur'ân includes all branches of knowledge, and it is addressed to all those who are involved with those branches of knowledge and those topics. They are invited, at any point in history, to find any contradiction, or any single flaw pertaining to their field of knowledge in this Qur'ân that they have before them.

You say that this challenge is addressed to the Arabs, because the Qur'ân is in Arabic, and it is not addressed to the Jews and Christians, but you forget that among the Arabs there are many Jews and Christians.

I hope that you, and the others present, will not look at this matter as merely a matter of talk simply for the purpose of passing time. Take it as a challenge that is unlike any other, to every mind that opposes it.

You will be able to take part in the scientific challenge in branches of knowledge referred to in the Qur'ân, before they were discovered in modern times. Try to prove that the Qur'ân said even once a piece of information that science has proven to be wrong.

We are all specialists in different fields. This challenge is addressed to all people of knowledge, to find a single flaw in the Qur'ân.

The forms of the challenge in the Qur'ân are not limited. You could try to find a contradiction between two verses. If you cannot take up the linguistic challenge, then you still have all other fields. If you spend enough time researching, you will reach the conclusion that is mentioned by the Qur'ân in *Surat an-Nisa'*:

The greatest feature: being free of Contradictions

“Do they not then consider the Qur'ân carefully? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely, have found therein many a contradiction” [*an-Nisa'* 4:82].

So it can only be from God, and that's that.

Try to work out the number of those who read the Qur'ân, from the time it was revealed until now, i.e., for more than fourteen hundred years, and also the number of those who wrote it down or heard it.

Then remember that none of those who read or heard it, found a single flaw or contradiction in it.

Add to that, the number of those who were opposed to the Qur'ân throughout history until today. You will never find anyone who found contradictions in it. Everyone who claims that there are contradictions in it is proven wrong on the basis of the same evidence that he quotes.

Look at all the branches of knowledge having to do with the unseen, and with literary and technical matters. How much have these branches of knowledge developed? This challenge was addressed to everyone, and it still stands. No one has found a single contradiction. I wonder, wouldn't people be able to find contradictions in it, if it was the words of a human being? How can it be otherwise, when we see that what was previously accepted as scientific fact is overturned in every era? If there was a single addition or insertion of human wording or human ideas, wouldn't man discover it? If there were any flaws or contradictions in it, why weren't they discovered by all of these scholars in all these eras?

How humiliating it is for mankind, their intelligence, and their knowledge, to be accused of such a level of negligence and

ignorance.

The Book which challenges its enemies, who are the majority of inhabitants on earth, to find any contradiction or flaw in it, and challenges them to change a single thing in it when it is widely available, and they fail to do that, must be a Book that is most miraculous.

This Book, which calls on its followers to read it all the time, and tells them that they will be rewarded greatly for that, every time they read it, repeat it, listen to it, and ponder it, without fear that they may find a mistake causing their faith to be shaken – this Book must be of a miraculous calibre.

How about when the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) recommended every Muslim to read the entire Qur'ân at least once every month, as in the *hadith* of 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr (may Allah be pleased with him) who said that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to him: "Read the Qur'ân every month." He said: "I can do more than that." He said: "Read it every twenty days." He said: "I can do more than that." He said: "Read it every ten days." He said: "I can do more

than that." He said: "Read it every week, but do not do more than that."¹

Do you know that one of the best acts of worship for Muslims, and one of the greatest wishes that Muslim fathers and mothers have, is that their children should memorize the entire Qur'ân?

Do you know that the number of those who memorize it in its entirety every year is hundreds of thousands of children, in both Arab and non-Arab countries? Those Muslims who know the entire Qur'ân by heart now, can be counted in the millions.

I hope that you will look again, even if you have looked before. You will see this astonishing fact. The Qur'ân is the only book in which no verse, word or letter differs from another, from the time when it was written down by hand on skins and palm leaves, until the latest printing nowadays. There is no difference between the editions that are printed in Arab countries and those that are printed in Europe, Africa, Brazil and America.

1. Narrated by Abu Dawud in his *Sunan* (1/441, no. 1388). Al-Albani said concerning this report: It is *sahih* (sound).

You will never find any but the one definitive answer: **“Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely, have found therein many a contradiction”** [*an-Nisa*’ 4:82]. An even more astonishing fact, which will make you look for the secret behind it, is that this Qur’ân is the most printed book in history, and the most handwritten book before that, but you will never find any differences between one copy and another, and you will never find any changes.

For example, look at one centre for printing the Qur’ân in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This centre was established in 1984 CE, and up until 2005 it had printed 116,309,033 copies of the entire Qur’ân, 43,004,412 copies produced in separate parts (*juz’ or sipara*), and 26,460,887 copies of translations.

Another fact is that the number of copies of the Qur’ân being printed is increasing annually, but as the number of copies printed increases, the care and precision involved is also increasing. Whereas with all other books, the number of copies printed decreases after it reaches its peak, and after a few years nothing is left but a few preserved copies. The more

prints are done, the further it gets away from the quality of the first copy and the more differences arise.

You can only reach one conclusion, or accept my answer to the following questions:

Why has this book remained the only one among all other books that is preserved, whether by hand or in printed form?

Why has it not changed?

Why has no one been able to change it?

Why are there no contradictions or flaws in it?

Why have all attempts to change or distort it failed?

Why does it become ever more widespread with the passage of time?

Why do its enemies print it and distribute it?

Take your time to think and investigate. Look as long as you want for an answer. You will reach the same conclusion I mentioned in my answer, because the One Who revealed it said in *Surat al-Hijr*:

“Verily, We, it is We Who have sent down the *Dhikr* (i.e. the Qur’ân) and surely, We will guard it (from corruption)” [al-Hijr 15:9]

The best rule that can be applied to all other books in history, is that which God said regarding the Qur’ân:

“Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely, have found therein many a contradiction” [an-Nisa’ 4:82].

That includes the other books of divine origin. The fact that there are so many contradictions in them proves that they, as they are now, are not from God.

With regard to books written by human authors, there is no one who writes a book but he will check it and recheck it, and he will find something to be corrected; no new edition of a book is issued but something has been added to it or taken out of it. This all happens within one or two years, except with this Book.

Look at the theses written by PhD and Masters students. How often do the students and professors review them, how often do the students review them with their peers, and with other professors, until they think that there are no mis-

takes or errors left in them, but when the time comes to examine the thesis, mistakes appear in it that no one could have picked up on before. All of mankind are invited to form a committee to investigate and examine and check this Qur'ân, as they were invited before with all their scholars in all branches of knowledge, in all eras, and the *jinn* along with them.

Is
language
a suitable
vehicle
for
miracles?

That makes us happy as Muslims, and do you know why? Because we are certain that they will reach only one conclusion:

“Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely, have found therein many a contradiction” [*an-Nisa* 4:82]

“Say: If the mankind and the *jinn* were together to produce the like of this Qur'ân, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they helped one another” [*al-Isra* 17:88]

Yes, they will inevitably reach this conclusion, because academic research that does not reach a conclusion or pave the way to a conclusion is futile.

So reason says: You will be able to say with certainty, that when you read the Qur'ân, God is undoubtedly speaking to you.”

Professor of comparative religion:

"There are major obstacles between you, Abu Haamid, and proving that the Qur'ân comes from God.

I can see that every time you try to get your car out of a ditch, after a lot of effort, you fall into an even bigger ditch.

If we accept, for argument's sake, that the Qur'ân is from God, how can we accept that words can even be miraculous in the first place?

How can we accept that any language, with its letters, has the capacity to be miraculous?

If we accept this, for argument's sake, how can we accept that it has the capacity to be an abiding miracle?

If we accept this, for argument's sake, how can we accept that the miracle of words and language is greater than the true miracles of the Prophets?

Can a rational, mature person believe that the miracle of words is greater than the miracle of a stick turning into a snake, or greater than the miracles of Jesus, which you yourselves believe in?

What comparison can there be?

Please, even if you prove that the Qur'ân is a miracle, how can this miracle compare to those great miracles? Even if it is a miracle, it is the weakest of all miracles.

If it is the weakest of miracles, how can it be the most abiding of miracles and the others are transient? How?"

Abu Haamid²: "Please, let us make a commitment to a rule here. I am the one who is being asked here, and you are the questioners. Because the topics and issues are interrelated, if I answer a question, let us not move on to another one until you are first convinced of the answer. Once you are convinced of the answer and we have moved on from that, we should not go back again, to get stuck on questions that we have already finished with, because that is mixing the issues. If we are not convinced, we should not move on until we are convinced.

Let us take this as our methodology in

2. I apologize to the reader for the length of Abu Haamid's response. That is because the questions are powerful, and there is a need to answer them with a clear explanation, as this issue has not been discussed before in such a rational and academic manner.

our discussion, because it is a method that is in accordance with reason and leads to a conclusion.

Based on that, I believe the fact that the Qur'ân is the only Book that is preserved, despite everything that we have mentioned, is something that is very clear. With the passage of time, the evidence further strengthens the idea that it is preserved and protected.

Although we respect all the Prophets and their miracles, it is very easy to prove rationally, that the Qur'ân is a greater miracle than all the other miracles of the Prophets. One of the reasons for this greatness is the fact that it is words. I will mention a number of important rational explanations which demonstrate that the Qur'ân is a miracle, and that reason itself determines that it is the greatest of all miracles. But ruling that the Qur'ân is the greatest, does not mean at all that the miracles of the other Prophets are undermined.

Imagine a rational scene. If a committee of the most knowledgeable people, from all countries in the world, in various specialties, got together and decided to write a book about all the various branches of

knowledge, foretelling unseen matters to come, and telling stories from the past, and this committee got together fourteen hundred years ago, i.e., six hundred and twenty years after the birth of Christ, what do you think we would say about the knowledge and conclusions of that committee?

Subsequent generations would discover many scientific contradictions and rational myths in their book. As time went by, the backwardness of human thinking at that time would become embarrassingly apparent. Now can you see, with me, how impossible it is that this Qur'ân was written by humans?

How could it have been, when Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) – its supposed author – was unable to read and write?

Can reason have any answer except one, which is that the Qur'ân is from God, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God and the last of the Prophets? Please, if reason can come up with any answer other than what I have mentioned, or has any objection; I hope that you will tell me.

So the Qur'ân is a miracle in all fields of knowledge, and the scholars in all fields, of all eras, are invited to examine the Qur'ân repeatedly, in order to answer just two questions:

Is what the Qur'ân speaks of true or not true? Is there any definitive scientific fact that contradicts the Qur'ân in the slightest?

Isn't this challenge addressed to modern scholars and scientists, just as it was an invitation to scholars and scientists in the past? It is addressed to all those who exist now, and it is a call to scholars and scientists in other fields, no matter how they develop, until the onset of the Hour (the Day of Judgement).

Now let your reason decide which of these miracles is greater in terms of comprehensiveness. The miracle which is addressed to those of a single speciality, such as sorcery in the days of Moses (peace be upon him), or doctors in the case of the miracles of Jesus (peace be upon him) – or a miracle that is addressed to all these specialists?"

Rational explanations prove that the Qur'ân is greater

Professor of history and comparative religion: "Now you are admitting that

Muhammad has only this type of miracle, whereas the miracles of the Prophets are varied. Therefore if we accept that the Qur'ân is a miracle, as you say, we should put it in the proper perspective, and not exaggerate about it, or deal with it as if it is a collection of miracles."

Abu Haamid: "First of all, to answer your objection that the Qur'ân is the only miracle of Muhammad, I would like you to know that the Qur'ân is not the only miracle of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). His miracles were of many types. You can hardly find any miracle of any other Prophet, but you will find its counterpart in the life of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and more. There are authenticated reference books listing the miracles of Muhammad, which number in the hundreds, of different types. I am afraid that if we start to discuss this topic, we will drift away from the main topic. Otherwise, we could discuss it, as it is a topic which is historically documented. However, at any time you wish, we may discuss the other miracles of Muhammad, as I am prepared to do so. Anyone who wants to refer to the books that

speak of the other miracles of Muhammad can find them in the books entitled *Dalaa'il al-Nubuwwah* or *Khasaa'is al-Nabi Muhammad sal-alalahu 'alayhi wa sallam...*

I reiterate that this is not in any way undermining the status of any other Prophet. The one who thinks of the Prophets being like a company or partnership will not worry about the people or workers in that company. He will look at the company itself. Individuals may come and go but the company name remains. So how about if the Prophets are all brothers, as the Prophet Muhammad himself said, in more than one *hadith*, including the *hadith* which was narrated from him by his Companion Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him), in which it says that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "The Prophets are brothers from one father, but their mothers are different. I am the closest of the people to Jesus son of Mary. He will descend, so recognize him. He is a man with a whitish, reddish complexion, as if his head is dripping even though it is not wet. He will break the cross and kill the pigs, wealth will become abun-

dant, and the *jizyah* will be abolished. At his time God will destroy all religions except Islam, and God will destroy the false messiah, the one-eyed liar. God will grant safety and security until the lion will graze with the camel, the tiger with the cattle, and the wolf with the sheep, and children will play with snakes, and none of them will harm another.”³

You cannot deny the miracles of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) unless you also deny the miracles of all the Prophets, because in principle you cannot prove any of the miracles of the Prophets by tangible means, you can only prove them through reports. But the reports of the miracles of the Prophets are subject to doubt, except those that are reported in the Qur’ân, or narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). How can you accept that, and not accept the miracles of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?

How can you accept that which has no chain of narrators going back to its author, and not accept that concerning which there is a proven chain of narra-

3. *Sahih Ibn Hibban*, no. 6814

tors?

This is the first rational proof."

Professor of history and comparative religion: "Let me interrupt before you get carried away in listing points. I would like us to refer to the basic requirement, which is that you should give me rationally convincing evidence, which is that language is capable of being the focus of a miracle."

Abu Haamid: *"The second rational proof* is this: isn't language the means of communication between individuals and also between nations?

The answer is: Yes indeed. So look rationally at how comprehensive this miracle is as a result of being in the form of words. To the extent that people use words, this miracle has gone to that extent, and more. Even if the language of the Qur'ân differs from other languages, there are still many things in common. These languages are made of the same substance, namely letters. They use the same tools, namely the tongue, lips and so on, and they are of the same type, namely words.

There is no difference between one lan-

Language is the permanent means of communication

guage and another, except a person's interpretation of the letters that are spoken. This is one of the signs of God, as it says in the Qur'ân, in *Surat al-Room*:

“And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colours. Verily, in that are indeed signs for men of sound knowledge” [*al-Room* 30:22]

Thus it is a miracle that is addressed to everyone who speaks in any language, because if a person does not believe in the Qur'ân as an Arabic linguistic miracle, let him produce a miraculous book in Arabic if he is an Arab, or in his own language, whatever it is, if this challenger is a non-Arab. This linguistic miracle does not exist in other languages at all.

In another sense, it is an honour to the speakers of all languages, for everyone who speaks in words. When I choose raw material from which to make fibreglass for example, which I then use to make the body of a space shuttle, this is an honour to that substance. When God made the last of His miracles out of human language, it was an honour to all languages. You could say that as much

as people need language to communicate with one another, there is a need for this miracle.

The third rational proof: the fact that this miracle is in the form of words does not cost anything to the one who wants to rise to the challenge, whether he is a child or an adult, strong or weak, man or woman. It does not cost any energy or effort. The simplicity of this miracle points to the strength of its miraculous nature.

Challenge
using the
easiest
means

It is as if it is saying to people: The words which are uttered or heard by all people highlight the miraculous nature of the Qur'ân to everyone, because no one is able to speak in the manner of the Qur'ân, even though they are not unable to speak in other ways. If the challenge had to do with a particular substance, then some people would be excused for not having it, or because it was very rare, or expensive, and they were unable to acquire a substance of that quality, and so on. But in the case of words, what excuse can the one who is unable to produce the like thereof have, not to believe that it is from God? Perhaps you have read at the beginning of some *surahs* separate letters, as in *Surat al-Baqarah* in which

God says:

“Alif-Laam-Meem. [These letters are one of the miracles of the Qur’ân and none but Allah (Alone) knows their meanings.]” [*al-Baqarah* 2:1]

or *Surat Maryam* in which God says:

“Kaaf Haa Ya ‘Ayn Saad” [*Maryam* 19:1].

If you have read that, then you should know that what is meant by it is the challenge. It is addressed by God to His slaves. Since you know letters, why can’t you produce something like this Qur’ân, if it is not from God?

Maturity
of reason

The fourth rational proof: Is human reason arrested and unable to expand and develop further?

Was human reason at the time of Adam (peace be upon him) like human reason at the time of Moses (peace be upon him) or at the time of Jesus (peace be upon him)?

Was it like it is now?

No one says that human reason did not develop, or that it did not benefit from experience, or increase in knowledge.

Yes, man is man, but this great human reason develops as a child develops, and subsequent generations add to previous generations.

If you think about the miracles of the Prophets, you will find that their content is in accordance with what human reason could understand at a particular time, and you will find that the common denominator in all cases is that they are physical, tangible miracles. Each of those miracles was sufficient to establish proof for the people to whom it was first addressed, and to confirm that the one who brought the miracle was a Prophet who brought it from God. Hence their miracles were physical, visible, and tangible, because the aim of the miracle was to establish proof that the mind could comprehend.

And because the miracles were meant to be – like the message of the Messengers who were supported by them – limited in terms of time, place and the people who witnessed them, as it says in the Qur’ân:

“And We sent not a Messenger except with the language of his people, in order that he might make (the Message) clear for them. Then Allah misleads

whom He wills and guides whom He wills. And He is the All Mighty, the All Wise" [*Ibrahim* 14:4]

"And indeed We sent Nooh (Noah) to his people, and he said: 'O my people! Worship Allah! You have no other *Ilah* (God) but Him (Islamic Monotheism). Will you not then fear (Him, i.e. His punishment because of worshipping others besides Him)?'" [*al-Mu'minun* 23:23]

"And to 'Aad (We sent) their brother Hud. He said: 'O my people! Worship Allah! You have no other *Ilah* (God) but Him. (*La Ilaha illallah*: none has the right to be worshipped but Allah.) Will you not fear (Allah)?'" [*al-A'raf* 7:65]

"And to Thamud (We sent) their brother Salih. He said: 'O my people! Worship Allah! You have no other *Ilah* (God) but Him. (*La Ilaha illAllah*: none has the right to be worshipped but Allah.) Indeed there has come to you a clear sign (the miracle of the coming out of a huge she camel from the midst of a rock) from your Lord. This she camel of Allah is a sign unto you; so you leave her to graze in Allah's earth,

and touch her not with harm, lest a painful torment should seize you” [*al-A'raf* 7:73]

“And to (the people of) Madyan (Midian), (We sent) their brother Shu'ayb. He said: ‘O my people! Worship Allah! You have no other Ilah (God) but Him. [*La Ilaha illallah* (none has the right to be worshipped but Allah).] Verily, a clear proof (sign) from your Lord has come unto you; so give full measure and full weight and wrong not men in their things, and do not do mischief on the earth after it has been set in order, that will be better for you, if you are believers” [*al-A'raf* 7:85].

When the development of reason was completed through the accumulation of human experience and knowledge, and mankind began to understand abstract concepts as they understood tangible matters, the main miracle came to them, which combined all tangible matters within the vessel of concept, namely language, which conveys concepts referring to facts. This is one point. The other point is that no matter how much human knowledge develops, its development is limited only to tangible matters,

and it cannot develop in language, words or letters. Yes, new terminology may be introduced, but this terminology is made from those letters. So the miracle is in the branch of knowledge itself, not in the raw material. There is a big difference between the two, like the difference between the control centre and the tools.

In order to clarify the matter further, I ask you: what distinguishes man from animals?

Why do philosophers call man the animal that can speak?

Because he is the living being that is rational.

But why do they call him an animal that can speak?

Because he thinks and he is able to express what he thinks.

Because he tries things, and he is able to record his experiences, as well as poetry and prose, spoken and recorded, so those who come after him are able to build more knowledge upon that recorded basis, and develop it further, and maybe build a new civilization. For it is on this foundation that civilizations were built.

The fact that the miracle of the Qur'ân is spoken and read indicates that it is addressed to the internal learning centre of man, which is his rational mind. The raw material of that learning centre is speech. Therefore this miracle is the ultimate one, because it is addressed to the pinnacle of creation; man, and hence to the pinnacle of man, which is his mind. Its raw material is the ultimate in raw materials; the meanings that are stored in his language.

Even though it represents the pinnacle, it is addressed to all nations at all levels, because the one who is being addressed is every rational person, every animal that speaks (human), with no exception, whether they lived at the time when it was revealed, or after them, or in our own era, or those who come after us, whether they are those in whose language it was revealed, or those who speak other languages. It is addressed to all of mankind. Is there any other miracle like this?

The fifth rational proof: what if Muhammad had only one miracle, and his miracle was similar to the miracles of the other Prophets – i.e., physical and tangible – having to do with clay, or a stick, or plants, or animals?

New
type of
challenge

What new evidence would Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) have added to the power and might of the One Who sent him? Yes, it would be an addition, but it would not be an addition in quality, rather it would be an addition in quantity!

But as he brought this level, and this type of miracle, he achieved great things thereby. That which concerns us here, is that the miracle did not disappear when the one who brought it passed away, as happened with the miracles of those who came before him. It will remain so long as man still needs to speak. Nothing can be added to it so long as man lives. No matter how much man develops – as we have mentioned – his development will be in terms of raw materials (materialistic development), not in terms of speech.

It is also important for us to understand that the miracles of the Prophets who came before him were not preserved by one another. Whereas this miracle preserved all other miracles, by recording them in the very miracle of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), which is the Qur'ân, this preserved record which no one can change.

If your mind has encompassed all that we have said, then your mind will lead you to the only inevitable rational conclusion, which is that this Qur'ân is the final, culminating miracle.

The Sixth rational proof is: The miracles were shining lights that God bestowed upon each Prophet to point the way to God. The fate of each light that was connected to a Prophet was that it was limited to his lifetime, so it was inevitably extinguished when that Prophet passed away, leaving nothing but the reports narrated by his followers. So those who saw the snake turning into a stick, or who saw the dead being brought back to life, or the clay turning into birds that flew in the air, and so on, narrated that to those who did not see it, and they in turn narrated it to their followers. So people passed the narration, adding and subtracting from the report, as is the habit of mankind in transmission. That is because the miracle disappeared when the Prophet died, and the light was extinguished when his life was extinguished. We all know that all of the Messengers are no longer here, and that the messages have come to an end, so all of these lights have been extin-

Survival
of the
guidance
is
connected
to survival
of the
miracle

guished. But does it make any sense that God would leave mankind until the Hour begins with no light to show them the way of the Prophets, except for reports that have been distorted by humans?

Hence it was essential that the last miracle should abide, even if the one who brought it passed away. So although Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) passed away, his miracle did not disappear. It remained in the best and most perfect shape. This is what is in accordance with reason, because the message of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) could only be in the form of words that would abide. It is the final miracle, and Muhammad is the final Prophet, otherwise how could God establish proof for or against all people, if there was no Prophet and no miracle?

So the fact that this miracle alone has survived, is sufficient rational evidence that this was the final Prophet and the final miracle. The Qur'ân remained as the light that was not extinguished when the Prophet died, and its survival was not dependent upon the life of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The Qur'ân remained the open

door between mankind and the Prophets, the open door between God and His creation. It was the door that is not closed upon the passing of the Prophet, and it will never be closed until the Hour begins.

The Seventh rational proof: The fact that the Qur'ân is in the form of words meant that it could be revealed in portions, large and small. If it had been a miracle like the other miracles of the Prophets, it could not have been used as a challenge until, all its parts were completed, whether it was clay, wood or iron, or any other raw material, whether single or compound.

But because it is composed of speech, it is possible to use each of its parts as a challenge, just as it is possible to benefit from each of its parts. Hence the one who has memorized the shortest *surah* and no more, can challenge the entire world to produce something like it, and they will never be able to do it. He can also recite it and be acknowledged as a bearer of Qur'ân, and he will be rewarded for reciting every letter, and he can worship God by reciting it.

Another advantage of it being revealed in the form of words, in portions, is that

Benefit of
its having
been
revealed
piecemeal

this made it easy for everyone – especially the first generation to whom the Qur’ân was revealed – to memorize it. In order to make it easy to understand the importance of this, you may imagine that those first Muslims who had recently entered Islam, were faced for the first time with a book the size of the Qur’ân, and were required to memorize it and follow everything in it.

What would be the fate of its memorization, and what would their reaction be, if it was all revealed at once?

The verses which mention the challenge quoted above, were not among the last to be revealed, so no one can say that the challenge only refers to the Qur’ân as a whole. Rather the challenge is mentioned among the earliest verses to be revealed, because confrontation with the people was at its strongest in the earliest days of Islam.

In it are recorded the commands of God

The Eighth rational proof: When God told mankind about Himself, and told them about what He enjoined upon them and what He forbade to them, and explained things that had to do with their lives, through the Prophet whom He sent to them, and through the Book that He

revealed to that Prophet. What about after the Prophets' missions ended and their Books disappeared, but mankind continued to exist on earth? Is there any way that our reason could help us to know the way in which God had presented Himself, or to preserve the rulings that God gave to His servants, or what God wants from His servants, or how God rewards those who do good and punishes those who do evil, and so on?

Is there any way to preserve all of that until the Day of Resurrection, in such a way that it will not be changed from what God revealed, except in the form of writing? Hence it is appropriate that the miracle which preserved all this necessary information should come in the form of words, written words that do not change no matter how much time passes and things change. The Qur'ân is the vessel which preserves everything that we have mentioned and more."

Professor of History and Comparative Religion: "If the advantage of the linguistic miracle over the tangible miracle is the rational evidence that you have mentioned, then I object in a way that you cannot evade. My point is that

Muhammad is not the only one who received a Book. You as Muslims believe in the Book that was revealed to Moses, and you believe in the Gospel that God revealed to Jesus, and you believe in all the other books.

If the matter is the matter of language, then the Arabic language is exclusive to the Arabs, hence the Qur'ân was revealed in it, and the same applies to all other languages.

Moreover, if the Torah and Gospel are like the Qur'ân, and they are all from God as you say, then why did God preserve the Qur'ân and not the other Books, when all of them were His words? Why is there this differentiation?

Is it rational to say that this differentiation comes from God, or is it something that the Muslims added, so as give their religion some distinction and market their religion?"

Abu Haamid: "There is a difference between saying that God revealed a Book of guidance and mercy to Jesus, Moses, or some other Prophet; and saying that God revealed a Book in which there is guidance and mercy to Muhammad, and

made his miracle the Book itself.

Give me one of the Prophets who said "My miracle is my Book; it is the Torah or Gospel or Psalms and so on."

If no Prophet said this concerning his Book, then how can we say it?

Show me a single verse in any Book of divine origin other than the Qur'ân in which God promised to preserve that Book.

I assure you that you will never find such a verse except in the Qur'ân. That verse is the one that I quoted to you before; it is the verse in which God says: "**Verily, We, it is We Who have sent down the Dhikr (i.e. the Qur'ân) and surely, We will guard it (from corruption)**" [*al-Hijr* 15:9]."

Professor of History and Comparative Religion: "I am sorry to interrupt, and I hope you will continue giving your rational answers about the capability of language to be a miracle, and that the Qur'ân is the greatest of miracles. I think you have finished giving the eighth rational proof."

Abu Haamid: "*The Ninth rational proof*"

The reason why previous miracles were not preserved

is – and here we know part of the rational reason why God did not preserve the Books of those previous messages, although He was undoubtedly able to preserve them as He preserved the Qur'ân. But He did preserve the minimum that man requires from these messages, which is to believe in them. As for the details of the laws that governed their daily lives, they were not preserved. People's lives at that time were very different; what reason was there to preserve information, when its application or its people had fundamentally changed?

It is well known to heart doctors that metal valves were the only replacement for natural valves when it was determined that there was a need to replace them, until the discovery of the natural valve which is much better in all aspects and much cheaper, because it is natural, and is made from the membranes of the heart itself, so the new valve was adopted worldwide.

Will there then be any need for hospitals to carry on working with the old metal valve, after the new natural valve has been adopted, and the faults of the original valve have been discovered? Yes,

those who had the first valve inserted before, lived their lives as was decreed for them, and in most cases they were better off than when they were ill. This is the case with all industries that are subject to development in all areas of life. But the rights of the first should be kept. Its name should be preserved, as should the fact that it has precedence.

With this logical approach that is adopted in all fields, you can understand why God delegated responsibility for the preservation of those Books and the teachings of the earlier Messengers to themselves. But as for the Qur'ân, He Himself guaranteed to preserve it.

The Qur'ân also guaranteed the rightful position, value and status of those Books, without saying that there was any guarantee to preserve them, or that they should be followed. If you study the Qur'ân, you will find that it enjoins believing in these Books, and it mentions what they contained of light and mercy, but it does not say that they were protected, or that following them is obligatory, and so on, except inasmuch as they are in accordance with the new Book of divine origin- the Qur'ân. God says:

“Verily, We did send down the Tawrah (Torah), therein was guidance and light, by which the Prophets, who submitted themselves to Allah’s Will, judged for the Jews. And the rabbis and the priests [too judged for the Jews by the Tawrah (Torah) after those Prophets], for to them was entrusted the protection of Allah’s Book, and they were witnesses thereto. Therefore fear not men but fear Me (O Jews) and sell not My Verses for a miserable price. And whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, such are the disbelievers.” [*al-Ma’idah* 5:44].

Then after that He says in verse 48:

“And We have sent down to you the Book (this Qur’ân) in truth, confirming the Scripture that came before it and Muhaymin (trustworthy in highness and a witness) over it (old Scriptures). So judge among them by what Allah has revealed, and follow not their vain desires, diverging away from the truth that has come to you. To each among you, We have prescribed a law and a clear way. If Allah had willed, He would have made you one nation, but that (He) may test you in what He has

given you; so compete in good deeds. The return of you (all) is to Allah; then He will inform you about that in which you used to differ” [*al-Ma'idah* 5:48].

Do you think it is wise for people to abandon new medical discoveries which are suited to their modern way of life, and which keep them healthy and save them time, effort and money, and go back to the old ways which were suited to the way people lived in previous times?

Is it appropriate for a man to hire a sail boat to transport his goods across the ocean and forsake modern ships that are safe, fast, and have a large capacity?

Is it appropriate for the owner of a large farm to use hand tools to cultivate his land, and to use a sickle to harvest his crops, forsaking modern agricultural tools?

Yes, if these modern tools appeared in past times, man would have stood before them in astonishment, not knowing how to operate them. He might throw them far away from his land, as happens now when these tools are offered to some of those who live in the jungle, and do not know of the modern scientific revolution.

Hence it is more appropriate for them to use shovels, sickles and human hands to do the planting and harvesting. Yet preserving the old tools is necessary in order to highlight their value at their time, and to study how things gradually developed, for purely academic interest. This is what is called in religion "believing in it", i.e., believing in the previous Messengers, not denigrating their religion or denying their message. Hence believing in the previous Messengers is regarded as an essential pillar of Islam, and the one who does not believe in them, is a disbeliever in Islam itself. In *Surat an-Nisa'*, God says:

150. "Verily, those who disbelieve in Allah and His Messengers and wish to make distinction between Allah and His Messengers (by believing in Allah and disbelieving in His Messengers) saying, 'We believe in some but reject others,' and wish to adopt a way in between.

151. They are in truth disbelievers. And We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating torment.

152. And those who believe in Allah and His Messengers and make no dis-

inction between any of them (Messengers), We shall give them their rewards; and Allah is Ever Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful” [an-Nisa’ 4:150-152].

The Qur’ân did not just refer to the rules mentioned in previous Books for academic or theoretical purposes, rather it explained many of the practical rulings, and before that, it mentioned the ideological unity of the Prophet’s messages. The mention of the Prophets in the Qur’ân is not limited to listing their names, or enjoining belief in them. The Qur’ân tells the stories of many of them, clearly and in detail, without any distortion or alteration, in the most eloquent and profound manner, and makes them easy to understand.

The Tenth rational proof is: Imagine that the staff of Moses (peace be upon him) had survived until today, and was used a sign of Moses’ Prophethood, as it was used then. Wouldn’t that increase the faith of the believers in it, and thus become an obvious sign of his Prophethood, so long as the staff existed? And could be a mercy for those who did not see it after Moses (peace be upon him) passed away?

In it are
extra
mercy
and extra
faith

Imagine if the sign of Jesus (peace be upon him) had survived and operated as it used to operate at the time of Jesus (peace be upon him). Would that not be a means of increasing certainty for those who did not see Jesus (peace be upon him) and as a proof for them against others?

The answer in both cases is: Indeed it is so.

How about when there was no Prophet who did not have a miracle?

Nevertheless, all the miracles have disappeared, leaving nothing but the reports about them, and we know nothing about most of them, even though they were undoubtedly great miracles. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "There is no Prophet who was not given some miracles that were similar to the miracles of the Prophets who came before him, so that the people would believe in him, but that which I have been given is a Revelation that Allah has revealed to me, and I hope that I will be the one with the most followers

on the Day of Resurrection.”⁴

The Messages used to renew the teachings, and eliminate deviation with the sending of new Prophets. If anything had to be abrogated, a new Messenger would be sent with a new law. Thus the Messengers came one after another, until there came the turn of the comprehensive, final Message. So it deserves that its miracles should be ongoing and be protected from alteration and distortion.

Hence, Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is the unique case in which the miracle remained, even though the one who brought it passed away. Hence he hoped that he would have the most followers, because the miracle survived, and continued. In that there is the greatest mercy to the people who came after him, because those who came after any of the Prophets did not have anything of his Prophet's miracle, except what he heard about, whereas those who came after Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saw his miracle, as those who saw him saw

4. Narrated by al-Bukhari (4981, 7274) and Muslim (152) and others from Abu Sa'eed from Abu Hurayrah.

it, so those who lived after him are like those who lived during his time, with regard to this miracle. This is the greatest mercy to his followers, as it offers them more support. Hence we are able to say to you now: Read the Qur'ân that is the everlasting miracle of Muhammad.

This is one aspect. From another angle, I say:

Does it make any sense for God to leave mankind after the time of Jesus (peace be upon him) until today, and until the Day of Resurrection, without any Messengers, then bring them to account after that?

The answer is definitely no.

So where is the Messenger (or Messengers) after Jesus (peace be upon him)? Where are the everlasting miracles of those who came after him in greater numbers?

The survival of the Qur'ân is the greatest evidence of the survival of the message of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) from this angle.

This Qur'ânic miracle supports the final message, which will never die even

though the one who brought it died.

The Eleventh rational proof: The survival of the Qur'ân is the best evidence that this message is for all of mankind. You all know that all of the previous Prophets (peace be upon them) came to specific geographical locations, and to specific peoples. There is no text from any of them in which he said "My message is for all of mankind" or "until the end of the world..."

Testimony that the message is universal

The message of Moses (peace be upon him) was, as it says in the Qur'ân:

"And indeed We sent Musa (Moses) with Our *Ayat* (signs, proofs, and evidences) (saying): 'Bring out your people from darkness into light'" [Ibrahim 14:5].

96. "And indeed We sent Musa (Moses) with Our *Ayat* (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) and a manifest authority.

97. To Fir'awn (Pharaoh) and his chiefs, but they followed the command of Fir'awn (Pharaoh), and the command of Fir'awn (Pharaoh) was no right guide" [Hood 11:96-97]

The message of Jesus (peace be upon him) was similarly specific, as God says:

“A Messenger to the Children of Israel (saying): “I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I design for you out of clay, a figure like that of a bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by Allah’s Leave; and I heal him who was born blind, and the leper, and I bring the dead to life by Allah’s Leave. And I inform you of what you eat, and what you store in your houses. Surely, therein is a sign for you, if you believe” [Aal ‘Imran 3:49].

The inevitable outcome was that the miracles and books of the Prophets would disappear when they passed away, in contrast to the survival of the Qur’ân, the unique miracle for the followers of all the religions that came before it, and for all people until the Day of Resurrection.

What does it mean that the miracle will remain until the Day of Resurrection so that we may all witness it – unlike other miracles – except that it is a miracle for all of mankind until the Day of Resurrection? Let the one whose mind refuses

to accept this tell us of a single abiding miracle for anyone other than Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

I repeat, there is nothing in this that is aimed at undermining the miracles or messages of the other Prophets (peace be upon them).

Each of these messages was the most suitable and most perfect for its circumstances and the Prophets are all brothers, and their objective is one.

If you can imagine a just king who lived for a long time, and there were many villages in his kingdom. So he sent one of his sons to one of the villages with a message explaining his laws to them. Five years later, he sent another message to another village with his second son, explaining his laws to the people of this second village, then he sent his third son to a third village, then the fourth and fifth and sixth... Would it be binding upon the people of the second village to follow the same system as the first, even though they differed in everything? Would what he decreed for one village be the same as what he decreed for another? The answer is definitely no.

King's
sons

How about if all his sons whom he sent to the six villages died, and their letters of appointment were altered to the point that their father's seal was erased? But all the inhabitants of those villages affirmed the great king's authority and recognized his favours, and they awaited his commands. And after many years the king himself sent their seventh brother to one of these villages to announce the unification of all the villages into one, and appointing his seventh son as king of the entire kingdom.

So the seventh son came, who was one of the people of that village, and was known for his good manners, trustworthiness and good lineage, and who acknowledged the rights and status of his brothers, telling them "I am just one of the sons of this king, and I am a brother of these noble men, and I have a letter to that effect from my father, refuting the attacks against my brothers who came before me, and exposing the distortion of their letters. This is my evidence and I will never change it, and the enemies will never be able to change it. If they want to drown it, it will never be drowned, and if they want to burn it, it will never be

burned. It will never be destroyed. Whoever does not accept it, let him do what he wants."

The last son died and the enemies tried to attack this letter, but they could not even get near it. So the system remained without alteration from what that son brought. The enemies themselves are still protecting it and preserving it, reinforcing its status, and with the passage of time, it becomes more protected and more widespread. Have you thought about this example?

The Twelfth rational proof: One of the greatest reasons why the Qur'ân is valid to become a message for everyone and an abiding message, is that it is distinguished by clear and unchangeable facts. So the issues of belief are clear and unchangeable, and not subject to any alteration, ever. What change can be introduced to the Oneness of God, or belief in the angels, or belief in the Messengers or Books or the Last Day or Paradise and Hell?

What change can be introduced into the stories of the past mentioned in the Qur'ân, and the general acts of worship?

It contains
fixed
principles
and
variables

But there are some variables, where putting them in a fixed mould is putting restrictions on human reasoning, human needs and scientific discoveries. Thus the Qur'ân leaves room for people's opinions and it leaves ample room for reasoning. So there is a vast intellectual space in the Qur'ân, such as we do not find anywhere else. You do not find the call to ponder the creation of God as you find it in the Qur'ân. God says:

190. "Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for men of understanding.

191. Those who remember Allah (always, and in prayers) standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and think deeply about the creation of the heavens and the earth, (saying): "Our Lord! You have not created (all) this without purpose, glory to You! (Exalted are You above all that they associate with You as partners). Give us salvation from the torment of the Fire" [*Aal 'Imran* 3:190,191]

After reciting this verse, the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Woe to the one who

does not think.”⁵

And God says in *Surat Saad*:

“(This is) a Book (the Qur’ân) which We have sent down to you, full of blessings, that they may ponder over its Verses, and that men of understanding may remember” [*Saad* 38:29]

And in *Surat Al-Room* God says:

21. “And among His Signs is this, that He created for you wives from among yourselves, that you may find repose in them, and He has put between you affection and mercy. Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who reflect.

22. And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colours. Verily, in that are indeed signs for men of sound knowledge.

23. And among His Signs is your sleep by night and by day, and your seeking of His Bounty. Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who listen.

5. Narrated by Ibn Hibbaan in his *Sahih* (620). Shu’ayb al-Arna’ut said: “Its chain of narrators is *sahih* (sound) according to the conditions of Muslim.”

24. And among His Signs is that He shows you the lightning, for fear and for hope, and He sends down water (rain) from the sky, and therewith revives the earth after its death. Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who understand.

25. And among His Signs is that the heaven and the earth stand by His Command. Then afterwards when He will call you by a single call, behold, you will come out from the earth (i.e. from your graves for reckoning and recompense)” [*al-Room* 30:21-25]

God enjoins us to refer to people of knowledge, each in his specialty, as He says in *Surat an-Nahl*:

“So ask (you, O pagans of Makkah) of those who know the Scripture [learned men of the Tawrah (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel)], if you know not” [*an-Nahl* 16:43]

The Qur’ân raised the status of thinkers above that of worshippers, and made the scholars higher in status than worshippers. Knowledge and scholars are often referred to in the Qur’ân, and the reason for the high status of thinking and think-

ers, and of learners and scholars, is quite clear. It is that the definitive outcome of sound knowledge and sound thought is an increase in knowledge of God and in faith in the Qur'ân. God says in *Surat az-Zumar*:

“Say: ‘Are those who know equal to those who know not?’ It is only men of understanding who will remember (i.e. get a lesson from Allah’s Signs and Verses)” [az-Zumar 39:9]

And He says in *Surat Faatir*:

27. “See you not that Allah sends down water (rain) from the sky, and We produce therewith fruits of various colours, and among the mountains are streaks white and red, of varying colours and (others) very black.

28. And likewise, men and *Ad Dawabb* [moving (living) creatures, beasts] and cattle are of various colours. It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allah” [Faatir 35:28]

For those who, like you, do not interact with the Qur'ân, it may be difficult to understand this matter. Even if he does understand it, it will be on the basis that it is something theoretical. He will not base

any practical issue on it. I will give you a clear example.

Despite the belief that the age of the earth is 4.54 billion years – according to estimates – it still gives every generation what suits it of provision, benefits and treasures. Some people thought that all the benefits of the earth were in the herbage that God brings forth from the earth, so that their animals may eat of it, and they may benefit from the animals, and if this herbage disappeared, there would be nothing else. After that, people thought that the earth's goodness was in what it produced of minerals, on the surface or in rocks, and if the minerals and herbage were to disappear, we would have nothing left. People after them thought that the goodness of the earth was in the oil that is stored in it, and so on. But the earth is still the earth, and no one knows what benefits are left in it. All of that is mentioned in a verse in which God says of the earth:

9. "Say: Do you verily disbelieve in Him Who created the earth in two Days? And you set up rivals (in worship) with Him? That is the Lord of the 'Alameen (mankind, jinn and all

that exists).

10. He placed therein (i.e. the earth) firm mountains from above it, and He blessed it, and measured therein its sustenance (for its dwellers) in four Days equal (i.e. all these four 'days' were equal in the length of time) for all those who ask (about its creation)"
[*Fussilat* 41:9-10]

Based on that, I wonder: Can anyone say that the earth is ancient or that all its benefits have been exhausted? Or that all the benefits of the sun have been exhausted? Or that mankind can do away with the sun?

The sun, from which humans strive to derive energy – its light does not fade and its benefits do not decrease.

What are the sun and the earth except two created entities? But the Qur'ân is the miraculous word of God, and it is not created. Its validity is greater than that of the sun and the earth. God challenged all creation with it.

So these Books could not have been distorted if God had guaranteed to preserve them. Since they were distorted, we know that God had a great purpose, which is

that God was preparing the world for something greater than them. Additionally the way of the Prophets is one, and that these Books are like a single Book. These Messengers are like a single Messenger, because they come from the same source. So one does not have an advantage over another, because the source of this book or that. Is not the Messenger who is from among my people or yours, rather it is from the Lord of the Worlds.

There should be no confusion as a result of the fact that the Torah and Gospel were not preserved, and the Noble Qur'ân was preserved.

We are not saying this so as to win people over, rather what we are saying is the religion of Islam, and if we did not say this, we would have gone beyond the pale of Islam entirely. Have you not read the last verses of the longest *surah* in the Qur'ân, *Surat al-Baqarah*, where God says:

285. "The Messenger believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers. Each one believes in Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers. (They say,) "We make no distinction between one another of His Messengers" — and

they say, "We hear, and we obey. (We seek) Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the return (of all)."

286. Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope. He gets reward for that (good) which he has earned, and he is punished for that (evil) which he has earned. 'Our Lord! Punish us not if we forget or fall into error, our Lord! Lay not on us a burden like that which You did lay on those before us (Jews and Christians); our Lord! Put not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Pardon us and grant us forgiveness. Have mercy on us. You are our Mawla (Patron, Supporter and Protector) and give us victory over the disbelieving people'" [al-Baqarah 2:285-286]

And God says:

"Say (O Muslims): 'We believe in Allah and that which has been sent down to us and that which has been sent down to Ibrahim (Abraham), Isma'il (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isaac), Ya'qub (Jacob), and to Al-Asbat [the offspring of the twelve sons of Ya'qub (Jacob)], and that which has been given to Musa (Moses) and 'Eesa (Jesus), and that

which has been given to the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and to Him we have submitted (in Islam)'" [al-Baqarah 2:136]

I am quoting these verses to prove that what I am saying is a fundamental principle in our religion, and I am not just saying it on the spur of the moment.

Moreover, when we believe it and state it to you, we are saying it to highlight the truth. We are not just acting. We believe that we are all, us and you, one nation, not separate nations. Our Lord is One, our message is one, the Prophets are all brothers, so the matter is much greater than competition or pragmatism. So if you know this matter for sure, you will realize that it is for you too, not only for me, and the greatest rebuke you may give me is: Why did you not tell me this before?

The greatest sense of sorrow for you will be: How could your parents die without knowing the Qur'ân?

The greatest joy for you will be to say: Praise be to God Who has guided me to this, at this age, before I die.

So there is no need for anyone to think that the aim of what we say is anything but to speak the truth.

The preservation of the Noble Qur'ân is in fact evidence for the protection of the status of the Torah and Gospel.

It is well known that if there is any doubt about someone's testimony, it will no longer be valid and no ruling or judgement can be based on it. The rule says: If there is any doubt about evidence that is presented, it cannot be used as evidence.

We quoted a certain amount of definitive evidence proving that the Torah and Gospel have been distorted, starting with the fact that Jesus (peace be upon him) did not write the Gospel himself. He did not dictate it to his students. It was not written during his life time, and ending with the fact that the original copies have disappeared, and have not been discovered until this day. Additionally, there are many interruptions in the chain of narration, and there has been interference from political rulers, in addition to the fact that hundreds of other Gospels were burned, and only these four were chosen. Many contradictions remain in these four, proving definitively, that they

are not from God, because God cannot be confused, or contradict Himself. All of this, as well as other evidence, makes it impossible to rule that the Torah, Gospel and Psalms remained without any distortion, or that they remained as they were revealed from God. Rather it makes it impossible to testify that God revealed the Torah, Gospel or Psalms in any definitive way, except through the Qur'ân!

Because how can we have definitive evidence of that, when all the evidence contained in them is subject to grave doubts?"

Professor of History and Comparative Religion: "Are all these masses of humanity that follow the Torah, Gospel and Psalms not sufficient to prove that God revealed the Torah, Gospel and Psalms?"

Abu Haamid: "As an academic and historical analyst, you know very well that reports we have inherited are one thing, and which of them is actually true is something else. Millions of worshippers today are following the Prophets – as they claim – but they cannot prove that the one they are following really existed, let alone that he was really a Prophet. We

Arabs have famous heroic legends, such as the story of 'Antarah ibn Shaddaad and Abu Zayd al-Hilaali, and you have famous heroic legends, but their fame does not mean that they really existed one day on earth, and people do not know who originally wrote the stories.

God insisted that these Books of divine origin, the Torah, Gospels and Psalms, should not be like these human legends, and He refused to leave them subject to conjecture. Therefore He sent a witness that could not be rejected, and no one can refute or distort its testimony. The Qur'ân came to be the only testimony that God revealed the Books named the Torah, the Gospel and the Psalms.

We have to understand that the relationship between the Torah and Gospel and the Qur'ân is not like the relationship between us.

We should not connect the Books of God to our regions, nationalities, backgrounds, backwardness, psychology and competitions. We have to overcome these hateful, narrow-minded, ignorant barriers, which are the greatest cause of division between these Books.

Nature
of the
relationship
between
the
books

The relationship between them is that their source is the same; God. If God revealed a Book to some people, then said to them: "I am going to take away this Book," they would have no right to object.

If He said to them: I am going to abrogate some of its verses, they would have no right to object, as if they owned it, or as if they were putting conditions on their Lord, or as if they were fulfilling personal aims, or competing with other nations.

This is done in accordance with the system created by God, and in accordance with His will.

The Qur'ân itself has abrogated verses, but they are recited and preserved in the Qur'ân until today. They are part of the miracle. The fact that these verses are both abrogated and preserved does not alter the reality in the slightest, which is that God confirms whatever He wants and abrogates whatever He wants, and all of that is for a reason. The reason is clear in every verse that is abrogated. If you want to discuss this in details, I have no objections. As God says in *Surat al-Baqarah*:

“Whatever a Verse (revelation) do We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring a better one or similar to it. Know you not that Allah is Able to do all things?” [*al-Baqarah* 2:106].

And God says in *Surat al-Ra'd*:

“Allah blots out what He wills and confirms (what He wills). And with Him is the Mother of the Book (*Al Lawh Al Mahfuz*)” [*al-Ra'd* 13:39].

When God preserved the Books by means of the Qur'ân, He only preserved His Books by means of His Books, and that is a mercy to His servants. On that basis, it is impossible, rationally speaking, that the Qur'ân should be subject to any change, because if the Qur'ân, which is the last Book, was changed, there would be no witness left for God on earth.

If all the Messengers died, and all the Books were burned, and all the witnesses disappeared, who would testify to the divinity of God? What authentic document would be left as proof against the deniers, or would be left between God and His creation?

Hence the survival and preservation of the Qur'ân is a preservation of the great-

est testimony of all the Books and all the Messengers, and it is a protection for mankind, lest those who toyed with the Books, foremost among whom are the leaders of the Jews, toy with them too.

This is the first point. Secondly, after we conclude this gathering, I would like you to go to twenty churches scattered across the land, and ask each one the same question: Do you believe that everything in the Gospel is the word of God?

The answer of all of them, or say most of them, will be no, the Gospel contains some things that are not the word of God.

While you are en route from one church to another, stop and ask whomever you want the same question, and you will find that they will also vary in their responses.

Then go to the mosques that are scattered across your land, and ask everyone, *imams* and common folk alike the same question about the Qur'ân. You will find they will all give the same answer, which is: yes indeed.

Go out on the street and ask any Muslim, regardless of his occupation, the same

question: Is everything in the Qur'ân the word of God? The answer will definitely be yes.

Forget about people; take a copy of the Qur'ân and go around the world. You will never find that the Qur'ân in India differs from the Qur'ân in Saudi or in America.

Do the same thing with the Gospel and you will see the difference, and the impossibility of there being harmony between one edition and another.

Respected professor, what crowds are you talking about?

If there is no harmony between one edition and another in the same era, then what do you think that the passage of time has done to these Gospels?"

Professor of History and Comparative Religion: "How can I understand the Qur'ânic accusation that they have been distorted, when the Qur'ân also enjoins believing that they are books of God?"

We can only conclude that your Qur'ân is telling us to believe in distorted Books, and say that your Qur'ân is asserting the superiority of man's ability over that of

God, and that man has gained control over the book of God. This is the greatest criticism of your Qur'ân and of God!

Is that not so?"

How
can we
reconcile
between
criticizing
them and
believing
in them?

Abu Haamid: "Respected professor, do you expect that the Qur'ân should enjoin disbelieving in the previous Books of divine origin on the basis that they are distorted? Or do you expect that it should enjoin following everything in them when their followers, of all people, know that they are distorted?"

Therefore it is most fair and just that it should enjoin believing in them as being from God, while forbidding us to follow everything in them, because of the distortions that have been introduced into them, whether to a greater or lesser extent.

The non-preservation of these books is not a shortcoming in those books; rather it is for a reason. One aspect of that reason is to render invalid the claims of their followers that there is no need to follow the last Book, because reason dictates that if their books had been preserved as they were revealed, and then the Qur'ân had come, then they could have said: We

have our Book and you have your Book. You have your religion and we have ours.

But the mere fact that everybody admits that there are distortions in those books, regardless of the degree thereof, whether it is great or small, shows the invalidity of following those Books, but it does not alter the fact that we are required to believe in them.

The fact there is consensus that the Qur'ân has not been distorted at all – to the point that no one is able to prove any distortion, even of a single word – makes it the only source, not only for the Arabs, but for all the followers of the Books of divine origin that came before. This is because God is the Lord of the Worlds not only the Lord of the Arabs. The Qur'ân is for all of mankind, even if it is in Arabic, and the message of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is for all of mankind even if he was born in Arabia.

This is what we will discuss further if we are able to hold further gatherings, if God wills, in this beautiful land of France. These geographical and linguistic characteristics do not imply subservi-

ence to anyone. Subservience is to God alone. Muhammad is like Moses and like Jesus (peace be upon them all) – they are all Messengers, not gods. We never at any time spoke of Jesus (peace be upon him) as a Palestinian or of Moses (peace be upon him) as an Egyptian, or of Abraham (peace be upon him) as an Iraqi, or of any of the other Prophets in terms of their origins. What matters, is that they all conveyed a message from God, they all came from God, and God chose them from among mankind. It is not the matter of regional origins, or else we would say that Jesus, Moses and the father of the Prophets Abraham (peace be upon them all) were easterners like Muhammad, based on your division of the world nowadays.

It is a grave calamity that you realize that the Books which were revealed to you are distorted, and that the ones who distorted them are the worst enemies of the Prophets, but you defend them and those who distorted them!

Does the one who transgressed against the Books of God and against the Prophets deserve to be defended?

Is it rational to mobilize the masses in

defence of distortion, when the Noble Qur'ân is the greatest defender of the previous Books, and curses those who distorted them?

For example God says in *Surat al-Ma'idah*:

“So, because of their breach of their covenant, We cursed them and made their hearts grow hard. They change the words from their (right) places and have abandoned a good part of the Message that was sent to them. And you will not cease to discover deceit in them, except a few of them. But forgive them and overlook (their misdeeds). Verily, Allah loves the good doers.” [*al-Ma'idah* 5:13]

Respected Professor, if you wanted to sell your valuable car, which you drove here tonight, for two hundred thousand euros, and a man brought you a bundle of bank notes and said, “Here you are, this is its price, here are two hundred thousand euros and more,” but some of the bank notes in this bundle are forged, would you accept that from him? Or would you leave it? Your answer will be: I will not accept it until I separate the forged notes from the others, and if it was not possi-

Selling a
valuable
car

ble for you to sort them because you had no machine available to scan them, and he had another bundle which was not forged; you would take the second bundle without hesitating.

Why don't you apply the same logic to the books of divine origin?

Nevertheless, you cannot deny that the bundle containing some forgeries still has some value. The method that you follow with the bundle of bank notes in which some forgeries have been inserted, is the same method that is prescribed by God when dealing with the previous books of divine origin. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "What the People of the Book narrate to you, do not believe them or disbelieve them; say 'We believe in Allah and His Books and His Messengers.' Then if it is false you will not have believed it, and if it is true you will not have disbelieved in it."⁶ This is what is called *tawaqquf* or reserving judgement. In other words, if they tell you something from their books or reports of their Prophets, then reserve

6. Narrated by Ahmad (17264), Abu Dawud (3644) and others from Abu Namlah al-Ansari; classed as *sahih* by al-Albaani.

judgement until things become clear to you, because you may disbelieve them and thus disbelieve a report that is proven from God or His Messenger. Or you may believe them when the report is one of those that have been distorted, or are false, and have nothing to do with God or His Messenger. Hence you should not judge until you have made sure. This is the method of scientific verification."

Professor of Comparative Religion and History:

"I have some criticism which you cannot deny, no matter what your excuse. You have started trying to dismiss our objections one by one. In fact, you have started coming up with objections, one after another, to say that the Torah and Gospel are distorted, and that the Qur'ân is not distorted, and that it is free of contradictions.

But at the same time, we see you clearly admitting that the differences in the Qur'ân are well established, regulated and accepted since the days of your Messenger Muhammad!

Why don't you look with me at what you yourself call different recitations of the Qur'ân?

Answer to
confusion
concern-
ing the ten
recitations

Doesn't the Qur'ân have ten different recitations, each of which differs from the others? Which of these recitations should we accept?

If you criticize us for having four Gospels, we should ask you to answer for these ten recitations. Even if we go along with you, and accept that the Gospel that was revealed from heaven was one, then it became four, the Qur'ân which was revealed from heaven was one and the recitations are ten.

You have two choices; either prove the soundness of the Qur'ân, and do not accept the recitations, or accept the ten recitations and give up your claim that the Qur'ân is free of faults."

The ten recitations are the greatest proof that the Qur'ân is sound

Abu Haamid: "Every time you come up with a new objection to the truth, the truth will become clearer and clearer, every time a new specious argument is raised. You will see that the different recitations are a great positive sign of the preservation of this Qur'ân. I will answer your objection in a few brief, rational points, without discussing in detail.

The recitations were revealed with the Qur'ân

The first rational answer:

The recitations are not a distortion of the

Qur'ân, as is the case with the Gospel and Torah. Rather the recitations were revealed with the Qur'ân from heaven. This answer alone is sufficient to refute your objection from the outset. In order to prove to you that the recitations were revealed with the Qur'ân, and that they are not man-made, I will quote to you just one report from Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself, which proves that the recitations were revealed to him with the Qur'ân, and that they were not invented after his death, as a change that was introduced into the Qur'ân. Rather he is the one who wanted them, and he kept asking for more so as to make things easier for his people. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself said: "Jibreel (Gabriel – peace be upon him) taught me one *harf* (recitation), and I kept asking him for more and he gave me more, until there ended up being seven *ahruf* (recitations)." Ibn Shihab (one of the narrators) said: "I heard that these seven are concerning a matter that is the same (i.e., the meaning is the same) and there is no difference about what is lawful and what is unlawful."⁷

7. Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari (1/561, no. 819).

Whether some scholars explain these seven *ahruf* as being recitations or something else, this variety was revealed from heaven.

Listen to this story about when a dispute about these recitations arose among the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad, and then draw whatever conclusions you want from it. It happened to the man who became the second caliph after the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), whose name was 'Umar ibn al-Khattab. 'Umar himself said: I heard Hisham ibn Hakeem reciting *Surat al-Furqaan* in a manner different from that in which I used to recite it, and the way in which the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) taught me to recite it. I was about to correct him while he was praying, but I waited until he finished his prayer, and then I tied his garment around his neck and seized him by it and brought him to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, I heard this man reciting *Surat al-Furqaan* in a way different to the way you taught

Quoting from *al-Intisaar li'l-Qur'ân* by Imam Sayf al-Tayyib al-Baqillani, vol. 1, p. 357

it to me.' The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to me: 'Let him go,' so I let him go. Then he said to him, 'Recite it,' and he recited it as I had heard him recite it. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, 'It was revealed like this.' Then he said to me, 'Recite it,' so I recited it and he said, 'It was revealed like this. This Qur'ân has been revealed in seven different ways, so recite it in the way that is easiest for you.'"⁸

If you examine this *hadith*, you will see that they called it recitations, and not new words. Moreover if you examine the story, you will see the great sensitivity that the Companions had with regard to any change in the Qur'ân, even if it was in the way it was pronounced.

And you will see that the reference point for each of them, was the one to whom it was revealed, and they never tried to make such decisions themselves, because it is something that was revealed. As they heard it from him the first time, they confirmed it with him every time there was a difference of opinion. You will also find

8. Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 2287 and Muslim, 818.

that they memorized the Qur'ân by heart; were it not for that, 'Umar would not have made this objection to Hisham.

Finally, the answer given by the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to both was a simple. It was a short answer (two words in Arabic): "Thus it was revealed."

The second rational answer:

Recitations,
not
Qur'âns

If you think about your objection, you will find that you have invalidated your own objection, and that the proof against you is embodied in your own question. Thus the truth prevails in all circumstances. Repeat your objection and you will find that you said: "If we have four Gospels, then you have ten recitations!"

So you are saying that these are recitations, and not Qur'âns, while all the recitations are of one Qur'ân. At the same time, you admit that what you have is four Gospels, so each Gospel is different from another, as would be the case if you said "four Qur'âns".

Moreover, if you came to the people who taught these recitations and asked each one, "Where did you get this recitation from?" he would say: "This is my recita-

tion of the Qur'ân that I narrated from the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)." Moreover, if you went to one who had a different recitation and asked him, "Where did you get this recitation from?" he would also say: "This is my recitation of the Qur'ân that I narrated from the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)." And so on, if you asked each of them about this recitation, he would tell you, "This is my recitation that I narrated from the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)." This is how each one of them would answer you. But if you were to bring anything from any one of the Gospel authors and ask him, he would tell you, "This is my Gospel that was revealed to me or that I wrote myself, and no one else has anything to do with it, as each would have said in the introduction to his own Gospel: "When I saw..."

So it is as if the Gospels are four heavenly Books, each of which is separate from the others.

The third rational answer:

Let us leave ourselves – you and I – out of it when we judge these people or

Knowledge of the recitations is an advantage

those. Let each one judge himself for himself, and let us ask each one who has a specific recitation about the other recitations. Does he believe that the other recitations are sound and valid? His answer will be yes, certainly. Similarly, if you ask his counterpart, and if you ask everyone who has a recitation, he will give you the same answer.

So this is the testimony of them all.

Moreover, each one of them would wish to learn more than one of the ten recitations, and many of them do indeed know more than one. For them, learning the ten recitations is better, academically, than knowing less, and so on. This alone is sufficient evidence, because combining knowledge of all these recitations is not regarded as combining between contradictions, whereas combining between the Gospels is combining between contradictions. No one has ever said that the one who combines between the recitations is combining more than one Qur'ân, whereas the one who combines between the Gospels is combining between more than one Gospel.

The fourth rational answer:

If I ask you now a specific question, namely how many are there who know the Qur'ân with all its recitations, the answer will be that all the Muslims who read the Qur'ân read it according to one specific recitation among these ten. But some Muslims may recite it with two, some may recite it with three, and some may recite it with ten. But there is no Muslim who does not recite with one of these recitations, whether it is what he inherited or what he learned. These recitations form a specific branch of knowledge, and every Muslim recites with one of them, whether he learns this specific branch of knowledge or not. But proper recitation is a common factor among all those who read Qur'ân. Go to the western part of the Arab world and listen to the ordinary Muslims there. Come to the eastern part of the Muslim world and listen to the ordinary Muslims here. You will find that the former recite in one way and the latter recite in one way, and perhaps if you were to ask each of them to analyze his recitation and his knowledge thereof, he would not know the answer, but in terms of performance he does very well.

Every Muslim recites according to a recitation

So the recitations are preserved among all the Muslims. If I were to ask you what the fact that specific recitations have been preserved proves, your answer and the answer of any fair-minded person would be that it is because these recitations are the Qur'ân, which God has promised to preserve.

The fifth rational answer:

God revealed more than one verse which clearly states that the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) has no right to add, subtract, change, or alter anything in the Qur'ân. Read these words of God in *Surat Yumus*:

"And when Our clear Verses are recited unto them, those who hope not for their Meeting with Us, say: 'Bring us a Qur'ân other than this, or change it.' Say: 'It is not for me to change it on my own accord; I only follow that which is revealed unto me. Verily, I fear the torment of the Great Day (i.e. the Day of Resurrection) if I were to disobey my Lord'" [Yumus 10:15].

Read what God says in *Surat al-Haaqqah*, where He declares His Prophet innocent

It is not allowed for Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) to change it

of any tampering with the Qur'ân:

44. "And if he had forged a false saying concerning Us (Allah),

45. We surely would have seized him by his right hand (or with power and might),

46. And then We certainly would have cut off his life artery (aorta)" [*al-Haqqah* 69:44-46].

If the one to whom the Qur'ân was revealed did not have the right to change anything, what right do those who came after him have? As the assumption that any tampering with the Qur'ân on the part of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would have been met with an immediate punishment from God of cutting off his aorta and immediate doom is an impossible assumption, what do you think God would do to the one who actually dared to do that?

Perhaps these recitations are part of the Qur'ân, so they were preserved by the One who preserved it, in the same manner, and changing the recitations is exactly like changing the Qur'ân, and God's promise to preserve the Qur'ân is

a promise to preserve the recitations as well, as God says:

“Verily, We, it is We Who have sent down the *Dhikr* (i.e. the Qur’ân) and surely, We will guard it (from corruption)” [*al-Hijr* 15:9].

The sixth rational answer:

Keeness
of the
Sahaabah

The Companions’ care about the recitations was exactly the same as their care about the Qur’ân. Rather, no one differentiates between their care for the recitations and the Qur’ân. They are the same thing.

Hence when ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan compiled the Qur’ân, as we have seen above – he did not compile it in one recitation, rather he compiled it in all ten recitations that were proven from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Then he sent a copy of the Qur’ân to each land. If you were to ask, did ‘Uthman make ten copies of the Qur’ân, the answer would be no, it was just one copy. With each copy, he sent a person who had knowledge of the Qur’ân and its recitations, one who knew the Book of God by heart in its entirety, and could teach them the Qur’ân with

those recitations. He was helped in that by the fact that the Arabic letters did not have dots or vowel signs. They were just letters which could be read in more than one way, which meant that there had to be a *hafiz* who had memorized the Qur'ân with every copy. 'Uthman ordered Zayd ibn Thabit to teach the people of Madinah, and he sent 'Abdullah ibn al-Sa'ib to Makkah, al-Mugheerah ibn Shihab to Syria, 'Aamir ibn 'Abd Qays to Basrah and Abu 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami to Kufa. Each of these men represented the committee that was formed in Madinah to copy the Noble Qur'ân, and each of them was in charge of transmitting the correct recitation in the unanimously agreed-upon manner, which they had transmitted from the Messenger of Allah Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), knowing that the Arabs used to read written books and poems in the correct manner without any need for someone to read it for them. But because the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) were very keen to protect the Qur'ân in the best manner, they allocated a reciter to go with each *Mus-haf* (copy of the Qur'ân) to teach them how to recite it, so as to leave no room whatsoever

for mistakes or confusion.

The Companions knew that Arabic words without dots could be read in more than one way sometimes, and they knew that the basic principle with regard to the Qur'ân was that it should be learned verbally and not from a written text. Nevertheless they were very careful with regard to future generations, lest anyone read a word that could be read in more than one way, and read it in the wrong way. So they sought to prevent the slightest possibility of error, and they combined learning verbally with learning from a written text. Thus a word that could be read in more than one way, and a word that could be read in only one way, became equal, because when teaching recitation there should be a book, and a teacher who is specialized in recitation, but it is not essential when learning verbally that there should be a book. This is an important matter.

The seventh rational answer:

Among the evidence that having a variety of recitations gave extra protection to the Qur'ân, is the fact that the one who examines the recitations will find that they are of different types. Among them

The recitations are variations not contradictions

are the ten recitations, which are *mutawatir*, i.e., they were narrated from the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) by a large number of people, not just one or two, and an even larger number of people narrated from this large number, and so on and so forth until the Hour begins. The other recitations, which are in harmony with the writing of the Qur'ân, but were not transmitted via sound reports, are regarded as odd, and it was narrated that it is not permissible to regard them as Qur'ân and they are not valid for use in prayer. And there are other recitations that fall between these two types.

So the existence of odd recitations which are in harmony with the words of the Qur'ân, and the scholars' rejection thereof is among the strongest evidence that the preservation of the recitations is part of the preservation of the Qur'ân, and that what matters is not what is written and the people's opinions – so as to draw conclusions as to what is possible and acceptable or not. Rather the basic principle is that what matters is what is narrated via a *mutawatir* chain of narrators, or via a chain that is sound and well known.

This is the only thing that matters.

The eighth rational answer:

The Arabs, as you know, had a number of tribes, and each of these tribes had its own way of pronouncing words. One tribe would pronounce a word in one way and another tribe would pronounce it in another way, so one word would have several ways of pronunciation, although the meaning was still the same. What shame or distortion is there in this?

Moreover, if the young children of a certain tribe inherited a certain way of pronouncing some letters from their forefathers, and the Qur'ân was revealed with this pronunciation of some particular words, what is wrong with that? What distortion is there in that?

Don't you see that this is a sign that the Qur'ân was made easy for people?

The ninth rational answer:

Don't you see that this was a sign of honour for the other dialects of the Arabs, not a sign of neglect? It was an honour and means of rising their status, because it offered protection from their dialect becoming extinct. How many languages

were born but have disappeared, let alone dialects?

Moreover, have you seen what calamities a nation like the Arabs has gone through since the time of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) until today? Yet their language has not been lost or changed, and moreover, its dialects have been preserved. You may wonder about the reason for this amazing fact, but you will find only one reason, which is the Qur'ân, and the preserved recitations of this great Qur'ân.

The tenth rational answer:

What greater evidence is there of the preservation of the Qur'ân than the preservation of these recitations?

Whereas the original texts of the Torah and Gospel have been lost, the Qur'ân has survived and been preserved, even in the ways of pronouncing some of its words which are known and defined, with nothing added or taken away. There can be no doubt that the one who memorizes the ways of pronouncing a word, is more likely to memorize the word itself, and more likely to memorize the book. The different ways of reciting may have

to do with pronunciation, not the way the words are written. The one who knows the different recitations and the different ways of reading will know, even better, the way it should be written. It was handed down by groups of people who had memorized it in such a fashion, until it reached us without the slightest difference, between those who came before and those who came after. The one who memorizes the different ways of recitation is more likely to memorize the way it should be written, because words are words, and letters are letters, but the way it is pronounced is what is different. Yet all these ways of pronunciation were preserved. What is more likely is that the Qur'ân would be preserved, because of the combination between narration and writing.

The eleventh rational answer:

Preserving the different recitations lends extra strength to the preservation of the Qur'ân. The roof that has four pillars is stronger than the roof that has one pillar, and the family that has seven sons who are united in harmony is bigger and stronger than the families that have only one son. If you examine the recitations

you will find that each recitation has its own chain of narrators going back to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). So every recitation provides a new chain of narrators for the entire Qur'ân, because its chain of narrators is not limited to its recitations only.

If you look at the first recitation, you will find that it has chains of narrators proving that the Qur'ân was received in its entirety from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). If you look at the second recitation you will find that it has chains of narrators proving that the Qur'ân was received in its entirety from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and so on. All of these recitations were narrated with sound chains of narration, leaving no room for dispute. The reciters of each of these recitations do not differ with one another. Moreover, none of these reciters undermines the other recitations.

Therefore, the implication is that each of these recitations proves the Qur'ân in its entirety, in all ten recitations, without any contradiction, and highlights its own speciality, which has to do with the pronunciation of a few words and the like.

Does this reinforce it or undermine it?"

Dr. Drima: "I want to go back to something that you said about the Qur'ân. You indicated that the Qur'ân contains scientific miracles, both medical and non-medical, and that it is miraculous even from a scientific point of view. Frankly, Abu Haamid, this is the last thing I can accept from you. You know when the Qur'ân was revealed, and you know when the scientific renaissance began, and that there were approximately six hundred and fifty years between them.

Moreover, scientific discoveries are still ongoing, and they are constantly developing. So what period is the Qur'ân talking about, and what discoveries is it talking about?

If we accept this, then why do we not accept that the Torah, Gospel and Psalms – which came approximately seven hundred years before the Qur'ân – are also miraculous, even from a medical point of view?

Perhaps you think that merely quoting a few words from the Qur'ân on some topic or other can be accepted as a scientific topic.

Perhaps you will say: Look at what the Qur'ân says about this topic, which scientists have discovered today.

How can the efforts of those researchers who have worked so hard in laboratories and study halls be dismissed so easily, on the basis of general ideas mentioned in the Qur'ân which was revealed fourteen centuries ago?

Yes, perhaps there are some prophecies that were proven true over time, as is the case with the books of famous seers such as Nostradamus.

But on the other hand, there are innumerable myths. If you opened every door of challenge except this one, perhaps it would be better for you, because science leaves no room for niceties, and the language of numbers is greater than ambiguous literary phrases. No matter how much you try to clothe ancient things in modern terms you will still see signs of its ancientness, which will be clearly exposed."

Abu Haamid: "How long ago did God create the sun, according to your knowledge?"

Dr. Drima: "God created it approxi-

mately 4.5 billion years ago.”

Abu Haamid: ‘How long ago did God reveal the Qur’ân?’

Dr. Drima: “A little over fourteen hundred years ago.”

Abu Haamid: “Can we stop benefiting from the sun on the grounds that it is so ancient? We know that what God has revealed is greater than what He has created, because what God has revealed is one of His attributes, but what He has created is a creation that can change and be altered.

This does not apply only to the Qur’ân, but to all the books of divine origin that God has revealed. What stops us from quoting evidence from those books is to protect them and not neglect them. If we knew for certain that what God revealed in those books had not been subjected to distortion, we could have quoted it as evidence in scientific fields and other branches of knowledge. But because the distorted material is mixed with what was revealed, we avoid using these books as evidence altogether, lest we quote the distorted material which may be contradicted by science. If that occurs it may be

used as a reason to reject the Torah and Gospel, thus leading to disbelief in God because of man's tampering and transgression.

With regard to the Qur'ân, you may look at it many times, but you will not find a single place where it contradicts science on any topic, and the reason is, that you can be certain that human tampering did not affect this Book. God cannot contradict Himself, and nothing in His creation can be hidden from Him, hence it is impossible to find anything in the Qur'ân that contradicts scientific facts.

But at the same time, you should not think that the Qur'ân is a book of medicine, astronomy, chemistry, physics, geography, or any other worldly science. Rather it contains general principles, or many great references, as well as some scientific issues that are described in detail, which may help the one who is hesitant to believe, offer miraculous proof to the one who is challenging, and increase the faith of the believer. Hence the strongest in faith are those who have the greatest knowledge. There are verses in the Qur'ân which say:

27. "See you not that Allah sends down

water (rain) from the sky, and We produce therewith fruits of various colours, and among the mountains are streaks white and red, of varying colours and (others) very black.

28. And likewise, men and *Ad Dawabb* [moving (living) creatures, beasts] and cattle are of various colours. It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allah. Verily, Allah is All Mighty, Oft Forgiving.

29. Verily, those who recite the Book of Allah (this Qur'ân), and perform *As Salah* (prayer), and spend (in charity) out of what We have provided for them, secretly and openly, they hope for a (sure) trade gain that will never perish" [*Faatir* 35:27-29].

In *Surat al-Hajj*, as elsewhere, there are verses that speak of scientific facts in this universe, so ponder them:

63. "See you not that Allah sends down water (rain) from the sky, and then the earth becomes green? Verily, Allah is the Most Kind and Courteous, Well Acquainted with all things.

64. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth.

And verily, Allah — He is Rich (Free of all needs), Worthy of all praise.

65. See you not that Allah has subjected to you (mankind) all that is on the earth, and the ships that sail through the sea by His Command? He withholds the heaven from falling on the earth except by His Leave. Verily, Allah is, for mankind, full of kindness, Most Merciful.

66. It is He, Who gave you life, and then will cause you to die, and will again give you life (on the Day of Resurrection). Verily, man is indeed an ingrate.

67. For every nation We have ordained religious ceremonies [e.g. slaughtering of the cattle during the three days of stay at Mina (Makkah) during the *Hajj* (pilgrimage)] which they must follow; so let them (the pagans) not dispute with you on the matter (i.e. to eat of the cattle which you slaughter, and not to eat of the cattle which Allah kills by its natural death), but invite them to your Lord. Verily, you indeed are on the (true) straight guidance (i.e. the true religion of Islamic Monotheism).

68. And if they argue with you (as regards the slaughtering of the sacrifices), say 'Allah knows best of what you do.

69. 'Allah will judge between you on the Day of Resurrection about that wherein you used to differ.'

70. Know you not that Allah knows all that is in the heaven and on the earth? Verily, it is (all) in the Book (*al Lawh al Mahfuz*). Verily, that is easy for Allah.

71. And they worship besides Allah others for which He has sent down no authority, and of which they have no knowledge; and for the wrongdoers, there is no helper.

72. And when Our Clear Verses are recited to them, you will notice a denial on the faces of the disbelievers! They are nearly ready to attack with violence those who recite Our Verses to them. Say: 'Shall I tell you of something worse than that? The Fire (of Hell) which Allah has promised to those who disbelieved, and worst indeed is that destination!'" [*al-Hajj* 22:63-72]

vincing words, but they are still general in meaning with regard to the applied sciences. We are scientists who grew up in laboratories, and have spent all our lives dealing with laboratory research, microscopes and numbers.”

Abu Haamid: “Excuse me, these are not general words. They are precise scientific words. Hence I will quote the words of one whose scientific credentials you will not doubt, a French scientist called **Maurice Bucaille**.

He says: “I studied the Qur’ân, paying particular attention to the description that it gives of a large number of natural phenomena, and I was astounded by the precise details of these descriptions.

I was astonished to find that they are identical to the concepts that we have today of the same phenomena, of which it is impossible for a man at the time of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to have had the slightest idea.

The first thing that astonishes the one who comes across this text for the first time, is the richness of the topics referred to:

Creation

Astronomy

Discussion of some matters having to do with the earth

Zoology

Botany

Human reproduction.

Whereas we find serious scientific mistakes in the Torah, we do not find any mistakes in the Qur'ân.

That made me wonder: if the author of the Qur'ân is a human being, how could he have written in the seventh century C.E., that which it would become clear is in accordance with modern science?

There is no room for doubt. The text of the Qur'ân that we have today is indeed the same as the original text. How could we explain this point?"⁹ End quote."

Dr. Drima: "With all due respect to the eminent scientist Maurice Bucaille, I still want to know some specific scientific examples from the Qur'ân."

9. *al-Mu'jizat al-Qur'âniyyah al-I'jaaz al-'Ilmi wal-Ghaybi*, Dr. Muhammad Hasan Heetoo, p. 167-168

Abu Haamid: "I shall mention to you a number of examples. Although I am keen to give you a variety of examples, I do not want it to take too long. You should understand that what the scientists have not discovered of various branches of science in the Qur'ân cannot be counted, and new things are emerging all the time.

I will mention to you a scientific figure whose soundness no one disputes. He is well known to people in his scientific field. His name is Dr Zaghoul al-Najjar, a professor of geology in a number of western and Arab universities, and the director of the Markfield Institute of Graduate Studies in the UK.

Dr. Zaghoul al-Najjar says:¹⁰ 'When astronomers in the first third of the twentieth century saw that the light of stars leaned towards the red end of the spectrum, they wondered: Does this mean that the stars are moving away from us? If they are moving away, what about the role of gravity?' There was a lengthy discussion in the first half of the twentieth century, until it was proven scientific-

The
beginning
of
creation
in the
Qur'ân

10. *Min Ayaat al-I'jaaz fi'l-Qur'ân il-Kareem*, vol. 1, by Dr. Zaghoul al-Najjar, p. 41

ly that the universe in which we live is expanding all the time. Scientists stated that one of its present characteristics is that it is continually expanding. Hence the galaxies are moving further away from us, and from one another, at speeds which are sometimes close to the speed of light (almost three hundred thousand kilometres per second). Hence man can never define the edges of the known part of the universe, because the more he develops his instruments, the further the universe will drift away, so he will need to develop his instruments yet further. The Qur'ân describes this fact with great precision, in the verse in which the Lord of the Worlds, may He be blessed and exalted, says:

“With Hands did We construct the heaven. Verily, We are Able to extend the vastness of space thereof” [*al-Dhariyat* 51:47].

Look at the way the Qur'ân expressed it: “We are Able to extend.” This means that the universe has been expanding since the moment it was created, and there is continuity in this expansion until the present moment, and until whenever God wills.

This expansion led scientists to the cor-

rect conclusion, which is that if this expansion is reversed, the substance of the visible universe will meet in one body.

The universe is expanding now, but if we want to find the beginning, we should reverse this expansion and trace it back in time until the starting point, where we find the first elementary body, which is of such a high density that it is in a critical situation. This body exploded and turned into clouds of smoke. From this smoke, points of gravity were created, which collected certain amounts of substance and energy around the gravitational centre. These collections of substance and energy continued to accumulate until, by the decree of God, they formed various heavenly bodies.

This is now the most widely accepted theory of the origin of the universe. It is called the Big Bang Theory. It is supported by the fact that the universe is expanding, and also by the fact that the temperature at the known edges of the universe is constant, and by the distribution of various elements throughout the known universe, and the formation of cosmic dust at the edges of the known universe.

The Qur'ân describes these facts, as it says:

“Have not those who disbelieve known that the heavens and the earth were joined together as one united piece, and then We parted them? And We have made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?” [*al-Anbiya'* 21:30]

“United” is the opposite of “parted.” United implies joining together, compiling and accumulating. This is a precise description of the state of the universe, in the elementary body, which preceded the Big Bang. It is the opposite of expansion backwards through time. This was the stage of being joined together.

Parting refers to explosion, scattering and separating. This is the stage of parting and the subsequent expansion of the universe.

This theory – the Big Bang theory – is something that cannot be proven as fact by empirical science, so it must remain at the theoretical level. But the fact that it is referred to in the Book of God, fourteen hundred years ago, gives precedence to the Noble Qur'ân, and gives this theory

enough support to raise it to the level of fact, just because it is referred to in the Book of God. The universe began as a single mass (the united stage) then this mass exploded (the parting stage) and turned into a blanket of smoke (the smoke stage). Empirical scientists say: a cloud of dust, and the Qur'ân says: **"Then He rose over (*Istawa*) towards the heaven when it was smoke"** [*Fussilat* 41:11].

We ask again: Was it possible for a man in the Arabian desert to reach these great scientific discoveries more than fourteen hundred years ago, and speak by himself with such precision about the point at which the universe began?

I wonder: what telescopes did Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) possess, in that desert fourteen hundred years ago?

So who told him about the beginning of the universe with such precision, when no one in the world knew anything about that before 1927, when the Belgian scientist Georges Lemaître came up with this theory, which he called his "hypothesis of the primeval atom."

Two years later, in 1929, the American

Telescopes at the time of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allâh be upon him)

Edwin Hubble proved this theory, which is known as the Big Bang Theory.

After this, is it possible to say that this Qur'ân is the words of a human being?

How the
universe
will end

Dr. Zaghloul al-Najjar says:¹¹ “Empirical scientists say that the expansion of the universe cannot continue indefinitely. This is because it is the result of the Big Bang, and because the rate of expansion of the universe today is slower than it was initially. Therefore, there will come a time when the two forces – the force of the explosion that is pushing outwards and the force of gravity which is pulling inwards – will become equal, and as the outward force becomes weaker, the force of gravity will begin to pull the universe inwards and collect it once more into a single body, just like the elementary body with which creation began. Contemporary scientists call this theory the Big Crunch Theory.

The Qur'ân pre-empted this scientific prophecy by fourteen hundred years, in the verse in which God says:

“And (remember) the Day when We

11. Min Ayaat al-I'jaaz fil-Qur'ân il-Kareem, vol. 1, by Dr. Zaghloul al-Najjar, p. 44

shall roll up the heaven like a scroll rolled up for books. As We began the first creation, We shall repeat it. (It is) a promise binding upon Us. Truly, We shall do it" [*al-Anbiya'* 21:104].

Look at the brilliant expression in the Qur'ân: "As We began the first creation, We shall repeat it," meaning that the process of creation will repeat itself completely by the command of God. In the future, which no one knows but God, the universe will go back to being a mass of ultra high density, which will then explode and turn into a cloud of smoke, and from this smoke will be created an earth other than this earth and heavens other than these heavens.

The Noble Qur'ân affirms that, in the verse in which God says:

"On the Day when the earth will be changed to another earth and so will be the heavens, and they (all creatures) will appear before Allah, the One, the Irresistible" [*Ibrahim* 14:48].

Who at that time could dare to define the way in which the universe was created?

Moreover, what about this precision about the way in which the world will

end, which science only discovered recently?

What can we call the one who glorifies this scientific fact?"

The
lowest
point on
earth

Now let us go back to another question, which is: What is the lowest point on the surface of the globe?

The answer, according to geological surveys, is that the lowest area on the face of the earth is Palestine and the Dead Sea.

The question is: how did scientists reach the conclusion that this is the lowest area on earth?

The answer is that this knowledge came after scientists did geological surveys, and discovered that the lowest point is at the South Pole, which is 2555 feet below sea level, but it is filled with snow, so it does not count. The lowest point in real terms is the Dead Sea in Palestine, which is 418 metres below sea level.

Thus science proves that this area, which is mentioned in the Qur'ân, is the lowest point on the face of the earth.¹²

Now another question remains to be an-

12.http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/extremes_on_earth

swered: Who did a survey of the earth and told Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that Palestine was the lowest area on earth? Because it says in *Surat al-Room*:

1. "Alif Laam Meem.

2. The Romans have been defeated.

3. In the nearest [lit. lowest] land (Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine), and they, after their defeat, will be victorious.

4. Within three to nine years. The decision of the matter, before and after (these events) is only with Allah, (before the defeat of the Romans by the Persians, and after the defeat of the Persians by the Romans). And on that day, the believers (i.e. Muslims) will rejoice (at the victory given by Allah to the Romans against the Persians) —

5. With the Help of Allah. He helps whom He wills, and He is the All Mighty, the Most Merciful" [al-Room 30:1-5].

The story behind these verses is that a great war had broken out between the two superpowers of the world at that

time; the Persian and Roman Empires. The Muslims had no power at that time, rather they were weak. The armies of the Persian Empire defeated the armies of the Roman Empire in 613 CE, and the Muslims were greatly saddened by that, because they wanted their Christian brothers to win, as they were people who followed a scripture, like them, whereas the Persians were fire worshippers. The Persian armies occupied Jerusalem and Damascus, and then Egypt after 614 CE, and the Persian forces were still expanding their conquests, then the balance tipped, as mentioned in the true promise, in this verse: **“The Romans have been defeated. In the nearest [lit. lowest] land (Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine), and they, after their defeat, will be victorious.”**

Here we may pause again and ask: What is the significance of this scientific reference in the midst of this great event, knowing that those people had no evidence that this was the lowest region on the surface of the earth?

There can only be one answer: that these are the words of God, and it is a miracle for all times, all branches of knowledge,

the miraculous nature of which never ends. Rather this brief reference in the midst of this verse, makes the reader of the Qur'ân open his eyes and hope to find more words like these, which disclose unknown scientific facts that are hidden until the right time.

Perhaps a man may deny a scientific fact or two, but to deny all these facts and think that they are no more than illusions, this needs a change in all rational standards.

There is only one fact, which is that the Qur'ân is from God.

* There is another scientific Qur'ânic fact

If you wish, you may ask now what scientists – not the common folk – believed about mountains only one hundred years ago. You will discover that the definition of mountains was that they were protuberances sticking up from the face of the earth. Is that not so?

Here we may ask: What is the definition of mountains in the Qur'ân? Listen to this scientific fact, then decide what you want.

The Qur'ân was the first to state the latest information on mountains

Dr. Zaghoul al-Najjar¹³ says: A peg is a mass of wood that is pointed at one end, and is used to fix the corners of a tent to the ground, whether in soil or rock. Most of it is buried in the ground, and only a little is visible above the surface. Its role is to fix or hold steady. When scientists studied mountains, they discovered that they extend further inside the earth than they do above sea level. We cannot find any description more expressive of that, than the word “peg”, which describes both the visible part, the internal extension, and its function. Glory be to God, Who, more than fourteen hundred years ago, revealed in His Book: **“And the mountains as pegs”** [*an-Naba’* 78:7]. Mountains are indeed pegs; the least part of the mountain is visible above the surface of the earth; most of it is buried beneath the surface and its role is to hold the earth steady. The fact that the Noble Qur’ân, which was revealed fourteen hundred years ago, describes the mountains as pegs is an amazing scientific fact that scientists did not discover until the twentieth century, and many people are still unaware of it until today.

13. *Min Ayaat al-I’jaaz fil-Qur’ân il-Kareem*, vol. 1, by Dr. Zaghoul al-Najjar, p. 84

In 1992 CE, I wrote a book about mountains that was published in America. In the introduction, I listed linguistic and scientific definitions for mountains in a number of language and scientific dictionaries as well as reference books in Arabic, English and French. I found that they unanimously described mountains as protuberances on the surface of the earth that reached a height of more than 310 metres above sea level, or more than 610 metres above a set point. It seems that it is a relative term which differs according to the features of the earth. In the Noble Qur'ân, which was revealed more than fourteen hundred years ago, our Lord says: **"And the mountains as pegs,"** which is a most eloquent and amazing description, because in one word, it describes the outward appearance, internal extension, and the function of mountains.

Then empirical science came and confirmed that for each elevation above dry land, there is an extension into the earth's crust that is many times greater, between 10 and 15 times greater than the elevation above the surface, depending on the density of the mountain's rocks, and the

density of the magma in which it floats. It is not only mountains that float; rather the continents also float on this magma as a means of stability. The mountains are a brilliant means of stabilizing the continents, making them suitable to live on, as well as being a brilliant means of stabilizing the earth as it rotates on its axis around the sun, which involves many movements, the most significant of which is its oscillation.

In more than ten verses, the Noble Qur'ân speaks of the earth being stabilized by the mountains. God says:

32. "And the mountains He has fixed firmly,

33. (To be) a provision and benefit for you and your cattle" [an-Nazi'at 79:32-33]

"And He has affixed into the earth mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with you" [an-Nahl 16:15]

"And it is He Who spread out the earth, and placed therein firm mountains and rivers" [ar-Ra'd 13:3]

"And the earth We have spread out, and have placed therein firm moun-

tains, and caused to grow therein all kinds of things in due proportion” [*al-Hijr* 15:19]

“And We have placed on the earth firm mountains, lest it should shake with them, and We placed therein broad highways for them to pass through, that they may be guided” [*al-Anbiya* 21:31]

“Is not He (better than your gods) Who has made the earth as a fixed abode, and has placed rivers in its midst, and has placed firm mountains therein, and has set a barrier between the two seas (of salt and sweet water)? Is there any *ilah* (god) with Allah? Nay, but most of them know not!” [*an-Naml* 27:61]

“He has created the heavens without any pillars that you see, and has set on the earth firm mountains lest it should shake with you” [*Luqmaan* 31:10]

“He placed therein (i.e. the earth) firm mountains from above it, and He blessed it, and measured therein its sustenance (for its dwellers) in four Days equal (i.e. all these four ‘days’ were equal in the length of time) for all those who ask (about its creation)”

[*Fussilat* 41:10]

“And the earth! We have spread it out, and set thereon mountains standing firm, and have produced therein every kind of lovely growth (plants)” [*Qaaf* 50:7]

25. “Have We not made the earth a receptacle?”

26. For the living and the dead?

27. And have placed therein firm and tall mountains, and have given you to drink sweet water?” [*al-Mursalat* 77:25-27]

The
Qur'ân
and
human
skin

A short while ago, a precise dissection of a human body showed that there are specialized nerve receptors, some for pain, some for pressure, some for touch. These receptors are very small and cannot be seen with the naked eye; rather it needs a special dye beneath a microscope. In the twentieth century we discovered that the temperature receptors exist only in the skin, and they are not found in muscle or bone. So burning is not painful once it passes the skin layer. This is something that is stated in a clear text in *Surat an-Nisa'*:

“Surely, those who disbelieved in Our *Ayat* (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.), We shall burn them in Fire. As often as their skins are roasted through, We shall change them for other skins that they may taste the punishment. Truly, Allah is Ever Most Powerful, All Wise” [*an-Nisa'* 4:56].

This text clearly states that once the skin is burnt or roasted through, it is no longer fit to perform its function, which includes feeling the pain of burning. So Allah will exchange it for another skin so that he (the disbeliever in Hell) may taste the punishment.

Diagnostic methods today rely on feeling pain. Feeling a pin-prick means that that part of the burned skin is still sound and is not finished yet, because skin that is completely burned has no sensation of pain. What were the laboratory tests that were done at that time on human skin?

Is there any possibility other than that this Qur'ân is from God?

Another miracle: in the late nineteenth century, after the invention of balloons and airships for flying, we discovered that air pressure decreases the higher we

The
Qur'ân
and the
atmosph-
ere

go, and this has a negative effect on the entry of air into the lungs. The higher one goes, the less air enters the lungs because the air pressure is less. When reaching the critical altitude of thirty thousand feet, a person will feel that he is suffocating. Hence airplanes are manufactured in such a way, that the air pressure inside the cabin is precisely controlled for the safety of the passengers, and so as to allow them to reach altitudes of forty and fifty thousand feet, and even to fly in outer space. This meaning is clearly indicated in verse 125 of *Surat al-An'am*, where God says:

“And whomsoever Allah wills to guide, He opens his breast to Islam; and whomsoever He wills to send astray, He makes his breast closed and constricted, as if he is climbing up to the sky” [*al-An'am* 6:125].

Do you think that any of the Arabian desert-dwellers could have ascended to the sky and measured the air pressure?

Give me any possibility other than that this Qur'ân was revealed from God?

Moreover, do you think that Muhammad – (peace and blessings of Allah be upon

him) – could have invented such scientific discoveries and amazing facts when he was an illiterate man who never held a pen in his life?

Explain this to me, I adjure you by God.

Don't you think that when God revealed the Qur'ân He put new information in it for the people of that time, as He put in it new information for our time, and for times to come? This is testimony of a type that suits our times without contradicting the facts that cannot be blown away by time. This is what is stated in the Qur'ân for every reader and for every time until the Day of Resurrection. In *Surat Fussilat*, in the fifty-third verse, it says:

“We will show them Our Signs in the universe, and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this (the Qur'ân) is the truth. Is it not sufficient in regard to your Lord that He is a Witness over all things?” [*Fussilat* 41:53].

Another sign of its astounding miraculous nature is the verse which speaks of spiders' houses.

In *Scientific American* magazine, it says:

The
Qur'ân
and
arachnol-
ogy

“As for the taut spider silk, it usually collapses as the result of a crack which causes it to be torn apart quickly and deeply. Any amount of contamination, no matter how small, poses a great danger to the spider’s web, because it is in a state of tension.

How easy it is to tear a spider web completely, like a piece of cloth or rubber once it has been cut or torn.”¹⁴

Strangely, this weakness in the spider’s house that is mentioned in the Qur’ân is not limited to the structural weakness of the spider’s web, rather it also includes the family system in the spider’s house. The same magazine published an article stating that the spider’s wedding night and the formation of its family is a night of terrifying criminal activity, in which a group of males fight to fertilize the female. After all the males present have been killed in that battle, the victor emerges to fertilize the female, which takes him a whole hour. After the head of the household has completed this act, the female climbs on top of him and stabs

14. *Scientific American*, March/April 1993, Fritz Vollrath, Professor of Biology in Basle, Oxford and Panama (Paper: Spider webs and silk).

him with her poisonous forelegs, and she keeps applying pressure, not leaving him until he is dead.

These facts about the structure of the spider's home, which appears from the outside to be well made, but in reality it is as weak as can be – who could have taught them at that time? Who told Muhammad – (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) – about that?

If anyone told Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) about that, or he expected it to be the case, who studied the family life of the spider, and found out that it was as weak as any family system could be?

Is there any explanation other than that the One Who created it, is the One Who described it to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?

Is there any explanation other than, that this Qur'ân is from God, and that this Messenger is the Messenger of Allah – (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)."

Dr. Drima: "I will never say that, but I will say: Give me a clear, sound text in which there is no ambiguity, and which

proves that the Qur'ân mentioned this fact before it was published in the *Scientific American* magazine in 1993."

Abu Haamid: "That verse is in a *surah* called *Surat al-'Ankabut* [the spider], verse number forty-one:

"The likeness of those who take (false deities as) *Awliya'* (protectors, helpers) other than Allah is the likeness of a spider who builds (for itself) a house; but verily, the frailest (weakest) of houses is the spider's house — if they but knew" [*al-'Ankabut* 29:41].

I hope that you will read the verse again and ponder it, and remember what it contains of the information mentioned above about the spider."

Dr. Drima: "Why has all this time passed and science was not able to discover this except in the laboratory?"

Abu Haamid: "This question should inspire you to believe that the Qur'ân is definitely from God. Isn't it amazing that a man can send a letter to you, and he says to you: "It is very easy to read, and every time you read it you will learn something new from it." So you read it, and learn something from it every time,

and your family and loved ones read it, and each of them benefits from it. Whoever is afflicted with a calamity reads it, and benefits from it, whoever is granted blessings reads it and benefits from it, and whoever is faced with danger reads it and benefits from it, and so on, so there is no one who does not benefit from it, regardless of his situation. The message is still filled with meanings and information. Then, when the first generation of the family dies and the letter becomes part of their legacy, their offspring look at it, and admire it. They say: "My word, how great is the knowledge of the one who sent it, and how much our family has benefited from it!"

This is just one letter to one family, so imagine the entire Qur'ân, the number of whose *surahs* is 114, the number of its verses is 6,236 and the number of its words is 77,439!

Millions of individuals, families, societies and nations, for fourteen hundred years have read it, and are still reading it, and they have not, and will never find a single flaw in it.

Not only that; what is even more amazing, is that they read it and passed by

these scientific treasures millions of times, but they did not discover it or see it. Then a scientist came along and discovered this fact in the laboratory, or research institute, thinking that he or she is the first one to discover it. Suddenly readers of the Qur'ân start noticing that this discovery that has dazzled that scientist, and the world along with him, was mentioned in the Qur'ân. in *surah* such and such, verse number such and such, in very precise wording, and he says: "My word, how often have we read this verse! Where were our eyes? Where were the eyes of all those who read it before?"

This happens repeatedly with people, time after time.

What is even more amazing than this is the fact that we are still reading the verses that speak of these scientific discoveries, reciting them night and day, but we do not comprehend them fully. Yes, we understand them properly, but the special understanding of specialists is something else altogether.

This is what happens with us, and it is what happened with those who came before us.

Isn't this a miracle?

Isn't this an invitation to scientists and researchers to read the Qur'ân in a special way, because the one who encourages this idea, may urge them by saying: Is it possible for a researcher who spends a lifetime doing research, to reach one scientific discovery which will benefit himself and others, then find the treasury of scientific discovery (the Qur'ân) and leave it aside and ignore it, and perhaps die not knowing anything about it, having wasted his life, and missed out on the greatest opportunity?

Do not think that these are just conclusions attached to the verses. Rather it is a promise made by God in the Qur'ân, and the scientists are seeing it fulfilled from time to time. The promise appears in *Surat Fussilat*, where God says:

"We will show them Our Signs in the universe, and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this (the Qur'ân) is the truth. Is it not sufficient in regard to your Lord that He is a Witness over all things?" [*Fussilat* 41:53].

Professor of Astronomy: "I admit to

you that the logic of which we are speaking combines conviction and modernization, but I will tell you frankly, that we only bid farewell to the backwardness in which our forefathers lived in the Middle Ages when we abandoned the Torah and Gospel. Was the scientific revolution in reality anything other than a revolution against the enslavement of the church, represented by clergymen who called for adherence to the Torah and Gospel, and the feudal rulers? Both of them sought to enslave people, the former enslaved their minds and the latter enslaved their bodies.

In reality, even though we cannot disagree with a lot of what you say, just mentioning the teachings of the bishops and monks that are based on the Torah and Gospel makes us wary of any religious ideas, language and feelings, regardless of the religion in question.

The return of religious language today means forsaking modern scientific civilization which began with the revolution in our country, France – how can we agree to go back to it after we saved ourselves from it, when the slogan of the revolution at that time was, as you know, ‘Hang

the last bishop with the intestines of the last king!”

Abu Haamid: “My dear professor, I appreciate the reason for this resentment that remains in the hearts of the present generation because of what the kings and feudal lords did on the basis of edicts issued by popes and bishops to their forefathers.

But I would like to bring the discussion back to its main focus. I want to take it away from religious debates and come back to the way we agreed upon, which is reason. So please answer my question, rationally and frankly: Isn’t it unfair to regard those who were behind the scientific renaissance and the unjust and ignorant enemies of that renaissance as equal?

Or to regard the one who helps you against your enemy and your enemy who wrongs you as equal?

Perhaps you will say to me: Did the Muslims help us against our enemies – the enemies of knowledge?

If you check with the honesty of an honest historian – as I know you to be – and study that period in which the European

Who helped you against the enemies of knowledge

revolution was first born, and fifty years before that, you will ask: Which empirical, scientific civilization on earth was greater than the Islamic civilization? You will find the only answer is that there was no such civilization other than the Islamic civilization. Ignorance and injustice together prevailed over all other countries of the world. Yes, there may have been some individuals or schools here and there, but to say that there was a culture or civilization that produced other civilizations, there was none apart from the Islamic civilization.

A fair-minded
French
minister

Count Dozy, the scientist and a former French minister, said: 'Whilst we Europeans were wandering in the wilderness of ignorance, only seeing the light through the eye of a needle, a powerful light shone from the legacy of science, literature, philosophy, industry and handicrafts brought by the Muslim nation. That was a time when the cities of Baghdad, Basra, Samarqand, Damascus, Qirawaan, Egypt, Tunis, Granada and Cordoba were great centres of knowledge in general. From them, this light spread into surrounding areas, and to other nations further away. From them, the

people of Europe in the Middle Ages acquired inventions, professions and many other handicrafts, on which we based the foundations of our civilization, which were originally taken from Islamic laws and the Muslim civilization.¹⁵

With regard to what the Europeans learned and transmitted during the Crusades from the Muslim and Arab world, it was a great deal. This is a little of the great amount. A historian says:

‘That is because through the Crusades there occurred direct contact between the Muslims and the European Crusaders. Through this contact, the Crusaders noticed a very refined culture, the like of which they had never seen. They also noticed different aspects of this civilization in all fields of life, including its scientific achievements. So they started to transmit and translate and imitate what they saw. For example, Frederic (1194-1250 CE), King of Sicily, adopted the idea of organized education, after seeing the many schools in Lebanon, and founded the first state university in Naples. Another man

15. *Al-Qur’ân yatakallam wal-Injeel yuthbit ma yaqooluhu Deen al-Haqq* by Muhammad Husni Yusuf, , p. 59

who travelled a great deal in the Islamic East during the Crusades was Adelard of Bath who said, urging the following of reason and freedom from the authority of the Greek philosophers which was still prevalent among Europeans of his generation: 'Is there anyone other than I who has learned at the hands of Arab teachers how to follow reason? For your part, you should not be blinded by the authority (of the Greek philosophers), because if you do that, it is as if you are tied to a rein.' Elsewhere he said: 'I learned from my Arab teacher to measure everything against reason. If you want to debate, then debate with me on the basis of reason only.'

Among the books which were translated during the contact that occurred between the Muslims and Europeans during the Crusades were: *Kaamil al-Sinaa'ah al-Tibbiyyah* (The Complete Art of Medicine) by 'Ali ibn 'Abbas, which was translated by Stephen of Pisa (also known as Stephen of Antioch) in 1127 CE. In 1200 CE Axioius translated the book of Galen on the effects of different foods, from an Arabic version that had been translated by Hubaysh ibn Ukht

Hunayn ibn Ishaq.

Finally we will point out another major cultural influence that was transmitted from the Muslims to the Europeans via the Crusades, which is that of hospitals. During their travels in Muslim lands, the Europeans saw the medical care given to the sick and the hospital system, the idea of which they transmitted to Europe.

For all generations, History preserved the memory of the centre of knowledge and light in Europe which was called Cordoba, at a time when Europe was filled with injustice and darkness.

Another centre of learning was Sicily, through which the light of knowledge spread across Europe.¹⁶

As everyone knows, the source of this light of knowledge was the East, because of the Islamic civilization that existed there. Official and unofficial delegations came to the Eastern lands to acquire knowledge, free of any cost. Hence many of these people were called "Orientalists." But the greatest focal point

16. *al-Injaazaat al-'Ilmiyyah fil-Hadaarah al-Islamiyyah*, p. 271, by Dr. Yoosuf Mahmoud, al-'Ajwan University of Science and Technology

of knowledge for you was in Andalusia, which you now call Spain. Spain became a centre of civilization which revived knowledge, and rescued it from the darkness of ignorance and oppression which prevailed over Europe. This centre of knowledge is regarded as having had a profound influence on the transmission and translation of Arabic and Islamic knowledge into Latin, surpassing the influence of other centres. This is due to many reasons, the most important of which are:

1. Andalusia had a rich heritage of Arabic and Islamic knowledge. It was the storehouse for the scientific treasures of Islamic civilization in the west.
2. The period of European contact with Muslims via Andalusia lasted longer than periods of contact in other centres.
3. The characteristic tolerance of the Umayyad caliphs and all other rulers of Andalusia towards scholars of all races and religions, which encouraged seekers of knowledge to come to Andalusia from all parts of Europe.

One of these scholars was Gerbert d'Aurillac (930-1003 CE), who later became Pope Sylvester II. He travelled in Andalusia between 960 and 967 CE, and was deeply influenced by the Islamic Arabic sciences, especially mathematics. Gerbert established two schools, in Seville and Nice, France, which focused on teaching medicine and Arabic language. Thanks to Gerbert, Arabic numerals, with the exception of zero, became widespread in Europe.

Pope
Sylvester

Similarly, Gerard of Cremona (1114-1187 CE) left his homeland of Italy in 1167 CE and went to Toledo, where he stayed until his death. His motive for travelling was so that he could study Ptolemy's *Almagest* (in Arabic, because the Greek original was not extant). But when he noticed the richness of libraries in Toledo, he learned Arabic and remained there, translating books, for the rest of his life. Among the most famous books that he translated were Ptolemy's *Almagest*, al-Khwarizmi's *Algebra*, *Mi-zaan al-Dhahab* by Thabit ibn Qurrah, al-Mansoori by al-Razi, Euclid's *al-Usus*, and a number of books by Aristotle, Archimedes, Abu Lonius, al-Kindi,

Gerard,
the
greatest
of
translato-
rs

al-Farghani, Banu Musa, al-Zahrawi and others. Gerard was regarded as the most famous translator in Europe at that time. It was said that he translated more books from Arabic to Latin than all other translators put together.

Plato of Tivoli lived in Barcelona for approximately twelve years, starting in 1134 CE, until 1145 CE. He translated a book of astronomy by al-Battani and a number of other books on mathematics.

Toledo remained a centre of learning even after it was lost by the Muslims, and it reached the pinnacle of its translation activities at the time of Alfonso X ("the Wise"), whose rule lasted from 1252 until 1284 CE. Among the scholars who translated books of science into Latin were John of Seville, Robert of Chester and Daniel of Morley.¹⁷

My dear professor of astronomy, it is sufficient for you to go to Paris and see the statues of Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and al-Razi in the College of Medicine standing proudly there, in Saint Street, where all

17. *al-Injaazaat al-'Ilmiyyah fi'l-Hadaarah al-Islamiyyah*, p. 272, by Dr. Yoosuf Mahmoud, al-'Ajwan University of Science and technology

the medical students pass by these statues, as Maurice Bucaille says.

Think about it and ask yourself a specific question: Why did Spain, unlike all other countries, become a centre of learning, shedding light on the entire West?

If you ask yourself a second question: why did the Arabs become the focal point of knowledge and civilization whose knowledge expanded after the coming of Islam, when they were not like that before? The answer can only be: Islam. The only answer you have before you is that Spain was the only (European) country which was enjoying Islamic rule. Now allow me to pick up this little book that I have beside me, by the famous French scholar and doctor Maurice Bucaille. The name of the book, as you can see, is *The Qur'ân and Modern Science*.

‘Bait al-Hikmah (the House of Wisdom) in Baghdad became an institution that was established for translation of books into Arabic, generously funded by al-Ma'moon for that purpose.’¹⁸

The great change achieved by the Mus-

18. *al-Injaazaat al-'Ilmiyyah fi'l-Hadaarah al-Islamiyyah*, p. 119

lims in western Sicily was a change in the ways of researching. Even the idea of universities was an Arab, Islamic idea that was transferred to the Europeans.

The historian says: Perhaps the Europeans' adoption of academic methods of research was the most important academic legacy bestowed by Islamic civilization upon the Europeans. In order to understand the extent of Muslim influence in this matter, it is essential to note that the Church in Europe had adopted Greek philosophy in the fourth century CE, and incorporated it into their religious teachings. That had been done by Augustine. Because of the authority that the church enjoyed, Greek philosophy – and what it means of shunning empiricism – prevailed among the philosophers and scholars of Europe, until there was contact between the Europeans and the Muslims. For example, Eriugena (Johannes Scotus Eriugena, John the Irishman) who was born in Ireland in the ninth century CE, and is regarded as one of the greatest philosophers in Europe at that time, believed that 'reason is the only ultimate reality' and that physical sensations were not more than an illusion. We find Be-

rengar of Tours (998-1088) and Anselm (1033-1101) exaggerating the role of reason, with no mention of sensation or empiricism. We find Daniel of Morley leaving Paris in 1180 CE, fed up with rational argument, and going to Toledo to listen to world philosophers who had greater wisdom. Daniel listened to lectures given by Gerard of Cremona, and he returned in England with many translations of Muslim books. In addition to that, Roger Bacon (1214-1294), who studied the books of Ibn al-Haytham, placed great emphasis on the importance of the empirical aspect of knowledge, and he looked down on fame and rewards which could become an obstacle to the continuation of great empirical research. **Leonardo da Vinci** in the fifteenth century also believed in empirical methods, and was frustrated with the rational atmosphere of an environment which venerated the Greek and Latin sciences and Christian beliefs, accompanied by Platonic philosophy. Concerning that, he said: 'I do not understand how I could quote, as many do, the words of the scholars, when it is much better to rely on examination and experience, because it is the teacher of the teachers.'

Leonardo
da Vinci

With regard to the rejection of Greek philosophy, we have mentioned above a quotation from Daniel of Adelard of Bath, who urged ignoring the authority of Greek philosophy and following reason, and we have seen his statement that he learned that from his Arab teacher. Similarly, John Beckham (1230-1292) attacked many of the views of Thomas Aquinas, wrote an essay on telescopes, and confirmed that his basic sources were the books of Ibn al-Haytham. I will quote to you the words of **Roger Bacon** to explain the importance of Islamic Arabic sciences at that time, when he affirmed: 'I am surprised at anyone who wants to study knowledge when he does not know Arabic.'

Roger
Bacon

Hence there is nothing strange about Bernard Lewis saying: 'Europe learned a new way of researching from the Arabs, and put reason before authority, calling for the obligation of independent research and empirical inquiry.' Similarly we are not surprised by the words of Privault: 'The influence of the Muslims was greater and clearer with regard to the academic spirit, and with regard to research that requires experiments to

prove matters ... the foundation of scientific research was undoubtedly laid by Muslim civilization.”

Professor of Astronomy: “I am very familiar with what you have said, because the topic is my specialty. But the explanation for that may be called a revolution within the revolution, because this scientific revolution in Islamic civilization was the illegitimate offspring of a legitimate marriage. No doubt Islamic civilization was a mighty civilization with which no other civilization on earth could compete at that time; it swallowed up many other civilizations, such as the Persian, Indian, Byzantine and other civilizations. It was nourished by them and continued to be nourished by them, until an intellectual revolution within Islamic civilization emerged from the knowledge of these civilizations, without any desire on the part of Islamic civilization itself. Now you come today and start attributing this illegitimate product to Islamic civilization, and even to Islam itself.”

Abu Haamid: “Excuse me if I tell you realistically, that I will not pay any attention to this attack, not because I am unable to answer, but because it stems

from negative ideas that originated in the unjust darkness of the Middle Ages, and are still deeply rooted in people's minds today. I do not want to rub salt in your wounds. But because you started it, I must explain, so the matter does not remain in your mind as it is, without you realizing it. I would like to remind you that the prevalent ignorance in Arabia before the coming of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was a far more profound ignorance than that which was present in Europe, when it comes to being far removed from theoretical and scientific knowledge. Although that ignorance was not accompanied by oppression as it was in Europe, there was still some sort of oppression in Arabia itself, from neighbouring states and kingdoms. Part of it fell under Magian Persian rule, another part under the rule of Christian Byzantium. As for the value of human reason in the Arabian Peninsula, you can imagine its value when you see one of the giants of Islam, the second most important companion of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), whose name was 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, after he became caliph of the

Muslims, when he was sitting with his inner circle, laughing then weeping. One of them asked him about that and he said: 'I remember the time when we were in a state of ignorance. We would make our god out of dates. Then, when one of us got hungry we would eat it! That is what made me laugh and made me cry.'

It is sufficient for you to know the name given to that period in the Qur'ân and in the words of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). It is described as the *Jahiliyyah*. Do you know what *Jahiliyyah* means? It is taken from the Arabic word *al-jahl* (ignorance), which is the opposite of *al-'ilm* (knowledge).

Is there anything that Islam regards as more abhorrent than that which it describes as the opposite of Islam?

Logic dictates that if you say *Jahiliyyah*, or days of ignorance, the opposite would be *'ilmiyyah* or days of knowledge, and if you say Islam, the opposite would be *kufir* (disbelief) and *shirk* (polytheism, associating others with God). But what is described as the opposite of *Jahiliyyah* is Islam. So it is as if Islam and knowledge are one thing, and *shirk* and *Jahili-*

yyah are one thing. Aren't some of the names of Allah which Islam teaches us *al-'Aleem*, *al-'Allaam* and *al-Khabeer* (All-Knowing, Omniscient)? Allah has ninety-nine names and not one of them is indicative of ignorance.

Respected professor, as you know, the first word that was revealed to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the cave was **"Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created (all that exists)"** [*al-'Alaq* 96:1]. If you look at the name of this *surah*, you will see that it is at the heart of modern scientific discoveries, one of the most important of all. It is *al-'Alaq*, meaning "the clot." It was revealed at a time when the world did not know this term, or its scientific or medical meaning, let alone its significance.

The focal point of this universe is man, and the first thing that man needs to know is himself. It is well known that this stage – the clot stage – is the first stage in the formation of man, when the male sperm and the female egg meet and mix, and become something else that attaches itself to the wall of the uterus. Hence it is called *al-'alaq* (from the root

'alaqa, meaning to hang). Before that stage it is nothing, rather it is in the *nut-fah* stage ("sperm drop"). After this stage it develops from that point. This is the general principle, not only in the case of man, but in the foetuses of all other animals, as scientific discoveries with regard to man and other species alike have shown. So the *'alaq* stage is the seed of true knowledge and forms a sound starting point towards knowledge of the journey of the greatest living creature of all. The name of a human, as a human, starts from this point, from the *'alaq* stage, and the name of this *surah*, the first *surah* to be revealed, is *al-'Alaq*.

Is it too much for a civilization that had such a starting point to produce this scientific revolution?

Was this scientific revolution the illegitimate offspring of a civilization that does not care about knowledge?

If some other civilizations had knowledge that nourished Islamic civilization – as you said – at the same time those civilizations also had myths and ignorant beliefs, and the myths were many times greater than the knowledge that they had. Why did Islamic civilization take the

knowledge and ignore the ignorance and myths? Why did Islamic civilization give those people knowledge and teach them how to use reason, if it was not a civilization that was based on knowledge in the first place?

Here I would like to go back to the same *surah*, *Surat al-'Alaq*. I do not want to pause at the first word, because that would take too long. It is sufficient to listen properly to the first five verses of this *surah*, and then you can judge for yourself.

The first
words
of the
Qur'an

1. **"Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created (all that exists).**
2. **He has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood).**
3. **Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous.**
4. **Who has taught (the writing) by the pen.**
5. **He has taught man that which he knew not"** [*al-'Alaq* 96:1-5]

It is sufficient for you to know that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was illiterate, and did not know how to read or write. There is great

wisdom in this, but there is no time to explain it here.

It is sufficient for you to know how strange this term was for that society, and how unusual the person was who knew how to read and write, and how rare books, writers and writing tools were at that time.

It is sufficient for you to look again at these five verses and ponder their meaning. Then you will see the status of knowledge in these verses. Let me quickly review the words of these verses with you.

Firstly: Look at the first word, which is **“Read!”** There is no need to explain it; just read it. Reading is the foundation of knowledge, whether learning or teaching.

The second phrase is **“In the Name of your Lord.”** Names are the first thing that every learner learns, in every branch of knowledge. The truest and most sublime of names is that of Allah; nothing takes precedence over it. The one who does not know his Lord does not know anything!

This guideline with regard to knowledge

is essential, because it can turn knowledge from mixed knowledge to that which is purely beneficial.

The third phrase is **“your Lord.”** The word *Rabb* (translated here as **“Lord”**) comes from the same root as the word *tarbiyah* (education). Knowledge without education is destructive knowledge. This guideline is one of the distinctive features of Islamic civilization.

The fourth phrase is **“Who has created.”** This is the scientific fact which may put an end to the greatest *Jahiliyyah* (ignorance) ever to emerge on the face of the earth, which is communist atheism.

The fifth phrase is **“from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood)”**, which I have spoken about already.

The sixth phrase is **“Read!”**, which is repeated for emphasis. This is indicative of the importance of this matter, especially among the other commands.

The seventh phrase is **“And your Lord is the Most Generous.”** This is connected to what comes before and what comes after of reading. It is as if it refers to the outcome of responding to the previous command. If you read, you will see the

generosity of your Lord because your Lord is the Most Generous.

The eighth phrase is: **“Who has taught.”** The word knowledge is sufficient, but this word attributes knowledge of all types to its source, which is God, may He be glorified and exalted.

The ninth word is **“by the pen.”** This is the greatest means of knowledge since the dawn of history, even though it has taken many forms and undergone many changes, and it will remain so.

The tenth phrase is **“He has taught man that which he knew not.”** This is great encouragement to man to seek that which he does not know. It urges him to develop new branches of knowledge and science. The one who taught him the first time will teach him a second and third time, and so on without end.

So if these verses mention knowledge and its source, and enjoin seeking it, repeating the command for emphasis, and encourage making new discoveries, what else is left?

Here I will repeat the rational question: Is it strange for a civilization to develop all these great branches of knowledge if

this is how it began?

Was this scientific renaissance the illegitimate offspring of a legitimate civilization, as the Professor of Astronomy said?

Prisoners
of war
and
knowled-
ge

A final example that I will give in response to what you said, is the first battle that the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) fought against his enemies. It was called the Battle of Badr. After Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) won the battle and took seventy prisoners, who were among the elite of Arabia, he made the ransom for each prisoner one of two things: they could either pay the ransom fee or, if the prisoner was able to read and write, he could teach one of the companions of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) how to read and write.

Have you heard of anyone before Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who would have accepted such a ransom, when what he needed most was wealth?

If you wish, you may say: Have you heard of anyone who gave precedence

to knowledge over wealth with regard to ransom of prisoners?

Behind this ransom was something amazing, which created a great deal of motivation on both sides to achieve the greatest results in the shortest time. The two desires came together, the desire of the prisoner to teach quickly, and the desire of the student to learn quickly. This led to the utmost seriousness in this joint endeavour. The Muslim learner was very serious about learning to read, and the prisoner was very serious about teaching so as to expedite his release. Hence, the outcome was very positive in terms of results and speed.

Here I ask you again: is it possible for a civilization that seeks to benefit from war, in an academic manner that connects the prisoner's release to his teaching others, or you may say that it combines knowledge and mercy, not to produce for mankind the most beneficial of human knowledge?

The
name
of his
miracle

Moreover, look at the miracles of all the Prophets (peace be upon them). No doubt they are great, but what do you think of the name of the miracle of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon

him), namely the Qur'ân? Have you not thought about that? It alone is sufficient.

His miracle has to do with reading, which is the very essence of knowledge.

The one who teaches reading in general cannot limit reading to his own books; rather reading will include other beneficial reading, which will lead to beneficial knowledge.

Is it possible that a civilization whose main miracle is based on reading – the very substance of knowledge – would not have among its legitimate offspring the greatest revolution in knowledge in human history from the time when God created the earth until the Day of Resurrection?

Is it possible – rationally speaking – for a Book such as this to ask its companions to read more of it and give them more reward for that, and emphasize for them a special kind of reading, which is to ponder what is read while reading, where a person does not only focus with his soul and emotions, but he focuses with his whole reason, because by reading it they will increase in knowledge, and the more they increase in knowledge the greater

their rational conviction will be, then they will adhere more strongly to this Book, as it says in *Surat Saad*:

“(This is) a Book (the Qur’ân) which We have sent down to you, full of blessings, that they may ponder over its Verses, and that men of understanding may remember” [*Saad* 38:29].

God only enjoined this type of reading because this Book contains so many secrets which the whole world cannot fully comprehend, no matter how often they read it.

As it says in a great verse which describes the unparalleled knowledge that is in this Book:

“And if all the trees on the earth were pens and the sea (were ink wherewith to write), with seven seas behind it to add to its (supply), yet the Words of Allah would not be exhausted. Verily, Allah is All Mighty, All Wise” [*Luqmaan* 31:27].

We will never discover the truth, unless we rid our minds of preconceived notions, and remove the dark glasses that we put on before, when examining every religion, because prejudice is one of the

greatest obstacles that prevent us from reaching the truth. If the majority of ordinary people may be excused for being influenced by society, or overwhelmed by preconceived notions in their minds, how could the academic leaders of society like you and the students who follow in your footsteps be excused?

Take it from me; we do not fear knowledge or reason. Rather knowledge and reason are among the greatest evidence that we have that our religion is true. Hence we do not fear the atheists and those who deny the existence of God, and we do not fear their evidence or specious arguments. But in your case, how can you handle these treacherous people if they ask for evidence that Jesus did exist or if they ask you where he is? What will you do if all your sources are distorted and are all contrary to reason?

Your belief does not fit your level of rational thinking, because it is a belief that cannot stand up to the reason of its own followers. Any rational thinking will cause this belief to collapse, so how can this belief stand up to the specious arguments of the atheists and others?

As for us, you have seen for yourself

how our religion prevails more each time a new specious argument comes along, like a commander who becomes more prominent with each new victory. I hope that you will not think that this is self-praise on my part, because our victory is shared when we prevail over falsehood. It is the biggest joke to suggest that the victory is yours. What benefit is a friend if he prevails when his friend is defeated?"

Complex-
es of the
atheists

Professor of Astronomy: "A Muslim university student told me, that the professor of philosophy was an atheist who did not believe in the existence of God, and he gave them a specious argument that confused them and may confuse you too. If it does not silence you it may render you helpless. But I do not want you to become helpless when answering the specious arguments of atheists.

This argument says: Your Qur'ân says that God is able to do all things. If He is able to do all things, and then can your Lord make a circle square? Can He make a rock that He is not able to lift?

If you say yes, you are admitting that He is unable to make the circle square or lift the rock.

If you say no, then you are admitting that He is unable to do something. What do you say, Abu Haamid?"

Abu Haamid: This is an old question, which our scholars have answered before, and they have answered greater questions than this. Our scholars stated a long time ago that the power of God has nothing to do with impossibilities, and they did not say that He cannot do what is impossible. God is able to do all things; what is impossible is not a thing.

Suppose that Zayd was accused by some people of stealing, and 'Amr was brought before the judge to bear witness, and the following conversation takes place between him and the judge:

- What is your name?
- I have no name but my name is Boutros.
- Have you seen this man before?
- Yes, I have seen him.
- When was the last time you saw him?
- Tomorrow.
- Did you see him stealing?

- I saw him but I did not see him at all.

What is the judge to make of this answer from Boutros? Nothing. Is his failure to understand due to any shortcoming in his reason, so that if we brought another judge who was smarter than him, he (the second judge) would be able to understand what the first one could not? No, because 'Amr effectively did not say anything. Understanding has to do with something comprehensible. If the word has no meaning that can be understood, then nothing will be understood. Hence it is fair for the one who did not understand contradictory words, not to say that he did not understand, because this may indicate that there was something that could be understood, but he failed to understand it. In fact there is nothing that can be understood. Hence – and Allah knows best – our scholars chose this subtle expression and said: The power of Allah has nothing to do with things that are rationally impossible, and they did not say that He is not able to do it.

Now look at all the examples that may be used as evidence that the concept of being able to do all things is a contradic-

tory concept. What is meant by squaring the circle is taking the lines that form the circle and putting them in the shape of a square. This is something that ordinary people can do. But if what is meant is making something round and square at the same time, this is contradictory, because if something is square it must mean that it cannot be round, and if it is round it must mean that it cannot be square. For someone to say Can He make the circle square, it is like saying Can He create a square and not create it? As you can see, these are contradictory words. The matter may not be as clear as the example of the rock, but if you think about it, this too is contradictory.

We say that God is able to do all things, and this one who denies His existence says to us: Can your Lord create a rock that He cannot move? He thinks that this question will make us say that God is not able to do all things, because he thinks that we have no choice but to answer yes or no. In either case he will achieve what he wants. If we say, Yes He can, he will say, 'Then there is something that He cannot do, so He is not able to do all things.' But we will never say yes or no,

rather we will tell him, 'Your question contains a contradiction, so it is something that is rationally impossible.' The power of God has nothing to do with impossibilities, rather it has to do only with what is rationally possible, because that which is rationally impossible is in fact nothing, so we cannot say that He is able or unable to do it. Why? Because the meaning of the question is Can the One Who is able to do all things not be able to do some things? Or Can the One Who is able to do all things put some limits on His ability to do all things? All of these, as you can see, are contradictory words. Moreover, a rock that the Creator is unable to move is something that is rationally impossible. Why? Because so long as the Creator is able to do all things, what that means is that His power has no limit. Assuming that there exists something the movement of which requires power greater than the power that has no limits makes no sense.

Can a man do something; build a structure for example, that he cannot move?

Yes, that is not rationally impossible. But we say that this is rationally possible in the case of man because man does

not create the items that he uses to make what he wants to make. For example, he moves the stone that he is able to carry, and then he adds another stone to it, and so on. When these stones are collected to form a structure, he will not be able to move it, because moving it takes more strength than he has. But the Creator is the Creator of all things, so it is not possible for Him to be incapable of anything."

Professor of Astronomy: "We agreed to let reason be the judge in all things between us. Can reason comprehend the likeness mentioned in the verse that you quoted? How can all minds come together, yet not reach the level of knowledge contained in the Qur'ân, let alone this example which is mentioned in the verse?

Where
is the
respect
for reason
in this?

Where is the respect for people's reason when it says to them: If all the trees on earth became pens and the seas became ink, and these pens wrote with this ink until all the seas were emptied, and seven seas like them, the knowledge and words of God would not be exhausted?

Isn't this causing reason to feel helpless and taking away its power of thinking? What is the benefit of thinking if you

cannot reach any conclusion from this thinking?"

Abu Haamid: "Firstly, I think you mean the verse in which Allah says:

"And if all the trees on the earth were pens and the sea (were ink wherewith to write), with seven seas behind it to add to its (supply), yet the Words of Allah would not be exhausted. Verily, Allah is All Mighty, All Wise" [Luqmaan 31:27].

If I were to tell you: Go into this house, and in this house there is a very, very big storeroom, in which there are all kinds of treasures and jewels, and they are all permissible for you, so take whatever you want of them. Whatever you take is yours, and do not worry about how much you take because there is such an abundant amount and it will not diminish, but the time is limited.

Would this offer tempt you to take more, without any fear or hesitation, or would it prevent you from taking? The answer is undoubtedly that this offer would give you the greatest motivation to take as much as you could.

You should understand that knowledge

is more precious than treasure, and that when God describes the Qur'ân in this manner, it provokes our minds to release all their rational power to derive whatever they want from it, however they want. The matter is greater than the ability of one mind. Moreover, this verse refers to the greatest tools of knowledge, namely the pen, ink and writing. Is this honouring these means and those who use them, or is it forbidding and condemning them?

Secondly: you know that since the Qur'ân was revealed and until the present day, no book has been revealed from heaven except this book, which is the last and final book. The level of knowledge it contains should therefore be able to encompass all intellectual civilizations to come and more, after their minds compiled the legacy of previous nations and reached the pinnacle of its maturity.

I adjure you, is this accordance with reason or not?

Or do you want God to have revealed a Book that was an example of backwardness and a laughing stock to scholars?

Not only that; there is also a psychological aspect. The one who reads the Qur'ân

finds something else that cannot be described, something that penetrates the soul, as if the soul were a dark room and light shines into this room and the room expands until it becomes wider than the universe; as if the atmosphere in the soul is filled with dust and smog, then the rain comes and washes away the smog and the sun rises upon it; or as if it is thirsty land which is then irrigated with water.”

Professor of Astronomy: “I think that everything you have said about the Qur’ân – firstly – is something that it has in common with the Torah and Gospel, because I often read the Torah and Gospel when I feel depressed and it takes away that depression, and I feel comforted as you do when you read the Qur’ân. This testimony of the soul concerning the Torah and Gospel cannot be refuted.

I am not the only one who finds this comfort, every Christian finds it. There is no one among us who does not have a Bible in his house, and reads the Bible from time to time.

You have seen for yourself how some of our leaders hasten to the churches at times of crisis. What are they seeking if not comfort?

Relaxing
by
reading
books

You cannot forget that the Israelis sent with every group of Jewish troops during the 1967 war one of their rabbis, and they put a Torah on every tank. Why is that? Was it not for comfort?"

Abu Haamid: "It is possible that the reason for what you mention of comfort when reading the Torah or Gospel is the fact that there are still some of the words of God in them that have not been distorted. It may also be due to the spiritual vacuum in which the individual in your society lives, so that anyone who speaks in religious terms will be accepted by some people. That is because the soul's need for faith is something natural, and spiritual hunger is something innate that must be fulfilled. When something akin to food is brought to a starving person, he will rush to eat it even if it is not for human consumption. This is what is happening with you and the Torah and Gospel. But if you try the Qur'ân, by God, you will find something that you have never found before, and you will taste something that you have never tasted before in your lives, so long as you read it with an open mind, without any pre-conceived enmity, even if you are not

Muslims.

You may think that the language of the Qur'ân is the same as the language of the Torah and Gospel. No, what I am saying is something different. Even in this matter I will not overlook reason for the sake of spiritual talk. Rather there is no point that I will mention but I will give purely rational reasons for it, so that I will not go against what we agreed under any circumstances. I will tell you these advantages, and there are countless other advantages. I am mentioning these as an indication only, although the difference that the reader finds between the Qur'ân and the Bible is immense.

I shall mention some of these advantages, along with the rational explanation for each advantage.

*The first advantage of reading the Qur'ân:*¹⁹ Confidence with comfort. The comfort that you feel when reading a Book knowing that it is the only Book

19. I did not include the interruptions and comments that took place when I was listing these advantages, because they were very small, and for the most part were supportive comments or requests for clarification. I have incorporated the comments into the list of advantages without indicating where interruptions took place.

Advantages of relaxing by reading Qur'ân and the reasons for it

The difference between the relaxation attained by reading Qur'ân and that attained by other means

in the world that is the word of God is a comfort that you do not find anywhere else.

All the Orientalists and prominent western scholars are unanimously agreed that the Noble Qur'ân is preserved in texts and in people's hearts and that not one word has been omitted from it or added to it. As **Schacht**, who is known for his bias against Islam, said: 'There can be no doubt that it is authentic and free of mistakes.'²⁰

Later on, he said: 'Even though there is a possibility that the *shaytan* could try to create confusion in it.'

Another of these western scholars was **Sir William Muir**, in his book *The Life of Muhammad*. Muir was known for his bias against Islam and against the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He said: 'No more than a quarter of a century passed since the death of Muhammad before violent disputes arose and factions appeared. 'Uthman fell vic-

20. *Nubuwwat Muhammad sall-allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam fil-Fikr al-Istishraaqi al-Mu'aasir* by Dr. Lakhdar Shaayib, p. 280, quoting from Daa'irat al-Ma'aarif al-Islamiyyah, vol. 2, subject Usul, Joseph Schacht p. 266

tim to this turmoil and these conflicts are still ongoing. But the Qur'ân remained the only book of all these groups. The reliance of all these groups on this Book is stark proof that the book that we have before us today is the same book that the wronged caliph ordered to be compiled and written down. Perhaps it is the only book in the whole world the text of which has remained unchanged and undistorted for twelve hundred years.'

Another of them is **Wahairi** who commented on the Qur'ân by saying: 'The Qur'ân is the furthest of all ancient texts from being mixed with something else, supplemented or added to, and it is the most sound and original.'

And **Yamer**, the famous translator of the Qur'ân into English, says in his book: The text of the Qur'ân is still as it was organized by 'Uthman in the book that was accepted and is followed by all Muslims.

And **Binbool** said: 'The greatest distinction of the Qur'ân is the fact that there has never been any doubt as to its authenticity. We can be confident that every letter we read today has not undergone

any change in thirteen centuries.²¹

Is this not a rational explanation (for this sense of comfort)? Hence this sense of comfort is not something artificial or contrived, as the reader of the Torah or Gospel tries to make it up or contrive it. Rather this comfort stems from the heart, because the soul recognizes full well the words of its Lord, hence this unparalleled harmony. Perhaps one of the greatest reasons for this sense of comfort is the real feeling that the reader of the Qur'ân has that he in particular is being addressed by the divine. These feelings cannot be denied by the one who reads the Qur'ân. It is almost as if he is Moses (peace be upon him) meeting his Lord in the sacred valley.

Extent of
the effect

The second advantage: When you read the Torah and Gospel as they exist now, you may be moved, but this effect is no more than momentary. But the secret of reading the Qur'ân is that it leads to building an entire way of life.

21. *Manaazirah bayna al-Islam wa'l-Nasraaniyyah li Munaaqishat al-'Aqeedah al-Deeniyyah bayna Majmoo'at min Rijaal al-Fikr min al-Diyaanatayn al-Islamiyyah wa'l-Nasraaniyyah*, p. 235, 236

Look at the followers of Jesus (peace be upon him) for example; there were no more than twelve Disciples and a few more around them. Look at the companions of Moses (peace be upon him), and how they abandoned him when he wanted to enter the holy land. Now look at the companions of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and you see something amazing with regard to both quantity and quality. You will see that the secret behind what these people achieved is the Qur'ân.

Reason says that the book which has this impact on the best and greatest nation, is able to create the same effect in the soul of every individual as it did the first time. Hence when you read the Qur'ân, you feel that its positive effect goes beyond the point of reading and goes beyond the limits of family and friends. It goes beyond life in the comprehensive sense: the life of this world and the life of the Hereafter.

Faith is
practical

The third advantage: You will never find in the Torah and Gospel anything but belief in a group of theories presented in theoretical words that have no impact on reality, whereas in the Noble Qur'ân you

find faith connected to deeds and deeds connected to faith. Read for example the first few verses of *Surat al-Anfal*, and see the connection between faith and deeds or between reading and impact:

2. “The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a fear in their hearts and when His Verses (this Qur’ân) are recited unto them, they (i.e. the Verses) increase their Faith; and they put their trust in their Lord (Alone);

3. Who perform *As-Salah* and spend out of that We have provided them.

4. It is they who are the believers in truth. For them are grades of dignity with their Lord, and forgiveness and a generous provision (Paradise)” [*al-Anfal* 8:2-4]

The secret behind this advantage of the Qur’ân over the Torah, Gospel and Psalms is that these Books were revealed to the Messengers (peace be upon them) in one go, written on tablets. Whereas the Qur’ân was revealed to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in stages, verse by verse, separately, according to need and circumstances. In

many cases verses were revealed in response to a problem that came up, or a question put to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), or an incident that occurred in the community or at home or with the enemy or with the hypocrites and the like. They are verses which were revealed to deal with reality, and are suited to every reality at all times. They were revealed and moulded a way of life in the real sense. They formed life anew. They were not revealed in one go, and they were not written by writers in libraries.

Many of these verses were revealed for a specific reason or because of a specific incident. This is called the reasons for revelation of the verses, of which there are many and they are of great importance, but I do not want to discuss them at length.

Profound
and sweet
at the
same
time

The fourth advantage: 'depth and sweetness.' When you read the Torah and Gospel, a huge number of questions will arise in your mind as soon as you allow your reason to work and put your emotions aside. They will increase when you have the audacity to enquire and ask, then raise objections. The advantage of

the Qur'ân is that the more you read it, the more your mind will work and the more your faith and conviction will increase. Hence, the Qur'ân asks its readers to read it a great deal.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'Whoever reads one letter from the Book of Allah will earn one good (*hasanah*) thereby. One good deed is equal to ten good deeds the like of it. I do not say that *Alif-Lam-Mim* is a letter, but *Alif* is a letter, *Laam* is a letter and *Meem* is a letter.'²²

The Christian Orientalist **Laura Faghtler**, says: 'The greatest miracle of Islam is the Qur'ân, which has been transmitted to us through strong and uninterrupted narrations via reports which give it absolute certainty. It is an unmatched Book. Each of its turns of phrase is comprehensive yet concise, yet it is of a reasonable size. ... Its style is original and unique, and there is nothing like this style in Arabic literature. ... The impact it has on the human soul occurs without any external

22. Narrated by al-Bukhari in *al-Tareekh al-Kabeer* (1/216) and by al-Tirmidhi (2910). He said: It is *hasan sahih gharib*. Also narrated by al-Bayhaqi in *Shu'ab al-Eemaan* (1983).

or additional help, such as in the commandments and prohibitions. It repeats the stories of the Prophets, describes the beginning and end of the world, and tells of the attributes of God, but it repeats them in an exciting way, which does not reduce its impact. It moves from one subject to another without losing this power. Here we see both depth and sweetness.²³

Increase
in
knowled-
ge

The fifth advantage: You will never increase in knowledge if you read the Torah and Gospel, rather you will find things that are contrary to your knowledge and reason, whereas one of the greatest advantages of the Noble Qur'ân is that it focuses on the rational aspect as it focuses on the emotional. So you will find yourself reaching the pinnacles and more in all topics discussed, as God says in *Surat al-Isra'*:

“And We send down of the Qur'ân that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe (in Islamic Monotheism and act on it), and it increases the wrongdoers nothing but loss” [*al-Isra'* 17:82].

It constantly provokes your mind and

23. *Difaa' 'an al-Islam* by Laura Faghler p. 56, 57

your reason. It even provokes the reason of those who do not believe in the Qur'ân and says:

“so what is wrong with these people that they fail to understand any word?” [*an-Nisa'* 4:78]

“O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you with Allah is that (believer) who has *At Taqwa* [i.e. he is one of the pious. Verily, Allah is All Knowing, All Aware” [*al-Hujurât* 49:13]

184. “Do they not reflect? There is no madness in their companion. He is but a plain warner.

185. Do they not look in the dominion of the heavens and the earth and all things that Allah has created; and that it may be that the end of their lives is near. In what message after this will they then believe?” [*al-A'raf* 7:184-185]

Gather
the
evidence
and study
it

The sixth advantage: the way in which it presents proof. When you are reading the Qur'ân, you will often come across

dialogues concerning the greatest issues. You will find that the *Qur'ân* presents the opposite argument, just as it presents its own argument. But when you read the proof of the Qur'ânic argument, you will find that it is an argument that cannot be withstood, so it has a great impact both rationally and psychologically, as if it is springing from your own mind and soul, not from a book that is recited to you. If you compile all the arguments in the *Qur'ân*, then you will have the strongest and most decisive arguments concerning the most important matters. Ponder for yourself what it says in *Surat al-Isra'*, where God says:

89. "And indeed We have fully explained to mankind, in this *Qur'ân*, every kind of similitude, but most of mankind refuse (the truth and accept nothing) but disbelief.

90. And they say: 'We shall not believe in you, until you cause a spring to gush forth from the earth for us;

91. 'Or you have a garden of date palms and grapes, and cause rivers to gush forth in their midst abundantly;

92. 'Or you cause the heaven to fall

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91. 'Or you have a garden of date palms and grapes, and cause rivers to gush forth in their midst abundantly;

92. 'Or you cause the heaven to fall

upon us in pieces, as you have pretended, or you bring Allah and the angels before (us) face to face;

93. 'Or you have a house of *Zukhruf* (like silver and pure gold), or you ascend up into the sky, and even then we will put no faith in your ascension until you bring down for us a Book that we would read.' Say: 'Glorified (and Exalted) be my Lord [(Allah) above all that evil they (polytheists) associate with Him]! Am I anything but a man, sent as a Messenger?'

94. And nothing prevented men from believing when the guidance came to them, except that they said: 'Has Allah sent a man as (His) Messenger?'

95. Say: 'If there were on the earth, angels walking about in peace and security, We should certainly have sent down for them from the heaven an angel as a Messenger.'

96. Say: 'Sufficient is Allah for a witness between me and you. Verily, He is Ever the All Knower, the All Seer of His slaves'" [*al-Isra*' 17:89- 96]

It says in *Surat at-Tur*:

29. "Therefore, remind. By the Grace of Allah, you are neither a soothsayer nor a madman.

30. Or do they say: 'A poet! We await for him some calamity by time!'

31. Say: 'Wait! I am with you among those who wait!'

32. Do their minds command them this [i.e. to tell a lie against you] or are they people transgressing all bounds?

33. Or do they say: 'He has forged it (this Qur'ân)?' Nay! They believe not!

34. Let them then produce a recitation like unto it (the Qur'ân) if they are truthful.

35. Were they created by nothing? Or were they themselves the creators?

36. Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Nay, but they have no firm Belief.

37. Or are with them the treasures of your Lord? Or are they the tyrants with the authority to do as they like?

38. Or have they a stairway (to heaven), by means of which they listen (to the talks of the angels)? Then let their

listener produce some manifest proof.

39. Or has He (Allah) only daughters and you have sons?

40. Or is it that you ask a wage from them (for your preaching of Islamic Monotheism) so that they are burdened with a load of debt?

41. Or that the *Ghayb* (Unseen) is with them, and they write it down?

42. Or do they intend a plot? But those who disbelieve are themselves plotted against!

43. Or have they an *ilah* (a god) other than Allah? Glorified be Allah from all that they ascribe as partners (to Him)?

44. And if they were to see a piece of the heaven falling down, they would say: 'Clouds gathered in heaps!'

45. So leave them alone till they meet their Day, in which they will sink into a fainting (with horror).

46. The Day when their plotting shall not avail them at all nor will they be helped (i.e. they will receive their torment in Hell)." [*at-Tur* 52:29-46]

It debates with the Jews and Christians who claimed that Ibrahim (peace be upon him) was a follower of their religions. It says in *Surat Aal 'Imran*:

65. "O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians)! Why do you dispute about Ibrahim (Abraham), while the Tawrat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel) were not revealed till after him? Have you then no sense?

66. Verily, you are those who have disputed about that of which you have knowledge. Why do you then dispute concerning that of which you have no knowledge? It is Allah Who knows, and you know not.

67. Ibrahim (Abraham) was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a true Muslim *Hanifa* (Islamic Monotheism — to worship none but Allah Alone) and he was not of the idolaters.

68. Verily, among mankind who have the best claim to Ibrahim (Abraham) are those who followed him, and this Prophet and those who have believed (Muslims). And Allah is the *Wali* (Protector and Helper) of the believers.

69. A party of the people of the Scrip-

ture (Jews and Christians) wish to lead you astray. But they shall not lead astray anyone except themselves, and they perceive not.

70. 'O people of the Scripture! (Jews and Christians): Why do you disbelieve in the *Ayat* of Allah, while you (yourselves) bear witness (to their truth).'

71. 'O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians): Why do you mix truth with falsehood and conceal the truth while you know?'" [*Aal 'Imran* 3:65-71]

These are just a few samples of many arguments and debates.

It remains for us to ask: Are there rational arguments in such quantities in the Gospel?

Realism

Examples of rational confusion found in the Gospels are too numerous to list.

The seventh advantage of reading the Qur'ân over reading the Gospel and Torah is that there is nothing in the Qur'ân that is unrealistic, imaginary or illusionary, no fables and nothing that makes no sense. It is realistic when it tells you

about yourself, your family, your relationships, the stories of the Prophets, and even when it tells you about Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to whom the Qur'ân was revealed.

Look at what God says in *Surat an-Naml* about Muhammad and the Children of Israel:

76. "Verily, this Qur'ân narrates to the Children of Israel most of that in which they differ.

77. And truly, it (this Qur'ân) is a guide and a mercy for the believers.

78. Verily, your Lord will decide between them (various sects) by His Judgement. And He is the All Mighty, the All Knowing.

79. So put your trust in Allah; surely, you are on manifest truth.

80. Verily, you cannot make the dead to hear nor can you make the deaf to hear the call (i.e. benefit them and similarly the disbelievers), when they flee, turning their backs.

81. Nor can you lead the blind out of their error. You can only make to hear those who believe in Our *Ayat* (proofs,

evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.), and who have submitted (themselves to Allah in Islam as Muslims)" [*an-Naml* 27:76-81]

It is very realistic, and a sign of its authenticity is that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was rebuked in a very gentle manner, when God said to him in the Qur'ân:

"May Allah forgive you. Why did you grant them leave (for remaining behind; you should have persisted as regards your order to them to proceed), until those who told the truth were seen by you in a clear light, and you had known the liars?" [*at-Tawbah* 9:43]

At the end of *Surat al-Kahf* it says:

"Say: 'I am only a man like you. It has been revealed to me that your *Ilah* (God) is One *Ilah* (God — i.e. Allah). So whoever hopes for the Meeting with his Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord" [*al-Kahf* 18:110]

How does this realistic logic compare with the logic of taking Jesus (peace be upon him) as a god when he is human,

There is nothing off-putting in it

and enslaving human minds to other humans?

The eighth advantage of reading the Qur'ân over reading the Torah and Gospel is that when you read the Torah and Gospel, you often feel put off by many of the meanings and accounts presented in them. That is only due to the distortions in them. On the contrary, you sense the harmony between the Qur'ân and the human soul. This may be explained rationally by noting that the One Who revealed the Qur'ân is the Creator of man. So the source of the Qur'ân and of man is one and the same, namely God, and a single entity cannot contradict itself at all. What is amazing is that I read about a laboratory study on the Qur'ân carried out by an Egyptian doctor, who took five people and put them into a state of deep relaxation, and he recorded their nervous responses, both positive and negative, whilst Qur'ân was being recited to them, so as to measure the impact of that on their feelings without any other interference. He found that the positive response of the nervous system reached its peak when Qur'ân was read.

Then he replaced the sound of the Qur'ân

with the sound of Arabic words spoken in the manner of Qur'ânic recitation, and the nervous response recorded was normal.

Then he connected the sensory equipment to five Filipino men who did not know a single word of Arabic. When he played music to them, the nervous response oscillated, but when he played a recording of Qur'ânic recitation, the positive responses increased and peaked.

One may wonder – and rightly so – why this effect occurs with the Qur'ân only, when these people did not understand a single word of Arabic. The answer is clearly that the Creator of man is the One Who revealed the Qur'ân. The Creator of the human nervous system is the One Who revealed the words of the Qur'ân. The Creator of the human soul is the One who revealed the verses of the Qur'ân. This Qur'ân is the Qur'ân that He revealed the first time, so it is natural that there should be some harmony between these nerves and these words. This harmony when in a state of deep relaxation is the truest it can be, and the furthest away from psychological, social or nervous influences. Man may achieve

the same effect if he removes the barriers between his soul and the Qur'ân by ridding himself of all ignorant biases and tribal feelings. How greatly I admired the words of an Englishman who was guided to Islam. In an interview with Emirates TV, on the Sharjah channel, he spoke of the first time he read the Qur'ân, just before he was guided, describing his psychology and inner feelings: 'When I read the Qur'ân for the first time, I felt as if it was the one that was reading me.'

Rationalism

The ninth advantage of the Qur'ân over the Torah and Gospel: You cannot make anyone enter Christianity by reading the Gospel, rather those who read the Gospel do not understand much of what it says, even those who read it a great deal, whereas the Qur'ân combines two qualities: it is eloquent and easy to read. Therefore those with the least knowledge and those with the highest levels of knowledge can understand it. Therefore you find people coming to Islam from all academic specialties, as well as ordinary people and even the least smart and those of the lowest socio-economic backgrounds.

On the other hand, you find that the common denominator among Muslims who

become Christians is desperate need for something, which is why missionaries exploit circumstances such as fatal diseases, famine, drought, floods, wars and so on, presenting the Gospel to them and calling them to Christianity. Some of your countries grant nationality to large numbers of Muslim migrants, not because they have any hopes concerning the first generation, but because they have hopes for the third generation.

The tenth advantage that the one who reads the Qur'ân has over the one who reads the Torah, Gospel and Psalms in its powerful style. A great scientist read the first verses of *Surat al-Baqarah* and announced his Islam on the spot. Those verses are:

“Alif-Laam-Meem. [These letters are one of the miracles of the Qur'ân and none but Allah (Alone) knows their meanings.]

2. This is the Book (the Qur'ân), whereof there is no doubt” [*al-Baqarah* 2:1].

When he was asked about the reason why he had become a Muslim, he said with amazement: This is the first time in my

life that I have read a book and seen the author in the first few words challenging anyone to find a mistake. All authors usually give apologies for any mistakes.

The one who reads the Qur'ân will see this confidence and decisiveness, and this sense of the sublime in every verse, *surah* and word."

Dr. Drima: "I think that at this particular point we all need to go home and have a rest, because we have a long day at work ahead of us. But I assure you that I will not get tired."

Abu Haamid: "Why will you not get tired?"

Dr. Drima: "Because Napoleon did not get tired."

** All laugh.*

Abu Haamid: "I think that true rest and comfort for the soul will come if each of you reads some of the meanings of the Qur'ân that you have with you, just as an experiment, to find out. You are people who love to examine and find out. When you read the Qur'ân, you will not just discover something new, rather you will discover yourselves for the first time..."

Conclusion of the gathering

What can my mind say when it sees someone who is helpless before the most enduring words that remain and are still addressed to all people, presenting a challenge, and they are unable to produce something like it or like part of it? All my mind can do is surrender. Even if it does not surrender, what it is going to do about this great challenge? **"Say: 'If mankind and the jinn were together to produce the like of this Qur'ân, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they helped one another'" [al-Isra' 17:88].**

These verses consist of letters and words, but they also contain the past, present and future, in the form of verses which include in their folds innumerable discoveries which it gives each generation the opportunity to discover what is sufficient for them and what will help them, what they can comprehend and what may guide them and give them more than they need.

It contains the history of what came be-

fore history and what will happen after the end of history, and what comes in between that was not recorded by history, such as the story of Jonah in the belly of the fish, or the story of the people of the cave inside the cave, or the story of what will happen after the Hour comes, when the people's Reckoning is complete, and the story of their eternal abode.

If we have seen things that are very amazing in our discussion, what is even more amazing than all that is that it gives life to those who are still alive, as if they were dead but the time for their resurrection has come, so they are resurrected from their graves to a new life. The evidence for that is this nation, which filled the horizons due to its size and prevailed over others due to its morals and ethics. It announces and everyone knows that previously it was among the dead; the only reviving element in its being was these Qur'ânic words.

Here it is before you: its treasure of words never runs out, its challenge is unlimited, its meanings will exhaust any ink, no matter how huge an amount there is.

Read it, examine it, read it again, memorize it. Try and try and try again to pro-

duce something like these words. When you realize that you cannot meet this challenge, you will feel helpless. Then announce your submission immediately, otherwise you should realize that you are only arguing irrationally with your reason and sacrificing your fair-minded judgement.

* * *

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The Fifth Gathering

Was Jesus (peace be upon him) God or a Servant of God?

Introduction:

A cross of gold hanging in the sanctuary of the church, crosses engraved on its walls, crosses glistening on the chests of the people present, except for the chests of Abu Haamid, Dr. Lutfy, my friend Abu Humaam and my brother 'Abd al-Salaam ... and the chest of Dr. Drima, for it is not his habit to wear a cross.

But the crosses did not provoke any excitement or concern except in our hearts as Muslim guests. For the others, it was more than a matter of fashion.

But the bright smiles and cheerful faces outshone the glistening of the crosses that adorned people's chests.

Bishop Sparto: "Our objection against Muslims in general – with apologies to Shaykh Abu Haamid – is that they do not respect Jesus, rather they demean him and detract from his status."

Attack of
Bishop
Sparto

Abu Haamid: "Perhaps Bishop Sparto was not present when we made our original agreement with the Archbishop, when we agreed to appoint reason as the judge between us, even with regard to religious texts, and that we would not have any "no-go areas" between us which our discussion and dialogue could not deal with. We would have to discuss everything so that no grudges or resentments would be left between us.

I hope that you are not trying, by means of this question, to put me on the defensive with this sudden attack, or taking it for granted that I am defeated because of the presence of these respected people, or trying to take advantage of the church atmosphere, or trying to make the most of the current atmosphere, or trying to take advantage of my being a stranger in the land of freedom, or basing your conversation on any other consideration. Let us be calm and strongly defend what we believe, with full submission to the judgement of reason and accepting the outcome.

An opportunity that may not come again

Believe me, it is an opportunity that will not be repeated. Let us rid ourselves, if only for this short while, of all precon-

ceived notions and prejudice, so that we may follow the ultimate verdict of reason. Let us make these few hours like the 'speakers' corners' that exist in some countries, where anyone who enters has to put up with listening both to what he likes and what he does not like, where the one who wants to speak may say whatever he wants, and no one is to be blamed for what he says.

We do not want these few hours to be a carbon-copy of our lives. We want a few hours which will be beneficial in the true sense of the word.

Do we agree on this, my friends?"

The bishops said yes, and the professors welcomed it warmly.

Abu Haamid: "I do not want to take too long to rebuff your attack and your claim that the Muslims do not respect Jesus. But I want to point out to you some principles in Islam, which include numerous details. Then you can decide whether the Muslims respect Jesus or not.

Whoever does not believe in Jesus (peace be upon him) in Islam is not a Muslim. If he is a Muslim but he disbelieves in Jesus, then he puts himself out of Islam at

that moment. Anyone who accuses Mary the mother of Jesus of being unfaithful has put himself out of Islam. Did you know that?

Did you know, Archbishop, that the name of Jesus (peace be upon him) is mentioned in the Qur'ân twenty-five times, whereas the name of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is mentioned four times only?

Do you know that Mary is mentioned by name in the Qur'ân thirty-four times, whereas none of the wives of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) are mentioned by name, and neither are any other Muslim women?

Do you know that there is a *surah* in the Qur'ân that is ninety-eight verses long and is named for Mary (*Surat Maryam*), whereas there is no *surah* in the Noble Qur'ân that is named for any of the wives of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or any other Muslim woman?

Some
of my
children's
names

Hence we have no reservations about calling our sons 'Eesa, which is Arabic for Jesus, or calling our daughters Mar-

yam (Mary), in fact we are proud to do so. On a personal note, my middle son's name is 'Eesa, and I also have two daughters. The younger one is called Fatimah and the older one is called Maryam.

I only want us to be fair-minded, and on that basis I repeat my question to you. Who is not respecting whom?

Is it the case that most Christians today do not respect Muhammad or that Muslims do not respect Jesus (blessings and peace be upon them both)?

Let me go back to reason and say: Praise be to God Who has bestowed upon you and us sound reason. No one can force anyone to believe what he does not believe. Let us check what reason dictates in all cases.

I think that those professors who know me will not reject what I say and do. They have never caught me saying or doing anything ambiguous, let alone lying. Yet I will add to that my oath by Almighty Allah – the oath of the Muslims – that were it not that I am certain of what I believe, I would not have argued for it, and were it not that I wish you every good from the bottom of my heart, I would not

have tried to convince you of it. Moreover I am not taking any money for this, not a single euro or dollar. No one has sent me as an employee or forced me to come here. It is only pure love for these dear faces, to whom I wish every good as I wish for myself."

Archbishop: "In fact this sincere spirit which we feel here is the best thing with which we can start our discussion, which we hope everyone will continue even if we differ. But you should realize, Abu Haamid, that I agree with everything that my brother Bishop Sparto said about the Muslims not respecting Jesus as he should be respected. Rather they insult him in the worst manner."

The cross

Abu Haamid turned to Professor Palmer, who owns a factory that manufactures medical equipment, and said: "I see a small emblem on the lapel of your fine jacket. It looks like an Iraqi flag."

Dr. Palmer: "Yes. I began to wear it after the martyrdom of Saddam Hussein. As a French person I admire him greatly and I love this great leader deeply."

Abu Haamid: "I respect your admiration and love. Hence I would like to give you

a gift of a beautiful wax model showing President Saddam Hussein hanging from the end of the rope, with the rope around his neck. You can put it on your desk so that you will never forget this man.”

Professor Palmer was very upset; red-faced, he yelled: “NO! I wear this flag and tell you that I admire him and love him, and I have the most handsome portrait of him in my house. How could I accept this gift when I cannot bear to look at the scene of his hanging, even though these images are available and preserved even on mobile phones?”

Abu Haamid turned to Bishop Sparto and said to him: “This is the thinking of those who love a person, is it not?”

Bishop Sparto: “Yes.”

Abu Haamid: “So how can you wear images of Jesus crucified on your chests? How?

How can you hang up images of him crucified, with his head tilted, in the sanctuaries of your churches, the direction facing which you pray?

Did he tell you to do that before he was crucified? Or did he tell you to do that af-

ter he was crucified? Is it an expression of love for him?

Isn't the cross something that his enemies boasted about?

Isn't the image of a loved one, whether a son, father or friend, being crucified one that cannot be boasted about or shown to others?

How can you display it in this manner?

What if the story of the crucifixion was wretched and miserable, in addition to being false?

A man may preserve his sword if he killed his enemy with it, or he may preserve his rope if he hung his enemy with it, feeling proud and boasting of this victory. But what is the reason for your preserving and keeping the cross?

Do you think that if Jesus (peace be upon him) had been killed by poison, you would have kept the poison? Or if he had been burned to death you would have worshipped and venerated fire? Or if a wolf had eaten him you would have worshipped the wolf?"

Bishop Sparto: "Some of those present may think that at first glance, what you

say makes sense, and they may be convinced of it, but if you understand the true meaning behind the cross, perhaps you yourself will wear a cross. It is an expression of self-denial. We say: The meaning of the cross is 'Mortifying the self from selfishness and love of oneself.' It is the rebellious will that we should subjugate and imprison in order to obey Christ, so that everyone will say: 'It is not what I want, rather what You want, O Lord.' Thus it is one of the most important duties of every Christian to carry his cross willingly."¹

Abu Haamid: "I would like to ask Bishop Sparto: Do you support the worship of idols? Do you know how it first began on earth?"

Idol
worship

Bishop Sparto: "No doubt you know that I do not support the worship of idols. Because we and you are both followers of divinely-revealed religions; this is something on which we do not differ at all.

As to how it began, there were Prophets

1. From *Muhaadaraat fi'l-Nasraaniyyah*, p. 104, discussing the stages that Christian beliefs went through, and their books, sacred societies and sects. Footnote on p. 79.

and righteous men among the people, who loved them very much. When they died they made images of them lest they forget them, then they made statues of them.”

Abu Haamid: “Was it justifiable to make statues so as to preserve the memory of the righteous?

What’s more important, didn’t the cross change from being a symbol of self-denial – as you say – to being a symbol of a god who is worshipped alongside God?

What is the difference between worshipping idols and worshipping crosses?

Yes, self-denial is required, but does self-denial mean humiliating the Messiah (peace be upon him)?

My dear Bishop, if a friend of mine was stabbed with a knife for my sake, would my hanging up the knife of his murderer in my car be a sign of my self-denial?

Would it be an honour for me before his dependents and family?

What difference would there be between me, if I hung it up, and the murderer, if he hung it up with pride, in order to boast?

Based on this, I will ask you, and I hope that you will give me a rational answer that has nothing to do with religious fanaticism. Isn't the one who wears and worships the cross worshipping the tool of the criminals with which they killed the best of people, whereas the one who worships an idol is simply worshipping an image of the Prophets or the righteous?

Yes, both kinds of worship are associating others with God, but which type of worship has the nobler origin? Is it the tool of the criminals or the Prophets and the righteous?

I don't want you to answer out loud. Your inward verdict is sufficient for me."

Professor Baro: "I think that one of the great positive things about this gathering is the high calibre of the participants, as they are the elite, whether in religion, medicine or history, and I hope that our dialogue will be profound. But when I look at the matter I do not see any common ground between us. We say that Jesus is God, but you say that he is human. How can we meet? How can we agree?"

Abu Haamid: "It is not necessary that

we agree, but so long as what we have in common is reason. Then we have to be convinced. So long as we are fair-minded and accept the rule of reason, we will inevitably agree. As much as a man uses his mind when he says something or hears something, to that extent he will be convinced. As much as he is fair minded, he will be willing to admit his mistakes and follow the truth, wherever it may be, even if the truth conflicts with his heritage, whims and desires, and society. When I say this, I am the first one to adhere to it, because I know that it is an opportunity that may never be repeated. If I drift away from it, please remind me.

A
challenge
to
produce
even one
word

As for the idea that Jesus was God, I ask you: Where does this idea of divinity come from? What is the source of this idea? What support and basis is there for the idea that Jesus (peace be upon him) is the son of God?

When Jesus (peace be upon him) came to the people, did he call them to worship him? Did Jesus (peace be upon him) ever say to the people, even once, "I am your god; worship me"?

Did he not repeatedly say in the Gospel: "I am the servant of God, I call you to

God, God is my Lord and your Lord”?

Give me one instance when he said to the people in the Gospel, ‘Worship me’, and I will give you ten instances when he said to the people, ‘Worship God.’

Give me one instance when he said to the people, ‘I am the second god with God,’ and I will give you one hundred instances when he said to the people: ‘God is my Lord and your Lord.’

Give me one instance when he said that he was not a messenger from God, and I will give you one hundred instances when he said that God had sent him as a messenger.

My dear Bishop Sparto, did Jesus (peace be upon him) recognize the existence of the Prophets before him and that God had sent them to the people to save them from servitude to anyone other than God?”

Bishop Sparto: “At some stage, yes, undoubtedly, and there were many messengers.”

Abu Haamid: “To what did these messengers call people?”

Did the previous Prophets call people to worship Jesus (peace be upon him) along

with God?

Did they fall short in that, or was God non-existent or unknown, or had He not yet assumed the position of being God? Do you think they wanted to save people from worshipping other gods along with God, so that Jesus (peace be upon him) would lead them into worshipping him along with God? Do you think that they came to save them from worshipping trees, rocks and humans such as Pharaoh and others, and Jesus (peace be upon him) came to take them back to worshipping humans in the form of Jesus (peace be upon him)?

I adjure you; I will let you off answering, but let reason decide.

Didn't Jesus believe in the Prophets who came before him? Didn't he confirm the message of the earlier Prophets, as it says in the Qur'ân, Torah and Psalms?

Does it make sense to suggest that God would choose the most honest and sincere of men, then send them to convey the message that it is obligatory to worship God alone, then when they reached their people they would betray their Lord and appoint themselves as gods instead

of God, asking their people to change from worshipping other things to worshipping their Prophets themselves?

Is it possible that Jesus (peace be upon him) would have said this?

There can only be one of two possibilities:

Either those who narrated from Jesus (peace be upon him) lied about him, or he lied about God and betrayed the trust.

There is no way that we can accept the second possibility. Indeed this lie is to be attributed to those who told lies about Jesus (peace be upon him).

If there is no uninterrupted chain of narrators going back to Jesus (peace be upon him), and there is no uninterrupted chain of narrators going back to the Gospel itself, as we discussed earlier in our third gathering, and we realize that the chain is interrupted in many places and that there are many unknown names – if this is the case, is there any authentic, undistorted book, even if it is something other than the Gospel of Jesus (peace be upon him) himself, that can confirm that?

The answer is that no such book exists,

not even the Gospel, because the writing of the Gospels began more than thirty-five years after the time of Jesus (peace be upon him) ended.

As the chain of narrators is interrupted, and the Book is not extant, there remains only one option: to look for an external witness to testify to the lordship of Jesus (peace be upon him). We will never find any better witness than the Old Testament. Let us look in the Torah for a word that refers to the divinity of Jesus (peace be upon him) or enjoins belief in it.

The answer is that there is not even one such word. *Au contraire*, in many places in the Torah we find that if any Prophet or anyone who claimed to be divinely inspired through dreams had called for the worship of anything other than God, he would have been executed even if he had performed mighty miracles. See Exodus 20:3,4,5, 23.

There is another text which mentions the punishment for the one who worships anything other than God. It says:

The verse with the wording given in the revised Arabic text on p. 616 is not in *Deuteronomy* 17:2-7. The closest I can

find in the passage is as follows:

"If a man or woman living among ... is found doing evil in the eyes of the LORD your God in violation of his covenant, and contrary to my command has worshipped other gods, ... then you must investigate it thoroughly. If it is true and it has been proved that this detestable thing has been done ..., take the man or woman who has done this evil deed to your city gate and stone that person to death."

On whom should this punishment be carried out? On Jesus (peace be upon him), who never claimed to be divine and never demanded that he should be worshipped? Or on those who falsely enjoined people to worship Jesus (peace be upon him)?

Let the judge of reason decide as it will.

Now let us move on to the Psalms. Is there a single word which indicates that Jesus (peace be upon him) is a god?

The answer is no, there is no such word.

Is there in the Qur'ân a single word which suggests that Jesus (peace be upon him) is a god?

The answer is that there is not a single

word. Rather the Qur'ân clearly states that those who take Jesus (peace be upon him) as a god instead of God are disbelievers. The Qur'ân quotes the words of Jesus himself (peace be upon him) to that effect. The point here is that the testimony of the Qur'ân is the same as the testimony of the Torah. It is forbidden to worship anything other than God. The text of the Qur'ân is more explicit than that, as God says in *Surat al-Ma'idah*:

“Surely, in disbelief are they who say that Allah is the Messiah, son of Maryam (Mary). Say: “Who then has the least power against Allah, if He were to destroy the Messiah, son of Maryam (Mary), his mother, and all those who are on the earth together?” And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them. He creates what He wills. And Allah is Able to do all things” [al-Ma'idah 5:17]

How could anyone dare to legislate polytheism in the name of God or in the name of Jesus (peace be upon him) without any rational or textual proof?

My dear Bishop, let me coin a similitude for you of the rights of possession. If

there is a space of three metres between you and your neighbour, and you want to incorporate it into your property, you will never be able to do so unless you prove that you own these three metres, or witnesses testify that they belong to you. If you do incorporate these three metres into your house, ignoring the system, then you are a usurper according to the law. How could we adopt this system with regard to empty metres of land and overlook all systems and laws when it comes to the most important of issues, the issue of divinity, and give to a man that which is the right of God alone?

Moreover, can there be any verdict, if we doubt the soundness of the claim to ownership of these few metres, other than to give them back to their owner?

If we accept our claim to ownership of the land of others in this manner, for example, would we accept the similar claims of others?"

Archbishop: "I think that you are challenging us to produce the words of Jesus where he said that he was lord or when he said to the people, 'Worship me', and in return you will present us with a hundred quotations to the contrary. I am sorry to

Accepting
the
challenge

tell you that if you quickly flip through the Gospel you will find that Jesus himself claimed to be divine on many occasions. But I urge you beforehand not to keep saying that the Gospel is distorted. This is an issue that we promised to go back to in the third or fourth gathering. As for the evidence, it is quite clear. In the Gospel of Matthew it tells that Jesus asked his students:

13. *'Who do people say the Son of Man is?'*

14. *They replied, 'Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.'*

15. *'But what about you?' he asked. 'Who do you say I am?'*

16. *Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'*

17. *Jesus replied, 'Blessed are you, Simon...'" Matthew 16:13-20*

In the Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, it says:

"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" I Corinthians 8:6

Moreover, if you read the answer that Jesus gave to those who wanted to see God, you would know who Jesus is and who God is, and you would not have issued this challenge, which is based on your lack of knowledge of our books.

In the fourteenth chapter of John's Gospel, Jesus said in answer to those who wanted to see the Lord:

"Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?" John 14:9-10

In the tenth chapter of John's Gospel, Jesus says:

"I and the Father are one" John 10:30

Isn't this sufficient to believe that they are the same?

Isn't this evidence sufficient to answer your challenge, Abu Haamid?"

Abu Haamid: "There is not a single text among those that you mention in which Jesus (peace be upon him) says that he

is “a god” or “God”. There is no text in which he says, ‘You have to worship me along with God or instead of God.’ But I still say: Give me a single text concerning Jesus, from the distorted Bible itself in which it says that he is God; I will give you many more texts which contradict what you say.

What does the Archbishop’s reason say? If I refrain from answering you on the basis of the Qur’ân or Islamic convictions, and we both refer to the Gospel itself and agree to accept its verdict, will that be fair?”

O my son

Archbishop: “Yes, no doubt. How could you deduce that Jesus is not divine when Christ himself says to you, “I am the son of God,” and “God is my Father” and “one Lord Jesus Christ” and so on?”

Abu Haamid: “Before I start discussing what you have mentioned, I would like to ask about something personal. Now you are regarded as a senior bishop in both age and in terms of religious and academic status. Every time I forgot your name I wanted to call you “son of the church” but I hesitated, lest that offend you.”

Archbishop: "My name is Richard, but it would be an honour if you were to call me 'son of the church'. Undoubtedly it would be an honour for any bishop to be called by this name, and I think that you would also be honoured if I called you 'son of the mosque' or son of Qur'ân. Is that not so?"

Abu Haamid: "Then this is your testimony and the testimony of all the bishops, and my testimony and the testimony of all the professors present that the church did not give birth to you or to the other bishops, and the mosque did not give birth to me. The church is not like a mother or father by blood, yet you say that it is an honour to be called 'son of the church'. Why isn't it an honour for Jesus to say 'son of God' even though God did not give birth to him or anyone else, just as the church did not give birth to you and the mosque did not give birth to me?"

What is there left except for you to say that this attribution is a term of respect and honour? Isn't this the logic of reason which both the ordinary man and the scholar can understand at the same time? It is logic which people in all places can

accept. A professor may address one of his students by calling him 'my son', exactly as Paul addressed the people of Corinth in his Epistle to them, when he said:

17. *"For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love" I Corinthians 4:17*

Thus an old man may address a small child, if he does not know him, by saying, 'my son'. And a small child may say to an old man, 'my father'. Do these people become the sons of those who address them thus, or vice versa? No rational man would ever say such a thing.

As for you quoting as evidence the passage in the Gospel where it says that if a person has seen Jesus, it is as if he saw God, and the words *"Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?"* (John 14:10), I urge you to let reason decide, and I ask you to look at the way in which we use these words. I ask you to seek the ruling of all the religions of heavenly origin, and you will see the misunderstanding of these words that made you fall into the trap of believing in the incarnation.

My dear bishop, have you heard a father saying to his child, 'You are in my heart', or someone saying to his beloved: 'You are my soul, you are my eyes'? and the beloved answers likewise, 'Just as I am in your heart and soul, you are in mine' and so on?

Do any of those who say such words mean that the person who is addressed is physically moved from his place and disintegrates until he literally enters the heart or soul or eyes of his beloved? Would any wise, rational man reach such a conclusion?

If this understanding is well established among those who love one another, who are all human, don't you think that the love of Jesus for his Lord is far greater than the love of these people for one another, and that the love of the Lord for Jesus is even greater than that? Why does this love not deserve to be expressed in such terms?

What you say about the love of Jesus for his Lord and the love of the Lord for Jesus may also be said concerning all the Prophets (peace be upon them). Such expressions are common among people and are used a great deal in speeches, books

and poetry.

The Arab poet expressed this as follows:

'It is most amazing that I long for them
And I ask my heart about them when
they are between my ribs

And my heart seeks them when they are
in my pupils

And my heart longs for them when they
are between my ribs.'

Is there any expression of unity which is
clearer than this? But does the poet mean
that bodies are united with one another?

Does he mean that the body of his beloved
dissolved and became incorporated
into him, and dwelt in his chest between
his ribs?!

If you look quickly through the Books
of heavenly origin, you will not find a
single phrase which refers to what the
Christians understand about incarnation,
even though such phrases appear a great
deal in the books. David (peace be upon
him) addressed his Lord, saying:

*"But let all who take refuge in you be
glad;*

let them ever sing for joy.

Spread your protection over them"

Psalm 5:11

Have you heard of any Jew who claimed that what their Prophet David meant was that God was incarnated in him or any of those who took refuge in Him?

We Muslims have an important *hadith* about this matter, in which the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

‘Whosoever shows enmity to someone devoted to Me, I shall be at war with him. My servant draws not near to Me with anything more loved by Me than the religious duties I have enjoined upon him, and My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory works so that I shall love him. When I love him I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes and his foot with which he walks. Were he to ask [something] of Me, I would surely give it to him, and were he to ask Me for refuge, I would surely grant him it. And I do not hesitate to do anything as I hesitate to take the soul of the believer, for he hates death,

and I hate to disappoint him.' [*al-Bukhari* (6502)]

Did any of the Muslims understand from this *hadith* that Allah becomes incarnated in His servant and Allah becomes part of his hearing, seeing or limbs?!

In another *hadith*, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

'Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, will say on the Day of Resurrection: O son of Adam, I fell sick and you did not visit Me. He will say: O Lord, how could I visit You when You are the Lord of the Worlds? He will say: Did you not know that My slave So - and - so was sick but you did not visit him? Do you not know that if you had visited him you would have found Me with him? O son of Adam, I asked you for food and you did not feed Me. He will say: O Lord, how could I feed You when You are the Lord of the Worlds? He said: Did you not know that My slave So - and - so asked you for food, but you did not feed him? Do you not know that if you had fed him, you would have found that with Me? O son of Adam, I asked you for water and you did not give Me to drink. He will say: O Lord, how could I give you to drink

when You are the Lord of the Worlds? He will say: My slave so - and - so asked you for water and you did not give him to drink. If you had given him to drink you would have found that with Me.’²

Couldn't the Muslims have interpreted this *hadith* as indicative of incarnation as the extreme Christians did?

The answer is definitely not, because reason, custom and sound understanding cannot accept that, because if God had meant incarnation He would have said ‘If you had visited him you would have found Me in him.’ But He said: ‘If you had visited him, you would have found Me with him.’

If He had meant incarnation, He would have said: ‘If you had fed him, you would have fed Me.’ But He said: “If you had fed him you would have found that with Me.’ There is a vast difference between the two.

Similarly He said: ‘If you had given him to drink, you would have found that with Me,’ and He did not say, ‘If you have given him to drink you would have given

2. Narrated by Muslim, 2569. *Kitaab al-Birr wal-Sillah, Bab Fadl 'Iyaadat al-Mareed*

Me to drink.'

As for quoting as evidence the words of the Messiah, 'I and the Father are one,' I do not know whether, if you said, praising your child or your partner, 'I and my child – or my partner – are one' – would you become one person?

If we say, 'The United States of America', does that mean that all of those states became one state? Or if we say 'United Arab Emirates', does that mean that the emirates became one emirate? Did land disappear and did they become mingled with one another? Or does it mean an agreement and a system of cooperation and harmony among the states or emirates? That is why you still say the States or the Emirates, acknowledging the fact that there are many.

We and all wise people understand from the words of God to Jesus and of Jesus to God the great love that there is between God and Jesus, which is greater than all other loves. The same may be said of the love of all the other Prophets for their Lord. Thus the one who pleases the Messiah pleases God, and the one who angers the Messiah angers God, and vice versa. There is no difference at all. It is

all the same. The likeness of that is what God says in the Qur'ân, in *Surat an-Nisa'*: **"He who obeys the Messenger, has indeed obeyed Allah"** [*an-Nisa'* 4:80].

Similarly they may say that there is unity between this one and that one. Does anyone understand from this that these two persons melted into one another, or do the wise understand that there is agreement, cooperation and mutual support between them? And so on.

If you wanted to apply this principle in life you would come to amazing conclusions that could not even occur in imaginary worlds or cartoons. You would have to imagine a man, if he loved his dog and said 'This dog is in my heart,' that he and the dog had become one. If the fans of a sports team loved the team and said 'This team is our life and our soul. They are in our hearts,' it would mean that these crowds became one body with the players.

Wouldn't wise people laugh at the implications of such a notion?

How can you find this understanding absurd in general cases, but you do not find it ridiculous that a great doctrine can be

based on that?

This is the trap which made you fall into the story which insults human intelligence, namely the Eucharist!"

The Last
Supper

Archbishop Richard: "What is wrong with the Eucharist? Abu Haamid, you are a man who respects the texts of our religion, and you respect even more the texts of your religion. In our religion there are texts that speak of Christ performing the Eucharist, which represents the strongest bond between Christ and the Christian. Whether you say that he is a Prophet or we say that he is a god, strengthening the bond is very important. Moreover, this is something on which all the Gospels are agreed, as the narrative is from Jesus himself. In the Gospel of Matthew it says that on the day of the Feast, the Messiah was in a place, and he had a piece of bread and a cup of wine in his hand. He said: 'This is my body, and this wine is my blood.'

O Abu Haamid, you should reach the level of accepting the blessing of the Eucharist; you should try it and you will feel its blessing.

In the Gospel of John it says that Christ

said, addressing the Jews:

" 'I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.'

52. Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?'

53. Jesus said to them, 'I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. 54. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. 56. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. 57. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me.'...

60. On hearing it, many of his disciples said, 'This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?'...

66. From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him"

*John 6:51-66*³

What is strange is that you Muslims seek blessings from the relics of your Prophet Muhammad. You drink water with which he performed ablution and so on. So why do you object to us because of the Eucharist?"

Abu Haamid: "Believe me, Archbishop, if I wanted to refute this ritual of yours in detail, it would take over one hundred points. But my concern is that if you compared the short time it took for you to voice your objection and the length of my answer, you would say that I had taken up most of your time."

Archbishop Richard: "Rest assured that we will never say that. It is only fair that you should state that answers usually take longer than questions. This is true even in exams that students take in the earlier grades. Moreover the nature of our questions is objections, problems or areas of confusion. Is a man to be rebuked if he defends himself? Nevertheless, I hope that you will not take too long to answer about the Eucharist because the basic

3. In a footnote it says that they apostatized. Izhaar al-Haqq by Shaykh Rahmatullah ibn Khaleel al-Rahman al-Hindi, vol. 3, p. 709

principle behind it is faith, not reason.”

Abu Haamid: “I appreciate your understanding of the reason for lengthy answers. But there is another reason for the length of my answers, which is that religion has no value in your lives, and no connection to your reason. It is simply repeating phrases that you heard from your forefathers. You do not use your brains when dealing with it. If you used your brains to deal with it, nothing worth mentioning would be left of it, because reason would reject it. But for us, religion is our entire way of life, in this world and in the Hereafter. There is no point that contradicts reason, and it is possible to demonstrate that it is in accordance with reason in all aspects. You can imagine how long we could talk about this, but out of respect for your request I shall do my utmost to be very brief in giving my response to the Eucharist, and I shall do so in a few points.

Different
ways of
seeking
blessing

1-As for our seeking blessing from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), do you see any resemblance between our seeking blessing from the relics of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the Eucharist?

Have you ever heard that any Muslim believed that the blood of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or his flesh would flow through his blood if he drank that water or wine, or if he ate something, or wore something, or did whatever he did, because it had some connection to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?

How can you compare what you do with regard to Jesus with the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) when a man came to him and said, "Whatever God wants and you want", and the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to him: "Rather say: What Allah alone wants"? How can you compare it with the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) when a man said to him, "Ask Allah to intercede for me" and he said to him, "Allah is far greater than that."

2-Come; let us allow our reason to judge, as we agreed that it should be the judge of everything for us and for you. Come; let us allow our reason to judge concerning the Eucharist.

Is there anything more odd and confusing than that you should present Jesus as a drunkard, drinking wine, when he is the Lord, as you claim?

Not only is he drinking, but he is telling others to drink wine; he is telling all his followers to do that until the Day of Resurrection! Can you imagine that this is what Jesus would enjoin?

What if your children drank wine, and you objected because alcohol is harmful to the heart, blood and liver and so on, and they said to you, "We are drinking it today because of the command of the Lord"?

What if your son got used to it after that and became addicted?

Moreover, what an insult it is to Jesus to make the connection between him and his followers this impure, intoxicating substance, the joy of which is that it takes away reason, which is the noblest characteristic of man, the very sign of his humanity!

3-My dear bishop, I would like to ask: What transforms into what? Does the bread become Jesus, or does Jesus become the bread? Or does Jesus turn, in

the hand of the priest who administers the Eucharist, into bread, which is eaten, and then, does it turn into Jesus, flesh, blood and bones, inside the one who drinks the wine and eats the bread?

Was Jesus originally bread and wine, or does Jesus turn into bread and wine?

After the bread and wine enter the body of the communicant, do they then turn into Jesus? Then does Jesus turn into urine and faeces that are expelled from the front and back passages? God forbid that Jesus should be like that!

Every time you fall into belief in incarnation because of the use of ambiguous words, just as you did on the basis of the words 'God is in me and I am in God.' You fell into belief in incarnation when you understood the word son and father literally. You fell into belief in incarnation with regard to Jesus and the idea that Jesus is the word of God, believing that he is part of God. You fell into belief in incarnation when interpreting the phrase 'holy spirit' which you understood to refer to the spirit of God, and so on and so forth. I have proven to you that each of these are wrong according to your texts and according to your reason, and now

you tell me that Jesus himself is flowing through you!

4-I adjure you by God, isn't Jesus one person, according to you?

And how many are you?

Are you not innumerable? So how can it make sense to say that one body is flowing through all your bodies in a true sense, not metaphorically? You could have said that he is flowing in the sense of love, sincerity, blessing and so on. But the Gospel texts clearly state that the bread, in the blood, bones and skin of each person, turns into Jesus the son of Mary.

Do you want me to remind you of the texts, or is what I have said sufficient?

Doesn't the text say that the bread and wine turn into ...?

If you think a little about the text that you have, and appoint your reason as judge, you will not interpret it literally, because the apparent meaning is clearly false.

If the bread turns into Christ completely in the hands of the priest, then the priest breaks this bread into many pieces, then either Christ is broken into many pieces,

or each piece also turns into a complete Christ. In the first case, the one who eats a piece of bread will not be eating a complete Christ, and in the second case, where did all these Christs come from?! Because originally there was only one Christ to be offered.

5-If the Eucharist which occurred shortly before the crucifixion was the same sacrifice as was offered on the cross, it would have been sufficient to save the world, so there was no need for him to be crucified on the wooden cross at the hands of the Jews, because – as you claim – the Messiah only came to the world to save mankind by his sacrifice once and for all. He did not come to suffer repeatedly, as is indicated at the end of the ninth chapter of Hebrews.⁴

6-Is it befitting to eat the one whom you worship, or to feel that you are eating his flesh, or drinking his blood, and breaking

4. In Hebrews 9:25-26 it says: "25Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. 26Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself"

his bones, so that his blessing will dwell within you? Even if this is only symbolic, it is not befitting to do this with your Lord. Is it befitting to do such a thing with your dead father, seeking his blessing or out of love for him? It is well known that one of the most evil of attributes is for a person to be described as eating human flesh or drinking human blood.

Paul did very well when he came up with the idea of this Eucharist, which was absorbed into Christian belief as food and drink are absorbed into the body.

Paul, the inventor of the Eucharist, said in his first Epistle to the Corinthians:

"Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?" I Corinthians 10:16

Among the Muslims, the highest form of love is called *al-khillah*, and the one who is loved thus is called *khaleel*. He is so called because the love of the beloved is absorbed (*takhallul*) in the one who loves him, as if it penetrates every part of his body and soul. But none of the Muslims says that this *khillah* is a physi-

cal union!"

Archbishop Richard: "I hope, Abu Haamid, that you will not take our discussion about faith into the realm of rationality and common sense, and try to get logic and reason to judge against us, because as Christian scholars we know best how to interpret the meaning of our texts. Another issue, which is very important, is that just as the words 'O my son' may sometimes mean something other than an actual son, sometimes they do actually refer to a son. Rather the basic principle is that the words father and son do refer to real fathers and sons. It is well known that the literal meaning should not be ignored in favour of some other meaning except for a reason. It is on the basis of this true meaning that we read the Gospel and according to this true meaning that we understand it. Moreover, you yourself asked that the Gospel should be referred to as judge."

Abu Haamid: "I hope, my dear Archbishop, that you will not try to neutralize reason when you find yourself cornered, and tell me not to drift away from the religious discussion to the logic of reason! I also hope that you will not make

yourself think on behalf of others. The Gospel, like the Torah and Qur'ân, is not addressed only to a specific group with a specific way of thinking. The language in which the Gospel, Qur'ân, Torah and Psalms speak is the language of all people. It is not a new language, and it is not the language of bishops only. Moreover, I wonder: Is it possible that you have not come across evidence in the Gospel which indicates that what is meant when God calls Jesus 'My son' is to honour him, not to attribute divinity to him?

No, it does not make sense. I respect your minds too much to think that you do not know that. But I think that the reason why you say this even though you see the evidence in front of you is that you picked up these words and this understanding thereof together, so this understanding became entrenched in your minds, as did the words, and now you cannot distance yourselves from the understanding that you first picked up. This understanding became entrenched among you generation after generation. But I will tell you of some clear, definitive texts from the Old Testament, the Torah, and from the New Testament, the

Gospel, which clearly state that what is meant when God says to Jesus (peace be upon him) 'My son' is not a son in the real sense. I hope that if you have any comment you will not hesitate to tell me. But I also want to get your approval for every question. Your silent approval will suffice. As for me, I shall state my approval clearly, without any reservations, if I am convinced of any point under discussion.

My dear Bishops, do you say that David (peace be upon him) was a son of God?"

Archbishop Richard: "No, definitely not, but he was an ancestor of Jesus through his mother's lineage."

The oldest son

Abu Haamid: "As you do not say that David was a son of God, what do you say about this clear statement, in which God addresses David and says: *"You are my son, today I have become your Father"* Psalm 2:7

In the Torah, God says to Moses (peace be upon him): *"Then say to Pharaoh, 'This is what the LORD says: Israel is my firstborn son'"* Exodus 4:22. There are many similar passages in the Old Testament.

If Israel is the firstborn son of God, shouldn't he be closer to the Father than his other children?⁵

In the Torah it also says:

"He [God] said to me: 'Solomon your son is the one who will build my house and my courts, for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father'"

I Chronicles 28:6.

Before the Archbishop goes back to his argument that you should adhere to what is in the Gospel, I would like him to look at, and ponder what the Gospel tells us, that Jesus himself said, when he was addressing his disciples: "your Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:11). So He is not just a Father to Jesus (peace be upon him) alone, rather He is the Father of all of these people. So are all of these disciples whom Jesus was addressing also gods? Or did they become literal sons of God?

In fact, Jesus included himself with his disciples and described them all as equal before God with regard to being sons. John tells us that Jesus said:

5. *Kitaab al-Bakheel* by al-Ja'fari (may Allaah have mercy on him).

"I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God"

John 20:17

In these words Jesus definitively excluded any other possibility with regard to the meaning of 'Father' here, and he established firm proof against those who seek to distort its meaning. He included himself and you in the description of being sons in the clearest terms, saying 'my Father and your Father', and he stated definitively that God alone was his God and their God, saying 'my God and your God.' The implication is that he regarded himself and them as equal in both cases, so the one who believes the one must necessarily believe in the other, and not differentiate between them. The one who believes that Jesus is the son of God must also believe that these men were also sons of God, and the same may be said of divinity and servitude. Isn't this sufficient?

A single glance at the first commandment in the Gospel of Mark will give you the explanation, because he quotes Jesus as saying:

28. *"One of the teachers of the law came*

and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, 'Of all the commandments, which is the most important?'

29. 'The most important one,' answered Jesus, 'is this: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with your entire mind and with all your strength." 31. The second is this: "Love your neighbour as yourself." There is no commandment greater than these.'" Mark 12:28-31⁶

Allow me to explain the definition of Divine Oneness as mentioned in the words of Jesus (peace be upon him).

Firstly, he said, 'The Lord our God'. Jesus (peace be upon him) was one of those commanded to worship one god, God, the God of them all. Would one who was a Lord say this?

Secondly, 'the Lord is One' ... so where did three (trinity) come from?

Thirdly, the teacher of the law responded *"You are right in saying that God is one*

6. *Izhar al-Haqq* by Shaykh Rahmatullah ibn Khaleel al-Rahman al-Kairanvi al-'Uthmani al-Hindi, vol. 3, p. 737

and there is no other but Him" (Mark 12:32). Regarding anyone other than God as divine is false.

Fourthly, the teacher of the law continued; "God is one" (Mark 12:33) There is no room for ambiguity whatsoever. The Lord is defined as being God.

Fifthly, because God is one, the word of monotheism is repeated once more, for emphasis.

Sixthly, the teacher of the law said: "*and there is no other but Him"* (Mark 12:32). This is the most powerful way of expressing the exclusivity of a person or thing. The previous affirmations of the Oneness of God would be sufficient, especially since they are repeated. This final phrase denies the divinity of anyone and anything other than God.

There is similar affirmation of the Oneness of God in the Gospel of John, where it is narrated that Jesus (peace be upon him) said:

"How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God?" John 5:44

In the Gospel of Barnabas, there is a declaration that Jesus (peace be upon him) is innocent of all these false, polytheistic notions. Here, Jesus says:

"I confess before heaven, and call to witness everything that dwells upon the earth, that I am a stranger to all that men have said of me, to wit, that I am more than man. For I am a man, born of a woman, subject to the judgment of God; that live here like as other men, subject to the common miseries." Gospel of Barnabas 94:1-2

Moreover, my dear Archbishop, Jesus did not leave the matter open to interpretation about his nature or essence. Rather he himself defined his status among people. In the context of his response to the Jews who objected to his disciples picking corn to eat on the Sabbath, Jesus himself addressed them, saying: *"The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath"* (Luke 6:5). So he is the son of man, not the son of God.

Even his lineage is described in detail. In the Gospel of Matthew it says:

"A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abra-

The
status and
mission
of Jesus

ham" Matthew 1:1

Where is the description of God as Father of Jesus in this clear text?

The status of Jesus was not unclear or ambiguous to people. He did not just appear outwardly to be human, rather he was a Messenger who was preceded by many Messengers who had come before him. He was a Messenger sent by God to tell the people about God Who had sent him.

In the Gospel, Jesus describes his status and the status of God, leaving no room for misinterpretation. He says: *"for you have one Father, and he is in heaven ... you have one Teacher, the Christ"* (Matthew 23:9-10). What can you say about anything that goes against this except that it is a lie and a deviation?

The Messiah (peace be upon him) said concerning his disciples:

"He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me" Matthew 10:40

He said concerning a small child:

"Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever

welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me" Luke 9:48

In the tenth chapter of Luke, Jesus said to the seventy whom he sent out two by two into the land:

"He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me" Luke 10:16⁷

In the Gospel of Matthew it says:

"This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee" Matthew 21:11

So he is a great Prophet, one of the Prophets of God.

John says:

"Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world" John 6:14, 7:40

In John it also says:

"[I am] a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God" John 8:40

Can any doubt remain, after all these texts, that Jesus was no more than one of the Messengers? This is his status and

7. *Izhar al-Haqq* by Shaykh Rahmatullah ibn Khaleel al-Rahman al-Kairanvi al-'Uthmani al-Hindi, vol. 3, p. 763

this is his role.”

Archbishop: “It says in one Gospel that Jesus is the only son of God.

O Abu Haamid, I do not remember these texts that you have quoted, but you should know that every case where someone other than Jesus is described as a son of God is to be understood as an honour for the person thus described. But when Jesus is described as son of God, it is to be understood in a real sense. Give me the name of a man whom God called a son of His in the Gospel, apart from Jesus.”

Abu Haamid: “I already cited a text from the Torah which clearly stated that David was called a ‘son of God’. I noticed from your response that you accepted everything I quoted. But now you want a text from the Gospel stating that. I would like to give you a text so that you will completely accept the Oneness of God. Here it is. The Gospels themselves call Adam the son of God, as it says in Luke:

“Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God”

Luke 3:38

How can we resolve this confusion? Isn’t the divinity of Jesus based on the idea

that he is the son of God? So why isn't Adam also a son of God as it says in this text? Then both of them may be sons of God as you say. Isn't this testified to in the Gospel?

How can you say that he is His only son, then it appears that He has another son, namely Adam?

Isn't Adam, according to the Gospel, a father (or ancestor) of Jesus? So how can Jesus (peace be upon him) be a Lord of Adam, when Adam is described in the Gospel as being the son of God?

I wonder, could God be a grandfather of Jesus, if Adam is the father of Jesus as the Gospel says?

Or could they be brothers?

Or did God disown Adam?

How can Jesus be more entitled to divinity than Adam, when Jesus (peace be upon him) had just one attribute, namely being the 'son of God', whereas Adam had two attributes: he was the father of Jesus and he was the 'son of God' as it says in the Gospel?

Moreover, why doesn't all of humanity claim that their father and Prophet Adam

was a son of God, so as to honour all of humanity? Are the Christians the only ones who make this strange claim?

How can he be the son of God, when there is no Prophet among his offspring, whereas Adam is the father of the Prophets – according to your standards? How can he be a son of God, when between him and Adam and God there is a long chain of ancestors as is proven in your Book, whereas between Adam and God there is nothing. All of this is according to your standards.

Can reason stand up to this storm of conflicting notions or solve all these mysteries?

Adam is not the only son who is competing with Jesus (peace be upon him), as we see in the Gospel. Rather there are many sons, as Jesus himself says in the Gospel:

*"Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.*

*9. Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God"*

Matthew 5:8-9

In the Gospel of John it says:

"Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" John 1:12

And in the Epistle of John it says:

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God" 1 John 3:1

So this description is an honour to all believers, to all those who obey God. What is to deprive all those who are deserving of this honour – as it is addressed to all – and limit it to Jesus only, or to Adam or to the Prophets, especially since this statement is very clear and very general in application? Yes, people are of different degrees, but they are all servants of God alone.

Moreover, what evidence is there for differentiating between Jesus (peace be upon him) and others with regard to being a son of God, when the description applies to all?

If the Christians apply this description only to Jesus, what is to prevent others from interpreting the word son in the same way, and saying that their man is

The
Creed,
and do
you know
what the
Creed is?

the only son of God?"

Bishop Paul: "We will tell you: we are monotheists, we worship one Lord, but you say, 'You worship three.' Are you teaching us our religion? Do you understand more than us, when we have spent our whole lives in this great religion?"

I adjure you by God, have you read what we call the 'creed' even once in your life? Do you know its value?

I am certain that you have not read this text, which is held in very high esteem by us. If you had read it, you will not say that we are polytheists, and you will not take this hostile stance against us.

I hope that you will listen to me as I recite the creed to you.

'We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salva-

tion, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And we believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. And we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.⁸

I think it is fair to call upon you to reconsider Christianity, and whoever does not know Christianity, let him try it. He will see the good that Jesus will do. How

8. *al-Jawaab al-Saheeh li man baddala Deen al-Maseeh* by Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah, edited and with a commentary by Dr. Ali ibn Hasan ibn Naasir, vol. 3, p. 288

his life will change for the better and his needs will be met.

How all obstacles will be removed from his path, and he will be at peace with the world and the world will be at peace with him.

Try Jesus and you will see what a good god he is."

Abu Haamid: "This offer that you are making when you say 'Try Jesus' is the same offer that is made by all the priests and missionaries to all people, especially to those who do not use their reason. That is only because a man cannot be convinced of what you are saying unless he ignores his reason, because these beliefs cannot make sense unless he lets his guard of reason down. Hence it is essential to hypnotise him so that after that he can be directed in whatever direction the hypnotist wants.

Why don't you try to convince me rationally, and you will see me follow willingly, with the utmost love and joy?

Why don't you appeal equally to my mind and heart?

Why do you want to separate my reason

from my heart?

The likeness of you and the one of whom you make this request is that of a man who claims to be sincere and loyal to you, then suddenly you realize that he wants to strike you forcefully on the head, so you grab his arms to stop him, and he suddenly turns into a sincere-sounding person who speaks of peace and love. Then when you have calmed down, he says to you: Close your eyes and do not ask me where I am taking you?

The first thing that should be said to this treacherous individual is: If you really want peace, take me with my eyes open!

With regard to my acknowledgement of your religion, you should realize that I know it very well. If I did not know it, I would not have dared to speak concerning a religion of heavenly origin. But I did not want to take our discussion beyond the rational guidelines.

As for the Creed of which you boast as the greatest proof of monotheism in your religion, I want to ask you about this Creed.

In the Creed it says: "And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of

God ... being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made”.

Is it possible that the universe could have two gods, who are equal in all things?

Is it possible that each of them could be able to do all things?

Just as it is impossible for there to be two gods, it is also rationally impossible for them both to be able to do all things at the same time. What do you think if one of them wants to bring a dead person back to life – will he be able to bring him back to life or not? The logical answer is that he will be able to bring him back to life, because he is able to do all things.

But what do you think if the other one wants the opposite of what the first one wants, i.e., he wants to keep that person dead forever. Will this other one be able to do that or not?

If you say that he will be able, as he is able to do all things, then the first one has failed because he is not able to do all things.

If you say that he will not be able to keep him dead, then he has failed, because he is not able to do something, so he is not

able to do all things.

This is one example concerning one issue. How about when there are innumerable cases of bringing to life and causing death, giving and withholding, raising and lowering, mercy and punishment, giving in abundance or giving with measure, honouring or humiliating, bringing together or separating, and so on, in any given moment?

Do not say that they are in agreement, because when you say that, you are saying it so that there will be no conflict between them which may show the helplessness of one of them. The question is not about their actions and how to regulate them; rather it has to do with the concept of power. You said that they are exactly the same, and that they are both able to do all things. The question here is:

Is one able to do the opposite of what the other one is able to do if he wants, or not?

You may ask the same question about all the other attributes.

You may ask it about provision: can he grant provision to whomever he wants without limit?

You may ask it about help: can he help whomever he wants?

With regard to the world of the unseen, does he know everything and is nothing hidden from him? What if the other one wants to hide something from him?

You will reach the definite conclusion that only one can have all these attributes, and no one else can ever share that with him. This is what it says in the Qur'ân, in *Surat an-Nahl*, which is pertinent to our topic:

51. "And Allah said (O mankind!): "Take not *ilahayn* (two gods in worship). Verily, He (Allah) is (the) only One *Ilah* (God). Then, fear Me (Allah) much [and Me (Alone), i.e. be away from all kinds of sins and evil deeds that Allah has forbidden and do all that Allah has ordained and worship none but Allah].

52. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and (all that is in) the earth and *Ad-Deen Waasiba* is His [(i.e. perpetual sincere obedience to Allah is obligatory). None has the right to be worshipped but Allah]. Will you then fear any other than Allah?

53. And whatever of blessings and good things you have, it is from Allah. Then, when harm touches you, unto Him you cry aloud for help.

54. Then, when He has removed the harm from you, behold! some of you associate others in worship with their Lord (Allah).

55. So (as a result of that) they deny (with ungratefulness) that (Allah's Favours) which We have bestowed on them! Then enjoy yourselves (your short stay), but you will come to know (with regrets)" [*an-Nahl* 16:51]

And God says in *Surat al-Anbiya*:

21. "Or have they taken (for worship) *alihah* (gods) from the earth who raise the dead?

22. Had there been therein (in the heavens and the earth) *alihah* (gods) besides Allah, then verily, both would have been ruined. Glorified be Allah, the Lord of the Throne, (High is He) above all that (evil) they associate with Him!

23. He cannot be questioned as to what He does, while they will be ques-

tioned.

24. Or have they taken for worship (other) *alihah* (gods) besides Him? Say: "Bring your proof." This (the Qur'ân) is the Reminder for those with me and the Reminder for those before me. But most of them know not the Truth, so they are averse.

25. And We did not send any Messenger before you but We revealed to him (saying): *La ilaha illa Ana* [none has the right to be worshipped but I (Allah)], so worship Me (Alone and none else)."

26. And they say: "The Most Gracious (Allah) has begotten a son (or children)." Glory to Him! They [whom they call children of Allah i.e. the angels, 'Eesa (Jesus) — son of Maryam (Mary), 'Uzayr (Ezra)], are but honoured slaves" [*al-Anbiya'* 21:21-26].

The fact that we should all acknowledge, is that the aim of all of us is true monotheism, but who is the monotheist in belief and action, and who is the polytheist in belief and action?

I do not know what made you quote what you call the 'Creed' as evidence of mon-

otheism, because it mentions the word "one" but it repeats it three times!

In fact it is a series of statements that are filled with contradictions. It says something correct then follows it with something incorrect.

It says the word 'one' twice instead of once. But if anyone asks, 'How many gods is the Creed telling us to believe in?' the only possible answer is, three gods!

'We believe in one God the Father Almighty ... And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God ... And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father.' The word 'one' confirms that these are three separate entities.

Father Paul, ask any child in grade one this math question. Ask him how many are there in this sentence? Or say to him: One plus one plus one – how many does that make?

Bring the greatest scholar and ask him the same question. The only answer will be three.

Forget about all that, and look again. Is

what is mentioned in the Creed one name or three names?

It is three different names. The first name is the Father, the second name is the Son and the third name is the Holy Spirit. How can three names become one name?

They distinguish between them further and describe the first one as 'Father', the second as 'Son' and the third as 'Holy Spirit'. How can these three descriptions be one?

What if you hold a piece of fruit in your right hand, and in your left hand you hold another piece of fruit and a seed, and say: This fruit in my left hand is from the seed of the fruit that is in my right hand. How many fruits are there? There are two, and no rational person would say that there is one fruit.

How many gods are there here?

You say: 'begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made.' The question is: if his substance is from the substance of his Father, how many substances do we have?

And so on.

Every word in this Creed definitely points to the opposite of monotheism and affirms polytheism.

Finally, it says 'And we believe in the Holy Spirit' which is a third god, called the Holy Spirit, and defines him as a third god, and makes him stand out by saying: 'who proceeds from the Father.'

Archbishop Richard, if we say that these heavenly bodies, that we see separated from the great hot mass when its outer layer gradually grew cold, according to the cloud theory, can we say that all these stars and planets are to be regarded as one star or one planet? ... Would any rational person who sees these stars and planets say that they are one planet?

Then the Creed makes the Holy Spirit stand out even further, and says: 'who with the Father and the Son together'.

Archbishop Richard, even the conjunction mentioned in the Creed is indicative of polytheism and of a different entity, i.e. that this is something different than the other. It is like you saying 'The teacher and the teacher and the teacher came in.' Does this mean that there is

one teacher who came in, or that there are three teachers?

The answer is that there are three teachers, based on the word 'and,' which implies that they are different people.

There are three teachers even though the name and description is one and the same.

How about if the differences in this case include name, description, actions and sequence (i.e., which comes first)? Hence the more you examine the Creed the more certain you will be that it is speaking of separate entities.

I hope that if my words are wrong, you will stop me and tell me, 'You are wrong; the evidence is such and such.' Otherwise I will regard your silence as approval. Excuse me, for I feel that the matter cannot be delayed, it should be decided, and after it is decided, each of you may choose what he wants to do, with no compulsion.

They became of one essence or substance, or as some of them say, they became like fire and iron, or milk and water, or water and tea. But this implies that they are absorbed into one another,

and that the physical reality of each is transformed. In fact, water and milk are transformed when they are mixed, and the same applies to fire and iron. In that case, the divine must have been transformed and its description and reality must have changed. Transformation can only take place when something disappears and something else emerges. This implies that something of the eternal, which must inevitably exist, has disappeared, but it is impossible for that which must inevitably exist to cease to exist. That which must inevitably exist cannot cease to exist. The eternal can only be eternal because it must inevitably exist. So how can it come in touch with another physical body and be mixed with it and become one with it?"

Father Frank: "I think, from what you are saying, that you are confused about the issue. Perhaps you will not find anything that will bring you closer to understanding the reality of the three and the one than focusing on the example of the union of salt with water. After they are united, you can only call it 'salty water'. No other description of this compound will be correct. Even though it is a com-

The
flawed
example
of salt in
water

pound, it is one thing.

Think about it, Abu Haamid, and you will be convinced. Why are you and I called humans? Is it not because of the union of soul and body? Similarly, God is one with Jesus."

Abu Haamid: "Perhaps you remember, Father Frank, what we discussed before, that God has raised Jesus up and seated him on His right. It says that in the Gospel. This text means that there was no union of one essence or substance with another, rather he is sitting on His right, and this clearly shows that the likeness that you gave of mixing water and milk in order to convince me of your belief is no more than an explanation which contradicts what it says in the Gospel itself. Moreover this explanation is flawed in many ways.

1-It is flawed because it is not based on any sound, legitimate evidence, whether in the Gospel, the Torah or the Psalms, or in the Qur'ân, or rationally. Is that not enough?

2-It is flawed because reason says that every union that results from mixing water with milk or salt with water implies

that the particles of one intermingle with the particles of the other. How can the particles of the Son mingle with the particles of the Father and with the particles of the Holy Spirit? How?

We do not want to give an example and make fun of it, but the one who gives an example has to put up with the objections and give a good answer that is rationally convincing. But to say that this is a doctrine, then when someone comes and asks, one gives this example, then when the example is debated and challenged as being a false example, one resorts to scare tactics by saying it is a doctrine... no rational person would accept this. The era of forcing reason to believe has gone, and will never return.

3-The union of milk with water, or salt with water, implies that the unique characteristics of one disappear in the other and vice versa. Otherwise how can milk become lighter even though it is still milk, and how can water become salty, even though it is not salt. If you add more salt to the water, its salinity will increase, because the number of salt particles has increased. You may say something similar about any mixture.

Here arises the question that the people who give this example cannot answer. What are the characteristics that disappear from God in Jesus and in the Holy Spirit, or vice versa?

Moreover, if the Son is complete, as you say, then what does it mean to say that some of his characteristics have gone?

You can have only one of two answers: You have to say either that the Father is complete or that he is incomplete.

If you say that he is incomplete and becomes complete through this union, this is disbelief, according to you.

If you say that he is complete and becomes incomplete, this is also disbelief, according to you.

The unity of the forces of two implies a change in the two forces when they are mixed, as the weakness disappears from this and that, and the two forces will complement one another in one integrated force.

An example of this unity is when hot water unites with cold water; the strength of the hot water is reduced a little and the strength of the cold water is reduced a lit-

tle, and from the two, warm water is produced. Does this apply to the union between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

In fact, your version of union does not have even one example in existence, because the implication is that God is no longer divine and Jesus is no longer human.

4-The source of this idea of union is human imperfection. It is the idea of seeking perfection, which stems from the need to reach the level of the challenge by means of union. Just as companies, provinces and states unite to add more strength and power by means of uniting, so that they can reach the level of standing up to the challenge, so too evil people unite to confront good people, and good people unite to confront evil people. This is the secret behind the idea of God's union. Thus such a great issue is presented to rational minds as cartoons are presented to children. It is the distortion of divine belief as a result of human weakness.

Does it make sense for anyone to say that God was the same before this union took place as He was afterwards? Or that the power of Jesus (peace be upon him) was the same as it was afterwards? Or that

the Holy Spirit was the same before and afterwards? Did God need to unite with anyone when He is the Lord of everyone, the One to Whom everyone returns and the One Whom everyone needs?

Hence in a Qur'ânic *surah* entitled *al-Ikhlâs* there is the most beautiful and complete affirmation of this truth, the truth of divine Oneness. Allah says, addressing His Prophet:

1. **“Say: “He is Allah, (the) One.**
2. **“Allah is *Samad* [Allah — the Self Sufficient Master, Whom all creatures need, (He neither eats nor drinks)].**
3. **“He begets not, nor was He begotten.**
4. **“And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him” [*Al-Ikhlâs* 112:1-4]**

If we say anything other than this, then we are saying that our Lord is incomplete in some aspect.

5-Have you ever come across the idea that people saw Jesus (peace be upon him) with their own eyes; they saw his hands, eyes, head, feet, how he walked, how he sat? The answer is undoubtedly yes. That is proven a great deal in the

Gospels.

The second question is: Did the people see God? Did they see His essence, or did they see His hands, feet and eyes. Did they see how He walked and how He sat?

The answer is definitely "no."

So how can Jesus be a god? How can he be equal with God in essence? How?

The final question is: Did the people see Jesus (peace be upon him) – during his lifetime – sleeping, eating, drinking? Did they see him looking for food? Did they see him worried or weeping and shedding tears? Did they see him crucified to death? Did they see him buried in the grave?

The answer is yes. So how can he be a god? The people saw him with their own eyes in this state. In the Gospel of John it says:

"No one has ever seen God" John 1:18

In the Torah, in the Book of Exodus, it says:

" 'But,' he [God] said, 'you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and

live'' Exodus 33:20

So how could he turn into a god?

We do not want to go too far in this discussion, but we want to comment on the response of Jesus (peace be upon him), that no created being can see his Lord, and how Jesus stated clearly that he had not seen his Lord, and that he was one of those created beings who had not seen the Creator, and that God has no son, otherwise how could he be a son and not see his father?

From another angle, the fact that the people saw Jesus (peace be upon him) indicates that he was not a god, because if he had been a god, the people could not have seen him with their own eyes in this world.

The story
of the
three who
became
Christians

6-It is narrated that three people became Christians, and a priest taught them the basic beliefs of Christianity, especially the doctrine of the trinity, and they were serving him. One of the friends of this priest came and asked him about the people who had become Christians, and he said: There are three people. This friend of his asked him, "Have they learned any of the basic teachings?" He said: 'Yes.'

He asked one of them to show his friend. He asked him about the doctrine of the trinity and he said to him: 'You taught me that there are three gods, one of whom is the one who is in heaven; the second was born from the womb of the Virgin Mary; and the third descended in the form of a dove upon the second god when he reached the age of thirty.' The priest got angry and threw him out, and said: 'This is not true.' Then he asked another of these converts and he said: 'You taught me that there were three gods. One of them was crucified and now two are left.' The priest got angry with him too and threw him out. Then he asked the third one – who was relatively smart in comparison with the other two and was keen to memorize the beliefs – and he said: 'O master, I have memorized what you taught me and understood it well, by the grace of Christ. The one is three and the three are one. One of them was crucified and died, and they all died because they are one, and there is no god now, otherwise the union would not be true.'⁹

Father Frank, is this not rational logic

9. *Izhaar al-Haqq* by Shaykh al-'Allaamah Ramatullah ibn Khaleel al-Rahman al-Kairanvi al-'Uthmani al-Hindi, vol. 3, p. 731-732

concerning the divine union?

Is it not reasonable, based on the likening of the union of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to water – to ask whether some of the water evaporated when Christ was crucified?

7-You liken the divine union to humanity, in terms of the union of the soul with the body.

You say that Jesus was soul and body, and were it not for the soul there would be nothing special about him, because without the soul the body has no feelings. The soul is what gives man the special faculty of feeling, and differentiates him from dead things, and so on.

If God was united with Jesus body and soul – as you claim – then based on that we say: What a humiliation it was for God, the day Jesus was crucified, if God was in him! The weeping of Jesus when he was in pain was the weeping of God who was united with him in suffering!

If you do not say this, then you have no choice but to say that God forsook Jesus in this moment of calamity and let him down, so Jesus was not God and was not

another god alongside God.¹⁰

Moreover, which of them represents the soul and which the body?

If you wish, you may ask: Which of them without the other has no value?

Or is each without the other incomplete, as is implied by your analogy?

8-As it says in the Gospel, Torah and Qur'ân, God only addresses mankind through revelation or from behind a veil, or by sending Messengers. Here we have to ask: Are these means sufficient to achieve what the Lord wants of sending the message to mankind, or not?

If you say that they are sufficient, and there is no need for this divine union, then we say to you that this is the truth, and you have invalidated your own belief in divine union. If you say that the divine union is essential in conveying the message, we say to you that what is true of Jesus must also be true of all the other Prophets!

9- Father Frank, if Jesus (peace be upon him) is, as you say, the Creator of the

10. *al-Jawaab al-Saheeh* by Shaykh al-Islam [Ibn Taymiyah], vol. 3, p. 33

heavens and earth, and he is the one who is controlling and preserving them, and so on, then who was created in Mary's womb? Who lived in her womb? Who emerged as a newborn from her womb? Who was wrapped in swaddling clothes? Who needed to be breastfed? Who ate food, and needed to urinate and defecate as an inevitable consequence of eating and drinking? Who?

Can any rational person respond to these questions by saying that it was God?! Exalted be God far above that.

10-You say that Jesus (blessings and peace be upon him) was buried for three days after he was crucified, then he rose from the grave.

So who washed God and shrouded him, and who carried him and buried him in his grave?

And who was in charge of the universe during the three days when Jesus (peace be upon him) died and was buried, as you believe?

If you say that God is the one who was in control of them, we say to you: If God preserved the universe before the birth of Jesus (peace be upon him) and He is the

one who preserved it after Jesus died and was buried, as you claim, then what role does Jesus play in controlling and preserving the universe, if it makes no difference whether he is there or not?

Why should God take a partner when He is the only One Who is in control of everything?

Will God still be in control of everything if He makes someone else equal to Him?

If God raised Jesus (peace be upon him) to this level after the passage of a certain length of time after the creation of Adam, what is to prevent Him, after a while, taking a fourth, other than Jesus, and a fifth and sixth and seventh?

What is to prevent God from having eleven disciples around Him like the disciples of Jesus (peace be upon him), so as to expiate each time the repeated sins of the sons of Adam?

Or did the crucifixion of Jesus (peace be upon him) expiate the earlier sins and not the later sins that came after him? Is there no expiation for those who came after him, even though their sins are more numerous and the people's numbers are

greater?

Or did repentance become sufficient after Jesus (peace be upon him) – as you say? If the repentance of those who came later is sufficient, what advantage do those who repent have over those of the earlier people who did not repent? What value is the crucifixion for those who came later but did not repent?

11-How could the Messiah be crucified – when he was the righteous son – so that the father could expiate the sins of later generations?

Is it just for the father to punish the righteous son because of the other, disobedient, sons?

Is it just to crucify the god for the sake of criminals and thieves?

Isn't the killing of Jesus (peace be upon him) a new crime which requires a new expiation? What will expiate it?

Who will take upon himself the expiation for the killers of Jesus (peace be upon him), or are these killers to be rewarded for offering the greatest sacrifice?

Who will bear the sins of the killers after that?

What sacrifice will expiate the sin of nuclear weapons for the sons of Adam?

You should know that Jesus has nothing to do with this expiation, and he did not speak of it, whether implicitly or explicitly. Rather it is one of the ideas of Paul, who said in his Epistle to the Romans:

"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned" Romans 5:12

What mind can accept this justification?

12-We put a specific question to you: Is there, according to your beliefs, another realm for reckoning other than this world? The answer is yes, it is the Hereafter, as is stated in the Gospel:

32. *"All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.*

34. *Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the*

creation of the world. 35. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36. I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

37. Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38. When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39. When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

40. The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

41. Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43. I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and

you did not look after me.'

44. *They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'*

45. *He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'*

46. *Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life." Matthew 25:32-46*

13-This idea of union gives a high status to those who disbelieved in Jesus and those who killed him. This is something that no one has ever suggested.

The one to whom Jesus spoke was spoken to by God. Those who saw Jesus saw God. Those who ate with Jesus ate with God. The one who slept in the same room as Jesus slept in the same room as God. The one who spoke to Jesus spoke to God. The one who made a request of Jesus made a request of God...!¹¹

Does it make sense to say that the son was crucified in the sight and hearing of

11. Shaykh al-Islam [Ibn Taymiyah], vol. 3, p. 33

his father, and that his father did not intervene? When the son was in pain and was weeping and asking for his father's help, the father did not respond – as it says in the Gospel itself?

What an offensive depiction of the father!

Paul says in the Epistle to the Romans:

"He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all" Romans 8:32

Can the father who did not save his own son, when he was in the worst of circumstances save anyone else, even if they ask for help in the son's name?

Does this not nullify the idea of calling upon the Lord, seeking His help and worshipping Him? Because this attitude towards his son – as you claim – is something unforgivable, which no father could comprehend.

The Gospels depict Jesus as he screamed, cried, wept and called out to his father, but his father did not answer him. When Jesus went to another place, which was a large garden (Gethsemane), he told his disciples to keep watch. Matthew says that Jesus said to his disciples:

36. *'Sit here while I go over there and pray.'*

37. *He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled.*

38. *Then he said to them, 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me''* Matthew 26:36-38

Mark says:

33. *"and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled.*

34. *'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,' he said to them. 'Stay here and keep watch.'*

35. *Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him.*

36. *'Abba, Father,' he said, 'everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me''* Mark 14:33-36

Luke says in his Gospel:

"And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground" Luke 22:44

Jesus was very keen to stay alive, and he shouted at his disciples every time they fell asleep. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says to his disciples:

"Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" Matthew 26:40

Mark says in his Gospel:

"'Simon,' he said to Peter, 'are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour?'" Mark 14:37

Imagine this frightening description of the Lord whom Jesus himself described as merciful, saying in the Gospel of Luke:

"Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" Luke 6:36

How could we accept this, when one of the basic principles in all religions is that every sinner must bear the consequences of his sin? In Deuteronomy it says:

"Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sin" Deuteronomy 24:16

In Ezekiel it says:

"The soul who sins is the one who will

die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous man will be credited to him, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against him” Ezekiel 18:20

Yes, the father may prefer, if the son is disobedient, to punish him himself. But to hand him over to his enemies and watch him as he is crucified and his ribs broken and impurities placed on his head and so on, this is something that cannot be comprehended. Perhaps some people cannot imagine now what the Gospels say about the crucifixion of Jesus. I would like to quote to you from the Gospel itself.

Based on what you have mentioned, reason dictates that you have the choice between only two things. Either that God is not the father of Jesus, and he is not His son, or that the father is unable to save his son.

Do you have any answer?”

Father Frank: “I ask you to answer according to your religion and belief.”

Abu Haamid: “The answer is that he is not His son, and God is not his father. Moreover, Jesus was not crucified in the

first place, so the story ended before it began.

In the Qur'ân there are clear, unambiguous verses that definitively deny the crucifixion. I will quote them because they are in accordance with reason, and because you asked me to do that. They also offer a true defence of Jesus (peace be upon him) and they offer you a way out from your dilemma. Allah mentioned some of the crimes of the Jews, among them is what they tried to do to Jesus (peace be upon him). Allah says:

155. "Because of their breaking the covenant, and of their rejecting the *Ayat* (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) of Allah, and of their killing the Prophets unjustly, and of their saying: 'Our hearts are wrapped (with coverings, i.e. we do not understand what the Messengers say)' — nay, Allah has set a seal upon their hearts because of their disbelief, so they believe not but a little.

156. And because of their (Jews) disbelief and uttering against Maryam (Mary) a grave false charge (that she has committed illegal sexual intercourse);

157. And because of their saying (in boast), 'we killed Messiah 'Eesa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary), the Messenger of Allah,' — but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but it appeared so to them the resemblance of 'Eesa (Jesus) was put over another man (and they killed that man)|, and those who differ therein are full of doubts. They have no (certain) knowledge, they follow nothing but conjecture. For surely, they killed him not;

158. But Allah raised him ['Eesa (Jesus)] up (with his body and soul) unto Himself (and he Daia Coca is in the heavens). And Allah is Ever All Powerful, All Wise.

159. And there is none of the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) but must believe in him ['Eesa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary), as only a Messenger of Allah and a human being] before his ['Eesa (Jesus) or a Jew's or a Christian's] death (at the time of the appearance of the angel of death). And on the Day of Resurrection, he ['Eesa (Jesus)] will be a witness against them" [*an-Nisa* ' 4:155-159]"

Father Rawas: "O Abu Haamid, the ex-

amples of iron and fire, water and milk or water and salt are not the only examples to give an understanding of the union of Jesus (with God). The greater a thing is, the more examples may be given concerning it. The likeness of the union of Jesus as a god with God is that of the sun and its rays.

Do you not see how rays are generated by the sun every single moment? This is how Jesus is.

The sun does not create the rays, and likewise Jesus was begotten from God, but he is not created. He is the Word of God, he is the utterance of God. Fire and its heat and light are not three fires, and the sun and its light and rays are not three suns.

Similarly, man and his soul and speech are not three men!"

Attempts
to flee

Abu Haamid: "Attempts to flee from one example to another will never end and will never be to any avail. Rather it will harm the one who does that. Every time, it will show him up more than the previous time, and so on until the point of failure, where admitting failure becomes necessary, knowing that the truth could

have been understood the first time. The falseness of what you are saying may be demonstrated from many angles.¹²

1-Let us start with the last of your arguments, which is that man, his soul and his speech are not three men, and fire and its heat and light are not three fires. This is a complete denial of the basis of your beliefs as represented in the Creed which was quoted a short while ago, in which you say: 'We believe in one God the Father Almighty ... And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father.'

And you said concerning the Holy Spirit that he is 'the Lord ... worshipped and glorified.' Here I will ask you again, Father Rawas, does any rational person say that the heat and light of fire that exist in it are fire of fire? In other words, are light and heat equal to fire or are they called fire? Or are they equal to a flame of fire?

The answer is definitely not. So how can

12. Adapted from Shaykh al-Islam [Ibn Taymiyah], p. 484

we say that this light is fire of fire?

Can we say that the light of the sun is sun of sun?

Or can we say that the heat of fire is fire of fire or that the light of fire is fire of fire?"

Father Rawas: "Before you move on from this point, the implication of what you are saying is that the sun consists of light, heat and rays. This is exactly what we say: Father Son and Holy Spirit, one God and one Lord. Is that not so?"

Abu Haamid: "If you believe this, then I hope that you will stick to what you have said already so that you may reach the truth. The conclusion is that these three form parts of the sun, so the sun is composed of two or three parts: fire, light and heat. Are you saying that God is composed of three parts, or that each of them is part of God, and each part of Him is one-third of God, because each part of Him on its own does not constitute God, just as each part of the sun on its own is not called a sun? Do you accept this, on the basis that you say in the Creed, that each is an independent and complete god, and you say that they are

one of three?

2-Are the rays of the sun the sun itself, or are they just rays?

Do the rays of the sun that are generated by the sun produce a sun on the basis that they are a sun? Have people ever once seen a sun that is generated by the rays?

Do the light rays produced by floodlights in stadiums and on the roads constitute the floodlights themselves? Can these rays generate actual floodlights, based on your words, "Very God of Very God"?

3-Does that on which the sun's rays fall become a sun? For example, if the sun's rays fall on you, do you become a sun? If the sun's rays fall on a wall, does the wall become a sun?"

Father Robin: "Spare us all your denials of the divinity of Christ, and let us agree on the divinity of the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit who breathed the Spirit of God into Jesus the son of Mary.

Even if you disagree that Jesus is God, you should not disagree with us about Jesus being a breath from God, and that the one who blew this breath was the Holy Spirit.

Divinity
of the
Holy
Spirit

Do you think that anyone could create but the Creator?"

Abu Haamid: "I would like to ask you a mathematical question. If you raise the roof of a house in the form of a triangle with equal sides, then you break one of these three sides, wouldn't the roof collapse?"

The definitive answer is: Yes, the roof would inevitably collapse according to the regular design.

Now you have acknowledged the failure of one of the three fundamental pillars of your faith, namely the divinity of Christ. Breaking down the next pillar will be easier, and I hope that you will not cling to the fallen pillars. I hope that you will cling, rather, to the pillar of God alone, which is the greatest of all pillars.

Let us ask now, firstly: was the Holy Spirit sent on a mission from God, or was he both the sender and the messenger?

Is he the creator of the spirit that he carried and breathed into Mary (peace be upon her), or was he the one entrusted with that spirit which was sent to Mary?

If he is, in principle, created – or begot-

ten, as you say – this implies that he had a beginning, whether the date thereof is known or not. Whether we call him created or begotten, the fact remains that he was sent and he was not the sender. He was the one who breathed it, not the one who created it. On what basis do we make him a god and associate him with the One and Only God Who created him, sent him and created the spirit that he breathed into Mary, Who gave him the strength to carry it and convey it to Mary?

Isn't it strange that humans appoint gods as they appoint people in charge of different departments? What is the difference between them and those who make idols and collect them in their big temples and worship whichever of them they want?

I adjure you by God, Father Robin: tell me what turned the Holy Spirit from a created being into a creator, from a worshipper into one who is worshipped, from a thing that had a beginning into a god who has no beginning and no end? I hope that you can give me convincing evidence. I do not want evidence to convince me, because this is an issue that cannot be accepted by reason at all. I

want evidence so that I may make some excuses for you.”

Father Rawas: “Do you believe that a nation of this size lost its reason and worshipped the Holy Spirit without evidence? Nevertheless I shall give you some evidence, Abu Haamid.

Doesn't it say in the Torah that Moses said, addressing the Children of Israel: “and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters” (Genesis 1:2)? Doesn't this mean that the Holy Spirit is truly the spirit of God?

In the Psalms, David said: “[Do not] take your Holy Spirit from me” (Psalm 51:11) and “By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath (spirit) of his mouth” (Psalm 33:6).

And in the Gospel of Matthew, Christ said to his disciples:

19. “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you”
Matthew 28:19-20

Even your Qur'ân mentions the Holy Spirit, and says that God supported the Messiah through him.

Isn't this sufficient proof of the divinity of the Holy Spirit, from the Torah, the Gospel and the Qur'ân?"

Abu Haamid: "I thank you, and everyone present, for listening attentively despite the difference in our points of view. At this point I would like you to listen to my answer until the end.

Firstly:

Even if we assume that the evidence is sound that you quoted from the Torah and Gospel that God revealed initially, the first verse that you quoted, which is from the Torah, says: "*and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters*" (*Genesis 1:2*). This makes us wonder again: how do you interpret the "Spirit of God" that was hovering over the water? Is it Gabriel or is it the life of God, or what?"

Father Robin: "Rather it is the life of God. The Holy Spirit is the life of God. Perhaps you have not read in the Book of Exodus the words of the Lord,

20. *"See, I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared.*

21. *Pay attention to him and listen to what he says. Do not rebel against him; he will not forgive your rebellion, since my Name is in him" Exodus 23:20-21 "*

Abu Haamid: "For God's sake, why don't you examine your evidence before you quote it? This is how you are when you are having this debate, so how about the way you understand your beliefs in your churches?"

I will answer this with an apology, as the cause is the sources from which you received your confused doctrine, which is so confused that it is difficult to separate what is sound from what is fabricated.

Moreover these false sources have been given an aura of holiness to scare off anyone who may question them from even coming close to them, and you have given those who teach them an aura of holiness and infallibility, so that they can take whatever gains they wish without any questioning or objections.

But your beliefs are based on sources which, if you had examined them in a ra-

tional way, and subjected them to questioning and scientific examination, as you examine and dissect things in your laboratories, what would have been left of them? Now think about it, Father Robin. If the Holy Spirit was the life of God, then when the Holy Spirit left Him, He would have become lifeless! Or at best, His soul would have been incomplete.

Based on that, every time God sent the Holy Spirit to the Prophets, He would have been left without a spirit or soul until he returned to Him.

You quoted evidence from the Book of Exodus to show that the Holy Spirit is the life of God. The life of every living being is one of its attributes and does not depart from it except when it dies. The attribute of life in God exists in Him and does not depart from Him, over the water or in any other way. That which hovered over the water was something else that was separate from God, something other than God. This is what is explained in the Book of Genesis itself, which tells the story of the beginning of creation and says:

1. *"God created the heavens and the earth.*

2. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters" Genesis 1:1-2

The spirit of God was the wind, which was above the water. This is in accordance with what it says in our religion, which is the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): "Do not revile the wind for it is a spirit created by Allah. It brings mercy and it brings punishment, so do not revile it, rather seek refuge with Allah from its evil and ask Allah for its goodness."¹³

Secondly:

Greatness may be manifested more greatly if Allah grants the power of life and death to some of His creation, without Him intervening directly Himself, as happened in the case of Abraham and the bird, and Moses and the cow, and Jesus and the bird, and so on.

Because the inevitable conclusion that everyone who sees and hears will reach, is that if this is the action of someone

13. *Sahih* (sound). Narrated by Ibn Majah (3727), Ahmad in his Musnad (5/123) and in al-Sahihah by al-Albani (2757), and others.

to whom Allah gave the ability of giving life – although he is a created being – then how about the power of God Who is the Giver of life and death?

It is an honour to the person at whose hand life is given, and it makes him distinct from other created beings.

I think that this text that Father Robin quoted from the Book of Exodus is the greatest evidence that the Holy Spirit is a created being, and not a creator, a worshipper and not one who is worshipped. He is not something unique to Jesus (peace be upon him), rather he was sent by God, like an envoy to whom a president may give certain powers to represent him in a certain country, and no more than that; so he bears the name of the president, as is the case here, *"See, I am sending an angel ahead of you"* (Exodus 23:20). So it is clearly stated in this text that he was sent, and that he was an angel, and these two points are sufficient.

If Father Robin acknowledges that the Holy Spirit came down as a messenger to the previous Prophets, then how could he turn, at the time of Jesus (peace be upon him) in particular, into a god when he did not do so before?

Is it possible that the president could raise the status of his envoy to become a president like him or alongside him?

Is it possible for an angel to be sent when he is an angel and to come back as a god?

Now I think that the matter has become very clear."

Father Robin: "Yes, it is clear, but what do you say about the second piece of evidence, which is from the Torah just as the first one is? It is the verse where David says to God:

"[Do not] take your Holy Spirit from me" Psalm 51:11

The Holy Spirit is part of God and cannot be taken away from God. This is a clear text concerning which there is no doubt."

Abu Haamid: "I hope, Father Robin that you will let your reason decide concerning the evidence that you are quoting. I realize that this evidence is among the evidence that you all quote to prove the divinity of the Holy Spirit. But didn't you realize that these words refer not to Jesus son of Mary but to David (peace be upon

him), so do you say that David is a god? That is because the text clearly says:

"[Do not] take your Holy Spirit from me" Psalm 51:11

But what does it mean to say that Jesus son of Mary became a god because the Holy Spirit, which is the life of God, was incarnated in him – as you imagine – but David did not become a god even though the Holy Spirit was incarnated in him as this text suggests?

Moreover, what David (peace be upon him) said to his Lord is an example of submission and humility, because it was a prayer, and he said in his prayer:

10. *"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*
11. *Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me" Psalm 51:10-11*

Moreover, you say that the Holy Spirit, which is the life of God, was incarnated in Jesus (peace be upon him). So how was Jesus (peace be upon him) before this life was incarnated in him?

Father Robin, this Spirit is a created being, and that which transfers souls to cre-

ated beings is also a created being. This is something that is well known in all religions, but they do not base the idea of the divinity of the Messiah on that. This is also mentioned in the Psalms:

"When you send your Spirit, they are created" Psalm 104:30

This is even narrated in the Gospel itself. In the Gospel of Luke it says:

"Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him" Luke 2:25

It also says:

"When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit" Luke 1:41

I adjure you by God, aren't these verses in the Gospel?

So why don't you say that John the Baptist and Simeon became Gods, on the grounds that the Holy Spirit was upon them?

Why did Jesus become a god for the

same reason, as you say repeatedly?

There is a similar report from the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) which describes how the child is created in his mother's womb. He said: "The creation of any one of you is put together in his mother's womb for forty days, then he becomes an *'alaqah* (a piece of thick coagulated blood) for a similar period, then he becomes like a chewed piece of flesh (*mudghah*) for a similar period, then Allah sends to him an angel, who breathes the soul into him, and is enjoined to write down four things: his provision, his lifespan, his deeds and whether he is doomed (to Hell) or blessed (destined for Paradise)..."¹⁴

With regard to the third text which you quote as evidence, which is the words of Jesus to his disciples: 19. *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20. and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you"* (Matthew 28:19-20), you should understand that the phrase "Holy Spirit" is not unique to Christians.

14. Narrated by al-Bukhari, 3208, and Muslim, 2643

Other religions also use this phrase. It is mentioned in the Torah, Psalms and Qur'ân as it is mentioned in the Gospel. Is that not so?"

Father Robin: "Yes."

Abu Haamid: "If we and you differ concerning its interpretation, what do you think if we adopt an explanation of this phrase that is common to all the Books of heavenly origin, even the Gospel, in exclusion of the far-fetched interpretation that some of you give to the Gospel.

In the Torah, God says to Jeremiah:

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations" Jeremiah 1:5

What does it mean, that God set him apart (or made him holy)? Does it mean that He made him a god? If that is the case, how come He said to him, 'I appointed you as a prophet to the nations'?

In the Torah it says concerning Joseph:

"So Pharaoh asked them, 'Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?'" Genesis 41:38

Did anyone say that Joseph was a god, based on the idea that the Spirit of God was in him?

In the Torah there is something that is more serious than that:

16. *"The LORD said to Moses: 'Bring me seventy of Israel's elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the Tent of Meeting, that they may stand there with you. 17. I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit that is on you and put the Spirit on them. They will help you carry the burden of the people...'*

So Moses went out and told the people what the LORD had said. He brought together seventy of their elders and had them stand around the Tent. 25. Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke with him, and he took of the Spirit that was on him and put the Spirit on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but they did not do so again" Numbers 11:16-25

In the Gospel it is narrated that God supported the disciples with the Holy Spirit, yet despite that no one says that the dis-

ciples became gods.

Jesus (peace be upon him) said:

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" Acts 1:8

The issue of the Holy Spirit is a regular issue; it is not specific to Jesus, and does not take anyone from being a servant of God to becoming divine. In the Gospel of Luke it says that Jesus said to his disciples:

"your Father in heaven [will] give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him" Luke 11:13

With regard to what you mentioned as evidence in the Qur'ân, it is in *Surat al-Ma'idah*, where God addresses Jesus (peace be upon him) and says:

"(Remember) when Allah will say (on the Day of Resurrection). 'O 'Eesa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary)! Remember My Favour to you and to your mother when I supported you with *Ruh ul Qudus* [lit. "the Holy Spirit", i.e., Jibreel (Gabriel)] so that you spoke to

the people in the cradle and in maturity; and when I taught you writing, *Al Hikmah* (the power of understanding), the *Tawraat* (Torah) and the *Injeel* (Gospel); and when you made out of the clay, a figure like that of a bird, by My Permission, and you breathed into it, and it became a bird by My Permission, and you healed those born blind, and the lepers by My Permission, and when you brought forth the dead by My Permission: and when I restrained the Children of Israel from you (when they resolved to kill you) as you came unto them with clear proofs, and the disbelievers among them said: "This is nothing but evident magic."” [al-Ma'idah 5:110]

If you ponder the verse as evidence that the Holy Spirit is a god, it will provide sufficient evidence with no need for anything else. That is for several reasons:

- (i) God is addressing Jesus son of Mary as one of the servants of God.
- (ii) He is attributing him to his mother and calling him her son, so he says "son of **Mary**".
- (iii) He describes **Mary** as his mother

and says **"your mother"**, thus referring to his birth and the fact that 'Eesa was born.

(iv) God commands him, and a command from God indicates that the one who is commanded is His servant. He says to him: **"Remember"**.

(v) He commands him to remember His blessings that He bestowed upon him, and attributes these blessings to Himself, so He says **"Remember My Favour"**. So 'Eesa was blessed; if he were a lord no one would have bestowed blessings upon him.

(vi) 'Eesa was supported with the Holy Spirit. If he had been a Lord, he would not have needed any support, because it is one of the attributes of the Lord that He has no need of His creation or of any support. Moreover the verse is evidence that Jesus needed support, and need is not one of the attributes of the Lord.

(vii) The Holy Spirit was enjoined to help him, so he is a servant of God just as Jesus is.

It is proven that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to

the poet Hassaan ibn Thabit, when he was confronting the polytheists with his poetry: 'The Holy Spirit will be with you so long as you are defending His [God's] Prophet.'

None of the Muslims say that this Holy Spirit is God, and no one says that Hassaan ibn Thabit became a god.

If the Muslims had wanted to look for all the similar texts, they would have found many texts which they could have used as the basis for regarding Muhammad as divine, but I reassure you that they did not think of that even for a moment.

In *Surat at-Tur*, Allah says to Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him):

"So wait patiently for the Decision of your Lord, for verily, you are under Our Eyes; and glorify the Praises of your Lord when you get up from sleep" [at-Tur 52:48].

Being "under His eyes" is closer than being on His right hand side, as the Christians say of Jesus (peace be upon him). Despite that, none of the Muslim scholars ever said that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was a

god because Allah had said to him, "*you are under Our Eyes*".

If we wanted to follow your rules, we would have said that the Muslims have a greater justification for interpreting things in ways that lead to this falsehood than you do! But the Muslims know that this is *shirk* (polytheism, associating others with God), so they shunned it.

On what basis, then, do you take Jesus as a god instead of God?

Didn't Jesus (peace be upon him) call himself a human being, "man" or "son of man" or "son of a woman"?

Didn't Mary (peace be upon her) bear him naturally in her womb?

Didn't he describe himself as a "boy" or a "young man"?

Weren't physical needs manifested in him in the clearest manner?

Didn't he and his mother eat food?

Didn't he relieve himself after that?

Didn't he sleep and wake up?

Would God do that?

Was his mother "God" or the "Mother of

God”?

Wasn't Jesus an infant when he was born, or was he, at the time of his birth, a fully grown young man?

Doesn't that mean that at that time he “knew nothing” and his mother “knew nothing”, as it says in the Qur'ân: **“And Allah has brought you out from the wombs of your mothers while you know nothing. And He gave you hearing, sight, and hearts that you might give thanks (to Allah)”** [*an-Nahl* 16:78]?

Didn't he have a known and certain beginning, or did he have another, imaginary beginning for which there is no evidence?

Why do you accept this illusionary beginning and overlook the beginning that is known?

Why do you run after illusions?

Why should we overlook that on which all the religions of divine origin are agreed and run after illusions and myths for which there is no evidence?

Even if we go along with what you say, and say that he was born once in eternity

past, does this claim suggest that he has a beginning or not?

You may say that he was born a million years ago, or a billion years ago, or a thousand billion years ago. Add as much as you wish – you will end up with a beginning when he was born. Is that not so?

Here the conclusion becomes clear. So long as Jesus (peace be upon him) had a beginning, then he is a created being.

There remains the ultimate question: Who is the Creator of Jesus (peace be upon him)?

Who is the only Creator who created this child who was born? Who is the only One to whom Jesus (peace be upon him) must return, as must all created beings?

Who?

Even if you assume a plurality of gods, we will reach the same conclusion. Even if you assume the existence of a thousand gods, one after another, these gods will all fall prey to the same argument, one after another, until you reach the first God, the source of these thousand gods. If you assume that there are one thousand crea-

tors of mankind, nine hundred and ninety nine gods will fall, one after another, until you reach the ultimate Creator of all the so-called gods, and these gods will fall according to the date of their beginning and end. All these gods will come to one conclusion, that they are created.

Yes, it will inevitably end with One Who is distinguished by great attributes, one of the greatest of which is, that He is the Creator Who begets not nor is He begotten. It is rationally impossible for one entity to combine the characteristics of being the Creator who creates something from nothing, and having been nothing at some point. It is impossible for one entity to be both created and the Creator.

It is also impossible for nothing to create something.

Everything inevitably ends up with the One and Only. This is what is stated in the Qur'ân, in a *surah* called *Surat al-Ikhlâs*, in which God says:

1. "Say: **"He is Allah, (the) One.**
2. **"Allah is *Samad* [Allah — the Self Sufficient Master, Whom all creatures need, (He neither eats nor drinks)].**

3. "He begets not, nor was He begotten.

4. "And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him" [*al-Ikhlās* 112:1-4]

I hope that you, professors who use your minds in the best manner in your specialities in life, and priests, who I fear may bear the burden of sin for this great nation if you persist in that which goes against sound reason and against the truth, will use your reason, for there is nothing good in belief that is based on that which is contrary to reason.

If reason enters through one door, your belief will exit through the other door. So why is the basic principle in your belief the inability of human reason to understand faith?

Why can't it be that there is nothing wrong with people's reason and that sound reason cannot digest your complicated beliefs?

Why, when you are cornered, do you resort to dismissing your reason as if it is an obstacle?

O rational men, what reason is this that accepts the view that Jesus is God, yet he

did not know what calamities and hardships were going to befall him, and he was crucified without prior knowledge on his part, as you say?

How can he be God, when he did not know?

Moreover, why is the basic principle in your religion that man cannot understand faith?

Why is it that the principle is that people with sound reason cannot understand it, rather than saying that people have sound reason, but your doctrines are too convoluted to understand?

Why do you resort to negating reason because it is an obstacle, every time you are cornered?"

Archbishop Richard: "Who told you that Jesus did not know what would happen?

Jesus did know what was going to happen. He only came to this world in order to rid it of sin through the crucifixion, but he did not tell people that he knew, because no one would be able to understand it while Jesus was still among them, before his ascension. If he had told

Did Jesus
(peace
be upon
him)
know he
was going
to be
crucified?

them it would have been a cause of their disbelieving in God, which would have been a greater calamity.

The second reason why he did not tell them is that he was afraid of the Jews. Jesus concealed the fact that he was God because he was aware of the danger posed by the Jews and their criminal attitudes. On that basis it was wise not to show that he was God in human form.

This question was answered by a priest called Fendor, in his book entitled *The Keys of Secrets*, and in other books of ours.

How could you be unaware of this answer? Is this answer contrary to reason?"

Abu Haamid: "There is no rational dilemma that you fall into but it grows more complex the more you try to get out of it. But in the case of truth, it only becomes clearer the more you attack it. This great Christian priest, whom you mentioned says that the reason why Jesus did not show the people that he was God, was because he was afraid that the people would not believe him. Here we may ask: Is it not the case that the person

who fears something that may or may not happen has no knowledge of the unseen? Hence he tries to protect himself from failure by taking certain measures.

Then you mentioned the second reason, which is his fear of the Jews.

With these two explanations you have ascribed to Jesus two of the most abhorrent of qualities: ignorance and cowardice!

My dear Archbishop, would you not be very upset if someone were to describe you as ignorant and a coward?

So how can you accept for Jesus son of Mary to be described as ignorant and cowardly?

Is this what the one whom you take as a lord deserves?

Human heroes confront their people with the truth no matter how great it is, no matter how grave the danger, no matter how great the sacrifice. Why would Jesus son of Mary be afraid to announce publicly the greatest truth for fear of the Jews?

A truly brave man does not fear the brave. How can the one who you claim is your Lord be afraid of the most cowardly

of people?

Aren't there among the companions and followers of Jesus, among the Christians nowadays, people who do not fear the Jews? How come some individuals are better and braver than Jesus?!

My dear Archbishop, if the one whom you regard as a god was afraid, then to whom can you turn when you are afraid of something?

My dear Archbishop, if Jesus brought all these miracles, was he incapable of bringing signs to make them understand the truth? Isn't this a new accusation of inability to make them understand?

Don't you see that you are saying that Jesus did not tell them that he was God because none of the people in the world could comprehend that?

The question is: If Jesus was not able to make them understand the truth, then who is more able than Jesus to do that? How could the world after him understand that he is the lord?

Isn't this fertile ground for fabrications, false claims and myths? Moreover, doesn't this motivate us to say that we

should throw out all the evidence which you quote as having been said by Jesus to show that he himself said that he was God?

Doesn't it motivate us to say that everyone who says that Jesus was God is fabricating lies against Jesus, because Jesus did not say that himself, and no one in the world understood that?

Doesn't that prompt us to ask a specific, clear question, namely: If the mission of Jesus was not to make people understand that he was God as you say, then what was the message of Jesus?

There is nothing left for you to say but that Jesus was a Messenger of God whom He sent to mankind as He sent the Messengers who came before him.

Another question is: If you claim that Jesus knew that he was God, and that he knew what his end would be, then why did he weep when he was placed on the cross – as you claim?

Do you think that he feared death?

Or do you think that he was uncertain of his fate?

Or do you think that his knowledge con-

cerning this issue was wrong?

Or do you think that he regretted this end?

Based on that, do you think that the one who does all of that deserves to be a lord?

Do you want me to tell you the right conclusion? The greatest respect that you can show Jesus is to believe that Jesus is the servant and Messenger of God, and the greatest insult that you can give to Jesus is to believe that Jesus is a god alongside God?

Apply this principle and see. You will see that the initial result is clarity in your mind, your heart, your understanding, your deeds and your happiness."

Archbishop Richard: "It is as if you have reversed the whole issue about Jesus, Abu Haamid. By saying this, you have made it something shameful for Jesus himself to say that he was the "son of God" or to say "God is my Father." You have made it a disgrace for any of the followers of Jesus to say that Jesus is God.

Thus the matter has become very confusing and reason has no choice but to give

up!

I know the reason why it is giving up. If you adhere to the principle of faith which is based on surrendering and not using rational thought, then you will not be confused. But when you discuss matters of faith in a rational way, then you will be confused.

Another thing that I will tell you frankly is: If we assume today that what you say is true, do you believe that your logic concerning this issue will be accepted so easily in this society?

Do you think that a faith, which has grown in our hearts for nearly two thousand years, can be given up for just a few words or in such an easy manner?

Changing the landscape by introducing a mountain chain into the country would be much easier than changing deeply-rooted beliefs!"

Abu Haamid: "If you knew the correct belief, you would not say that comfort means not using your reason in matters of faith, because false beliefs do not give as much comfort as a dose of opium, and it is easier to rid oneself of false beliefs, than it is to give up opium. It disappears

Assurance that comes from using reason in issues of belief

more easily than foam on water when a strong wind blows across its surface.

The one who does that only fears that the light of truth may awaken his sleepy, dizzy mind from its darkness.

This kind of mind fears coming out of its eternal slumber. It is afraid to take even one step outside its little hole, lest its faith evaporate when the heat and light of true belief shine on it.

This is the general description of all your people, and your beliefs about Jesus (peace be upon him). But can you imagine that any man who loves Jesus (peace be upon him) would cling to the disbelief that Jesus (peace be upon him) warned against, so that he can find some comfort in this disbelief?

Is this the logic of one who loves another, or is the one who loves another the one who sacrifices his life and his comfort for the sake of his beloved and his principles? Is there any injustice towards Jesus that is greater than this?

Rest assured that we only want you to examine your beliefs with your own reason, and you will see that the comfort you gain will be multiplied, comfort for

your reason and comfort for your souls. You will inevitably discover the truth and you will realize that religious truth does not contradict modern scientific truth because they are both true, and truth does not change over time.

As the Swiss Orientalist Roger Du Pasquier said in his book *Unveiling Islam*:

'The reader is invited to discover a world that is still ruled by that which Allah revealed, and is fundamentally different from modern civilization. Unveiling Islam means proving that it is possible to live in the shade of truth.'¹⁵

This is greatness, nothing else. Here, greatness is found in servitude. You do not consider your Lord to be a created being like you, no matter what that created being is, because that created being is a servant to his Creator, just as you are a servant to your Creator. Hence the greatness of the Prophets is superior because they liberated people's minds from worship of created beings, whatever they were, to worship and servitude towards

15. *Nubuwwat Muhammad sall-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam fil-Fikr al-Istishraaqi al-Mu'aasir* by Dr. Lakhdar Shaayib, p. 209

Almighty God, may He be glorified.

This is the greatness of Jesus (peace be upon him). He knew his Lord truly, as all the Prophets knew Him, and he venerated and worshipped Him as he knew Him. He lived his life like a stranger, and he departed this world adhering to that. Indeed, he was born adhering to that. Greatness is yours if you follow in the footsteps of these great men, and it is sufficient company and honour for you.

Jesus (peace be upon him) insists on disavowing everyone who says that he is divine or propagates this notion, in a Gospel which is undoubtedly his, even if some people doubt it. It is the Gospel of Barnabas where he says:

"Truly I say to you that, speaking from the heart, I tremble because by the world I shall be called God, and for this I shall have to render an account.

As God lives, in whose presence my soul stands, I am a mortal man as other men are, for although God has placed me as prophet over the House of Israel for the health of the feeble and the correction of sinners, I am the servant of God, and of this you are witness" Gospel of Barna-

bas 52:10-14

This points to the seriousness of the offence that people committed against Jesus (peace be upon him), when some of them said that Jesus (peace be upon him) called people to worship him.

What disrespect towards Jesus could be greater than this?

It is disrespect towards him, because it is accusing him of lying and fabrication, and the ultimate betrayal, because the greatness of the betrayal is linked to the greatness of the trust, and what trust could be greater than being entrusted with conveying the message of God?

They claim that God chose him and sent him, and then he told the people that he was the son of God, thus diverting people's attention towards him and not towards God!

How could God have sent all the Messengers with His message, calling people to believe in His Oneness and to worship Him, and all the nations testify to that ... except Jesus (peace be upon him), if his followers say that he told us to worship him and he did not tell us to worship God?

Jesus says quite frankly in the Gospel of Matthew – as we have already seen:

9. *"And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven.* 10. *Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one Teacher, the Christ"* Matthew 23:9-10

In the Gospel of John it says:

"These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me"

John 14:24"

Father Robin: "I want to go back to the other half of your question to Archbishop Richard, after confirming that the reality whose echo I feel in my soul, is that much of what you are saying is rationally convincing – at least – but do you expect us, based on what you say, to give up this religion and our history and follow what you say?"

Do you expect that the people before you could bear the burden of the mistake of those who made a mistake, if they did make a mistake? – And for your information they did not make a mistake.

Do you expect that a nation of this standing and this size could change if the con-

victions of Father Robin or Father So and so, or Professor So and so, and others change?

Abu Haamid, now I am the one who is asking you to be rational and logical, and not to overwhelm us with emotion, as if we are the ones who are trying to make people not think or who are responsible for people's sin."

Abu Haamid: "From these words I can detect a sense of getting closer to using reason, were it not for fear of the masses, huge burden of history, and expected future losses. But does this absolve you of your obligations?

Is this trust or courage?

Isn't your first duty to liberate your minds from these bonds and save yourselves? This is the step which should not be delayed for a moment. If all people hang back, should we hang back with them?

God said in the Qur'ân, to your forebears who hesitated to respond to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him):

"Say: "I exhort you to one (thing) only, that you stand up for Allah's sake in

Greatest
duties
towards
Jesus
(peace
be upon
him)

pairs and singly, and reflect, there is no madness in your companion (Muhammad). He is only a warner to you in face of a severe torment" [Saba' 34:46]

This means that each person must think for himself and make a decision concerning his salvation, and not worry about the masses, or he may reflect with another person and they may both make a decision about their salvation.

Is the proper order of society that you, as scholars and priests, should be at the back when the cart comes before the horse, when the shepherd begins to follow the flock, when the businessman begins to say, 'So long as my fellow businessmen have lost their money, I might as well lose my money too!'? When loss and doom become the motive for loss and doom?

This is the first step.

Imagine that a dead person was buried a few hours ago, and the earth was piled two metres over his head, then it became clear that he was only unconscious, and he awoke and began to move, trying to raise his head and lift the earth that is

piled over him, so that he can come out and return to his family and his life in this world, and the person standing above him sensed some movement in this grave. Would you agree that the grave should be stepped on until all movement ceased and the person died in anguish, or would you agree that the piles of dirt be removed so that he could be brought out?

Imagine whatever you like. But imagine yourself as that man, and then decide what you wish.

This is the reality of your belief, which is buried beneath the accumulation of history, but this will be the situation of the one who refuses to respond to this call of life.

The greatest duty of rational Christians today – after saving themselves – is to save the people from this confusion in which they are living, unlike all other nations, where reason is cancelled out, and the contradictions in people's minds lead to them being torn apart inwardly and outwardly. The Christians have become an example of differences in religious belief to such a point, that 'if ten Christians were to get together to agree on one thing, they would part with eleven

views.¹⁶

The greatest loyalty or sincerity that you could offer to this great religion, the religion of Jesus (peace be upon him) is to cleanse it of the tons of polytheistic notions that have surrounded it and made it lower than the polytheists themselves, so that its position among other religions is like that of the crow among other birds, which is regarded as a laughing-stock because of the way it walks and the sound of its voice. This is a metaphor for misguidance and ugliness.

The nation that brought new life to the world in the field of technical science is qualified to save its reason and correct its religion, and combine true religion with sound reason.

Bringing this great nation back to the true teachings of Jesus (peace be upon him) – before they were altered by Paul – requires great ambition, as great as Paul's ambition in misguiding your nation. Let us remove the accumulation of almost one thousand years.

Who can carry the burden of all these years?

16. *al-Jawaab al-Saheeh*, vol. 2, p. 266

The one who knows the truth and is convinced of it, but turns away for fear of his wife, or for fear of his mother or his family, or for fear of his friends or of losing his job, may die with them, as generations of families have died, who lived in misguidance and died in misguidance. Let them wait until the disavowal of Jesus (peace be upon him) before God on the Day of Resurrection, and until their own families disavow themselves of them, as it says in *Surat al-Baqarah* in the Qur'ân:

“When those who were followed disown (declare themselves innocent of) those who followed (them), and they see the torment, then all their relations will be cut off from them” [*al-Baqarah* 2:166].

Let everyone, each rational person, everyone who received the message, choose which of the two humiliations he wants: the humiliation of a few moments before his family in this world, or humiliation before his family, before the masses, before Jesus, the Prophets (peace be upon them), before the Lord of the Worlds, and eternal punishment, with no family to protect him, because they are all polythe-

ists, and there is no world to return to, because this world has ended and the earth and the heavens have disappeared... In the Qur'ân, in *Surat al-Anbiya'*, it says:

104. "And (remember) the Day when We shall roll up the heaven like a scroll rolled up for books. As We began the first creation, We shall repeat it. (It is) a promise binding upon Us. Truly, We shall do it.

105. And indeed We have written in *Az Zabur* [i.e. all the revealed Holy Books — the *Tawraat* (Torah), the *Injeel* (Gospel), the Psalms, the Qur'ân] after (We have already written in) *Al Lawh Al Mahfuz* (the Book that is in the heaven with Allah) that My righteous slaves shall inherit the land (i.e. the land of Paradise).

106. Verily, in this (the Qur'ân) there is a plain Message for people who worship Allah.

107. And We have sent you not but as a mercy for the '*Alameen* (mankind, *jinn* and all that exists).

108. Say: 'It is revealed to me that your *Ilah* (God) is only one *Ilah* (God, Allah). Will you then submit to His Will

(become Muslims and stop worshipping others besides Allah)?'

109. But if they turn away say: 'I give you a notice (of war as) to be known to us all alike. And I know not whether that which you are promised (i.e. the torment or the Day of Resurrection) is near or far.

110. Verily, He (Allah) knows that which is spoken aloud (openly) and that which you conceal.

111. And I know not, perhaps it may be a trial for you, and an enjoyment for a while.'

112. He said: 'My Lord! Judge You in truth! Our Lord is the Most Gracious, Whose Help is to be sought against that which you attribute!'" [*al-Anbiya'* 21:104-112].

No, do not say our history, and your history!

History will all vanish, and the land will all vanish. The earth, with everyone in it and on it, will disappear and change, and man will stand before God for the Reckoning. Your history will remain as proof for you or against you, so why persist?

This matter makes a man think to himself in an honest and frank manner, no matter what people think of you. Your soul is your soul, and it is a clear mirror that is attached to you, in which no dust or confusion should be accepted.

Even if you hold a high position in religion, responsibility, finance or society, there is nothing in the universe today that is greater than this mission. If you want to be great, there is no mission greater than this.

One man said to another, 'I need something small from you.' He said: 'Go and ask a little man about it,' meaning that if you have a big need, tell me about it, but if it is small, go and ask someone who is small like it.

My dear Archbishop, stand at the gates of the graveyard one day and watch the people going in. Go on the internet if you like, and look at the statistics of those who are departing this world for the Hereafter every day in your country, in Europe, in America... all over the world. As you came with those who came into this world, you will depart with those who depart.

My dear Archbishop, do you want to know the numbers of those who pass away every year, indeed every second of this life, to that other realm? The number of deaths per year is 55,205,782; per month it is 1,600,482; per day it is 150,835; per hour it is 6,285; per minute it is 105; and per second it is 1.7.

You will say to yourself quite honestly: I will die one day as all these people are dying. The day is inevitably coming. But — where next?

Yes indeed. Your days in this world will come to an end and you will set out on the longest journey (death). But will you be happy to pass away like all these masses pass away?

Stop and say it from the bottom of your heart: No!

I must carry concern for salvation in my heart, even if it is a heavy burden, even if those who are drowning are many.

That's fine, but isn't it enough consolation that my actions are in accordance with my rational thinking? And that I have lit a light inside my mind that is preventing me from confused beliefs as my life runs its course?

That's fine, but isn't it enough consolation that I am following the truth and God is with me?

Sign of
glory

Look at the flood waters running down this slope, carrying stones and branches with them. The steeper the slope, the stronger the flow. Then near the bottom of the slope you see a strongly-rooted tree, slender and tall, and the flood is toying with it, covering it until it can barely be seen, then it appears, then it is submerged again, then it appears again. And so on, and so forth.

You pass by this scene, and you are certain that this slender stem will end up like all the other trees, rocks and branches, carried along with the foam on the surface of the water. Then you come back to the same place after a while and, to your surprise, you see that this tree is in the middle of the flood, surrounded by the waters which are now giving way to it, and moving around it. It is as if it is reaping the harvest of patience, the reward for being different from the roiling crowd when it went in the opposite direction, and now the crowd is coming and apologizing for its previous behaviour, showing loyalty, listening to and obey-

ing that tree, which today is increased in strength, pride and control, in resisting countless millions of water particles and the debris that they carry. This tree is nothing but a sign of pride of inanimate beings towards animate beings.

But how great is the difference between the living and the dead?

How great is the gap between plants and humans?

How great is the difference between one glory and another?

If others passed on these myths to you, knowingly or unknowingly, how can you be pleased to pass on these myths knowingly?

Who is the greater cheat? One who passes on forged money or one who passes on a false religion?"

Father Silas: "Abu Haamid, do not think that we will surrender just because you answered some of our questions. Do not think that we have run out of similitudes (for the trinity) just because you rejected the first few we gave. No way!

It is an intellectual and ideological conflict, and we will never surrender except

The hand and the fingers are a sign of divine Oneness

when the fighter surrenders. But here we are friends, not fighters. Look at my hand – isn't this hand the clearest example of trinity and unity at the same time? How many fingers are there on this hand? It has five fingers but in the end it is one hand!

This proves to you, beyond any shadow of a doubt, that it is possible for a thing to be one and many at the same time."

Abu Haamid: "I say that every time you are confused about a matter, look at both of your hands, and you will see that your hand is evidence of true oneness, not of 'trinity' or 'quinity' or any other number.

Father Silas, is it possible for a rational person to say, 'These five fingers are one finger'?

Or is it possible for a rational person to say that these two hands are one hand?

When you are talking about the hand, you have to prove that these two hands are one hand, and when you are using numerous fingers as evidence of unity, you have to prove that these five fingers are one finger.

Moreover, when you are talking about the one hand that I see in front of me, you have to prove to me that what I am seeing is three hands in this one hand, and that each of them is completely independent from the others, and is self-sufficient, and that they are equal in all attributes, characteristics and abilities.

All of this, yet what I see is one hand. Is that possible?

Let us move on to the fingers. Show me one finger and prove to me that it is five fingers!

Is it possible for a rational person to say that these five fingers are one finger?

Finally, Father Silas, shifting in this manner from one similitude to another will not lead to any conclusion. If you are serious about reaching true unity, your reason will lead you to this conclusion, no matter what routes you take. If you want to complicate the matter, then the matter will be complicated for you, and you will die in a state of confusion without reaching anything.

You have given this hand as a similitude. If you want to have a detailed discussion about it, and I debate with you concern-

ing it, you will shift to another example. Every time I debate with you concerning something and prove unity to you, you will move further away with more convoluted examples, but just before finishing you will end up – as is in your mind – with three gods, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But ultimately, if you were serious about seeking the truth, you would reach the origin of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, i.e., their Creator, and the answer would be that He is God, the One and Only.

The system of unity that I am speaking about is the system to which the whole universe testifies. It is the system on which we base our entire lives, because of which our entire lives become sound.

Don't you see that if the family system were to be governed by two leaders, that would lead to corruption, division and scattering, with the affairs of each individual coming under his own control?

Don't you see that the purpose of major elections in many countries is to elect only one man? It is not possible to imagine the election of more than one president. Otherwise chaos would reign in the country?

Don't you see that a ship can only have one captain, otherwise the ship will sink?

The same applies in the case of bee hives – there can only be one queen. It is true also of ant colonies and dovecotes, in the forest and in everything. When there are multiple rulers, it is a sign of imminent disorder and ruin. This is in accordance with reason and reality, and in accordance with the system of the Books of divine origin. The words of the Qur'ân also bear witness to this:

“Had there been therein (in the heavens and the earth) *alihah* (gods) besides Allah, then verily, both would have been ruined. Glorified be Allah, the Lord of the Throne, (High is He) above all that (evil) they associate with Him!” [*al-Anbiya* 21:22].

Do you think that God would establish the system of the universe on a basis of pure monotheism, and establish our lives on a basis of pure monotheism, then command us to believe in three gods and tell us “three in one and one in three”?

How can you tell me three gods and say, Worship one God?

Do you think that if I go along with your argument, and turn to one direction, which is heaven, do you think I could direct my heart to one Lord in heaven or to three lords in heaven, when I know that there are three?

My mind will turn towards heaven but before my eyes, will be three different images of each of the three. The Father, among you, is depicted as an old man with a white beard. The Son is depicted as Jesus (peace be upon him) crucified, or as an infant in his mother's lap, and the Holy Spirit is depicted in another image.

Aren't these three different images, each of which is different from the others, and each of which has its own impression in the memory. To which of the three images should I direct my mind? Is there any confusion greater than this?

Or is it expected that I should isolate my mind and close my eyes, then raise my hands in prayer and submission, and what matters is that I should pray to three in one and one in three?

So my hands go in one direction, my heart in another and my mind in a third?!

Look at yourself – if you were to enter a king's court and see three kings wearing crowns, sitting on one huge throne, each of them having a different appearance from the others, and you are told to submit your request. The first question you ask yourself is: to which of these three should I submit my request? Then you say: Who is the strongest of the three, so that I may turn to him, and so I don't ignore him and give precedence to someone else, lest he get angry with me?

Your heart's focus will be here and your eyes' focus will not be on the two on either side, rather it will be only on the one in the middle, because the middle one is the original one, and the two on either side will, if need be, refer to the middle one, like you do. The conclusion is: the one to whom these two will turn is the one to whom I should turn. He is an all-powerful lord, if these two express their helplessness, need, weakness and so on to him.

He is a mighty lord, if these two and other creatures submit to him.

He is a wise, protecting lord, if these two refer their needs to him, and so on with regard to all the imperfections and needs

of creation. Hence you come to all the perfect qualities that are mentioned in his names and attributes.

Is this not the logic of sound reason?

There is a great *hadith* of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in which the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) referred to reason to prove the Oneness of God to a Bedouin.

It was narrated that 'Imran ibn Husayn said: "The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'O Husayn [father of 'Imran, the narrator of this *hadith*], how many gods do the people worship?" My father said: "Seven: six on earth and one in heaven." He said: "To which one do you turn for your needs when you are in need and when you are afraid?" He said: "To the One Who is in heaven." He said: "O Husayn, if you become Muslim, I shall teach you two words which will benefit you." He ['Imran] said:

"When Husayn became Muslim, he said: 'O Messenger of Allah, teach me the two words that you promised me.' he said: 'Say: "O Allah, inspire me to follow

guidance and protect me from the evil of my own self.'""

Abu 'Eesa (at-Tirmidhi) said: This *hadith is hasan ghareeb*. It was narrated from 'Imran ibn Husayn through chains other than this one.

Here I hope that the bishop will pay attention to the connection between the rational evidence used by the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the words of his supplication for this man. You will see that it is not only a supplication or a miracle. No, he prayed for two things for him: the first has to do with wisdom, which is the fruit of sound thinking, because wisdom is the right way. The second is protection from the evil of one's own soul. How often is one's own self an obstacle, even though rationally one is convinced? Based on that, if these two objectives are fulfilled, then the person will reach the right decision as Husayn the father of 'Imran did."

Bishop Sparto: "The evidence of the divinity of Jesus is to be found in your Qur'ân! Didn't Jesus perform miracles that no Prophet or human ever performed?

Raising
the dead

So what do we say about one who does what other humans cannot do?

The nature of the miracles of Jesus is the clearest evidence of his divinity, because they are miracles that humans cannot perform, either in quality or quantity. Are these miracles not true, when your Qur'ân itself testifies that Jesus is God? If giving life to the dead is something that only God can do, and Jesus brought the dead back to life, is this not sufficient evidence?

Toying with the minds of the people present is not appropriate and will not produce any conviction, because the one who does that is not going to prevail or convince others, even if he convinces them of some minor issues in the debate.

Hence I hope that this time you will not evade this definitive evidence of the divinity of Jesus."

Abu Haamid: "I thank you for this affirmation on the one hand, and you're evading the argument on the other. It is approval of my answer that I mentioned to you, without any objection, and it is fleeing to your former evidence that Jesus is God because he brought the dead

back to life, along with many other miracles which appeared at his hands, according to the Qur'ân.

You quoted as evidence the verse:

“And will make him [‘Eesa (Jesus)] a Messenger to the Children of Israel (saying): ‘I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I design for you out of clay, a figure like that of a bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by Allah’s Leave; and I heal him who was born blind, and the leper, and I bring the dead to life by Allah’s Leave. And I inform you of what you eat, and what you store in your houses. Surely, therein is a sign for you, if you believe’” [*Aal ‘Imran* 3:49].

This implies a number of things:

Firstly:

The fact that you are quoting the Qur'ân as evidence makes me happy, because it seems that deep down in your soul you realize that it is the only source which has not been touched by the hands of distortion. But I would like you to read the verses that come before and after this verse, so that you will know what the

Qur'ân says. I also hope that you will ponder the name of the *surah*, which is called *Surat Aal 'Imran*. Ponder the words of the **Qur'ân** more and more, and you will know whether it shows that Jesus is divine or a servant of God:

42. "And (remember) when the angels said: 'O Maryam (Mary)! Verily, Allah has chosen you, purified you (from polytheism and disbelief), and chosen you above the women of the 'Aalameen (mankind and jinn) (of her lifetime).

43. 'O Mary! Submit yourself with obedience to your Lord (Allah, by worshipping none but Him Alone) and prostrate yourself, and bow down along with those who bow down.'

44. This is a part of the news of the *Ghayb* (Unseen) which We reveal to you. You were not with them, when they cast lots with their pens as to which of them should be charged with the care of Maryam (Mary); nor were you with them when they disputed.

45. (Remember) when the angels said: 'O Maryam (Mary)! Verily, Allah gives you the glad tidings of a Word ["Be!" — and he was! i.e. 'Eesa (Jesus)

the son of Maryam (Mary)] from Him, his name will be the Messiah 'Eesa (Jesus), the son of Maryam (Mary), held in honour in this world and in the Hereafter, and will be one of those who are near to Allah.

46. He will speak to the people, in the cradle and in manhood, and he will be one of the righteous.'

47. She said: 'O my Lord! How shall I have a son when no man has touched me?' He said: 'So (it will be) for Allah creates what He wills. When He has decreed something, He says to it only: "Be!" — and it is.

48. And He (Allah) will teach him ['Eesa (Jesus)] the Book and *Al-Hikmah* (i.e. the *Sunnah*, the faultless speech of the Prophets, wisdom), (and) the *Tawraat* (Torah) and the *Injeel* (Gospel).

49. And will make him ['Eesa (Jesus)] a Messenger to the Children of Israel (saying): "I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I design for you out of clay, a figure like that of a bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by Allah's Leave; and I heal him who was born blind, and the

leper, and I bring the dead to life by Allah's Leave. And I inform you of what you eat, and what you store in your houses. Surely, therein is a sign for you, if you believe.

50. And I have come confirming that which was before me of the *Tawraat* (Torah), and to make lawful to you part of what was forbidden to you, and I have come to you with a proof from your Lord. So fear Allah and obey me.

51. Truly, Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him (Alone). This is the Straight Path.”

52. Then when ‘Eesa (Jesus) came to know of their disbelief, he said: ‘Who will be my helpers in Allah’s Cause?’ *Al-Hawariyyun* (the disciples) said: ‘We are the helpers of Allah; we believe in Allah, and bear witness that we are Muslims (i.e. we submit to Allah).

53. Our Lord! We believe in what You have sent down, and we follow the Messenger [‘Eesa (Jesus)]; so write us down among those who bear witness (to the truth, i.e. *La ilaha illallah* — none has the right to be worshipped but Allah).’

54. And they (disbelievers) plotted [to kill 'Eesa (Jesus)], and Allah planned too. And Allah is the Best of those who plot.

55. And (remember) when Allah said: 'O 'Eesa (Jesus)! I will take you and raise you to Myself and clear you of those who disbelieve, and I will make those who follow you superior to those who disbelieve till the Day of Resurrection. Then you will return to Me and I will judge between you in the matters in which you used to dispute.'" [Aal 'Imran 3:42- 55]

Secondly:

Are the words in these verses about these miracles attributed to Jesus (peace be upon him) or to God?

Aren't they the words of God, Who is the source of the true miracles, and the One Who bestowed them upon Jesus (peace be upon him)? I shall let you ponder the verse time and again, so that you will realize that you are quoting as evidence the greatest evidence against everyone who says that the miracles of Jesus (peace be upon him) are indicative of his divinity.

Thirdly:

Undoubtedly the miracles of Jesus (peace be upon him) are great, but let us go back to reason and discuss extraordinary events, and let us make reason our reference point. Extraordinary events are something that is beyond reason; therefore we will not discuss the possibility of extraordinary events from a rational point of view. Rather let us discuss why the miracles of Jesus (peace be upon him) became evidence for the divinity of Jesus (peace be upon him) whereas the miracles of others did not become evidence for their divinity.

Why didn't the Jews claim that the Prophet Ezekiel (peace be upon him) was divine when he brought thousands back to life, whereas you claim that Jesus brought the dead back to life, but he only brought three people back to life, as it says in the Gospels? Which of them is more entitled to make claims of divinity, on the basis of reason and the same logic that you apply, according to your argument?

Why do you claim that Jesus (peace be upon him) is God on the basis that he brought humans back to life, whereas Moses (peace be upon him) is the one at

whose hands God created a snake from a stick? Which is more difficult – according to reason – to create a human from a human just by breathing into him, or to create a living being, in which is a soul and life, from a piece of wood, and defeat other living beings, as happened with the snake of Moses and the snakes of the sorcerers?

Bringing the dead back to life means that the body of a real human being needs nothing more than the return of the soul. But a stick needs the nature of the wood to be changed into living cells, and it needs a soul too. So which miracle is more difficult?

Which miracle is more difficult according to reason: the miracle of Jesus (peace be upon him) which brought back to life one whose body was whole, by breathing into him, or the miracle of Moses (peace be upon him) where he struck a dead body with a piece of meat and it came back to life?

Which is more difficult according to reason: bringing a dead person back to life, or slaughtering a flock of birds then cutting them into small pieces and mixing them, with their feathers and bones, until

they all become one pile, then dividing it up and taking the portions and scattering them on different mountaintops, then calling them by name, so that they come back to life and come flying in response to the call, each on its own. Which is more difficult? Let us subject the matter to reason and see what it decides.

When did miracles performed by people become a sign that these humans are divine?

If that is the case, then why do you deny other people who claimed, and still claim that their leader and Prophets were divine, on the basis of what they saw of miracles performed at their hands, and why do you limit it to Jesus (peace be upon him) only?

If the miracles that a Prophet performed for his people are indicative of divinity, then why aren't the miracles performed by a righteous man indicative of his Prophethood, which is far easier because it is only moving him from the level of ordinary humanity to a higher level of humanity, whereas what you do raises him from the level of humanity to the level of divinity.

Moreover, aren't there some miracles that are performed by *Satan*? So shouldn't *Satan* be worshipped as divine, on the basis of these miracles?

Do you know whose line of thinking this is?

It is the line of thinking of the foremost enemy of Jesus (peace be upon him), the thinking of the one whom Jesus (peace be upon him) will kill when he returns. It is the thinking of the *Dajjaal*, the Antichrist. Do you know who the Antichrist is or not?

The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told us about him and warned us of his danger, as he said: 'God did not send any of the Prophets but he warned his followers about the *Dajjaal*. I am the last of the Prophets and you are the last of the nations. He will inevitably emerge among you.'

And he said concerning him: 'He will go around the world with the speed of the wind.'

'God has not created any tribulation since He created the world greater than the tribulation of the *Dajjaal*.'

If we followed your principles in giving evidence, then the *Dajjaal* would be a better candidate for divinity than Jesus!

Father Sparto, do you think I have drifted away from the rule of reason while discussing miracles, or do you have any other proof?"

Evidence
of his
divinity
is that
he was
created
by a
breath!

Father Jim: "Forget what you are saying, and look at other evidence which should be introduced, showing that the Messiah is divine and that he is the son of God. This is the fact that he was born without a father, and his birth occurred as the result of a breath into the womb of a woman, Mary. This breath – as it says in your Qur'ân – was a breath from God. What is greater than the fact that Jesus was a breath from God in the womb of a woman, which was followed by pregnancy and the delivery of a baby? What can this mean other than that he is the son of God?"

Abu Haamid: "Firstly, based on this I would like to ask you a specific question. Do you believe, according to what it says in the Old Testament and the New Testament, that a breath from the spirit of God was breathed into a person other than Jesus (peace be upon him)?"

Father Jim: "Yes – Adam."

Abu Haamid: "I tell you that this is also in the Qur'ân. God says: **"Verily, the likeness of 'Eesa (Jesus) before Allah is the likeness of Adam. He created him from dust, then (He) said to him: 'Be!' — and he was"** [*Aal 'Imran* 3:59].

What would you say to one who claims that Adam is a god alongside God, or that he is the son of God?

Isn't the justification for calling him divine the same? In fact it is more applicable in the case of Adam than in the case of Jesus (peace be upon him).

Isn't he closer to God than Jesus (peace be upon him) with regard to the beginning of his creation? Isn't he the first father of Jesus (peace be upon him) and the father of all mankind? Wasn't the breath in Adam more pure and unmixed with any human parts or female womb, so that he cannot be called 'son of man' as it says in all the Gospels that Jesus described himself?

Isn't he (Adam) the only one to whom the angels of God in heaven prostrated when the soul was breathed into him and he stood up? Do the angels prostrate to

anyone but their Lord?

Isn't he the only man who dwelt in Paradise with the angels of God?

The matter of the breathing in of the soul is not the only unique characteristic of Adam (peace be upon him). It is one of many unique characteristics. Which of the two is more qualified for this description (of being divine) according to your analogy?

Do you have any rational answer for that?

If the reason why Jesus (peace be upon him) deserved to become a God is that he was born without a father, then the entire universe came about with no father, no mother and no lineage! Moreover, all creatures originally began with no father or mother. Similarly, many kinds of insects are born every year in the rainy season without a father or mother, so why shouldn't this be a justification for these insects becoming divine?¹⁷

Here I would like to ask a specific question: Is the fact that a person's beginning

17. *Izhaar al-Haqq* by al-'Allamah Rahmatullah ibn Khaleel al-Rahman al-Kairanvi al-'Uthmani al-Hindi, vol. 3, p. 765

different from the ordinary a cause for venerating the Creator, or for venerating the one who was created and had no control over his situation?

My friends think of the value of a principle that does not amount to a hill of beans.

Is the fact that he was created in this manner a cause for proclaiming the Oneness of the One Who created him, and singling Him out for worship alone, and giving more thanks to Him, or is it a cause for increased disbelief in Him and associating others with Him, and elevating that created being, who was created involuntarily, to the level of the One Who created him, and manifested in him the wonders of His power? Did God make him a sign to other created beings so they worship him instead of God, or so that they would take him as a sign of His might and power, as we have seen in the Qur'ânic verse from *Surat al-Anbiya'*: **"and We made her and her son ['Eesa (Jesus)] a sign for Al-'Alameen (the mankind and jinn)"** [*al-Anbiya'* 21:91].

Secondly, if you wrote a book and the reader could not understand something,

to who can this reader turn in order to find out what you meant by that phrase?

Would you like him to figure out what your words mean from something other than your book?

The answer will undoubtedly be no.

Based on this logical principle, the Muslims have a principle which says: The first thing by which the Qur'ân is to be interpreted is the Qur'ân itself.

Let us apply to the Muslims this rational principle which they themselves and all people agreed to. Here God says: **"And she who guarded her chastity [Virgin Maryam (Mary)], We breathed into (the sleeves of) her (shirt or garment) [through Our *Ruh* — Jibreel (Gabriel)], and We made her and her son ['Eesa (Jesus)] a sign for *Al-'Alameen* (the mankind and *jinn*)"** [*al-Anbiya'* 21:91].

The confusion, as you imagine, stems from the word 'our Spirit', i.e., the attribution of the Spirit to God. From this breathing Jesus (peace be upon him) became a son of God! This is the result of a purely animalistic understanding; the fact of the matter is that these people

Resolving the confusion about the meaning of the verse "We breathed into (the sleeves of) her (shirt or garment)"

thought of this breath in terms of sexual movements accompanied by ejaculation. This implies disrespect towards God that is worse than the disrespect shown by the Jews towards the chaste and pure Mary when they fabricated lies against her although she is far above that. What a huge difference there is between the one who accuses God and the one who accuses a human being. Let us go back to the word 'our Spirit' – there is no confusion in this issue at all. The story is told in full in *Surat Maryam*. Read it in full and see whether there is any confusion left after that.

16. "And mention in the Book, Maryam (Mary), when she withdrew in seclusion from her family to a place facing east.

17. She placed a screen (to screen herself) from them; then We sent to her Our *Ruh* [angel Jibreel (Gabriel)], and he appeared before her in the form of a man in all respects.

18. She said: 'Verily, I seek refuge with the Most Gracious (Allah) from you, if you do fear Allah.'

19. (The angel) said: 'I am only a mes-

senger from your Lord, (to announce) to you the gift of a righteous son.'

20. She said: 'How can I have a son, when no man has touched me, nor am I unchaste?'

21. He said: 'So (it will be), your Lord said: "That is easy for Me (Allah). And (We wish) to appoint him as a sign to mankind and a mercy from Us (Allah), and it is a matter (already) decreed (by Allah)."'

22. So she conceived him, and she withdrew with him to a far place (i.e. Bethlehem valley about 4 6 miles from Jerusalem).

23. And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a date palm. She said: 'Would that I had died before this, and had been forgotten and out of sight!'

24. Then [the babe 'Eesa (Jesus) or *Jibreel* (Gabriel)] cried unto her from below her, saying: 'Grieve not: your Lord has provided a water stream under you.'

25. 'And shake the trunk of date palm towards you; it will let fall fresh ripe

dates upon you.

26. 'So eat and drink and be glad. And if you see any human being, say: "Verily, I have vowed a fast unto the Most Gracious (Allah) so I shall not speak to any human being this day."'

27. Then she brought him (the baby) to her people, carrying him. They said: 'O Mary! Indeed you have brought a thing *Fariyy* (a mighty thing).

28. 'O sister (i.e. the like) of Harun (Aaron)! Your father was not a man who used to commit adultery, nor your mother was an unchaste woman.'

29. Then she pointed to him. They said: 'How can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle?'

30. He ['Eesa (Jesus)] said: 'Verily, I am a slave of Allah, He has given me the Scripture and made me a Prophet;

31. 'And He has made me blessed where ever I be, and has enjoined on me *Salah* (prayer), and *Zakah*, as long as I live.

32. 'And dutiful to my mother, and made me not arrogant, unblest.

33. 'And *Salam* (peace) be upon me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I shall be raised alive!'

34. Such is 'Eesa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary). (It is) a statement of truth, about which they doubt (or dispute).

35. It befits not (the Majesty of) Allah that He should beget a son [this refers to the slander of Christians against Allah, by saying that 'Eesa (Jesus) is the son of Allah]. Glorified (and Exalted) be He (above all that they associate with Him). When He decrees a thing, He only says to it: 'Be!' — and it is.

36. ['Eesa (Jesus) said]: 'And verily, Allah is my Lord and your Lord. So worship Him (Alone). That is the Straight Path..'

37. Then the sects differed, so woe unto the disbelievers [those who gave false witness by saying that 'Eesa (Jesus) is the son of Allah] from the Meeting of a great Day (i.e. the Day of Resurrection, when they will be thrown in the blazing Fire).

38. How clearly will they (polytheists and disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah) see and hear, the Day when they

will appear before Us! But the wrongdoers today are in plain error” [*Maryam* 19:16-38].

Is the one who breathed God, or is the one who breathed the one whom God called ‘Our Spirit’ [Our *Ruh*, in the translation above], who is Gabriel (peace be upon him)?

The verse clearly states that the one who breathed was Gabriel, and that God did not breathe into the womb of Mary at all.

Moreover, from a rational point of view, does the breathing of an angel create a God?

What clearly indicates that this *Ruh* [angel] is one of the blessings of God is what it says in the Gospel of Matthew 1:18-24 and the Gospel of Luke 1:26-38. Luke says:

“30 But the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. 31 You will be with child ...’”
Luke 1:30-31

Then how can a creator be produced from a created being? How can the one who has a beginning produce one who has no

beginning? How can he have no end?

Based on what you say, the Muslims would have the right to deify everyone. Do you know why?

Because they would all turn into gods when the angel blows into the Trumpet when the Hour begins. This blowing of the Trumpet is something in which you believe also.

If being created without a father is sufficient reason for us to worship this created being, then we should worship the ewe named Dolly, which was produced by means of cloning but did not live for long.

The scientists who clone creatures these days are able to take genetic material from the mother and fuse it with an egg in the mother herself, and produce a female who is exactly like the mother, as was the case with the ewe Dolly.

Would such human beings deserve to be worshipped on the basis that they were created without fathers?

But when they emerge, they will not be emerging from their mother's wombs, rather they will be emerging from the

earth just as Jesus emerged from the earth, according to your belief, and ascended to heaven. The issue is exactly the same.

So does Jesus turn into a God and these people do not, even though they are all resurrected from the earth by means of blowing?

As for humans, they went through the *nutfah* (sperm drop) stage before reaching the stage where the soul is blown into the foetus, hence human life begins in the womb when the soul is blown in. When they emerge from the earth, that will also be accomplished with the blowing in of the soul.

Are these two actions sufficient to turn people into gods?

If it is understood that people's creation begins with a drop of sperm, and the creation of Jesus (peace be upon him) began with a breath, then we will know what the two have in common, which is that they both have a beginning, and they are both created. Everything that is said about him before he was in the womb of Mary is pure illusion and speculation for which there is no evidence whatsoever.

How can the one who had a beginning be a god?

What is unique about Jesus (peace be upon him) is that he was not the product of the human stage of sperm, and the Spirit breathed him into his mother's womb without any sperm.

In the usual stages of creation, life begins, then the soul is introduced. The living cell is what begins as sperm, then a blood clot (*'alaqah*), then a chewed lump of flesh (*mudghah*), then the soul is introduced. But what happened with Jesus (peace be upon him) is that the soul and life were introduced at the same time.

If everything that is attributed to something else becomes part of it or one of its attributes, then we see that a number of things are attributed to God in the Qur'ân and elsewhere. Can the priest apply the same principle to the she-camel concerning which God says: **"It is a she-camel of Allah! (and bar her not from) having her drink!"** [*al-Shams* 91:13]?

Did this she-camel, by virtue of this attribution, become a daughter of God, or ridden by God?!

Moreover, can we say that the House (*Ka'bah*) was born from God, or that God lives in it? Can something similar be said of the mosques, which are called 'Houses of God'?

One of the most prominent scholars, whose name is al-Teebi, said in his commentary on *Mishkat al-Masabih*:

'A Muslim was reciting the Qur'ân and a priest heard the words **'and His Word, ("Be!" — and he was) which He bestowed on Maryam (Mary) and a spirit (Ruh) created by Him'** [*an-Nisa'* 4:171].

He said: 'This phrase confirms our religion and goes against Islam, because it is an acknowledgement that Jesus is a spirit and he is part of God.'

'Ali ibn Husayn ibn al-Waqid, the author of *al-Nazeer*, was present there, and he answered by saying: God has said something similar of all creatures: **'And has subjected to you all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth; it is all as a favour and kindness from Him'** [*al-Jathiyah* 45:13].

If what is meant by 'a spirit (*Ruh*) created by Him' is a spirit that is part of Him,

and what is meant by 'as a favour and kindness from Him' is also something like Him, according to what you say, then it implies that all created beings are gods. The priest acknowledged this and believed (became a Muslim).'

The phrase 'from Him' does not mean 'part of Him'. If it did mean that, then the meaning of the verse 'as a favour and kindness from Him' would be that all created things are part of Him, and no one, of any religion, says that!"

Bishop Sparto: "If you manage to find a way out of this question, what do you say about the fact that the Qur'ân calls Jesus son of Mary the 'Word of God'?"

The Word
of God

Isn't the word of God from God? Aren't the words of God described as perfect and never ending because God never ends? So how can Jesus end?

The answer is definitely yes. The words of God are among the attributes of God. If you ask me which of the attributes are the word of God, the only answer can be that the words of God are the life of God, because the words of God are by means by which Jesus emerged and by which Jesus brought the dead and clay to life.

It says in your Qur'ân that Jesus is '**His Word, which He bestowed on Maryam (Mary)**' [*an-Nisa'* 4:171]. What it says in your Qur'ân is also mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew:

'Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away' Matthew 24: 35

Moreover reason supports this, because reason says that the sublime may be manifest in the physical. As man is the noblest of things, it is possible for God to be manifest in man. Hence He was manifest in the noblest form of man; Jesus."

Abu Haamid: "I thank you for demonstrating all the objections that you have about the correct belief, because these objections clarify that belief very well, as it is said, 'Things become clearer when compared to their opposite.' These objections also remind me of what I have omitted to point out the falseness of, or that I did not think was important so I did not mention it, but when you mentioned it I realized that it is important to you, so I will answer it. I will answer this argument in several ways:

1-I would like to start my response to

you with a specific question: Were you not created from the word of God?

The answer is: definitely yes.

Didn't God create Jesus (blessings and peace be upon him) by His command?

The answer is definitely yes.

So what is the difference between you and Jesus, if the reason for creation is the word of God? The answer is that there is no difference.

Similarly, all people are created by the word of God, as all creatures are created by the word of God.

On that basis, there should not be any confusion.

But if I come and ask you by which of the words of God you and Jesus were created, you will say: I don't know exactly. This is the answer of all Christians, but I can easily tell you by which of the words of God you were created, and do not think that the answer is mere speculation on my part. Rather it comes from God, Who said the word, as it tells us in *Surat Ya-Seen*:

'Verily, His Command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it,

‘Be!’ — and it is!’ [*Ya-Seen* 36:82].

In the Qur’ân there is another verse which clearly speaks specifically about Jesus. In *Surat Aal ‘Imran*, God says:

‘Verily, the likeness of ‘Eesa (Jesus) before Allah is the likeness of Adam. He created him from dust, then (He) said to him: ‘Be!’ — and he was.’ [*Aal ‘Imran* 3:58].

It is quite simple and clear, without any complexity. It is not only in the Qur’ân, rather it is in the Torah too. In the Book of Genesis it says:

15. *‘And God said, ‘Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, 16. and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.’ And it was so ‘Genesis 1:15-16*

How could Jesus be one of the attributes of God when he is no more than a single word?

The difference is only in the method. The method in Jesus’ case is that Gabriel blew into Mary’s womb, and then pregnancy occurred, whereas in ordinary people’s

case the angel whose special role it is blows the soul (into the foetus) when one hundred and twenty days have passed, as we have seen above and as we shall see in the next soiree, if God wills.

2- Give me a specific answer: did the word of God become Jesus, or did Jesus become divine by the word of God? In other words, was Jesus the word itself or was he created by the word?

If Jesus was created by the word, then he is one of its effects, and is no different from anyone else in that respect!

If Jesus was the word itself, then you have fallen into a number of issues. Firstly, if you say that God created in Jesus the word, this means that as God created speech in people other than Jesus, so He also created it in Jesus, but if you say no, rather he is the word of God Himself, in the sense that the word or speech itself moved from God to Jesus, then God was left without speech, i.e., God was left mute, when speech was taken away from Him or He Himself gave it up. The difference between the two is that when He created speech in Jesus, His attribute was not transferred to Jesus. Rather Jesus is just like any other created being. That is

like when God created strength in some of His creation, or hearing or sight and so on. But when you say that Jesus is the attribute of speech, then this implies that this attribute was transferred from God to Jesus.

Secondly, if we say that the word of God is Jesus himself, then based on that Jesus became a god. Then you must say that the bird, to which Jesus said 'Be!' and it became a bird, became a god, because the bird came into existence by the word of the god Jesus, as Jesus came into existence by the word of God! And when Jesus said to the dead person, 'Arise,' he arose and was alive, so that dead person also became a god.

3-This verse which you quoted from the Gospel of Matthew, to prove that Jesus became God by this word, does not prove what you say about Jesus being God, because the verse does not suggest that Jesus had no beginning and no end. Rather the verse describes Jesus as never ending, as it says in the Old Testament:

*'The grass withers and the flowers fall,
but the word of our God stands forever'*
Isaiah 40:8

Here it only mentions that it has no end. It does not say that it has no beginning. This applies to Jesus, Abraham, Muhammad and others, because their fame will abide and not fade, even if the heavens and earth fade away.

4- Can a rational man imagine that God, the Creator, could become part of a created being?

If you yourselves affirm that Mary was created, and that the humanity of Jesus is created, then how can reason come up with a creator made from one created being and another?

In other words, what would Jesus be without the word of God which you claim was incarnated in him?

Isn't he, without that word, a created being as you admit? Based on that, does he not have a beginning, and does he not have the attributes of a created being that you mentioned? So how can a created being be a creator?

I adjure you by God, how can he have a beginning and not have an end? How?

How can you admit that he has a beginning, then say that he has no beginning?

How?

How can part of him have a beginning and part of him have no beginning? How?

How can part of him be created and part of him be a creator? How?

How can he be created in one way and the creator of his mother?

What confusion affects the mind because of this belief, which is expected to be simple and free of complex issues!

5-Speech, like sight, strength and knowledge, is like all other attributes. If God looks at something, will the attribute of sight be transferred to that thing?

Would any rational person say this?

If God teaches a created being something, does that mean that divine knowledge is transferred to that person, and does that person become a god?!

If God gives strength to those whom He has created, does that mean that divine power is transferred to them, and do they become gods?! Is that rationally possible?

If you say that it is not possible and that

this applies only to Jesus, we say to you: What is keeping it from Prophets other than Jesus, when they are all human and Prophets by the word of God, and He is the one who has given them knowledge, strength and so on.

If you say that it is possible, we say to you: Then every created being is a god, and the idea that Jesus alone is divine is invalidated. Not only that, there will be none of the attributes of God left, because all the attributes of God have something to do with mankind, and have some effect on them, such as hearing, sight, strength, knowledge, mercy and independence.

6-You will never find a rational man in this world who regards speech as something separate from the speaker.

Have you ever heard of any rational man in history calling upon the word of God, or the life of God, or the power of God, or the hearing of God, or the sight of God? That is for a simple reason, which is that the attribute is not the same as the one to whom it is attributed. The word is not God, the power is not God, and the knowledge is not God. Rather these and others are attributes of perfection that exist in God. If anyone among you

says otherwise, we say to him: So long as you say that the Bible is the Word of God, then the Bible is God. Would any rational man say that the Gospel or the Torah or the Qur'ân is God?

What if it is proven that the Gospel or Torah or Psalms have been changed – which has been proven – has God been changed or what?

Do you accept it if I say that your words which are written on a piece of paper or heard on a tape are you?

7-You say that the word of God which is sublime is manifested in something physical.

If we follow this analogy, then we would say that for God to manifest Himself in an angel is more appropriate because angels are not physical, so why is He manifested in Jesus and not in the angels?

Moreover, aren't you a man in whom something sublime, such as the soul, is manifest in something physical, which is your body, and by virtue of this soul, you are a complete and noble human being? Was Jesus like that or not?

The answer is that he most definitely was

like that.

So the incarnation of God in Jesus was in the complete Jesus, body and soul."

Father Jim: "I am still waiting for your answer to the earlier question of Father Rawas, but until this moment you have not come anywhere near answering his question. We will excuse you if you do not have an answer, or even if you want more time to search for an answer, but I do not doubt that it is a question that is very embarrassing for you, because it is based on a true example that no one has any choice but to surrender to. Abu Haamid, if you focus your mind a little on the examples that Father Rawas gave, you will realize that our doctrine is convincing, because the generation of the son from the father is the generation of words and knowledge from God, and it is like the generation of speech from reason, the generation of knowledge from a scholar. Isn't what I am saying to you a logical matter which is accepted by human reason with regard to humans? So how can human reason not accept it with regard to a matter that is more difficult and more serious, that being the matter of belief? Moreover this meaning of

which we are speaking is what is stated in your Qur'ân, where it says that Jesus is the Word of God:

'The Messiah 'Eesa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary), was (no more than) a Messenger of Allah and His Word, ('Be!' — and he was) which He bestowed on Maryam (Mary) and a spirit (*Ruh*) created by Him' [an-Nisa' 4:171].

So he is His Word.

You as Muslims ask people to believe things that are more difficult for the mind to comprehend than this, so how can you expect your fellow Muslims to follow blindly but you do not expect us to follow blindly?

Jesus is one of the attributes of God – His Word and the attribute of knowledge.”

Abu Haamid: “Firstly, you say that we as Muslims expect people to accept things that are more difficult to digest and comprehend. I am waiting for you to tell me any issue in Islam that contradicts reason.

The basic principle for us is that a sound religious text cannot contradict sound

reason and that blind following with regard to issues of faith is invalid.

With regard to this issue, what do you think if I prove to you that you yourself are not convinced of it, let alone the other gentlemen present, who I do not think will nod their heads in support of you except out of respect for you, and perhaps they thought they had some rational explanation for something that they thought had no rational credibility at all. This new example that you are using does not indicate any conviction, rather it is more akin to throwing a straw to an ant that has already fallen off the ship in the midst of the ocean, and the ant climbs onto it, thinking that it is the plank of another ship and that it will save it from the waves. Although I respect everyone present, rational debate dictates this example, and I shall prove what I am saying rationally with a great deal of evidence, as follows:

1-Do you know, Archbishop, that by means of this logic and by quoting the evidence in which you are imitating those who came before you, that you are in fact insulting the three whom you have taken as gods, the Father, Son and Holy

Spirit?"

Father Jim: "I admit that I am imitating those who came before me, and there is nothing wrong with that. But what insult is there if my reason agrees with those who came before me? What insult is there if I venerate the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?"

Abu Haamid: "There is nothing wrong with a person imitating those who came before him in following the truth, and there is nothing wrong with imitating them in something that is in accordance with reason, but blindly following one who is not rational is not acceptable!"

I will explain to you how it is an insult to God, Jesus (peace be upon him) and the Holy Spirit – as you claim. If the gentlemen present are convinced of it, all well and good, otherwise I will retract my claim.

If Jesus was the word that was generated from God as speech is generated from reason, then this means that there is some imperfection in God, because God did not speak before speech was generated from Him, which is what you call the Word. Just as a child's speech is gen-

erated little by little, then he becomes a speaker after he was unable to speak, so too speech was developed in God, and this speech was His son Jesus (peace be upon him), so how was God before this Son came?!

Do you accept that God was incapable of speech for a period of time before Jesus was generated from Him? Do you accept that?

Do you accept that God was ignorant before Jesus (peace be upon him) was generated from Him, if Jesus is – as you claim – knowledge that was generated in God?

Do you accept that God was incapable before Jesus (peace be upon him) came, because Jesus (peace be upon him) is power, as some of you claim?

This is with regard to God, and I do not think that you would accept to worship a Lord who was at any time dumb or ignorant or incapable.

Moreover, you do not accept this with regard to Jesus (peace be upon him) himself, even though you say that he is the Son. You combine only two attributes for Jesus (peace be upon him): the attribute

of speech and the attribute of knowledge. What about the other attributes of Jesus as Lord?

Do you accept to worship speech and knowledge? Do you accept to worship a tape or a voice? Do you accept to worship Jesus (peace be upon him), the Lord who speaks and knows, as you say, but he is lacking all other attributes, so he is incapable, deaf, dumb, defeated and other negative attributes?

Ask yourself: would you agree to give a child these two positive attributes only while taking other attributes away from him?

Jesus
is like
speech
and life

The answer is definitely not. How can you attribute what you dislike for yourselves and your children to God?

How can God give you these children with these attributes and chose for Himself the worst attributes?

Is this fair?

It is also very odd when you say that the Son is one of the attributes of the Father.

Moreover, my dear Professor, is your son one of your attributes? Yes, perhaps he resembles you in many ways, or perhaps

he does not resemble you in most of his attributes. Perhaps he is the opposite of you. But as for him being one of your attributes, that cannot be. Your attributes are part of you and were created with you.

Does reason accept this logic between one created being and another? Or between a created father and a created son, who resemble one another in human attributes? Then how about a created being with the Creator?

O rational men, how can Jesus (peace be upon him) be an attribute of God, whether it is the attribute of knowledge or of power? What did God do when Jesus (peace be upon him) was dead for three days? Did God remain without knowledge, speech or power for three days?

Where was the knowledge of God when the conspirators were plotting his crucifixion? Was the divine attribute of knowledge or power idle?

Where were the divine attributes of knowledge and power when Jesus was in the womb of his mother during the pregnancy?

I hope that you will think of all the situ-

ations of Jesus (peace be upon him) that are narrated in your Gospels that you have before you, then ask the same question. Is this befitting for God?

Ask the same question even with regard to the most sublime situation of Jesus (peace be upon him) in your view, which is when God raised him and seated him on His right hand. If he is an attribute of God, then how can His attribute be beside Him and not in Him? Can your attribute sit beside you?

The aim is not to mock the Messiah (peace be upon him) – God forbid. Rather it is mocking the idle reason that does not do anything about the one who mocks the Messiah.

You also insult the Holy Spirit when your explanation of the Holy Spirit is that he is the life that was generated from God, i.e. that God was not alive before the Holy Spirit was generated from Him.

By the same token you do not accept the explanation that the Holy Spirit is life.

Is mere life praise?

Moreover, do you have any evidence that these two or three attributes were gener-

ated from God, or is this just sticking claims on a wall to which nothing can stick?

What answer can you give to one who claims to have started a new religion and says that other attributes of God were generated from God in like fashion, and every attribute that is generated from God is a son of God, so just as His speech became a son, His power became a son, and His sublimity became a son, and His hearing became a son, and His sight became a son and so on. If the attributes of God are unlimited then His sons are innumerable!

What is there to prevent that which is true of Jesus (peace be upon him) also being true of others?

Finally, if Jesus (peace be upon him) is the attribute of knowledge, can the mere attribute do anything in isolation?

Does the attribute of life create, grant provision, ward off harm or provide support? Can the rational person's view be respected if he says that life is the creator of the heavens and the earth?

I urge you to set aside the givens of doctrine and bring the givens of reason, be-

cause the sound givens of doctrine cannot contradict the sound givens of reason.

The foundation of your faith, which is your belief that Jesus (peace be upon him) is a god along with God, does not only contradict the Gospels themselves along with the Books of divine origin, language and reason, rather it also contradicts inner human nature and the practical life of nations.

I ask you frankly, my dear archbishop: would you want anyone else to come forward and lead the people in prayer with you, or should there be only one prayer leader?"

Archbishop: "There can only be one prayer leader."

Abu Haamid: "What if you appoint two leaders for the same congregation and for the same prayer?"

Archbishop: "Then there would inevitably be confusion for the worshippers."

Abu Haamid: "What if there were three prayer leaders?"

Archbishop: "Then the confusion would inevitably be greater. The prayer could not possibly be valid, because who would

the people follow in their prayer?"

Abu Haamid: "Professor of Political Science, Jimmy, why are there presidential elections in all countries? Are they not aimed at electing one president for the country?"

And you, Dr. Drima: Would you agree to have another head of the neurology department in your hospital?"

Dr. Drima: "Definitely not."

Abu Haamid: "The life of mariners is based on the same principle. A ship cannot have more than one captain, and a travelling party must elect one of their number as their leader.

This system applies even in the world of animals and insects, bees and ants and everything that God has created.

This applies in all of life. How could God prescribe for people a belief which contradicts and is diametrically opposed to the system that He has laid down for their life, which contradicts their reason and their nature, and which contradicts their common sense, books and constitutions?

If the Archbishop's prayer would be in-

validated by the presence of three prayer leaders, when they are in a place that is farthest removed from disputes and differences, a place that is farthest removed from destructive envy, then how about this great universe whose boundaries, numbers and dimensions are unknown?

Can the idea of a partnership in the most important position (i.e., that of God) be acceptable?

If this matter has no basis and is unacceptable in even the most minor issues, then how can you accept it with regard to the most important issue?

It is not acceptable with regard to relationships between created beings, so how can it be acceptable with regard to the relationship between the Creator and His creation?

If any of these priests and professors have any objection, let him state it. I am ready to listen attentively and accept whatever is convincing."

Dr. Drima: "Rather we are ready to go home and sleep well!"

All those present laughed, and parted as if they had never disputed the most seri-

ous and sensitive of issues.

Conclusion

As soon as a rational man engages his mind and thinks about the Trinity, he sees its structure collapsing. Why doesn't every wise person think about it when he is able to?

If a man resolves to think about this matter when his head is resting on his pillow, then this belief would collapse, because the structure of this belief cannot bear any stirring of the mind even when it is asleep, just as a cooking pot cannot bear the movement of any of the three stones on which it rests.

Why don't the Christians who applied their reason to all aspects of life apply it to the issue of beliefs?

Is this request legitimate or not? Is it essential or not?

A principle that man is afraid to think of in a rational way is not befitting for rational people to believe in it

If a principle does not hold firm before the questions of rational people or re-

spond to the objections of its opponents, and it does not give a proper answer even to the questions of children, then it deserves to be buried without ceremony!

Sixth Gathering

Seal of the Prophets: Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

Introduction:

The weather was more than wonderful, the temperature was seventeen degrees Celsius, and the time was eleven a.m. on a weekend. A few white clouds floated in the blue sky and the window of the room where we were gathered opened onto a fragrant flower garden. But the most beautiful thing about this environment was the faces of the people present in this gathering which was held on a basis of friendship between prominent scholars in the fields of history and theology in the city of Montpellier on the Mediterranean coast, in the home of Dr. Drima.

The subject that arose, without prior agreement, was the competition organized by a Danish newspaper to find the worst image of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), which was then taken up, firstly by the French newspaper Libération, then

by other newspapers, until the matter reached the French Parliament which discussed this issue.

Was he
confused?

Professor of Gospel Studies Gary: "It is well known that Muhammad was a confused man. He was a man who never settled on an opinion and nothing he said can be relied on. He might say one thing at night and deny it the next day!

This alone is sufficient to shed doubt on all his teachings. More than one scholar has said this about him."

Abu Haamid: "I am not concerned about whether you are convinced of what you are saying or not, but I would like to ask you: Have you yourself read anything about the life of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or is what you are saying and arguing about not your opinion but that of others?

Have you read about the childhood of Muhammad, or about his youth or adulthood? Have you read about his attitude towards his family or his companions or his enemies?

If you have not read anything at all, then is it not my right to stop this discussion so that you may read for yourself about

Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or bring someone else to me who has read about Muhammad so that I may debate with him?

Isn't this the ruling of sound reason?

I want to set aside my rational judgement and I want you to set aside your own rational judgement or the rational judgement of the one whom you are imitating, so that we may listen to those who spoke about Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), who were never accused of being companions or followers of Muhammad.

Then we can think about whether Muhammad was confused or not.

Massinion says of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him):

'There will remain hidden from us many secrets about this character. Hence we may discuss what has been disclosed and indicated by his public life of his strong will, great self-control, moderate temper, gentleness, forbearance, patience, far-sightedness and all the qualities required of a war leader and man of state that have been honed by belief and deep faith.'¹

Secret of
greatness

1. Massinion, Jeanmarion, p. 68. From *Nubuwwat*

Emile Darminham says: 'He demonstrated nobility and greatness of spirit the like of which is rarely found in history. He enjoined his troops to show mercy to the weak, elderly, women and children, and he forbade them to destroy houses and crops and to cut down fruit-bearing trees.'²

Will Durant says: 'He never drank alcohol, which he forbade to others. He was kind towards prominent leaders and cheerful towards the weak, but he inspired awe in those who looked down on others. He was easy-going with his helpers, he joined every funeral procession that passed by him. He rejected all the trappings of authority and refused all affected types of veneration and respect. He would accept an invitation from a slave to eat, and he would not ask a slave to do something when he had the time and strength to do it himself. He spent only a little on his family. Most of his wealth was spent on charity. He was a tough

Muhammad fil-Fikr al-Istishraaqi al-Mu'aasir by Dr. Lakhdar al-Shaayib, p. 414

2. *al-Islam wal-Wajh al-Aakhir lil-Fikr al-Gharbi* by 'Imaad al-Deen Khaleel. From *Nubuwwat Muhammad fil-Fikr al-Istishraaqi al-Mu'aasir* by Dr. Lakhdar al-Shaayib, p. 415

fighter who did not spare his enemies... but his acts of mercy are innumerable.³

And he said: 'At his peak, Muhammad lived an ordinary and simple life, with no great expense or ostentation. All his life he remained frugal, with no interest in material comforts. He lived in a house made of mud bricks and people often saw him mending his worn-out garment and patching it himself. He took part in public life with the people and never turned anyone, young or old, away from his gatherings.'⁴

Watt says: 'He knew how to divide his time among his many Commitments. In his relationship with his companions he showed a great deal of tact. He was capable of being tough sometimes, but in general he was gentle. Most often his laughter was no more than a smile, and we find many stories which show that he was careful and sensitive in dealing

3. *Qissat al-Hadaarah* (The Story of Civilization), Will Durant, 11/45. From *Nubuwwat Muhammad fil-Fikr al-Istishraaqi al-Mu'aasir* by Dr. Lakhdar al-Shaayib, p. 415

4. *al-'Arab Tareekh Moojaz*, p. 43-44. See also Blachère, *le Probleme de Mahomet*, p. 101. From *Nubuwwat Muhammad fil-Fikr al-Istishraaqi al-Mu'aasir* by Dr. Lakhdar al-Shaayib, p. 415

with others. Even though some of these stories are not true, in general they depict a sound image of him. It seems that Muhammad was especially compassionate towards children, who always loved him. Perhaps this was an expression of the sorrow of a man whose own children all died at an early age. His kindness extended to animals too, which was something remarkable in the era in which he lived in that part of the world.⁵

Watt says: 'Muhammad was a man of state, filled with wisdom. Because the structure of the concepts that we find in the Qur'ân is no more than a framework, and this framework needed institutions to bring them into practical application, his wisdom with regard to these issues – i.e., political and social – led to the rapid extension that turned his small state into an international empire.'⁶

Professor of Gospel Studies Gary:
"The greatest answer to you, Abu Haa-

5. *Muhammad in Medina*, p. 389-390, 939. From *Nubuwwat Muhammad fil-Fikr al-Istishraaqi al-Mu'aasir* by Dr. Lakhdar al-Shaayib, p. 416

6. *Mahomet Prophete et Homme d'Etat*, p. 207. From *Nubuwwat Muhammad fil-Fikr al-Istishraaqi al-Mu'aasir* by Dr. Lakhdar al-Shaayib, p. 417

mid, is that all of these people whom you have mentioned, even though you praise them, not one of them entered Islam or followed Muhammad whom he praised. Moreover, although they may have praised him in one place, they criticized him in another.”

Abu Haamid: “I will tell you something, and I shall prove it rationally so that you do not think that I am just a fanatical blind follower.

Firstly:

Anyone who testifies that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is a man of truth is only testifying in his own favour, in addition to the fact that he has reached the truth. Anyone who knows Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and does not testify in his favour is testifying against himself and showing that he is a false witness.

That is because these fair-minded men came after many centuries of injustice, lying and fabrications against Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), as your forebears fell victim to those whom they trusted, and they did

not check the false information that they gave about Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Among them was the French Benedictine historian Guibert de Nogent (1053-1130 CE), who despite his acknowledged lack of sources, all of which were oral and Christian, did not refrain from substituting pigs for the dogs of Elogio de Cordoba, when he said that pigs were to blame for the end of Muhammad, as he said: 'A herd of pigs devoured him during an epileptic fit'!

Guibert used this myth to explain why Muslims forbid pork, and he added elsewhere in his books that the reason why alcohol is forbidden to Muslims is that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was drunk when these pigs devoured him.

As for Bishop Hildebert of Tours (d. 1133), he said that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was a false prophet who managed to deceive his people by means of miracles that he performed for them, which took the form of a fearsome bull that he was able to train to bow before him every time he commanded it to do so.⁷

7. Von Grunebaum, *l'Islam Medieval*, From

Eloge de Cordoba, or Eloge de Cordoue who is known as the most knowledgeable of bishops in his country and whose writing is nothing but pure lies against the Prophet's biography and Islamic law, repeated his lies and fabrication when he said: 'When Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) realized that his death was at hand, he predicted that the angels would come on the third day and resurrect him. After his soul had descended into Hell, his companions were guarding his body. When the third day came and the angels did not appear, they departed because they believed that the angels would not approach if they were present whereupon, instead of angels, dogs came and ate part of the body of the Prophet and the Muslims buried what was left. So as to take revenge on dogs, they ordered that large numbers of the animals be killed every year, and this was the miracle of the Prophet of Islam.'⁸

Can you imagine, as you hold the posi-

Nubuwwat Muhammad fil-Fikr al-Istishraaqi al-Mu'aasir by Dr. Lakhdar al-Shaayib, p. 50

8. Von Grunebaum, *l'Islam Medieval, From Nubuwwat Muhammad fil-Fikr al-Istishraaqi al-Mu'aasir* by Dr. Lakhdar al-Shaayib, p. 44

tion of professor, that people's minds at that time could accept this?!

Yes, the minds of your forebears accepted this lie, and these lies bore the hoped-for fruit of distorting the image of Islam and Muslims and the Prophet of Islam, and increasing hatred between them and the Muslims. This hatred was invested and used to prepare armies to wage war against Muslim lands.

Hence this true testimony – which we quoted earlier from these scholars – about Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), even though it is imperfect and even though it came as if it was a testimony which was given reluctantly by those who know better, in comparison to what came before it is regarded as a light, even though it is very small in comparison to the huge darkness that surrounds it. Each of these testimonies is a light in the midst of darkness.

Secondly:

If you examine the condemnation that those mentioned made of Islam or its Prophet, you will find that it is not based on proper knowledge, rather it stems from misinterpretation, wrong conclu-

sions or misquotations.

Thirdly:

The fact that these people who testified to the truth did not become Muslims should not be counted in their favour; rather it is the greatest proof against them. This is something that was criticized by the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who coined a similitude for it when he said: 'The one who teaches the people well and forgets himself is like the wick which gives light but burns itself.' Narrated by at-Tabaraani in *al-Kabeer* from Jundub, and classed as *hasan* by al-Suyooti.

But this small light which these scholars mentioned is sufficient in the midst of this darkness to lead every reader to Islam.

Fourthly:

Your argument that the fact that these people did not become Muslim is proof against Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is unacceptable. It may be noted in response that the fact that other Orientalists did become Muslim is the strongest argument against them. Many of these people were thinkers and

Impact
of blind
fanaticism
on the
narration
of history

prominent scholars who had worked for a long time in academia before they became Muslim. Many of them did not become Muslim until after lengthy research and moving from one religious belief to another. Among them is:

Nasrouddine Dinét, the son of the internationally-acclaimed painter Alphonse Étienne Dinét, b. 1861 CE in Paris. This Orientalist was born to Catholic parents from whom he learned the doctrines of the crucifixion, redemption and trinity. As time passed, he began to feel a sense of unease and religious confusion. After studying in depth the reason for his anxiety and the fundamentals and other issues of his beliefs, he embraced Islam and officially declared his Islam in 1927 in the El Jedid Mosque in Algiers. He took the name Nasrouddine, and left instructions that he be buried in the city of Bousaadah in Algeria. His body was transported from Paris, where he died in December 1929 CE.⁹

Muhammad Asad was an Austrian who was born Leopold Weiss. The story of

9. From *Nuhuwwat Muhammad fil-Fikr al-Istishraaqi al-Mu'aasir* by Dr. Lakhdar al-Shaayib. See also *al-Istishraaq wal-Mustashriqoon* by Najeeb al-'Aqeeqi, 1/228

his Islam is a unique example of the penetration of Islamic beliefs into the hearts of some westerners unintentionally, just by living among Muslims. Muhammad Asad said in his book *The Road to Makkah*: 'The story I am going to tell in this book is not the autobiography of a man conspicuous for his role in public affairs. It is not a narrative of adventure – for although many strange adventures have come my way, they were never more than an accompaniment to what was happening within me. It is not even the story of a deliberate search for faith – for that faith came upon me, over the years, without any endeavour on my part to find it.'¹⁰

'Abd al-Waahid Yahya Guinon was the son of the French spiritual philosopher Rene Guinon. He was raised a Catholic and he remained a Catholic until he moved to Cairo in 1930 CE, where he declared his Islam. He got married and produced three children, Ahmad, 'Abd al-Waahid and Khadijah, and he did not leave Cairo even to supervise the publication of his works in Europe – which was taken care of by his friends and stu-

10. op. cit., p. 166

dents – until he died in 1951 CE.¹¹

Other converts include: Roger Garaudy ... and Murad Hofmann, the Muslim German Orientalist, who was born in 1931 CE to a Catholic family, and started his university studies in 1950 CE. He obtained a Master's degree in American Law from Harvard in 1960 CE. He worked in the German Foreign Service from 1961 until 1994, during which he served as Director of Information for NATO, after which he was appointed as German Ambassador in Algeria in 1987 CE. Then he moved to Morocco in 1990 CE, where he filled the same position until he reached retirement age in 1994 CE. He currently lives in Turkey. Since he announced his Islam in 1985 CE, he has produced a number of books, starting with *Diary of a German Muslim* which was published in 1985 CE, *Islam: The Alternative* which was published in Germany (*Der Islam als Alternative*) in 1982 CE, and *Islam 2000*.¹²

Fifthly:

I do not excuse anyone for not entering Islam, yet everyone has his reasons for

11. op. cit., p. 170

12. op. cit.

not doing so. Some of them feared being disowned by their families. Some feared losing their wealth, or being boycotted by their societies. Some thought that intellectual conviction was sufficient, and so on. Yet I affirm that there is no excuse for any of them. What excuse can there be for not following the truth after coming to know it?

Sixthly:

If you put together all the different quotations in which Orientalists praised Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and defended him, then you will have a complete collection of complementary testimonies on all topics, which shows the complete character of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and refutes everyone who criticizes him in any way. Isn't this rational verdict sufficient to show that he was a true Prophet?

Seventhly:

Moreover, the Orientalists themselves know full well that Abu Taalib, the uncle of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), defended Muhammad (peace and bless-

Relying
on false
stories

ings of Allah be upon him) and protected him by all means at his disposal against his people, yet despite that he did not become Muslim. Is Abu Taalib proof against Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or is Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) proof against Abu Taalib himself? Is the fact that he did not become Muslim something that people found strange, so that people began to say, How come he was deprived of guidance when he knew Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) best of all people? How could strangers benefit when the closest of people could not benefit?

The story
of the
Negus

Hence we say here: How can ordinary people benefit from you, when the scholars like these fair-minded Orientalists did not benefit? The fact that a king like the Negus entered the religion of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is a strong argument against Abu Taalib and against these Orientalists and against everyone. What made him (the Negus) enter Islam when he was the king of Abyssinia, a country that was stronger than the country of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon

him), and these *Muhaajiroon* (Muslim migrants) were not more than refugees in his own land?

Becoming Muslim was furthest away from any seeking of interests. How many lessons there are in the story of his coming to Islam?"

Dr. Drima: "Out of curiosity, I would like you to tell us the story of how the Negus became Muslim. I have never heard of this before, and I think that many of the gentlemen present have never heard it either."

Abu Haamid: "I shall read to you from a book which is regarded as one of the greatest historical references for us as Muslims. It is a book called *al-Bidaayah wal-Nihaayah*. This story has been proven to be soundly narrated as I mentioned to you. The one who narrated it was the one who witnessed it. The one who witnessed it in this case was one of the women who migrated to Abyssinia. Her name was Umm Salamah. Hence you may know the value of women from the earliest days of Islam, and you will realize that Muslims could acquire knowledge from a woman as well as from a man, from the earliest days of Islam,

and you may know the reason why the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) married her and other women. He married her after her husband died in the battle of Uhud. Listen to this story in detail as it was narrated from Umm Salamah (may Allah be pleased with her), who said:

‘When we reached Abyssinia, we stayed in the land of the best protector (the Negus) where we were safe and free to practise our religion. We worshipped God and were not harmed nor did we hear anything hateful. When news of that reached Quraysh, they conspired to send two men to the Negus concerning us, and to give the Negus gifts of the finest goods that Makkah had to offer, the most valued of which was leather. So they collected a great deal of leather for him, and they did not leave any of his generals without giving him a gift. Then they sent ‘Abdullah ibn Abi Rabee’ah ibn al-Mugheerah al-Makhzoomi and ‘Amr ibn al-‘Aas ibn Waa’il al-Suhami, and told them what they wanted them to do. They said to them: Give each general his gift before you speak to the Negus concerning them, then give the Negus his gifts, then ask

him to hand them over to you before he speaks to them. She said: They set out and came to the Negus, and we were in the best land with the best protector. There was no general to whom they did not give him his gift before they spoke to the Negus, and then they said to every general: Some foolish young men of our people have sought refuge in the land of the king; they have forsaken the religion of the people and have not entered your religion. They have brought in an invented religion which neither we nor you know. The nobles of their people have sent us to the king concerning them, to bring them back to them. When we speak to the king concerning them, advise him to hand them over to us and not to speak to them, for their people have the keenest insight and know most about their faults. They said to them: yes. Then they gave their gifts to the Negus and he accepted them from them, then they spoke to him and said: O King, some foolish young men of our people have sought refuge in the land of the king. They have forsaken the religion of the people and have not entered your religion. They have brought in an invented religion which neither we nor you know. The nobles of their peo-

ple, their fathers, uncles and kinsmen, have sent us to you concerning them, to bring them back to them, for they have the keenest insight and know most about their faults.

‘Nothing was more hateful to ‘Abdullah ibn Abi Rabee‘ah and ‘Amr ibn al-‘Aas than that the Negus would listen to what we had to say.’

‘The generals around him said: They are speaking the truth, O king. Their people have the keenest insight and know most about their faults. Hand them over to them so that they may take them back to their land and their people.’

‘The Negus got angry and said; No, by God, I will not hand them over to them. No people who have sought my protection, settled in my country and chosen me rather than others will be betrayed, until I summon them and ask them about what these two are saying about them. If they are as they say, then I shall hand them over to them and send them back to their people, but if they are otherwise, then I shall protect them and protect them properly whilst they are under my protection.’

'Then he sent for the companions of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and summoned them. When his envoy came to them, they gathered together and said to one another: What will you say to the man when you come to him? They said: We will say what we know and what our Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has enjoined upon us, come what may.

When they came to him, they found that the Negus had summoned his bishops with their sacred books around him. He asked them: 'What is this religion for which you have forsaken your people and have not entered my religion or the religion of any of these nations?'

The one who spoke to him was Ja'far ibn Abi Taalib. He said: O King, we were an ignorant people, worshipping idols, eating dead meat, committing abominations, severing ties of kinship, mistreating neighbours, the strong among us devouring the weak. This is how we were until God sent to us a Messenger from among us, whose lineage, honesty, trustworthiness and generosity we knew. He called us to God, to affirm His Oneness and

worship Him, and to give up the things that we and our forefathers worshipped instead of him, such as rocks and idols. He commanded us to speak the truth, fulfil trusts and uphold ties of kinship, to be good neighbours, to refrain from crimes and bloodshed. He forbade us to commit abominations, to speak falsehood, consume the wealth of orphans and slander chaste women. He commanded us to worship God and not associate anything with Him. He commanded us to pray, give *zakaah* and fast. She said: and he enumerated the commands of Islam. He said: We accepted his truth and believed in him, and we followed him in what he brought. We worshipped God alone, and we did not associate anything with Him. We regarded as forbidden what he forbade to us and we regarded as permissible what he permitted to us. But our people attacked us, persecuted us and tried to tempt us away from our religion so that we would go back to worshipping idols instead of God, and to regard as permissible the evil things that we once regarded as permitted. When they got the better of us, treated us unjustly and made things too difficult for us, and came between us and our religion, we came to

your country, having chosen you above all others. Here we have been happy in your protection and we hope that we will not be treated unjustly whilst we are with you, O king.

‘The Negus said to him: Do you have with you anything that he brought from God?’

‘He said to him: Yes. The Negus said to him: Recite it to me. He recited to him the beginning of *Surat Maryam*.’

1. “*‘Kaaf Haa Yaa ‘Ayn Saad.*

[These letters are one of the miracles of the Qur’ân, and none but Allah (Alone) knows their meanings.]

2. (This is) a mention of the mercy of your Lord to His slave Zakariya (Zachariah).

3. When he called out his Lord (Allah) a call in secret.

4. He said: “My Lord! Indeed my bones have grown feeble, and grey hair has spread on my head, and I have never been unblest in my invocation to You, O my Lord!

5. “And verily, I fear my relatives after

me, and my wife is barren. So give me from Yourself an heir.

6. "Who shall inherit me, and inherit (also) the posterity of Ya'qub (Jacob) (inheritance of the religious knowledge and Prophethood, not of wealth). And make him, my Lord, one with whom You are Well Pleased!"

7. (Allah said) "O Zakariya (Zachariah)! Verily, We give you the glad tidings of a son, whose name will be Yahya (John). We have given that name to none before (him)."

8. He said: "My Lord! How can I have a son, when my wife is barren, and I have reached the extreme old age?"

9. He said: "So (it will be). Your Lord says: It is easy for Me. Certainly I have created you before, when you had been nothing!"

10. [Zakariya (Zachariah)] said: "My Lord! Appoint for me a sign." He said: "Your sign is that you shall not speak unto mankind for three nights, though having no bodily defect."

11. Then he came out to his people from *Al Mihrab* (a praying place or

a private room) and he told them by signs to glorify Allah's Praises in the morning and in the afternoon.

12. (It was said to his son): "O Yahya (John)! Hold fast the Scripture [the *Tawraat* (Torah)]." And We gave him wisdom while yet a child.

13. And (made him) sympathetic to men as a mercy (or a grant) from Us, and pure from sins [i.e. Yahya (John)] and he was righteous,

14. And dutiful towards his parents, and he was neither arrogant nor disobedient (to Allah or to his parents).

15. And *Salaam* (peace) be on him the day he was born, and the day he dies, and the day he will be raised up to life (again)!

16. And mention in the Book, Maryam (Mary), when she withdrew in seclusion from her family to a place facing east.

17. She placed a screen (to screen herself) from them; then We sent to her Our *Ruh* [angel Jibreel (Gabriel)], and he appeared before her in the form of a man in all respects.

18. She said: "Verily, I seek refuge with the Most Gracious (Allah) from you, if you do fear Allah."

19. (The angel) said: "I am only a messenger from your Lord, (to announce) to you the gift of a righteous son."

20. She said: "How can I have a son, when no man has touched me, nor am I unchaste?"

21. He said: "So (it will be), your Lord said: 'That is easy for Me (Allah). And (We wish) to appoint him as a sign to mankind and a mercy from Us (Allah), and it is a matter (already) decreed (by Allah).'"

22. So she conceived him, and she withdrew with him to a far place (i.e. Bethlehem valley about 4 6 miles from Jerusalem).

23. And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a date palm. She said: "Would that I had died before this, and had been forgotten and out of sight!"

24. Then [the babe 'Eesa (Jesus) or Jibreel (Gabriel)] cried unto her from below her, saying: "Grieve not: your

Lord has provided a water stream under you.

25. "And shake the trunk of date palm towards you, it will let fall fresh ripe dates upon you."

26. "So eat and drink and be glad. And if you see any human being, say: 'Verily, I have vowed a fast unto the Most Gracious (Allah) so I shall not speak to any human being this day.'"

27. Then she brought him (the baby) to her people, carrying him. They said: "O Mary! Indeed you have brought a thing Fariyy (a mighty thing).

28. "O sister (i.e. the like) of Harun (Aaron)! Your father was not a man who used to commit adultery, nor was your mother an unchaste woman."

29. Then she pointed to him. They said: "How can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle?"

30. He [‘Eesa (Jesus)] said: "Verily, I am a slave of Allah, He has given me the Scripture and made me a Prophet;

31. "And He has made me blessed where ever I be, and has enjoined on

me *Salah* (prayer), and *Zakah*, as long as I live.

32. "And dutiful to my mother, and made me not arrogant, unblest.

33. "And *Salaam* (peace) be upon me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I shall be raised alive!"

34. Such is 'Eesa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary). (It is) a statement of truth, about which they doubt (or dispute).

35. It befits not (the Majesty of) Allah that He should beget a son [this refers to the slander of Christians against Allah, by saying that 'Eesa (Jesus) is the son of Allah]. Glorified (and Exalted) be He (above all that they associate with Him). When He decrees a thing, He only says to it: "Be!" — and it is.

36. ['Eesa (Jesus) said]: "And verily, Allah is my Lord and your Lord. So worship Him (Alone). That is the Straight Path. (Allah's religion of Islamic Monotheism which He did ordain for all of His Prophets)."

37. Then the sects differed, so woe unto the disbelievers [those who gave false witness by saying that 'Eesa (Jesus) is

the son of Allah] from the Meeting of a great Day (i.e. the Day of Resurrection, when they will be thrown in the blazing Fire).

38. How clearly will they (polytheists and disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah) see and hear, the Day when they will appear before Us! But the wrongdoers today are in plain error.

39. And warn them of the Day of grief and regrets, when the case has been decided, while (now) they are in a state of carelessness, and they believe not.

40. Verily, We will inherit the earth and whatsoever is thereon. And to Us they all shall be returned' [*Maryam* 19:1-40]."

Umm Salamah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: 'By Allah, the Negus wept until his beard became wet, and his bishops wept until their scrolls became wet, when they heard what he recited to them.' Then the Negus said: 'This and what Moses (peace be upon him) brought have come from the same niche.' Then he said to 'Abdullah ibn Abi Rabee'ah and 'Amr ibn al-'Aas: 'Go, for by Allah I will never hand them over to you and I

will never betray them.'

When they had departed, 'Amr ibn al-'Aas said: 'By Allah, tomorrow I will certainly tell him some bad things about them that will uproot them all.' 'Abdullah ibn Abi Rabee'ah, who was the more prudent of the two men in his attitude towards us, said to him: 'Do not do it, for they are our kindred even though they have gone against us.' He said: 'By God, I will tell him that they claim that Jesus son of Mary is a creation' (lit. slave).

The next day, he came to him and said to him: 'O King, they say something serious about Jesus son of Mary. Send for them and ask them what they say about him.'

So he sent for them and asked them.

'Nothing of the kind had happened to us before.' The people gathered together and said to one another: 'What will you say about Jesus when he asks you about him?' They said: 'We will say concerning him – by God – what God said about him and what our Prophet has brought, come what may.' When they entered upon him, he said to them: 'What do you say about Jesus son of Mary?' Ja'far ibn

Abi Talib said: 'We say about him what our Prophet brought concerning him: he is a slave of God and His Messenger, a spirit from Him and His Word that He bestowed upon Mary, the blessed virgin.'

He struck his hand on the ground and picked up a stick and then he said: 'Jesus son of Mary does not exceed what you have said by the length of this stick.' The generals around him snorted when he said that. He said: 'Though you snort, by God! Go, for you are safe in my land. The one who reviles you will be punished, the one who reviles you will be punished, the one who reviles you will be punished. Not for a mountain of gold would I permit a man among you to be harmed. Give their gifts back to them, for we have no need of them. By God, God did not take a bribe from me when He gave me back my kingdom, so why should I take a bribe to do something against Him; He did not do what men wanted against me, so why should I do what they want against Him?'

So they departed, defeated and taking their rejected gifts with them, and we stayed with him, safe in the best security.'"

Is
Revelation
on a
myth?

Professor of physics, Preget: 'Talking about revelation is like talking about aliens who live on other planets, or like a science fiction movie.

Is it befitting for us, in this civilized age, to talk about revelation as if it is a given, something that is rationally proven? Or as if reason accepts the existence of something called 'revelation'? We want to pause a while and look again, and again, and again, because most of what you have mentioned is based on a matter that is rationally controversial. If we do not accept revelation in the first place, then how can we accept the revelation of Muhammad? It is something that requires extra mental effort!"

Was
Revelation
given to
Muhammad
(peace
and
blessings
of Allaah
be upon
him)?

Abu Haamid: 'I do not think that anyone here will object if I mention the evidence for the existence of God, because that is an issue that is cut and dried for all of mankind, from all different groups and ways of thinking. The evidence for the existence of God is the evidence for revelation and it is evidence that God sent revelation to people whom He chose. It is evidence that God sent revelation to Abraham, Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them). What is it that makes it rationally

acceptable that God sent revelation to them, but not that He sent revelation to others, such as Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?

As for revelation being rationally possible, there are many things which exist but cannot be seen with our eyes, such as the many types of invisible rays like X-rays which penetrate the human body when used to make images which help doctors to diagnose disease, and which are also used to treat some kinds of disease. Man is able to produce them even though they cannot be seen with the eye. Then there are ultra-violet and infra-red rays, and the electrical current which cannot be seen as it travels along the wires and cables. Only its effects can be seen, such as cooling in refrigerators, heating in irons and light in lamps, etc.

Electromagnetic waves exist in space and carry sound from one country to another, where it is picked up by radio equipment and electrical equipment. They also carry sounds and images which are picked up by televisions. These things (invisible rays of various kinds and electromagnetic waves) were discovered by man in modern times through their effects.

Were they non-existent before they were discovered by man? Was ancient man correct when he denied their existence because he could not see them with his own eyes, even though they have existed throughout the universe from eternity?

Is modern man justified in denying the existence of that which he cannot see? Or in denying everything that he has not discovered through its effects? Has science reached its peak and have scientists learned about everything that exists? Haven't you heard that science has discovered only a little about the universe and is unable to learn much, as has been stated by specialists?¹³

Once this is established, and we want to prove whether Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) received revelation or not, the first step is to prove whether Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was truthful in himself or not. There is no testimony more eloquent than that of his enemies at his own time, and the testimony of those who studied his life in order to find fault

13. *Nubuwwat Muhammad sall-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam fil-Qur'ân*, p. 166-167, by Dr. Hasan Diya' al-Deen 'Atar.

with him after he was gone. Is that not so?

The famous Orientalist Montgomery Watt says, despite his bias and misinterpretations: 'As far as Muslims are concerned, the Qur'ân is the Word of God and Muhammad himself understood it as such. There is no doubt that he was completely sincere in his belief and he was certain that he could distinguish between his own personal thoughts and that which came from a source outside himself. For him to continue his work in the circumstances of persecution and hostility in which he lived would have been impossible, if he were not fully convinced that God had sent him. If he felt that this revelation was the product of his own thoughts, then his religious movement would have been baseless.'¹⁴

But he later had second thoughts and rejoined the ranks of Orientalists, denying the true Prophethood of the Prophet by resorting to a psychological explanation of the phenomenon of revelation. He said: 'To suggest that Muhammad was sincere does not mean that his be-

14. *Mahomet Prophete et Homme d'Etat*, p. 16

liefs were correct, because a man may be sincere but mistaken. It is not difficult to explain to a modern western man how Muhammad got it wrong, because what appears to a person to be coming from without may actually be the promptings of the subconscious.¹⁵

And he said: 'The most far fetched thing that one may say about Muhammad is that he did not believe in what was revealed to him and that he did not receive the revelation from an outside source, rather he made up the verses deliberately then proclaimed them to the people. But such a view of matters is not reasonable, because it does not explain in a satisfactory manner why, during the Makkan period, Muhammad was prepared to put up with all kinds of deprivation and how he managed to earn the respect of men who were extremely intelligent and of upright character. Nor does it explain how Muhammad succeeded in establishing an international religion which produced men whose piety was highly visible.'¹⁶

15. *op. cit.*, p. 17

16. *Muhammad in Medina*, p. 495 (from *Nuhuwwat Muhammad sall-Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam fil-Fikr al-Istishraaqi al-Mu'asir* by Dr Lakhdar Shaayib, p. 464)

At this point we should ask Montgomery Watt and those who are convinced of his views: Here you are admitting that it is impossible that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was lying and confirming that he was truthful, so why do you stop at this point?

Why don't you affirm his truthfulness with regard to what he said about being a Prophet?

Do you have any evidence that he was not telling the truth when he said that he was a Prophet?

Is it possible to rule out his Prophethood on the basis of mere illusions for which there is no credible evidence?

Have you ever heard that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) lied even once concerning a minor issue to a small child?

How could he not tell a lie to a child, yet tell lies about his Lord to all nations?

How could he not tell lies when he was a small child, yet tell lies when he was a grown man?

Why don't all these introductions that you suggest lead to the natural conclu-

sion, which is that the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was true?

The same may be said with regard to Jesus, Moses and Abraham (peace be upon them), based on the same possibilities. But the Muslims would never say that.

Have you ever heard that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) brought something that he said was revelation but human reason found what he said odd or weird as one would find the words of insane people or others?

Many of the westerners who have written about the life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said confusing and contradictory things about him. This is indicative of confusion and ignorance in some cases, and of bias and prejudice in others. This tells us of the greatness of the well-founded character around whom many confusing thoughts and ideas formed, whilst it stood steady, strong and proud.

This is nothing new, and these accusations are not new. The polytheists made contradictory and ill-founded accusations against him, but just as those Arab

polytheists of old vanished, these European accusers will join them. Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) continued to be defended by sound thinking and clear truth even when his followers became too weak to defend him. The Qur'ân challenged them with time, i.e., that in time things would become clear and they would be refuted:

30. "Or do they say: 'a poet! We await for him some calamity by time!'"

31. Say: 'Wait! I am with you among the waiters!'"

32. Do their minds command them this or are they people transgressing all bounds?"

33. Or do they say: 'He has forged it (this Qur'ân)?' Nay! They believe not!"

34. Let them then produce a recitation like unto it (the Qur'ân) if they are truthful" [at-Tur 52:30-34]

Yes, some people have tried to describe the revelation that came to him and the condition in which it came to him as epilepsy, but despite that one of the Orientalists who was biased against him testified that it was not epilepsy. Durant

Did he
suffer
from
epilepsy?

says: 'What often happened during these visions was that he fell to the ground, trembling or unconscious, with sweat pouring from his forehead. His trembling may have been the result of an epileptic seizure, but we have never heard that he bit his tongue or that his muscles went slack as usually happens in epileptic seizures. There is nothing in the history of Muhammad to suggest that his power of reason declined, which epilepsy usually leads to. On the contrary, we see that his mind became clearer and his ability to think, his self confidence, his physical and spiritual ability and his leadership skills all increased the more he advanced in age. The bottom line is that there is no definitive evidence that what was happening to the Prophet was something akin to epilepsy.'¹⁷

Montgomery Watt said: 'Muhammad distinguished between what was revealed to him and his own personal thoughts. Most of the enemies of Islam emphasized that Muhammad suffered from epilepsy, and that this religious experience of his had no value. But the symptoms

17. *Qissat al-Hadaarah*, 11/25, 26. From *Nubu - wat Muhammad sall-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam fil-Fikr al-Istishraaqi al-Mu'aasir*.

described do not resemble the symptoms of epilepsy, because that affliction leads to physical and mental weakness, whereas Muhammad, until the end of his life, remained in full control of his mental faculties. Even if it is possible to claim that, the evidence is still against it, as anyone with sound understanding can see that this claim is based on no more than ignorance and illusion, because the physical symptoms that accompany it do not by themselves confirm or deny the religious experience.¹⁸

If you do not believe in the first revelation in the cave, then what do you say about the revelation that always came to him in his house or among groups of his companions and in full view of them?"

Dr. Drima: "I looked in the section of books on the *Sunnah* and *Sirah* (Prophet's biography) in your home library, and I saw a number of books which narrate everything that came from your Prophet Muhammad, his words, deeds, movements, when he was awake, when he was asleep, when he was silent; his physical

Books of the *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)

18. *Muhammad in Mecca*, p. 101. From *Nubuwwat Muhammad sall-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam fil-Fikr al-Istishraaqi al-Mu'aasir* by Dr Lakhdar Shaayib.

attributes and character traits, his social, political and economic life. They describe everything up to the moment of his death.

I was quite amazed and asked myself:

Is it rational that this huge number of volumes should have been preserved about one man?

Is it rational that all of this huge amount of information should be sound and not distorted at all?"

Abu Haamid: "I am not surprised by this question from you, because you are a doctor and you do not devote your time to studying books of religion, let alone Islamic books. But what I am very surprised by is specialists who know the truth but do not transmit it as it is in their books. The biggest problem is that their books have become references from which other writers quote, and the public reads them and accepts what is written in them.

An example of that is the famous Jewish Orientalist Ignác (Ignaz) Goldziher, who claimed that whims and desires, along with political and other factors, played a role in the acceptance and rejection of re-

ports of the *Sunnah*. If he had sought the truth and wanted to be sincere towards his people in transmitting and explaining the truth, he would have said that the academic methodology in examining and checking to which every report of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was subjected is something to which no other written matter in history was ever subjected, except the Qur'ân. If the previous books of divine origin had been subjected to this critical methodology, nothing would be left of them!

I hope that each person present will let his reason decide and he will reach the truth. Think thoroughly about everything that I and others say to you, and overcome the barrier of names, big and small, no matter how great the transmitter, analyst or thinker. Beware of falling victim to anyone, for the victim is a victim whether the butcher is great or small. The one who surrenders his reason is worse than the one who surrenders his neck.

If an animal is slaughtered, that is its fate and it is for this that it was created. But the rational man was not created for that. Hence he is too proud to submit his rea-

son to the reason of another, especially when it comes to serious matters in which reason has fallen victim to forgery.

The science of *hadith* (which deals with examining the reports from Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is among the greatest evidence for the message of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and that it is the final message; it is through this science that God preserved the message of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forever.

What about the study of which narrators are sound or otherwise (*al-jarh wal-ta'deel*)?

In our previous two meetings, we referred to some of the basis of this knowledge, but now it is appropriate to discuss it in more detail, as we have new faces here, and because it is relevant to our topic. There is nothing wrong with discussing its fundamental principles in more detail so that the picture will become clearer and so that we may expose some of the serious misconceptions that surround the reports of the *Sunnah*. The name of the branch of knowledge through which the reports of the *Sunnah* are examined and checked is *'ilm al-jarh wa'l-ta'deel* (the study of the soundness or otherwise of narrators of *hadith*). This is the branch of

knowledge which basically deals with all that is narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), not only to confirm its soundness but to look for reasons to reject it. The basic principle is that every report should be subjected to criticism and verification. Those who checked every *hadith* were not all of one nationality or from one country. Some of them were Persian, some were Iraqi, and others were Madani, Khorasani and so on.

Moreover, these scholars did not all belong to one era. You will find that *'ilm al-jarh wal-ta'deel* deals with everyone who narrated a *hadith* and is ongoing until today, meaning that the *hadith* which was narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and its narrators from that day to this are still being subjected to a process of critical analysis and sifting. If you knew the strictness of the scholars when examining the narration of any narrator of *hadith*, then you would have more confidence in and respect for these scholars, even if you do not believe in what they are narrating. The *hadith* must be narrated by more than one from more than one, and so on.

until it reaches our time or the time of the scholar who wrote it down. If at any of these stages the *hadith* has only one narrator, then the scholars call it a "*ghareeb*" (strange) *hadith*, and they adopt a stricter stance towards authenticating it.

Moreover, the scholars have set out strict principles and guidelines which can be applied to reach the ruling easily. Hence it is very rare to find a single *hadith* concerning which the scholars differed greatly as to whether it should be accepted or rejected. Rather these crowds of specialists, despite the differences in their countries and languages and the times in which they lived, agreed on the soundness of the same *ahadith*. They wrote books concerning that, as they also wrote books specializing in unsound *ahadith*. Moreover, the scholars of *hadith* did not destroy the *ahadith* that they deemed unsound, as the Christians did with the Gospels that did not agree with their views and the views of Constantine, on which basis they destroyed over one hundred Gospels. Rather the scholars of *hadith* preserved those weak *ahadith*, leaving the ruling on these *ahadith* for the people time after time, era after

era; lest they impose on people's minds what they had decided is right. Therefore they left the weak *ahadith* in books that exist alongside the *sahih* books. They mentioned the reasons why these *ahadith* are weak and why others are sound (*sahih*), and they left the matter open for all people and all scholars. But the one who wants to express his view concerning either type of *hadith* must base his view on evidence, otherwise his opinion is worthless.

Is there anything more fair than this? Is there any freedom of criticism greater than this? Is there any openness greater than this?"

Charles: "We know that the most difficult discovery is the detection of forgery in papers and documents, and sometimes in currency. Is it possible to find out, from books that were written centuries ago, about forgeries that may have been added to sayings or historical stories, no matter how accurate these books were?"

Abu Haamid: "You know that the compilation of these books that named the men who narrated *ahadith* took place after the scholars of *hadith* wrote their books of *hadith*. Therefore the documenting of

hadith was done and was completed a long time ago. So no one can come now and say: I have discovered a *hadith* from Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that no one before me has discovered.

If he is asked directly: Where did you get it from? Who narrated that to you from Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)? If he mentions the source of his *hadith*, he must inevitably have a source in the books which narrated that *hadith*. So we must go back to the source and look at each of the narrators of each *hadith* one by one, and examine them against the books of biographies that we mentioned. There we will find each of the narrators who narrated each of the *ahadith*.

If a man says: I have discovered an ancient manuscript of *ahadith*, we will tell him: This is very good, because it is our religious legacy. We will examine the authenticity of that manuscript, and the soundness of its attribution to its author, then the soundness of the attribution of each of its *ahadith* to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Then we will apply the same methodolo-

gy and we must refer each of these sources, to the sources I mentioned, and each of the narrators to the first sources which contain the biographies of all narrators. Thus we will know that no matter how many books and manuscripts turn up, the men (narrators) of *hadith* are limited in number and are well known. Each of them has a precise evaluation, and thus fabrication is impossible. If it does happen, it is certain to be discovered as soon as it is subjected to the rules of *al-jarh wal-ta'deel* (the study of the soundness or otherwise of narrators of *hadith*).

I will tell you this story of the discovery of an attempt at fabrication and lying against the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The Jews, as is their wont, tried to forge a *hadith*, which they fabricated well and narrated it complete with *isnaad* and narrators, but when the scholars of *hadith* applied their principles to it, it became obvious that it was forged in several ways. That is because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) imposed the *jizyah* on the Jews in return for their being allowed to cultivate the land of Khaybar and stay there safe and

Discovery
of a
forgery
attempt

secure under the protection of the state. But the Jews fabricated a *hadith* stating that the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) waived the *jizyah* for them on the basis of a document and witnesses. In the document it said the following: 'The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has waived from the Jews of Khaybar the requirement to provide free labour and the *jizyah*, on the testimony of Sa'd ibn Mu'adh and Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyaan.' The scholars pointed out that this so-called document was false for ten reasons, including the following:

1. None of the scholars of *hadith*, *sirah* and *maghazi* mentioned that, even though they were very eager to document things that were less important than that.
2. The ruling on *jizyah* was only revealed after the conquest of Khaybar; when the people of Khaybar made this deal the ruling on *jizyah* had not yet been revealed, so how could it have been waived?
3. Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyaan had not become Muslim yet. He only became Muslim at the conquest of Makkah, which happened after Khaybar.

4. Sa'd ibn Mu'adh died at al-Khandaq, before the conquest of Makkah.

5. The people of Khaybar were not required to supply free labour at the time of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), so how could it be waived for them?

6. The people of Khaybar did not respect or pay attention to the rights of the Muslims, which might dictate that the *jizyah* be waived for them. They were the most hostile of people towards the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Companions. What good had they done for the Muslims so that the *jizyah* might be waived for them and not others?

7. They claimed that the document that they produced was written in the hand of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him), which is definitely a lie. The enmity of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib towards the Jews is well known. He is the one who killed Marhab the Jew, and he killed such a large number of Jews on the day of Khaybar that it may be said that the conquest of Khaybar took place at his hands.

8. This is only known through the narration of the Jews, and they are people of lies. They tell the most lies against Allah and His Prophets and Messengers. How could they be telling the truth about the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in something that is contrary to the Book of Allah?

9. If this document were authentic they would have shown it at the time of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs and at the time of 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz and at the time of al-Mansur and al-Rashid, and the imams of Islam would have excluded them along with those for whom the *jizyah* was to be waived, or one *faqih* would have mentioned it. It is not permissible for the Muslims to agree upon something that is contrary to the *Sunnah* of its Prophet. How could there be in the possession of the scholars of the enemies of Allah a document from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and they did not use it as evidence against those who took the *jizyah* from them every time, and not a single scholar among the *salaf* mentioned it?!

10. The leading scholars of *hadith* and *hadith* transmission bear witness that

this document is false, and that it is a forgery and fabrication. When the Jews produced it four hundred years later at the time of al-Hafiz Abu Bakr al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, the vizier Ibn al-Maslamah sent word to him and told him about it. al-Hafiz said: This document is a fabrication. The vizier said to him: How do you know? He said: It mentions the testimony of Sa'd ibn Mu'adh and Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyaan, but Sa'd died on the day of al-Khandaq, before Khaybar, and Mu'awiyah became Muslim on the day of the Conquest [of Makkah] in 8 AH, but Khaybar was in 7 AH. And the vizier was amazed by that.¹⁹

If I wanted to put the issue in simpler terms, I would say to you: Every man who narrated a single *hadith* from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) should have a file that contains his biography in greater detail than the file that the job-seeker presents to any company for which he wants to work, and which may even be bigger than the file of a man who is "wanted" for security reasons!

19. *Ahkaam Ahl al-Dhimma* by al-'Allamah Shams al-Deen ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, vol. 1, p. 91.

The books of *'ilm al-jarh wal-ta'deel* (the study of the soundness or otherwise of narrators of *hadith*) present each of these narrators and examine him closely to determine whether he is credible or not. They examine his entire life in such a way that if something that would damage his credibility, such as telling a lie even once in his life, or lying to a child, or lying when joking, was mentioned even once, then his *hadith* will never be accepted, even if he was the most devoted of worshippers, because his worship is for him but his narration of *hadith* is for everyone.

al-Bukha-
ari

One of the most famous and strongest narrators of *hadith* is a man called Muhammad ibn Ismaa'eel al-Bukhari."

Charles: "Yes, I have heard of him. He is al-Bukhari. But despite the fame of this great scholar, I ask again: how do we know that one *hadith* was spoken by the Prophet Muhammad, and that another was not spoken by him, when there is a gap between him (al-Bukhaari) and the Prophet Muhammad of more than two hundred years?

What can guarantee that every report that each one of these scholars narrated in his

book is a *hadith* from the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) when their reports from the Prophet Muhammad run into the thousands?”

Abu Haamid: “I appreciate the fact that you find this branch of knowledge something strange, because you do not have anything like it at all. I hope this will not come under the heading of people being hostile towards that which they do not understand. In order to make the matter clearer, I will give you the example of a person who is the most famous author of a *hadith* book, in which reports from the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) were compiled. Al-Bukhari was born in 194 AH and died in 256 AH, i.e., he was born approximately 183 years after the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) died, and he lived for approximately sixty-three years.

He wrote his famous book, *al-Sahih al-Jami'* (more often known as *Sahih al-Bukhari*) and he stipulated specific conditions for narration in addition to the well known, general conditions. Al-Bukhari did not accept any narrator or in-

clude his *hadith* in his book until he was utterly certain about him. This condition is represented in his stipulation that he himself should meet the narrator in person, and the narrator should have seen and met the one from whom he narrated. He was not content merely to accept people's authentication of narrators.

Al-Bukhari heard from some people that there was a man in Syria who had a *hadith* from someone else, from another man, from another man, from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He undertook a journey to go and meet him – and you know how difficult travelling was in those days. When he reached him, he found him holding a bucket in his hand and calling his horse so that he could catch it. The horse came to him and he caught it. Al-Bukhari greeted him with *salaam*, and then he looked at the bucket and saw that it was empty, with nothing in it. So al-Bukhari left him and rejected his *hadith*, and he went back to his homeland without writing down the *hadith*, and he said: The one who lies to a horse may also lie in his narration of *hadith* from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Reason
for the
stringency
of
conditions
for
narration

Yes, one may say that this is very strict, but I tell you: Yes, it is strictness, but it is strictness concerning a very important topic which is to be narrated to great nations. The responsibility is great because what will be based on the *hadith* is very important.

Hence you can accept the *hadith* and the stories from al-Bukhari with complete peace of mind. When al-Bukhari did that, he knew that the issue was that of methodology and principle, so the one who neglects his principles once with an animal in order to catch it may neglect his principles with people and ignore them.

There are other narrators who followed the same method as al-Bukhari. You should not find it strange that they had a similar attitude. But in order to dispel your astonishment you may measure their actions against their principles, and you will no longer find their actions so strange.

Sometimes you may hear of the actions of some people who live in the jungle or in Arctic regions and find them very strange indeed, and you may not believe the one who tells you about that. But as soon as you see it for yourself and under-

stand the reasons behind it, you will no longer be so surprised. Based on that, the principle on which the Muslim scholars based their strict method of authenticating the reports of the *hadith* of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is that they regarded the reports from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as the matter of religion, and lying about them as lying about matters of religion, which is the worst kind of lying in their view. Nevertheless, any criticism of any of these narrators must be for a reason.

Moreover, they regarded lying about the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as being like lying about God. The reason for that is that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was transmitting from God, even though they did not regard Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as a son of God or raise him to the level of divinity.

Hence you find that many of the authors of books of *hadith* put at the beginning of their books a *mutawatir hadith* (i.e., a *hadith* with the highest level of authenticity) from the Prophet (peace and

blessings of Allah be upon him) which says: 'Whoever tells a lie about me deliberately let him take his place in Hell.'²⁰ In other words, his place in Hell is guaranteed, and what can be more frightening than that?

As it is the matter of religion, no one has the right to compromise, because it is not the matter of personal rights.

Not only that, it is the duty of everyone to take precautions himself with regard to his religion, and not to rely on one narrator's authentication of another narrator, until he is certain and has done his own checking. The reason for that is that anyone may say: If So - and - so has taken precautions with regard to his religion, then I should also take precautions with regard to my religion. So each narrator adds new precautions and each one who comes after them goes through the same level of checking and examining, taking precautions with regard to his religion, so the reports from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) keep increasing in authentication as time goes by.

20. Narrated by Muslim (7620) and others.

Hence it is logical to find these scholars rejecting many times more reports from the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) than they narrated in their books. Here it is reasonable to ask: If they wanted to narrate a great deal, then why is what they rejected of *ahadith* so many times greater than what they accepted?

Do you know that the number of *ahadith* that al-Bukhaari narrated in his *Saheeh* is 2602, excluding repetitions, but he selected them from 6009 *ahadith*.

Do you know that the first book of *hadith* that was compiled is called *al-Muwatta'*, in which the number of reports from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and from the *Sahabah* and *Tabi'in* is 1720, but he selected them from a number of *ahadith* totalling nine thousand.

All of these *ahadith* that were not narrated by Imam Malik were regarded by him as not being suitable for him to be held accountable for narrating them.

Do you know that the book which is second to that of al-Bukhari in authenticity is called *al-Musnad al-Sahih*, by another

author whose name is Muslim al-Nisaburi? The number of *ahadith* in this book is four thousand, but he chose them from three hundred thousand *ahadith*.

Do you know that another of the famous books of *hadith* is called *Sunan Abi Dawud al-Sijistani*, and that the number of *ahadith* that he narrated in his *Sunan* is 4800, which he selected from five hundred thousand *hadith*?

Do you know that the *Musnad* of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal contains approximately 30,000 *ahadith* which he selected from among approximately 750,000 *ahadith*?

Do you know that the number of *hadith* narrators authenticated by the scholars is approximately 8183.

Do you know that the number of narrators whose *hadith* they rejected is approximately 1609.

Do you know that among the men whose reports were not accepted were men who reached pinnacles of worship, righteousness, sincerity, good character and so on, but they did not fulfil the conditions of narrating *hadith*? So you may learn that they were careless in narrating *hadith*,

or they had poor memories, or became senile at the end of their lives, or their memory grew weak, and it is not known whether they narrated their reports before they grew senile and confused or after that. If you were with me in my home library, I would show you some specialist books which speak of the character of *hadith* narrators, and you would see something amazing about their strict rules and the volume and number of their books, which as I mentioned before are called the books of *al-jarh wal-ta'deel* (the study of the soundness or otherwise of narrators of *hadith*) or the books of men.

Precision and comprehension of the books which state which narrators are sound or otherwise (*kutub al-jarh wal-ta'deel*)

If you visit me, I will show you them, and I will teach you how to research in them. Regard this as an invitation from me, to come and visit me in my house in Dubai.

These books include:

1. *Tahdheeb al-Kamaal* by al-Mizzi in 37 volumes.
2. *Siyar A'laam al-Nubala'* by al-Dhabhi in 25 volumes.
3. *Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb* by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalaani in 12 volumes.

4. *al-Du'afa' wal-Matrookoon* by al-Nasi'i.
5. *al-Jarh wal-Ta'deel* by Ibn Ma'in in 9 volumes.
6. *al-Du'afa'* by Ibn Hibban and Ibn al-Jawzi.

These are just a few books on the topic of *al-jarh wal-ta'deel* which may be found in any library. You can work out the number of pages: if every volume is 400 pages or more, then the total number of pages is approximately 68,400.

I think that it is now clear that I am telling you that the *ahadith* which were narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and rejected by the scholars because they were not certain that they could be soundly attributed to him are many times more numerous than those that they accepted and narrated in their books. This means that the aim behind this branch of knowledge was not to collect any amount of *hadiths* and incidents that were narrated from the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Rather the aim was to sift these reports and extract only those that were sound (*sahih*).

Based on this, all Muslim scholars follow the clear rule that it is impossible for any *sahih hadith* to contradict another *sahih hadith*.

It is also impossible for any *sahih hadith* to contradict any verse of the Qur'ân, and it is impossible for any *sahih hadith* to contradict sound reason.

Is there any evidence stronger than this that the source of the Qur'ân, the source of the *hadith* and the source of reason is one, namely God, based on the evidence that there is no contradiction at all?

Some cannot comprehend the strength of this evidence, which proves that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is the Seal of the Prophets and that these *ahadith* are among the greatest evidence of his Prophethood, and the fact that there is no contradiction between these *ahadith* is further evidence of that. Hence I hope that those who cannot comprehend that will think of the number of *ahadith* that have been narrated from the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the number of his actions, words, approvals, opinions, campaigns and so on, and think of the number of Qur'ânic verses and

their meanings, and the different types of human reason and different types of people...

Yes despite all this, there is not a single contradiction in all this huge number!

Perhaps you will say this is no more than a claim.

I say: Say what you want, but let you or whichever scholars you choose give me a single contradiction, for a contradiction that is not well-founded is only indicative, if it indicates anything at all, of the narrow thinking and short-sightedness of the one who presents it; it may also indicate that he is imitating others without knowledge. Hence you may find what appear to be contradictions, but you will find many books specializing in discussing the two points or reports which appear to be contradictory.

That is sufficient evidence for the one who wants to know the truth.

Part of seeking the truth is to ask: Is it possible that the teachings of any human being could have been preserved as have the teachings of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), in such quantity and variety, whereas reports

from other people alter and change?

Is all of that due to human efforts, or thanks to the actions of human beings?

Is it possible for Islam and the Muslims to have been subjected to all these cultural and military attacks which they have faced throughout history, yet the *Sunnah* has remained as it is, without changing?

Discussing the issue of the preservation of reports in isolation of any mention of divine power is no more than a kind of atheism. Discussing it in isolation of any mention of academic principles is no more than an academic blunder."

Professor of Gospel Studies Jerry: "Is it possible that all these great scholars of ours were wrong? Do you want us to investigate scholars such as the French Orientalist Louis Gardier, and the other French Orientalist Louis Massinioun, and the French Orientalists Regis Blachère, and ignore the Anglo-American Orientalist Hamilton Gibb? Or do you want us to doubt the research of the American scholar-priest Montgomery Watt, or the German scholar Karl Brockelmann, and accept the words of the supporters of Muhammad? Where could the truth lie if

not with these researchers? Do you want me to investigate the work that our scholars already did?"

Abu Haamid: "Let me give you a general answer, and follow it with a specific answer. I only want the rational judgment of the people present. I do not disagree that these are great thinkers, but I do not think that you can say of any one of these thinkers that he is infallible and free of error, or that he was inspired by God, or that he was the recipient of Revelation.

I do not think that you would want anyone else, let alone yourself, to imitate any of them in their mistakes. Is that not so?

My dear Professor, suppose I have a dispute with another person about some issue, let's say a financial matter, and we agree to appoint you as arbiter. Is it fair for you to listen only to one side? Can the truth be discovered by the one who agrees to listen only to one party, on the basis that he is a king or a famous person, and he ignores the person who is not well known, or he accepts the words of the one whom he knows and he does not listen to what the one whom he does not know has to say?

Can a person be regarded as seeking the truth if he does not listen to the people who claim to know the truth, and he only listens to the other side? Is this a sound academic method or fair judicial procedure?

Do you think that the issue under discussion here is financial, or personal, or individual?

How about when a mistake concerning it may lead to generations going astray?

This is a major form of mental slavery, when your reason submits to the reason of another person on the basis that he has a great intellect. Beware of giving up your reason when you cling to your physical body and wealth.

Here I am, asking you, without any worries, to tell me every specious argument you have about the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), even though I am as certain about his message as any eye-witness. But your mentioning your specious arguments will not affect my certainty, so long as I have strong faith that is based on truth, because this confusion will be removed from you and I will be increased in cer-

tainty. This is how the equation works, I think.

What harm will it do to you if you listen to my point of view as you listened to the point of view of those Orientalists and great thinkers whom you mentioned? Why don't you regard it as the opportunity of a lifetime which may never be repeated, in which you may hear another point of view? If you like it, all well and good, otherwise you may continue to live your life as you are, with no harm done.

The greatest calamity is that you follow the ruling of So - and - So when he passes judgement against others!

The calamity is that you do not read what the Muslims themselves have to say when you are able to do so, but you accept judgements against them, without giving them the opportunity to defend themselves or explain the truth.

One of those who strove the hardest to distort the image of Islam and the biography of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), with an unfair bias, admitted that many western intellectuals are unfair in what they transmit and analyze about Islam.

His name is Montgomery Watt, the famous American Orientalist, who said: 'If it so happens that some views of western scholars sound unreasonable to Muslims, that is because the western scholars are not always true to their academic principles and their views should be re-examined from the point of view of precise historical facts.'²¹

AS for the detailed response, Ignác (Ignaz) Goldziher was a Jewish man who told lies about Jesus (peace be upon him) as he told lies about Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

I do not know if you accept your politicians to be followers of the Jews with regard to your politics, and if you accept your economists to be followers of the Jews with regard to your economy. How can you accept for them to follow them in their ideas and thoughts, when you know that they do not believe in Jesus (peace be upon him) or in the purity of Mary (peace be upon her), or in any of the things that you believe in?

I am ready now to explain to you the hatred that Goldziher demonstrated in all

21. No reference. Quoting from handwritten notes.

his books about Islam. These mistakes were not due to misinterpretation; rather they were due to deliberate lack of precision when quoting Islamic references. The basic principle, for him, was to think badly of everything that was transmitted about Islam, even the Islamic principles of mercy, tolerance and so on. This reminds us of the testimony of the great Jewish scholar 'Abdullah ibn Sa-laam, when he met the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for the first time, and told him that the Jews were liars.

As for your quoting the great French Orientalist Massinioun, it is sufficient reason for rejecting his testimony to note that he was motivated by religious, anti-Islamic sentiments, and that he had a strong relationship and connection with Father Charles de Foco, as he admitted himself when he was carrying out a special study in Morocco for his government which he sent to the Pope, urging him to invade Morocco. He said: Even I – and at that time I was pro-colonialism – wrote to de Foco about my hopes that there would soon be an armed invasion of Morocco, and he replied supporting my view.

Jean Morin said concerning him: It is wrong and foolish for us to try to distinguish deep down between the Christian and the scholar, because they were inseparable aspects of his personality."²²

Irrefutable
testimony

Professor of Gospel Studies: "Believe me, Abu Haamid; I will be saying something just to be kind if I say that your words would be acceptable outside of this gathering to any westerner. The reason is very simple: you want to put yourself in the position of these western scholars so that people will ask Who is Abu Haamid? But they will never ask about Montgomery Watt or Goldziher or Louis Gardier and others. Even if you had many books in Arabic or other languages as I know, you are not known to our readers. Hence your books will continue to be unknown and your thoughts will continue to be rejected by us."

Abu Haamid: "It is not important that I should be known to these people or those. What matters is that I should speak the truth, and the truth itself will spread. It is not important that the truth should be at-

22. See Louis Massinioun, Jean Morin in *al-Is - tishraaq fi Ufuq Insidaadihi* by Dr. Saalim Humaysh

tributed to me or to anyone else, because at the end of the day the truth is prevailing naturally and inevitably. A verse of the Qur'ân, in *Surat al-Isra'*, says: **"And say: Truth (i.e. Islamic Monotheism or this Qur'ân or Jihad against polytheists) has come and Batil (falsehood, i.e. Satan or polytheism) has vanished. Surely, Batil is ever bound to vanish"** [*al-Isra'* 17:81].

I hope that you will not think of anyone else, rather think to yourself: are these arguments convincing to your mind or not? If they are convincing to your mind then you may be certain that they are convincing to most human minds, so be concerned about yourself and forget about others.

Another thing: the one who tries to find the truth based on what certain people say will be lost, because truth cannot be learned from what certain people say. Truth cannot be recognized from what men say; rather men should be measured against the truth. I do not confront anyone on the basis of witchcraft. My answer to everyone in this gathering and those who are absent is: Look at the names of these people and look at the

names of those who refuted them – they were not Muslims; rather they were non-Muslims who did not follow the religion of Muhammad. They studied Islam in depth and were influenced by it, but they died without declaring that they had entered Islam.

Opinion
of
prominent
figures
concerning
Muhammad
(peace
and
blessings
of Allaah
be upon
him)

Many Orientalists came grim-faced, with bad intentions towards Islam, but they ended up with the opposite result. They ended up testifying in the favour of this Prophet. Among these Orientalists was Carlyle who said: 'It is shameful for any modern man of this generation to listen to the illusions of those who say that Islam is a religion of lies, and that Muhammad was not following the truth. The time has come to fight these foolish and shameful notions. The issue to which the Prophet called people has continued to be a shining torch for fourteen centuries for millions of people. Is it possible that this message, in the light of which millions have lived and died, is no more than the fabrication of a liar or the deceit of a deceiver? If lies and deceit could be so readily accepted by people and become so widespread, then life itself would become foolish and pointless, and it would

be better if it did not exist. Have you seen a liar who is able to create a religion and spread it so widely in this manner?

The liar cannot build a house from bricks because he is ignorant of the characteristics of building materials. If he did build it, what he built would be no more than a heap of building materials. So what about the one who builds a house the pillar of which is all these centuries in which all these millions of people lived?

Then he said: 'Based on that, it is wrong to regard Muhammad as a liar and fabricator, using tricks and all possible means to achieve his ulterior motives or ambitions. The message he delivered is nothing but truth, and his word is nothing but the voice of one who is truthful and sincere. It is a star that shone upon the whole world; it is the decree of God!'²³

Bosworth Smith says in *Muhammad and Islam*, which was published in London in 1874 CE, confirming the view of Carlyle and others:

'It is impossible for anyone who has

23. *Muhammad Rasool Allah*, by Nasr al-Deen Dineh. Dr 'Abd al-Haleem Mahmoud, p. 19-20. From *Nubuwwat Muhammad fil-Fikr al-Istishraaqi al-Mu'aasir* by Dr. Lakhdar Shaayib, p. 95

studied the life and character of the great Arabian Prophet and knows how he lived and how he taught, not to bow in respect to this revered Prophet who is one of the greatest Messengers of God. No matter what I tell you, I will tell you many things that are well known to all, but when I re-read them, I feel more of that respect and admiration.²⁴

Another distinction of the life of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is that there is no ambiguity in it and nothing hidden. You and anyone else can decide about all aspects of his life. When you try to criticize Muhammad, refutation and proof that your accusation is false will come at you from all directions. Do you know why? It is because the life of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is an open book, with nothing hidden and no ambiguity.

Blachère says: 'It does not seem that at any time Muhammad tried to be mysterious about his private life. His words, gestures and attitudes, as a father or as

24. 'Ulama' al-Gharb yadkhuloona al-Islam, Muhammad Hilmy, p. 32. From *Nubuwwat Muhammad fil-Fikr al-Istishraaqi al-Mu'aasir* by Dr. Lakhdar Shaayib, p. 96

a husband, and his behaviour as a believer, were open to his followers who were moulding their character – out of conviction – on the basis of his character. Thus the features of the *Sunnah* were defined.’²⁵

Look at what the author of ‘*The 100*’²⁶ says:

‘My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world’s most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular level.’

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says: ‘Muhammad is the most successful of all Prophets and religious personalities.’

Another writer says: ‘... the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human

25. Le Probleme de Mahomet, p. 101. *Nubuwwat Muhammad fil-Fikr al-Istishraaqi al-Mu'aasir* by Dr. Lakhdar Shaayib, p. 414

26. Michael H. Hart, *THE 100: A RANKING OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL PERSONS IN HISTORY*, New York: Hart Publishing Company, Inc., 1978, p. 33

Many
accusatio-
ns and the
confusion
of the
accusers

greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he?'²⁷

You will be amazed when you see some Orientalists accusing the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) of being insane and the like, when he can see before his own eyes evidence of his miraculous words and attitude which were filled with wisdom. You have to conclude: What a great difference there is between wisdom and insanity!

Some of them accuse him of the same thing that Quraysh accused him of, when they said that he was a sorcerer! But this may be refuted very easily by asking: If he was a sorcerer, then how come he bewitched those who followed him but he did not bewitch you?

Confusion
of his
enemies
when
speaking
of him

The fact that you do not believe in him is the greatest refutation of your accusation that he is a sorcerer. This accusation against the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is nothing new. The contradictions of his enemies in one false attribute and one specific accusation are among the greatest evidence of his truthfulness.

27. Lamartine, *Histoire de la Turquie*, Paris, 1854, vol. 11, pp. 276-277

I will tell you this story, which is narrated in the books of history.

It was narrated that Jabir ibn 'Abdullah said: The Quraysh gathered together one day and said: See who among you is most knowledgeable about sorcery, soothsaying and poetry, then let him go to this man who has divided our community, caused disorder among us and criticized our religion. Let him speak to him and look to see how he can respond to him. They said: We do not know of anyone but 'Utbah ibn Rabi'ah, so they said: You, O Abul-Walid. So 'Utbah went to him and said: O Muhammad, are you better or 'Abdullah (meaning his father)? The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) remained silent. Then he said: Are you better or 'Abdul-Muttalib (meaning his grandfather)? The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) remained silent. He said: If you think that they are better than you, then they worshipped the gods whom you criticize. But if you think that you are better than them, then speak so that we may hear what you say. By Allah, I have never seen a beloved child who portends more evil for his people

than you. You have divided our community, caused disorder among us and criticized our religion, and you have shamed us before the Arabs, to such an extent that rumours are circulating among them saying that there is a sorcerer or a soothsayer among the Quraysh. By Allah, we are only waiting for one cry for help, and then some of us will unsheathe the sword against others until we are all diminished. If you are poor we will all collect wealth for you until you become the richest man of Quraysh. If you want to get married, then choose any of the women of Quraysh you want and we will give you ten women in marriage. If you want leadership, we will appoint you as our leader for the rest of your life. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'Have you finished?' He said: Yes. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'Listen to me,' then he recited to him from *Surat Fussilat*:

"In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

1. Ha Meem.

[These letters are one of the miracles of the Qur'ân, and none but Allah

(Alone) knows their meanings.]

2. A revelation from (Allah) the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

3. A Book whereof the Verses are explained in detail — a Qur'ân in Arabic for people who know.

4. Giving glad tidings [of Paradise to the one who believes in the Oneness of Allah (i.e. Islamic Monotheism) and fears Allah much (abstains from all kinds of sins and evil deeds) and loves Allah much (performing all kinds of good deeds which He has ordained)], and warning (of punishment in the Hell-fire to the one who disbelieves in the Oneness of Allah), but most of them turn away, so they hear not.

5. And they say: 'Our hearts are under coverings (screened) from that to which you invite us; and in our ears is deafness, and between us and you is a screen, so work you (on your way); verily, we are working (on our way).'

6. Say: 'I am only a human being like you. It is revealed to me that your *Ilah* (God) is One *Ilah*, therefore take Straight Path to Him and obedience to Him, and seek forgiveness of Him.

And woe to the polytheists.

7. Those who give not the *Zakah* and they are disbelievers in the Hereafter.

8. Truly, those who believe and do righteous good deeds, for them will be an endless reward that will never stop.'

9. Say: 'Do you verily disbelieve in Him Who created the earth in two Days? And you set up rivals (in worship) with Him? That is the Lord of the '*Alamin* (mankind, jinn and all that exists).

10. He placed therein (i.e. the earth) firm mountains from above it, and He blessed it, and measured therein its sustenance (for its dwellers) in four Days equal (i.e. all these four 'days' were equal in the length of time) for all those who ask (about its creation).

11. Then He rose over (*Istawa*) towards the heaven when it was smoke, and said to it and to the earth: "Come both of you willingly or unwillingly." They both said: "We come willingly."

12. Then He completed and finished from their creation (as) seven heavens in two Days and He made in each

heaven its affair. And We adorned the nearest (lowest) heaven with lamps (stars) to be an adornment as well as to guard (from the devils by using them as missiles against the devils). Such is the Decree of Him, the All Mighty, the All Knower.'

13. But if they turn away, then say: 'I have warned you of a *Sa'iqah* (a destructive awful cry, torment, hit, thunderbolt) like the *Sa'iqah* which overtook (the people of) 'Ad and Thamud'" [*Fussilat* 41:1-13].

He did not go out to his family and keep away from them. Abu Jahl said: By Allah, O Quraysh, I think that 'Utbah has followed Muhammad and that he likes his food, and that is only because he is in need. Let us go to him. So they went to him and Abu Jahl said: By Allah, O 'Utbah, we have only come because we think that you have followed Muhammad and that you like his affair. If you are in need, then we will collect for you from our wealth so that you will have no need of Muhammad's food. He got angry and swore by Allah that he would never speak to Muhammad again. He said: You know that I am one of the wealthiest men

of Quraysh, but I went to him – and he told them the story – and he answered me with something that, by Allah, is neither sorcery nor poetry nor soothsaying. Rather he recited: **“In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. 1. Ha Meem.** [These letters are one of the miracles of the Qur’ân, and none but Allah (Alone) knows their meanings.] **2. A revelation from (Allah) the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful”** until he reached the verse, **But if they turn away, then say: ‘I have warned you of a Sa’iqah (a destructive awful cry, torment, hit, thunderbolt) like the Sa’iqah which overtook (the people of) ‘Ad and Thamud’,”** whereupon I put my hand over his mouth and adjured him by the ties of kinship to stop. You know that when Muhammad says something, he does not lie, and I was afraid that the torment would come upon you! End quote.²⁸

My dear Professor, do you think that any rational person would reject an offer to acquire wealth if he wanted leadership and to be in charge of people, especially when these men were the leaders of the

28. *al-Bidaayah wal-Nihaayah* by al-Haafiz Ibn Katheer, vol. 3, p. 62

people?

Do you think that he would reject wealth if it came to him without him seeking it? Or do you think that he would reject women if the offer came to him, and his aim was women?

Why did he not spare himself all this effort and pain? Why did he not spare himself all this time and money? Why did he not spare himself and his companions and loved ones all this torment? Why did he not make the most of his people's efforts and strength? Why expose his companions to risk? Why indeed expose himself to risk? Why, if he was not a Messenger from God?

Is there any other rational answer?

Does it make sense, after all this, to say that Muhammad was a deceiver, let alone to say that he was a liar?

If the person knew the implications of what he is saying, he would not say it!

Annie Beasant says: 'It is impossible for anyone who studies the life and character of the great Prophet of Arabia, who knows how he taught and how he lived, to feel anything but reverence for that

Impossible

mighty Prophet, one of the great messengers of the Supreme. And although in what I put to you I shall say many things which may be familiar to many, yet I myself feel whenever I re-read them, a new way of admiration, a new sense of reverence for that mighty Arabian teacher."²⁹

Rational evidence testifies to the truth of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)

Professor of Gospel Studies: "Remember, Abu Haamid that our original agreement was to let reason judge. Now I say to you that Muhammad was lying. Do you have anything to suggest that he was not a liar or deceiver?"

Forget about religious and historical evidence. Come and discuss rational evidence and prove to me on the basis of reason that Muhammad was not a liar."

Abu Haamid: "I will answer your question by noting a number of points.

The story of a Muslim cleric and Jewish cleric

1- I will answer by telling you this story which happened between one of the greatest leaders of Islam, whose name is Ibn al-Qayyim, and one of the greatest Jewish scholars, when this rational debate took place between them. Ibn al-Qayyim said:

29. Annie Beasant, *THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF MUHAMMAD*, Madras, 1932, p. 4.

I had a debate with one of the greatest scholars whom the Jews regard as a prominent man of learning and leadership. I said to him during this debate: By disbelieving in Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), you insult God greatly. He was surprised at that and said: Would such a one as you say such a thing? I said to him: Listen to the explanation. If you say that Muhammad was an unjust ruler, who suppressed the people with his sword, and he was not a Messenger from God, when he spent twenty-three years claiming that he was a Messenger of God Who had sent him to all of mankind, continually saying that God had enjoined this and forbidden that and that he had revelation saying such and such ... but none of that was true according to what you say. He also said: God has permitted me to take captive the women and children of those who disbelieve in me and go against me, and to seize their wealth and execute their men, but none of that was true, and he persisted in changing the religion of the Prophets and opposing their followers and abrogating their laws ... then you must say that either God was watching and was aware of that, or you must say that it was

hidden from Him and He did not know of it. If you say that He did not know of it, then you are attributing the worst kind of ignorance to Him, and the one who knew that had more knowledge than Him! If you say that it happened with His knowledge as He was looking on, then He must have been either able to change it and put a stop to it, or He was not able. If He was not able, then you have attributed to Him the worst of incapability that is contrary to His Lordship. If He was able to stop it but instead He supported him and helped him and caused him to prevail, and made his word supreme and answered his prayers, and enabled him to defeat his enemies, and caused more than a thousand miracles of all types to appear at his hand, and no one wished him ill but God caused him to prevail over him, and he did not call upon Him but his supplication was answered ... this is the greatest injustice and folly, which it is not reasonable to attribute to any reasonable man, let alone the Lord of the heavens and the earth. When God testifies to him that He approves of his call and supports him, to you this is testimony of falseness and lies. When he heard that he said: God forbid that God should do this to a liar and fab-

ricator. Rather he is a true Prophet and those who follow him will prosper and be blessed. I said: Why don't you enter his religion? He said: He was only sent to the unlettered who have no Book. As for us, we have a Book which we follow. I said to him: You are defeated utterly, for everyone knows that he told us that he is the Messenger of God to all nations, and that the one who does not follow him is a disbeliever who is one of the people of Hell. He fought the Christians and Jews who are people who follow a Book. If his message is true then everything he said must be believed. Then he kept quiet and did not answer.³⁰

2. My dear Professor of Gospel Studies Gary, if none of his enemies who opposed him accused him face to face of lying, then how can you believe one who did not know him or live with him, when he accuses him of being a liar?

His
enemies
did not
accuse
him of
lying!

Rather the Orientalists narrated this incident which can be found in all books of history, and which tells of how Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be

30. *Hidaayat al-Hayaara fi Ajwibat al-Yahood wal-Nasaara* by Imam Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah

upon him) started calling people.

Imam al-Bukhari narrated that Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: When the verse **"And warn your tribe of near kindred"** [*al-Shu'ara'* 26:214] was revealed, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) climbed up Mount Safa and started to call out: 'O Banu Fihr, O Banu 'Adiyy!' calling the clans of Quraysh until they had gathered.

If a man could not go out, he would send a messenger to see what was going on. Abu Lahab and the Quraysh came and he said: 'What if I told you that there was a cavalry in the valley that wanted to attack you. Would you believe me?'

They said: 'Yes, we have never found you to be anything but truthful.'

He said: 'I am warning you of a stern punishment.'

Abu Lahab said: 'May you perish for the rest of the day! Is it for this that you called us together?'

Then the *surah*, **"Perish the two hands of Abu Lahab (an uncle of the Prophet) and perish he! 2. His wealth and**

his children will not benefit him!" [*al-Masad* 111-1,2] was revealed.

Wasn't his nickname among his people before he became a Prophet "*al-Sadiq* and *al-Ameen*" (the honest and trustworthy)?

3. You will agree with me that the legacy of knowledge that was left behind by Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is huge, and no one else left behind the like of it. He told the people a body of *hadith* that is many times the size of the Qur'ân. None of those who read his *hadith*, of those who knew him and those who did not know him, his friends and his enemies, has been able to find a single lie that can be attributed to him. Is it reasonable, then, to say that he is a liar?

His great legacy of knowledge which is free from lies and errors

The rational question here is: Why did Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) leave behind this legacy, and to whom? If there was to be any Prophet after him, would there be any need to leave behind this entire legacy or to solve the most difficult problems or set out principles for the world?

Isn't it fair for us to ask you to look at

the entire legacy of Muhammad and find even one lie? So how about if you cannot find one?

Did he
contradict
himself?

4. One of the inevitable outcomes of lying is contradiction. This is something that is well known. If a liar tells a single story twice, there will be contradictions and differences. So how about if he tells it often? Is it possible for him to avoid contradictions? How about if he were to produce something the size of the Qur'ân, which is 604 pages of average-sized paper, and as we have noted, its readers have not found a single contradiction? Can the one who brought it be a liar?

How about if the legacy of knowledge that he left behind was many times greater than the Qur'ân?

Let the one who says anything else bring us a single contradiction. We discussed this in the soiree where we spoke of the Qur'ân and reason.

The most
famous
truthful
personality

5. I think that neither you, Professor, nor those who are present and those who are absent, would disagree that the most famous personality throughout history is Muhammad (peace and blessings of

Allah be upon him), and that those who do not believe in Muhammad today are more numerous than those who do believe in him. So our question is about a man whose enemies are more numerous than his supporters, a man whose legacy of knowledge is widespread and available to all. He is challenging them, but these enemies, despite their large numbers, are not able to show even one lie or contradiction. This is the case, and he says that those who do not believe in him will go to Hell.

6. If we wanted to count all the reports in which Muhammad told of things that happened in the past and would happen in the future, and so on, and we said that their number reached one thousand or one hundred thousand, no one, whether he was one of those who had read the previous Books or who witnessed subsequent events, would be able to point out a single lie. Does this not mean that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has a hundred thousand proofs that he is telling the truth? This is how we should understand the evidence, and we should not count all the evidence that proves his truthfulness as one sin-

Corroborating evidence to prove his truthfulness

gle proof, or regard the total sum of all this evidence as counting neither for nor against him.

Lying is one of the gravest of sins in his view

7. Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) regarded lying as the one of the worst sins. If he had forbidden lying whilst not heeding this prohibition, that would cancel him out as an example to be followed.

Truthfulness of the *Sahaabah*

8. If his Companions were the most truthful of people, then how could their teacher, the one who taught them this truthfulness and whose example they were following, be a liar?

His refutation of those who said that the Prophets lied

9. One of the fundamentals of Muhammad's call is the refutation of any accusation of lying that is levelled against the Prophets. Is it reasonable to suggest that he would refute any accusations of lies and other things against them, and then tell lies himself?

Fulfilment of his prophecies for the future

10. Stranger than all of that is the fact that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told us of things that had not happened. He told us that they would happen, and as time went by there came proof that these things were happening as Muhammad (peace and bless-

ings of Allah be upon him) told us they would. This has happened very often. It is ongoing and has never stopped, such as Iraq, Egypt and Syria becoming Muslim, and so on. It should be noted that when he died, these countries had not yet become Muslim. Another of these cases is his foretelling of the siege of Iraq, which happened in 1990, and many other events. Don't you see that he did not make any mistakes or tell any lies when he spoke of the future, so do you think he could tell lies about what was happening in his own era (namely that he was receiving revelation from God)?"

Professor of Gospel Studies: "I hope that you will stop here, because you have mentioned things that are more like claims that have no evidence. Our reason does not allow us to let things pass without any investigation and proof. You said that Muhammad mentioned the siege of Iraq, and you said that he mentioned the siege of Syria, and you said ...

The
siege of
Iraq and
Syria

My objection is about two issues. Firstly, I am asking you for evidence, and after you tell me the evidence, I have another objection which is even stronger than that. If Muhammad mentioned the siege

of Iraq and the siege of Greater Syria as we see in the siege of the Palestinians, nevertheless the historians do not differ concerning the fact that Iraq and Syria did not come to Islam during the lifetime of Muhammad, so how could you solve this dilemma into which you have fallen?

One of the conclusions that I hope you will reach in this gathering and in future gatherings is that every time you present a specious argument as if it is a disaster for me, or as if it is plain truth, my answer will show it to be like nothing more than a soap bubble that is blown away by the wind. You can imagine that if I did not answer, you would continue to imagine it as a real dilemma, but you are chasing a bubble as is the case here. Rather the matter is more serious than that. If you remember every time you stir up a specious argument, the conclusion of that specious argument turns against you and becomes the opposite of what you imagined. Based on that, I hope you will check all the previous specious arguments that you stirred up. You will find that they all fall into this category. I guarantee to you that all your specious arguments in the

future will be of that type. I hope that you will reach this conclusion even if it happens at the end of this gathering or at the end of the last gathering."

Professor of Torah Studies Moshe: "We know that your claim that the Qur'ân is the miracle of Muhammad cannot be perfect unless you claim that Muhammad was unlettered. The idea of Muhammad's illiteracy is aimed at perfecting the plan and making it look legitimate.

But there is a great deal of evidence quoted by senior historians which shows that Muhammad was literate.

I think that the trick that Muhammad played was quite unprecedented.

Muhammad studied what was going on around him closely, and was able to achieve something that no one else had done before. After studying the Torah and Gospel and all other books that became available to him, and through those whom he met on his visits to Syria – after that Muhammad found that the Arabian environment was fertile for the spread of his teachings which were originally taken from the Torah and Gospel. He gathered around him those who were infatuated

Is the
claim of
illiteracy
my idea?

with him because they did not know any reformer other than him, when they realized that he needed a reformer.

Watt says: 'Despite the fact that traditional Islam affirms that Muhammad did not know how to read or write, this information is dubious according to modern western scholars, because it seems that this was fabricated in order to highlight the miraculous nature of the Qur'an, which is something that an illiterate man could not achieve. *Au contraire*, we find that a huge number of Makkans knew how to read and write, hence it may be assumed that a dynamic merchant such as Muhammad must have had his share of this skill.'"³¹

Abu Haamid: "It is very shameful for a man to come along in the guise of a fair-minded researcher who adheres to professional, academic rules, yet he cannot help but display his enmity more than one who is a blatant enemy!

I do not blame you, Professor Moshe, as much as I blame those who pretend to be researchers and claim to be academically fair in their research. How can such peo-

31. *Mahomet Prophete et Homme d'Etat* [?], p. 37

ple come out with such things?

Are you more hostile and more opposed to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) than Quraysh were?

Do you know more about him than those who lived with him for forty years before the Revelation came to him? Do you know more about his weak points than his people who had known him as an infant and child, and as a youth and a grown man?

Or are you keener to show up every fault – if there are any – than those who fought him with the sword, and he killed some of them and they killed some of his companions?

I ask you to produce one witness for us, not from among the Muslims but rather from among the disbelievers who were his contemporaries, who says that Muhammad could read and write.

Give us one instance in which Muhammad wrote a book or a letter, or even signed his name.

If Muhammad was literate, why didn't he write down a single verse of the Qur'ân?

Why did he appoint forty scribes to write down the verses as soon as they were revealed?

Isn't writing down the Qur'ân the ultimate honour, and wouldn't Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) take precedence over anyone else with regard to pleasing God?

So why did he give precedence to others over himself with regard to this honour and great act of worship?

Whoever says that Muhammad wrote a single verse let him show it to us!

Whoever says that Muhammad wrote on parchment or a palm leaf or a stone, let him show us the writing of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)!

Isn't it appropriate that he should have written his letters to the kings himself?

Why are his letters to the kings written in the handwriting of various Companions, and there is nothing left of them except his well known seal?

Moreover, if Muhammad could write, then who taught him? What was the name of his teacher?

If Muhammad concealed the name of the one who taught him to read and write, then what honour would his teacher gain if he were to disclose that he had taught Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) even one word?

If a person did not learn for forty years – as is the case with Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) – how could he learn after that?

So how about after the age of forty – in the case of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) – when he had no free time or peace and quiet in which to learn?

Nevertheless, suppose that Muhammad did know how to read and write; suppose that he learned how to read and write at the end of his life. What does that mean?

How could this alter the reality of his Prophethood?

What difference did reading and writing make to the reality of the Prophethood of Jesus (peace be upon him)? What difference did reading and writing make to the reality of the Prophethood of Moses (peace be upon him) before that?

What difference does it make to the greatness of the Qur'ân? Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) died, and the Qur'ân is still the same as it was when it was revealed to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) when he was alive. If you have any objection, then here is the Qur'ân.

Resorting to casting aspersions on the illiteracy of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is evidence of real bankruptcy, because it is ignoring the main issues and talking about matters that are no more than minor issues that make no real difference to the reality of the Qur'ânic challenge in all its aspects, the reality of his Prophethood, the reality of his religion. Is that not so?

Isn't this the evidence of reason? History bears witness.

Durant said: 'But it seems that no one ever paid attention to teaching him how to read and write. His advantage had no value for the Arabs at that time. Hence among his entire tribe of Quraysh there were no more than seventeen men who knew how to read and write. It is not known that Muhammad ever wrote any-

thing himself. After his mission began he employed a personal scribe. But that did not prevent him from bringing the most famous and most eloquent book in Arabic, or learning about people's affairs to a level that most educated people could hardly reach."³²

Dr. Lutfy Noureddine: "Leave the fanatics who do not understand outside our gatherings so that we can keep the level of our soiree at a highly rational level. Today we want an academic debate about this personality who is subjected to a great deal of attack from time to time in our country. It does not make sense for us to read about anyone but Muhammad.

It does not make sense for our people to remain ignorant about a personality who had such a great impact on history.

It does not make sense for great scholars to make statements about Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), then we do not read about Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and we do not find anything

32. From *Nubuwwat Muhammad fil-Fikr al-Istishraaqi al-Mu'aasir* p. 389 by Dr. Lakhdar Shaayib, quoting from *Qissat al-Hadaarah* (the Story of Civilization), 11/21

Is the claim of illiteracy...

in our libraries except books which distort the image of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). One of these great scholars is Barnard Shaw, when he said:

Muhammad in the opinion of Bernard Shaw

‘Europe has started to realize the wisdom of Muhammad and has started to love his religion. It will declare that Islamic doctrine is free of the things it is accused of, that were fabricated in Europe in the Middle Ages. The religion of Muhammad is the only system on which pillars of peace and happiness will be built, and on its principles problems will be solved.’

The religion most able to absorb civilizations

He also said: ‘The world today is in the greatest need of a man like Muhammad in his thinking, this Prophet who always presented his religion in a manner that deserved respect and veneration, because it is the strongest religion that is able to absorb cultures and it will abide forever. I see that many of my countrymen have entered this religion on the basis of clarity and in the future this religion will find its place on the rest of the continent.’”

Was he a sociologist only?

Professor of sociology Johann: “Firstly, I will say that I am not a believer in the message of Muhammad as a Prophet

who received revelation from God, but because I have been a teacher of sociology for twenty years, I admire the character of Muhammad as a sociologist, and my admiration is ever increasing for the genius of Muhammad and the amazing social system that he set out for the family. It is more like a complete system for the entire state, distinguished by flexibility with precision at the same time. With this system, Muhammad made the family a sound building block for a great and sound state. He made the family a safety valve for the state, and he set up a system within the family with amazing precision. Each member has his rights and duties, and there is no disorder. The husband is the head and leader of the family. The wife is the mother who is obliged to obey the husband. He made kind treatment of the wife a greatest act of practice and means of drawing closer to God. The children have to obey the parents, and the parents have to raise them well. Servants are obliged to be honest and masters are obliged to treat servants like themselves. He forbade entering upon parents except with permission at three times, during the afternoon, after sunset and at noon. So he made these times of privacy for the

parents, because these are times when there is usually uncovering of *'awrahs*, intimacy and so on.

For all of these rulings there are precise details which preserve the integrity of the family and society, and protect the rights of individual family members. Raising children starts with choosing a good wife, and choosing a good name for the child, and breastfeeding, and so on throughout all stages of his life until he marries.

In return, the son or daughter is obliged to honour the parents from the age of discernment until the child or parent dies.

Rather the child's honouring of the parents continues after death, by his praying for them and upholding ties with their families and friends, and establishing charitable projects so that the reward goes to them.

Thus Muhammad extended social ties beyond death.

The ties that were established between the parents and their friends do not end with their death; rather they become a trust and preservation of the father's rights by upholding ties with his friends.

Thus the father's death becomes a cause of expanding the circle of social relations. In place of the deceased father, his family members, sons and daughters are introduced. All the members of the friend's family are included too. The same applies if the mother dies. Their death is the cause of the circle of kindness being extended.

What struck me about the brilliant genius of Muhammad is his lofty ambition with regard to change, his good planning for change, his ability to change and his clear vision with regard to the future of change.

Muhammad was one of those men whose vocabulary does not contain the word impossible. He has a clear plan to implement his wishes, through his study of life in Arabia, which is the environment in which he was born and raised and died. Prior to that, it was one of the most socially backward environments.

It had no civilization, knowledge or scholars worth mentioning. Nor did it have any strong connection with other international civilizations, apart from the type of relationship that resulted from being enslaved by the civilizations of

Persia and Byzantium!

Muhammad started with principles that were rejected from an ideological point of view by his society. He did not bring anything that was in accordance with the desires of his society. Rather he brought the exact opposite. They worshipped many idols, but Muhammad called them to give up worshipping all of their idols and destroy them, and worship the One God. This is what he called for, whereas his people were a focal point for idol worship throughout Arabia. The whole world around him followed a religion other than that of Muhammad. Muhammad had no supporter in the whole world. He had no internal or external support. How could he succeed? Yet he did succeed, and he founded an ideal society the like of which no one in history has founded, before or since. After that he managed to establish the strongest society in Arabia, and he made its capital a city called Madinah. Muhammad made this great society more strongly united than a small, close-knit family. In order to know the strength of a structure's foundations, it is sufficient to see how tall and strong it is. On that note, everything that came after

that, which was built on the foundation laid by Muhammad from the beginning until today, is built on a strong foundation which he laid for the first family, and now we see that the number of Muslims has reached almost 1.5 billion, and their greatest advantage is their family and social ties, whereas we see that other societies, which are not based on the foundation of the family, are collapsing rapidly. If we think of modern civilization, we will find that its foundation is based on a revolution against backwardness, and the family is not included in its structure. So they are like one who wants to build without bricks. Thus modern civilization collapsed socially, and other indications of collapse are obvious, because what is the value of a civilization in which the family has no foundation?

If we look at the socialist civilization, we will see that its basis is the pursuit of justice and equality. There was a revolution against injustice, and on that basis a huge civilization was established in the socialist countries such as Russia and the countries that followed it. But they did not last even as long as an individual's lifespan. Seventy years after its establishment, it

collapsed like an iceberg in hot water. That only happened because it was not based on a moral or ideological foundation, and the family had no value in it, so its invalidity became apparent quickly, and its collapse was terrifying.

Even though the political system that did not support the social system built by Muhammad has disappeared, his social system is still going strong.

Here the historian refers to the greatness of the genius that produced this social system in such an extraordinary manner, yet it is logical and organized. The more important question is:

If this achievement was of an ordinary type, why was no one else ever able to produce the like of it before Muhammad, if only on paper?

Why has no one else ever been able to repeat it after Muhammad until today and it seems that it will never happen?"

Dr. Lutfy: "Was Muhammad a mere social reformer or family reformer?

Or was Muhammad a Prophet? What do you think, Abu Haamid?"

Professor Ecopis: "Muhammad was not

a Prophet at all. Muhammad was a social reformer and a family reformer, because if he was a Prophet, why didn't Moses foretell his coming? Why didn't Jesus or any of the other Israelite Prophets foretell his coming? Why is he not mentioned in the Old Testament or the New testament?"

Abu Haamid: "It doesn't matter to me that Professor Ecopis is Jewish, as it appeared to me from the outset, based on his harsh attitude towards Prophet Muhammad and his resentment of the idea that he is a Prophet. When he mentioned Moses (peace be upon him) he followed it by saying 'Peace be upon him' but when he mentioned Jesus (peace be upon him) he did not say anything, because the Jews in principle do not accept Jesus (peace be upon him) as a Prophet just as they do not accept Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as a Prophet.

Hence our academic discussion should not descend into harshness and the like between one another. Instead it should be a calm discussion with the aim of reaching a good conclusion, as is befitting to the level of the people present.

Did anyone before Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) foretell his coming?

The foretelling of Muhammad is rationally essential and this is the evidence for that

I would like to ask the Professor: Is it a condition of a Prophet's Prophethood being valid that the one who came before him should have foretold his coming, or that his name should be mentioned in the scriptures?

Here you can only give one of two answers. Either you will say that it is not a condition, in which case you have given in. Or you will say that it is a condition, in which case we say, bring your proof.

Moreover, if you say that the one who came before him should have foretold his coming, we say to you: Who foretold the coming of Noah (peace be upon him)? Who foretold the coming of Abraham (peace be upon him)? Who foretold the coming of all the Prophets except Jesus (peace be upon him)? Bring your proof!

Even though I know you have no answer to the questions I put to you, if I do not mention evidence from the previous Books, such as the foretelling of the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), that would be fair, would it not?

So how about if I give you what you have requested of evidence from the previous

Books?

Rather I shall answer you on the basis of reason first of all. What we discussed before, about there being no prophecies concerning the Prophethood of all the Prophets whom we and you know, is **the first rational point.**

The second rational point is: Does it make sense that the Israelite Prophets, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel and Ezekiel – and Jesus (peace be upon him) is like them – should be mentioned, and in some cases their events and other details are mentioned too, but no mention is made of a man like Muhammad or of the events of Muhammad that changed the course of history in a way that no other events did since the beginning of creation?

Who is most deserving of mention?

I do not think that any of you will deny that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was more lastingly influential than Nebuchadnezzar or Xerxes or Alexander or anyone of that ilk. Is that not so?

John William Draper says: 'Four years after the death of Justinian, A.D. 569, was born at Mecca, in Arabia the man who, of

all men exercised the greatest influence upon the human race . . . Mohammed.³³

John Austin says concerning the influence of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): "In little more than a year he was actually the spiritual, nominal and temporal ruler of Medina, with his hands on the lever that was to shake the world."³⁴

In history you can see what Muhammad did, and what his nation did compared to other nations on earth. You can see that his nation survived and expanded, and you can see that this civilization is in a state of resurgence.

Those great men have gone and hardly anyone mentions their names or carries their names, whereas you can see how high and prominent the status of Muhammad is, and how great his nation is, and how many carry his name. Does it make sense that these men should be mentioned in the Torah and Gospel, al-

33. John William Draper, M.D., L.L.D., *A History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, London 1875, Vol. 1, pp. 329-330

34. John Austin "Muhammad the Prophet of Allah," in T.P.'s and Cassel's Weekly for 24th September 1927

though they have vanished and some of their nations have vanished, but Muhammad is not mentioned? If he is not mentioned in them, this is a shortcoming in the extant copies. It does not undermine the status of Muhammad. This is my first rational proof.

Isn't this undermining the status of these books and these Messengers? Does reason accept this logic or is it utterly repelled by it?

The third rational point is: let us assume, as you assume rationally, that Muhammad is not a Prophet and that he is the greatest threat to the world. Does it make sense that the Israelite Prophets would mention those who are far less dangerous than him but they did not mention this great danger? Does it make sense for me to describe a lethal fish in the midst of a great flood that may or may not bite someone, but I do not describe the flood that is going to overwhelm lands and people?

Isn't it logically essential that the Prophets should mention Muhammad if he was a liar or deceiver of such a level, and warn against him in the strongest terms, as Muhammad warned against the *Dajjal*

The fish
and the
flood

(Antichrist) who will emerge before the Hour begins, and he foretold the descent of Jesus (peace be upon him) in great and precise detail?

The failure to foretell of him or warn about him on the part of the Prophets – as you claim – is not in the favour of the previous Prophets or of the previous Books. On the other hand it is a strike against them. So how about if the foretelling of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was clear, in the form of a covenant that God took from all the Prophets that they should foretell their people about him and that if he was sent they should believe in him and support him? For example it says in *Surat Aal 'Imraan*:

“And (remember) when Allah took the Covenant of the Prophets, saying: ‘Take whatever I gave you from the Book and *Hikmah* (understanding of the Laws of Allah), and afterwards there will come to you a Messenger confirming what is with you; you must, then, believe in him and help him.’ Allah said: ‘Do you agree (to it) and will you take up My Covenant (which I conclude with you)?’ They said: ‘We

agree.' He said: 'Then bear witness; and I am with you among the witnesses (for this)'" [Aal 'Imraan 3:81]

The fourth rational point is: Do you think that if a rich man died, leaving behind children, and the children disputed about their father's legacy, and news of that spread throughout the land, and their case was referred to a just judge – do you think that any of them would dare to say, 'My father bequeathed his entire estate to me, and I have a document to prove it, and I have witnesses from my father' even if he did not have such a document?

Do you think he would sacrifice his reputation and credibility throughout the land, when he knows that he will be asked for the document and required to produce witnesses? Is that not so? So how could Muhammad declare to the whole world, at the highest level of proclamation, that Jesus (peace be upon him) himself had foretold his coming? Can anyone announce that if it was not true, when he knows the large number of his opponents and their harshness and the extent of their disbelief in him? As for the announcement in question, it is nar-

rated in the Qur'ân that Jesus (peace be upon him) foretold the coming of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), in a *surah* called *Surat al-Saff*, where Allah says:

“And (remember) when ‘Eesa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary), said: ‘O Children of Israel! I am the Messenger of Allah unto you, confirming the *Tawraat* [(Torah) which came] before me, and giving glad tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad.’ But when he came to them with clear proofs, they said: ‘This is plain magic’” [*al-Saff* 61:6].

Yes, this is evidence from the Qur'ân, rational evidence supports it 100%, even if you do not believe in the Qur'ân, because testimony has nothing to do with whether you agree with it or not. What matters here is whether the testimony is valid or not, whether the witness is telling the truth or not. No matter how much you may disagree with a person concerning a major issue, you could still believe him.”

Professor of Torah Studies: “I think that you have digressed far from the topic under discussion by trying to bring rational

evidence to say that the Prophets foretold the coming of Muhammad. This foretelling does not come under the heading of rational evidence because, as you say, it is foretelling.

Does this statement mean anything other than highlighting those instances of foretelling in the Torah, Psalms and Gospel, or previous Books of which we know nothing?

We should not do what you have done just now, when you quoted from the Qur'ân about the foretelling of Muhammad's coming. In what way was the Qur'ân foretelling his coming? What is mentioned here is no more than a few verses from the Qur'ân. Can that be called foretelling when it did not come before what they foretold?

These books of ours are before you, and we have studied them thoroughly. I hope that you will not argue, as you usually do, that they have been altered and distorted and so on.

If you cannot quote something clear and specific from them to prove the Prophet-hood of Muhammad, then close the topic of foretelling altogether, and we will dis-

cuss another topic. You have no choice but this."

Foretelling
the
name
of the
Prophet

Abu Haamid: "What it says in the Qur'ân about the foretelling of Muhammad's coming is not actual foretelling. How can it foretell his coming when it is his Book? Rather it is informing us of the foretelling of his coming that occurred in the previous Books of the Prophets. There is a great difference between these two things. If you deny this foretelling then prove it, because the Qur'ân quoted it as it was, in clear terms which are attributed to the Prophets themselves, as you can see in the verse quoted which speaks of Jesus himself (peace be upon him). Would anyone dare to attribute to a Prophet a recommendation that he did not make, when he has countless followers and witnesses throughout the ages who would defend him if others tell lies about him as you are trying to do now and even more than that? And I shall show you that there are prophecies as I mentioned to you.

Moreover, if in the Qur'ân there were thousands of various accounts, and you could not prove it to be lying in even one account, how could you prove it to be ly-

ing concerning this specific issue?

I will quote to you some texts from the Torah and Gospel, without commenting in detail on them, merely quoting the texts, and I will follow it with questions based on that. The one who is seeking light in a dark wilderness and sees a single candle will not wait until he has gathered a bundle of candles, because he may never find this bundle. He will follow this single candle immediately so that he can find a way out before the candle is extinguished, otherwise he may become supper for the wild beasts. So let us limit ourselves to a single piece of evidence so long as we are seeking the truth, rather than seeking to win the argument, because coming back to the truth is better than persisting in falsehood, as 'Umar ibn al-Khattab said. So how about when you have acquired from these gatherings a bundle of candles? Now I will give you a new bundle, the light of which you will never be able to extinguish unless a man in the desert could extinguish the sun with one blow. Here are the prophecies from your own Books which foretell the coming of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as one of the

Prophets and not merely as a reformer.

First example of foretelling the coming of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the Bible:

When the Jews wanted to find out who John (peace be upon him) was, they sent to him a special delegation of priests and Levites from Jerusalem. In the Gospel of John it says:

19. *"Now this was John's testimony when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. 20. He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, 'I am not the Christ.'*

21. *They asked him, 'Then who are you? Are you Elijah?'*

He said, 'I am not.'

'Are you the Prophet?'

He answered, 'No.'

22. *Finally they said, 'Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?'*

23. *John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, 'I am the voice of one calling in the desert, 'Make straight the way*

for the Lord. '"

24. Now some Pharisees who had been sent 25. questioned him, 'Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?'" John 1:19-25

Here there arise specific questions, for each of which we hope to find a specific answer. Who was this 'Prophet' mentioned in this text with the definite article ('the Prophet')? Who is the Prophet whose sending was a well established fact for the Jewish scholars and for John, whose coming is foretold here?

Is he the Christ (Messiah), or is he Elijah, or do you think he is John?

John gave his answer, stating that he (the Prophet) was not the Messiah or Elijah or John, as you see in the text before you.

Tell us, who could it be other than Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?

So who is this one whose coming was foretold by this company of noble Prophets, from Moses (peace be upon him) to Jesus (peace be upon him)?

Bring all the Christian scholars and let them tell us the name of this Prophet. If

they say 'We do not know,' ignorance is not proof. The one who has knowledge is proof against the one who does not know. If they give us the name of a Prophet, then let them tell give us evidence, and tell us where they got this evidence from. The answer given by John in the Gospel is clear. It can be no one other than Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), based on this text.

This is also affirmed in the Qur'ân, in *Surat al-Saff*, where Allah says:

"And (remember) when 'Eesa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary), said: 'O Children of Israel! I am the Messenger of Allah unto you, confirming the *Tawraat* [(Torah) which came] before me, and giving glad tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad.' But when he came to them with clear proofs, they said: 'This is plain magic'" [*al-Saff* 61:6].

Foretelling
the name
of the
nation that
has no
understand-
ing

Second example of foretelling the coming of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the Bible:

In the thirty-second chapter of Deuteronomy, it says concerning the Jews:

"They made me jealous by what is no

god

and angered me with their worthless idols.

I will make them envious by those who are not a people;

I will make them angry by a nation that has no understanding." Deuteronomy 32:21

Here we see two things, one which is agreed upon and one concerning which opinions differ. As for that which is agreed upon, it is that these words are addressed to the Jews who had provoked the jealousy of God by worshipping that which was not a god and by taking false gods. The matter concerning which opinions differ is the statement that God would make them envious by causing a nation that had no understanding to prevail over them. The question here is: Who is this nation that had no understanding, mentioned in this holy text, who God would cause to prevail over the Jews? Most commentators on the Bible say that they were the Greeks. But does this description apply to the Greeks? Were they a people who had no understanding?

The answer is most definitely not, be-

cause the Greeks, for more than three hundred years before the coming of Jesus (peace be upon him), were superior to the whole world in sciences and the arts. All the famous wise men, such as Socrates, Hippocrates, Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Archimedes, Pliny, Euclides, Galen and others were leaders in divinity, mathematics, the natural sciences and other branches of knowledge before the time of Jesus. At his time the Greeks were at the pinnacle of their knowledge and they were aware of the rulings and stories contained in the Torah and other books of the Old Testament.³⁵

Is it correct to describe the Greeks as 'people who had no understanding' when they were the most knowledgeable of people on earth at that time? They are the most unlikely of people to be described thus.

Who can the 'people who had no understanding' be, other than the Arabs, who were the most ignorant of people concerning science and art from the time of Jesus until the coming of Muhammad

35. *Izhaar al-Haqq*, vol. 4, p. 1133 by Shaikh al-'Allaamah Rahmatullah ibn Khaleel al-'Uthmani al-Kairanvi al-Hindi

(peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?

If you study the Qur'ân and Bible thoroughly, you will see that the description in the Qur'ân is virtually the same as that in the Bible. The Arabs are described in the Bible as a nation that had no understanding, and the Qur'ân describes them as an unlettered nation, as it says in *Surat al-Jumu'ah*:

“He it is Who sent among the unlettered ones a Messenger from among themselves, reciting to them His Verses, purifying them (from the filth of disbelief and polytheism), and teaching them the Book (this Qur'ân, Islamic laws and Islamic jurisprudence) and *Al Hikmah*. And verily, they had been before in manifest error” [*Al-Jumu'ah* 62:2].

The punishment of the Jews by means of the Arabs is compounded because the Jews were scholars and the Arabs were ignorant. The scholar despises the ignorant man, so this was a severe punishment for them. Moreover, the Arabs were the descendants of Hagar, which provoked the envy of the Jews. Hence God's punishment fitted the Jews' crime.

The Qur'ân often mentions the envy of the Jews because of the fact that this Prophet was sent from among the Arabs and not from among them. In *Surat al-Baqarah* it says:

“Many of the People of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) wish that if they could turn you away as disbelievers after you have believed, out of envy from their own selves, even after the truth has become manifest unto them. But forgive and overlook, till Allah brings His Command. Verily, Allah is Able to do all things” [*al-Baqarah* 2:109].

From a rational point of view, the Biblical text is in accordance with the Qur'ân text when speaking of the setting up of envy in the hearts of the Jews towards the Arabs after the latter became Muslims and followers of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). In the Torah it says with reference to their envy, “*I will make them envious by those who are not a people*” (*Deuteronomy* 32:21) and here – in the Qur'ân – it shows the fulfilment of that promise in the words **“out of envy from their own selves, even after the truth has become manifest unto them.”**

Doesn't the result refer to the things that led to it? God made that promise to the Jews and the promise of God was fulfilled both inwardly and outwardly. The inward sign is the jealousy that they possessed in their hearts, and the outward sign is the Arabs' prevailing over them. Can there be any sign after that? Can it be denied?

Third example of foretelling the coming of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the Bible:

Reference
to Mount
Paran

In the thirty-third chapter of Deuteronomy it says:

*"The **LORD** came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them" Deuteronomy 33:2 – King James version*

It is well known to all that what is meant by the phrase "*The **LORD** came from Sinai*" is when God gave the Torah to Moses (peace be upon him). And it is well known to all that the phrase "*and rose up from Seir unto them*" is when God gave the Gospel to Jesus (peace be upon him). Seir is an area to the south of the Dead

Sea in southern Palestine.³⁶

Our question here is: where is Paran from which the Lord will shine forth?

The definitive answer is that it is Makkah, based on nothing but the evidence of the Torah itself. It clearly says in the Book of Genesis that what is meant by Paran is Makkah. It is agreed upon by all scholars of religion and history that Isma'il was not raised and did not grow up anywhere but in Makkah. This is stated clearly in the verse:

20. *"God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and became an archer. 21. While he was living in the Desert of Paran, his mother got a wife for him from Egypt"* Genesis 21:20-21, NIV

A passage from the Qur'ân which describes the locations of three Prophets is also in accordance with this:

1. **"By the fig, and the olive.**
2. **By Mount Sinai.**
3. **By this city of security (Makkah).**

36. *Mu'jam al-Buldaan*, 3/171; *Qamoos al-Kitaab al-Muqaddas*, p. 163, 466

4. Verily, We created man in the best stature (mould).

5. Then We reduced him to the lowest of the low.

6. Save those who believe (in Islamic Monotheism) and do righteous deeds. Then they shall have a reward without end (Paradise).

7. Then what (or who) causes you (O disbelievers) to deny the Recompense (i.e. the Day of Resurrection)?

8. Is not Allah the Best of judges?" [*al-Tin* 95:1-8].

‘By the fig and the olive’ refers to the land of Palestine, because it is the homeland of the fig and olive. Mount Sinai is the place where Moses (blessings and peace be upon him) went, and ‘this city of security’ is Makkah.

The Qur’ân states that Ishmael lived in Makkah, in the verse in which God speaks of Abraham in the *surah* that bears his name:

“[Ibrahim (Abraham)] said: ‘O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in an uncultivable valley by Your Sacred House (the Ka’bah

at Makkah) in order, O our Lord, that they may perform *As Salat*. So fill some hearts among men with love towards them, and (O Allah) provide them with fruits so that they may give thanks” [*Ibrahim* 14:37].

From a different angle, this is clearly foretelling the conquest of Makkah by Muhammad and his Companions, which is more specific than the first interpretation.

The books of *Sirah* (the Prophet's biography) state that when the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) set out to conquer Makkah, he set out with ten thousand fighters among his Companions, and he halted with his army before entering Makkah in an elevated area on the outskirts of Makkah, where he ordered each of his Companions to light a torch made of grass in order to strike fear into the hearts of the people of Makkah, so that they would surrender without fighting. As a result of this plan, very little fighting took place and God protected them from being killed. This is something concerning which none of the biographers differ.

Now you can go back to Deuteronomy,

chapter 33, and you will find this specific phrase:

"And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.

Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words" Deuteronomy 33:2-3

Our question: after seeing all these signs combined in the Torah text, can there remain any doubt that the one who is referred to in this foretelling is Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?

Fourth example of foretelling the coming of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the Bible:

This verse in Genesis is the promise of God to Abraham, where God foretells the coming of his son Ishmael. It says:

"And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve

The prophecy of Jesus (peace be upon him)

rulers, and I will make him into a great nation" Genesis 17:20

Who are the descendants of Ishmael whom God promised to increase in numbers and bless?

Are the descendants of Ishmael the Jews? Or the Christians? Or who?

Are they not the Arabs?

But when did the Arabs become a great nation, if not after Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came to them?

The Torah text specifies that this great nation will be formed from the descendants of Ishmael. The specificity of the lineage is precise and could not be more precise than that. The lineage that is preserved puts an end to any confusion, whereas if it was specified on the basis of religion or belief and so on, the Jews might say 'This is our nation' and the Christians might say, 'This applies to our beliefs.' But here it is defined as the progeny of Ishmael.

There is similar evidence for this promise in the Qur'ân, which mentions the supplication of Abraham, who said:

“O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in an uncultivable valley by Your Sacred House (the *Ka’bah* at Makkah) in order, O our Lord, that they may perform *As Salat*. So fill some hearts among men with love towards them, and (O Allah) provide them with fruits so that they may give thanks” [*Ibrahim* 14:37].

This is what is also testified to in the Qur’ân, in *Surat al-Anfal* where it says:

“And remember when you were few and were reckoned weak in the land, and were afraid that men might kidnap you, but He provided a safe place for you, strengthened you with His Help, and provided you with good things so that you might be grateful” [*al-Anfal* 8:26].

Fifth example of foretelling the coming of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the Bible:

“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be”

Genesis 49:10 – King James Version

"The sceptre will not depart from Judah,

nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,

until he comes to whom it belongs

and the obedience of the nations is his"

Genesis 49:10 – New International Version

It is agreed that what is meant by the departure of the sceptre from Judah is the disappearance of the Law of Moses (peace be upon him), and it is agreed that what is meant by the departure of the ruler's staff from beneath his feet after Moses is Jesus (peace be upon him). But who is meant by Shiloh, to whom the people or nations will submit? Who can it be other than Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?

Sixth example of foretelling the coming of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the Bible:

The forty-fifth Psalm:

1. *"My heart is stirred by a noble theme
as I recite my verses for the king;*

my tongue is the pen of a skilful writer.

2. *You are the most excellent of men
and your lips have been anointed with
grace,
since God has blessed you forever.*

3. *Gird your sword upon your side, O
mighty one;
clothe yourself with splendour and
majesty.*

4. *In your majesty ride forth victoriously
in behalf of truth, humility and right-
eousness;
let your right hand display awesome
deeds.*

5. *Let your sharp arrows pierce the
hearts of the king's enemies;
let the nations fall beneath your feet.*

6. *Your throne, O God, will last for ever
and ever;
a sceptre of justice will be the sceptre
of your kingdom.*

7. *You love righteousness and hate wickedness;*

*therefore God, your God, has set you
above your companions*

by anointing you with the oil of joy.

8. *All your robes are fragrant with myrrh
and aloes and cassia;*

from palaces adorned with ivory

*the music of the strings makes you
glad.*

9. *Daughters of kings are among your
honoured women;*

*at your right hand is the royal bride in
gold of Ophir.*

10. *Listen, O daughter, consider and give
ear:*

*Forget your people and your father's
house.*

11. *The king is enthralled by your beau-
ty:*

honour him, for he is your lord.

12. *The Daughter of Tyre will come with
a gift,*

men of wealth will seek your favour.

13. *All glorious is the princess within her
chamber;*

her gown is interwoven with gold.

14. *In embroidered garments she is led to the king;*

her virgin companions follow her

and are brought to you.

15. *They are led in with joy and gladness;*

they enter the palace of the king.

16. *Your sons will take the place of your fathers;*

you will make them princes throughout the land.

17. *I will perpetuate your memory through all generations;*

therefore the nations will praise you for ever and ever."

I hope that you will read these descriptions again and ask yourself frankly: Can this apply to anyone other than Muhammad?

So David was foretelling the coming of a Prophet after him. Until the coming of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) no Prophet appeared who bore the characteristics de-

scribed by David (peace be upon him)."

Professor Ecopis: "O Abu Haamid, excuse me for interrupting your train of thought, but this text is one that is well known to us. As Christians, we are agreed that it is David foretelling the coming of Jesus. What connection is there between Muhammad and David? Rather David is a father (ancestor) of Jesus."

Abu Haamid: "I hope that you will read the text again, and I hope that this time you will read it independently of previous interpretations and free of intellectual restrictions, and you will see that what is meant can only be one person, namely Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Examine it carefully.

Did Jesus (peace be upon him) gird his sword by his side? Was he known for might and power, as in the phrase 'O mighty one'?

Did Jesus (peace be upon him) have sharp arrows, as in the phrase 'Let your sharp arrows pierce the hearts of the king's enemies'?

Is there any name whose memory is perpetuated through all generations like that of Muhammad, as it says: 'I will perpetu-

ate your memory through all generations; therefore the nations will praise you for ever and ever’?

Whoever doubts that his memory or his name is perpetuated, let him listen: is there any Prophet whose name is given to newborns more often than that of Muhammad? Is there any Prophet whose name is mentioned in the call to prayer as is that of Muhammad?

Seventh example of foretelling the coming of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the Bible:

The prophecy of the “barren land”

In the Book of Isaiah it says:

1. “ ‘Sing, O barren woman,
you who never bore a child;
burst into song, shout for joy,
you who were never in labor;
because more are the children of the
desolate woman
than of her who has a husband,’
says the LORD.
2. ‘Enlarge the place of your tent,
stretch your tent curtains wide,

*do not hold back;
lengthen your cords,
strengthen your stakes.*

3. *For you will spread out to the right
and to the left;*

*your descendants will dispossess na-
tions
and settle in their desolate cities.*

4. *'Do not be afraid; you will not suffer
shame.*

*Do not fear disgrace; you will not be
humiliated.*

*You will forget the shame of your
youth
and remember no more the reproach
of your widowhood.*

5. *For your Maker is your husband—*

the LORD Almighty is his name—

*the Holy One of Israel is your Re-
deemer;*

he is called the God of all the earth.

6. *The LORD will call you back*

as if you were a wife deserted and dis-

tressed in spirit—

a wife who married young,

only to be rejected, 'says your God.

7. *'For a brief moment I abandoned you,*

but with deep compassion I will bring you back.

8. *In a surge of anger*

I hid my face from you for a moment,

but with everlasting kindness

I will have compassion on you,'

says the LORD your Redeemer.

9. *'To me this is like the days of Noah, when I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover the earth.*

So now I have sworn not to be angry with you,

never to rebuke you again.

10. *Though the mountains be shaken*

and the hills be removed,

yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken

nor my covenant of peace be removed,'

says the LORD, who has compassion on you.

11. *'O afflicted city, lashed by storms and not comforted,*

I will build you with stones of turquoise,

your foundations with sapphires.

12. *I will make your battlements of rubies,*

your gates of sparkling jewels,

and all your walls of precious stones.

13. *All your sons will be taught by the LORD,*

and great will be your children's peace.

14. *In righteousness you will be established:*

Tyranny will be far from you;

you will have nothing to fear.

Terror will be far removed;

it will not come near you.

15. *If anyone does attack you, it will not be my doing;*

whoever attacks you will surrender to you.

16. *'See, it is I who created the blacksmith*

who fans the coals into flame

and forges a weapon fit for its work.

And it is I who have created the destroyer to work havoc;

17. *no weapon forged against you will prevail,*

and you will refute every tongue that accuses you.

This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD,

and this is their vindication from me, '

declares the LORD. Isaiah 54:1-17

Undoubtedly this is addressed to a specific land, but which is this 'barren' land which did not produce Prophets after Ishmael (peace be upon him)? Is it the land of Egypt which never became barren after this prophecy, because it is the land to which Moses (peace be upon him)

and others were sent? Or is it the land of Palestine to which David and those who came after him were sent? Or is it Arabia, which remained barren after the time of Ishmael, and to which no Prophets were sent, and in which no Prophet was born after this prophecy until the time of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?

Who is the 'desolate woman'? Is she Sarah, the free woman who lived in Egypt and never knew loneliness or desolation, as she was the mother of Isaac, Jacob and the Children of Israel? Or is she Hagar, the mother of the Arabs, because she was the mother of Ishmael from whom was descended Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah, who lived in desolate isolation – in the desert of Makkah, which is mentioned and clearly described in the Book of Genesis:

"The angel of the LORD also said to her:

'You are now with child

and you will have a son.

You shall name him Ishmael,

for the LORD has heard of your mis-

ery.

12 He will be a wild man ...” Genesis 16:11-12

Eighth example of foretelling the coming of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the Bible:

Foretelli-
ng
of Kedar

“Sing to the LORD a new song,

his praise from the ends of the earth,

*you who go down to the sea, and all
that is in it,*

you islands, and all who live in them.

*11 Let the desert and its towns raise their
voices;*

*let the settlements where Kedar lives
rejoice.*

Let the people of Sela sing for joy:

let them shout from the mountaintops.

12. Let them give glory to the LORD

and proclaim his praise in the islands”
Isaiah 42:10-12

Who is Kedar? Is he not the son of Ishmael, according to consensus? Aren't Rabi'ah and Mudar among his descendants? Isn't Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah

(peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) from Mudar? Can there be any other interpretation, after this? Mentioning the name of Kedar rules out all other possibilities.

Was God glorified throughout the land, mountains, seas and islands as He was glorified after the coming of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?

Have the people of this world seen God being glorified throughout the earth as you see during the pilgrimage of the Muslims to the *Ka'bah*?

Does any worshipper on earth raise his voice as the Muslims raise their voices in the *Talbiyah for Hajj*, when they set out from their homelands and islands and mountains and wildernesses?

There is a clear reference in the book of Isaiah to the *Hajj* and the actions of *Hajj*. Think about it, for it does not require much thought:

1. *"Arise, shine, for your light has come,*

and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.

2. *See, darkness covers the earth
and thick darkness is over the peoples,
but the LORD rises upon you
and His glory appears over you.*
3. *Nations will come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.*
4. *"Lift up your eyes and look about you:
All assemble and come to you;
your sons come from afar,
and your daughters are carried on the arm.*
5. *Then you will look and be radiant,
your heart will throb and swell with joy;
the wealth on the seas will be brought to you,
to you the riches of the nations will come.*
6. *Herds of camels will cover your land,
young camels of Midian and Ephah.*

*And all from Sheba will come,
bearing gold and incense
and proclaiming the praise of the
LORD.*

7. *All Kedar's flocks will be gathered to
you,*

*the rams of Nebaioth will serve you;
they will be accepted as offerings on
my altar;
and I will adorn my glorious temple.*

8. *"Who are these that fly along like
clouds,*

like doves to their nests?

9. *Surely the islands look to me;*

*in the lead are the ships of Tarshish,
bringing your sons from afar;
with their silver and gold,*

....

10. *"Foreigners will rebuild your walls,
and their kings will serve you." Isaiah
60:1-10*

We know that the Jews added two phras-

es to this prophecy in order to change the meaning, and they restricted it to a prophecy that they attributed to Isaiah (2:2) and Micah (4:3,4), which says that this global pilgrimage will be to Mount Zion and the House of the God of Jacob.

No matter how many changes the Jews made, what can they say about this prophecy which exposes them, as the text states?

6. " 'In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. 7. I will shake all nations, and the desired of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the LORD Almighty. 8. 'The silver is mine and the gold is mine,' declares the LORD Almighty. 9. 'The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,' says the LORD Almighty. 'And in this place I will grant peace,' declares the LORD Almighty" Haggai 2:6-9

How can these stubborn ones ignore this clear prophecy at the international level? Proving this prophecy takes no more than tuning in to a satellite channel such as al-Majd or al-Saudia, or any Gulf channel, in any language, at the time of *Hajj*, in

order to see with your own eyes what is mentioned in this prophecy, and see this House of God around which are gathered people glorifying God, around the *Ka'bah*. You can see with your own eyes how this live transmission of worship in this place is not limited to the *Hajj*, rather footage of crowds praying around the *Ka'bah* is transmitted five times a day, direct live transmission, prayer which will continue until the Day of Resurrection.

You can ask: is there any other house anywhere on earth where God is worshipped as He is worshipped around this House? Since the time of this prophecy, more than three thousand years ago, has there even been any place of worship on earth that has continued to survive as a place of worship like this place of worship (the *Ka'bah*)?

Who would dare to misinterpret this prophecy and say that it refers to anything other than the *Ka'bah*, when he sees the millions of camels and rams, exactly as mentioned in this prophecy, that are offered annually during the *Hajj* season in Makkah, as an act of worship to draw nearer to God and to feed the poor

and needy?

Even if some are confused about the rams, how can anyone be confused about the camels?

Even the glory mentioned in this prophecy is a clear reference to the *Ka'bah*, when it is surrounded with crowds of worshippers like bracelets of gold packed around it. You may picture the Temple, as imagined by the Jews, and compare it with the image of the *Ka'bah* as it exists in reality, not in the imagination, and decide for yourselves: which fits better the description mentioned in this text? What precision there is in this prophecy which even says that nations from the ends of the earth will come to it! Who other than the Jews would come to the temple as they imagine it? Then you will be amazed by this miracle.

What precision and accuracy there is in this prophecy which even mentions the means by which people will come to this House, which is by air in an amazing scene which is mentioned in this text, for which there can be no other interpretation than airplanes, where it says: "*Who are these that fly along like clouds, like doves to their nests?*" (Isaiah 60:8).

Here I would like to draw the reader's attention to some Qur'ân verses which speak of Abraham's building of this great House, so that you may compare them with the Bible texts.

26. "And (remember) when We showed Ibrahim (Abraham) the site of the (Sacred) House (the *Ka'bah* at Makkah) (saying): 'Associate not anything (in worship) with Me, [*La ilaha illallah* (none has the right to be worshipped but Allah) — Islamic Monotheism], and sanctify My House for those who circumambulate it, and those who stand up (for prayer), and those who bow (submit themselves with humility and obedience to Allah), and make prostration (in prayer);'

27. And proclaim to mankind the *Hajj* (pilgrimage). They will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, they will come from every deep and distant (wide) mountain highway (to perform *Hajj*).

28. That they may witness things that are of benefit to them (i.e. reward of *Hajj* in the Hereafter, and also some worldly gain from trade), and mention the Name of Allah on appointed days

(i.e. 10th, 11th, 12th, and 13th day of *Dhul Hijjah*), over the beast of cattle that He has provided for them (for sacrifice), [at the time of their slaughtering by saying: (*Bismillah, Wallaahu Akbar, Allaahumma Minka wa Ilaik*)]. Then eat thereof and feed therewith the poor having a hard time.

29. Then let them complete their prescribed duties (*Manasik of Hajj*) and perform their vows, and circumambulate the Ancient House (the *Ka'bah* at *Makkah*)” [*al-Hajj* 22:26-29]

Can the Jews say that this applies to *al-Masjid al-Aqsa* (Jerusalem), knowing that that place of worship was not built until five hundred years after Abraham, at the time of David, and the Torah text precisely defines to which of the two places of worship this prophecy applies? It definitely applies to the latter mosque, as it says: “*The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,*” says the LORD Almighty. *‘And in this place I will grant peace,’ declares the LORD Almighty*” (*Haggai* 2:9).

Ninth example of foretelling the coming of Muhammad (peace and blessings of

Foretelling
the
Kingdom
of
Heaven

Allah be upon him) in the Bible:

It says in the Gospel of Matthew:

"In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near'" Matthew 3:1-2

Who is the one whose kingdom and power John the Baptist foretold in the Desert of Judea?

Is it Jesus (peace be upon him)? The answer is definitely not. How could John be foretelling Jesus when they were contemporaries of one another?

How could he be foretelling him when Jesus (peace be upon him) was foretelling the same thing as John and he commanded his disciples to give the glad tidings of the forthcoming great kingdom which he called the Kingdom of Heaven? In the Gospel of Matthew it says:

"When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he returned to Galilee... From that time on Jesus began to preach, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near'... Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom." Matthew

4:12, 17, 23

Look at any command that Jesus (peace be upon him) gave to the disciples whom he sent to the Israelite towns: "As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near'" (Matthew 10:7). This was one of the greatest missions of Jesus, which he commanded them to convey no matter what the circumstances. In the Gospel of Luke it says:

8. *"When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. 9. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.' 10. But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, 11. 'Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near'"* Luke 10:8- 11

If the foretelling of the Kingdom of Heaven did not materialize at the time of Jesus (peace be upon him) or at the time of John, or at the time of the disciples of Jesus (peace be upon him), because they also foretold its coming as did those who came before them ... then in whom was this foretelling fulfilled?

Some of your commentators say that this foretelling refers to the Greeks or those who took over Jerusalem, but is it correct to apply the phrase 'Kingdom of Heaven' to those who wronged and persecuted the Jews and destroyed the Temple, the Greeks and others who utterly destroyed their kingdom?

Or is what is meant by the 'Kingdom of Heaven' foretelling the coming of Muhammad and the *ummah* of Muhammad, of which Jesus himself (peace be upon him) said, as it says in the Gospel:

'Hence I say unto you that the Kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation that will labour for its fruits?'

Do the Greeks labour for its fruits?

Jesus (peace be upon him) angered the Jews when he explained to them by means of a clear parable that they did not deserve this divine legacy, because they responded to the blessings of God with ingratitude and betrayal of the Prophets. So it was inevitable that the kingdom of God would be taken away from them. Listen to this amazing, precise parable in the Gospel of Matthew:

33. "Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. 34. When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.

35. 'The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. 36. Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. 37. Last of all, he sent his son to them. "They will respect my son," he said.

38. 'But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, "This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance." 39. So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

40. 'Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?'

41. 'He will bring those wretches to a wretched end,' they replied, 'and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at har-

vest time.'

42. *Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the Scriptures:*

*"The stone the builders rejected
has become the capstone;
the Lord has done this,
and it is marvellous in our eyes"?*

43. *'Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. 44. He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed.'*

45. *When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew he was talking about them. 46 They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet."* Matthew 21:33-46

Can there be anything clearer than this?
Let us take it step by step, as in this text.

Is there any nation whom God blessed like the Jews, as in this parable which speaks of them being given control over this vineyard?

Is there any likeness of the Prophets who were sent to the Jews like the messengers whom the owner of the vineyard sent to those whom he had put in charge of the vineyard?

Is there any nation who killed the Prophets like the Jewish nation, as the owners of the vineyard did?

Is there any clearer indication than the statement that the owner of the vineyard sent his son to the ones to whom he gave control of the vineyard and they killed him? Isn't that a reference to Jesus, and the word 'son' is to be understood as an honorific as we have seen above?

Here the question arises: Didn't Jesus depart this earth and join his Lord when he was the last one referred to in this parable? So who came as a Prophet after Jesus?

The answer is that no one after Jesus said that he was a Prophet who came from God except Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

The text explains that the story of these Jews with the vineyard ends with the end of Jesus's time on earth.

This parable is also mentioned in the Gospel of Luke, with some differences:

9. *"He went on to tell the people this parable: 'A man planted a vineyard, rented it to some farmers and went away for a long time. 10. At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants so they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. 11. He sent another servant, but that one also they beat and treated shamefully and sent away empty-handed. 12. He sent still a third, and they wounded him and threw him out.*

13. 'Then the owner of the vineyard said, "What shall I do? I will send my son, whom I love; perhaps they will respect him."

14. 'But when the tenants saw him, they talked the matter over. "This is the heir," they said. "Let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours." 15. So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

'What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? 16. He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.' When the people heard this, they said, 'May this never be!'

17. *Jesus looked directly at them and asked, 'Then what is the meaning of that which is written:*

"The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone"? 18. Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed.'

19. *The teachers of the law and the chief priests looked for a way to arrest him immediately, because they knew he had spoken this parable against them. But they were afraid of the people" Luke 20:9-19*

Answer me, commentators – of what stone is Jesus (peace be upon him) speaking, and what structure?

Isn't this the structure of the nations from the beginning of creation until the time of Jesus?

Perhaps some of you will say that the stone which the builders rejected is Jesus. But this understanding contradicts the clear phrasing that comes after it: *"Therefore I tell you that the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit"* (Matthew 21:43).

If the Kingdom of God was taken away from you as is stated here, then to whom did it go after the nation of Jesus (peace be upon him)?

Furthermore, Jesus did not only say that the Kingdom of God would depart from them, rather he said that the Kingdom of God would be given to another nation which would produce its sound fruit.

Foretelling
the *Hijrah*
(Prophet's
migration)
and the
Battle of
Badr

Eighth example: clear foretelling of the migration of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the battle of Badr and the victory of the Muslims.

13. *"An oracle concerning Arabia:*

*You caravans of Dedanites,
who camp in the thickets of Arabia,*

14. *bring water for the thirsty;*

*you who live in Tema,
bring food for the fugitives.*

15. *They flee from the sword,*

*from the drawn sword,
from the bent bow
and from the heat of battle.*

16. *This is what the Lord says to me: 'Within one year, as a servant bound by contract would count it, all the pomp of Kedar will come to an end.*

17. *The survivors of the bowmen, the warriors of Kedar; will be few.'"* Isaiah 21:13-17

This is a clear prophecy that it will go to Arabia. It mentions Dedan (al-'Ula) and Tema (Tayma'), which were two Jewish towns in the environs of Madinah, which is the city to which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) migrated from his homeland of Makkah. What can be more specific than this?

Moreover, this text clearly enjoins the Jewish inhabitants of the cities of Dedan and Tema to support this one who would migrate from his people, as it says:

13. *"You caravans of Dedanites,
who camp in the thickets of Arabia,
14. bring water for the thirsty
you who live in Tema,
bring food for the fugitives"* Isaiah 21:13-14

Then the text mentions with amazing pre-

cision how the migration of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would occur on that night. Whoever has read the story of the *Hijrah* (Prophet's migration) will recognize the precision in this text, as all the historical sources state how the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) left his house on the night of the *Hijrah*, and they all concur that his enemies agreed to kill him and arranged it so that his blood would be lost among the Arab tribes so that his people would not be able to seek revenge for him as would be the case if one specific tribe killed him. They chose ten young men, each from a different tribe, and each man had a sword. When he came out of his house, they would strike him as one and be rid of him. But God protected him and he emerged from among them without them realizing anything at all. This is what is mentioned in this amazing text where it says:

*"They flee from the sword,
from the drawn sword,
from the bent bow
and from the heat of battle."*

Isaiah 21:15

Then comes another amazing sign which refers to a specific time. One year after the *Hijrah*, there occurred the first of the Prophet's battles, with the leaders of the Arabs, namely the tribe of Quraysh. He defeated them and killed the greatest of their leaders, after which the tribe of Quraysh grew weak. This is what is clearly indicated in the end of this passage, where it says:

16. *"This is what the Lord says to me: 'Within one year, as a servant bound by contract would count it, all the pomp of Kedar will come to an end. 17 The survivors of the bowmen, the warriors of Kedar, will be few.'"* Isaiah 21:16-17

Anyone who knows Kedar will recognize the precision of this prophecy and the foretelling of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Kedar is the twelfth son of Ishmael, as we have seen above, and Quraysh is the Arab tribe which was proud of its descent from Ishmael and Kedar. They did not set out for this battle except in a sense of pride in their tribal origin and descent. But the battle of Badr referred to in this text ended in nothing less than the killing of seventy of the most prominent leaders

of Quraysh, and the capture of seventy more, and the rest of the thousand went back defeated. Most of the pride of Kedar was lost specifically in this battle. Arab tribalism grew weak and was replaced with the brotherhood of faith.

Foretelling
of the
Paraclete

Tenth example of foretelling the coming of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the Bible:

Jesus said in his commandment:

15. "If you love me, you will obey what I command. 16. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete [often translated as Counsellor or Comforter] to be with you forever— 17. the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. ...

26. But the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. ...

29. I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe." John 14:15-29"

Professor of Torah Studies Moshe:

“As for this foretelling, it is far-fetched to transfer it from Jesus to Muhammad. As teachers of this subject we are certain that the only interpretation is that it applies to Jesus, because Jesus is the Paraclete. He is the one who stayed with them forever and thus it was: the Father sent him in his name to speak to the people in his name.

Where is the foretelling of Muhammad and where is the reference to him?”

Abu Haamid: “I do not want to tell you that you are saying something that you do not believe, or that you are saying something to set some people against others. But I hope that you will examine this text in a fair-minded manner and without bias, and you will see that this is one of the greatest examples of foretelling the coming of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). I will not tell you what I am convinced of, which is that the meaning of the name Paraclete is Muhammad. That is because the word Paraclete may have one of two meanings. Either it means Muhammad or Ahmad, or it means consoler, the one who makes others steadfast, or intercessor, and all of these are names or at-

tributes of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), as is proven in Islam. This is in addition to the fact that this is proven by means of studying the language of numbers (numerology or numerical symbolism), but I do not want to go into that.

Despite the fact that the meaning of the Paraclete is very clear, which is that it refers to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and no one else, the Christian masses say that what is meant by it is Jesus (peace be upon him). It is as if their aim is to distort every text that foretells the coming of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) by all possible means, even when the text is very clear as in this case.

It is as if Jesus (peace be upon him) knew that people would deny it, so he affirmed it by all means so that they would not deny it. He said to them first of all, 'If you love me.' No one says this when he is asking for something for himself. It is as if he is saying: If you love me, then love So and so for my sake, or obey So and so, because your obedience to him will be obedience to me, and so on.

This context indicates that these were

last instructions, which had to do with what would happen after his life (on earth) ended.

Here we ask again: Is it appropriate, if what Jesus (peace be upon him) meant by the Paraclete was Jesus himself, to say "*another Paraclete*"?

If he meant himself when he spoke of the Paraclete, would he have said "*[he] will remind you of everything I have said to you*"?

If he meant himself by the Paraclete, would he have said to them: "*I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe*"?

If what he meant was himself, would he have said: "*he will testify about me*" (John 15:26).

If he meant himself by the Paraclete, would he have said, "*Unless I go away, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you*" (John 16:7)?

Eleventh example of foretelling the coming of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the Gospel:

In the Gospel of Barnabas it says:

"Jesus answered: 'Ask what you please, Barnabas, and I will answer you.' Then said he who writes: 'O Master, seeing that God is merciful, wherefore has He so tormented us, making us to believe that you were dead? and your mother has so wept for you that she has been near to death; and you, who are an holy one of God, on you has God suffered to fall the calumny that you were slain amongst robbers on the Mount Calvary?'

Jesus answered: 'Believe me, Barnabas, that every sin, however small it be, God punishes with great punishment, seeing that God is offended at sin. Wherefore, since my mother and my faithful disciples that were with me loved me a little with earthly love, the righteous God has willed to punish this love with the present grief, in order that it may not be punished in the flames of hell. And though I have been innocent in the world, since men have called me "God," and "Son of God," God, in order that I be not mocked of the demons on the day of judgment, has willed that I be mocked of men in this world by the death of Judas, making all men to believe that I died upon the cross. And this mocking shall continue until the

advent of Muhammad, the Messenger of God, who, when he shall come, shall reveal this deception to those who believe in God's Law.' Having thus spoken, Jesus said: 'You are just, O Lord our God, because to you only belongs honour and glory without end.'" (Gospel of Barnabas 220:17-20)³⁷

And it also says in the Gospel of Barnabas:

"Know, O Barnabas, that for this I must have great persecution, and shall be sold by one of my disciples for thirty pieces of money. Whereupon I am sure that he who shall sell me shall be slain in my name, for that God shall take me up from the earth, and shall change the appearance of the traitor so that every one shall believe him to be me; nevertheless, when he dies an evil death, I shall abide in that dishonour for a long time in the world. But when Muhammad shall come, the sacred Messenger of God, that infamy shall be taken away." (Gospel of Barnabas 112:14-17)³⁸

37. From *Izhar al-Haqq* by al-'Allaamah Rahmatu - lah Khaleel al-Rahmaan al-Kairanvi al-'Uthmaani al-Hindi, vol. 4, p. 1206.

38. Op. cit.

After this clear statement by Barnabas, let anyone say whatever he wants about the Gospel of Barnabas, but what do you think he will say about Barnabas himself? Wasn't he the closest of people to Jesus (peace be upon him), according to the consensus of Christian scholars?

Hence you know why the Gospel of Barnabas was concealed.

But the one who uses his reason and is fair-minded will be content with the foretelling described above. Moreover you will find clear statements of this foretelling in the Gospel of Barnabas, where the name of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is clearly stated."

Professor Ecopis: "But what you ascribe to Muhammad is not the same as what all other nations ascribe to their Prophets of greatness, holiness and so on.

You say that he is the leader of the Prophets, and that he will hold the highest status of all created beings on the Day of Resurrection, and that he is the Seal of the Prophets and the last of them. You attribute to him a high status that no other nation attributed to its Prophet. Is it be-

fitting that the one who is of such a high status as that which you assume for him should not be foretold by the Prophets who came before him, or even referred to by them? The issue is very serious."

Abu Haamid: "What do you think if I prove to you that the Books of divine origin foretold his coming as a Prophet and not as a social reformer? Will you accept it?"

Ecopis: "Yes."

Abu Haamid: "Will you bear witness that Muhammad is a Prophet?"

Professor Ecopis: "We will see about that."

Abu Haamid: "Then listen to the foretelling.

Twelfth example of foretelling the coming of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the Bible:

It says in the Old Testament itself, in the Book of Deuteronomy:

"I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him" Deu-

Foretelling of one who is like Moses

teronomy 18:18"

Professor Ecopis: "This verse is well known to us. It applies to Jesus. It is strange that anyone would say that it refers to Muhammad. This is the first time that I have ever heard anyone say that this verse is referring to Muhammad! The evidence that who is meant here is Jesus is obvious, because it says 'from among their brothers', and the brothers of the Jews are the Christians!

It says 'like you', and who is like Moses except Jesus? Jesus was a Prophet and Moses was a Prophet; Jesus was a Jew and Moses was a Jew."

Abu Haamid: "I am surprised that this verse remained sound even though so much of the Torah has been distorted, and that it has not been distorted or omitted!

How many of the verses that speak of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) have been erased, but this verse has not.

Nevertheless, I say that we should set aside any emotional discussion and go back to our rational discussion. Let us see whether the words of this verse apply

to Jesus (peace be upon him) or to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Please note that my belief is that they are both Prophets sent from God, but here we want to refer to reason when examining the text before us, to see which of the two interpretations is correct.

The Lord says to Moses:

"I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him" Deuteronomy 18:18

God has set out a sign to identify that Prophet: he is like Moses. If all that Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them both) have in common is that they are both Prophets and are both Jews, then this description also applies to all the Prophets of the Children of Israel after Moses (peace be upon him) whose Prophethood is acknowledged, such as Solomon, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, John the Baptist, Joshua and others. What distinguishes Jesus from these Prophets who were also Jews like Jesus (peace be upon him)?

The fact that it says 'Prophet' means that

he is one of this noble company of men. As they are all similar on the basis of what we have said, then they are all out of the equation because of this similarity. So it remains for us to look for one who has other unique qualities that set him apart from all the others.

Moreover, you will find that there are many differences between Jesus and Moses (peace be upon them), whereas there are many similarities between Muhammad and Moses. Let us examine that and ask:

Was Jesus (peace be upon him) born to two parents as Moses and Muhammad were?

The answer is no.

Did Jesus (peace be upon him) get married as Moses and Muhammad did?

The answer is no.

Did Jesus (peace be upon him) bring an independent Law as Moses and Muhammad did?

The answer is no.

Did Jesus (peace be upon him) have children as Moses and Muhammad did?

The answer is no.

Did Jesus (peace be upon him) combine bringing the message and bringing rulings, as Moses and Muhammad did?

The answer is no.

Did Jesus (peace be upon him) die a natural death as Moses and Muhammad did?

The answer is no.

Did Jesus (peace be upon him) leave behind a nation that followed him after he died as Moses and Muhammad did?³⁹

The answer is no.

And there are other events which make the similarity between the two even greater.

The message came to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) when he was in the cave, far away from his people, as the message came to Moses when he was in Sinai, far away from his people.

During his lifetime, Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) migrated from his country, and Moses (peace be upon him) also migrated from

39. Quoting from Deedat

his country.

During his lifetime, Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) faced harshness from a people who were led by a man who was known as 'the pharaoh of this nation'; his name was Abu Jahl. And Moses (peace be upon him) faced harshness from a people who were led by a man who was known as the 'pharaoh of Egypt.' Muhammad was the cause of the pharaoh of the Arabs, Abu Jahl, being killed, and Moses (peace be upon him) was the cause of the pharaoh of Egypt being drowned.

Can there be any remaining doubt after this that the one who is foretold in this verse of the Bible is Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and not Jesus (peace be upon him)?

I am confident that if these distorters discover this verse, they will erase it before it becomes proof against them."

Professor Ecopis: "If we go along with your interpretation of the phrase 'like you', then what do you say about the phrase 'from among their brothers'? Aren't they Jews so their brothers must be Jews too?"

Abu Haamid: "The problem is that the interpretation of the verses in the Torah and Gospels takes something as given, as the verses themselves do, and this is in fact the heart of the problem. Therefore we did not dispute about the verse and I do not want to give this impression. But I want you to look at the interpretation on a rational, realistic and historical basis. These words are addressed by God to whom? Is it not to the Jews?"

Isn't what is meant by 'their brothers' the brothers of the Jews?

Who are the brothers of the Jews?

Are they not the Arabs? For the father of the Arabs is Ishmael and the father of the Jews is Jacob, and they are brothers. If He meant the Jews themselves, He would have said 'I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among themselves', as God said to the Arabs when He sent Muhammad from among the Arabs and said to them, as it says in the Qur'ân:

"Indeed, Allah conferred a great favour on the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from among themselves, reciting unto them His Verses

(the Qur'ân), and purifying them (from sins by their following him), and instructing them (in) the Book (the Qur'ân) and *Al Hikmah*, while before that they had been in manifest error" [*Aal 'Imraan* 3:164].

Something similar appears in Genesis, where Ishmael is called a brother of the Jews:

"and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers" Genesis 15:18

Could it be any clearer than this?

This definition has two limits which exclude anything beyond them. They include all that is to be included and exclude all that is to be excluded. With the first phrase, 'like you', it excludes Jesus son of Mary completely from the equation, and it excludes everyone who is not like Moses (peace be upon him). In the second phrase (your brothers), it excludes all the Israelite Prophets. Thus the conclusion becomes clear; it cannot refer to anyone except Muhammad."

Professor Ecopis: "I would like to remind you of our initial agreement, which was our commitment to let reason decide. Hence I say to you: Forget about all

the evidence that you have quoted from the Torah and Gospels, and let us refer to reason to determine whether Muhammad was the last of the Prophets.

I do not accept your trying to get out of accepting the evidence that you have quoted from the Gospels and elsewhere, but because I am an academic man, I am not familiar with the religious texts that you have quoted, even if you try to give a rational explanation for each one.

On that basis, what I want to see proven rationally is that Muhammad is a Messenger of God.

Then prove rationally that Muhammad is the final Prophet.

Perhaps you would be able to prove that if Muhammad was alive and we could see him and speak to him, and he could prove to us himself by means of a miracle that he is the final Prophet."

Abu Haamid: "Based on what you have said, I ask you likewise to prove to me that Jesus (peace be upon him) was a Prophet according to reason, let alone proving that he was divine according to reason!

Prove to me that Noah, Abraham, Moses and others were Prophets according to reason.

You will never be able to do that, whether on the basis of reason or of texts, for two reasons:

The first reason is that the rational sources proving their Prophethood are non-existent, and the second reason is that the textual sources proving the Prophethood of these noble men to mankind are dubious to a great extent, as we have discussed before.

As for quoting as evidence the fact that people do or do not believe in them, what people have inherited and followed generation after generation cannot be counted as being of any value in proving whether what they have inherited is true or not. Is what the Indians have inherited, despite their large numbers, true? Is Buddha a god? Is what the Chinese inherited from Confucius true? Was he in fact a Prophet?

This also despite their large numbers.

Thus you find yourself hoping and wishing to prove the Prophethood of Jesus (peace be upon him) by means of the

texts, but this is an impossible undertaking. So how can you prove his Prophethood rationally?

Try again, try a thousand times. You will never be able to do it.

You may want to ask me now: do you believe that Jesus is a Prophet?

I will say: Yes, with all certainty.

You may say: How can you believe in something that it is impossible to prove on the basis of both texts and reason – as you say? I affirm to you that, yes, it is impossible to prove the Prophethood of any of these noble Prophets except in only one way, which is by proving the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). If you prove the Prophethood of Muhammad then you will prove the Prophethood of Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them all). That is because the source of proof which was brought by Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is a source upon which no aspersions can ever be cast. It is the Qur'ân.

We have discussed this proof before in our discussion about the Qur'ân and rea-

son. In the Qur'ân there is proof which mentions all of these Prophets. Only in Islam is it required to believe in all of these Prophets as a condition of faith. In the teachings of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) it is obligatory to believe in all of these Prophets (blessings and peace of Allah be upon them all).

MOREOVER – assuming that you believe in the Torah – I ask you: Show me any mention of Jesus in the Torah or Psalms. You will never be able to show me anything.

Show me where Moses (peace be upon him) and the Israelite Prophets after Abraham are mentioned in the Gospel. You will never be able to find anything.

If you cannot prove their Prophethood from the texts, how could you prove it rationally?

The matter is so clear that it does not need any further thinking or delay.”

Rational evidence that he is the last of the Prophets (peace be upon them)

Professor of Gospel Studies: “I want to discuss everything you have said, starting with the last point mentioned. You have affirmed that Muhammad is a Prophet, and now you have affirmed that he is the Last of the Prophets. But I do not know

how you can prove to us rationally that Muhammad is the final Prophet, especially since we do not believe in that at all. Why can't Jesus or John the Baptist be the last Prophet?"

Abu Haamid: "You can never reach a conclusion that Jesus is a Prophet unless you reach the conclusion that Muhammad is a Prophet and that he is the last of the Prophets (blessing and peace of Allah be upon them all), because proving the Prophethood of Muhammad is essential for rational reasons and for textual reasons. But after we have confirmed that all of these men are Prophets, we need to find out who among these Prophets is most entitled to be the last Prophet.

In order to examine the issue in an academic and rational manner, we need to know the characteristics that the final Prophet should have, then we can ask: To which of the Prophets does this description apply, without undermining the status of any other Prophet?

First rational requirement: He should be the last in historical or chronological terms

No rational person would dispute that

the last of the Prophets should be the last of them to be born, otherwise how could he be the last if another Prophet is sent after him? Just as the last of your brothers and sisters is the last one to be born, even if it is only by one hour, the same applies to the Prophets. No one disagrees that the last of the Prophets to be born was Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). So how about when we realize that between the birth of Muhammad and the birth of Jesus there were five hundred and sixty years?

Isn't this definitive rational evidence that Muhammad is the last of the Prophets?

Second rational requirement: He should enjoin belief in all the Prophets

It is not rationally possible for a Prophet to enjoin belief in all the Messengers who had been sent unless he was the last of them. Hence this stipulation is essential in both rational and chronological terms. Similarly, it is not rationally possible to defend against aggression that is directed against all the messages of heavenly origin that were sent, except in the final message. Therefore it is essential that the message of the final Prophet take on the task of defending all of his fellow Proph-

ets who came before him, and to refute the transgressions against them and to defend the religions of the Prophets. To explain it further: for example, if the total number of Prophets was one thousand, and Prophet number one hundred defended those who came before him, who will defend the other nine hundred? If Prophet number nine hundred defends those who came before him, who will defend the last hundred?

Therefore this stipulation is not subject to discussion with regard to the message of Muhammad, rather it makes believing in all the Prophets equivalent to believing in Muhammad. It says at the end of *Surat al-Baqarah*:

“The Messenger believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers. Each one believes in Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers. (They say,) ‘We make no distinction between one another of His Messengers’ — and they say, ‘We hear, and we obey. (We seek) Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the return (of all)’” [*al-Baqarah* 2:285].

So how about if those Books which were

revealed to those Messengers themselves became a source of condemnation of the Prophets? There is a great deal in the Torah – as it exists now – of attacks upon the Prophets and the most abhorrent of accusations against them, such as the accusation that Noah became drunk and committed incest with his daughter, God forbid.

In the Gospel as it exists now – assuming that it is sound – it describes all the Prophets as being slaves to Jesus (peace be upon him). What insult could be greater than that?

If there is nothing left in these messages that defends all these Prophets, then these messages are not fit to be the final message which protects all the messages and defends their honour against all insults.

On the other hand, there is nothing in the Qur'ân that speaks ill of any of the Prophets; rather you will find the clear, decisive ruling that the one who undermines the status of any one of them is deemed to be a disbeliever. For example in *Surat an-Nisa'*, it says:

150. “Verily, those who disbelieve in Allah and His Messengers and wish

to make distinction between Allah and His Messengers (by believing in Allah and disbelieving in His Messengers) saying, "We believe in some but reject others," and wish to adopt a way in between.

151. They are in truth disbelievers. And We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating torment" [*an-Nisa* 4:150-151]

In *Surat at-Tawbah* it says:

"And the Jews say: 'Uzayr (Ezra) is the son of Allah, and the Christians say: Messiah is the son of Allah. That is their saying with their mouths, resembling the saying of those who disbelieved aforetime. Allah's Curse be on them, how they are deluded away from the truth!" [*at-Tawbah* 9:30].

And it says in *Surat at-Ma'idah*:

"Surely, in disbelief are they who say that Allah is the Messiah, son of Maryam (Mary). Say: "Who then has the least power against Allah, if He were to destroy the Messiah, son of Maryam (Mary), his mother, and all those who are on the earth together?" And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heav-

ens and the earth, and all that is between them. He creates what He wills. And Allah is Able to do all things" [al-Ma'idah 5:17]

Does it make sense to regard as equal a message which is founded on belief in the messages that came before it, and a message which does not stipulate any such thing and does not mention the previous messages at all?

Does it make sense to regard as equal a book which mentions the stories of previous Prophets in the best and brightest of terms, and books which claim to be from God but which undermine the status of the Messengers of God in fabricated stories?

Does it make sense to regard as equal a Prophet who makes it a basic principle of his message to defend his fellow Prophets, and a Prophet whose followers falsely accuse the Prophets who came before him?

Third rational requirement: he should have the quality of moderation

Moderation

Reason says that a silken thread cannot become a necklace, no matter how many or how precious its beads, and no mat-

ter how long the thread is, unless the two ends are joined and thus become the middle when they are united in a single knot.

This is the case with the final message. Rationally and realistically, it is essential that it should be in the middle of the necklace of heavenly messages, which is the most precious of all necklaces.

Being in the middle is an essential attribute of the last in the series of messages.

Let us look at any of these messages, clearly described in its book as being in the middle of these heavenly messages. The best proof that may be used for or against any message is what it says about itself. Although you do not find this description in any of the messages, you do find a clear text that describes the message of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as being in the middle. In the Qur'ân, in *Surat al-Baqarah*, God says:

“Thus We have made you, a just (and

the best) nation⁴⁰, that you be witnesses over mankind and the Messenger be a witness over you. And We made the *Qiblah* (prayer direction towards Jerusalem) which you used to face, only to test those who followed the Messenger from those who would turn on their heels (i.e. disobey the Messenger). Indeed it was great (heavy) except for those whom Allah guided. And Allah would never make your faith (prayers) to be lost (i.e. your prayers offered towards Jerusalem). Truly, Allah is full of kindness, the Most Merciful towards mankind" [*al-Baqarah* 2:143].

What is meant by being in the middle is being in the centre of many directions in the horizontal plane and being at the highest point in the vertical plane.

Based on that, Adam or Noah, one of whom brought the first message, cannot be described as having the message which was the last one, because he was definitely not the last Prophet, so he can never deserve to be called the middle one, whereas Muhammad (peace and bless-

40. A just (and the best) nation: the phrase *ummah wusta* may also be translated as "middle nation" (Pickthall) or "a nation justly balanced" (Yusuf Ali). [Translator]

ings of Allah be upon him) described himself as the final Prophet, and he also described himself as being in the middle, so the two descriptions are combined in him. In the Qur'ân he is described as the last of the Prophets, in *Surat al-Ahzab* where it says:

“Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last (end) of the Prophets. And Allah is Ever All Aware of everything” [*al-Ahzab* 33:40].

And he said: ‘I have several names. I am Muhammad, and I am Ahmad, and I am *al-Hashir* (the gatherer) at whose feet the people will be gathered, and I am *al-Mahi* (the eraser) by means of whom Allah erases disbelief, and I am *al-'Aqib* (the last).’⁴¹

His message is also described as being the middle one, as it says in *Surat al-Baqarah*:

“Thus We have made you, a just (and

41. *al-'Aqib* (the last) is the one after whom there will be no other Prophet, as al-Zuhri said. Narrated by al-Bukhaari (4614) and Muslim (2354) and others, from Muhammad ibn Jubayr ibn Mut'im, from his father.

the best) nation⁴², that you be witnesses over mankind and the Messenger be a witness over you. And We made the *Qiblah* (prayer direction towards Jerusalem) which you used to face, only to test those who followed the Messenger from those who would turn on their heels (i.e. disobey the Messenger). Indeed it was great (heavy) except for those whom Allah guided. And Allah would never make your faith (prayers) to be lost (i.e. your prayers offered towards Jerusalem). Truly, Allah is full of kindness, the Most Merciful towards mankind" [*al-Baqarah* 2:143].

If Adam or Noah deserved to be described as being in the middle on the basis of uniting the two ends of the necklace, as we mentioned, then it would not be in the middle in principle, rather it is less likely to be in the middle, because it is at the beginning in chronological terms. How great a distance there is between the one who starts at the edge and his reaching the middle in the horizontal plane and the highest point in the vertical plane from a

42. A just (and the best) nation: the phrase *ummah wusta* may also be translated as "middle nation" (Pickthall) or "a nation justly balanced" (Yusuf Ali). [Translator]

distance.

All nations may claim or even compete to be in the middle, but the matter is not so unclear as to cause confusion even to the least rational and youngest of people. Examining the teachings of each Prophet will show you which Prophet's teachings are in the middle in comparison to other Prophets, and then you will be able to know who is the last Prophet.

The issue of who is in the middle is not only theoretical, rather you may find it in any minor issue of law, as may become clear by comparing.

Don't the Christians worship Jesus (peace be upon him) alongside God, whereas the Jews killed their Prophets? Who is in the middle between the exaggeration of the former and the heedlessness of the latter except the followers of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), who said: 'Do not praise me as the Christians praised Jesus son of Mary, for I am a slave, so say 'the slave of God and His Messenger.'

Aren't the Muslims in the middle between the Jews who forbade God to abrogate and confirm whatever He willed

of rulings, and the Christians who permitted their senior scholars to legislate what was permitted and what was forbidden, instead of God? The Muslims are in the middle because they follow the way of *ijtihad*, studying the texts of *shari'ah* within the guidelines which are well known and clear.

Aren't the Muslims in the middle with regard to food, as the Jews forbade to themselves good things that God had permitted to them, so they do not eat animals with undivided hooves, like camels, or ducks, whereas the Christians permitted to themselves the consumption of unclean and impure things, like pork, alcohol and so on? But the Muslims do not eat anything but the good things as Allah says of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him):

"Those who follow the Messenger, the Prophet who can neither read nor write whom they find written with them in the *Tawraat* (Torah) and the *Injeel* (Gospel), — he commands them for *Al-Ma'ruf* (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam has ordained); and forbids them from *Al-Munkar* (i.e. disbelief, polytheism of all kinds,

and all that Islam has forbidden); he allows them as lawful *At Tayyibat* (i.e. all good and lawful as regards things, deeds, beliefs, persons and foods), and prohibits them as unlawful *Al Khaba'ith* (i.e. all evil and unlawful as regards things, deeds, beliefs, persons and foods), he releases them from their heavy burdens (of Allah's Covenant with the children of Israel), and from the fetters (bindings) that were upon them. So those who believe in him, honour him, help him, and follow the light (the Qur'ân) which has been sent down with him, it is they who will be successful" [*al-A'raf* 7:157].

Isn't Islam in the middle between Judaism which permits shedding the blood and taking the wealth of non-Jews, and Christianity's false idealism which says, "*If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.*" [Matthew 5:39]

Anyone with the slightest modicum of reason and fair-mindedness will inevitably believe in Islam when he realizes its moderate nature. But believe me, those who are falling short in conveying the message of Islam are the Muslims. If

the Muslims had conveyed this moderate message properly, they would have guided the world.

This idea was best expressed in a statement by Professor Irving, a professor at the University of Tennessee in the USA, when he addressed a group of Muslims in Glasgow, Scotland a few years ago. He said:

‘You will never be able to compete with the great nations in science or technology, or in political, economic or military terms, but you can bring these nations to their knees by means of Islam. Wake up from your slumber and realize the value of this light which you are carrying, for which the souls of people in all corners of the world are thirsting. Learn Islam and apply it, convey it to others and the world will open up to you, and everyone with power and authority will succumb to you. Give me forty young men who understand this religion in depth and apply it precisely in their lives, who can present it to the people in modern language and with a modern style, and I will

open up the Americas with them.’⁴³

Prince Charles, the heir to the British throne, gave a lecture on values in the conference hall of the British Foreign Office [The Wilton Park Seminar, Wilton Park, West Sussex] in December 1996, which clearly indicates the meanings that we referred to. He said:

‘Modern materialism in my humble opinion is unbalanced and increasingly damaging in its long-term consequences. ... But during the last three centuries, in the Western world at least, a dangerous division has come into being in the way we perceive the world around us. Science has tried to assume a monopoly - even a tyranny - over our understanding. Religion and science have become separated, with the result, as William Wordsworth said, ‘Little we see in nature that is ours’. Science has attempted to take over the natural world from God, with the result that it has fragmented the cosmos and relegated the sacred to a separate, and secondary, compartment of our understanding, divorced from the practical

43. Quoting from *Qadiyat al-Takhalluf al-‘Ilmi wal-Tiqnni fil-‘Aalam al-Islami*, by Dr. Zaghloul al-Najjar, p. 137. See also *al-Islam wa Mushkilaat al-Hadaarah* by Sayyid Qutub, p. 136 ff.

day-to-day existence.

We are only now beginning to gauge the disastrous results of this outlook. We in the Western world seem to have lost a sense of the wholeness of our environment, and of our immense and inalienable responsibility to the whole of creation. This has led to an increasing failure to appreciate or understand tradition, and the wisdom of our forebears accumulated over the centuries. Indeed, tradition is positively discriminated against - as if it was some socially unacceptable disease...

In my view, a more holistic approach is needed in our contemporary world. Science has done the inestimable service of showing us a world much more complex than we ever imagined. But in its modern, materialist, one-dimensional form, it cannot explain everything. God is not merely the ultimate Newtonian mathematician or the mechanistic clockmaker.

...

As science and technology have become increasingly separated from ethical, moral and sacred considerations, so have the implications of such a separation become more sombre and horrifying - as we see,

for example, in genetic manipulation, or in the consequences of the kind of (scientific) arrogance so blatant in the scandal of BSE. ...

I have always felt that tradition is not a man-made element in our lives, but a God-given intuition of natural rhythms, of the fundamental harmony which emerges from the union of those paradoxical opposites which exist in every aspect of nature. Tradition reflects the timeless order of the cosmos, and anchors us into an awareness of the great mysteries of the universe so that, as Blake put it, we can see the whole universe in an atom and eternity in a moment. ...

Islamic culture in its traditional form has striven to preserve this integrated spiritual view of the world in a way we have not seen fit to do in recent generations in the West. There is much we can share with that Islamic world view in this respect ...

But in the West, in turn, we need to be taught by Islamic teachers how to learn once again with our hearts, as well as our heads... The approaching millennium may be the ideal catalyst for helping to explore and stimulate these links, and I

hope we shall not ignore the opportunity this gives us to rediscover the spiritual underpinning of our entire existence.⁴⁴

Fourth rational requirement: Unity and harmony among companions

His
compani-
ons

Reason says that if you have a long thread that has a split at the beginning, the further the thread stretches, the further apart the two sides will become. Thus the distance and the drifting away will continue to increase the further the line extends from the starting point. Is there anyone who can stop the increasing distance between the two sides?

If the change started at the time of Jesus (peace be upon him), until the extent of the split reached a ratio of 10/12 when Jesus was still among them, then how great do you think the split would become after Jesus (peace be upon him) departed this world?

How great will this alteration and change be? How great will the distortions and lies be? What trace of the original will be left at the point where the thread split?

44. *al-Sharq al-Awsat* newspaper, issue no. 6592, dated 15/12/1996, quoted from *Kayfa Nad'un-Naas* by Professor Muhammad Qutub, p. 186, 187

Based on this mathematical principle, it can never be appropriate for any message to be the final one unless the message was preserved at the time of its bearer's death at least. The greatest guarantee of its preservation after its bearer is gone is harmony among his companions after his departure and their being united in following his principles.

Here we may go back and apply the clear rule concerning the followers of the Prophets.

Following paragraph not there in revised Arabic text

Did the companions of Moses (peace be upon him) preserve the message of Moses, when they let him down time after time during his lifetime, until he died in the wilderness when he was with them?

Did the companions of Jesus (peace be upon him) preserve the message of Jesus when they handed him over to the pagan ruler, then drifted away after he was gone until none of the twelve disciples remained steadfast in adhering to his principles except two? How could there be any trust left between the Prophet and those who came after him?

This description is not hidden to anyone who studies the history of Judaism and Christianity. It was even stated clearly in the Qur'ân, when God says in *Surat al-A'raf*:

“And We have broken them (i.e. the Jews) up into various separate groups on the earth: some of them are righteous and some are away from that. And We tried them with good (blessings) and evil (calamities) in order that they might turn (to Allah’s Obedience)” [*al-A'raf* 7:168].

Whereas the historian is amazed when he sees the unity of the companions of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). No division emerged at his time. Hence you see the Companions of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) described clearly in the Qur'ân, in *Surat al-Anfal*:

“And He has united their (i.e. believers’) hearts. If you had spent all that is in the earth, you could not have united their hearts, but Allah has united them. Certainly He is All-Mighty, All-Wise” [*al-Anfal* 8:63].

The greatest feature of the life of Mu-

hammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is that there is nothing mysterious and nothing hidden about it. You or anyone else can find out and decide about all aspects of his life. When you try to accuse Muhammad, the response and rebuttal of your accusation will come to you from all directions. Do you know why?

Blachère says: 'It does not seem that Muhammad tried at any time to be mysterious about his private life. His words, gestures and behaviour as a father or husband, his behaviour as a believer, were an open book to his followers who were modelling themselves, out of conviction, in his image, and thus the features of the *Sunnah* were defined.'⁴⁵

History records practical events which no historian disagrees with: after the death of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), some of the Arab tribes apostatized. Some of them declared their apostasy because they did not want to pay *zakah*, and others claimed that there was a Prophet after

45. Le Problème de Mahomet, from *Nubuwwat Muhammad fil-Fikr al-Istishraaqi al-Mu'aasir* by kakhsar al-Shaayib, p. 414

Muhammad among them. But the outcome was that this episode did not lead to any divisions among the Companions of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Instead it united them all. There were some battles, but that only lasted for a few months, then the apostasy movement faded away for good. None of the Companions of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) were involved with this apostasy.

You have seen that during the Farewell Pilgrimage of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), more than one hundred thousand people performed the pilgrimage with him, each one of whom was willing to sacrifice his soul, his children and his wealth for him. Moreover, when he returned to Madinah after the Farewell Pilgrimage, tribes came to him from all over Arabia, declaring their entry into Islam. When he died, things were settled and his Companions were the strongest they had ever been, and they continued to grow stronger as the years went by, and their religion continued to spread further. This makes reason reach the

conclusion, decisively and beyond any shadow of a doubt, that he is the only one who deserves to be described as the final Prophet.

To this evidence may be added the respect that the followers of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) have for the Companions of Muhammad, even those who did not see them and those who came after them, until the Day of Resurrection. His followers do not regard anyone as equal to the Companions of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). This is out of loyalty and respect towards their Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). One aspect of this respect is that you will find in this book, every time I mention one of them I say 'may Allah be pleased with him' or some such phrase. The same thing is done by anyone who writes about them or mentions them, whether in a book or sermon. This high esteem in which they are held has nothing to do with the mistakes that any of them may have made in the conclusions they worked out (*ijtihad*). Respecting their status is due to their seniority in Islam and their having been Companions

of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). This is what the Muslims always remember, and indeed God mentions that in the Qur'ân and praises those who come after them and pray for them. God says in *Surat al-Hashr*:

“And those who came after them say: ‘Our Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in Faith, and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. Our Lord! You are indeed full of kindness, Most Merciful’” [*al-Hashr* 59:10].

If this is how the Muslims rally around the Companions of its Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), then how about the way the Companions of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) rallied around him? Is there any other nation like this?

Fifth rational requirement: his message is general and addressed to the followers of all other Prophets

Reason says that if each Prophet was sent only to his own people, then the message of the last Prophet should include all the nations of the Prophets who came before him, otherwise, not sending him to all

the nations of the Prophets rules out any idea of his being the final one. If Prophets continued to be sent only to their own people, then this implies that Prophets should continue to be sent and should never end, and thus the world would be in a vicious circle. Therefore it was essential that there should be a final Prophet whose message would encompass all previous messages.

This is the description of the message of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), unlike all other messages, because each Prophet was sent only to his own people. The message of Moses (peace be upon him) was for the Children of Israel only, and the message of Jesus (peace be upon him) came to complete the message of Moses. It was only for them (the Children of Israel), as Jesus said: *"I was sent only to the lost sheep of [the house of] Israel."* (Matthew 15:24)

But the message of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is for all of mankind. Based on that, you – a French Professor – belong to the nation of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), as do

all the westerners, easterners, Indians, Chinese, Americans, Europeans, Arabs, non-Arabs, white, black, red, blond... all of them belong to his nation, to all of whom he was sent, and he called them all without the slightest discrimination. Hence the characteristic of the message of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), which is that it is for all of mankind, was proven in the Qur'ân where Allah says in *Surat Saba'*:

“And We have not sent you except as a giver of glad tidings and a warner to all mankind, but most of men know not” [*Saba'* 34:28].

I affirm to you that I am not quoting these verses in order to prove a religious argument, but the best description of the message is to be taken from the book of the message itself, then you can judge rationally for or against it.

If you wish to clarify this issue further and prove it, you should know that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not say that his message was general and for all of mankind, and then stop there. Rather he brought a system of belief and a way of life to prove this description. He called all of

mankind to his religion, and this is something that did not happen with the other Prophets. He called the kings and rulers of other nations to Islam, and his letters have been preserved and recorded by all historians, both Arab and western. That was mentioned by Toynbee, Gustave le Bon and other western historians.

After that, he made the foundation of his message equality, and he applied this principle despite the natural financial and social differences and so on, without it leading to the emergence of classes or tribalism in his society, or eliminating people's characteristics or denying them their rights.

If you go back to the reasons why many people became Muslim before, you will find that they are the same reasons why many people are coming to Islam still. One of the greatest of these reasons is true equality. You will find that the oppressed are most usually the ones who enter his religion, because it restores to them their human rights in real terms. And you will find that the oppressors are the least likely to become Muslims, because Islam obliges them to restore the rights of the oppressed.

His methodology has been implemented

Sixth rational requirement: application of his methodology and teaching in real life

Do you accept the claim that a message is suited to all people if it was not implemented in a practical sense among a nation that came before, and not even among the people of the one who brought the message?

Tell me the name of any of the Prophets (peace be upon them) who was able to apply the Book that was revealed to him for the first time in his life as it was revealed, except Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Did Jesus (peace be upon him) apply the Gospel when he was faced with the lengthy trials that befell him throughout his life and until the end of his days at the hands of his people?

Or was Moses (peace be upon him) able to apply the Torah as it was revealed to him, when the greatest calamity that he faced was the troubles that he faced with his people and companions until he died in the wilderness, in the desert of Sinai?

So how can we apply a system to all people when it was not even applied at the

time of the one to whom it was revealed in the first place?

If we stipulate the condition that the last message should have been applied in the lifetime of the one who brought it, and afterwards, and it should have been applied to various types of people, and it should have been applied by various nations to themselves and others, then after that it will have been proven that it is suitable for this era and subsequent eras, then how far-fetched is it to describe as the final message a message that was not applied in a complete and ideal manner during the lifetime of its Prophet, even though the other conditions were fulfilled?

But look at the Qur'ân and the teachings of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and how they were embodied in the lives of people at the individual, state and *ummah*-wide levels, at different periods and among different nations. This is true greatness. Greatness does not lie in idealism that cannot be applied, and that is only good for slogans and cheering. Rather greatness lies in putting these principles into practice in real life, so that when these principles

are applied, it looks as if they are realistic in the ideal world and idealistic in the real world. So how about in the material world? Whatever the case, the principles of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) were applied in reality in the best and most perfect manner, during his lifetime for ten years, then after that they were applied during the four periods of the caliphates of Abu Bakr al-Siddeeq, 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab, 'Uthman ibn 'Affan – all in the Arabian Peninsula – and in the caliphate of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib in 'Iraq. After that, it expanded with the Umayyad caliphate in Syria and the 'Abbasid caliphate in Iraq, and the Ottomans in Turkey. This application included all Islamic regions. The places mentioned were only capitals of the caliphates. The application of these principles knew no geographical bounds. Rather it extended to all the countries that are now known as Arab or Muslim countries, and to many regions beyond that, thus proving that these principles are fit to be applied to all nations.

The soundness of its principles was not proven only to the Arabs, rather these principles were also applied among you

– Europeans – and you can still see the remnants of that in Andalusia in Spain, and what you achieved in the sciences and in the Renaissance are mere traces of it, so how about if Islam had ruled you?

Isn't this an historical fact, even though some have tried, in vain, to erase it?

Not only that, this is an experience which is fit to be applied to all nations, regardless of whether those who apply it are Arabs or non-Arabs, otherwise how could those who carried Islam and implemented it have succeeded, such as the nations that were founded in Europe, Asia, Africa and so on?

Tell me, who among the companions of Moses (peace be upon him) was an Arab or a European?

Who among the companions of Jesus (peace be upon him) was a Westerner or a Persian or an Indian?

But come and look at the Companions of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and you will find that among them were Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, 'Ali and other Arabs, and you will find non-Arabs such as Salman al-Farisi (the Persian) and Suhayb al-Rumi

(the Roman), and Bilal al-Habashi (the Abyssinian), who was the *muezzin* of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and so on. For your information, Bilal was a slave who was bought from his Arab master by Abu Bakr, who manumitted him. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) raised his status to such an extent that he made him his *muezzin*, the one who called people to prayer. 'Umar – who was the second caliph after the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) – used to say: 'Abu Bakr, our master, manumitted our master'⁴⁶ – meaning Bilal. Are these not examples that demonstrate that race has no effect whatsoever on the implementation of Islam or on its leadership?

This is in addition to the fact that this realistic approach is not merely theoretical, rather it is a sign of vitality, as the great thinker Bernard Shaw calls it: 'I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality.

I have studied him - the wonderful man

46. Narrated by al-Bukhari (3754) from Jabir ibn 'Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with him).

and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Saviour of Humanity.

I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness.'

Bosworth Smith says: 'He was Caesar and Pope in one; but he was Pope without Pope's pretensions. Caesar without the legions of Caesar: without a standing army, without a bodyguard, without a palace, without a fixed revenue. If ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by the right divine, it was Muhammad, for he had all the power without its instruments and without its supports.'⁴⁷

Seventh rational requirement: decisively ruling out the possibility of inheriting Prophethood

It is essential that the final Prophet should rule out any possibility of the Prophethood being inherited, and that he should announce that in a way that leaves no room for doubt, clearly dem-

47. Bosworth Smith, *Mohammad and Mohammadanism*, London, 1874, p. 92

onstrating that he is the last or final one and that there will never be any Prophet after him.

In principle, religious or worldly authority should be passed on, so when a king dies a new king must be appointed to rule the kingdom after him, whether he appoints someone or not. When a president dies, he is succeeded by another president, and the same was true of the Messengers. God never left mankind without a message, for how could He bring them to account for something without having conveyed the message to them? God says in the Qur'ân:

“Then We sent Our Messengers in succession. Every time there came to a nation their Messenger, they denied him; so We made them follow one another (to destruction), and We made them as *Ahadith* (the true stories for mankind to learn a lesson from them). So away with a people who believe not!” [*al-Mu'minun* 23:44].

If there is a need for a change to this regular system, then the king, or president, or God, must announce in a way that leaves no room for doubt that this system is coming to an end.

Based on that we say: show us a Prophet among these Prophets who made such an announcement. Indeed, show us a Prophet who did not appoint another Prophet to follow him in clear terms. Abraham appointed his sons, and his sons appointed their sons, and so on.

Moses (peace be upon him) appointed Seth, and Jesus (peace be upon him) appointed the Apostles.

Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is unique, not only in the fact that no Prophet came after him, but also in that he announced that to the world. He clearly stated that he was the last of the Prophets on more than one occasion. He said: 'There will be thirty great liars among my nation, each of whom will claim to be a Prophet, but I am the last of the Prophets, there will be no Prophet after me.'⁴⁸ And he said: 'Before the Hour there will be great liars; beware of them.'⁴⁹

The end of Prophethood is even clearly stated by God in the Qur'ân, in *Surat al-Ahzab*, where He says:

48. Narrated by Muslim (2889) and others from Thawban (may Allah be pleased with him)

49. Narrated by Muslim (7446) and others.

“Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last (end) of the Prophets. And Allah is Ever All Aware of everything” [*al-Ahzab* 33:40].

Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is unique in that no male child of his lived after his death, even though he left nine wives behind when he died, so God cut off any possibility of the Prophethood remaining among his offspring, let alone anyone else.

He had a son called Ibrahim, but he died when he was a little over two years old. His mother was an Egyptian Coptic Christian called Mariyah.

Moreover, his Companions did not compete for Prophethood at all after he died either. If any of them had claimed to be a Prophet, they would have executed him straight away. Those who did make such claims after his death were branded apostates and fought against fiercely. Some of them were killed, and some repented and surrendered, and were forgiven.

If there had been any possibility of there being any Prophet after him, these people would not have been killed and the

survival of the Islamic state would not have been exposed to danger at this early stage.

Eighth rational requirement: realistic example for all sectors of society and all nations

Some of the Prophets were sent to people who were merchants and traders, so they taught them the proper way of doing trade and forbade them to cheat and deceive people or lie, such as Shu'ayb (peace be upon him). Some of them were sent to people whose work was mostly handicrafts, so they taught them the right way of working and forbade them to do wrong, such as David. Some of them were sent to people who were murderers and bandits, such as the people of Thamud. And so on and so forth.

Because it was an historical necessity for earlier nations to transmit their knowledge to later nations, so that the later nations would become a focal point where good experience would be accumulated by their good people and evil experience would be accumulated by their evil people, it was essential that the final Prophet should be the focal point for the accumulation of all the good experience of

those who came before him, and for the accumulation of the remedies that dealt with all the experience of the evil people, and also offer protection against evil by means of his teachings.

Let us look now at two issues: what do you know about the aspects of the life of each of the earlier Prophets?

You will find that many aspects of their lives are shrouded in mystery.

What do you know about the family life of Jesus (peace be upon him)?

What do you know about his business dealings? What do you know about his military life?

What do you know about his judicial life?

What do you know about the life of Moses (peace be upon him) – his health, intellectual life or family life?

These are the most famous of the Prophets among you, but you do not know anything about their lives, so how can you know about the lives of other Prophets?

Is it possible that the one whose life with these aspects is unknown can be the final

Prophet?

If merchants and businessmen, for example, look at the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), they will find a complete and integrated economic system. In the books of Islamic rulings there are chapters that deal specifically with transactions and business dealings.

Similarly you will find information on his devotional life, his judicial life, his social life, his experience in calling people to God, his life as a reformer, his health, and so on.

If you look at what has been narrated about Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), you will say: If there was nothing in the life of Muhammad but the fact that his leadership encompasses all types of people in all situations and all aspects of life, that would be sufficient for us to conclude that he alone should be the final Prophet.

If the various aspects of the life of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) were distributed among the earlier nations, each nation taking the part that is of particular interest to it,

An
example
for all

you would find that each nation would have what is sufficient and more. It is as if the Prophets were all combined in the character of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and as if all religions were combined in his. How excellent are the words of the thinker Professor Jules Masserman: 'People like Pasteur and Salk are leaders in the first sense. People like Gandhi and Confucius, on one hand, and Alexander, Caesar and Hitler on the other, are leaders in the second and perhaps the third sense. Jesus and Buddha belong in the third category alone. Perhaps the greatest leader of all times was Mohammed, who combined all three functions. To a lesser degree, Moses did the same.'⁵⁰

In fact if you look at some examples from his life you will be astonished at their variety, comprehensiveness and realism. I will give just a few small examples from his life.

Practical
examples
from his
life

With regard to judicial matters, for example, his wife Umm Salamah (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated that the

50. Professor Jules Masserman, 'Who Were History's Great Leaders?', *TIME Magazine*, July 15, 1974

Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) heard an argument at the door of his apartment, so he went out to them and said: 'I am only human. Disputants come to me and one of them may be more eloquent than the other, so I think that he is telling the truth and I rule in his favour. If I rule in a person's favour concerning the rights of another Muslim, it is no more than a piece of Fire, so let him take it or leave it.'⁵¹

And he said: 'If one of you is tested with having to judge between Muslims, let him not pass judgement when he is angry, and let him treat them equally in the way he looks at them and the way they are seated and in his gestures towards them, and let him not raise his voice to one and not the other.'⁵²

With regard to family life and real family problems, this realistic story is narrated: It was narrated that al-Nu'man ibn Bashir said: Abu Bakr asked for permission to enter upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and he heard 'A'ishah speaking in a loud voice.

51. Al-Bukhaari - al-Fath 13 (7181); Muslim, 1713

52. Narrated by Abu Ya'la

When he entered, he caught hold of her to slap her and he said: 'Why do I see you raising your voice to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?' But the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stopped him and Abu Bakr went out angrily. When Abu Bakr went out, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'Did you see how I saved you from the man?' A few days passed, then Abu Bakr asked permission to enter upon the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and he found that they had reconciled. He said to them: Include me in your peace as you included me in your war. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'We will, we will.'

With regard to being fair and balanced in marital relationships:

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'No (male) believer should hate a (female) believer. If he dislikes one of her characteristics he will be pleased with another.'⁵³

53. Narrated by Muslim 1469 and others from Abu

With regard to balancing one's time between worship and other matters of life, this beneficial story was narrated from his era:

It was narrated that Abu Juhayfah Wahb ibn 'Abdullah al-Sawa'i (may Allah be pleased with him) said: the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) established a religious bond of brotherhood between Salman and Abul-Dardaa'. Salman visited Abul-Dardaa' and noticed that Umm al-Dardaa' appeared scruffy and unkempt. He said to her, What is the matter with you? She said, Your brother Abul-Dardaa' has no need of this world. Then Abul-Dardaa' came (to visit him). He made some food for him, and said, Eat. [Abul-Dardaa'] said, I am fasting. [Salman] said, I will not eat until you eat. So he ate. When night came, Abul-Dardaa' went to pray *qiyaam*, but [Salman] said to him, Sleep, so he slept. Then he wanted to get up for *qiyaam*, but [Salman] said, Sleep. When the last part of the night came, Salman said, Now get up. So they prayed, then Salmaan said to him, Your Lord has a right over you, your soul has a right

Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him).

over you and your wife has a right over you, so give each one his due. He [Abul-Dardaa'] went to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and told him about that. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, 'Salman is right.'

With regard to social relationships and the extent to which talk and disputes affect efficiency:

It was narrated that Abu Umamah al-Bahili (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'No people ever went astray after having been guided but they got involved in arguments.' Then the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) recited the verse: **"They quoted not the above example except for argument. Nay! But they are a quarrelsome people"** [az-Zukhruf 43:58].

With regard to intelligence in problem solving and fairness, there is the following realistic story:

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be

upon him) said: 'A man bought some land from another man, then the man who had bought the land found a jar on his land, in which there was some gold. The one who had bought the land said: 'Take your gold from me, for I only bought the land from you; I did not buy the gold from you.' The one who had sold the land said: 'No, I sold you the land and whatever is in it.' They referred the matter to another man, and the one to whom they referred for judgement said: 'Do you have children?' One of them said, 'I have a son,' and the other said, 'I have a daughter.' He said: 'Then marry the boy to the girl and spend on them both, and give charity.'"⁵⁴

With regard to honouring guests, the following story is narrated:

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: A man came to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said: I am starving. He sent word to one of his wives and she said: By the One Who has sent you with the truth, I do not have anything but water. Then he sent word to another of his wives and she said something similar, until all of them had

54. Al-Bukhaari – al-Fath 6 (3472)

said that: No, by the One Who has sent you with the truth, I do not have anything but water. He said: 'Who will host this man tonight, and Allah will have mercy on him?' An Ansari man stood up and said: 'I will, O Messenger of Allah.' He took him to his house and said to his wife: Do you have anything? She said: No, only the food for my children. He said: Distract them with something, then when our guest comes in, extinguish the lamp and make him think that we are eating. Then when he wants to eat, go to the lamp and extinguish it. They sat and the guest ate, and the following morning he went to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), who said: 'Allah is pleased with what you two did for your guest last night.'⁵⁵

I reaffirm to you that this is not all of his life. These are just a few examples of what has been narrated with *sahih* chains of narration with no room for doubt. There are many times more than this.

Ninth rational requirement: completing the achievements of those who came before him

55. al-Bukhaari – *al-Fath*, 7 (3798); Muslim (2054).

The best analogy of the work of the Prophets is that of a structure, as the best structure is that which builds nations within the structure of humanity. Logic says that if people come one after another, continuing to build a great palace at consecutive intervals, then this structure cannot be completed until the last brick is put in place by the last builder.

Hence it was essential for each Prophet to know what the one before him did, then add to it, and so on, until the last Prophet came, knowing what each of them had done before him, then he made the final addition, which completed the entire structure. Based on the fact that the last of the Prophets to be born was Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), then he is inevitably the last of the builders and Prophets. This fact cannot be altered. Hence Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) gave a clear analogy and said: 'The likeness of me and the Prophets before me is that of a man who built a structure and did it well and made it beautiful, except for the place of one brick in one of its corners. The people started walking around it and admiring

it, and saying, Why wasn't this brick put in place?' He said: 'I am that brick, and the last of the Prophets.'

You would be amazed at how the Qur'ân counts the Prophets one by one, then praises them and tells Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to follow their example.

Think about what Allah says in *Surat al-An'am*:

83. "And that was Our Proof which We gave Ibrahim (Abraham) against his people. We raise whom We will in degrees. Certainly your Lord is All Wise, All Knowing.

84. And We bestowed upon him Ishaq (Isaac) and Ya'qub (Jacob), each of them We guided, and before him, We guided Nuh (Noah), and among his progeny Dawud (David), Sulaymaan (Solomon), Ayyub (Job), Yusuf (Joseph), Musa (Moses), and Harun (Aaron). Thus do We reward the good doers.

85. And Zakariyya (Zachariya), and Yahya (John) and 'Eesa (Jesus) and Ilyas (Elias), each one of them was of the righteous.

86. And Isma'il (Ishmael) and Al-Yasa' (Elisha), and Yunus (Jonah) and Loot (Lot), and each one of them We preferred above the '*Alameen* [mankind and *jinn* (of their times)].

87. And also some of their fathers and their progeny and their brethren, We chose them, and We guided them to the Straight Path.

88. This is the Guidance of Allah with which He guides whomsoever He wills of His slaves. But if they had joined in worship others with Allah, all that they used to do would have been of no benefit to them.

89. They are those whom We gave the Book, *Al Hukm* (understanding of the religious laws), and Prophethood. But if these disbelieve therein (the Book, *Al Hukm* and Prophethood), then, indeed We have entrusted it to a people who are not disbelievers therein.

90. They are those whom Allah had guided. So follow their guidance. Say: 'No reward I ask of you for this (the Qur'ân). It is only a reminder for the '*Alameen* (mankind and *jinn*).'" [*al-An'am* 6:83-90].

But we may wonder: If what the builders all have in common is concern about the soundness of the house that they built, then what do the messages have in common?

The rational answer is that just as they were sent from One, so they must inevitably agree with the basic principle of the message, which is calling people to worship Allah alone, and that every Prophet supported the Prophets who came before him, until the last of them came and supported all of them and added new things in his religion, which does not contradict their religions. This is what is affirmed in the Qur'ân itself, where God says in *Surat al-Ma'idah*:

"And We have sent down to you the Book (this Qur'ân) in truth, confirming the Scripture that came before it and *Muḥaymin* (trustworthy in highness and a witness) over it (old Scriptures)⁵⁶. So judge among them by what Allah has revealed, and follow not their vain desires, diverging away from the truth that has come to

56. *Muḥaymin*: that which testifies the truth that is therein and falsifies the falsehood that is added therein.

you. To each among you, We have prescribed a law and a clear way. If Allah had willed, He would have made you one nation, but that (He) may test you in what He has given you; so compete in good deeds. The return of you (all) is to Allah; then He will inform you about that in which you used to differ”⁵⁷ [*al-Ma'idah* 5:48].

So he supports and also adds. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: ‘The Prophets are half-brothers. Their mothers are different and their religion is one, and I am the closest of people to Jesus son of Mary.’

Tenth rational requirement: telling what will happen at the end of the world and issues of the Hereafter

If the role of the Prophet is to analyze for people what happens to them and offer his advice to them with regard to matters of real life only, then the mission of each Prophet becomes no more than the mission of any reformer other than the

57. Narrated by Abu Dawud (2/214) and Ibn Hibban in his *Sahih* (6775-6782) and others, from Abu Hurayrah. Al-Albaani said in *al-Silsilah al-Sahihah* (5/214): I say: This chain is *sahih* as al-Hafiz said in *al-Fath*, and it meets the conditions of Muslim.

The Resurrection is the final event

Prophets.

Rather the main distinction of the Prophet is that he receives Revelation giving him special information that man cannot know by reason alone, the greatest of which is information about the future that has an impact on their lives, that keeps the message of that Prophet alive for them even if he dies, and as time goes by it only proves further that this is the truth. This is the way from one Prophet to the one who comes after him, and so on.

Because things in this world would be most changeable between the last Prophet and the onset of the Hour, the final Prophet had to explain these events so as to strengthen the faith of his companions and followers when they happen, and so as to protect them from going astray, and so that these reports could take the place of the Prophet if he were alive. If we were to refer to all the books of the Prophets, you will never find any mention of these signs which are only mentioned rarely. Although the Prophets before the final Prophet may be excused for not explaining things that have to do with mankind on the Day of Resurrection in the most

perfect manner, who can excuse the last Prophet for not explaining that – if he did fail to explain it? Who is he going to leave it to so that they can explain it later on?

This alone is sufficient evidence that none of these was the final Prophet, whereas Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mentioned these signs in the clearest possible terms, giving the largest number of signs, and he connected this explanation to the fact that he was the last Prophet by saying, for example: 'Allah did not send any Prophet but he warned his nation about the *Dajjal* (Antichrist). I am the last of the Prophets, and you are the last of the nations, and he will undoubtedly emerge among you.'

If you look at the titles of Islamic books, you will find that the scholars compiled books which dealt specifically with the Prophet's description of many events that will come to pass before the Hour begins. They are called *ashraat al-saa'ah* or portents of the Hour.

He also explained other things that are specific to each person, although all people will go through them. So you will

find many books which speak of what happens to a person from the moment his soul begins to depart, through the moment of death, and what happens after that of the departure of the soul and where it goes, then his entering the grave and what happens there in detail, then the emergence from the grave for the resurrection and gathering, then the arena of Reckoning. He described everything that will happen therein in miraculous, comprehensive and precise detail.

That is only because it is a message which will be followed by nothing other than the onset of the Hour (i.e., the Day of Judgement), no matter how long it takes.

Eleventh rational requirement: a living, lasting and authenticated reference

The scholars are the reference point

Reason says that if every Prophet has a successor, and his successors were also Prophets, then who should succeed the final Prophet when there are no Prophets after him, because if there were any Prophets after him he would not be the last one?

So it is essential that the final Prophet should leave behind him a reference

point to which people can refer, who will convey his message without being Prophets. This attribute is one of the most important attributes, because without it there would be no reference point for the message of that final Prophet and there would be no living reference for people. Moreover, written references alone are not sufficient for many people. How good a testimony is when it comes from all possible sources: written books and living witnesses. There is no way to preserve this lasting, living reference without the existence of Prophets, unless scholars are like Prophets but are not actually Prophets, rather they are successors to the Prophets, whose status stems from the status of the Prophets. This is what became available to the final message of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and this is what the final Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mentioned when he said:

‘Whoever follows a path in the pursuit of knowledge, Allah will make easy for him a path to Paradise. The angels lower their wings in approval of the seeker of knowledge, and everyone in the heavens

and on earth prays for forgiveness for the seeker of knowledge, even the fish in the sea. The superiority of the scholar over the worshipper is like the superiority of the moon over all other heavenly bodies. The scholars are the heirs of the Prophets, for the Prophets did not leave behind dinars or dirhams, rather they left behind knowledge, so whoever takes it has taken a great share.⁵⁸

Apply this description to any of the Prophets and you will see that there is no Prophet who was not followed by another, so it is impossible for any of them to have been the final Prophet, except Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), after whom there is no other Prophet.

Although there were other Prophets after Moses who succeeded him, and after Jesus there came those whom you call the Apostles, and after him came the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), there is no Prophet after Muhammad according to you and according to us: these scholars who came

58. Narrated by Ahmad (21763), Abu Dawud (3641), al-Tirmidhi (2682), Ibn Majah (223) and others.

after Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) are countless and not limited to any country or time. They will continue in all eras and all places until the end of the world.

Twelfth rational requirement: preservation of unchangeable principles

It is essential that the final Prophet – whoever he is – should have unchangeable religious principles which will remain after he is gone as they were during his lifetime.

Otherwise, how could reason be convinced that this is the last of the Prophets, and that he is for all people until the end of the world, at the time when his teachings are non-existent or subject to doubt?

Let us look rationally and impartially: where are the unchangeable principles of the Prophets, and which have survived the most until the present day?

Can anyone dispute that they are the fixed principles of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?

Is there any Book that has been preserved as it was revealed to its Prophet like the

Preservation of the Qur'ân and preservation of the Sunnah

Qur'ân? There is no need to repeat the proof of the preservation of all the guidance of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him); we discussed that in two places previously.

Preservation of the Ka'bah

If anyone is uncertain about these fixed principles, let him look at the focus of prayer of each religion, and he will see that the direction of prayer of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is the only one that is still in safe hands; it is called the *Ka'bah*.

At the same time the Christians' focus of prayer ended up in Muslim hands and it still is. Or at least it will remain disputed for as long as God wills.

As for the Jewish claim that their focus of prayer, the Temple, is underneath *al-Masjid al-Aqsa*, they have not produced any evidence for that. It is more apt for an underground focus of prayer to be for an underground nation!

Preservation of a group that follows the truth

There is no Prophet who left his unchangeable principles still alive among his nation until the Hour begins like the scholars whom Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) left behind, in terms of both quantity and

quality, as we have seen. No matter how confused people's minds may become or how the tests and trials intensify, it is essential that there will remain a group who are protected from deviation despite what their religion is subjected to. They cannot be uprooted as happened when the companions of Jesus (peace be upon him) were put to trial or as happened to the Jews after Moses (peace be upon him). This is what Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) referred to when he said: 'A group of my nation will continue to prevail on the basis of the truth, and they will not be harmed by those who oppose them, until the decree of Allah comes to pass when they are like that.'⁵⁹

Hence you will find that the scholars of the nation of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) are the ones who will bring the nation back to the right path every time the people drift away from it. There are clear examples of that. You know that powerful, hidden organizations always want to spread immorality among the people and pull them away from using their reason and

59. Narrated by Muslim (1920) and others from Thawban.

adhering to good morals, and they are supported in that by the rulers, and this is in accordance with the wishes of the common folk because it is no more than their whims and desires. Who is preventing this decline from occurring and stopping this trend?

Who is withstanding this flood, if not the scholars?

Whereas you will find that many Jewish scholars care about religion only to the extent that they can make material gains from it. As for the Christian scholars, they have no influence in real life or on the street!

The calamity is that perverts have invaded the church and its institutions to such an extent that the ratio of perverts among nuns has become alarming.

The John Jay report found 4,392 recorded cases against priests in the United States, representing 4% of all priests, between 1950 and 2002. The total number of victims was 10,667. The cost of compensation for victims was 2 billion dollars since 1950 and this is what has been paid to date.⁶⁰

60. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_sex

This is what has been recorded. As for unrecorded cases which have occurred in monasteries, there are more than eight times as many cases.

Doctrinal and moral deviation among Jewish and Christian clergy is an ancient issue. The Qur'ân pointed it out and warned against it in the strongest terms. God says in *Surat at-Tawbah*:

“O you who believe! Verily, there are many of the (Jewish) rabbis and the (Christian) monks who devour the wealth of mankind in falsehood, and hinder (them) from the way of Allah (i.e. Allah's religion of Islamic Monotheism). And those who hoard up gold and silver (*Al Kanz*: the money, the *Zakah* of which has not been paid) and spend them not in the way of Allah, announce unto them a painful torment” [*at-Tawbah* 9:34].

Hence we may conclude that the elements of steadfastness that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) left behind in his nation are a guarantee that his religion will be preserved no matter how much time goes by.

So the references are preserved, in the form of the Qur'ân which is recorded in people's hearts and on paper. If all the written (printed) *Mus-hafs* were burned, you would still find scholars who could protect the Qur'ân from any change. If all the scholars died, you would still find many more children who had memorized the Qur'ân, starting from the age of five years, who can recall it in full with no mistakes. If all the Arabs died, you would find innumerable non-Arabs in many places who have memorized it. The second preserved reference is the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The *qiblah* or direction of prayer is also preserved. Those who are guarding the faith will never cease to exist, namely the scholars. And the language of the Qur'ân is preserved and has not died out as happened to the languages of the other Books of divine origin. What is left after that? Isn't this proof that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was the last Prophet?

His
greatest
miracle
will abide

Thirteenth rational requirement: his miracle will abide until the end of the world

Reason says that it is not possible for the

last of the Prophets to bring a miracle, then the miracle disappear when he died. What is the fault of one who came after him and did not see his miracle if he does not believe what people told him about it?

How can one who did not see the miracle be held accountable in the same manner as one who saw the miracle for himself at the time of that Prophet?

Is the one who saw the table of Jesus (peace be upon him) as it was descending from heaven, then ate and drank at that table and it went through his veins and stomach, like one who hears of it today but does not know how authentic these events were and does not know whether the reports are true or false?

If there was any miracle of any of the Prophets other than the final Prophet – let us assume – that lasted after his death, then the end of that miracle would be the coming of the subsequent Prophet. Hence it is essential that the characteristic of the miracle of the final Prophet should be that it will last until the end of the world, because there is no Prophet after him until the end of the world.

Based on that, let us ask: Is there any miracle of the previous Prophets that still exists?

The answer is: No, nothing ... apart from the Qur'ân.

Hence it is essential that the bearer of the final message should be Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), because his miracle is the only miracle that has lasted until today, and will last until the Day of Resurrection.

Moreover, the Qur'ân itself contains various miracles for everyone, as we have seen in the discussion on 'Survival between the Torah, Gospel and Qur'ân' that there is scientific proof that this Prophet is the last one, and that he is undoubtedly true.

This evidence is spread throughout the Qur'ân and *Sunnah*, and this evidence is proven in all fields of life, in medicine, astronomy, in the oceans and deserts, in childbirth, in the trees, in the earth and heavens. Go back and look at what was said in the discussion on the Qur'ân and reason.

Fourteenth rational requirement: flexibility and precision

Reason says that the manufacturer benefits from each new experiment on the device that he made, until he reaches a level when he can announce the introduction of his new device. The same is true of laws, as they developed in accordance with man's needs. Some people may need some flexibility whereas others need more strictness; some may need their laws to focus on financial dealings whereas others may need less of a focus on money, and so on.

Human perfection requires nothing less than perfection in laws which combine flexibility and precision at a higher level.

But anyone may ask: How can we follow laws that were revealed more than a thousand years ago?

Is it possible that they may encompass huge human developments that have been made?

The answer to this question is the answer to specific questions. Isn't God the One Who created...

The answer is yes. Then isn't God the One Who revealed the Book?

The answer is yes.

But with regard to the huge developments, then I will give a tangible example. Has man, with all the developments he has made in airplanes and rockets, been able to go beyond the boundary of heaven? The answer is no.

More importantly we may ask: has man with all the telescopes that he has developed been able to see the furthest point of the universe? The answer is no.

So despite these huge developments, man is unable to physically go beyond the boundary of the heavens and his sight is unable to reach the boundary of the universe. If God has made man unable to reach the end of the universe physically or by means of his sight, then man is much more incapable of comprehending the laws of God.

Therefore one of the most important attributes of the final law is that it should be able to encompass the developments of life with precision, not subject to altering, changing or disappearing, as George Bernard Shaw said in his description of Islam: 'It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating

capacity to the changing phase of existence which can make itself appeal to every age.'

The one who examines the nature of Islamic *shari'ah* will find that these two elements feature prominently in it: flexibility and precision. It is sufficient to examine two guidelines which are represented in two basic principles. The first is the principle that everything is basically permissible, i.e., using everything that exists is permissible for man so long as there is benefit in it and it helps him. This principle is based on many verses in the Qur'ân itself, such as the verse in *Surat al-Baqarah* which says: **"He it is Who created for you all that is on earth. Then He rose over (*Istawa*) towards the heaven and made them seven heavens and He is the All-Knower of everything"** [*al-Baqarah* 2:29]. This principle includes all scientific developments that are beneficial to man, both in the past and in the future, no matter how long, until the Day of Resurrection.

The second guideline is the well known legislative principle that acts of worship are basically forbidden, i.e., it is not permissible to add to the acts of worship that

God has prescribed. Hence it is not permissible for man to issue laws, because issuing laws is an act of worship, and it is not permissible for one man to worship another. Man has nothing to do with the way in which prayers are to be offered, because prayer is worship. But he does have something to do with the way in which sales and purchases and other transactions are done, and establishing institutions and systems and so on. In this regard you will find that flexibility which is so vast that no human can comprehend how vast it is, and you will find the potential for encompassing all human developments, no matter how great they are. That is like the example of a man standing in the sunlight on a clear day in the open desert. No matter how hard he tries he will not be able to go beyond the limits of the light, because the light is extending far and wide and no matter how hard he tries to jump he can never go above the source of the light. He can never jump as high as his own height. No matter how hard he tries to take away that light, it will not decrease in fact. No matter how hard he tries to cover the light, he will never succeed.

Perhaps you may be wondering: where is the precision then?

The answer is that the precision is in the invariables which cannot be undone. Among the invariables in terms of interactions is the prohibition on *riba* (usury), the prohibition on obscenity, the prohibition on betrayal, the prohibition on lying, the prohibition on consuming people's wealth unlawfully or wrongfully, the prohibition on bearing false witness, and so on. If you avoid these forbidden things and others like them, then do whatever you wish.

Don't you agree, after this, that this message is the one which deserves to be the last?

Fifteenth rational requirement: Its system should be based on knowledge

Life is life, earth is earth, and raw material is raw material. Man's scientific discoveries are based on two factors: either invention or putting things together. As life will continue after the final message, this message must be based on knowledge which will be able to encompass any expansion in knowledge and life until the Day of Resurrection, otherwise

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the final religion will continue to fall behind life and thus people will be living in chaos. Isn't this a rational given?

Which of the messages of divine origin focused on knowledge as the Message of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did? We have discussed this previously in the discussion on the Qur'ân and science.

Does it make sense to say that the accumulation of experience, levels of discovery and the vastness of human reason were, at any stage of history or at the time of any of the Prophets, as they were during the period of history when Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was sent and afterwards?

Hence it is essential that his message should be the final message, and his message should also be able not only to keep pace with scientific developments and the expansion of human knowledge, but also to add to it and increase it. We have seen a great deal of evidence to that effect in the discussion on 'Survival between the Torah, Gospel and Qur'ân' and in this gathering."

Dr. Breughel: "I would like to pause

here so that you can prove to me that all the words of Muhammad are in accordance with modern science. Prove that to me, even if it is with just one clear example.”

Abu Haamid: “My dear Professor, as your speciality is embryology, I would like to ask you which scientists believe is created first: the bones or the flesh, when the foetus is formed in its mother’s womb?”

Dr. Breughel: “The well known theory worldwide was that the flesh is formed first, until modern science discovered the fact which changed this concept and turned the science of embryology upside down, when science proved that the bones are formed of cartilage first, then the flesh covers them.”

Abu Haamid: “I do not disagree with a single thing you have said, but I ask you: What would you say if I told you that the Qur’ân mentioned this fact hundreds of years before modern scientists knew it, and mentioned it in very clear terms? Can you say after this that it was written by a human?”

Do you have any explanation other than

Scientific miracle of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)

that it is from Allah?

Read these verses from *Surat al-Mu'minun*:

12. “And indeed We created man (Adam) out of an extract of clay (water and earth).

13. Thereafter We made him (the offspring of Adam) as a *Nutfah* (mixed drops of the male and female sexual discharge and lodged it) in a safe lodging (womb of the woman).

14. Then We made the *Nutfah* into a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood), then We made the clot into a little lump of flesh, then We made out of that little lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, and then We brought it forth as another creation. So Blessed is Allah, the Best of creators” [*al-Mu'minun* 23:12-14].

It definitively states that the bones come before the flesh.”

Dr. Breughel: “This is from the Qur’ân. But where does Muhammad fit into the topic of foetal development?”

Abu Haamid: “My answer is that this Qur’ân was revealed to Muhammad

(peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and it is his miracle. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) defined the stages of foetal formation precisely, to the day, at a time when it was impossible for Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to take this scientific risk of blowing away his religion and his credibility, were it not for the fact that God revealed to him these precise figures.

In a *hadith* narrated by Imam al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim, with their chain of narrators going back to 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, it is narrated that he said:

'The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), who is the truthful and trustworthy one – told us: 'The creation of any one of you is put together in his mother's womb for forty days, then he becomes an *'alaqah* (a piece of thick coagulated blood) for a similar period, then he becomes like a chewed piece of flesh (*mudghah*) for a similar period, then Allah sends to him an angel who breathes the soul into him ...'⁶¹

61. Narrated by al-Bukhari in his *Sahih* (3/1174), no. 3036, 3154; Muslim in his *Sahih* (4/2036), no.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told us, in this *hadith*, that the creation of the foetus is put together in forty days. What is this putting together of its creation? The word '*jama'a*' means gathering something after it has been scattered. Ibn Hajar – who was one of the greatest commentators on the *hadith* of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) – said in his commentary on this: 'What is meant by gathering together, is putting something together after it has been scattered.' We may wonder, what is the scattered thing that is put together to achieve the formation of creation? These Prophetic words are very precise in scientific terms, as we may conclude that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was referring thereby to the huge and rapid division of embryonic cells in different directions, and how the cells become distinct from one another in the '*alaaqah*' stage, then the cells of each part of the body come together to complete its formation and creation in the *mudghah* stage, like small buds. The first forty days do not end until all the cells of all

2643; also narrated by Abu Dawud, Ahmad, al-Tirmidhi and others.

the different parts of the embryo's body have become distinct and have migrated and gathered in their specific locations, after having been similar and indistinct in the stage of huge and rapid multiplication of the initial embryonic cells in the first weeks.

In the same *hadith* he also told us that the early stages of embryonic development, the '*alaqah* and *mudghah*, begin and are completed in these first forty days. The *hadith* speaks of the time frame of two matters: (i) the time within which the creation of the body cells is put together in the form of initial buds and (ii) the time of different embryonic stages – the '*alaqah* and *mudghah* according to the text, and the *nutfah* by implication, because the word *nutfah* does not appear in the authentic texts.

As for the miraculous aspect of the *hadith* which speaks of forty days, it is that the apparent meaning indicates that the creation of man is put together in the first forty days, and that time hardly passes before the cells of each part of the body have become distinct and gathered in the form of buds, and they have all gathered in a space that is no more than one cen-

timetre. Then the *hadith* describes the stage of the '*alaqah* and *mudghah* in this period of time: "then he becomes an '*alaqah* (a piece of thick coagulated blood) for a similar period," i.e., then he becomes an '*alaqah*, completely formed as it is meant to be, putting together the cells of man's creation in the first forty days. Modern science confirms what the *hadith* says about the embryo, between the eighth and twenty-first days, taking on the different features of a hanging blood clot ('*alaqah*), as it hangs onto something, appearing like a clot of thick blood, then at the end of the third week, it takes on the form of the leech that swims in the pond and attaches itself to livestock. 'Then he becomes like a chewed piece of flesh (*mudghah*) for a similar period,' when the embryo takes on the shape of a round piece of chewed flesh, which is distinguished by marks like the shape of the imprint of human teeth, an irregular, rugged surface, and spaces between the physical masses which give it the shape of a chewed substance. The miraculous aspect lies in the fact that the name and the named object are identical, even though the embryo is very small, no longer than a fingertip, and the time

between these phases is very short. Before the discovery of eggs and the connection to the menstrual cycle, estimating the age of the embryo was something very difficult. The *nutfah* (sperm drop), *'alaqah* (blood clot) and *mudghah* (lump of chewed flesh) which are mentioned in the Noble Qur'ân were not known at all at that time. Similarly, the basic parts of the embryo begin to appear and form, and the embryo gradually takes on the shape of a chewed piece of flesh (*mudghah*), partly formed and partly unformed.

The miraculous aspect of the *hadith* is what happens on the forty-second day. This *hadith* speaks of the creation of hearing, sight, bones, muscles, genitals both male and female, and the human shape of the embryo, and it defines the specific day after which the creation and formation of these faculties begins, and not before. This is what has been confirmed by scientific facts in the field of embryology.

After these scientific facts of modern embryology became known, they were seen to be in accordance with what it says in the Noble Qur'ân, and *ahadith* of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Al-

lah be upon him). Who told Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) about all these facts? Who among humans at his time, and for ten centuries thereafter, could dare to define the time, to the day, which separates two completely different stages, and mentions details which did not become known until after lengthy, exhaustive research, and after the advancement of scientific tools and the invention of the microscope? God says:

53. "We will show them Our Signs in the universe, and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this (the Qur'ân) is the truth. Is it not sufficient in regard to your Lord that He is a Witness over all things?"

54. Verily, they are in doubt concerning the Meeting with their Lord? (i.e. Resurrection after their death, and their return to their Lord). Verily, He it is Who is surrounding all things!"
[*Fussilat* 41:53-54]

Professor of History and Comparative Religion: "I am not a specialist in medicine or embryology, but I think that a strong objection will blow away this verse which you quoted from the Qur'ân,

as well as the *hadith* of Muhammad. If it is proven that there is a single scientific mistake in the Qur'ân or the words of Muhammad, this will assuredly blow away everything that you have, because God does not make mistakes. Is that not so?

This objection is based on the fact that the one who examines a woman who has had a miscarriage will find a piece of flesh and will not see any bones in it, so how can your Qur'ân say that the bones come before the flesh?"

Abu Haamid: "Yes, you have the right to object and ask question, but what you see is what everyone can see with the naked eye, and this is what humans could see at the time when this verse was revealed, at the time when Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said what he said, and until these conclusions were reached by modern laboratories.

Your saying this is new, and that is a great proof that this Qur'ân is from God and that this Prophet is the Messenger of God. Consider the length of time between when it was revealed versus modern scientific discoveries, as it came at a time that coincided with your Middle

Ages. Is this not truly a miracle!

Yes, until recently it was believed that the bones and muscles appeared concurrently and grew together, but recent research has shown a completely different fact which no one noticed before: the cartilage tissue in the embryo turns into bone first, then muscle cells are selected from the tissue present around the bone and these cells come together and envelop the bone.

This scientific fact, which was mentioned in this verse centuries ago, was explained in a scientific book called *The Development of Man* as follows:

'In the sixth week, as a continuation of the cells turning into cartilage, the first process of ossification occurs in the collar bone. At the end of the seventh week, ossification begins in the long bones. Whilst the bones continue to form, muscle cells are selected from the tissue surrounding the bones, and the muscles begin to form; the muscle tissue begins to divide around the bones in masses to the front and rear.'

Microscopic research has proven that the development of the embryo inside the

mother's womb occurs as described by the verses of the Qur'ân. First the cartilage tissues are formed, which turn into the bones of the foetus, then after that the muscle cells are formed which collect to form [muscles] around the bones.

In the same book it says: 'In the seventh week, the skeleton begins to spread throughout the body, and the bones take on their familiar shapes. At the end of the seventh week and the beginning of the eighth week, the muscles take up their positions around the bones.'

Hence he noted that cartilage is a kind of bone in the earliest stages of its development and formation. Moreover, some of the bones mature early on in the same period, when the rest of the bones are still in the cartilage stage.

Also he noted, that; 'cartilage is a strong tissue, but it remains soft for a long time while the foetus grows, then the cartilage calcifies and becomes solid bone tissue. The first bone in the body to calcify is the collar bone.'⁶²

This is not the only miraculous aspect, rather there are others which are too

62. Developing Human.

many to include in this book.

Sixteenth rational requirement: regulating relationships with other creatures

Just as the nation of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) succeeded all previous nations, the other nations succeeded one another. Hence it was essential that the final message should set out a clear system to regulate relationships between all nations ... the nation of animals, the nation of birds, nations we know and nations we do not know, nations we see and nations we do not see, because these relationships cannot be comprehended by the human mind alone. How can man regulate these relationships when he has not yet succeeded in regulating human relationships? There is sufficient evidence of that in his wars and transgressions. Moreover, if every message was partial and limited only to the most basic needs of the people to whom their Messenger was sent, then how can it be possible to deal with all the issues of mankind? How can it deal with the relationships between the nation of mankind and other nations (the animal kingdom etc)? If the final Prophet did not explain these relationships, then who

would explain them after him?

As the final message will come towards the end of this world, it is essential that it should have a clear system of dealing with other creatures, with plants, with living and nonliving beings, the reason being that this world will become extinct and towards the end of the world, the extinction of creatures will be hastened. If people deal with them with overwhelming scientific savagery, many creatures that could be beneficial in ways that mankind does not understand could become extinct, but if they left all these animals alone altogether, that could lead to the extinction of mankind. So it is essential to strike a balance that will provide a sound outlook first of all, then a sound life.

I find myself compelled to briefly quote some of the reports from the life of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that have to do with this aspect, in order to prove to you with clear evidence that he is the most deserving of being the last Prophet, because this quality is clearly applicable to his life and method.

Please excuse me if I do not comment on

each of these reports, because they are so clear, and for the sake of brevity.

It was narrated that ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Aas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: ‘The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: ‘The merciful will be shown mercy by the Most Merciful; show mercy to those who are on earth and the One Who is in heaven will show mercy to you.’”⁶³

Think about this phrase, ‘those who are on earth’; how many worlds does this include?

Think about the basis of dealing with all those who are on earth: it is a method of mutual mercy, based on the words ‘show mercy’.

Think about interactions with the nation of animals, especially dogs!

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: ‘The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: ‘While a dog was going around a well, almost dying of thirst, one of the prostitutes of

63. Narrated by Abu Dawud, 4941; al-Tirmidhi, 1924.

the Children of Israel saw it. She took off her shoe and gave the dog water to drink, and she was forgiven because of that.”⁶⁴

Think about interactions with the nations of birds and chickens.

It was narrated that Ibn Mas‘ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said: ‘We were with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and we camped in a place where there was an anthill, which we burned. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: ‘No one should punish with fire except Allah, may He be exalted and glorified. No one punishes with fire except Allah, because no one should punish with fire except its Creator.’ He said: ‘we passed by a tree in which there were the chicks of a redstart (a kind of bird), and took them. The redstart came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and hovered over him. He said: ‘Who has distressed this bird with regard to her chicks? Put them back.’ So we put them back.’⁶⁵

64. Al-Bukhaari – *al-Fath* 2 (702); Muslim, 467.

65. *Musnad Ibn Abi Shaybah*, 196; al-Tabarani in *al-Kabeer*, 10223

Is there anything weaker in man's eyes than an ant, a small bird, or a chicken?

This is the relationship of man with the weakest of creatures. It is a relationship of mercy. If some of these creatures become harmful, he may get rid of them, but he should not get rid of them in a vengeful manner, such as getting rid of ants by burning their nest if they are harmful. Also he should not get rid of them at all if they are not harmful. But at the same time it is not appropriate to raise them to the level of sanctity as some nations do that have lost their reason and worship ants, mice, cows or fish...

It was narrated from Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) that he passed by two boys of Quraysh who were using a bird, or hen, as a target, and for each shot that they missed, they gave one of their arrows to the bird's owner. When they saw Ibn 'Umar, they scattered. Ibn 'Umar said: 'Who did this? May Allah curse the one who did this! The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) cursed the one who takes a living being as a target.'⁶⁶

66. Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

And it was narrated that Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: 'The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'A woman went to Hell because of a cat that she tied up and did not feed, or let it eat the vermin of the earth.'

Man is required to give food to cats and other animals if he wants them to live with him, otherwise he must let them seek their own food by themselves.

It was narrated that Sahl ibn al-Hanzaliyyah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: 'The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) passed by a camel that was emaciated and he said: 'Fear Allah with regard to these mute animals; ride them when they are sound and eat them when they are sound.'"⁶⁷

This is the way with regard to domesticated animals. They are to be used in a kind manner and we should pay attention to their health and well-being, and they should be eaten when they are healthy, not sick and emaciated.

67. Narrated by Abu Dawud and by Ibn Khuza - mah in his *Sahih*

It was narrated from Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) passed by a donkey that had been branded on the face, and he said: 'May Allah curse the one who branded it.'⁶⁸

If you ponder this *hadith*, you will see that not paying attention to the feelings of donkeys was something that was very common. It was important to be able to tell animals apart, so they used to brand them on the face, but the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) changed this method and ordered that the method that was followed at that time be cancelled out and something better be introduced.

It was narrated from Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'There is no Muslim who plants something, and birds or humans eat from it, but it will be an act of charity on his part.'⁶⁹

The reward that is stipulated for this action is a great incentive to 'go green'

68. Narrated by Muslim

69. Narrated by al-Bukhari, Muslim and al-Tirmidhi

and it is the greatest means for man to deal with the problem of desertification. Moreover the aim behind this command is noble, because it is for the benefit of birds from which we do not benefit and for people whom we do not know, namely passers by and others.

The sea is often mentioned in Qur'ānic verses and Prophetic *ahadith*; for example the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'Its water is a means of purification and its dead meat is permissible.'⁷⁰

Similarly, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'There was a branch of a tree in the road that was annoying people, so a man removed it, and he was admitted to Paradise.'⁷¹

It was said in another *hadith*: 'Fear the two things that incur people's curses.' They said: 'What are the two things that incur people's curses, O Messenger of Allah?' He said: 'The one who relieves himself in the road or where they seek shade.'⁷²

70. *Musnad Ahmad* 8380.

71. *Musnad Ahmad*, from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him), 10028

72. *Musnad Ahmad* 8498, from Abu Hurayrah

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said in another *hadith*: 'No one of you should urinate in standing water that does not flow and then bathe in it.'⁷³

These texts are just a few which give an idea of the many topics that were narrated concerning different worlds.

As for what has been narrated concerning the world of the angels and the world of the *jinn*, there is no room to discuss it here, but none of it is contrary to reason. If we have another opportunity to discuss this topic, we will look at it in detail.

Seventeenth rational requirement: its title is morality

As the earth has never seen at any stage such a huge amount, in quality and quantity, of humankind as it is witnessing in its last stage, and as this nation is the greatest nation in history, rather it is many nations within the framework of this great nation, its need for morality is greater than that of all other nations that came before it. It needs morality as a precaution to protect it against disputes.

Let us look at which message among all

73. Narrated by al-Tabarani

other messages focuses most on morality, and which preserved the biography of its Prophet and highlights stories that focus on morals.

If we do not quote any text from any religion, then reason says that because the last of the messages is closest in time to us, then it most preserves the morals of its Prophet because it is closest to us and is least exposed to the calamities of history.

As the moral legacy is accumulative in nature, it is essential that the last message should have compiled all the good characteristics and attitudes. Hence the Lord of the Worlds says to the bearer of the last message concerning the previous messages: **"They are those whom Allah had guided. So follow their guidance"** [*al-An'aam* 6:90]. This is the basis: follow them all, learn from them all, so it will be as if the one who sees your attitude is seeing the attitude of all the Prophets. This is the proper way, not overlooking those who came before. Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) explained this quite clearly: 'I have been sent to perfect good manners.' He summed up his message as complet-

ing good attitudes and morals. The word 'complete' includes two important meanings:

1. It is based on that which came before
2. It adds to that which came before.

Perhaps this quality is common to all the Prophets. Each Prophet followed the example of the one who came before, and also had his own specific moral quality. Based on that, the last of them should be the most comprehensive in good manners and qualities, and have more qualities that are specific to him, to be added to what came before. This is what is well known about the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). His wife answered, when she was asked about his character: 'His character was the Qur'ân.'⁷⁴

This comment by 'A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) has many great dimensions, including the following:

1. It connects the recording of his attitude and behaviour to something that does not disappear or change, namely the Qur'ân.
2. His character is easy, as easy as the Qur'ân in which Allah says: **"And We**

74. Narrated by Ahmad. 460

have indeed made the Qur'ân easy to understand and remember; then is there any one who will remember (or receive admonition)?" [*al-Qamar* 54:17].

3. His character is both great and realistic. Hence it is something that can be put into practice; it is not just theoretical.

If you study the life of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and how he dealt with any situation, you will be able to benefit from his attitude as an example to follow in any situation in which you find yourself. Similarly, anyone may take it as an example for whatever situation he finds himself in, whether he is a shepherd or a president. Everyone can see the possibility of following his example in his own circumstances.

I will tell you a few points, drawing upon the life of this ethical, moral man.

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: 'The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'The most perfect in faith of the believers are those who have the best manners, and the

best of you is the one who is best to his womenfolk.”⁷⁵

Look at this integration which connects perfection of faith with perfection of attitude.

And he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: ‘There is nothing that weighs more heavily in the Balance than good manners.’⁷⁶

Look at how Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) made preserving good manners something that was not only for him, rather he made it something common to all people, and the thing that will differentiate between believers and make their balance weigh more heavily on the Day of Resurrection.

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: ‘Do you know who the one who is bankrupt is?’ They said: ‘Among us, the one who is bankrupt is the one who has no *dirhams* and

75. Narrated by al-Tirmidhi and by Ibn Hibban in his *Sahih*

76. Narrated by Abu Dawud. See *Sahih al-Targheeb wal-Tarheeb*, no. 2641

no goods.' He said: 'Rather the one who is bankrupt among my nation is the one who will come on the Day of Resurrection with prayer, fasting and *zakah*, but he will come having insulted this one, slandered that one, consumed the wealth of this one, shed the blood of that one and beaten this one, all of whom will be given some of his *hasanat* (good deeds), and if his *hasanat* run out before the scores have been settled, some of their sins will be taken and thrown onto him, then he will be cast into the Fire.'⁷⁷

If you study this *hadith* you will notice that it is talking about the bankrupt believer among the nation of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), not the non-believer. You will find that a good attitude includes both words and deeds. It includes words and wealth, and a bad attitude eats up *hasanat* (rewards for good deeds).

Eighteenth rational requirement: direct relationship with God

The nations used to go to their Prophets when they fell into sin to seek forgiveness from God, and their Prophets would

77. Narrated by Muslim and al-Tirmidhi

pray for forgiveness for them too, then God would forgive them. But to whom can they go if they sin, after the death of the final Prophet?

Would God leave them in their sin, or leave people other than their Prophets to extort them, taking advantage of their falling into sin, when sin is inevitable because of human weakness?

Or would God set up intermediaries between Him and His creation, to whom they could go to be purified of sin, be granted divine pleasure or be allocated land in Paradise?

Those who give themselves these special qualities are the most mendacious of people to one another and those who tell the greatest lies against God, because the Prophets came to remove intermediaries between people and their Lord, and because they are trying to raise themselves above people. Instead they are attributing to themselves attributes which belong only to God, viz. forgiveness and accepting repentance.

Therefore one of the most important features of the final message is that it should remove all intermediaries between man-

kind and their Creator, between the sinner and his Lord, because there is no Prophet after the final Prophet, and Revelation ceased after the death of the final Prophet. Hence everyone who claims to speak on behalf of God is a fabricator who is speaking of God without knowledge. The final message must open the door to repentance by night and by day, from the east to the west, removing all obstacles between the sinner and his Lord at all times and in all places.

The one who ponders the necessity of this feature for the final message, then looks at the message of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) will know for certain that this is the final Message. Listen to the Qur'ân, how God addresses His servants. He says in *Surat az-Zumar*:

“Say: “O ‘*Ibadi* (My slaves) who have transgressed against themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins)! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah, verily, Allah forgives all sins. Truly, He is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful” [*az-Zumar* 39:53].

If you look again at the verse, you will see that God is addressing those among

His servants who have transgressed against themselves, not those who are righteous.

This verse is addressed directly from God to His creation, without the intermediation of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or anyone else. It is phrased in a way that is dear to them, as He attributes them to Himself and says 'O My slaves.' Moreover, the slaves or servants who are addressed here are those who transgress against themselves, not ordinary sinners; those whose sins were drinking intoxicants, disbelief, wrongdoing, adultery and so on.

God addresses these people, telling them not to despair of the Mercy of God, and that they have to turn back to Him and repent before death, as they do not know when it will befall them. Hence the verse which comes immediately after it says:

“And turn in repentance and in obedience with true Faith to your Lord and submit to Him (in Islam) before the torment comes upon you, (and) then you will not be helped” [*az-Zumar* 39:54].

Moreover, look at how the Prophet

(peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) opened the door of repentance after him, at any time and in any place, at the broadest level and in a direct manner between a person and his Lord. Listen to what he said:

‘Allah rejoices more over the repentance of His slave when he repents to Him than one of you who was on his mount in the wilderness, then he lost it, and his food and drink are on it, and he despairs of finding it. He goes to a tree and lies down in its shade, having lost hope of finding his mount, and while he is like that, there it is standing in front of him, so he takes hold of its reins and says, because of his intense joy, ‘O Allah, You are my slave and I am your lord,’ making this mistake because of his intense joy.’⁷⁸

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: ‘If you were to commit sins that reached up to the heavens, then you repented, Allah would accept your repentance.’⁷⁹

78. Narrated by al-Bukhari, 5949; Muslim, 3744; and others

79. Narrated by Ibn Majah with a *sahih* chain of narration.

It was narrated from Anas that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'All the sons of Adam are prone to sin, and the best of those who sin are those who repent.'⁸⁰

It was narrated from 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'Allah accepts repentance from a person so long as the death rattle has not reached his throat.'⁸¹

It was narrated from Abu Musa (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'Allah spreads out His hand by night to accept the repentance of those who sinned during the day, and He spreads out His hand by day to accept the repentance of those who sinned during the night, until the sun rises from its place of setting.'⁸²

It was narrated from Safwan ibn 'Assaal (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be

80. Narrated by at-Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah and al-Haakim, from 'Ali ibn Mas'adah

81. Narrated by Ibn Majah and by at-Tirmidhi, who said it is a *hasan hadith*

82. Narrated by Muslim and an-Nasaa'i

upon him) said: 'In the west there is a gate the width of forty years' or seventy years' travel. God opened it for repentance the day He created the heavens and the earth, and He will not close it until the sun rises from it.'⁸³

Yes, among the conditions of repentance being accepted, the person should resolve not to do it again, and he must return to people things that are rightfully theirs. But if he does it again, will God accept his repentance a second time?

I will quote to you this *hadith* from the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) so that you will know whether He will accept it or not.

It was narrated that 'Uqbah ibn 'Amir said: 'A man came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, one of us sins.' He said: 'It will be recorded against him.' He said: 'Then he asks for forgiveness for it and repents.' He said: 'He will be forgiven and his repentance will be accepted.' He said: 'Then he sins again.'

83. Narrated by al-Tirmidhi in the *hadith* if al-Ba - haqi; al-Tirmidhi said it is a *sahih hasan hadith*.

He said: 'It will be recorded against him.' He said: 'Then he asks for forgiveness for it and repents.' He said: 'He will be forgiven, and his repentance will be accepted. God does not get tired until you do.'⁸⁴

Nineteenth rational requirement: easy-going mercy and tolerance, without any weakness

What was narrated about mercy in the previous messages of divine origin is related to specific situations as was mentioned to us (in the Books). As for mercy in all aspects of life, this is not narrated from any of those Prophets (peace be upon them). One of the necessities of the final message is that it should be characterized by mercy in all aspects of life, and that mercy should be a principle which is applied practically with the potential to be repeated in human lives.

When thinking about the lives of the Prophets, you will find that Musa (peace be upon him) was a mercy to the Children of Israel, and his message came to bring them out of the oppression of Pharaoh.

84. Al-Bayhaqi said in *al-Majma'* (10/200): it was narrated by al-Tabarani in *al-Kabeer* and *al-Awsat*, and its chain of narration is *hasan*.

This is something which no one denies, and there are words in the Qur'ân which prove that, in *Surat al-Naazi'aat*:

17. "Go to Fir'awn (Pharaoh); verily, he has transgressed all bounds (in crimes, sins, polytheism, and disbelief).

18. And say to him: 'Would you purify yourself (from the sin of disbelief by becoming a believer)?

19. 'And that I guide you to your Lord, so you should fear Him?'" [*al-Naazi'aat* 79:17-19]

Jesus (peace be upon him) came to complete the message of Moses (peace be upon him), hence he said: "*I have been sent to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.*"

Emile Darminham says of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): 'He demonstrated nobility and greatness of spirit the like of which is rarely found in history. He enjoined his troops to show mercy to the weak, elderly, women and children, and he forbade them to destroy houses and crops and to cut down fruit-bearing

trees.⁸⁵

But in the case of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), God defined the aim of his mission as follows:

“And We have sent you not but as a mercy for the ‘*Alameen* (mankind, *jinn* and all that exists)” [*al-Anbiya* 21:107].

Look at the confirmation of this aim and the extent to which is mentioned in the *ahadith* of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him):

It was narrated from Jabir ibn ‘Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: ‘May Allah have mercy on a man who is easygoing when he sells, and when he buys, and when he asks for a debt to be repaid.’⁸⁶

It was narrated that ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) said: ‘some prisoners were brought to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings

85. *Al-Islam wal-Wajh al-Aakhar li-Fikr al-Gharbi* by ‘Imaad al-Deen Khaleel. From *Nubuwwat Muhammad fil-Fikr al-Istishraaqi al-Mu’aasir* by Dr. Lakhdar al-Shaayib, p. 415

86. *Al-Bukhari – al-Fath* 4(2076)

of Allah be upon him), and there was a woman among the prisoners who was searching for someone. When she found a small boy among the prisoners, she clasped him to her and started to breast-feed him. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to us: 'Do you think that this woman would throw her child into the fire?' We said: 'No, by Allah, she would never do that if she is able not to.' The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'Allah is more merciful towards His slaves than this woman is towards her child.'⁸⁷

It was narrated that 'A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: 'A Bedouin came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said: 'Do you kiss children? We do not kiss them.' The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'what can I do for you if God has removed mercy from your hearts?''⁸⁸

It was narrated that Jarir ibn 'Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: 'The Messenger of Allah (peace and

87. Al-Bukhari – al-Fath 10 (5999); Muslim, 2754

88. Al-Bukhari – al-Fath 10 (5998); Muslim, 2317

blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'they will not be shown mercy who do not show mercy to people.'⁸⁹

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: 'I heard Abul-Qasim [the Prophet] (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say: 'Mercy is not taken away except from one who is doomed.'⁹⁰

It was narrated that Ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said: 'The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'You will not truly believe until you have mercy.' They said: 'All of us are merciful, O Messenger of Allah.' He said: 'It is not the mercy of one of you to his friend, rather it is mercy to all people, mercy to all...' So it is not only mercy to Muslims; it is mercy to all people.

It was narrated from Abul-Darda' that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'The one who is given his share of kindness is given his share of goodness, and the one who is deprived of his share of kindness is deprived of his

89. Al-Bukhari – al-Fath (7376); Muslim 2319

90. Al-Hafiz said in al-Fath (10/453): It was narrated by al-Tabari

share of goodness.⁹¹

It was narrated from Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saw an old man walking and leaning on his two sons. He said: 'What is the matter with this man?' They said: 'He has vowed to walk.' He said: 'God has no need of his tormenting himself.' And he told him to ride.⁹²

It was narrated from Anas ibn Malik that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'I began to pray, intending to make it lengthy, then I heard a child crying so I made it brief, because I knew what his mother suffers because of his crying.'⁹³

In a *hadith* whose authenticity is agreed upon, Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'A man said: 'I shall certainly give charity.' So he went out with his charity, and put it in the

91. al-Tirmidhi, 213; he said it is a *sahih hasan hadith*

92. al-Bukhari – al-Fath 4 (1865); Muslim, 1642

93. al-Bukhari – al-Fath 2 (709); Muslim 470

hand of a thief. The next day they said: 'Charity was given to a thief last night!' He said: 'O Allah, to You be praise for a thief. I shall certainly give charity.' So he went out with his charity, and put it in the hand of a prostitute. The next day they said: 'Charity was given to a prostitute last night!' He said: 'O Allah, to You be praise for a prostitute. I shall certainly give charity.' So he went out with his charity, and put it in the hand of a rich man. The next day they said: 'Charity was given to a rich man last night!' He said: 'O Allah, to You be praise for a thief, a prostitute and a rich man.' Some came to him and said to him: 'As for your charity to a thief, perhaps it will make him have no need to steal. As for your charity to a prostitute, perhaps it will make her have no need to commit adultery. As for your charity to a rich man, perhaps it will make him learn a lesson and he will spend from that which Allah has given him.'⁹⁴

It was narrated from 'A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that some Jews came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said: '*Al-saam*

94. Narrated by al-Bukhari, 1332

'alaykum (may death be upon you).⁹⁵ 'A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: 'And may death be upon you, and may God curse you and be angry with you.' The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'Take it easy, O 'A'ishah! You should be kind and avoid harshness and bad speech.' She said: 'Didn't you hear what they said?' He said: 'And didn't you hear what I said? I replied to them *'Wa 'alaykum* (and also upon you),' and my prayer concerning them will be answered but their prayer concerning me will not be answered.'⁹⁶

It was narrated from 'A'ishah, the wife of the Prophet (May Allah be pleased with her), that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'There is no kindness in a thing but it adorns it, and it is not taken away from a thing but it makes it defective.'⁹⁶

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that a Bedouin urinated in the mosque and the people got up to sort him out, but the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to them: 'Let

95. Al-Bukhari – *al-Fath* 10 (6128)

96. Muslim, 2594

him be, and pour a bucket of water over his urine, for you are sent to make things easy, not to make things difficult.⁹⁷

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that a man was owed something by the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and he spoke to him in a harsh manner, and the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) wanted to sort him out. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'Let him be. The one who has a right is entitled to speak.' And he said to them: 'Buy a camel of the same age as his and give it to him.' They said: 'We cannot find anything but a camel that is older than his.' He said: 'Give it to him, for among the best of you are those who are the best in paying off debts.'⁹⁸

How much truth the great scholar Diwan Chand Sharma understood when he summed up the matter in two phrases: 'Muhammad was the soul of kindness, and his influence was felt and never forgotten by those around him.'⁹⁹

97. Al-Bukhari – *al-Fath* 10 (6128)

98. Al-Bukhari – *al-Fath* 4 (2306); Muslim, 1601

99. Diwan Chand Sharma, *The Prophets of the East*, Calcutta 1935, p. 122

*The twentieth rational requirement:
transparency of family life*

The final Prophet should build the greatest structure in the history of mankind because it is the structure which does not rely in its building on builders to come after him, so the foundations of that structure should be the greatest possible in strength and power. Is there any foundation for society other than the family?

Isn't the first brick in the building of society the family? Hence any lack of clarity or transparency in family life represents a weakness in his example.

Moreover, there is a need for some people to specialize in economics, politics and other aspects, but this is not something that everybody needs. But the need for the family is something that all people need, just as they need night and day. An individual may live as a politician or an economist, he may live as a rich man or a poor man, but each of them must live in a family. Similarly, each of them may be a member of an association or committee and the like, or he may not be, but he must be a member of a family.

The basis of all of these is the family.

Therefore it is imperative that the life of the last of the Prophets should be completely clear in that regard, because it is the foundation in building a society, and because it is something that no human being can be without.

What matters is not the visible, public aspects of his life only. Rather what matters is what is hidden of his life within the four walls of his home. Isn't the soundness of his private life the basis of the soundness of his public life?

Because what is the benefit if a man is great outside his house, but he is living a life of misery in his family? What is the benefit if he is successful with his friends or at work, but he is a failure with his wife and children?

Even if this is the case for many successful people, do you think that this makes a person fit to be an example for all people, in all fields?

What do you think people will do if they fall into trouble with their families, with their wives, with their children, if they refer to the biography of the one whom they take as an example and do not find much, or if they find a huge volume about

the life of that Prophet in which nothing is written about his family life except one or two pages?

How about if this person is a candidate to be last Prophet, in whom all human perfection is to be combined?

There is no room, when problems arise, for abstract idealism and saying words that merely sound good but are not effective.

If the final Prophet, whoever he is, is lacking in this aspect, then it not only undermines him, it also undermines all the previous Messengers, and it undermines the One Who sent him, because it may lead someone to say: All these messages did not fill the gap of the personal aspect, or he may say: These messages are not enough to save mankind.

Here there is an urgent question which presents itself: Who among these noble Prophets (peace be upon them) has a personal life that is so open that he deserves to be known as the last Prophet?

The only answer can be that it is Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

At the time when you can hardly find any mention of the personal and family lives of the other Prophets, in contrast you will hardly find any minor aspect of family life that is not mentioned in the life of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his family.

At the time when you hardly find any personal story about the life of any Prophet that goes beyond a few pages, you will find huge volumes that are hardly able to cover the personal and home life of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

If you state the tiniest details you want to know about, I can tell you what Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said and what he did. Above all, you will never find anything that contradicts sound modern science or sound reason or refined modern culture or sound behavioural science.

And ask me, or ask any bishop about any aspect of the life of any Prophet, and perhaps you will find that mystery surrounds him. That is not because of lack of knowledge on our part. We have, praise God, inherited biographies of the Prophets, but it is because no reports

of these things have come down from them, and perhaps because their people to whom they were sent had no need of these things.

If a bishop or anyone else disputes with you concerning this fact, then ask him to tell you some aspects of the life of any given Prophet, and then you will know the truth, which is that there is no final Prophet except Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

All of his words and deeds are mentioned in the most sublime manner and with the most sublime meanings, whether it involves his dealings with his family, or his joking with them, or his intimacy with his wives, or his teaching them, or his working inside his house, or the way he got married, or the way he solved problems, or the way he dealt with his guests or his children or his servants, or how he dealt with calamities, or how he acted at times of joy, or what he did at night, or how he slept and turned over in bed, or how he got up from sleep...

Similarly his personal life, from birth through childhood, youth, marriage and fatherhood, to old age, sickness and death, is thoroughly recorded. As I said

earlier, that would require citing many books and their summaries, that is not possible to list them all here.

* * *

Conclusion of the Gathering

An important question asks: How long did Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) live on earth? Rather how long has he lived on in people's hearts? And how long has he lived on in their just systems and good manners?

Is humanity today heading towards social and moral decline or not?

So long as the unanimous answer is yes, then for how long will mankind remain confused until it comes back to the guidance of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?

The distance between the confusion of mankind and its return to the teachings of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is equal only to its giving up its bias, or if you wish you may say its adopting a fair-minded attitude.

People can afford to give up following the example of this or that military general, political leader or reformer, but if they give up following the example of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), that spells misery for them in the home, at work, in life until death and in the Hereafter.

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Tawfiq Al Refaie

*In the Name of Allah
The Most Beneficent,
the Most Merciful*

Seventh Gathering

Introduction

Say what you wish about your principles, and listen to what you want about principles.

But the fire of problems will melt down all talk of principles.

Do you want to know how great a share your religion has in your life? Look at the share of your religion in solving your problems. Your friend is the one who is your friend when problems arise, not the one who withdraws from you when you have a problem or when there is a problem between you and your community, let alone the friend who brings you problems.

If you believe in a principle, but all it does when you have problems is warn or run away, then its paper deserves to be burned, as its idealism is burned by the fire of the problem.

Look at this chapter, keeping in mind an image of the world as it was more than fifteen hundred years ago. Look at the

accumulation of problems that nations have inherited, starting from fourteen hundred years ago. All these problems were not the invention of the mediaeval generation only; rather they were accumulated by generation upon generation.

You will see two layers of darkness surrounding the earth completely: the darkness of injustice and the darkness of ignorance.

But the great question remains: who melted down these mountains of problems?

You decide, even if it is only in your mind.

Whoever solves the problem will win the prize

In the house of the divorcee Isabella, a group of thinkers sit in a circle. The layout of the gathering was amazing. There were flowers everywhere, spreading their natural fragrance, and flowers in the middle, attracting attention naturally. The sense of feeling at ease was evident on the faces of all people present.

How beautiful is a natural life without anything artificial.

Why
divorce
in the
first
place?

Isabella: "Anyone who wants to speak of the achievements of any civilization has to mention the problems that this civilization tackled before he can think of listing its achievements. When I look at Islamic civilization, I do not find that it solved any problems; rather I find that it is no more than an outward garment that was placed on a body that was rotten with problems. One garment was changed for another but the body remained the same.

I am a divorced woman with no children and now I have no one, after living with a Christian Lebanese man to whom I was devoted and sincere, but in the end, without me knowing a single convincing reason, he divorced me and as you can see I am now alone after having had a companion. I am a stranger after having had a family. The only thing that I have to look forward to – no matter how thoroughly I look at what is coming or how hard I try to ignore it – is death!

Do you think that this would have happened to me if divorce were not prescribed in our law?

Tell me, what does Islam say about divorce?

Does Islam approve of divorce?

It is a real problem, and you cannot deny it.

After all that will you say that Islam solves problems? What problems has Islam solved?

Why isn't divorce in the woman's hand? Why can't it be by agreement between them? Why is woman neglected after divorce? Why is there divorce at all?

This does not necessarily mean that I regret my divorce from this man who was a bad man. I cannot say anything good about him, except that he was a male in the house. The only thing I remember in this situation in which I lived was other women who got divorced and became lost after that."

Abu Haamid: "You have the right to feel upset about these divorcees, Isabella, and we should feel some of what you feel when the pain of divorce hit you. But our situation is more like one who is shot at, but the bullets did not hit him, so he feels dizzy, which is what happened to me. But before I begin my objective answer, I would like to ask you something; if you wish, you may answer, and if not,

then do not answer. Was this Lebanese man a Muslim?"

Isabella: "He was not a Muslim; he was a Christian."

Abu Haamid: "So your personal problem has nothing to do with Islam. Hence I will start with another question: Why divorce?"

I want one point for another, one question for another. So I say: Imagine married life without divorce. Imagine that a man and a woman are placed in a beautiful house, then the door is locked and then replaced with a wall. The house is blocked on all sides, and they are told: There is no way out from here except in one case – death. What would be the feelings of two people who have the sense that there is no way out of this house until they die?

The only feeling will be an immediate desire to escape from this house, no matter how beautiful it is.

What if life is not as ideal as I described to you, rather it is a life in which there is a lot of friction and a lot of reasons for disputes, different opinions, different points of view, different natures? What if the two people feel that there is no way

Why
divorce
in Islam?

out?

You were saying just now that he was a bad man...

Imagine if divorce was not allowed, and escape from this man was impossible, and you discovered that after marriage. What would you do?

Emergency exit

Reason says: it is wise to have an emergency exit that should not be approached or touched, because touching it may mean a disaster for the family. Have you seen any place that is firmly enclosed like a plane? Isn't the existence of an emergency door in a plane something necessary? But does that mean that it is o.k. to tamper with it? Reason says that it should not be used by everybody in the family, the spouses and the children, even though it concerns everyone. Its use should be within the narrowest limits and restricted to the person who is most concerned with the family, who is the one who proposes marriage in the first place.

This should be the person who is most likely to use his reason more than his emotion. This is the person who examines the issue of divorce from all angles and sees its long-term consequences, be

they financial, ethical or social. Who do you think this person can be other than the husband who bore the costs of the marriage when he did the marriage contract and bore the expenses of the family when he got married and acquired a house, and who will bear the expenses of divorce if he issues a divorce, and who will bear the expenses of a new family if he wants to start a new family after this divorce? Isn't this the ruling which is in accordance with reason and nothing else?"

Isabella: Yes, but isn't it possible for the wife to be mistreated? Isn't it possible that the man may abuse this right? Isn't it possible that he may ask the woman to leave this room but she will not be able to? What is the solution in this case?

Giving the right of divorce to one party, the husband, when the matter concerns them both – there is a great deal of injustice in that."

Abu Haamid: "There is another way out in Islam, a way out which is for the woman only, not for the man. A way out that is called *khul'*. In this instance the woman refers her case to the judge, seeking a personal right which is akin to a

Khul'

veto, which is called *khul'*. *Khul'* gives the woman the right to leave the man on the basis of a deal between them, based on which she separates herself, from him whether he is willing or not, whether she states what the problem is or not. I will tell you a true story which happened at the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with regard to this issue. Perhaps you remember al-Bukhari, the most famous narrator of *hadith* whom we have mentioned before. Al-Bukhari narrated that the cousin of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), whose name was 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas, said: 'The wife of Thabit ibn Qays came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, Thabit ibn Qays – I do not criticize him for his character or religious commitment, but I hate to return to disbelief after becoming Muslim.' The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'Will you give him back his garden?' She said: 'Yes.' The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'accept the garden and give her one divorce.'¹

1. Narrated by al-Bukhari, 4971, and others.

Do you know what this *hadith* means, Isabella?

This wife wanted to be free of her husband, even though she acknowledged that she could find no fault with him. But she could not bear to live in the same house with him, as his wife. But she was afraid to deny his good points because she did not want to be ungrateful for something good, as Islam enjoins being grateful for good things. Over and above that, she did not want to ascribe a fault to him, but she wanted to be free, and she would bear the consequences and cost of that."

Isabella: "In fact it is an important matter and you have explained it brilliantly."

Abu Haamid: "That is not the end of it. Divorce in Islam is not the matter of uttering a single word and everything is finished. There is a precise system to it, to the point that when it is implemented you feel that it will inevitably lead to restoration of married life and reconciliation before it reaches the stage of definite divorce. When it reaches the stage of divorce it actually means that it has become impossible for them to live together and that this decision is the right one, because it is a rational decision that

Stages of
divorce
in Islam

is based on thought and common interests, and the fact that it is impossible to live together.

Because of the great importance of the family in Islam, details of the way in which disputes between spouses are to be resolved are mentioned in the Qur'ân itself, which may be summed up as follows:

If internal problems arise between the spouses, there should be two ways of reconciliation. The first way is the direct way, in which there are three stages: exhorting the wife in a good way, forsaking her in bed, and limited discipline. If these three ways fail, then there is an external way of reconciling, in which it is prescribed to bring in two arbitrators, one from the woman's family and one from the man's family. Family pressure usually brings about a simple and easy solution, because reason states that the least likely to know the solution is the one who is angry, so if a calm outsider is brought in on both sides, the problem will be solved. The two families usually will send only the wisest, most influential and most prominent member to deal with such issues.

If both arbitrators fail to find a solution and declare that to both parties, and the two parties insist on their differences, then divorce begins with one pronouncement of divorce, the initial pronouncement of divorce, which, it is stipulated, must be given when a woman first becomes pure from menses, and before the husband had had intercourse with her during this period of purity – in these precise terms. By the time this point is reached, the couple will usually have thought it over. If he has intercourse with her or does any of the things that lead to it, after she has become pure from menses, this means that the wife has been taken back by the husband, and this is the greatest sign of reconciliation and resumption of normal life, because intercourse and divorce cannot go together.

Who will be able to stay away from a woman who is living under the same roof as him, in the same house, when he has all these feelings of desire, in circumstances that are constantly changing from anger to acceptance, disputes to reconciliation, parting and embracing, and so on? Moreover, after the man has kept away from the wife during her men-

ses, he feels the most desire for her when she first becomes pure. This is in addition to the fact that the regular physical programming of the man's and woman's body throughout the marriage has made it so that their physical desire is greatest when she first become pure following her menses, and that physical factor applies to both of them.

He then waits for three months, until she has menstruated and then become pure, then menstruated then become pure, then the divorce becomes in effect. During this time, it is not permissible for the husband to make her leave his house and go to her father's house or anywhere else. Rather she stays in his house, with her husband and children, so that all natural means of reconciliation may be used during this time. If the law ordered her to leave the house, her absence would harden the heart – as is well known – and the woman's leaving the house would bring in more people who want to cause trouble than people who want to bring about reconciliation.

Among the influences that Islam wants to use during this period, is the husband's seeing the wife in front of him in the

house, with adornment and makeup, and seeing his children, then thinking of the loss of all this, in addition to the extra expenses that he will incur without gaining anything in return. She will also see him, and see her children, and see the loss that is awaiting them.

Seeing the children and imagining being separated from them, and thinking that this may be the last time she sees them as part of this family puts a huge emotional pressure on both of them, because they are the apples of their eyes and the fruits of their parents' love.

If they do not compromise for their sake, then for whose sake will they compromise?

If they insist after they have taken enough time and exhausted all means of reconciliation, and they insist on the third divorce, then it becomes known that reconciliation is impossible and that separation is better.

Isabella, does it make sense after all this that the judge should issue a ruling preventing divorce?"

Isabella: "If you knew, Abu Haamid, what the judicial system is doing here,

you would realize that the wife is still exposed to injustice among us in one way, and that the man is exposed to it in many ways.

Why hit wives?

But I have one comment to make on what you said, which is: you concealed something, probably because you were afraid that it may be criticized, and that is that it is prescribed for the husband to hit the wife. You have this verse in the Qur'ân. But why hit in the first place?

Whatever you say to us about the mercy of Islam and the mercy of Muhammad, hitting the woman destroys everything!

Abu Haamid, if international law today forbids hitting animals, how can Islam allow hitting women? In fact, if I were thinking about becoming Muslim because of all the advantages that you have mentioned here tonight, this allowing the hitting of women would stop me entering Islam!"

Abu Haamid: "Isabella, you should realize that there is nothing in my religion that I am afraid to show for fear that someone may question me about it or object to it, because it is in complete harmony with reason. For me it is something that

has to do with Islamic law. Moreover, I have overlooked many issues so as not to make the discussion too long, because things may take even longer when there are questions, as has happened now. With regard to hitting, you should realize that reconciliation between two spouses who are in conflict is something that is done in two stages. In the first stage, reconciliation is brought about directly and in privacy. In the second stage there is outside intervention from the family. Hitting is no more than the last step in the first stage of direct, private reconciliation. This is not my own idea that I have come up with now just to please you, rather hitting cannot take place except as the last step in direct reconciliation, and it is what is mentioned in the verse in which God says:

“As to those women on whose part you see ill conduct, admonish them (first), (next) refuse to share their beds, (and last) beat them (lightly, if it is useful); but if they return to obedience, seek not against them means (of annoyance). Surely, Allah is Ever Most High, Most Great” [*an-Nisa'* 4:34].

This is a direct reconciliation between

the husband and his wife which no one else knows about. It is within the walls of their house, and most likely in their bedroom. Everything that happens between them is concealed, therefore there is no embarrassment in it, because embarrassment can only be caused when things are exposed and brought out into the open. This is the first point.

The remedy of hitting may be preceded by the remedy of turning away from her in the same room. He should not send her out of the room even if the room is the husband's own private property. If that remedy does not succeed, there is the remedy of exhortation, but this is not to be done in front of other people, rather it is a private exhortation that is to be given when they are on their own. A word may be harder to bear than hitting, but Allah did not say: belittle them and insult them, rather He said: "admonish them" and finally He said "beat [or hit] them." Hitting comes within the framework of the direct remedy that is private, between the husband and his wife. This is the first point.

Secondly: The husband here is entrusted with following these steps in the proper

order. He should not ignore it unjustly. He is entrusted with the *shar'i* ruling with regard to his wife, just as the political ruler is entrusted with ruling his country and the people under his rule. If the husband is not sincere then he is being treacherous in the implementation of this ruling, knowing that he should take his time in implementing one remedy before moving on to the next option. The husband is accountable, religiously and in judicial terms, if it becomes clear that he has transgressed the limits with regard to hitting and wrongdoing. This is what indicates that hitting is not an absolute right that the husband has over his wife.

Thirdly, moving from admonishing and shunning to hitting alerts the spouses, in the most serious manner, to the end of the stage of direct, private treatment of the problem, and points to the possibility of separation. What means are there after hitting? Therefore the woman usually takes this matter very seriously, so long as the hitting is done for disciplinary purposes and is done in secret to highlight a point, and is not done for the sake of revenge.

What if the hitting is to no avail? Then

the only option left is separation.

The most important result of hitting is thinking seriously about the consequences and the future, and the closeness of the tragic end.

Fourthly: Although the man is entrusted with the manner and level of hitting, it should not be a kind of hitting that causes pain, rather it is a light hitting which is aimed at nothing more than discipline and reform, a kind of wake-up call. But if the husband oversteps the mark in hitting, then he is to be brought to account for his transgression. God made hitting the last stage of the direct, private remedy. Hence it is very easy to discover any injustice on the husband's part after the intervention of arbitrators, at which point it becomes the woman's legitimate *shar'i* right to take her case of wrongdoing to the *qaadi* (judge), if the two arbitrators cannot sort it out.

Fifthly: Yes, you may object to this matter in the strongest terms, and that is because you are unlikely to make a mistake because you are a noble and decent character. And other women may object to the idea of hitting because of the honourable way in which their husbands treat

them or because of their husbands' level of education. There is no doubt concerning that. Hence the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said concerning those who hit their wives: "Those are not the best of you" – even if they are Muslim and good, because hitting their wives brings them to a lower level. Hence the wives and servants of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) all bore witness that he "never hit a servant, a woman or a child."

What a good educator is the one who can make others understand him without having to give them a stern look; and the one whose look can make them understand before he starts speaking; and the one whose ignoring them can make them understand before he starts admonishing them; and the one who admonishing can make them understand without resorting to hitting them. The one who reaches the level of hitting has exhausted all disciplinary means and demonstrated his incapability and his failure with regard to all the means that were available to him.

Sixthly: Marriage is a system that is ruled by clauses and conditions, and hitting is

prescribed for disciplinary purposes, to keep order. If disorder occurs and there is a dispute, then the one who is in charge must restore order by using good means and admonition. If he is not able to restore order in these circumstances, then what is left but using a sufficient amount of force to restore order?

On this basis nations are established and their security is protected when needed, and the extent of that is to be determined by the ruler according to his wisdom. Can the ruler be told to let things go out of control and not to use force?

The victims of division and dissent are many times more than the victims of hitting – if there are any such victims.

All of these are aims compared to which hitting becomes bearable. Hence God limited hitting, which is to be used only until the woman comes back to obedience, and He said: **“but if they return to obedience, seek not against them means (of annoyance)”** [*an-Nisa'* 4:34].

Seventhly: Hitting is the means which naturally comes to mind when all other means fail. This is a fact which no one

denies. Do you think it is worse to suppress this natural matter, and then the person will not care about the destructive consequences, no matter what they are, in a moment of anger – or is it better to discipline it and lay down guidelines, so that it may be used in a beneficial way?

Eighthly: The reason why there are different views about a husband hitting his wife, as some support it and some object to it, is that it has to do with the way you look at the issue. A child may object strongly to hitting if he sees his father hitting his mother. Why?

Because he regards his mother as the weak party, as he is her son, but if he were to look at it from his father's view point of his mother, this is a different angle, and he would start to see her as a husband sees his wife, and he would understand the issue and learn a lesson from it.

The same applies if we look at the issue from a judge's point of view. We will see that he looks at the issue in order to examine it and seek evidence, because he wants to pass judgement concerning a dispute, so for him the basic principle with regard to these people is conflict.

Looking
from
different
angles

When we look at the issue from the point of view of the conflict between the man and the woman, the matter takes on the form of enmity and one party seeking to prevail over the other, and so on. Moreover, looking at it from this angle – the angle of conflict and escalation – guarantees to make hitting that is based on mercy and discipline more akin to when a loving mother smack her only child when he makes a mistake and repeats it, after using all known means of discipline. That may make people think badly of the mother's dealings with her child, and the child may be taken from his mother and given to someone else, thus depriving him and her of her greatest happiness.

Since when is depriving the parents of the dearest of all creation to them a remedy?

Since when is preventing hitting in all cases a remedy?

How can you discipline one who feels safe from any punishment?

Since when did the extreme attitude of some careless parents and husbands with regard to hitting become a reason to

Hitting
is not an
absolute
right

ban a disciplinary means that may bring about good results, if used in the proper place and time, and a reason to prevent the reform of some wives? Yet the one who transgresses should bear the burden of his mistake if he goes to extremes in hitting or uses this method at the wrong time or with one who does not deserve it?

In addition to all the conditions stipulated, one of the conditions of hitting is that it should not cause injury or be severe.

Thus this short-sighted look from only one angle led to women and children being in control.

Yes, hitting is a minor issue and we do not want to discuss it at length. The angle from which you look at the issue leads to a specific ruling on hitting.

Moreover, hitting or corporal punishment is a deterrent, not a means of teaching good manners – in most cases – in the sense that if you cannot prevent your child's destruction except by hitting, will you leave him to die?

If you cannot take away from him the knife with which he wants to kill himself except by twisting his arm, will you

leave him to kill himself because it is not allowed to twist the child's arm?

If you cannot prevent him from burning the house down by taking the matches away from him except by hitting him so that he will drop the matches, will you let him burn the house down, because hitting is not allowed?

Condi-
tions of
hitting

Although we say that hitting is only allowed provided that it is based on mercy and with the aim of discipline, and so long as it does not lead to a greater harm, and so long as you exhaust all other means first, yet we say that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not hit anyone, and he said concerning those who hit their wives, "Those are not the best among you."

Therefore it is no wonder that societies which are based on materialism and suspicion, and past experience of injustice, produced these laws which are based on improper examination of the issue and looking from only one angle. They are no more than a reaction. Moreover, doesn't Islam make reviving the conscience the greatest guarantee of good application, and the best guard against transgression? Thus the punishment of the law is of less

serious consequence for the one who transgresses.

What comparison can there be between the punishment of people and the punishment of God?

Hence when you compare the Islamic system with your system, you may make a big mistake, because you are comparing the one who has no conscience with one whose conscience is alive.

If you wish, you may say that you are comparing a man who hits with no conscience and with no fear of God with a man whose conscience is alive and who fears God, and fears the punishment of God if he oversteps the mark.

Is it wise or reasonable to ban hitting when the wife's rebellion still continues?

The greatest motive for crime is to waive the punishment, if the reason for the punishment still exists and the perpetrators are still present in society.

With regard to the marital relationship in the Islamic system, it is a sacred and organized relationship, in which the wife and the husband are subject to precise

guidelines and rulings. The basis of these rulings is being conscious of God. Islam makes the home a field in which each races to please the other. The husband's point of view is based on the *hadeeth* of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): "The best of you is the one who is best to his family."² And the wife's point of view is based on the *hadeeth* of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): "If I were to order anyone to prostrate to anyone – other than God – I would have ordered women to prostrate to their husbands."³

A relationship that is so sanctified and regulated is one in which no hitting can ever occur. If it does occur, it is only aimed at helping the marriage to survive and is in its best interests, and is aimed at warding off failure. It is based on positive thinking of the relationship. Were it not for its sanctity and importance, it would not deserve this clear and strict legislation to protect it.

Is it not a sign of negligence and scorn towards marriage to make it too easy to

2. Narrated by Ibn Majaah, 1977, and others from Ibn 'Abbaas

3. Narrated by at-Tirmidhi, 1159, from Abu Hura - rah; he said it is a *ghareeb hasan hadeeth*.

exit it and to destroy the obstacles that prevent its lasting survival?

If the wise woman understands this, then she will appreciate the husband who hits her within the conditions that we have mentioned, because he is bringing her back to her home and stirring her out of her arrogance or ignorance, and he is not making her live in the street like so-and-so, and he has brought her back to her senses *after she persisted in her mistakes*.

The husband who understands this concept will never take hitting as an act of revenge, or as a means to prevail over his wife. Rather it is a sign of loss for him when all other means have failed. When he puts the idea of hitting into practice, he is losing the race for the position of who is better, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said of those who hit their wives: "Those are not the best among you."

The child of this family should show gratitude to his father for this wisdom, because he has protected him from loss when he protected their mother from loss, and kept her so that she could raise them and fulfil her mission, even with

the deterrent of hitting that took place sometime in the past.

How many flocks have thanked the shepherd for a little hitting and scaring that prevented them from getting scattered which would lead to them and their young becoming food for the wolves.

How many generations have appreciated a leader who with his resolve prevented them from becoming divided and lost among other nations.

You know, Isabella, that some women can be brought back to their senses with a simple word and admonition, and others need harsh words and threats, and some need the husband to shun them in the same house and not speak to them, and some can only be brought back to their senses by means of scaring and light hitting.

You admit, Isabella, that this may work with some women. If that is the case, then is there any wise woman who would prefer separation and losing the children so that she will not be deterred by hitting? Many women would say after divorce: Would that I had been hit a hundred times and not divorced once.

So each of these three remedies has an aim at a certain stage. If the aim is not achieved, one leaves it and moves on to the next one. This depends on a man's knowledge of his family. If he knows that this remedy or that will have the opposite effect, then it is not permissible for him to use it.

But when you banned disciplinary hitting that had a purpose, you fell into the fatal type of hitting. If you look at the alarming numbers of battered women and the terrifying outcomes of hitting, you would rush to embrace the Islamic system. The French government, in a study that was prepared to mark the International Day to Stop Violence against Women organized by the United Nations, announced that on average, one French woman died every three days as the result of domestic violence, in comparison to one man every fourteen days, according to a report in the Qatari newspaper *al-Raayah*.

Statistics that were compiled country-wide in France indicate that this problem affects all classes of French society equally. Starting from January 2006, the number of domestic violence crimes was 113. 83% of which were against women,

Statistics
of wife
beating

compared to just 18 cases in which the husband died as a result of violence on the wife's part. But in twelve of those cases, it was the husband who started the fight.

Studies indicate that one in every three women worldwide has been exposed to bad treatment in her life, whether it was hitting, threats, attacks, harm, disfigurement, honour crimes, insults, abuse, forced marriage and so on. Between 40-70% of women slain in Australia, Israel, South Africa, Canada and the United States were killed by their husbands or boyfriends, usually in the context of a relationship that was based on mistreatment.

In general, we can say that 40% of women who were killed met their end at the hands of a husband or boyfriend; 70% of victims of violence in Sweden lived with some form of violence or sexual abuse. More than 200,000 women in Holland are exposed to violence each year at the hands of their husbands.

In the USA, a woman is exposed to beating, usually at the hands of a husband or boyfriend, every fifteen seconds. (United Nations study on women of the world,

2000).

Approximately two women are killed every week at the hands of their partners in the United Kingdom.” (E Joni Seager, 2003).⁴

Isabella: “It is true that these figures show a frightening increase in cases of women being beaten in civilized societies, but they also show that there are cases of men hitting women in the third world, and this alone is sufficient to make these figures the greatest testimony that Islam has not succeeded in limiting the injustice that is done to women, and perhaps it is a real contributor to the legitimizing of hitting women, because hitting women is mentioned in the Qur’ân and *hadeeth*, and legalizing something wrong is a more serious matter than leaving the issue without legislation, because the law is usually protected and it gives legitimacy to the one who does this action.”

Abu Haamid: “There is a fact which should be clear in the minds of the debaters, which is that Islam is one thing and incorrect application is something else.

4. www.amnesty.org

The things that are wrong with the Muslims' reality today should not be held against Islam at all. Islam denounces any mistake, no matter who does it, and no matter what his status in Islam.

It is sufficient to instil this principle in people's minds that God referred to the mistakes of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) more than once in several places, and the Prophet conveyed these verses which were revealed about him in the Book of Allah, which spoke of his mistake, just as he conveyed the verses which praised him, without adding or taking away anything.

Don't we see in *Soorat at-Tawbah* the rebuke that God gives to His Messenger for accepting the excuses of the hypocrites when they have excuses for not going for *jihad* with him? He says to him: **"May Allah forgive you (O Muhammad). Why did you grant them leave (for remaining behind; you should have persisted as regards your order to them to proceed on *Jihaad*), until those who told the truth were seen by you in a clear light, and you had known the liars?"** [*at-Tawbah* 9:43].

This rebuking occurred more than once in different places, and many great lessons may be learned from it, such as instilling this principle in people's minds, that mistakes are to be rejected. So long as God did not overlook the mistakes of His Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), it is impossible for any mistake to be left in *sharee'ah*, because God alone would be held responsible for it, but God is far above making any mistake. Based on that, it is more appropriate that no attention should be paid to the mistake of any individual in Muslim society. From this verse we also understand that there should be freedom and protection for the one who gives advice.

This is one thing. Secondly, this is not a call of idealism or a suggestion that Islam cannot be implemented. There was a stage when Islam was implemented in the best way and the true form of Islam emerged. The advantage of that application was that it came immediately after the greatest period of ignorance (*Jaahiliyyah*). This means that that which succeeded in that era of ignorance is more able to succeed in other periods of igno-

rance, and that it is fit to be applied in every period. Is this not the language of logic and statistics?

My son
Haamid
and cars

Thirdly, my oldest son Haamid was crazy about driving cars at great speed, and he tried all ways of driving, such as driving on two wheels only, and other stunts that put his life in danger. I advised him time and again, but he was only outwardly deterred. He started doing that in secret, and other people told me what he was doing.

He tried many times to convince me to let him join a racing club, but I refused, saying to myself: If he is like that and nothing deters him, how about if it becomes a way of life for him, and he becomes friends with reckless people?

We discussed the matter over lunch one day, and my brother Shaykh Qays was with us and helped him to convince me. They said to me: At the club there is a special protection system, and there are special times for racing, and there is a private subscription. Anyone who does not follow the system receives a special penalty. My son Haamid said something to me that I still remember: O my father, let me join the car club. I know that speed

is something that I love, so let me get it out of my system in a safe way.

I said: I agree, on this condition.

The surprise is that now Haamid does not go over the speed limit of 100 kph on the highway!

He hates crazy speeding completely.”

Isabella: “This is a good example, but what point are you trying to make?”

Abu Haamid: “When hitting was legally banned in your countries, it turned into killing, craziness, prisons, abuse and cases of hysteria.

Legislation to ban hitting altogether

The solution became referring the matter to the courts – in the best cases. But when specific rules and regulations are prescribed for hitting, and there is a specific system, a specific limit, a specific aim, and it is forbidden to approach it, and our example [the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)] did not hit women or children, the outcome is as it was prescribed, and hitting becomes rare. Its bitterness becomes like the bitterness of medicine. The patient takes it out of necessity even though he dislikes it, and the result is like the beneficial ef-

fect of medicine.

I will tell you this story which shows the extent of moderation in using hitting, even though it is discouraged.

Can you imagine that the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) gathered the Muslims together to deliver a special speech to them about hitting women, to put men off this matter in the strongest terms by discussing the realities of their lives? He said: "Would one of you whip his wife like a slave, then sleep with her at the end of the day?"⁵

If you think about this *hadeeth*, you will realize the abhorrence of hitting, and you will know what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) intended when he presented his audience with two opposite and different matters. Hitting is the pinnacle of harshness and sleeping with one's wife is the pinnacle of love, so how can the two come together on the same day?

Let us go back now and apply this to our discussion. Let us go back to that dark period in which Islam forbade hit-

5. Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 4942

ting women. It forbade that in a society where women had no right to object and no helpers.

Who could a woman look to for help when the one who wronged her was her father or husband or brother or society?

Yes, there was hitting in Arabian society, but the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said that there should be no hitting, and he was the example of refraining from it. Based on this comprehensive remedy, after that only one complaint was taken to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) by one woman who complained of her husband's mistreatment, during a period of at least thirty-five years, i.e., until the end of the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the era of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs who came after him."

Professor Christian: "Forget about the permissibility of hitting women in Islam, and look at another problem which is more difficult than that. We may say that maybe a wise woman will understand the reason for hitting and benefit from it – I say maybe – but what do you say about

Second
specious
argument:
harshness
towards
children

Muslims hitting children?

What is well known about Muslims is that they are the most hard-hearted people towards children, and that any problem regarding children can only be dealt with by means of a bigger problem, which is hitting them.

Can children's problems be solved by hitting them?

Does hitting in the first place exacerbate the problem or solve it?

Don't these parents need a law to prevent them from mistreating their children?"

Abu Haamid: "First of all, I tell you that we need a law to prevent mistreatment in all its forms. With regard to hitting unjustly, it is not true at all. You know that in every society there is hitting of children, animals and so on. But I will prove to you that your society dealt with this problem using a methodology which I have already mentioned to you, namely protecting the problem and issuing legislation concerning it whilst investing more in it.

It is well known educationally that the style which combines encouragement

and deterrent is the balanced method of upbringing that leads to a balanced character, if the encouragement and deterrent are at the appropriate level.

Nevertheless, encouragement is the preferred style, rather than deterrent, unless encouragement does not work, in which case we resort to deterrent means in the most limited way.

I am very amazed at how you can accept this image of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or of the religion of Islam as being cruel to children. Hence I find myself with no choice but to explain to you the attitude of Muhammad in this regard, then you may judge as you wish.

But to judge me on the basis of ongoing distortion of Islam in the media, this had nothing to do with fair-mindedness.

You must realize that our example when it comes to raising children, Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), did not hit any child or woman during his lifetime of sixty-three years, even though he did not isolate himself from people, and even though his family was large and there was a great deal of friction

Muham-
mad
never hit
a servant
or a
child or a
woman

at times. This is the testimony of Anas ibn Maalik, his servant, who joined him as a child and served him for ten years, and what he narrated here was narrated after his death. It was narrated that Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "I served the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) for ten years and he never once said '*Uff*' (a word of contempt) to me, and he never said for something that I did, 'Why did you do that?' or for something that I did not do, 'Why didn't you do that?' The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was the best of people in attitude, and I have never touched any kind of silk that was softer than the hand of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and I have never smelled any musk or perfume that was more fragrant than the sweat of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)."⁶

And there is the testimony of his wife, when 'Abd-Allah al-Jadali said: I asked 'Aa'ishah about the attitude of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and she said: "He

6. Narrated by Muslim, 6123; at-Tirmidhi, 2015, who said it is *hasan saheeh*.

was not rough or foul-mouthed, and he did not make noise in the marketplace, and he did not respond to bad deeds in kind, rather he would forgive and overlook.”⁷

It was narrated that Sahl (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “I and the one who sponsors an orphan will be in Paradise like this,” and he gestured with his forefinger and middle finger, holding them slightly apart.⁸ In other words, the one who sponsors an orphan will be the companion of Muhammad in Paradise.

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “I issue an emphatic warning against neglecting the rights of the two weak ones:

orphans and women” – i.e., he regarded it as a very serious issue to neglect the

7. Narrated by Ahmad, 6/174; at-Tirmidhi, 2016; in *al-Shamaa'il*, 347 and elsewhere. At-Tirmidhi said: this is a *saheeh hasan hadeeth*. Abu 'Abd-Allah al-Jadali's real name is 'Abd ibn 'Abd, or it was said 'Abd al-Rahmaan ibn 'Abd

8. al-Bukhaari – *al-Fath*, 9 (5304).

rights of women and orphans.

Concerning small children, he said: "He is not one of us who is not merciful towards our little ones and does not appreciate the position of our elders."⁹

You know that for the Muslims, the teachings of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) are like the teachings of the Qur'an. And you know how keen Muslims are to follow the example of their Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and how keen they are to follow his *ahaadeeth*.

In the Qur'an, God warns us against disobeying his command, as He says in *Soorat al-Noor*:

"And let those who oppose the Messenger's (Muhammad's) commandment (i.e. his *Sunnah* — legal ways, orders, acts of worship, statements) (among the sects) beware, lest some *Fitnah* (disbelief, trials, afflictions, earthquakes, killing, overpowered by a tyrant) should befall them or a painful torment be inflicted on them" [*al-Noor* 24:63].

9. Narrated by at-Tirmidhi, 1920; he said it is *hasan saheeh*

Although some Muslims go against the command of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and hit children, that only represents a few isolated cases. Moreover, this problem has not turned into a greater problem, or a problem that is protected and legalized as is the case among you.

Harmful effects of preventing parents from smacking their children altogether

Removing corporal punishment altogether from the method of raising children, and letting the children know about that, is tempting them to wreak havoc on the widest scale.

No one says that allowing the father or mother to hit the child means that it must be used even once, or that it must be used every time, or that a form of terrorism is to be used and the like. Otherwise, look at the criminal law of which all people are aware, which includes various kinds of punishment; no one says that this is humiliating to people or that it is applicable to all people, rather judges vary in the way they apply the law in a single case, according to each judge's opinion.

When you drive on the highway and see a sign that says "radar surveillance in operation", for example, it never occurs to you that they are accusing you of negli-

gence.

The family is part of this greater society. Permission to smack one who transgresses a specific limit does not mean anything more than a deterrent for the one who may be tempted to commit a transgression that cannot be stopped except by means of corporal punishment.

Moreover, the greatest deterrent against transgressing against the child is the overwhelming emotion that the parents feel towards the child, which is sufficient to prevent them from hitting him in a vengeful manner. Rather the hitting is for the sake of discipline and training, if he is hit at all.

This corporal punishment is a deterrent to the mischievous child against persisting, and it is a deterrent to the other siblings from doing the same as the one who has erred. But what should you do if you cannot deter the oldest child, for example, by all means of encouragement and deterring, except hitting? Will you leave him to go on his merry way and let the younger ones follow him on the path to doom, and all you can do is watch and keep silent and not move, and if you take action and use corporal punishment to

protect them from error, the law will intervene to protect them? Wouldn't such a law prompt the rest of the children to use all of their destructive energy to go wild and pay no heed to the limits?

Here we should ask: in whose interest was the law that forbids hitting children at all promulgated?

Is it in the interests of parents who see the apple of their eyes in trouble and cannot save him because of the law, and if they find that saving him involves smacking or hitting him for the purpose of discipline, they will be told that the law doesn't allow it, even if your children are lost?

Is it in the interests of the children whose futures, siblings and families, in some cases, are destroyed, using the law as an excuse, and the law protects their mistakes?

I want you to ask these people: Do they know the difference between injustice and discipline or corporal punishment in cases of necessity?

I want you to ask them about the percentage of reckless children whose lives ended in doom, who could have been saved from doom by means of disciplinary cor-

poral punishment, but they were not thus prevented because of the law.

Ask others who were prevented by corporal punishment from pursuing a course of doom and destruction.

I hope that at this moment you will dismiss from your mind the image of that unjust father who holds in his hand a sharp tool or iron rod, or who raises his stick and starts hitting a small child mercilessly because the child broke a vase or hit his younger brother, or drew a black line on a white wall and the like.

This is not Islamic behaviour or discipline; rather Islam prescribes corporal punishment as a necessity after exhausting all other means, when corporal punishment becomes a deterrent against that which is more harmful to the child. All laws are agreed on this, that the greater of two evils may be warded off by the lesser. Moreover, this hitting should have the quality of discipline, not revenge. Is it possible for a father to take revenge on his child, unless he is mentally or behaviourally deviant?

After all this, if we want to look at the effect of banning corporal punishment

in your society, let us look at how it has caused savagery in hitting, and the tragic results it has had on children's lives.

Dr. Christopher Hobbs, head of a specialized group that studied this type of transgression against children in the Leeds University Hospital says:

"We have trained school teachers, nursery school teachers, police officers and health visitors to recognize the signs of abuse in children, and we have established a large number of foster homes, and we will be looking for a large number of families who can take these children in. But the problem that we are facing is that these children need families who have experience in dealing with such cases, because they have a lot of social and psychological problems, and may behave in inappropriate ways. *The Independent*, 3/11/86.

A spokesman for the same organization said on 13/7/86: More than 300 children in Leeds are receiving psychiatric treatment after suffering abuse from family members or other adults.

Let us look now at the attitude of the British law towards this problem, and the

extent of its role in solving it and putting an end to it.

Maurice Hawker, director of social services for Essex County Council, says: The problem resides in the fact that the law does not protect these children. We lose many cases when we try to take these children to look after them, because the burden of proof is very difficult. Society as a whole needs to take children's rights into account. *The Observer*, 12/11/86.¹⁰

Is what British law does aimed at protecting the child or the abuser?

Dr. Hobbs says: It is very difficult to take any action against the abuser, unless he admits it, even if a medical examination proves it. The law now protects the abuser. The police know this and very few cases ever reach court. *The Independent*, 3/11/86.

I ask you, Professor, is this a solution or is it condoning the problem?

Imagine if the one who is abused is your child – what would you do to the abuser of your child?

10. From *Atfaal al-Hadaarah al-Mu'aasirah, nahw al-Haawiyah*, Majallat al-Bayaan, issue 3, p. 98

Would you feel that the law is a deterrent?

If this is the number of cases of abuse that are reported, then how many cases go unreported?

If this is the number of those unwilling victims, what does the law say about young people who consent to homosexual activity?

Does the law have the right to punish when the law allows the media to propagate such immorality?

Isn't the child a victim?

He is a victim of someone who came to solve his problem, but instead legalized it and gave more room to those who commit it.

He is a victim of educational methods, the media and judicial law.

You, as the parent, stand there confused.

You say: What should I do?

Should I kill the one who abused my child?

Or should I punish my child even if it involves hitting that is not severe?

The law prevents me from doing either; rather it allows my child to take me to court if I hit him in any way.

The law believes him and not me; it may even take my child away from me and give him to someone else!

What should I do?

Is there any protection for immorality that is greater than this?

How can I protect my child when the law forbids me to even hint at using a deterrent style, namely disciplinary corporal punishment. Yes, only hitting.

If a person has a chicken farm and the fox attacks and eats his flock, does he have the right to take the fox to court if he did not build any fence to protect his chickens?

Aren't these abusers worse than foxes? So why do you prevent people from building fences and setting up checkpoints? Moreover, who can guarantee that his brothers will not follow in his wrongdoing footsteps if they see that the one who does these things is safe from punishment?

Ordinary parents are the least likely of

people to be vengeful towards their children. This is the natural case even with animals. The hen exposes herself to the fox in order to protect her chicks. The cow will try to head-butt the lion in order to defend her calves. The horse carefully lifts up its feet to avoid stepping on its foal. Is it possible for a human to hit a little child in a vengeful manner when he is the one who sacrifices his wealth and his life in order to protect him and his future? How could he both protect him with his life then try to destroy him?

The law of nature is greater than laws written on paper.

The law appears ridiculous when it prescribes a punishment for a person who hits one hand with another, or hits his leg with his hand, or hits himself with a stick. So how about when the nature of animals – let alone humans – testifies that the parents' natural love for their children is greater than their love for themselves and their love for their spouses? A man will willingly and generously donate a kidney if his child's life depends on it, but he would not give it to anyone else.

As for the odd cases in which some fathers and mothers mistreat their children,

this usually happens under the influence of intoxication, sometimes as a result of insanity, and in rare cases under the influence of anger. But rules and laws cannot be based on odd or weird cases and then applied to everyone.

It is sufficient for us to see where things have ended up with regard to children, and how the perverts and deviants have taken advantage.”

You should know that our religion tells us to respect the system and implement it, not only in our own countries or in Muslim countries, but wherever we may be on earth, because Islam does not just create good citizens, rather it creates good people, so they are good and spread goodness not just within the borders of their own countries or among their co-religionists, but wherever they go in any spot in the world.

You can see for yourselves how any neighbourhood in your country becomes good in any region of your country, if there are Muslims there. Crime rates fall, disputes grow less, problems decrease. Even in prisons, if Muslim reformers enter them and meet the prisoners, their situation will change for the better. There

is a great deal of testimony to this effect, especially in American prisons.

I hope that no one will think that in our houses in our own countries we hit our wives! No, rather we look down on the one who hits his womenfolk. Our Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) says concerning this type of husband, as we have seen: "Those are not the best among you."

How can we hit our wives in your countries when the system forbids that altogether?

Professor Christian: "These figures cannot be denied in fact, or be checked quickly. But you, Abu Haamid, have turned the matter against us in a very serious manner when you mentioned what is happening in our societies and we are suffering from it much more than your societies are.

But there is a problem that is far greater than the problem of hitting children, namely the problem of sexual deviance in children, and even in adults, which is getting worse day after day, and we do not know how to solve it.

In our societies it has taken on the form

Acknowledging the problem of homosexuality

of public demonstrations and official demands, and the problem is that legislators are giving in to it when politicians give into it, so they have begun to set out laws for it, not to limit it but to protect it and propagate it!

We really need to know how Islam would deal with this problem if it were faced with it. We do not want a theoretical solution."

How
Islam
deals
with
homosex-
uality

Abu Haamid: "As for what you want to know about how Islam deals with the phenomenon of this deviance, Islam operates on the principle that prevention is better than cure. Protection now, before the crime takes place, means cutting off the causes that lead to it and regarding the media which promotes this immorality, as part of the crime. It cannot be regarded as having nothing to do with it. In the Qur'ân there is a verse in *Soorat al-Noor* which says:

"Verily, those who like that (the crime of) illegal sexual intercourse should be propagated among those who believe, they will have a painful torment in this world and in the Hereafter. And Allah knows and you know not" [al-Noor 24:19].

Islam regards as the most important matters with regard to proper upbringing the instilling of internal self-monitoring in the child's heart, creating a sound family atmosphere and preventing the causes of sexual provocation even inside the home. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade brothers and sisters to sleep in the same bed, or beneath the same blanket, once they reached the age of discernment, i.e., when they reach the age of seven years or older. He said: "Separate them in their beds."¹¹

He also prescribed punishments at home as a precaution and he did not rule them out, but it is a disciplinary punishment based on love.

Moreover, Islam prescribes appropriate sex education that is aimed at preventing people from falling prey to sexual abusers. After all that, if a child falls into this deviancy, then the child is to be forgiven for his young age even if he was willing, but he must be disciplined and educated, and the first one who should be concerned with that is his parent or

11. Narrated by Ahmad (6689), Ibn Abi Shaybah (3482) and others.

guardian, because he is the first one to be rebuked if his child falls into any shortcoming. As for the abuser, he should be given a punishment that will deter him and others like him, so long as he is an adult of sound mind.

As for spreading temptation and waiving punishments, as happens in your societies, this is like what the poet said:

‘He threw him into the sea, tied up, and told him: Don’t get wet!’

As the saying goes: The one who feels safe from punishment will misbehave.

But I would like to affirm once again, Professor Christian, that the methodology that is used in your societies to confront a small problem has, unfortunately, been turned into a larger problem, and then you organized it, protected it and prepared means of propagating it!

Undoubtedly deviance is a problem, but look at how educational experts, the law, the media and politicians deal with it!

They acknowledged it, issued laws protecting it, formed clubs for it and finally they even officially legislated for it in some countries, introducing what they

call 'same sex marriage' and so on.

For whose sake are they doing all this?

Is it for the sake of the desires of those perverts who spread diseases in society, and persist in their behaviour regardless of these diseases.

Studies show that 95% of those affected by AIDS are homosexuals and that the rest are drug users or people who received a transfusion of infected blood. More than 90% of those who are affected by this disease die from it.¹²

Is opening clubs for perverts and giving them political rights and media channels a solution to the problem, or is it making it worse?

Should we treat one who is affected with a disease such as cholera or any other epidemic in this manner, or should we put him in quarantine so that he can be treated, and only when he is cured allow him to mix with society?

Do you know how Islam deals with men who are physically effeminate but are not actually homosexuals?

Firstly: Islam creates a pure atmosphere

12. *Majallat al-Bayaan*, issue no. 2 p. 84

for the new generation to live in, as Allah says in *Soorat at-Tawbah*:

“The believers, men and women, are *Awliyaa*’ (helpers, supporters, friends, protectors) of one another; they enjoin (on the people) *Al-Ma’roof* (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do), and forbid (people) from *Al-Munkar* (i.e. polytheism and disbelief of all kinds, and all that Islam has forbidden); they perform *As-Salaah* (*Iqaamat-as-Salaah*), and give the *Zakaah*, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah will have His Mercy on them. Surely, Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise” [*at-Tawbah* 9:71].

Secondly: Islam forbids men to imitate women and vice versa, according to the *hadeeth* in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: ‘Allah cursed the women who imitate men and the men who imitate women.’¹³

It is no secret to you that what is meant by being cursed is being cast out from the mercy of God. This is one of the most effective means of putting people off this imitation of one gender by the other.

13. Narrated by al-Tabaraani, 11502; Ahmad, 3060; and al-Tirmidhi, 2748.

What does the effeminate husband leave for his wife if he starts to adorn himself as she does? And what manliness does a wife leave for her husband if she starts to imitate his masculinity?

Don't you see that if the effeminate husband starts asking for his sexual rights from his wife, that will put his wife off him or may prompt her to seek to fulfil her desire with someone else?

What respect will be left for a minister – for example – if it becomes known that he is treated like a woman in physical relationships?

Yes, perhaps he enjoys that perversion and deviation, but what have our children done to deserve having such a person as an example? What have his wife and family done to deserve that?

What has manhood done to deserve to fall victim to this?

What has femininity done to deserve to fall victim to people to whom it does not belong?

Moreover, is it right for those who have this problem to broadcast their perversion?

Perversion is one thing, and broadcasting perversion is something else altogether.

Thirdly: Islam enjoins being active and tells people that idleness is something bad. In the Holy Qur'ân, God says in *Soorat at-Tawbah*:

“And say (O Muhammad): ‘Do deeds! Allah will see your deeds, and (so will) His Messenger and the believers. And you will be brought back to the All-Knower of the unseen and the seen. Then He will inform you of what you used to do’” [*at-Tawbah* 9:105].

Allah said to His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him):

7. “So when you have finished (your occupation), devote yourself for Allah’s worship.

8. And to your Lord (Alone) turn (all your) intentions and hopes” [*al-Sharh* 94:7-8].

i.e., as soon as you finish one task, start another, and so on throughout your life.

Fourthly: Islam encourages young men to live a rough life and forbids being effeminate. It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him)

said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

‘The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak believer, although both are good. Strive to do that which will benefit you and seek the help of Allah, and do not feel helpless. If anything befalls you, do not say ‘If only I had done (such and such), the such and such would have happened,’ rather say: ‘Allah has decreed and what He wills He does,’ for ‘if only’ opens the door to the work of the *shaytaan*.’¹⁴

Fifthly: Islam encourages keeping company with good people. It was narrated from Abu Moosa (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

‘The likeness of a good companion and a bad companion is that of a perfume seller and one who works the bellows. With the perfume seller, either he will give you something or you will buy something from him, or you will notice a good smell from him, but with the one who works the bellows, either he will burn your clothes

14. Muslim, 2664

or you notice a bad smell from him.’¹⁵

Sixthly: Islam enjoins isolating effeminate men if they cannot give up imitating women.

Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allah be pleased with him) – who was the cousin of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) – said: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) cursed effeminate men and masculinized women, and said: ‘Expel them from your houses.’ The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) expelled So and so [a man], and ‘Umar expelled So and so [a woman].¹⁶

Isolating effeminate men from society comes after it is determined that they are unable to stop imitating women, so this isolation is a far-reaching psychological punishment which motivates them to check themselves, take stock and try to deal with their shortcomings.

Moreover, isolation from society also prompts the effeminate man to become self-reliant in doing things for himself. The problem with the effeminate man

15. al-Bukhaari – *al-Fath* (9/5534)

16. al-Bukhaari – *al-Fath* (10/5886)

is that he is weak and unable to rely on himself.

But if he is isolated and loses the people he used to rely on, then this will awaken his willpower and he will slowly start to change.

But his presence in society offers the greatest motive for people of weak character to be like him, thus this attitude will grow slowly until it becomes a phenomenon, as we see in Europe and America.

I say to the one who objects to this: would you like to have in your country one thing that could cause the bird flu?

The answer is definitely not.

Why not? The answer is: for fear of it spreading.

Are these diseases that are lethal to manliness and good character any less serious than animal diseases? Are our children less important to us than animals?

We need to re-evaluate our values."

Professor Anderson: "Let me tell you, Abu Haamid, about another problem which Islam makes more complicated. The one who does not know about the

The third
problem:
slavery

slavery system in Islam will think that the aim of Islam is mercy to all people, whereas we find that Islam has prescribed slavery as a system – especially with regard to women – as it allows men to enjoy intimacy with their slave women without any marriage contract or dowry, and it prescribes selling these women, and using them as labour, and it makes their rights like those of animals, like the right of a piece of furniture in the house. Can such a system be described as a system of mercy, let alone a system that is good for all times and places?”

Missing
out on
the truth!

Abu Haamid: “It is not possible for the judge, no matter how experienced he is, to reach the right conclusion unless he listens well to both sides. How can he listen to one side and not the other?”

I think that one of the main gains from these soirées is that they allow me to explain to you the opposite point of view. After that, one can pass judgement with clarity. So what harm will it do a person if the facts come to him by themselves without him putting much effort into seeking them?

Is there anything dearer in life than the truth?

Does anyone lose anything in this world greater than a person who passes away never having known the truth on which his fate depends, except one who is faced with the truth, but he rejects it, preferring to live in the darkness of illusions?

Therefore no fair-minded person can be right in his judgement unless he looks at the issue of slavery in a realistic manner, then sees how Islam dealt with slavery in that situation, and looks at the outcome of this system after that, until the present.

It is not realistic for the critic who is living in today's reality to pass judgement from his position today against the situation of Islam fourteen hundred years ago, and then praise his reality and undermine Islam, when he does not know that the gradual approach that Islam took in dismantling the global system of slavery is what produced this freedom of humanity of which he is boasting about now; in fact he is boasting about Islam without realizing it.

How was the world at that time? What did Islam do in that world?

Wasn't the whole world at that time split into two groups: the owner class and the

slave class?

Wasn't the world heading towards expanding the slave class and expanding the possessions of those who owned other people?

Do you know of anyone at that time – fourteen hundred years ago – who called for a reversal of this equation apart from Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?

Do you know of anyone who set out a system for manumitting slaves in this world, apart from Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?

Do you know of anyone who made achieving freedom a basic feature of his system, by restricting the sources of slaves to the point where they would dry up, whilst also widening the means of escaping slavery to the largest extent, apart from Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?

Do you know of anyone who turned the idea of manumitting slaves into a goal that their owners would willingly pursue, apart from Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?

Do you know of anyone who set out for those who remained in slavery a system of rights which were binding upon their owners, so that slavery was now governed by a system which took precedence over any system set up by the slave-owners on the basis of his whims and desires, a system which allowed psychological freedom and human rights, apart from Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?

I do not doubt that you find these words of mine strange, but let history judge what I say and you will see that whatever is sound in the current system of liberation is the fruit of the efforts of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?

Do you remember the means of enslavement that were legal before Islam? They included plunder, kidnap, gambling, raiding, wars, piracy and so on. Do you remember that Islam closed all of these doors and left none of them except a legitimate *jihad* war, which is confirmed today in the prisoner-of-war system that confirms their rights?

Do you remember the system of slavery in your country at that time, in the Ro-

man Empire, and how the slave-owners used to enjoy watching their slaves fight to the death on stage with an audience of people watching and laughing?

Do you remember how they would leave groups of slaves with wild animals so that the owners could watch animals devour humans?"

Professor Anderson: "We remember all the things that you have mentioned in our societies, and we remember much more that brings disgrace upon man. But up until now you have mentioned some claims about Muhammad but you have not backed up these claims with any evidence apart from some moving historical words, then you attributed the virtue of our liberation movement to Muhammad!"

Abu Haamid: "I hope you go back and look at the world at that time – as I mentioned to you – and name for me one civilization that stood up to slavery.

No, give me one civilization that did not add to the problem of slavery and make it worse!

I hope that you will not go far. Give a specific answer to this question.

Then I hope that you and the others present will look at how I have proven every claim that I made to you, so that you can see with evidence how Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) opened the doors to manumission of slaves gradually, then after a while the world turned around and looked at the places that used to be filled with slaves, and suddenly there were hardly any slaves to be seen, and there is no one who opened the door for them except Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Do not worry about my words that have no proof; take a quick look at the doors that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) opened:

1 – Expiation

(i) Expiation for breaking an oath: If a person swears an oath to God that he will not do something good, then he regrets it and wants to do that good deed, then he may do it on condition that he frees a slave – such as one who swears that he will not pay for his child's maintenance, or that he will not uphold ties of kinship, and so on. The evidence for what I am saying is the words of Muhammad

(peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): 'Whoever swears an oath to do something, then sees that something else is better than it, let him offer expiation for his oath and do that which is better'.

(ii) Expiation for having intercourse while fasting: It is not permissible in Islam for one who is fasting to eat, drink or have intercourse with his wife during the day. If he has intercourse with his wife when he is fasting, then he has to make up that day when he broke his fast, and also free a slave. An incident took place at the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Listen to this story:

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah said: 'A man came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said: 'I am doomed, O Messenger of Allah!' He said: 'What has doomed you?' He said: 'I had intercourse with my wife in Ramadan.' He said: 'Do you have the means to free a slave?' He said: 'No.' He said: 'Can you fast for two consecutive months?' He said: 'No.' He said: 'Do you have the means to feed sixty poor persons?' He said: 'No.' Then he sat down, and a large basket of dates was brought to

the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He said: 'Give this in charity.' He said: 'Is there anyone poorer than us? There is no family between the two lava fields (of Madinah) more in need of it than us.' The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) smiled until his teeth were visible, then he said: 'Go and feed it to your family.'¹⁷

If you ponder this *hadith*, you will see that the first option for expiation in the case of this transgression against the law was to free a slave.

(iii) Expiation for manslaughter in addition to paying the blood money: If a person kills someone by mistake, whether the slain one is a Muslim or a non-Muslim, he must pay the blood money to the slain person's family, and also free a slave. The evidence for that is the verse in which Allah says:

"It is not for a believer to kill a believer except (that it be) by mistake; and whosoever kills a believer by mistake, (it is ordained that) he must set free a believing slave and a compensation (blood money, i.e. *Diyah*) be given to

17. Al-Bukhari – *al-Fath*, 4/1936

the deceased's family unless they remit it. If the deceased belonged to a people at war with you and he was a believer, the freeing of a believing slave (is prescribed); and if he belonged to a people with whom you have a treaty of mutual alliance, compensation (blood money — *Diyah*) must be paid to his family, and a believing slave must be freed. And whoso finds this (the penance of freeing a slave) beyond his means, he must fast for two consecutive months in order to seek repentance from Allah. And Allah is Ever All Knowing, All Wise" [*an-Nisa'* 4:92].

Here too, the first option for expiation in the case of accidental manslaughter is to free a slave. This is undisputable proof of the importance of freeing slaves.

(iv) The relative: If the slave is a relative, so long as you are free, than that slave who belongs to you becomes free, because of the *hadith* narrated from the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): 'Whoever takes possession of a close relative (as a slave), he becomes free.'¹⁸

18. Narrated by Abu Dawud, 4/260; at-Tirmidhi, 3/367.

2 – Acts of worship

(i) Virtuous actions

Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) strongly urged manumission of slaves, to such an extent that he said: 'If a person frees a Muslim slave, Allah will free each of his limbs in return for each of [the slave's] limbs from the Fire...' ¹⁹

You can appreciate the importance of this incentive when you see that the greatest danger that every person fears for himself is abiding forever in Hell, and that one of the means of salvation from this fate is freeing slaves.

3 – Contract of manumission

This is a system whereby the master is obliged to agree to manumit the slave if he wants that, in return for a set amount of money which is agreed upon and in which there is no exaggeration. This system is proven in the Qur'ân where Allah says in *Surat an-Nur*: **"And such of your slaves as seek a writing (of emancipation), give them such writing, if you**

19. Narrated by at-Tirmidhi; the hadeeth also appears in *Sahih al-Targheeb wal-Tarheeb*, no. 1890

find that there is good and honesty in them” [*an-Nur* 24:33].

4 – Obligatory *zakah*

You can imagine the status of manumission of slaves in Islam after you learn that Islam obliges every rich Muslim to pay 2.5% of his wealth as *zakah* to specific categories of people every year. Every slave who wants to be free is entitled to a prescribed share of this obligatory *zakah*.

5 – Marriage of a master to his slave woman

Islam also tried to harness sexual desire in the issue of manumission, as it dealt with it both realistically and idealistically at the same time, with regard to this type of people. Islam looked at the problem realistically, as it was faced with a serious social problem.

When Islam came, slave women were widespread in society. A group of men – before Islam – would come and have intercourse with one slave woman, because she was regarded as property that did not belong to anyone and as a means of fulfilling physical desires for anyone.

This was a serious and complex social problem.

Did Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) have to just look at this black spot on society and leave it as it was, when it had been increasing without anyone denouncing it or taking practical steps to deal with it?

Or did he have to compete with others in widening the circle of slavery in his rising society, by consuming other societies and making them slaves, when the conquests after him reached most of the lands of the earth?

Or should he have closed his eyes to this problem which could lead to terrifying moral corruption and fatal diseases?

Or should he confront all of society, and confront men and women, thus raising the status of slave women to that of ladies in one go, thus destroying the foundations on which society was based, as they were the mothers of households and prominent figures in society, both they and their children?

Islam dealt with this dilemma by allowing the master only to have intercourse with his own slave woman, on the basis

that she belonged to him, as he had intercourse with his wife, in terms of concealment, modesty, privacy and human rights. It forbade him to allow anyone else to have intercourse with her in return for payment or otherwise, even if he were his guest or son or anyone else. Then if the master married her and she bore him a child, the slave woman's status would be raised to that of a free woman and she would be called *umm walad* (mother of a child), i.e., mother of the master's child, as an honour to her, as she was attributed to her child who was attributed to his father in terms of freedom. On this basis it was forbidden to treat her as a slave woman, so it was not permissible for him to sell her or treat her as a slave. Thus it became one of the greatest honours for the child for his mother to be manumitted, lest anyone shame him because of her. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) encouraged children to do that in the strongest terms when he said: 'No son can compensate his father unless he finds him a slave and manumits him.'

It also became one of the child's most important duties to manumit her. As for

the child, he was classified according to the higher position of his parents, i.e., he would be free merely by virtue of his birth, whether the father agreed to that or not. If the slave woman became an *umm walad* and the master refused to manumit her, then if he died she immediately became free, according to the law."

Professor Anderson: "Excuse me for interrupting again, but this is not a sufficient solution to a major problem such as this, because the one who is manumitted becomes free, but what about the one who remains a slave?"

What about the one who will live his entire life and die as a slave if he is not manumitted by Islam?"

Abu Haamid: "This is a good question, but I was about to mention it in the sixth category.

6 – Preserving dignity and rights

As for those who remained slaves at the beginning of Islam and were not yet freed, they were given special treatment, including the following:

Firstly: the slave is granted noble rights. It was common for a man to use his slave

women in order to earn money with their bodies, but Islam forbade that in the Qur'ân, as it says in *Surat an-Nur*:

“And force not your maids to prostitution, if they desire chastity, in order that you may make a gain in the (perishable) goods of this worldly life. But if anyone compels them (to prostitution), then after such compulsion, Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful (to those women, i.e. He will forgive them because they have been forced to do this evil act unwillingly)” [*an-Nur* 24:33].

Before Islam, men would use their slave women to earn money for themselves by selling their bodies. If the slave woman did not want to do that, he would force her. Then Islam came and forbade this practice altogether, whether it was done by compulsion or with the woman's consent. Compulsion in this case is unlawful, and consent to fornication is unlawful, and God does not forgive anyone but those who repent from their sins.

Secondly: It is forbidden to humiliate them or give them too much work that is beyond their capability. The one who looks at the changes in the way in which

the Companions of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) treated their slaves, will realize what Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did with those Arabs who were rough and harsh before they entered Islam.

Look at Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, a man from the Ghifar tribe, which was known for banditry, and what Islam did to his view of slaves after he learned from Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The evidence for that is the report narrated from al-Ma'rur ibn Suwayd (may Allah be pleased with him) who said that he saw Abu Dharr wearing a certain kind of garment, and his slave was wearing something similar. I asked him about that and he said that he had insulted a man at the time of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), criticizing him because of his mother. The man went to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and told him about that and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'You are a man in whom there is still some ignorance. (They are) your brothers and servants

whom Allah has placed under your control, so whoever has his brother under his control, let him feed him what he eats and clothe him with what he wears, and do not burden him with more than he can bear. And do not burden them with more than they can bear, and if you do that, then help them.'

Thus Abu Dharr began to treat his slaves in accordance with what Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had said. This is a general methodology and is not unique to Abu Dharr. Al-Bukhari narrated a *hadith* from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in which he says concerning slaves: 'They are your brothers whom Allah has put under your control. Whoever has his brother under his control, let him feed him from what he eats and clothe him from what he wears, and let him not burden him with work that overwhelms him, and if he does burden him with work that overwhelms him, let him help him.'²⁰

Thirdly: he enjoined treating them kindly. The evidence for that is the *hadith*

20. Al-Bukhari, *al-Fath*, I (30); Muslim, 1661

of Abu Mas'ud al-Badri (may Allah be pleased with him) which was narrated by Imam Muslim (may Allah have mercy on him) in his *Sahih*. He [Abu Mas'ud] said: 'I was beating a slave of mine with a whip when I heard a voice behind me (saying): 'You should realize, Abu Mas'ud!' But I did not understand the voice because I was so angry. When he came close to me, I saw that it was the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and he was saying, 'You should realize, Abu Mas'ud! You should realize, Abu Mas'ud!' I threw down the whip that was in my hand and he said: 'You should realize, Abu Mas'ud, that Allah has more power over you than you have over this slave.' I said: 'I will never beat a slave again after this.' I said: 'O Messenger of Allah, he is free for the sake of Allah.' He said: 'If you had not done that, the Fire would have scorched you, or the Fire would have touched you.'

Fourthly: It is obligatory to educate them. Isn't this something strange in that society at that time? But it is not something strange in a religion which enjoins teaching animals, as it enjoins the son of Adam to teach dogs and birds. It says in

Surat al-Ma'idah:

"They ask you what is lawful for them (as food). Say: 'Lawful unto you are *At Tayyibat* [good things]. And those beasts and birds of prey which you have trained as hounds, training and teaching them (to catch) in the manner as directed to you by Allah; so eat of what they catch for you, but pronounce the Name of Allah over it, and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Swift in reckoning'" [al-Ma'idah 5:4].

Let us go back to the greater question: Where did this freedom from slavery that you are enjoying come from, which came only after you got to know the civilization of Islam, as your greatest thinkers admitted? Should this matter be looked at as one of the good things about Islam or should it be regarded as something negative as some people regard it? Should you be grateful and acknowledge it or be ungrateful?"

The
fourth
problem:
jizyah in
Islam

Father Andre: "You are the one who said that if anyone of us had any point to pick on about Islam, let him present it to you. Hence you should put up with our attacks. For a while I have found it strange that the followers of this religion

claim that it grants freedom to other religions, yet it imposes the *jizyah*!

Jizyah is a problem, as you take money from us because we did not become Muslim. Is this equality or what?

Does belief have some value for you, so that we have to pay the *jizyah* for it?

All the time you have been quoting proof that your religion does not differentiate between people, and you claim that you are a mercy for mankind and so on and so forth. But when it comes to reality, if anyone falls under your rule, you take a sum of money from him, because he did not become Muslim, but if he becomes Muslim, this duty that you call *jizyah* is waived for him."

Abu Haamid: "If Islam takes from the Muslim that which is called *zakah*, at a rate of 2.5% of his wealth per year, then why shouldn't it take something from every non-Muslim individual too?

If Islam works out all the trade goods belonging to the Muslim and takes 2.5% of his total as the *zakah* on trade, why shouldn't it take something from the non-Muslim who can afford it, a very small amount, regardless of what he owns, no

matter how great it is?

In fact, just as Islam waives the *zakah* for poor Muslims, it also waives the *jizyah* for non-Muslims, if the person is poor or cannot afford it, and so on.

The second caliph after the death of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him), who became a symbol of justice, passed a beggar in the streets of Madi-nah who was asking people for money. 'Umar asked him about his religion and he said that he was a Jew. 'Umar said: 'We have not been fair to you. We took the *jizyah* from you when you were young and we neglected you when you got old.' Then he allocated him a stipend that was enough to keep him, from the treasury of the Muslims.²¹

Thus the *jizyah* was turned around in favour of this Jew and the caliph 'Umar allocated him a fixed stipend until he died.

This was not just for this Jewish man, rather it became a general system in the

21. *Ahkaam Ahl al-Dhimmah* by al-'Allaamah Shams al-Deen ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, vol. 1, p. 144

Islamic caliphate for the one who was unable to pay his *jizyah* and look after himself and his family.

You should also know, Bishop Andre that the *jizyah* was not taken from anyone but the workers among the non-Muslims. If a man was rich and was not a worker, nothing was taken from his stored wealth.

The Muslims wrote many books on this topic. One of the most famous of the reliable books in this field is the book of Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Shaybani, which is entitled *al-Ziyaadaat*,²² in which he says concerning a Christian who was sick for an entire year and was not able to work, but he was well off: *Jizyah* is not due from him, because it is only required of the one who is healthy and working.²³

One of the ways in which it was made easy for those who paid the *jizyah* was that it was taken from their actual property, and they did not need to sell anything and hand over its price. This was

22. *al-Ziyaadaat* by Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Shaybani, who was also a companion of Abu Haneefah. The book is still extant in MS form.

23. *Ahkaam Ahl al-Dhimmah* by al-'Allaamah Shams al-Deen ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, vol. 1, p. 147

so as to make it easier for them. The fourth caliph, 'Ali,²⁴ took the *jizyah* from craftsmen by taking needles from needle-makers, knives from knife-makers, rope from rope-makers. Then he would call the people who took care of the poor and give them gold and silver, and they would take it and distribute it to the poor. Then he would take this [i.e., the needles, ropes, etc] and distribute it, and they would say: We have no need of it. He would say: You took the best and left me the worst. You must definitely take it.

Moreover, Islam did not leave the amount of *jizyah* open, to be tampered with by rulers according to whims and desires. Rather it forbade increasing it to more than four dirhams per individual per year, which is equivalent to approximately one dollar, no matter how much

24. Abu 'Ubayd, *al-Amwal*, no. 117; also narrated by Ibn Abi Shaybah, 7/582

In *al-Amwal* (p. 56) Abu 'Ubayd said: "This directive from 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) was that they should only take from them these goods equivalent to the value of the amount of *dirhams* that were due from them as *jizyah*, and they should not force them to sell them and then take the price from them, aiming thereby to be kind to them and make things easy for them."

property, income or work a person has, and also made it very easy for them.

The famous caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khattab would check on his workers who dealt with the *jizyah* and emphasize to them that it was essential to be easy-going with the Christians. 'Abdur-Rahman ibn Jubayr ibn Nufayr narrated that a great deal of money was brought to 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) – I think he said: 'from the *jizyah*' – and he said: 'I think you have ruined the people.' They said: 'No, by Allah, we did not take anything except with their consent and without any pressure.' He said: 'Without the whip or any coercion?' They said: 'Yes.' He said: 'Praise be to Allah Who did not make that happen at my hand, and during my rule.'²⁵

The covenant of the famous commander Khalid ibn al-Waleed with the Christians of Syria when he conquered that land is still a testimony to that, as it says therein: 'This is what Khalid ibn al-Waleed gives to the people of Damascus: security for their lives, property and churches. None

25. *Ahkaam Ahl al-Dhimmah* by al-'Allamah Shams al-Deen ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyah, vol. 1, p. 139

of their houses are to be taken from them. Any old man among them who is too weak to work or has been affected by sickness or was rich and became poor, the *jizyah* is waived from him and he and his family should be given help from the treasury of the Muslims.'

Have you ever seen any mercy greater than this?

For your information, there are reasons and wisdom behind the *jizyah*, such as that the Muslims would defend and protect them. Hence when Abu 'Ubaydah, who was the commander in Syria, heard that the Byzantines were preparing to fight him and he was unable to confront them, he returned the *jizyah* that he had taken from the Christians of Syria, telling them: 'We have returned your wealth to you because we have heard that the hordes have massed against us, and you stipulated that we should defend you, but we are unable to do that. So we have returned to you what we took from you. We will adhere to the conditions that were written between us and you if God grants us victory over them.' When he said that to them, and returned the wealth that he had taken from them, they said:

'May God grant you victory over them. If it was them – the Byzantines – instead of you, they would not have returned anything to us, and they would have taken everything that we had left, until they left us with nothing.'²⁶

So when the Islamic state is unable to protect these people, the *jizyah* must be waived, and this in fact happened as we have seen.

When the non-Muslim pays a sum of money to the state, even if it is symbolic as in the case of the *jizyah*, the rights of the one who pays it are to be protected in full, so that he can ask for his rights if the ruler falls short with regard to him and his co-religionists.

Another thing is that this symbolic *jizyah* confirms the deal between the two sides, the Muslim state and this individual. This deal is sufficient to raise and reinforce the position of the Christians.

The Christians' deal is with the Muslim state, not with an individual or company and the like. So his real guardian is the

26. From <http://www.truth.org.ye/index.htm>. See also al-Kharaaj by Abu Yusuf, p. 149-150, quoting from *al-'Alaaqaat al-Diwwaliyyah fil-Islam*, by Dr. 'Uthmaan Jumu'ah.

Muslim state. Isn't that enough?

Moreover, his staying in the Muslim state gives him enough time to choose the truth without any pressure or coercion. The symbolic nature of the *jizyah* protects him and lets him continue to follow his religion, with his rights protected and without any compulsion on him or his children. If he chooses at some point to embrace Islam, then the *jizyah* is waived and he is required to pay *zakah*. His choosing Islam does not lead to any financial rewards; rather it increases his financial expenses with the imposition of the *zakah* which is much more than the *jizyah* in most cases.

Can the wise man see any fairness like this?

Moreover, you should know that this *jizyah* is not to be imposed on people of the Book who are living in the Islamic state or visiting it, because they come under the terms of a peace deal or have been granted safety and security.

It applies only to those who fought the Muslims and persisted in doing so, and when they were defeated or nearly defeated, they decided to opt for a peace

deal to save their lives. Moreover, no matter how many Muslims they killed or how much destruction they caused for the Muslims, they are to pay the *jizyah* and no more, without being asked to pay reparations for the trouble they caused to the Muslims, because they chose a peace deal rather than defeat, and they chose to stay in their land and with their property, in addition to their choosing to remain in their own faith rather than entering Islam, on the basis of a peace deal without fighting. All of that in return for paying this *jizyah*. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) emphasized the rights of Christians in the strongest terms, and warned emphatically against undermining any peace treaty with non-Muslims.

He said: 'If anyone wrongs a *mu'ahid* [a non-Muslim living under Muslim rule under the terms of a peace deal], detracts from his rights, burdens him with more work than he is able to do or takes something from him without his consent, I will plead for him (*the mu'ahid*) on the Day of Resurrection.'²⁷

27. Abu Dawud, 3052; al-Albani said it is *sahih*.

What defence can be greater than the fact that the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) will make himself the opponent of any Muslim who wrongs any of him in any way whatsoever, or who takes something from him without his consent?

Compare this with what the Torah says about this ruling. It says in Deuteronomy:

10. *"When you march up to attack a city, make its people an offer of peace. 11. If they accept and open their gates, all the people in it shall be subject to forced labor and shall work for you. 12. If they refuse to make peace and they engage you in battle, lay siege to that city. 13. When the LORD your God delivers it into your hand, put to the sword all the men in it. 14. As for the women, the children, the livestock and everything else in the city, you may take these as plunder for yourselves. And you may use the plunder the LORD your God gives you from your enemies"* Deuteronomy 20:10-14

How big a difference there is between the one and the other!

Nevertheless, the clear enslavement and

thirst for blood expressed in this Torah text seems merciful when compared to the Crusades!

The mercy of Islam in war astounded the fair-minded historians. Gustave le Bon said: 'History has never known a conqueror more merciful than the Arabs.' Thomas Arnold said in his book *The Preaching of Islam*: 'When the Muslim army reached the Jordan Valley, and Abu 'Uhaydah camped in the city of Fahl, the Christians in that region wrote to the conquering Arabs: 'O Muslims, you are dearer to us than the Byzantines, even though they follow our religion, and you are more sincere and kinder towards us, you refrain more from wronging us and are better rulers. But they prevailed over us.' The people of Homs shut the gates of their city to the army of Heraclius, and told the Muslims that their rule and justice were dearer to them than the injustice and harshness of the Greeks and Romans.'²⁸

Let me ask you: are you pleased with how much tax is taken from your income?

Is there anyone who is pleased with how

28. *Al-Da'wah ila al-Islam*, Arnold, p. 73 (The Preaching of Islam)

much the state takes from him?

How can he be pleased when your state takes on average between forty and sixty percent of your income?!

The state has a lot of income, but for the individual's income to become part of the state's income on the basis that they are enjoying the state's services, this is something that no one can accept!

Doesn't the state have a huge income from natural resources, commerce, industry and economic relations with other countries?

What comparison can there be between this huge amount and the *jizyah*?"

The fifth problem: the spread of Islam by the sword

Professor Anderson: "I do not want to apologize for stirring up another argument against Islam. That is because Abu Haamid always demonstrates how distinct Islam is, more than before the argument was presented. What I want is to remind him of here is not a new argument, rather it is a fact concerning which Abu Haamid cannot defend Islam, because Islam was established for the first time and every time by means of this shameful thing.

You know, Abu Haamid, that the image of Islam which is imprinted on our minds, is that it was spread by the sword. When I say that, I am fully convinced of it. You think that this is mercy from Muhammad but each of us knows how Islam was spread in the world!

Muhammad came at a time when wars had exhausted tribes and nations, and he started to launch raids against the exhausted Arab tribes. then he expanded gradually until his death, and the caliphs who succeeded him expanded further beyond Arabia. They had no means of spreading Islam except the sword, so they gave people the choice between Islam and death. What do you think that people would choose, other than life?!

It is sufficient to look at the number of battles in which Muhammad engaged with his enemies, and the battles which his successors engaged in with their enemies, and it will become clear to you whether Islam was spread by the sword or by conviction.

This fact will destroy all your claims that Islam is a religion of reason, or that Islam was not spread by the sword. How great a difference there is between the sword

and reason?"

Abu Haamid: "I hope that you will tell me of a single instance when Muhammad gave any people or country the choice between the sword and Islam, and they chose Islam.

I ask you now to tell me of a case of any individual, from any race, to whom it was said 'Either become Muslim or we will kill you,' and he chose Islam.

Do not say there are many. Tell me of one case. History does not cheat anyone and does not hide anything. Do you know why there is no such case?

Because if a person enters Islam by force, his conversion to Islam is rejected, because God says in the Qur'ân:

"There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the Right Path has become distinct from the wrong path. Whoever disbelieves in *Taghut* [false gods, etc.] and believes in Allah, then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break. And Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower" [al-Baqarah 2:256]

I hope that you will tell me of a single

instance in which the Muslims granted security to non-Muslims after defeating them, and then they betrayed them.

The answer is you will never find any such instance.

Rather, on the contrary, you will find many instances of Christian victories when they gained full control over their enemies and granted them security, then betrayed them.

What did the Christians do to their brothers?

Treachery became a tradition between the Catholics and Protestants. Hardly did either of them prevail over the other but they soon betrayed them, committing the worst of atrocities. I am amazed at how you can stir up these specious arguments against Islam, when the history of the church in your countries is drenched in blood!

Take this example in your history, which you know better than me.

The historians tell us:

One of the worst massacres carried out by the Catholics against the Protestants was the Paris Massacre of August 24, 1572 [the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre], during which the Catholics attacked their

Protestant guests who had been summoned to Paris to work out a deal that would bring the differing points of view closer, then they treacherously killed them whilst they were sleeping. The next morning the streets of Paris were running with the blood of these victims, and congratulations came to Charles IX from all over, from the pope, the Catholic kings and scholars, for this great heroic action.

By the same token, when the Protestants grew strong, they played the same role of cruelty and persecution against the Catholics, and they were no less savage in dealing with their opponents and former enemies.

And so on and so forth; the history of Christianity records reports of rivers of blood and piles of human bodies turned into ashes by fires; sighs, tears, groans, savagery, barbarism and cries for help.

The Roman Church frequently used persecution and expulsion against the Protestants, in the kingdoms of Europe. The number of those who were burned at the stake reached 230,000 of those who believed in Jesus but not in the pope. In France on a single day thirty thousand were killed.

In the city of Toulouse, a million were killed.

In Calabria, Italy, in 1560, thousands upon thousands of Protestants were killed. A Roman writer says: I shiver whenever I remember the executioner with the bloody dagger between his teeth and the cloth dripping with blood in his hand, and his arms covered in blood up to the elbows, dragging the prisoners *one after another* as a butcher drags the sheep.

In 1521, Carlos V issued orders that the Protestants be expelled from al-Falamank on the advice of the pope, as a result of which 500,000 were killed.

After Carlos died, his son Felipe (Philip) took the throne, and when he went to Spain in 1559 he charged Prince Alphonse with the mission of expelling the Protestants. The historians state that within a few months eighteen thousand were killed because of him.

After that he used to boast that he had killed thirty-six thousand throughout the kingdom.

This is what the Catholics did to the Protestants. What did the Protestants do to

the Catholics when they gained power?

They played the same role, and they were no less savage, rather they worked methodically according to the law that protected them.

The Protestants issued the following laws:

(1) No Catholic could inherit his parents' estate.

(2) No Catholic could buy land after the age of 18 unless he became a Protestant.

(3) No Catholic could work in the field of education. Anyone who went against this ruling was to be imprisoned for life.

(4) Anyone who was Catholic had to pay double taxes.

(5) If any Catholic sent his son outside England for education, he and his son would have to hand over all their wealth and livestock.

(6) A Catholic could not be given any position in the state.

(7) Any Catholic who did not attend the Protestant church on Sundays or feast days would be given a large monthly fine and regarded as an outcast.

(8) A Catholic was not to be heeded if he called for help.

(9) Their marriages were not to be recognized and their dead were not to be prepared for burial or shrouded, and their children were not to be baptized unless it was according to the rites of the Church of England.

(10) Their priests were not to be brought to their slain or when preparing them or shrouding them.

(11) A Catholic was not allowed to own a weapon.

(12) If a Catholic priest performed any priestly services, he was to be imprisoned for life.

Many Catholic monks and scholars were, on the orders of Queen Elizabeth I, carried in boats and drowned at sea. Her troops came to Ireland to bring the Catholics into the Protestant fold. They burned down the Catholic churches and killed their scholars, hunting them down like wild animals. They did not grant security to anyone, and if they did grant them security, they killed them anyway.

In terms of numbers and statistics:

In Spain the Inquisition burned more than 31,000 people at the stake, and inflicted other torments on 290,000 others.

In 1568, the Holy See [central government of the Catholic Church] issued its ruling condemning all the inhabitants of the Lowlands to death, excluding a few individuals who were mentioned by name. Ten days after this verdict was issued, millions of men, women and children were sent to the gallows.

How did the Arab tribes enter Islam?

My dear Professor, if you study history, you will find that all the Arab tribes who became Muslim entered Islam after a few of their members had come and met Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and entered Islam out of conviction, then they went back to their people and called them to Islam, and others became Muslim, until the whole tribe had entered Islam. This scenario was repeated until all the Arab tribes who had not entered Islam up to that point announced that they had become Muslim one year before the death of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). We are not trying to offer a justification that has no basis; rather it is a scene that is proven in the Qur'ân in a

specific *surah* which is called *Surat al-Nasr*, in which Allah says:

1. **“When there comes the Help of Allah and the Conquest (of Makkah).**
2. **And you see that the people enter Allah’s religion (Islam) in crowds.**
3. **So glorify the Praises of your Lord, and ask His forgiveness. Verily, He is the One Who accepts the repentance and Who forgives”** [*al-Nasr* 110:1-3].

The word *nasr* may be translated as help or as victory, but what is meant here is not victory in any particular battle. Rather it refers to people entering Islam. This is the true victory for which fighting is prescribed. Moreover, how can we imagine anyone entering Islam out of fear of being killed, when the one who enters Islam voluntarily or willingly or for some worldly gain or in any other way is to be believed, and it is not permissible to suspect his motivations or to examine his heart? Why? Because Islam has prescribed something specific and clear for the one who wants to enter it, and the one who does that has entered Islam and is to be dealt with as a Muslim. What he must do is to say ‘I bear witness that there is

no god except Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger, and I bear witness that Jesus is His slave and Messenger, and His word that he bestowed upon Mary and a spirit from Him.' As for the one who says this with no sincerity or conviction, the matter is between him and God, but it is not permissible for us to accuse anyone who enters Islam, even if he says *as-salaamu 'alaykum* to us. Such an accusation is a transgression against God. God says:

“O you who believe! When you go (to fight) in the Cause of Allah, verify (the truth), and say not to anyone who greets you (by embracing Islam): “You are not a believer”; seeking the perishable goods of the worldly life. There are much more profits and booties with Allah. Even as he is now, so were you yourselves before till Allah conferred on you His Favours (i.e. guided you to Islam), therefore, be cautious in discrimination. Allah is Ever Well Aware of what you do” [*an-Nisa* 4:94].

A true story happened at the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to a man who was one of the most beloved of people

to Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Read this story from Usamah ibn Zayd (may Allah be pleased with him) who said:

‘The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sent us to al-Huraqah of Juhaynah, where we attacked the people in the morning and defeated them. A man from among the *Ansar* and I caught one of their men, and when we overpowered him, he said: *La ilaha illallah*. The *Ansari* left him alone but I stabbed him with my spear and killed him. When we came back, news of that reached the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and he said to me: ‘O Usamah, did you kill him after he said *La ilaha illallah*?’ I said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, he was only trying to protect himself.’ He said: ‘Did you kill him after he said *La ilaha illallah*?’ and he kept repeating it until I wished that I had not become Muslim before that day.” According to another report: ‘The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: ‘Did he say *La ilaha illallah* and you killed him?’ I said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, he only said it for fear of the weapon.’ He said: ‘Did

you open his heart to find out whether he said it or not?' and he kept repeating it until I wished that I had become Muslim on that day.²⁹

If you ponder the philosophy of *jihad* in Islam based on the religious texts and the real-life application thereof, you will find that the aim of *jihad* itself is that it is a means to acquaint the people with Islam, because if the Muslims are prevented from taking the message of Islam to the people, *jihad* comes to remove the obstacles and open the way. So the aim is to bring people into Islam, for nothing is dearer to God than a person's coming into Islam and repenting from disbelief voluntarily and willingly. The words of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to his commanders when he sent them to fight some of the tribes in *jihad* are preserved. He said to them: 'By Allah, if Allah were to guide any man through you, it would be better for you than red camels [the best kind].'³⁰

The
aim is
guidance

The aim is not to force people, because

29. Agreed upon. Narrated by al-Bukhari, 6872; Muslim, 287

30. Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

forcing people is forbidden. Rather the aim is to guide people. Can people be guided by the sword and coercion, or by reason and dialogue?

The sword was only prescribed in order to remove the domination of fear from the oppressed, and to remove coercion from their minds, so as to leave room for the authority of reason and leave it up to the person to decide freely on the basis of evidence.

You should understand that what is worse than a disbeliever in the Islamic view is a person who is called a hypocrite. This is the one who makes an outward show of having entered Islam when inwardly he is the opposite of that.

The logic of Islam says to him: What made you choose to be a hypocrite when you had the freedom of choice?

What made you make an outward display of being Muslim while inwardly concealing disbelief, when you were basically not forced to do that? You should have availed yourself of the freedom to enter Islam or not. Hence proof is established against the hypocrite.

Moreover, you say that as soon as Mu-

hammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) declared his Prophethood he started launching raids against the tribes. But I do not know on what historical basis you make this claim!

Do you know that the first battle that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Companions fought was fifteen years after his mission began?

Fifteen years of torment and persecution of him and his Companions, until some of them were killed under torture, both men and women, but they did not recant their faith. Then the persecution continued until some of his Companions were driven out of their homeland and they migrated to Abyssinia, which was ruled by the Christian Negus and which was a Christian land, for no other reason than that there was religious and intellectual freedom in that land. History records what Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to his Companions about that Christian man: 'Go to Abyssinia, for there is a man in whose land no one is wronged.'

Moreover, Muhammad himself left his birthplace and migrated to an area five

hundred kilometres from his homeland of Makkah, a place called Madinah, where they stayed for a long time before permission was given to them to fight, because Allah says:

“Have you not seen those who were told to hold back their hands (from fighting) and perform *As-Salah*, and give *Zakah* ...?” [*an-Nisa*’ 4:77].

As soon as they migrated from their homeland of Makkah, the polytheists seized their property and houses, and took over their businesses. They did not leave anything for them. Then the polytheists of Makkah started to cooperate with the Jews of Madinah in plotting against them in their new land. They started to bring the other tribes together to put an end to him and his Companions.

Note that it was after fifteen years that he started to fight, despite all the various means of enmity and persecution that had been used against him.

The legislation of fighting began with the least binding ruling, which is permission, not a binding command. What I am saying is proven by the verses in *Surat al-Hajj*:

39. "Permission to fight (against disbelievers) is given to those (believers) who are fought against, because they have been wronged; and surely, Allah is Able to give them (believers) victory.

40. Those who have been expelled from their homes unjustly only because they said: "Our Lord is Allah." For had it not been that Allah checks one set of people by means of another, monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, wherein the Name of Allah is mentioned much would surely, have been pulled down. Verily, Allah will help those who help His (Cause). Truly, Allah is All Strong, All Mighty."
[*al-Hajj* 22:39-40].

So these verses are stating that it is just 'permission', for which reasons are given: it is the enemy who attacked them first, they were expelled from their homes wrongfully and were prevented from practising their religion and prevented from merely believing.

Would it make sense for Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to tell his Companions: Submit to falsehood and hand over your wealth,

families and land to your enemies and do not ask them for anything. Let your enemies spy on you until their plots reach your land. Disclose your secrets to their spies, bare your chests to their spears and expose your honour to their slander?!

Do you think that if Muhammad had done that he would have protected his Companions, or that he would have established his religion and his state, or that his teachings would have reached us? Do you think that if he had done that, his religion would have been realistic?

There is something else that I would like to point out, based on the fact that you know how serious Muslims are about adhering to what is in the Qur'ân and their keenness to follow what is narrated from the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). I hope that you will look at the principles of fighting in Islam, and you can see how they adhered to these principles after that.

These are basic principles which you have to know when you are talking about this important subject:

(i) Prophet Muhammad (peace and bless-

Principles
of war
according
to
Muhamm-
ad (peace
and
blessings
of Allah
be upon
him)

ings of Allah be upon him) enjoined his Companions not to wish to meet their enemy (in battle) and said: 'Do not wish to meet the enemy, and if you do meet him, then be patient and persevere.'³¹ Can the one who forbade his Companions to wish to meet the enemy enjoin them to be the aggressors?

(ii) He would tell his army at times of war: 'Fight in the name of Allah, for the sake of Allah. Fight those who disbelieve in Allah. Fight but do not steal from the spoils of war, do not break your promises, do not mutilate (the enemy dead) and do not kill children.'³²

What precaution to prevent the Muslim army from transgressing can be greater than these precautions?

In a similar vein, the advice of all the caliphs after him came to their commanders, telling them not to kill children and women, not to kill monks or destroy churches, not to cut down trees. The first of them to offer such advice was the first caliph after the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), whose name

31. Narrated by *al-Bukhari* in *al-Jihad*, 32/156, 112; and by *Muslim* in *al-Jihad*, 19/20

32. *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 3, no. 1731

was Abu Bakr al-Siddeeq. He said to one of his commanders, whose name was Yazeed ibn Abi Sufyaan, when he sent him to Syria: 'I recommend ten things to you: do not kill women, or children, or old people. Do not cut down fruit-bearing trees. Do not destroy buildings. Do not kill sheep or camels, unless it is for food. Do not burn down date palms or cut them down. Do not steal war booty and do not be cowardly.'³³

When other armies entered countries, they followed a scorched earth policy, burning all vegetation, striking every living thing with lethal weapons, even future generations. But in these recommendations, Abu Bakr al-Siddeeq forbade even killing livestock or crops, while it was an army that he was talking to!

(iii) Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade mutilation of the slain, and described it as something forbidden. It is narrated in a *sahih* (sound) report that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saw a woman who had been slain

33. *Ahkaam Ahl al-Dhimmah* by al-'Allaamah Shams al-Deen Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, vol. 1, p. 163

during a military campaign and said: 'This one was not a fighter! Catch up with Khalid and tell him: Do not kill children or workers.'³⁴

(iv) It is a part of religion to respect the enemy slain by burying their bodies and not leaving them out in the open.

(v) Islam regards kind treatment of prisoners as one of the greatest acts of charity and acts of worship that bring one closer to God. That appears in the Qur'ân, in *Surat al-Insan* where it says:

8. "And they give food, in spite of their love for it (or for the love of Him), to the *Miskeen* (the poor), the orphan, and the captive,

9. (Saying): 'We feed you seeking Allah's Countenance only. We wish for no reward, nor thanks from you'" [al-Insan :8-9]."

Professor Anderson: "Abu Haamid, I cannot disagree with anything you have said, but what I know and am certain of, is that the Muslim army used to give

34. Abu Dawood in *al-Jihad* (4/3); al-Nisaa'i in *al-Kubra, Kitaab al-Siyar* (5/186); Ibn Majah (2/948). Quoting from *al-'Alaaqaat al-Duwaliyyah fil-Islam* by Dr. 'Uthmaan Jumu'ah Dumayriyyah.

their opponents three options, the first of which was to enter Islam, the last of which was to fight, and in between there was the option of paying the *jizyah*. Is this correct or not? Is this the rational thinking that you are calling for, Abu Haamid?"

Abu Haamid: "Believe me, Professor, I feel sorry for you because of the intense confusion in which you find yourselves. What a grave sin I would be committing if I left you without explaining the truth to you. When you narrate events in a certain context, you probably believe yourself, and those who are with you believe you, and you think that this is proof in your favour, whereas in fact it is new misguidance in which you are indulging without realizing, Believe me, my friends: it is a sign of the Muslims' love for you that they are calling you to Islam, otherwise what harm would it do to them if they did not call you? Believe me, it is self sacrifice on the Muslims' part when they expose themselves to being captured, wounded, tortured, lost and killed in order to present Islam to you without compulsion.

The principle that says to you 'I am

only fighting you in order to engage in dialogue with you so that you may come to learn about my religion, after which I will never force you if you do not choose my religion, and you can remain in your religion' is a principle which deserves to be examined and to be the subject of dialogue. It is a principle which says to you: 'Stay in your country, enjoy the rule and wealth of your country, if you are convinced and choose Islam for yourself. I do not want to enslave you or plunder your wealth. Rather, if you are in need, then all my economic, military, social and academic resources are at your service.'

Doesn't a principle such as this deserve to be examined and its followers to be engaged in dialogue?

Doesn't this initially tell you of the soundness of this principle and the fact that it is based on proof on which it is betting? How about when it has proven its credibility throughout its history? I am not trying to point out one aspect of the truth that is hidden from you, and what is beyond that is even greater than that. My conviction is that the greatest regret you will feel will come on the day when you

realize the reality of this religion. Then you will wonder how you could have believed the one who stood between you and this religion in previous stages of your life, and you will wish that he had fought you and forced you to enter Islam. I hope, Professor, that you will look at these three options fair-mindedly. I will present them to you as they are in Islam.

(vi) Before fighting, Islam gives the opposing army the choice between three things, the last of which is fighting.

The first option is to enter Islam on the basis of conviction and dialogue, because it is not permissible to force anyone to enter Islam. The evidence for this claim is what it says in *Surat al-Baqarah*:

“There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the Right Path has become distinct from the wrong path. Whoever disbelieves in *Taghut* and believes in Allah, then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break. And Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower” [*al-Baqarah* 2:256].

The second option is to pay the *jizyah*, which is a symbolic payment, in return for the same protection and general rights

as the Muslims in the Islamic state. We have already answered the objections of Father Andre.

The third and final option is fighting. Here we may ask: what other option is left apart from this? This option is not for most people, rather it is for tyrant rulers who prevent dialogue and intellectual freedom, and put obstacles in the way of their people and do not listen to the other opinion.

If they allow dialogue without fighting, then the aim is achieved and there is no need for fighting. Let one argument fight with another. But if the tyrants insist on continuing to enslave their people and prevent them from thinking, and prevent them from finding out and engaging in dialogue, then there is no option but fighting to remove this obstacle and open the way for people.

There is no religion that can be spread by means of rational dialogue like Islam. If Islam could not be spread by means of dialogue, then dialogue would not be given precedence over fighting in these three options. Giving precedence to dialogue over fighting is evidence that its victory through dialogue is more guar-

anteed than its victory through fighting, and that the risk involved in fighting is greater than that involved in dialogue.

Perhaps you have heard of the most famous peace deal in Islamic history, and maybe even in all of history. It is the treaty of al-Hudaybiyah, which occurred in 6 AH, i.e., nineteen years after the Islamic call began, when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his enemies agreed upon the truce when the Muslims were at the gates of Makkah and their enemies had no power to defend it. Even though most of the Companions of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not agree with this treaty, they still entered into this truce with the polytheists, and the agreed length of the truce was ten years.

Not even one year passed before the polytheists came to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asking to cancel parts of the truce, and he agreed to that, and did not insist on the previous conditions. The reason why the polytheists wanted to cancel parts of the truce was that it benefited the Muslims more than the non-Muslims. After they agreed to the truce, the Muslims began

mixing with them and exchanging visits with them, demonstrating their manners and attitude, and engaging in dialogue with them. The result was that in this single year, the Muslim numbers multiplied greatly, with many more people entering Islam than in the previous nineteen years put together. There is sufficient evidence of this in the fact that the Companions who were with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) at al-Hudaybiyah were fourteen hundred people. But one year after this truce, when Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came to conquer Makkah, he was accompanied by ten thousand fighters. How great this difference is, and how great the fruits of dialogue.

Here we may ask again:

Firstly: If Islam was spread by the sword, how come it is spreading now in the greatest nations on earth, the civilized and stronger nations, which colonized the Muslim world at some point, and is still dominating them?

How come it is spreading in the countries that are most hostile towards it?

Have you ever seen a people who are

weak, small in numbers, outsiders, but they are followed by the strong majority of people in a country? How come the Muslims who migrated to their countries, fleeing oppression or seeking security and provision, are spreading Islam among the well established people of those countries, the rich and strong?

Wherever you find them, no matter what their numbers, no matter how weak they are, you will find them spreading their religion among the local people. Do you wonder why that is?

Do you think the people of that country need them?

Do you think the people of that country do not understand?

Why is their religion spreading a great deal among the scholars and professionals?

Why is its spread increasing every year?

How come it is the fastest-growing religion on the global level?

Statistics show that Muslims are the fastest growing group in the world.³⁵

35. *USA Today*, The Population Reference Bureau, Feb 17 1989, p. 4A

The Islamic religion is growing faster than any other religion in the world.³⁶

Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the United States.³⁷

Islam is continuing to grow in America and no one can doubt that.³⁸

Islam is the fastest-growing religion in America, which is evidence and the foundation of stability for a large portion of our people.³⁹ Bernard Shaw said: 'If any religion had the chance of ruling over England, nay Europe within the next hundred years, it could be Islam.'

Why are the numbers of those becoming Muslim in America today greater than it was twenty years ago?

How come it has become the second religion in Europe?

Did you wonder how Islam spread to Tataristan, Mongolia and neighbouring regions, when they are nations who came to the Muslim world as savage, invading armies who wrought destruction on the

36. Mike Wallace, 60 Minutes

37. *New York Times*, Feb 21, 1989, p. 1

38. Hillary Rodham Clinton, *Los Angeles Times*, May 31, 1996, p. 3

39. CNN, December 15, 1995

Muslim countries they passed through?

They entered the Muslim countries on a mission of vengeance, but it was not long before they returned carrying the message of Islam to the Tatar and Mongol lands, and to what are known today as the republics of Central Asia.

Let us ask again: If Islam was spread by the sword, how come it reached countries that were never reached by the sword, and Islam entered lands which the sword of Islam never entered, such as the lands of East Asia and others?

Let us ask a third time: If Islam was spread by the sword, how come when Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) entered a land in victory, he pardoned its people and did not give them the choice between becoming Muslim or being killed. After defeating his opponents, Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) never took revenge. When he conquered a land he treated its people with the utmost kindness. It never happened that he killed anyone after a victory except in the case of one village, which was a Jewish village called Quraydah. He did not kill them because they were Jews... No,

rather he fought them because there was a treaty between him and them, and they lived with him in the best manner, with their rights, lands, wealth and religious rituals protected, but they broke that treaty at a time when the city of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), Madinah, was under siege and was exposed to an all-out attack from all the disbelieving Arab tribes in a battle that was known as the battle of *al-Ahzaab* (the confederates). What is meant by the confederates here was a gathering of Arab tribes who were supporting one another with the single aim of eliminating Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and Madinah? Despite that, Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not kill among these Jews any child, old person, woman or disabled person, or any man who was not able to bear weapons, and he did not eradicate them utterly, and he did not go beyond this group to any other group of Jews.

Do you think that if he had left them alone after all they had done that he would have been a leader whose example was to be followed?

Would anyone respect his covenant with him after that?

Nothing like that happened to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) again throughout his battles, and it was never repeated. So this was a lesson in leadership, a lesson that was needed by the treacherous people, especially by the Jews.

There is no one who glances quickly at history, who has not heard of the greatest conquest achieved by Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in all his battles, namely the Conquest of Makkah, when Muhammad entered Makkah in triumph and the leaders of his enemies fell in humility and defeat before him. They were the ones who had killed and tortured his Companions, expelled him from Makkah, driven out his followers. And now here they were before him, and Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) delivered a speech in which he said to these people: 'What do you think I am going to do to you?' They said: '[You are] a noble brother and son of a noble brother.' He said to them: 'I do not say anything to you today but that which my brother Joseph said: **No**

reproach on you this day; may Allah forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy' [Yusuf 12:92]. Go, for you are free.'⁴⁰

I adjure you by God: set aside the bias of tribalism and view the matter like an honest, professional historian. Is this the language of someone who loves to fight?"

The fifth
problem:
half a
glass of
wine

Dr. Drima: "I can see that all these specious arguments against Islam are weak, and I will not hide from you the fact that I admire Islam's attention to rational conviction. But whenever I think about the matter, I find that there are things in Islamic law which keep me away from Islam.

Frankly, I am a man who likes to drink wine, without going to extremes. I cannot do without half a glass of wine at least every day, but Islam forbids even a drop of it. If you told me that Islam permits me half a glass of wine every day, I would think seriously about it.

Does it make sense for Islam to make half a glass of wine a problem that could affect whether a man enters Islam or not?

40. *al-Bayhaqi fil-Dalaa'il*, 5/58

How can Islam solve my problem if this half-glass is regarded as a problem in Islam, whereas for me this half-glass represents a key to solving my daily problems?

This is not only my problem. It is the problem of almost all professors, educators and wise men in our country.”

Abu Haamid: “Whether you are testing me with this half-glass or not, this religion does not belong to me, and it does not belong to anyone else, even if he is a scholar or a Prophet, or even a council of scholars, for them to toy with it according to interests, circumstances or whims and desires.

A test
case

Similar cases have occurred more than once. The leaders of the polytheists suggested to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that he should organize a gathering for them that would not be attended by the weak and slaves among his followers. If they came, these leaders would leave, and when the leaders left, the poor Companions could come back to him. They encouraged him by saying that if they followed him, all the people would follow him as a result. Then Allah revealed

unambiguous verses in *Surat al-An'am*, in which He says:

52. “And turn not away those who invoke their Lord, morning and afternoon seeking His Face. You are accountable for them in nothing, and they are accountable for you in nothing, that you may turn them away, and thus become of the unjust.

53. Thus We have tried some of them with others, that they might say: ‘Is it these (poor believers) whom Allah has favoured from amongst us?’ Does not Allah know best those who are grateful?

54. When those who believe in Our *Ayat* (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) come to you, say: ‘*Salamun ‘Alaykum*’ (peace be on you); your Lord has written (prescribed) Mercy for Himself, so that if any of you does evil in ignorance, and thereafter repents and does righteous good deeds (by obeying Allah), then surely, He is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful” [*al-An'am* 6:52-54].

So there is no compromise on any of the rulings. Whoever wishes may believe

and whoever wishes may disbelieve.

I am saying this so that you do not get the wrong idea that Islamic rulings are inflexible. Rather *ijtihad* [striving to find an answer to new problems within the framework of authentic texts] in Islam is open until the Day of Resurrection, within known guidelines. But I am saying it so that you will realize that neither I – as Abu Haamid – nor anyone else in this world can tell a lie about Islam in order to win you or anyone else over. If anyone does that, it is a mistake and a sin.

Moreover, you said that Islam pays attention to the rational side of things and this is something that impressed you. Hence I say to you: What does alcohol do, other than take away reason, completely or partially?

Is there anything nobler in man than reason? Does it make sense to take reason away?

Is it humane to take away the symbol of humanity?

Nevertheless I say to you: our topic is not the harm caused by alcohol and the like, rather our topic is how the west deals with this problem and how Islam deals

Way of
treatment

with it.

It is more correct to ask, how did Islam deal with this problem, and how did the west turn it into a big problem that is allowed and protected and encouraged by the media and laws?

The issue is not only an individual's drinking habits. It is much greater than that. It is a real problem, and the biggest problem is the fact that people do not realize it as a bigger problem, a problem the cost of which is in lives, wealth, families and happiness.

Second
most
prevalent
killer

The *University of California Encyclopaedia of Health* (1991 edition) says: Alcohol is currently regarded as the second killer – after smoking – in the United States. Drinking intoxicants in America causes the death of more than 1,000,000 people annually. Alcohol alone is responsible for more than half of all deaths resulting from traffic accidents in America.

Not only that; alcohol is responsible for the injury of more than half a million people in car accidents in America in a single year. In the home, intoxicants are responsible for many house fires, falls

and cases of drowning whilst swimming.

The *Encyclopaedia* goes on to say that intoxicants do not only cause problems in the home or on the roads, rather what America loses due to decreased productivity and loss of work hours caused by drinking is more than \$71 billion each year, let alone losses which cannot be counted in monetary terms, such as psychological, family and social problems. Writers in American newspapers and magazines encourage people not to offer intoxicants before dinner – at their parties – and to take away car keys from those who drink too much, so that they will not drive themselves to death!

The *Encyclopaedia* says elsewhere: One-third of young people in America consume intoxicants to such an extent that it affects their studies or gets them in trouble with the law! Most of these young people start to consume intoxicants before the age of thirteen.

Professor Shoket, who is a professor of psychology at the University of California and the director of the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, says: Ninety percent of people in the

United States drink alcohol, and 40-50% of men are affected by temporary problems that result from consuming intoxicants. Ten percent of men and 3-5% of women are addicted to alcohol.^{41 42}

Do you see these numbers?

I hope that you will not just glance quickly at them. They are not people slain in open warfare, or military losses in a great war.

They are not victims of an epidemic that swept over the land like the bird flu!

They are the victims of this alcohol of which Dr. Drima speaks. The Professor and other scholars and academics know well the harmful effects of alcohol on man's mind, life and physical well being. The difficulty is in dealing with the pleasure involved, and in dealing with the tradition one is used to. The difficulty is in dealing with weakness.

Even if this excuse is accepted from everyone, it should not be accepted from a

The value of half a glass

41. From *Kitaab Harrison al-Tibbi*, 1991

42. Article entitled *Atubba' al-Gharb yahadhdh-roona min Sharb al-Khamr*, by Dr. Hassaan Shamsi Basha, *al-Bayaan* magazine, issue no. 57, p. 91

doctor whose professional success is based on being fair-minded and just, even with his enemies.

Yes, man could state his verdict with all sincerity if he is asked why he goes against what he said. His truthful answer will be: Because I cannot keep away from it.

The Professor knows that every time reports appear which try to give people the illusion that intoxicants are not harmful, or that they may have some benefits in some ways, the scientists confront it and prove it to be false. Some doctors claimed that a little wine may reduce the percentage of people dying of heart attacks, but a major article in the British *Lancet* magazine (published in 1987) refuted these claims. The writer of the article said: 'What some doctors claim, that alcohol may be beneficial when taken in small doses, is a pure lie and fabrication.' The article also says: 'The study on which they based this view is a study that is not authentic and is unreliable.'

Professor Shoket says: 'Drinking three or four glasses of beer daily leads to elevated blood pressure, hence alcohol is currently regarded as a major cause of

high blood pressure. Drinking alcohol leads to weakness in the heart muscle, resulting in enlargement of the chambers of the heart and heart failure. Hence the patient experiences difficulty in breathing with the slightest exertion. Clots may form on the left side of the heart. There is no doubt that there is a strong connection between stroke and consumption of intoxicants. Alcohol causes irregularity in the heartbeat, which in turn leads to a rapid heartbeat. This may happen after drinking alcohol only once.'

Professor Shoket says: 'Some drinkers may notice an increase in libido after drinking a glass or two, but they forget that it may also cause impotence in men. They also forget that drinking intoxicants may lead to atrophy of the testicles and decrease in semen. In women, drinking intoxicants may cause cessation of menstruation, decrease in the size of the ovaries leading to infertility, and miscarriage.'⁴³

Listing all the harm caused by alcohol would take too long, but the calamity is

43. Article entitled *Atibba' al-Gharb yuhadhdh-roona min Shurb al-Khamr*, by Dr. Hassaan Shamsi Basha, *al-Bayaan* magazine, issue no. 57, p. 91

the way in which Western experts dealt with this problem.

What is the punishment that they imposed on drunkenness? What is it?

The answer is: the wide availability of alcohol and legalization of its sale, encouragement to drink it, protection for drinkers, and so on.

If protection of intoxicants was stopped, it would not be so bad, but the matter went further, to the protection of drugs.”

Dr. Drima: “I visited a number of Muslim countries, and I found that alcohol is available in the hotels, and is also sold in other places.

Yes, I did not find people drinking alcohol as we do. The number of drinkers is small when compared to us. But the point is: why do you denounce us for drinking alcohol when it is present in your countries too?

Why doesn't Islam deal with this problem in your countries?

If you say that Islam is a remedy, then prove this with evidence.”

Abu Haamid: “I do not think that you

believe that all Muslim countries represent Islam or apply Islam. The evidence is what you mention of the fact that most Muslim countries permit drinking of alcohol in hotels, on airplanes and so on.

As for how Islam deals with the drinking of alcohol, this is what should be studied. It should be asked: was Islam's treatment of addiction in the past successful or not?

Is this remedy fit to be applied on every occasion, at all times and in all places, or not?

As for how Islam dealt with this problem, you may be surprised if I tell you that more than 90% of Arab society used to drink alcohol before Islam, yet despite this the percentage after the remedy was complete had dropped to almost zero.

How did Islam deal with this visible problem?

How did it deal with addiction?

You know that the verses of the Qur'ân were not all revealed in one go, in a book or on tablets or dictated to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Rather a few verses would be re-

vealed, according to need, to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). This was in order to cover all events and so that they might be applied to similar events until the end of the world. In this case the remedy was successful, and it was done in stages, gradually. Hence the first verse that was revealed concerning alcohol appears in *Surat an-Nahl* where Allah says:

“And from the fruits of date palms and grapes, you derive strong drink and a goodly provision. Verily, therein is indeed a sign for people who have wisdom” [*an-Nahl* 16:67].

The Qur’ân did not state clearly in this verse that drunkenness is bad, but it presented it as being contrary to goodly provision. Thus that generation was alerted by this hint and began to ask about the ruling on drinking alcohol. Then Allah revealed the words:

“They ask you concerning alcoholic drink and gambling. Say: ‘In them is a great sin, and (some) benefits for men, but the sin of them is greater than their benefit.’ And they ask you what they ought to spend. Say: ‘That which is beyond your needs.’ Thus Allah makes

clear to you His Laws in order that you may give thought" [*al-Baqarah* 2:219].

This shows that there is a great deal of sin in alcohol, as well as some commercial benefits, but it is not clearly forbidding alcohol. This is a stronger hint and greater warning, because the most hated thing to the people of that righteous generation was sin, so how about if the sin was greater? The verse ends with an important phrase, namely: **"Thus Allah makes clear to you His Laws in order that you may give thought."**

But it had not yet reached the level of prohibition. This verse remained for a while and people continued wondering and their questions about the ruling increased: was it *haraam* or not?

Should they give it up or not?

Then Allah revealed the words in *Surat an-Nisa'*:

"O you who believe! Approach not *As-Salah* (the prayer) when you are in a drunken state until you know (the meaning) of what you utter ..." [*an-Nisa'* 4:43].

This verse represented practical training

in giving it up; even though it does not clearly state that it is unlawful in general terms. Rather it stated that it was unlawful in a limited sense, at a certain time and in a certain situation: Allah forbade approaching the prayer if one did not understand the verses being recited. Thus this verse combined a temporary, ideological prohibition with a practical ban that was also temporary, and thus giving it up became both ideological and practical in nature, but the secret here is connecting the prohibition to prayer: drinking alcohol became the opposite of praying.

So the drinker was forbidden to meet God in prayer, and alcohol denied him this great honour: **“Approach not *As-Salah* (the prayer) when you are in a drunken state...”**

Moreover, if you examine this ruling when it is applied practically, you will see the effectiveness of this remedy and its results.

Prayer is offered five times a day, at times which are spread throughout the night and day.

The time for *Zuhr* prayer begins when

the sun has passed the meridian, and lasts until '*Asr*', i.e., approximately three and a half hours later. When the sun sets, the time for *Maghrib* begins, and when the red afterglow disappears, i.e., less than two hours later, the time for '*Isha*' begins. The time for '*Isha*' lasts until *Fajr* prayer, which begins two hours or more before sunrise. These were the timings in the Arabian Peninsula when the prohibition on alcohol was revealed, but they may vary in other countries according to the length of the night and the day.

The question here is: When could the drinker drink alcohol, when he is besieged by the times of prayer in this manner?!

The first true victory here is that the individual is now receiving the ruling of Allah concerning a matter towards which he has an inclination. If he accepts this ruling with pleasure, then this is the key to accepting other rulings that go against his whims and desires. The second victory is that he is now in control of the way he plans his time, which is a sign of the Muslim being in control of his will, which is the weak point of the addict, as weakness of will is the cause of failure of

every treatment. The third victory is the length of abstinence throughout the day.

He no longer has any time for it throughout the day, except after '*Isha*', but after '*Isha*' one is usually exhausted because of working on the land, planting crops and grazing livestock. The state of exhaustion is akin to intoxication, so there is no need for the intoxication of alcohol when there is the intoxication of sleep. Fourthly, the reason for this abstinence is not just giving it up because it is harmful; rather it is given up because it is unlawful and has been forbidden by God. So the one who gives it up does so for two reasons: obedience to God, and then because it is harmful. Thus the reason for abstinence combined the two strongest incentives to obey: rational conviction and emotional motives, i.e., the heart alongside strengthening the will and mind, as we have seen in the verse:

"*Shaitaan* (Satan) wants only to excite enmity and hatred between you with intoxicants (alcoholic drinks) and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah and from *As-Salah* (the prayer). So, will you not then abstain?" [*Al-Ma'idah* 5:91].

And as mentioned in the second stage, **“In them is a great sin”** [*al-Baraqa* 2:219].

As the permission mentioned in the second stage was connected to the prayer, one had to estimate the length of time that reason would be absent, so that this loss of reason would not last until the time of the next prayer. But the length of time that reason will be absent and when it will return are not something that can be properly estimated and controlled. So drinking should be properly controlled.

But the primary and greatest reason for the success of this remedy is that it is a divine remedy. God knows best about His servants. As for it being a gradual and progressive remedy and so on, these are all means.”

Dr. Drima: “In fact it is a brilliant practical remedy, but what guarantee do you have that if my son gives it up today he will not go back to drinking it tomorrow? I myself may be convinced of your words today but after one or two days I may go back to drinking it again. The instant remedy is nothing but a temporary remedy.”

Abu Haamid: "I hope that you will think again about every step of this remedy and its quality, and you will find the secret behind its success.

Firstly: It is a divine remedy. For the one who gives it up for the first time on the basis of belief in Allah, the connection is established between the prohibition and faith, and faith remains with him throughout his life.

Secondly: It is a remedy that is based on reviving the will or strengthening it, and there is a big difference between the two.

Thirdly: It is a remedy that relies on practical and gradual steps. Moving from one stage to another means that the previous step has succeeded, until one reaches the pinnacle of abstaining out of faith.

Fourthly: It is a remedy which motivates the twin foundations of success, namely emotion and reason.

Fifthly: It is a remedy that is not connected to a specific time or visible thing, after which a man may feel that he has no need to continue with the remedy. Rather the outcome of the remedy appears after the man departs this world.

Often you tell your child not to do something, but he does not obey or he cannot put up with the instructions, even though it is harmful and he realizes that, but it is as if he has become addicted to it, like reckless speeding and the like. But when you get him to the right level of sound faith, which convinces mind and heart alike, then he has no choice but to respond.

In spite of all these positive responses on the part of those at whose time these verses dealing with alcohol were revealed, when most of them were examples of addiction, the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not stop discussing this issue when he noticed their positive response. Rather he went on to explain the consequences for the drinker in the Hereafter, so that this would be the best guarantee of steadfastness for the one who repented from it, if his resolve weakened or he tried to avoid supervision of people whom he feared, by explaining its harmful effects and the consequences for the one who drank it, and warning against it in the strongest terms. Thus he combined the ruling of reason and the ruling of sincere

emotion.

It was narrated that Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) said: 'The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) cursed ten with regard to alcohol: the one who squeezes [the grapes etc], the one for whom it is squeezed, the one who drinks it, the one who carries it, the one to whom it is carried, the one who pours it, the one who sells it, the one who consumes its price, the one who buys it and the one for whom it is bought.'⁴⁴

What did Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say about alcohol?

So the issue is not just the issue of drinking, rather he blocked all routes that lead to drinking.

It was narrated from 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'There are three to whom Allah will forbid Paradise: the one who is addicted to alcohol, the one who is disobedient to his parents, and the cuckold who approves of evil in his family.'⁴⁵

44. Narrated by Ibn Majah and at-Tirmidhi, who said it is a *gharib hadith*.

45. Narrated by Ahmad, al-Nasa'i and al-Bazzar.

What dearer price can the addict pay if he continues in his addiction?

It was narrated that Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: 'The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'Avoid alcohol, for it is the key to all evil.'

Then he blocked the way to drinking it, even if one drinks only a little, and even if it is not called wine or alcohol, so long as it intoxicates:

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'Every intoxicant is *khamr*, and every intoxicant is unlawful. Whoever drinks *khamr* in this world and dies addicted to it will not drink it in the Hereafter.'⁴⁶

And it is also narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade sitting at a table where alcohol is drunk.⁴⁷

After that he enjoined a punishment for everyone who drinks it: forty lashes to be administered in public.

46. Narrated by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, at-Tirmidhi and al-Nasa'i.

47. Narrated by al-Tabarani in *Sahih al-Targheeb wal-Tarheeb*, vol. 2 p. 598

Lashes here does not refer to a whip that causes death or injury, rather it is aimed at exposing these evil characteristics of the one who has broken the covenant with God.

Beware of looking at this drunkard and his feelings and forgetting society as a whole.

Beware of forgetting all the losses that drunkards cause to society so as to gain their votes in elections. Beware of looking at satisfying the addiction and forgetting how it really destroys a man.

You should remember that Islam did not start the stages of prohibiting alcohol with lashes; rather lashes came at the end of these remedial stages.

If you think of the reason for drinking, you will find that it is seeking happiness, if only for the few moments in which the person becomes oblivious to the world of stress and responsibilities. Otherwise, there is nothing attractive in alcohol for which people would love it or enjoy it. It does not taste good or smell nice, and it offers no health benefits or positive moral effects.

Our question is: does alcohol really bring

happiness? Has it brought happiness to your societies? If you want, I can put the question to you differently: Can we describe your societies as happy despite all the securities, luxuries, alcohol and sexual freedom, or are they unhappy societies?

I hope that you will take just one thing as a sign of happiness, which is love of life, by looking at suicide rates,⁴⁸ then compare.”

World Health Organization

Suicide Rates

Suicide rates (per 100,000), by country, year and gender

Most recent year available. As of May 2003

	Country	Year	Males	Females
1	Albania	00	2.4	1.2
2	Belarus	00	63.6	9.5
3	Belize	95	12.1	0.9
4	Canada	98	19.5	5.1
5	China (Hong Kong-SAR)	99	13.0	14.8
6	Portugal	00	8.5	2.0

48. www.who.int/mental-health/prevention/suicides/en/print.html

7	Romania	01	20.8	3.9
8	Russian Federation	00	70.6	11.9
9	Spain	99	12.4	4.0
10	Sweden	99	19.7	8.0
11	Switzerland	99	26.5	10.0
12	Syrian Arab Republic	85	0.2	0.0
13	United Kingdom	99	11.8	3.3
14	United States of America	99	17.6	4.1
15	Uruguay	00	16.6	4.2
16	Egypt	87	0.1	0.0
17	France	99	26.1	9.4
18	Germany	99	20.0	7.3
19	Greece	99	5.7	1.6
20	India	98	12.2	9.1
21	Israel	97	10.5	2.6
22	Italy	00	11.1	3.4
23	Japan	99	36.5	14.1
24	Jordan	79	0.0	0.0
25	Kuwait	00	1.6	1.6
26	Panama	87	5.6	1.9
27	Peru	89	0.6	0.4

Professor Sinau: "The one who thinks about the Islamic punishments, will find that they are very cruel, and they can never be appropriate for this civilized man in this scientific age!

Punishments and how they fit the crime in modern times

No rational person in this day and age can be convinced of the soundness of a law that was promulgated fifteen hundred years ago.

Even if we say that Islamic legislation is sound, others will say: Why aren't the laws of other civilizations that imposed punishments of mutilation for breaking some public law or some private regulation of the king also sound?

Abu Haamid, you can say that these punishments were suitable for that particular Bedouin environment, but as for them being suitable for the civilized age, this is something that no rational person can accept. You yourself have tried to convince us more than once on an academic and rational basis that your religion accepts development and encourages scientific progress. But now we are confronted with these punishments!

Don't you see that developments and progress are advancing whilst these punishments are fixed. Isn't there a confrontation between the two?"

Abu Haamid: "I know that these problems that you have mentioned represent a great obstacle in the mind of the West-

erner and prevent him from accepting Islam, and they may make others think that Islam is not a sound religion at all, or that it cannot be suited to real life, so it should be limited to the mosque and to matters of worship, and it is not fit to go even a hand span beyond that.

I am fully aware of this, but I would like us all to focus on what I am going to tell you, so that we can try to free ourselves from these preconceived limits. Yes, I am the one who is asking you to free yourselves from these mental limitations.

Without this liberation we will never reach the truth.

Truth is there, out in the open, but we cannot reach it unless we rid ourselves of the chains and break the bars of the prison!

Why am I saying this?

Because these specious arguments are always repeated, but if we solve them then we will put an end to them all, otherwise our minds will continue to be haunted by them and we will not advance a single step.

I hope that you will think long and hard.

Are the things you have mentioned rational givens which cannot be subjected to discussion?

Is everything old to be rejected indeed?

Is nothing that is old fit for modern life?

Should everything that was proven to be sound at some time in the past be eliminated in subsequent eras on the basis that it is old?

Or is the fact that it is sound evidence that it is true?

Is that which was proven to be valid in many consecutive eras equal to that which is proven to be a failure and contrary to reason?

Let us go back to the ancient excuse and ask: If you say that everything old is to be rejected – in these general terms – then you have to abandon the heavens and the earth and air, and go to another universe that you create yourselves!

Do you know why?

It is because the system that is governing these things and all these galaxies is very ancient.

The systems of gravity, air, water, crops,

light, darkness, movement of planets and stars and so on – are they successful, beautiful and precise or are they bad and should be changed because they are old?

Even our social systems with regard to the family, lineage, motherhood, fatherhood and so on – should they be changed?

The answer is: definitely not, because they are successful systems. The more time goes by, the deeper becomes the conviction that they are successful and that they are systems that cannot be changed because there is no alternative to them. Thus it becomes one of the greatest facts. So let us agree in principle that not everything old is bad and must be changed. So some of it is bad and must be changed, some of it is regular and can be changed, and some of it cannot be changed.

Similarly, not everything new is good.”

Professor Sinau: “I hope that you will not mix cosmic systems with religious systems, because cosmic systems are one thing, and religious systems are another. When we say this about Islamic systems, we may also generalize it to include Christian and Jewish systems too, so do not think that we are biased.”

Claim that the punishments in Islam are too harsh

Abu Haamid: "If you think about what you have said, you would not have raised this objection. By raising this objection you have shown that you accept cosmic systems but reject Islamic systems, although you agree with me that the one who set out both systems is one and the same, namely God. Is that not so?

So how can we accept one from Him and reject the other?

How can this cosmic system be precise and accurate with no ratio of error, because any error would spell the destruction of life, whilst believing that the system which He set out for mankind is not fit for life?

How can His system of laws for daily life not extend one hand span beyond the mosque, whilst you acknowledge that the system of the infinite universe runs with the utmost wisdom and precision?

What you have to do is define the case further and say: Prove to me that this system was set out by God and then I will be content, and do not turn a blind eye here and skim over this essential topic and say that this is something ancient.

I will make the same request of you and

say: Prove to me that this system of yours comes from God, and in that case I will adhere to it.

The wise man will not measure the suitability of rulings and laws on the basis of the time and place in which they were issued or the place where they ruled at some time or other.

No Westerner can imagine that the laws and rulings of Islam are suitable, so long as he connects them to the systems of the Middle Ages, which were ruled by kings and bishops who put the people through great hardship, where the system was not commensurate with the crimes that people committed, and sometimes went to the extent of killing people just to please the whims and desires of those corrupt kings.

I hope that you will remove this image of us and you, for you are seekers of truth and facts, so do not regard the laws of Islam through a mediaeval lens.

Once you remove this image, the first question is: To whom are the laws of Islam to be attributed?

Are they to be attributed to a ruler or king or committee, or are they to be attributed

to a particular era?

The answer is that they are to be attributed to God.

Question: Is this attribution to God correct?

Answer: We have discussed the attribution of Islamic laws to their source before. Their source is the *Qur'ân* and the *hadith* of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The people here know that this is as sound as the attribution of this universe to God.

If we have reached this conviction, then that is the end of the matter. But some atheists may object and say: Is it the right of God to legislate for people or not?

Is the legislation of God for people free of whims and desires or shortcomings, because He is merciful and knows best about His servants in all eras, or is what people legislate for people to be suspected of shortcomings and defects?

If we are fair-minded, we will find that current human legislation is the new form of mediaeval legislation, except that it is the other way round.

What they have in common is whims and

desires. The whims and desires of the kings, bishops and tyrants were behind those unjust systems, and what is behind this modern legislation is the whims and desires of human committees. Whoever those humans are, they cannot avoid whims and desires.”

Professor Sinau: “You can accuse those kings and bishops of whims and desires, but to accuse those legal committees of whims and desires is unacceptable, because what one committee member may miss, another will catch, and so on.

Hence these committees are less likely to be influenced by whims and desires.

Even if I agree with you and accept that they may be affected by whims and desires, it will only be by way of mercy towards people, mercy in reducing a punishment; mercy for the one who is sentenced and for his family. What is wrong with mercy?”

Abu Haamid: “By God, I am surprised at your objection, Professor!

This era with its scientific achievements and technology that you boast of – was it established on anything other than the principle of changing what mankind did

before?

Look at what mankind has achieved in this era, and look at what they have developed and done.

Look at all the mobile phones and how they have changed.

Look at television and how it has developed over the years.

Look at weapons...

Look at everything, and you will find the greatest witness to the shortcoming and ignorance of man in the development of which you speak. Is that not so?

If the human manufacture of material things, which are tools that are made in labs and are tangible and can be altered in the lab time and time again, and the changes can be tested and examined by more than one expert, then when they reach a certain level where nothing remains to be added, they are produced to the people, and they remain like that for a few years, admired by all people, as is the case with cars, then their faults start to emerge, and sometimes, as soon as they are produced and used, their faults become apparent... – where then is per-

fection?

What about the efforts of the committees and labs? What about the tests and so on?

These discoveries are based on manufactured, tangible things, in other words all the committees can do is say with regard to running the affairs of people is that previous experience shows such and such, and what is expected is such and such. So the best possibility of success is to make laws like this. So they are not definitive about the infallibility of the law and they know that it is based on probability. Hence you see them changing it frequently. The ones who make the laws are most aware of that because they themselves have changed many laws like that and they based their laws on alterations that they made to the laws of others.

Is this not sufficient evidence of the definite shortcomings in human laws and systems?"

Professor Sinau: "What you have suggested is clear, but it has nothing to do with whims and desires. Rather it has to do with the inherent ignorant nature of

human beings. There is no one among us who says that mankind knows everything. Rather our discussion is about human whims and desires in laws. I tell you: Whims and desires do not affect humans so long as they promulgate laws by means of committees that come one after another."

Abu Haamid: "I thank you first of all for acknowledging that ignorance is inherent in human beings. This alone is sufficient to waive man's absolute right to issue laws for other humans, because sound legislation must be based on certain knowledge, as its effect on humans is practical, comprehensive and serious: it covers the prohibition or permissibility of various types of wealth, the prohibition or permissibility of various types of marriage, and even the prohibition or permissibility of shedding blood. What can be more serious than that?

My dear Professor, if you had a serious case in court, would you accept for a judge who is ignorant of your case to pass judgement?

The answer is definitely not. So how can you accept for the entire judicial system to be in the hands of those who are igno-

rant of the future?"

Professor Sinau: "Then what is the solution? Is the solution for mankind to withdraw from legislation altogether, and receive it from another source without contributing anything?"

If the committees are ignorant of the future, and the cases that are to be legislated for are very serious in nature, then from whom can we seek legislation?"

Abu Haamid: "Excuse me, Professor Sinau, I cannot but offer my thanks to you for your approval, and I hope that you will not be too hasty with me because I have not yet responded to your request to prove the existence of whims and desires in human decisions. We have a proverb which says 'Explaining the obvious is difficult.' When day breaks, does it need more evidence than that it has come? The evidence for that is the natural difference between human beings. Are human whims and desires in the past like the whims and desires of humans today?"

Are the whims and desires of the Arabs like the whims and desires of the Europeans? Are the whims and desires of the Europeans like the whims and desires of

the Americans?

Are the British like the Germans or French or Chinese? Are the whims and desires of children like whims and desires of adults? Are your whims and desires when you were a child like your whims and desires when you were a young man, or like your whims and desires after you retired? Are the whims and desires of the poor like the whims and desires of the rich?

Think carefully and you will realize that human legislation is the result of people's whims and desires. You will find that they are reactions to other views. Otherwise, how come dictatorial laws and democratic laws appeared as opposed to them?

How come the principles of socialism appeared, and the principles of capitalism appeared as opposed to them?

How come American law prohibited alcohol for a period of more than ten years, and criminalized anyone who dealt in it or sold it, and executed three hundred people, and imprisoned more than five hundred thousand, and confiscated property valued at hundreds of millions of

dollars, then permitted alcohol again?

Why did all this happen? Why all this variation in laws, if humans are humans, time is time, and were it not for inherent imperfection and whims and desires in humans, we would not see this mutual criticism between those who follow socialist laws and those who follow capitalist laws, and so on.

My dear Professor, is it possible for anyone to deny that human psychology is influenced by the environment, or by time, place and reactions?

Can human psychology rid itself of fear and greed and other assumptions?

If it is not possible to get rid of that entirely, then how can humans set out a system that is free of whims and desires?"

Professor Sinau: "I will repeat my previous question: what is the solution?"

Frankly, I do not want you to tell me that the solution is in religion, especially Islam. I do not want you to tell me: Rule according to Islam and you will see the results.

If Islam were fit to rule, your Arab countries would have been ruled by it. How

come you ignore it but you want us to be ruled by it?"

Abu Haamid: "So long as we are discussing and researching, I hope that you will explore all possibilities and not be afraid to raise any question. It is not fair for you to give a conclusion before it is proven, then tell me not to say that the solution is Islam.

I can say quite confidently: Why not? Rather the solution is specifically in Islam. Islam has nothing to do with what you know from other religions, and you should not regard the laws of Arab and Muslim countries as belonging to Islam. These laws are imported from your countries. Therefore they are a proof for us that your laws are not fit to rule either in your environment or ours.

But you do have the right to say to me: Prove to me with rational evidence that Islam alone is the solution.

Is that not so? Answer me, Professor!"

Professor Sinau: "Yes, that is so. Prove it to me; otherwise your words will be no more than claims without evidence."

Abu Haamid: "I think that after this

round of discussions, we will have no need to go back and discuss the existence of God."

Professor Sinau: "Yes, that is a given, and there is no need to discuss it."

Abu Haamid: "I also think that we have had sufficient discussion of whether the Torah, Gospel and Psalms are from God. As for the versions that we have before us, there are grave doubts concerning them, as we have discussed. We have also discussed the issue of whether Jesus is god or the third of three, and we explained clearly that this is a polytheistic belief which was basically opposed by Jesus (peace be upon him). Whether we agree on that or not, there remains no doubt now that there is no acceptable argument to show that there is another god with God, or that the Qur'ân that we have before us is not from God, or that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is not a Prophet or is not the Final Prophet.

Do not think that the issue is not going to go beyond reason, rather it is fully in accordance with reason, because the only way to guarantee a system of laws that is 100% neutral is for the one who sets

out these laws not to be influenced by human whims and desires. The only way to guarantee a system of laws that is free of any signs of ignorance and that pays to all new issues that may arise in the future is the same way.

Hence it is essential that the one who sets out this system of laws should be the Lord of those people Who is not unaware of anything, and is not ignorant of anything, and does not show favouritism to one race over another, or one people over another. Hence you have to understand that if the Torah and Gospel had been 100% sound, we would have found that all the laws in them would have been free of whims and desires, free of ignorance, free of any defect. But because they were not preserved as they were revealed, we cannot trust them because the basis of passing judgement should be certainty. How can these books affirm this when they are based on ambiguities? Hence we say: we have nothing left but the Qur'ân!

Yet the Qur'ân preserved some of the rulings of the previous books as in the passage where God says:

“And We ordained therein for them:

Life for life, eye for eye, nose for nose, ear for ear, tooth for tooth, and wounds equal for equal. But if anyone remits the retaliation by way of charity, it shall be for him an expiation. And whosoever does not judge by that which Allah has revealed, such are the wrongdoers.” [*al-Ma'idah* 5:45].

On that basis, I would like to confirm to you in the strongest terms that the legislation in the Qur'ân is legislation that is free of whims and desires, ignorance and defects, because it is legislation that was definitely not promulgated by human beings, and because it cannot be attributed to any tribe, nation, tradition or people. There is no tribalism in it. It is not influenced by human beings, including Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). All honour is for the one who adheres to it and acts in accordance with it. If the Arabs and Muslims misapply it today, this is a shortcoming on their part, not in the system (of Islam). It is a great deprivation to deprive yourself from adhering to it because you think that it is only for the Arabs. Truth has no geographical or linguistic boundaries. How far you would leap ahead of other

nations if you were to combine technological advancement with this comprehensive, practical system which is based on faith?"

Professor Sinau: "Does it make sense for us to have inflexible legislative clauses that are implemented in various parts of the world, but you yourself admit that they may change from one situation to another, from one country to another, from one time to another, from one life stage to another?"

Abu Haamid: "I excuse you for this objection, but this is evidence of your inability to overcome the great barrier in your mind, this barrier which was built up over many centuries and great events, and now we are trying to breach it but are unable to, and we are trying to avoid it by going right and left, but we cannot avoid it. This answer is part of that attempt. But I urge you to help me with just one step, whereby we may try to overcome this barrier.

My dear Professor, if the legislative clauses were inflexible, I would be the first one to try to help you to overlook them, and put them behind your back. As you can see, I am an educated man and

am open to all cultures. I am not a man of the temple, hiding behind concrete walls or solid mental barriers.

The advantage of Islamic laws is that they contain clear guidelines for the establishment of a sound life. I will give you an example:

If you had a large family, which consisted of four wives, each of whom came from a different part of the world, and you built four neighbouring houses for them, and each wife produced many sons and daughters, and you started to set up a suitable system for this family, letting everyone know their rights and duties, and explained the reward for fulfilling their duties and the punishment for those who broke the rules – is this sound logic or not?”

Professor Sinau: “Yes, this is one of the duties that no family can go without. Otherwise, without this system, the family would disintegrate and the children and wives would be lost.”

Abu Haamid: “Is it appropriate for this father to set out different systems of punishment, whereby if a son of the first family steals he will be grounded

for a month, but if the thief is from the second family he will be grounded for a year, and if he is from the third family he will be grounded for two months, and if he is from the fourth family he will be grounded for one day only? Is this variation acceptable just because the families are different?"

Professor Sinau: "Of course not, because the crime is the same and the conditions apply to all."

Abu Haamid: "The same applies to all punishments, and to the system of rewards, and no attention should be paid to differences in characters or language. On that basis you should realize that I am only telling you this to make you understand what I am trying to say. Replace the head of this family with God, and replace this four-part family in four houses with people all over the earth, and replace the system set out by the head of the family with Islamic legislation, in the sense that it is the final legislation as we have already proven.

But nevertheless I say to you that there are advantages in Islamic legislation which make it so flexible that it is capable of containing all variations and differences.

It has advantages which combine the strictness of its punishments with mercy, advantages which combine the strictness of its punishments with treatment for the offender and protection for society, rather precautions before any crime takes place. Can you imagine that?

Let me be more specific and give you an example of a more difficult topic in Islamic legislation, which is the subject of punishment.

Before Islamic legislation carries out these punishments, it forbids the causes of falling into crime before the crime takes place. So it locks the door to crime in people's hearts before trying to close the door in reality. Therefore if you leave the door of your shop wide open and go some place, leaving no one to guard the shop, no one will steal anything.

Can you imagine that?

Yes, this is a fact. That is because Islamic legislation tells people that the one who is watching them is God, Who is never absent. Go, if you wish, to some Islamic regions where the legal punishment for stealing is applied, and you will see the results.

Go to Makkah, and you will see the shops wide open when the people go out five times every day to pray, and the shops are left open for twenty to thirty minutes at a time, but you will not find a single case of theft, even though there are thousands of shops around the *Haram* (Sanctuary) in Makkah.

Even though the shops are open, the desire to steal is not there, because of the tough punishment. Before the punishment comes, there is the conscience which is aware that the Lord is watching and nothing is hidden from Him.

But when the power went out in [name of city and details omitted...].

Why? Because there is no tough punishment and no conscience that feels that God is watching.

The second example is that the system in your countries does not regard immoral and indecent behaviour as an offence deserving of punishment. Rather, so long as it does not upset the public system or affect security, no matter what the offence is, so long as it is done with mutual consent, then it is permitted according to the law, even if it is immoral actions be-

tween two men, a man and a woman, or two women, there is no punishment!

If a person drinks to the point of complete intoxication, there is no punishment so long as he is not in a public place and does not drive a car on the road, because in that case he is exposing people to harm and annoyance. But if he exposes himself to harm, that does not matter.

On the other hand, Islamic law carries out the punishment because he meets the conditions for punishment, and it is to protect himself from his own deviance, and because these things are evil in and of themselves, and whatever harm to society results from it is only to be added to the original offence.

What is really remarkable about these man-made laws is that they in fact equate the one who engages in evildoing and offence – if it is done with mutual consent or otherwise – with the one who does not do such actions in the first place!

They equate marriage with illicit relationships, so long as they are with mutual consent.

Aren't these systems any more than projects that are aimed at destroying in-

dividuals with the protection of the law?

Aren't they no more than projects that are aimed at destroying society in the name of freedom that is protected by the law?

Isn't it the case that during adolescence, most people pass through a "crazy phase" when their whims and desires lead them to commit offences, but in these systems they find protection, which implies the destruction of most of society when it is at its strongest?

How can it be otherwise when there are adverts for alcohol, channels for sex, and so on?

Is there any mercy in the Islamic punishments?

But the Islamic system clearly points out the harmful effects, then defines the punishments for them very clearly, and explains that the punishment with Allah is greater. It closes the doors that lead to these offences, when it forbids the manufacture, selling and transportation of alcohol, when it forbids acting as an intermediary in selling it, pouring it, cultivating grapes with the aim of making wine, and any work at any of these stages.

If this approach does not work, then the punishment is to be strictly applied, with-

out vengeance or overstepping the mark. Although it is a tough punishment, its advantage is that it is merciful to society and also merciful to the individual."

Professor Sinau: "I hope, Abu Haamid that we may discuss some of the points you mentioned before. But as for your saying that the advantage of the punishments in Islamic law is that they are a mercy, this is not acceptable and it is not logical at all. Where is the mercy in the punishment for stealing?

Do you know, ladies and gentlemen, what the punishment for stealing in Islamic law is?

It is cutting off the hand at the wrist, and throwing away the severed hand! Where is the mercy in that, for God's sake?

Where is the mercy in mutilating a man or a woman who steals anything worth approximately thirty dollars or more? Where is the wisdom in cancelling out this productive potential and increasing the numbers of the handicapped who become a burden on society? What a great difference there is, Abu Haamid, between this punishment of yours and the punishment of prison in which the prisoner can

gain qualifications and become a working member of society!"

Abu Haamid: "I do not know whether the professor understands what he is saying. Is this comparison based on numbers? Or is it just attacks such as we are used to hearing against Islam and its punishments from professors in universities and from sportsmen in interviews and actors on the stage and from teachers and the man in the street? We hear such things all the time whenever there is a discussion on the prescribed punishments in Islam, especially the legal punishment for stealing.

My dear Professor, I will ask you some questions and if your answer to any question is not yes, then you should voice your objection to me straight away and do not delay. At the end of the day we will reach the truth through numbers.

Professor Sinau, I have told you an important fact, which is that the legislator of this punishment is God, Who does not favour any side. He does not favour the individual over society or society over the individual. The evidence for that is the definitive proof that we have established to show that the Qur'ân is from

God.

Now I will quote to you the verse in which God Himself prescribed the punishment for stealing. It is in *Surat al-Ma'idah*, where God says:

“And (as for) the male thief and the female thief, cut off (from the wrist joint) their (right) hands as a recompense for that which they committed, a punishment by way of example from Allah. And Allah is All Powerful, All Wise” [*al-Ma'idah* 5:38].

I am not quoting this verse to you because you believe in the Qur'ân. No. Rather I am doing what constitutionalists and lawyers do when they show their references and the basis on which they make their statements.

I am amazed that you can defend the punishment of imprisonment for thieves.

I am amazed that you can defend the figures which you could show on the internet in an instant.

Professor Sinau, do you know that the number of thefts in Egypt in 1891 was nine thousand, three hundred and fifty six, and it kept increasing, until in 1939

the number was sixty five thousand, five hundred and eighty. This means that in 48 years, the number of thefts increased seven fold. The rate of theft increased seven fold whilst the population of Egypt during those years did not increase at all.⁴⁹ There was no punishment of cutting off the hand, rather the punishment was prison. How can you convince me that prison is better or is a remedy?

According to an FBI report the number of thefts in year 2003 was 10.4 million which cost to 17 billion dollars which included car thefts amounting to \$ 8.6 billion and \$3.5 billion for robbery, etc.

Shouldn't there have been a decrease in the number of thefts if prison was a successful remedy and deterrent?

Isn't this increase the result of a man-made system?

What can we call a system that does not produce any positive results except a failed remedy?

Why don't we acknowledge the failure as these numbers testify?

49. *al-Tashree' al-Jinaa'i fil-Islam*, 1/739-740

These are not numbers that have been made up by the Muslims!

Another question: How many thieves who were imprisoned came out of jail and went back again?

Look at the numbers of those who go back to prison after being released, and you will realize whether prison is a remedy or a cause of decline.

67% of those who were released in 1994 went back to prison within 3 years.

30% were rearrested after six months.

44% were rearrested after one year.

54% were rearrested after two years.

67% were rearrested after three years.⁵⁰

Can any fair-minded person say after this that prison rehabilitates thieves?

These figures include only those who were arrested. As for the crimes which remain unsolved, that is a different matter altogether.

These figures also refer to the date of arrest and the percentages. Perhaps the

50. <http://usgoveinfo.about.com/library/weekly/aa060702a.htm> Your Guided to US Government Info, from Robert Longley Free Newsletter

truth is that they all engaged in new types of theft, which they learned in prison, as soon as they were released from prison, and because they had become more cunning, there was a delay in arrest in most cases. So the higher rate of arrest for 67 percent of them was after three years.

After all this, can any rational person say that prison rehabilitates thieves?

My dear Professor, these history books bear witness that the *hadd* punishment for stealing, which is cutting off the hand, was only applied six times in four hundred years [shouldn't this say fourteen hundred years??] in an area that includes almost all the Arab and Muslim countries today.

Can we imagine the level of security in which those societies lived?

Can any wise man say after this that the legal punishment for stealing causes an impediment and wastes potentials?

I do not know how the legal punishment for stealing can affect productivity negatively, or how imprisoning the offender can lead to increased productivity, unless we suggest that there is an inverse ratio between financial security and productiv-

ity, or that the relationship between fear and productivity is one in which they are interconnected, so that if financial anxiety in society increases, productivity will also increase.

Professor Sinau, do you think that stealing is a negative crime in the sense that its effects are limited to those who are safe, or does it have many other effects? Doesn't it usually lead to killing of all kinds, terrorizing those who are safe, violating the sanctity of homes and destruction of everything that stands in the way of the thief, erasing all traces of his crime lest he be found out?

Imagine that this professional criminal was indeed captured, along with other thieves and gangs of thieves here and there, and they were all put in the same prison. What are they going to talk about among themselves in that place where they are gathered together?

What experiences are they going to swap?

What productivity do you expect in people who are basically criminals, who have committed crimes and then learn new things in this place?

Moreover, how much will the prisoner cost society in food, drink, training, medical treatment and so on?

The more serious his crime, the more costs there will be in prison.

Moreover, what guarantee is there after he is released that he will not become more vicious, or more sneaky, or more evil?

After all of that, we should ask: Who is the real victim as the result of this remedy or this punishment of imprisonment?

Isn't it the society which pays in blood and productivity, to cover the costs of the failed treatment that brings no result?

In fact this is not a failed remedy; rather it is providing qualifications in a higher degree of criminality! It is specialist training in thievery.

Let me now prove to you through the language of numbers what I have said to you.

New York, USA (CNN): For the first time in the history of the USA, the number of those in prison has reached more than one in every 100 Americans. According to a new report, America is the country

which has the highest ratio of prisoners in the world, which prompted it to reduce the costs of rehabilitation by putting fewer offenders accused of minor offences behind bars.

Based on documentation in all fifty states, the report says that 2,319,258 Americans were in jail at the beginning of 2008, i.e., one in every 99.1 adults. This rate remained the highest in comparison to any other country.

The report, which was issued by the Pew Center on The States, said that the fifty states spent more than \$49 billion on rehabilitation last year, in contrast to less than \$11 billion twenty years ago.

According to the report, the number of prisoners increased last year in at least 36 states, according to the Associated Press.

Kentucky recorded the greatest increase in prisoner numbers, at a rate of 12%. The state governor, Steve Beshear, said that the crime rate in the state had increased by only 3% in the last thirty years.

According to the report, the annual cost of keeping a prisoner is \$23,867. Rhode Island is regarded as spending the most

on a single prisoner, on average \$44,860, whereas Louisiana spends the least, on average \$13,009.

California, which suffers from a budget deficit of \$16 billion, spent \$8.8 billion on rehabilitation last year; in second place is Texas, where the number of prisoners is slightly higher, spent \$3.3 billion.

On average, the states spend approximately 6.8% of their general funds on rehabilitation. Oregon recorded the highest rate of spending, at 10.9 %, whereas Alabama spent the least at 2.6%.

According to the report, four states – Vermont, Michigan, Oregon and Connecticut – now spend more on rehabilitation than on higher education.

According to national figures on prison inmates, at the beginning of January, the number of prison inmates in state and federal prisons was estimated at 1,596,127, in addition to 723,131 inmates in local prisons. This is out of a total U.S. population of 230 million.

The report indicated that the number of prison inmates in the U.S. surpasses that of any other country; it is many times higher than that of China, where there

are 1.5 million prisoners.

It also explained that the U.S. is ahead of other nations in terms of percentages too, as the rate is 750 in every 100,000. This is higher than Russia with 628 in every 100,000, and the former Soviet states which are also in the top ten.

With regard to categories, the report indicates that one in every thirty of those behind bars is between the ages of 20 and 34.

The racial difference is prominent in the case of women. Whereas one in every 355 female inmates is a white woman between the ages of 35 and 39, one in every 100 female inmates is a black woman of the same age group.”⁵¹

Professor Sinau: “You did not answer the question. You have demonstrated that prison is a failure in treating thieves, but does this justify the harshness of the Islamic punishment? Does this justify the cutting off of a living, moving hand because of theft, when it could be avoided by using some other method of punishment?”

51. <http://arabic.cnn.com/2008/entertainment/2/29/us.prisoners/index.html>

Abu Haamid: "It is sufficient for me to know that theft is a crime. Isn't that so?"

It is sufficient for me that you have admitted that the thing which is used to commit this crime is the faculty that usually carries out the theft, which is the hand.

It is sufficient for me that you admit that this thieving hand has transgressed its limit and taken possession of whatever it could reach of things that belong to others.

Let me explain the matter to you by giving an example: you have many hands which have worked hard, produced and taken possession, and a lot of wealth had come into their possession. Then another hand sneaks in, transgressing the limits of its own possessions to take that which is in the possession of other hands. Everyone tries to push it back and scare it off, but it is not deterred and it insists on reaching out and it indeed reaches out and takes something.

What do you think is the suitable punishment for it?

Imagine if there was a tree in your yard, and its branch overhung your neighbour's yard, and you could not stop it growing

over your wall except by cutting. Don't you have to prevent it bothering your neighbour by cutting it?

This applies throughout life with regard to the one who oversteps the mark. It even applies to parts of a single individual. If one of your teeth sticks out beyond the normal limit and you cannot straighten it, there is no other remedy but to have it extracted. Similarly, if a finger sticks out oddly and you cannot reduce this annoyance, then the only remedy is to remove it.

I would like you to think about the prescribed Islamic punishments, and then decide however your conscience and fair-mindedness dictates. Even if you do not tell me openly, what matters to me is what you feel inside.

This punishment in Islamic law came as a lifelong deterrent to the thief, so that he will not think of committing this crime again. Every time he thinks of doing it again, he will think of his sinful hand that was cut off, and he will be deterred.

Moreover, the thief usually thinks about the consequences before taking action. He weighs up the idea of acquiring other

people's wealth and the idea of losing part of his body and also having to return people's property to them. No wise person on earth would prefer to lose his life or part of his body in order to acquire wealth for a moment and then end up with no money and no hand.

Moreover the motive for stealing is to get rich from other people's wealth, and the usual means of acquiring it is by using the hand. So cutting off the hand is a punishment that fits the crime. It may be said that the one who rushes to get something before its time, will be punished by being deprived of it. Islam does not prevent people from becoming rich; rather it prevents people from transgressing in order to become rich. The natural outcome for the one who has this strong desire to become rich is that it stops his hand reaching out to take the wealth of others, so that he can use his potentials in novel and legitimate ways to get rich, because the other way is too dangerous and very costly.

Isn't this a social remedy that takes effect before the theft takes place?

Moreover, thieves usually steal in secret, hidden from people's view, taking ad-

vantage of their not knowing about him. So they use the same method when they come out of prison, with other people who do not know them. But cutting off the hand is a sufficient and obvious sign which exposes him to people, whether they know him, or not.

Doesn't this offer protection to society and prevent people from falling prey to the thieves?

Cutting off the hand of the thief puts an end to the devilish whispers that affect all weak souls in society who may think to themselves of stealing. The one who thinks to himself of stealing may check his hand and feel it a thousand times before losing it.

Isn't this the remedy for weak souls?

Finally, people are of two types. The one who does not want to steal does not fear that his hand may be cut off, because he does not steal. As for the one who wants to steal, if he does it then he knows the consequences. So let him bear the consequences of his action before people and before his family and children.

Therefore it is the best means of reforming the thief himself after that."

Professor Sinau: "You tell me that it is a remedy for the thief! How can it be a remedy when you have ruined his life? How can it be a remedy when you have handicapped him? How can it be a remedy when you have mutilated him and he will have to appear before people like that until he dies? How can he remove this disgraceful image from himself after his punishment?"

Abu Haamid: "The shortcomings in manmade legislation surround it on all sides. One of its shortcomings in this case is that the legislator shows sympathy to the criminal, to the criminal hand, and does not show any sympathy to women and children and those whom he has terrorized in their homes!

He feels sympathy for the frightening thief but he does not feel any sympathy for the society that is frightened and threatened. Is this the proper balance?

They feel sympathy for the few in contrast to the innocent millions, but they do not show any sympathy to the millions of innocent people.

If you were on a huge cruise ship and had your beloved dog with you, whom you

can never leave behind, but a few days into the journey he became scared of the sea and scared of the people, and he began to attack people's possessions and even the people, and he turned vicious and you tried to treat him in all ways but to no avail, should he be left to destroy people or should he be destroyed?"

Professor Sinau: "Rather he should be destroyed."

Abu Haamid: "Islamic law does not enjoin destroying or killing the thief; rather it enjoins cutting off his hand only, at the wrist.

Do you think that law enjoins cutting off limbs? Or that it enjoins cutting off an innocent hand or an innocent limb?

My dear Professor, yes, you are cutting off one hand, but it is in return for protecting society, protecting people's possessions, protecting productivity, spreading security. You have increased productivity, because security is the capital of productivity. I hope you will think at the level of professional gangs and their growing numbers, and how this severe punishment could slow down this increase.

Moreover, how can you say that I have handicapped him, ruined his life, or mutilated him?

I hope that you will look at the numbers of those who become handicapped as a result of cases of theft, then decide.

I am afraid that you are going to say that these punishments are too little.

Look at the memory that will be carried by the child who is frightened by a thief in the dark until he grows up.

Look at the fear felt by children every time they wake up in the middle of the night, in the dark.

Look at physical and financial damage caused by the thief, then judge as you wish.

Why are there such sympathy and a desire to cover up for a person whose hard-heartedness, criminality and greed will only be increased by that?

I hope that you will answer me. Is it wise not to cut off the feet and to express sympathy towards them if they are affected by cancer, on the grounds that this is a deformity which will affect these feet until the end of the person's life and so on?

Or is it wise to save the rest of the body by cutting off this limb before its harm spreads to the other parts of the body?

My dear Professor, if you try to enter the thief's heart and listen to how he talks to himself after his hand has been cut off, you will find that he admits that he deserved this punishment. You will hear that he regrets what he did, and is weeping for his lost hand. Every time he looks at the place where the hand and fingers used to be and does not see them, he will weep for his sin and will say to himself, But in the end you deserved this just punishment, because you were the transgressor; your other limbs have to be careful lest you meet the same fate as that hand which has gone, never to return.

You will hear him say to his Lord: Glory be to the One Who judged and was just, how He prescribed this appropriate punishment.

You will hear him praising God and saying: Praise be to God Who has punished me in this world and I hope that He will not punish me in the Hereafter. And he will say: If this is humiliation and disgrace before a limited number of people in this world, then what about the greater

disgrace in the Hereafter?

And he will say: I will never do such a thing again. And he will promise to improve his image with other people, so as to erase the former, negative image.

O my children, I have made mistakes so do not follow me in my mistakes. Perhaps if my hand was not cut off, you would be tempted by my misdeeds and follow my example, thinking that success in thievery is heroic.

Imagine when people follow the disciplinary method that I mentioned to you at first, when the legal punishments were established. Only one incident of theft occurred during the life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), on the part of a woman from one of the most famous Arab tribes, which was one of the highest in status, namely the Makhzum tribe. Listen to this *hadith*:

It was narrated from 'A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that Quraysh were concerned about the case of the Makhzumi woman who had stolen. They said: 'Who will speak to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon

him) concerning her?' Then they said: 'Who would dare to do that but Usamah, the beloved of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?' So Usamah spoke to him, and the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'Are you interceding about one of the legal punishments of Allah?' Then he stood up and delivered a speech in which he said: 'O people, those who came before you were doomed because if a nobleman among them stole, they let him off, but if a lowly person stole, they carried out the punishment on him. By Allah, if Fatimah the daughter of Muhammad were to steal, I would cut off her hand.'⁵²

This woman knew that it was the punishment of God, not the punishment of people, and so she had to repent to God and seek to please Him. Hence she had no choice but to set herself straight so that she might be saved from the punishment of God in the Hereafter. This is the deterrent punishment and beneficial, comprehensive remedy that is based on complete wisdom, by means of which life becomes sound. God says in clear

52. Narrated by al-Bukhari – *al-Fath* 12 (6788); Muslim, 1688; Abu Dawud; at-Tirmidhi.

and comprehensive words: **“And there is (a saving of) life for you in *Al-Qisas* (the Law of Equality in punishment), O men of understanding, that you may be among the pious”** [*al-Baqarah* 2:179].”

Professor Sinau: “Frankly I do not have any objections to what you have mentioned after this detailed answer of yours. But what you have mentioned can be proven unsound from an academic point of view, because it will lead to the chopping off of a lot of hands, since every person who is proven to have stolen something will have his hand chopped off, even if what he stole was worth only one euro.

I wonder how many hands would be cut off in our society, when you yourself have mentioned the rate of theft.”

Abu Haamid: “Listen; there is a rule in Islamic law which says that Islam does not carry out any punishment until after it has closed all the doors that could lead to these offences.

Islamic law takes precautions against crime before it happens. It does not open the door to fornication and then punish

for it. It does not make alcohol widely available then impose the legal punishment on the one who drinks it. It does not open the door to theft and then cut off the hand of the thief. No; rather it closes all these doors, then it uses a stick and carrot approach, then after all that it imposes the legal punishment.

Look at another principle, which says that the punishments are not to be carried out when there are doubts.

I will give you an example of something that happened at a time which was one of the strictest in applying the legal punishments. That was the time of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, the second man after the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), as we have already seen.

There was a famine at the time of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, when no rain fell for a long time, and no crops grew, and the animals died, and the people were starving. There was such severe want in Madinah that that year was known as the year of ashes. 'Umar waived the punishment for stealing and did not carry it out even though there were many cases of theft, on the condition that the needy man took

only what was sufficient for him.

This is the clearest example which shows that Islam does not carry out the legal punishment so long as there is some reason not to carry it out. This is the first point.

Secondly, not every case of theft is subject to the legal punishment, unless the items stolen reach a value of one-quarter of a golden *dinar*, i.e., more than twenty euros. Islam connected the value to gold and not to currency because gold was and still is the standard reserve of every currency.

It is also conditional upon the thief being an adult. No legal punishment is to be carried out on a child or minor.

Another condition is that the person should be in need and have no choice but to steal, as we have seen in the story of 'Umar and the year of ashes.'

The
punish-
ment for
apostasy

Professor Sinau: "I want to go back to the harshness of the punishment system in Islam. If this is what you say about stealing, then what do you say about the punishment for apostasy? It is death! Imagine, gentlemen, that Abu Haamid who always tells us that Islam is the reli-

gion of reason and challenges us, saying 'Bring anything in Islam that you think is contrary to reason and I shall prove to you rationally that it is in accordance with reason!' So, Abu Haamid, prove to us that the punishment for apostasy is rationally sound!

You say that if a man enters Islam it should be based on reason. So what if he leaves Islam on the basis of reason? Does he deserve to be executed?

Would you like us to treat you in the same manner?

Do you accept that we should deal with you in a similar manner, that if any of you enter our religion, we should let him be, but if he wants to leave then we should execute him?"

Abu Haamid: "I thank you for bringing up this sensitive point so that we can clarify it properly, because I think it is the last of the points that you have about things that you find confusing in Islam, and if we answer it you will have nothing else in which to seek refuge. Hence I will say frankly: after that you will have to decide, Professor. Yes, you will have to make your final decision.

My answer to this objection is:

Firstly: you yourself acknowledged

that Islam does not force anyone to enter it. Instead it gives people the choice of whether to enter it or not. Islam is to be explained to people. If they are convinced of it rationally then they may enter it, otherwise they are not to be forced. The evidence for that is in the Qur'ân itself, in *Surah al-Baqarah* to be precise, where God says: **"There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the Right Path has become distinct from the wrong path"** [*al-Baqarah* 2:256].

Do you know, Professor, the occasion on which this verse was revealed? You will never find such freedom of choice. These polytheist women had not borne any children, so they vowed that if they bore children, they would make them Jews, and some of them did indeed bear children. Then the people of Madinah became Muslim, and a Jewish tribe in Madinah betrayed the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and were expelled by him. But the people of Madinah refused to let their children leave with the Jews. But God forbade them to take their children in order to force them to become Muslim, and said:

"There is no compulsion in religion.

Verily, the Right Path has become distinct from the wrong path. Whoever disbelieves in *Taghut* [false gods] and believes in Allah, and then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break. And Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower” [*al-Baqarah* 2:256].

The *hadith*, as narrated by Ibn ‘Abbas, states that ‘a barren woman would take it upon herself, if her child survived, to make him a Jew. When Banu al-Nadir were expelled (from Madinah), there were some children of the *Ansar* among them. They said: ‘We will not let our children go.’ Then Allah revealed the words:

‘There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the Right Path has become distinct from the wrong path’ [*al-Baqarah* 2:256].”⁵³

The one to whom Islam is presented knows that if he wants to keep his religion, no one will force him to become Muslim, but if he chooses to enter Islam, then he has chosen his destiny, and he should realize beforehand that he cannot change it. This is the condition that

53. See *Sahih Abi Dawud* (2/510, no. 2333)

is presented to him. Isn't it the right of Islam to present this condition before one enters it? Does the objector have the right to object after that, if he breaks the condition, knowing that when he agreed to enter Islam, it was with his own consent and with full awareness of what he was doing?

Apostasy is regarded as breaking many covenants and abandoning many commitments, both intangible and tangible. It is as if it is a declaration of war.

When a man enters Islam, he agrees to pay *zakah* on his wealth, which is 2.5% of his wealth every year. He agrees to solidarity with the Muslim community in all that befalls it. He agrees to do five duties, namely prayer, *zakah*, fasting and *Hajj*, in addition to believing in *Tawhid* (divine oneness) and all that stems from that. He agrees to engage in *jihad* and defend Islam when it is exposed to danger. It is on this basis that the apostate has broken all these covenants. He has broken the covenant of trust and loyalty, and other moral covenants. It is not just one or two covenants. Rather it is a group of major covenants that cover all aspects of life, including the covenant of defence.

Not only that, apostasy is also a declaration of war against Islam and its people. Do you know why?

Because he could have remained a non-Muslim, he could have concealed his apostasy and not declared it. But he insisted on declaring his apostasy.

So his case is not one of conviction, rather it is one of declared hostility.

Yes, you have the right to open the door to one who wants to leave your religion, because there are no consequences that result from his leaving, because there was no commitment in the first place. Rather there is complete freedom to commit oneself or break free. It is as if it is all the same whether it exists or not with regard to the life of society. Islamic law prevents crimes before they occur. It does not open the door to fornication or adultery, then punish for it. It does not allow the sale of alcohol then carry out the legal punishment for it; it does not open the door to stealing then chop off the thief's hand. No, rather it closes all these doors, it encourages and deters, gives glad tidings and warns, and then it carries out the legal punishment.

If you look at the legal punishment for apostasy you will say: Islam does not oblige a person to change his religion, and it gives him complete freedom to stay with his original religion. It preserves all his rights, just like those of a Muslim, even if he does not become Muslim, and maybe with fewer obligations, so long as he remains in his religion. As we have seen, the Muslim pays *zakah* of 2.5% of his wealth every year, and he is obliged to pay other expenses that may be required of him by the Muslim state. He pays more than that when he is required to engage in *jihad* to protect his country from the followers of other religions and other non-Muslims. He is also committed to other obligations such as prayer and other acts of worship, whereas you, if you remain a follower of your religion, are not obliged to do any of that, apart from what you pay of the *jizyah* only, which is a very small amount that is required only from the one who is able to pay it. The one who cannot afford it is not obliged to pay it. It is required from professionals only. The one who is poor and unable to pay is to be given money by the Muslim state, from what is called the "*Bait al-Mal*" or treasury of the Mus-

lims. This is what you have if you are not a Muslim. But if you choose Islam over your religion, freely and on the basis of sound reason, then after all that you leave Islam and go back to your former religion or another religion, it begs the question: What made you change your religion this time? You were undoubtedly wrong on one of these two occasions, either the first time or the second time. As there was a condition attached to your decision, then you must bear the consequences if you change your mind.

This prompts us to say in all earnest that if Islam wanted to kill him, it would have killed him when he was still a follower of his original religion. If it had wanted to deceive him, it would not have given him complete freedom as to whether to enter Islam or not, or given him freedom and then killed him.

If it had wanted to put pressure on him, it would have put pressure on him before he entered Islam, so as to force him to enter it.

This prompts us to say definitively that Islam was fair when it gave him unlimited time and absolute freedom to choose whether to enter Islam or not, and it takes

the matter very seriously when it asks people not to undermine the conditions of entering Islam.

Secondly: Imagine if some country were to stipulate certain conditions for those who enter the country, seeking to acquire its nationality, before allowing them to enter, and the newcomer agreed to that and gives his signature. Then this man asked to join the army of that country, and the authorities agreed on the basis of his signature and agreement to adhere to certain conditions. Then he asked to work in a nuclear facility belonging to the company, and the authorities agreed to appoint him in return for his adhering to certain conditions, including his promise that if he goes to work in another country in the same specialty, he will be executed because he may disclose the country's secrets, and because he may cause the efforts of others to be lost, or he may encourage the workers in that facility to leave, which would harm the interests of everyone in the state, not just the interests of the worker who is leaving or the interests of that facility or of the military forces. Suppose that this is your country. Suppose that this facility

is in your country. Wouldn't you support these conditions imposed on the one who wants to work in a nuclear facility in your country? Moreover, what would you say if the government of your country did not ask this individual to fulfil these conditions and was not strict in applying them? Wouldn't you regard it as a treacherous government? Would it have the right to remain in power after exposing the interests of everyone in the state to danger and exposing the state itself to the risk of destruction or occupation?

My dear Professor, a person could change his company, his job, his house, his clothes or his country, and no one would object. Why? Because all of these are superficial matters. If you wish you may describe this as changing one's skin. Changing one's skin is something natural, which no one is to be blamed for, not even animals. Snakes change their skin, birds change their feathers, and trees change their leaves, and so on.

As for changing one's beliefs, this is an inward change. It is a change of one's heart and soul. It is changing reality. If this does indeed happen, then the ruling is that this person should be executed,

which happens even among animals. If a snake were to change, hypothetically, into a lizard and went into its former den, the other snakes would eat it. The same is true of birds and other creatures. Changing religion is more difficult than changing one's character, because it is changing one's Lord. Is changing one's Lord something regular?

Thirdly: Who told you that this man used his reason to leave Islam as he used it to enter it?

When he entered it he was given complete freedom and ample time. Is that not so?

So he was mature and sane and understood fully. What changed after that?

Nothing changed. The only thing that changed was his reason, or he disclosed his real intentions for which he entered Islam, because he only entered it in order to cause harm or to spy.

When he chose Islam, he chose it for himself, and he may have consulted his family and friends of his former religion. So it was collective thinking, whether they objected or agreed, but in the end he chose whatever he liked of advice and

made his decision.

So if he leaves Islam and goes to another religion, his intention was to cause harm, because he will not be executed unless he announces his apostasy. But if he had a change of heart and kept it to himself, he will not be killed, although he will be called as hypocrite in Islam, because the basic principle in Islam is that people are to be taken as they appear to be.

Despite all that, you should know one important fact, which is that before he is executed, Islam is to be presented to him and discussed with him, and he should be reminded until he becomes rationally convinced and no longer has any rational reason to persist, and he should be given time to think about this matter. But if he persists in that, then there is nothing left but the sword.”

Professor Sinau: “Would you approve if we dealt with the one who changes his religion from Christianity to Islam by killing him as you do with the one who changes his religion from Islam to Christianity?”

Don’t you say that your religion is the religion of reason and fair-mindedness?

Where is the fair-mindedness in this, Abu Haamid?"

Abu Haamid: "My dear Professor, when Islam executes the one who apostatizes from Islam, it is in fact defending Christianity and Judaism as it is defending Islam. Can you imagine that?"

That is because when this man was a Muslim, he believed in the Christianity that was brought by Jesus and in the Judaism that was brought by Moses. He believed in the Israelite Prophets as he believed in Jesus as he believed in Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon them all). But when he apostatized from Islam he disbelieved in all these messages and he disbelieved in the Messengers. Don't these religions deserve to be protected from such people?

Suppose that he goes back to Christianity. Does your religion to which he has come enjoin belief in all the messages and messengers as it enjoins belief in Christ? The answer is definitely not. This is the first point.

Secondly: You do not have this condition so that you may demand imposition of the punishment connected to it. You

did not stipulate that the one who becomes Christian should not change his religion, and you do not stipulate that if a Christian changes his religion you will kill him. It has nothing to do with us if you do not stipulate this condition.

Moreover, on what basis can you stipulate that, when your religion is distorted and altered, and the contradictions in it are immense and pervasive? For example, in our view the one who changes a single letter of the Qur'ân has apostatized from Islam. What do you say when the Torah and Gospel are mostly distorted in such a way that you cannot find one manuscript of the Gospel that resembles another, and so on? They differ in the sources themselves, let alone in minor issues. On what basis do you regard apostasy? On what basis do you execute the apostate?

If you open this door, some Christians will kill others, and the followers of one version of the Gospel will kill the followers of another version, because the Gospel has been changed and varies from one person to another.

Moreover, if your religion does not offer any rational conviction in the first place, how can you kill him if his rational con-

viction changes?

If your religion does not give sound and convincing answers to the most important questions, such as the unseen, and what lies beyond this world, death, the grave, the Hereafter, the Messengers; rather it enjoins disbelief – on what basis would you kill him if he changes his religion?

Tell me frankly, Professor: do you have the right to equate the employee in a factory that is failing with an employee in the country's nuclear facility when it is at the peak of its success? Will the employee of the failing factory be held accountable if he sees his rights are neglected, and the factory can no longer pay his salary, and the debts that are owed to him, if he then leaves the factory?

Is he to be blamed if he changes factories because he is not fulfilling his potential and the factory is the reason? Is there any comparison between him and the employee in the nuclear facility whose rights are protected and whose bonuses are plentiful, and the facility is committed in the best possible manner if this employee decides to leave? Is the one employee equal to the others?

Does the latter have the right to leave as the former did?

This condition that is stipulated when a person enters Islam, and this punishment for the one who leaves, if they indicate anything, they indicate the great respect that is due to this religion and to reason, the seriousness of this commitment and this decision. When you allowed yourselves to enter and leave, that is because of the great disrespect that you have towards your religion in your minds, your disrespect for reason and your disrespect for the decision.

In your view religion is less significant than a company or the most junior employee or the most junior servant in a household, because you do not allow the servant in your house to leave his work whenever he wants or however he wants without there being some consequences or penalties!

Do you want us to deal with our religion as you deal with yours?

Do you want us to deal with our Lord in a way that is worse than the way you deal with your servant?

If you supply all your servant's needs

and give him all his rights, then he betrays you and leaves the house, and you catch up with him, won't you ask him for all that was due from him? This is the case with a servant, so how about God Almighty, who is our Lord?

The most important thing in life for you is material things. You have made the material your real lord, and if anyone transgresses against material things or the system, his punishment may reach the level of execution, such as in the case of military treason and the like. What harm does it do if we are dealing with our Lord and making our religion the most important thing in our lives?

What fault is it of ours if you do not give your religion any value? What fault is it of ours if you do not adhere to it and do not tell your children to adhere to it?

What fault is it of ours if your religion does not mean anything more to you than an optional extra like any other in life? Should the one who gives up an optional extra be punished?

What fault is it of ours, if you discover for yourselves the reality of your distorted religion, and give it up, and give

precedence to anything else over it?

Thirdly: Examine the foundations of the issue. Can you equate the religion of trinity with the religion of pure monotheism? Can you equate denial of all the Prophets with belief in all the Prophets?

Can you equate belief in a real book of which not a single letter has been distorted with distorted books?

Can you equate truth with falsehood?

Fourthly: Prescribing the punishment of execution for the apostate indicates that there can be no remedy for this person at all and there is no good in him.

Can the one who could not adhere to his religion adhere to any principle, if this apostate changed the most fundamental of all principles? Can he be sincere towards anyone or to any country if he has betrayed Allah his Lord?

Hence the one who objects to the punishment should have asked what apostasy really means before objecting to the punishment.

Fifthly: When Islam prescribes this punishment for apostasy, it takes into account the apostate before anyone else. How

often man takes matters of the utmost seriousness in jest and does not appreciate them properly. Whims and desires toy with him and the people of whims and desires toy with his mind, and the truth becomes hidden from him, and his thinking may lead to certain doom in this world and in the Hereafter. Therefore execution is the border that separates what is serious from what is in jest, it separates the great reality from whims and desires and chaos.

Based on that, the one who wants to announce his apostasy must remember that this punishment will erase from his soul any sense of jesting or joking, because after losing one's life there is nothing left to lose. It is the most serious decision about the most serious issue; therefore the punishment is the most serious punishment.

Sixthly: Perhaps you now imagine that Muslims are like birds in cages, and that they would leave Islam at any moment they felt safe, were it not for the legal punishment for apostasy.

This is a mistaken notion.

When the Muslim practices Islam, he is living his life in all aspects in accordance

with it. Do you think that anyone would want to depart from life? So how about when he regards his religion as being like water for fish, like air for breathing, and in fact he enjoys this life in this religion, he enjoys his life and he enjoys his prayer, he enjoys his faith in the marketplace as he enjoys it in the mosque?

He finds it the same as a religion and as a way of life. He finds its effects and fruits when his son honours him, when his father raises him well. He finds its benefits in his wife's attitude and she finds it in her husband's kind treatment of her. He finds it in his attitude with his friends and his friends' attitude with him. He finds it in his financial dealings, in lending and borrowing, in all things, in all aspects of life.

The worst news he can hear is news of one who has left Islam or apostatized. How can he think of apostatizing from his faith?

If the legal punishment for apostasy is the reason why Muslims remain in the faith, then why don't they apostatize nowadays when most Muslim states do not apply the legal punishment for apostasy?

End of the Problems

The one who fails to solve the problems of his home and children is more likely to fail if he tries to engage in problem solving, because the one who does not have a thing cannot give it.

The one who makes his way of solving problems the issuing of laws and regulations to protect them is more likely to increase the problem and propagate it, and if he continues, he is more likely to destroy his country and his world, and hang himself and others by means of his solutions.

Merely admitting the way Islam solves problems will never bring you out of your current situation into a better one, unless you solve the biggest problem that you have, which is the problem inside you, namely the problem of your belief, after which all the foundations of your problems will collapse.”

The Eighth and Final Gathering

Introduction

If anyone did not make a decision during these gatherings, it is as if he did not attend any gathering, even if he was present throughout!

If anyone makes a decision at the end of the final gathering, it is as if he attended all the gatherings, because he has reaped the final benefit.

If anyone does not make his decision at the end, when he is rationally convinced of what is presented to him, it is as if he is spoiling his food after it is well cooked by keeping it on a high flame until it burns.

After accepting Archbishop Richard's invitation to attend a service in the cathedral of this great city, with these professors, I invited the archbishop and these six scholars to visit us in Dubai and see its features, old and new, and to attend the prayers in our mosque. Now the day has come when we celebrate their arrival with some close friends.

Making
the
announcement

Chinese
men
announce
their
Islam

I took them to attend the Jumu'ah (Friday) sermon and prayers in Masjid al-Manarah which is located on the shore-front in Dubai. After I said the salaam at the end of the prayer, I stood before the worshippers to announce to them that three Chinese men wanted to announce their entering Islam. Our Chinese brother Dawood had told me beforehand that these three people were convinced of Islam after he presented it to them and they read about it and he discussed it with them for more than a month. They told him that they wanted to enter Islam, and now here they were, standing up and leaving their positions in the rows of worshippers and coming towards me to announce their Islam willingly and with no compulsion, rich men who were not in need. One of them owned a Chinese restaurant company in Dubai, the other was an engineer for prefabricated houses, and the third worked with ceramic tiles. As for their religion, one was an atheist and the other two were Christians.

I shook hands with the three, one by one, then they stood facing the same direction in front of the microphone and I asked them, through the interpreter, if Brother

Dawood had translated to them first of all the meaning of the words *Ashhadu an laa ilaaha illallah wa ashhadu anna Muhammad Rasool Allah* (I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah)? He said: They understood that what it means is that there is none worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad was the Messenger of Allah and the last of the Prophets.

Abu Haamid: "Then tell them to repeat the *Shahaadatayn* after me. They repeated the *Shahaadatayn* word for word before the congregation: I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and I bear witness that Jesus – peace be upon him – is the slave of God and His Messenger and His word that He bestowed upon Mary and a Spirit from Him."

They repeated that and after that everyone stood up quickly to congratulate them upon entering Islam, crowding around them on all sides, as if it were the day of Eid!

All of this whilst our seven important guests were watching!

Then my French guests and I left the mosque and went to my house in the Jumayra neighbourhood which is no more than a hundred metres from the shoreline. From the sitting room of our house we can hear the sound of the waves and see the fishing boats, and the sea breezes waft in gently.

We drank Arabic coffee and ate delicious dates, and then we sat down waiting for lunch. The topic that presented itself to the gathering was the topic of the Friday sermon and what had followed it, when those Chinese men became Muslim.

Impressi-
ons of
Friday
prayer

Archbishop Richard said: "The truth I learned today, after all the previous discussions is that Islam is a great religion and we should respect it, but we cannot respect it unless we know its details from the inside and know it as its followers know it. The greatness that we have seen today is manifested in everything. The worshippers stood in straight rows, and I did not see any distinction between one row and another, between one person and another. Poor stood next to rich, bosses stood next to employees. There was no fee or charge to enter the mosque; it is open to all!

When the *imam* recited, the people all responded with one word, which was the word *Ameen*. I was very impressed by that response, because we have the same word; we say *Amen*. The meaning of this response is: 'O God, answer our prayer.'"

Dr. Drima: "What impressed me in particular today was the concern of the Prophet Muhammad for the family and society. My companion, Dr. Ahmad Sa'doon, translated for me the sermon that Abu Haamid delivered to the people. I was also very impressed during the sermon at how attentively the people listened to it. It was as if there were birds on their heads."

Professor Charles: "In fact what impressed me was something that I cannot put into words. It is feelings inside me that were a mixture of awe and respect on the one hand, and peace of mind and tranquillity on the other. Yes, I cannot describe it, but I felt that it was flowing through my body. I felt the hairs on my body stand on end many times, especially during the prayer and when I listened to the Qur'ân! If you ask me whether I understood the sermon I would tell you that

I didn't understand a word but I got the general drift. Abu Haamid was speaking about honouring our mothers and their rights over us."

Dr. Jacob said: "There are many things today that I will never forget. The greatest of them all is the prostration, which I had never tried before in my life. When I prostrated I felt as if I was close to the Lord, very close indeed.

Yes, a while ago I studied a book by a Muslim scholar, which was given to me by a French student of Algerian origin, in which it mentions the benefits of prostration, and presents some scientific information about prostrating on the ground, such as the fact that it nourishes the brain with blood. It is sufficient for you to know the effect of nourishing the brain with blood in order to realize the effect on all faculties of the body. It also exercises the neck muscles, and discharges negative charges from the brain to the ground. All of that is one thing, and its spiritual impact is something else!"

Abu Haamid: "I hope that we will remain committed to the rules of discussion to which we adhered in our series of discussions in France, which is adhering

to the rule of reason. However I excuse anyone who cannot hide his feelings today. Perhaps for the first time in your lives you entered the mosque on a Friday and saw for the first time people entering Islam so easily."

Professor Gerard said: "In fact, I did not pray with you when you prayed. Rather I stood with my back leaning against the rear wall inside the mosque, watching what was going on and watching the organized movements. As a teacher of natural medicine, what I saw was like exercise in the form of a worship ritual, in addition to its spiritual meanings of worship and humility, which are reflected in the movements themselves.

If the Muslims will let me know, I will explain to them the benefits that there are in their worship for the muscles, nerves and vertebrae that they may not be aware of. I have seen a video before of a man performing the Islamic prayer, but today I saw how you actually do it. You stand in this manner with the feet straight, not pointing away from the body. This adjusts the position of the feet, which is a mistake that many people make in their posture. This is how the feet should

be when standing or walking. Looking whilst standing at the place on the ground where you will prostrate increases one's focus, in addition to helping the circulation of blood. As for the posture of bowing, placing the hands on the knees then straightening the back and neck and looking again at the place of prostration, this is what we call stretching the muscles and vertebrae of the spine, and also the joints.

When standing up straight after bowing, the most important muscles to move are the muscles of the lower back. These muscles are the most likely to suffer pain in most people, especially after the age of fifty. But by stretching and strengthening them in these two exercises, you may protect them. When you prostrate, which is when you place your foreheads on the ground, it is a distinct exercise, as I see it, for the thigh muscles, because the worshipper goes down on his knees or on his hands, but the posture of prostration, stretching the back by placing the head on the ground, putting the hands beside the head and leaning on the hands and head is very beneficial for the shoulder and back muscles, and also for the neck

muscles. And it is one of the most beneficial exercises for the one who has had surgery to remove or cauterize a disk.

It is most beneficial for the abdominal muscles, and it is very important for pregnant women, because it strengthens the abdominal muscles. Hence in Germany this is called the "*Allaahu akbar* exercise."¹

Abu Haamid: "I thank you first of all for sharing your feelings and for this information. But let us leave the topic of admiring the Friday sermon, and admiring the Islamic prayer, and admiring the atmosphere in the mosque on Friday. Let us leave all of that. I am going to ask you about these dates that we have in front of us.

Each date is glistening like gold, with piles of them filling these eight plates."

Archbishop Richard: "Excuse us for getting carried away with talking about Friday prayers. We did not notice these

The
beautiful
date

1. The Professor did not mention the order of movements as listed here, rather he said them as Abu Haamid prompted him by mentioning each part of the prayer and how it is done. Abu Haamid's prompting has been omitted so as not to interrupt the flow for the reader.

lovely dates, which are delicious and filled with nutrients, from the blessed tree beneath which Mary gave birth, and from which she ate immediately after giving birth."

Abu Haamid: "So the date combines all good qualities and gained the admiration of all because of its beautiful image and great benefits. Is that not so, gentlemen?"

All: "Yes."

Abu Haamid: "So what do you think if we do not eat the dates, and we just admire their outward appearance only?"

Archbishop Richard: "In that case we would be like the one who hears of it and does not see it. In fact our regret may be even greater, because we have seen it but did not eat of it. But, Abu Haamid, it is clear that you are leading us somewhere, based on our answer."

Abu Haamid: "Yes. I want to tell you that sound reason says that since you all admired one aspect of Islam, the rational conclusion is that you should taste it as you tasted the dates, otherwise what is the point of admiring a fruit in which there are so many benefits for you, which

you could obtain but you do not. Is the date offered for any other purpose except to be eaten?"

Dr. Drima: "I can tell you quite frankly that I can clearly see the greatness of Islam and I feel as if I am a Muslim even though I did not enter Islam. Islam is indeed a great religion and I am happy with what I have learned about Islam, which is the result of your friendship."

Abu Haamid: "If you were to say a thousand times how beautiful the date is, how good the date is, how sweet the date is – is this repeated slogan equal to tasting a single date just once?"

Is chewing the word like chewing the date itself, when your body absorbs its benefits?

Let me tell you the story of an English man who worked in the British consulate in Dubai. He had a similar attitude to this. After Friday prayer I was invited to lunch at the house of Mr. Khalfaan, and it was a big gathering with a crowd of guests that Friday. When we had finished eating lunch, my friend Naasir said to me: This is our English brother. He has some questions about Islam. I went to him hap-

pily and sat down beside him, and I said to him: Ask whatever you want.

He said: I have four questions. He asked the first question and I answered him, then the second, third and fourth. After answering each of his questions, I put this question to him: Are you convinced? He said: Yes.

Then I said to him: Do you have any other questions? He said: Yes. He asked question after question, until he had asked ten questions.

I said: Are you convinced? He said: Yes. I said: Are you finished or do you have more questions? He said: I am convinced and I do not have any more questions.

I said: Why don't you become Muslim?

Convinced but ...

He said: I am fully convinced of Islam but I want to be more convinced.

I said: Good, but let me tell you the truth. You cannot imagine the reality of Islam unless you enter Islam. Do you think that if there was a boy who was born under the house in a dark tunnel and grew up in darkness, and everyone who visited him in the dark described life above ground to him, and told him of light, the beauty

of nature, the moonlit night, the dawn, the sunrise, midmorning, noon, mid-afternoon, the sunset – do you think that by means of these descriptions he could do away with actually seeing the earth and its beauty, and it would be as if he were seeing it?

He said: Certainly not.

I said: It is the same with Islam. Your heart now is in a state of great darkness, but you will never be able to know the light unless your heart sees the light and it penetrates your heart and your cells, and they are indeed illuminated. At that point the light will shine within you and will become a part of you, and it will no longer be just a description. Then you will know what Islam is. I will give you an example with the prayer.

This prayer that you see and admire its outward appearance, right now you have no share of it except what you see.

But if you pray as a Muslim you will realize what prayer can do inwardly. It will revive your soul and your heart, it will revive your mind and you will taste its sweetness. I am not telling you about yoga or relaxation. It is something else.

The English man said to me: Let me think about it some more.

I said: Until when?

He said: I do not know.

I said: Think as long as you want, however you want, but do you believe in the Hereafter and that the punishment of the disbelievers is Hellfire?

He said: This is what worries me, rather it scares me.

I said: Then we will meet again if God wills, and if we live long enough.

I left amazed at the coolness of this Englishman in making a decision about a matter concerning which he had already come to a conclusion on both the rational and emotional levels after studying all aspects of it.

Some time passed and I forgot about our English brother. Six months later I saw him one day praying 'Isha' in the mosque of Ahmad al-Taayir in Dubai. I praised Allah a great deal but what I noticed was that he prostrated for a very long time. After that we met in the same gathering where we had met at first. We embraced and shook hands, then I said to

him: *Subhaan Allah* (glory be to Allah), how did you become Muslim? He said: After that discussion we had, I went to Britain, and I thought about that discussion a great deal, and I realized that I had no option except Islam. Then I became Muslim and I wished that I had become Muslim before.

I said to him: I saw you prostrating for a long time.

He said: Yes, I remembered what you said and I found it to be true, when you told me you can never taste the reality of Islam from the outside, you can never know the taste of Islam unless you enter it, and you can never know the taste of prayer unless you perform it as a Muslim, then you will see something else.

I remembered the likeness of light that you mentioned for the one who lived underground and had never seen light, knowing it only from descriptions.”

Archbishop Richard: “Now you have started to apply emotional and ideological pressure so that you can make whoever you can become Muslim. This is contrary to the rule of reason that we agreed to make judge and to accept what

it proved.

Imagine, Abu Haamid, if I had called you to Christianity on the day you were with me there, or if you had called people to Islam there, in my church!"

Abu Haamid: "My dear Archbishop Richard, I have never gone beyond the rule of reason. You are the ones who expressed your rational admiration for Islam and your rational admiration for the prayer, and your rational admiration for the Friday prayer. What is expected after rational admiration is that we should follow what rational judgement dictates. Is that not so?

Tell me, archbishop, is there any blame on the one who sees a date and starts praising it and his host says to him: If you taste it you will find it even better? Wouldn't the host be regarded as miserly if he does not encourage his guest to eat his delicious dates when he praised them?

My dear archbishop, how often is it essential to convince someone rationally so that he can pass judgement?

When the mind is clear and free of pre-conceived notions, one sound argument

will suffice for him to follow what it dictates. So how about when he has seen countless rational evidence in these discussions?"

Professor Silas: "As for me, I praise God that I have attended most of these discussions that have been held. They are meetings the like of which I have never attended in my entire life. I hope that they will change my life. But I am still confident that we should have some answers to many questions for which we do not know the answers."

Abu Haamid: Let me tell you of this story that happened to me. One day I was travelling on our wooden ship, steered by my older brother Abu Taariq, which transported passengers and goods to and from Kuwait. It was taking us from an island belonging to the state of Kuwait that is called Failaka, to Kuwait City. That was in 1979. The trip by sea usually lasted about two hours. During the trip a discussion took place that many people had wished for, between me and 'Abd 'Ali, who was an educated Shi'i, well read and fanatically committed to the principles of his *madhhab*. The agreement was that if he convinced me I would follow him and

"'Abd
'Ali' on
the sea

if I convinced him, he would follow me.

The discussion did not last more than a quarter of an hour, centred on controversial religious issues on which we and they differ, before the falseness of his views became apparent and ‘Abd ‘Ali was silenced, at which point he said something like what Professor Silas said. He said: Undoubtedly our scholars must have some answer to your arguments, but I do not know it right now.

I said to him: Take as much time as you want, and ask whomever you want, research the matter, then come and tell me, and we will look at the evidence you have. But if you do not find this evidence that you think exists, then what will you do?

‘Abd ‘Ali kept quiet and an old man with a slightly bent back and a deep voice who was present during the discussion on board the ship, whose name was ‘Abdullah Fahd, addressed me, saying: It is pointless to argue with this man. The only thing that will work with him is to take him and throw him overboard! Everybody laughed, and ‘Abd ‘Ali laughed too, and took this opportunity to slip away quickly and go elsewhere.

Professor Silas, when we started these discussions we agreed to let our reason decide. Why are we waiting for the verdict of other minds? Why are we waiting for something unknown? Why, when we are unable to answer, are we repeating, "Perhaps our scholars know the answer... perhaps... perhaps...?"

Professor Silas: "Attempting to avoid making a decisive decision based on the assumption that there may be some things we do not know, in reality means that there is an inability to make a decisive rational decision although the issue is clear, or that there is an unwillingness to do so. That means that I know what is right and what is wrong, but I persist in doing what is wrong. Moreover, following this assumption is something that will never end!"

Archbishop Richard: "I think we are all prepared and longing to witness the last chapter in the last round and find out the ruling of reason, whatever it may be. But I do not want to stipulate that each person should announce his conviction on the basis of one piece of evidence concerning a major matter. Moreover, proof has shown that we were wrong in some

cases and that Abu Haamid was wrong in some cases. The matter needs many further rounds in order to reach a decisive conclusion.”

Abu Haamid: “I have no objection to continuing these rational discussions for the rest of our lives, but what I want to ask the Archbishop, and all of us who are present today or who attended before is: Have you ever seen that you established any proof against me in any of these rational discussions or on any point we discussed?

So long as I say that there is no rational argument that proved me wrong in any of the discussions, whereas our friend the Archbishop has admitted – just now – that he was proven wrong during these discussions, I will pose this specific, legalistic, clear question again: Is a single, definitive piece of evidence against the defendant in a specific case sufficient for the judge to pass a ruling against him, or does the defendant have the right to demand a second piece of evidence, or a third or a fourth or a tenth?”

Dr. Drima: “Undoubtedly it is sufficient to establish one piece of evidence, and the defendant’s request for his opponent

to bring a second or third piece of evidence should not be answered, otherwise the matter will never end.”

Abu Haamid: “How about when everyone can see all this evidence which established proof against you, and there is so much of it that it is unquantifiable, in every topic that we discussed? How about when the Archbishop had admitted it or most of it just now?”

Abu Haamid turned to the people present, interrupting and apologizing, saying: Excuse me, but it is not proper for me as the host to continue debating with you whilst lunch is served. Please help yourselves, and we will continue this discussion after lunch, because we are reaching the end. And perhaps we will reach a decision that is in accordance with reason, God willing. Please help yourselves to lunch.

After
lunch

Dr. Drima: “If you were to ask me what is missing from Abu Haamid’s table today, I would say that it is more than is required and is more than was expected. This is the Arab hospitality that we hear about. But by way of stirring up discussion in the hope of learning, frankly I do not see any wine or pork on the table, and I do not know what the Muslims

have against pork in particular. Wine – as we know as doctors and as Abu Haamid explained to us – leads to much harm, but as for pork, what is wrong with it? If we take the pigs and raise them in clean farms, their meat would be good? Or if we take it and cook it well?

Is it possible that it was forbidden at the time of the Prophet Muhamamad because it was a dirty animal, and that prohibition continues today even after it has become a clean animal?

Is it possible to say that this is a religion which is good for every time and place?

Moreover, what is the reason for this aversion towards pigs, to such an extent that you made the purpose of the Messiah's coming at the end of time, as is well established in your religion, to 'will break the cross and kill the swine'?²

Is it possible that Jesus will come to break the symbol of his followers and kill an animal?

Is this the religion which you say is in accordance with reason and science?"

2. Narrated by al-Bukhari (2109) and Muslim (242)

Abu Haamid: "Believe me, friends, I am very happy with every specious argument that you stir up, because I regard it as evidence of your seriousness in this debate, and it shows that you are not trying to avoid asking difficult questions just to be polite. It is also indicative of your sincerity in seeking the truth. I hope that you will continue to seek the truth until you accept the answers, if they are convincing and at the same level as previous answers. It is sufficient benefit for me at this table if I answer these specious arguments in a way that leaves no room for uncertainty that Islam is the truth.

Firstly: Let us forget about proving that pork is medically harmful, and let us discuss the rational aspect of the matter. Based on that, I will ask you: why do you eat it? Is it not because it is permissible as far as you are concerned?

The answer is yes. My answer is: I do not eat it because it is forbidden as far as I am concerned. God forbade it and I obey the command of God. God is the one Who created it and it is His right to forbid it. You may dispute with me and I may dispute with you: is it permissible or forbidden.

Therefore our main difference is as to whether pork is unlawful and forbidden by God, or is it lawful and permitted by God Who created it?

If God forbade it, then we should abstain from it, whether it is useful or harmful.

Isn't it God's right to test His servants by whatever means He wants?

Didn't God test our father Adam, when He permitted to him everything in Paradise and forbade just one of its many trees to him?

If you object, I say: Why did He forbid it to us? The answer is: He permitted everything else to you. But you did not ask why He permitted everything else to us."

Dr. Drima: "What you are saying is something important. It is a clear and basic principle in prohibiting and permitting. But how can we agree when it is forbidden in your religion and permitted in ours? How?

I think it is fair that we should not object to you, and you should not object to us. Your rulings are not binding on us, and our rules are not binding on you. Is that

not so?"

Abu Haamid: "These words would be true if their basis was true, but what if we prove that Islam and Christianity agree on the prohibition of pork? What if we prove that Jesus himself forbade pork? Shouldn't we then give it up even if it is not harmful?"

Dr. Drima: "Definitely, but how will you prove that, when this prohibition is not mentioned at all in the Gospel. Anything that is not expressly forbidden is permitted, and the rulings of the Qur'ân are not binding upon us."

Abu Haamid: "You know that your Bible is composed of two Testaments, the Old Testament, which is the Torah, and the New Testament, which is the Gospel, which came to complete the Old Testament. Hence any ruling that appears in the Old Testament is confirmed in the New Testament so long as it is not clearly abrogated in the New Testament. No Christian would disagree with this ruling except one who does not accept the sanctity of the Old Testament. On that basis, let us see whether the prohibition on pork is mentioned in the Torah.

The answer is of course it is.

1. *"The LORD said to Moses and Aaron,*
2. *'Say to the Israelites: Of all the ani-*
mals that live on land, these are the ones
you may eat: 3. *You may eat any animal*
that has a split hoof completely divided
and that chews the cud.

4. *'There are some that only chew the*
cud or only have a split hoof, but you
must not eat them. The camel, though it
chews the cud, does not have a split hoof;
it is ceremonially unclean for you. 5. *The*
coney [the hyrax or rock badger], though
it chews the cud, does not have a split
hoof; it is unclean for you. 6. *The rabbit,*
though it chews the cud, does not have a
split hoof; it is unclean for you. 7. *And*
the pig, though it has a split hoof com-
pletely divided, does not chew the cud;
it is unclean for you. 8. *You must not eat*
their meat or touch their carcasses; they
are unclean for you'" Leviticus 11:1-8

3. *"Do not eat any detestable thing.* 4.
These are the animals you may eat: the
ox, the sheep, the goat, 5. *the deer, the*
gazelle, the roe deer, the wild goat, the
ibex, the antelope and the mountain
sheep. 6. *You may eat any animal that*
has a split hoof divided in two and that

chews the cud. 7. However, of those that chew the cud or that have a split hoof completely divided you may not eat the camel, the rabbit or the coney [the hyrax or rock badger]. Although they chew the cud, they do not have a split hoof; they are ceremonially unclean for you. 8. The pig is also unclean; although it has a split hoof, it does not chew the cud. You are not to eat their meat or touch their carcasses" Deuteronomy 14:3-8

These texts of the Torah alone are sufficient. However, the prohibition on pork does not appear only in the Old Testament; it also appears in the New Testament itself.

Mark narrates in his Gospel that the Messiah killed pigs and drowned a large number of them in the sea.³ And he told his disciples not to give sacred things to dogs or to throw pearls before swine.

So he mentioned pigs alongside dogs. Hence the one who regards pork as permissible has disbelieved in Moses and the Messiah.⁴

3. See: Matthew 8:28-32; Mark 5:1-14; Luke 8:26-33

4. *al-Takhjeel*, 2/609-610

In the Gospel of Matthew it says:

"Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs" Matthew 7:6

"Of them the proverbs are true: 'A dog returns to its vomit,' and, 'A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud'" II Peter 2:22

11. *"A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. 12. The demons begged Jesus, 'Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them.' 13. He gave them permission, and the evil spirits came out and went into the pigs.*

The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned" Mark 5:11-13

But there is a fact that we must pay attention to, which is that the Messiah came to confirm the Torah and confirm what it says in it.

17. *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until*

everything is accomplished" Matthew 5:17-18

The question I expect from the Professor and from everyone else is: From where do we get the idea that pork is permissible?

The answer is: it comes from the same source that changed the religion of Jesus altogether. It came from Paul.

Therefore Paul did not dare to state clearly that pork was permissible, but he made a general statement permitting everything except blood and that which had been strangled and that which had been sacrificed to idols, and he criticized anyone who described anything as impure. Thus he included the pig among the things that are pure and permissible. This appears in his letters and not in the Gospel itself. It says in the Acts of the Apostles:

28. " *It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: 29. You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things. Farewell*" Acts 15:28-29

In Paul's Epistle to the Romans it says:

"As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean"
Romans 14:14

He said in his Epistle to Titus:

"15. To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted"
Titus 1:15

Dr. Drima: "In fact what I like about these discussions of ours is that they are subjecting religious texts to reason. Logic is the judge even of religious texts. Nevertheless I want to remind Abu Haamid of my objection to their religion's prohibition of pork. I agree with him if pork is dirty, but if it is clean then how can we forbid it? And I remind him of their hatred of pigs."

Abu Haamid: "I will prove to you now and for always that when God forbids something, He does not forbid it for no reason, rather He forbids it for some great wisdom and in the interests of people themselves, for their benefit and

good health. And after that you will have no choice but to say yes, this religion is fit for all times and all places, and its ruling is the truth whether it has to do with humans or animals, on heaven or on earth, with regard to everything. I am not saying that with regard to pork only, but rather with regard to everything that Allah has forbidden in the Qur'ân and in the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Dr. Hans-Heinrich Reckeweg says in his book *Health and Pork*:

Consumption of freshly killed pork products causes acute responses, such as inflammations of the appendix and gall bladder, biliary colics, acute intestinal catarrh, gastroenteritis with typhoid and paratyphoid symptoms, as well as acute eczema, carbuncles, sudoriparous abscesses, and others.

During the lean years of the war and especially those after the war, the health of the population was, practically speaking, good. Few people could eat their fill. Meat from any source was only available in small amounts, pork was rarely ever available. There was very little fat, hard-

ly any sugar, but there were plenty of cereals and grains, i.e., bread and pastries. These were supplemented with potatoes, root crops and fresh vegetables.

During that time there were hardly any cases of inflamed appendix and no gall bladder problems except among those who had managed to kill a black market pig, which was rare. At the same time rheumatism, intervertebral disc damages and similar complaints were almost unknown. This was also true of cardiac ailments, sclerosis, and high blood pressure.

Soon after the currency reform of 1948 was established, pork products, ham and particularly bacon became readily available and the health picture of the German population completely changed. Inflammation of the appendix, gall bladder disorders, acute eruptions of the skin such as pyoderma, impetigo, carbuncles and sudoriparous abscesses became common place.

Particularly frightening was the increase in cases of cancer at that time. A great many patients between 60 and 70 years old, who had hitherto been free of disorders, suddenly became ill with stomach

complaints.

In 1952, in the medical magazine published in Munich (no. 12), there was a report by Dr. Hans-Heinrich Reckeweg which said that eating pork caused inflammation of the joints, calcification, leucorrhea in women and other chronic diseases.

Dr. Reckeweg conducted experiments on 30 mice in 1955.

Some of them were fed a normal diet, and some were fed pork.

The mice fed on pork developed cancer in various parts of their bodies. In some cases skin diseases and ulcers also became apparent.

Studies also showed that pork contains some poisonous substances or toxins. The doctor added:

Pork should never be fed to dogs, particularly boxers as they develop mange and itching skin sores, as well as tendency for severe internal diseases.

The same was reported about circus animals; especially lions and tigers, which due to pork consumption became lazy and obese, suffered from severe bloody

noses (probably due to high blood pressure), and soon died.

Studies state that feeding pork to fish in fish farms kills the fish within a few days.

The owner of a trout farm reported that the entire stock could be eliminated in a matter of days by feeding minced pork to the trout.

Pork should be regarded as an important homotoxin (human poison), which initiates activation of the body's defence mechanisms. These defensive measures then manifest themselves in a variety of illnesses.

Professor Hauss (in Münster) stated that fats, especially pork fats, when combined with psychological pressure leads to serious (fatal) consequences.

Professor Wendt (in Frankfurt) attributes arteriosclerosis, diabetes and disorders of circulation almost exclusively to 'protein-fattening' for which the mucopolysaccharides, in particular the mucous components of the connective tissue of pork, are to be blamed, although he mentions nothing about them coming from pigs.

The question has come up as to the differences between pork and other kinds of meat.

Pork contains an enormous amount of fat, even the so-called 'lean pork', in contrast to other types of meat such as beef, lamb, etc. Pork contains much intra-cellular fat or particles of fat inside the cells themselves, while in other animals, the fat is found almost exclusively outside these cells in the connective tissues.

It causes obesity and diseases of the heart, blood and circulatory system.

High cholesterol levels in the blood lead to the development of cancer cells. (Professor Roffo).

No matter what method of cooking is used, you cannot remove the fat in the cells and muscle fibres.

Pork also contains a high level of sulphurs (amino-sugars, chondroitine sulphates, hexosamine, glucosamine, etc.)

The storing of these mucous substances in sinews, ligaments, cartilages, etc. can be dangerous and can result in rheumatism, arthritis, and arthroses, and damages to vertebral discs, to name a few.

Professor Bier conducted experiments which proved that ligaments and cartilage which contain small amounts of sulphur are stronger and more resilient."

Dr. Drima: "In fact as a doctor this is the first time that I have come to know of these dangers in such detail. I will look into these scientific websites that you have mentioned and check for myself. But what I think is that it is just a claim and I will never find it on any website. It is your opinion, Abu Haamid, that the one who eats pork will acquire the base characteristics of the pig. But how can that be proven rationally?"

Abu Haamid: "You know the effects that one's surroundings usually have on a person, so how can we find it strange that food has an effect on man? So the possibility is there.

One of the greatest German medical scientists, whose name is Professor Lettré, said: Eating various parts of the pig affects the same parts in the human body.

For example, those who have eaten a great deal of bacon (produced from the flesh of the pig's back) show typical fatty folds at the back of the neck. The same is

true with regard to consumption of bacon derived from the pig's stomach area, as these patients show thick bulges of fat in their own stomach areas. People who eat ham show irregular deformation in the buttock and hip areas without even realizing that ham was the cause.

Based on the words of this scientist who is neither Muslim nor Jewish, we say: So long as it is proven that it affects the physical faculties of man then why shouldn't it affect his rational energy, way of thinking and attitude as well?

We Muslims have a *hadith* from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) which explains this amazing connection. He said: 'Pride and arrogance are among the keepers of camels, and tranquility and dignity are among the keepers of sheep.'⁵ Incidentally, I shall quote the opinions of two of our scholars who are well known to you. The first one is called Fakhr al-Raazi, who said: The scholars said that food becomes part of the essence of the one who eats it, so he will inevitably develop attitudes and characteristics that existed in the food.

5. Narrated by al-Bukhari (4127) and Muslim (85)

The pig has the characteristics of greed and great physical desires, so it is forbidden to eat it lest man acquire these characteristics.

The second is an historian who is famous in the west and the east, and he is an expert in the natures of peoples and nations. His name is Ibn Khaldun and he says: The Bedouin ate camel meat and became rough as a result. The Turks ate horse meat and became vicious as a result. The Franks (Europeans) ate pig meat and became cuckolds as a result.

Pork contains a high level of growth hormones, which leads to obesity, and makes the cells vulnerable to cancer.

Pork also contains a high level of histamines which cause skin diseases, allergies, inflammations of the colon and gall bladder, dermatitis, neurodermatitis and asthma.

Pork also causes viral fevers and other diseases.

The toxins in pork may be summed up as follows:

1. High levels of cholesterol, which causes high blood pressure, hardening of the

arteries, heart disease and cancer.

2. Histamines, which cause: eczema, skin diseases, inflammation of the appendix and gall bladder, and thrombosis.

3. High levels of hormones, affecting growth and causing obesity and cancerous tumours.

4. The proteins in pork and human flesh are virtually identical.

The pig is the only animal whose heart valves can be used to replace human heart valves because they are identical to human heart valves.

A few weeks or months before slaughtering pigs, it is essential to castrate them so that they do not secrete sexual hormones which would make the smell of their meat unbearable.

From birth until slaughter the age of pigs should not exceed six years, otherwise they will develop cancer.

Raising pigs naturally does not change the factors which cause various diseases.

The diseases caused by pork are due to the toxins that the pig consumes and the bad environment in which it is raised may

make them more harmful, but the basic causes of disease remain in the genetic makeup of this meat, and no matter how much it is heated or otherwise processed these genetic facts are not altered at all.

The testimony of modern science is sufficient to make you certain that everything that God had forbidden in Islam is only forbidden for a reason, and everything that God has permitted is also for a reason. The great wisdom behind all that, is what is in man's best interests, whether he realizes it or not. Islam is too great to take a hostile stance towards an animal let alone take a hostile stance towards any nation, because it is the religion for all peoples and all nations."

The thing
that puts
me off
most

Professor Jacob: "Abu Haamid, why do you bear so many grudges against Christianity? We want you to be more frank with us. What is the thing that you found most irrational in our religion? What is the thing that you found most off-putting in Christianity?"

Abu Haamid: "By Allah, I have never been anything but very frank with you, and I have never abandoned the ruling of reason for the ruling of emotion even for a moment. But as you have asked me to

be even more frank than I was, I cannot hide the fact that the thing I find most amazing is the brilliant way you use your reason with regard to material things but you set it aside when it comes to matters of your religion!

You are to be envied for these life sciences which you have achieved, and which could not have been achieved had God not blessed you with this reason. He gave you the potential, yet with all these powers of rational thinking, you accept all these contradictions with regard to your beliefs! You submit to them without wondering or asking questions about the most serious rational, scientific and emotional issues.

These contradictions do not require a profound knowledge of religion or an in-depth study.

These contradictions – if a little child asked you about them, you would not know how to answer convincingly.

For example, you tell me about Christ in the Creed that you believe in, that he was born and not created. Can there be any contradiction more obvious than this?

You tell me that there are three gods but

they are one, and you say there is one but He is three. How can that be?

You tell me that Jesus is the Son of Adam and the Son of Man and that he is the creator of Adam. How can that be?

You tell me that he is the Lord who was slain. How can that be?

You tell me that he is the god who was crucified. How can that be?

You say that he wept and grieved because of the Jews' torture. How can that be?

You say that the Lord was buried for three days. How can that be?

You say that you wear the cross as a sign of love on our hearts. How can that be?

You say that he was very humble, and then you say that he claimed to be divine. How can that be?

You say that you pray to him and ask of him and he fulfils your needs, then you say that Christ often called upon his father. So why shouldn't we call upon the Lord directly?

You say that you are monotheists, yet even in your sign of the cross you acknowledge three gods, otherwise why

not tap yourself just once, on the heart for example, to declare that there is one God?

You say that you respect the Torah and believe in what it says, and you think that it promotes monotheism, yet you still believe in trinity. How can that be?

You say that God gave this Gospel to Jesus, but if we ask you where is the Gospel of Jesus, you say there is no Gospel of Jesus. You say but it was written more than thirty years after Jesus (peace be upon him) departed this world. How can that be?

Even if we agree on that, do you have an uninterrupted chain of narration for that? You say no.

Do you have any copy of the manuscript that was written at that time? You say no. Did Jesus (peace be upon him) dictate it himself?

You say no.

So how can you take it as evidence?

Aren't all these rationally legitimate questions?

Do you think your reason can digest these

contradictions, or comprehend them?

Did religion come to blow away reason?

Why don't you give a convincing answer to satisfy your reason before you try to convince the reason of others? This applies if there is any answer, but there is no answer, because giving a convincing answer for something impossible is impossible!"

A place
of
worship
without
images

Professor Reno: "What I wonder is what I noticed when I entered your mosque; I wondered why I did not see any statues or pictures in it, not of the Lord or of Muhammad or his mother, or of his companions, or of his relatives or of his children.

Isn't our religion of divine origin, as is yours? So how come we were contaminated with this and you were not?

When we were in the mosque, we did not feel that we were praying to an image or a statue or to anyone who could be pictured in the mind's eye. On the other hand our churches – with apologies to the Archbishop – are filled with these statues and images and so on. A question sprang to mind at that moment to which I do not know the answer. Was the place

of worship where Mary used to worship before Jesus was born like this?

Was there an image of Jesus crucified before he was born? Or was there an image of Moses or of Adam?

Does it make sense to believe that Jesus worshipped there where there was an image of him crucified, or an image of his mother or of his Lord?"

Abu Haamid: "In fact what happened to you happened to us, but God made us steadfast in adhering to sound belief, and that is only because God guaranteed to preserve the Qur'ân and the guidance of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). It is amazing, is it not? Those who changed the religion of Jesus (peace be upon him) are those who tried to change the religion of Muhammad too. They are the Jews.

The Jews, who claimed to have crucified Christ, who boast of that. The Jews are the ones who tried to kill Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), in fact they did kill him with poison, as he died three years after being poisoned by a Jewish woman from Khaybar who put poison in roasted mutton and offered it to

him, and he ate just one mouthful!.

Professor Reno: "But what about the Jew who altered Christianity?"

Abu Haamid: "By God, this is something truly amazing, that the followers of a religion do not know who changed their religion!

The archbishop is the most knowledgeable of people about who among the Jews changed your religion. It was the Jewish saint 'Saul' who after that became the founder of Christianity as it now exists, as it says in books of Christian history, among whom is Berry who said: Many trustworthy modern academics claim that he (Saul/Paul) was the true founder of Christianity.⁶

Paul the
Dangero-
us

No one can deny that Paul was of Jewish origin. He says in himself in the Acts of the Apostles:

"My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead"
Acts 23:6

6. From *Muqaaranah al-Adyaan al-Maseehiyyah* 2, by Dr. Ahmad Shibli, p. 111; Outline of History, vol. 3, p. 695

But Paul was no ordinary Jew, and neither was he a Jew who was peaceful towards Christians before he became a Christian leader. He says of himself:

13. *"For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. 14. I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers"* Galatians 1:13-14

The early Christians did not face any harm or persecution from anyone else as they did at the hands of this Paul. Even Luke himself says of Paul in the Acts of the Apostles:

3. *"But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison"* Acts 8:3

"... Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. Acts 9:1-2"

The story of his persecution of the Christians, men, women and children, makes for shocking reading, but what is even

7. *Muqaaranah al-Adyaan al-Maseehiyyah* 2, by Dr. Ahmad Shibli, p. 111-112

stranger than all of that is the story of how Paul became a Christian. Luke says:

1. *"He went to the high priest 2. and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. 3. As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. 4. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?'*

5. *'Who are you, Lord?'* Saul asked.

'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' he replied. 6. 'Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.'" Acts 9:1-5

At the end of this story, Luke says a phrase of great significance, which changed the face of history. He said: *"At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God"* (Acts 9:20). This was an idea that had never been heard before.

A
religion
based on
a vision

Based on this story, I want to pose these questions to the rational mind of everyone who loves the religion of Jesus Christ

(peace be upon him). God is my witness that I love Jesus (peace be upon him) and I love his religion, and I love the Gospel that God revealed to him.

Can we take a religion from a vision seen by a single Jew to which no one else bore witness, as he says?

Can we accept the religion of a man who once killed the early Christians and students of the disciples, and was never a disciple or even a student of the disciples?

Can we forget about the honour of the early Christians that he violated and their blood that he shed, as we also forgot about the claim that they killed the Messiah himself?

Yes, many people fought the Prophets and reformers and then joined their ranks, but the one who studies the conversion of Paul which he mentioned himself will find that it was the true beginning of the new Christianity, because it combined the two most significant features of the new religion, namely (i) abandoning reason, which is the way to understand the new religion, and (ii) abandoning monotheism and associating others with God,

so there was no room for monotheism and monotheists after that day.

As for the abandoning of reason, you have before you a Jewish man who was deeply committed to Judaism as a religion, changing, in a strange story, which is not proven to have occurred. He changed and there was no proof that this story took place except his words, and there were no witnesses with him. Reason testifies that there is no one to whom God sent revelation but He prepared him beforehand. The same is true of all the Prophets. So how come Paul was the only one who was not prepared for Revelation, rather he turned from one state to another. He turned from a man who drove the friends of God to Jerusalem to torture them to a man who was called by the Lord when he was at the peak of his criminal activities. Indeed, he turned from a man who drove the friends of God to slaughter to a man who led them to religious beliefs!

As for the abandoning of monotheism, this is the first time that the claim was made that Jesus was god, and this became the foundation of the new Gospel and the basis of the new Christianity. It became

the factor that differentiated Paul from all the other Christians. Paul brushed aside all the original Christians so that he could gain full control over everything, even his teacher who believed him and presented him to the Christians. He got rid of him and his Gospel. Who can be unaware of Barnabas? Then he followed that by getting rid of Peter, the chief disciple.

In the Acts of the Apostles, it says of Barnabas:

"They [Paul and Barnabas] had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company" Acts 15:39

Paul says of Peter:

"When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face" Galatians 2:11

Here Paul began methodically to change the fundamentals. He abolished the teachings of Christ and replaced every sound principle with a false one. He replaced the story of Jesus being taken up into heaven with the story of the crucifixion, which is why the Christians wear the tool of the Messiah's crucifixion on their chests as an adornment!

Trinity replaced monotheism, and circumcision of the heart replaced true circumcision, which is prescribed in the laws of all the Prophets. Baptism replaced repentance, and the message of Jesus (peace be upon him) became universal after it had been only for the Children of Israel. Love of Jesus (peace be upon him) meant chewing bread on the basis that it was cutting his flesh between your teeth and drinking wine that turns into the blood of Jesus (peace be upon him) in your stomach! This is the sign of purification and a sign of love for Jesus (peace be upon him), as they claim!

What I am saying is not a conclusion, rather I am reading what came from Paul and what he said about those among the Christians who were followers of Jesus (peace be upon him) who did not agree with him or agree with his opinions. He says:

20. *"Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, 21. which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith."* 1 Timothy 6:20-21

This is how he described those who disagreed with him! But who had the strength to stand up and resist him?

But it is strange that the followers of Jesus (peace be upon him) and their followers accepted this man, and how his teachings spread.

Perry says: After the crucifixion of Christ, his followers melted away and his message disappeared, and no one heard anything of this message any more.*

Paul and
Luke

The most important reason was that he managed to win over a man who was of great importance, namely Luke, Luke whom Paul called the 'Beloved Physician'. Luke, who believed in the message of Paul, and was sincerely devoted to him, and gave him a position like that of Jesus himself (peace be upon him), Luke wrote his epistle, The Acts of the Apostles, which is the life story of Paul, as he also wrote his Gospel, which he filled with the ideas of his teacher. It should be noted, that neither Paul nor Luke ever met Jesus the son of Mary (peace be upon him)."

8. From *Muqaaranah al-Adyaan al-Maseehiyyah* 2, by Dr, Ahmad Shibli, p. 114

The
reason
why
idolatry
was
added to
the mix

Professor Reno: "We still need to know what prompted Paul to come up with this idolatrous mixture, and why, and where it came from."

Abu Haamid: "As for why, this is the way of the Jews in all eras. The Jews were the spearhead in the fight against the Prophets. The number of Prophets killed by the Jews is greater than the number of Prophets killed by all idolaters put together. The Jews do not have one particular way of fighting the Prophets and their followers.

So how about if their enemy dissented from them, as they say about Jesus (peace be upon him)?

The Jews believe that Jesus (peace be upon him) split from them, and hence he deserved to be crucified, because he changed his religion.

Paul tried both methods of fighting. At first he fought a war of eradication from the outside, or a war of uprooting people and making them disappear. His second war was aimed at eradicating the principle itself and making it disappear. His success in the second type of war was more extensive and longer lasting.

As for why he came up with this mixture of Judaism and idolatry, it is well known that the general characteristic of the world before Christ was either idolatrous or Jewish, but idolatry prevailed throughout the world and Judaism was only for the Children of Israel. Then Jesus son of Mary came to the Jews as he said: "*I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel*" (Matthew 24:15).

Whoever realizes that the trinity — in particular — was nothing new that was invented by Paul will realize where Paul stole it from, and how he succeeded in applying it as Christian religion.

The trinity was a Babylonian religion that flourished four thousand years before Christ. They divided the divine into three. The first group of gods was three: the god of heaven, the god of earth and the god of the sea. The second group was three: the god of the moon, the god of the sun and the god of justice and legislation.⁹

Trinity was also the worship of the Hindus one thousand years before Christ.

9. *Muqaaranah al-Adyaan al-Maseehiyyah* 2, by Dr. Ahmad Shibli, p. 136, quoting from *Tareekh al-Falsafah*, by Dr. Ibraaheem Madkoor, p. 6

Their three gods were Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. They were regarded as three aspects of one god, or Brahma was regarded as one god with three persons: Brahma the creator, Vishnu the protector and Shiva the destroyer.

Wells says: Ptolemy I built a great temple, the temple of Sirabium, in which a kind of trinity was worshipped, composed of Osiris, Isis and Horus. The people did not regard them as separate gods; rather they were three manifestations of one god.¹⁰

Reason says that if Christ was sent to abolish a specific belief, then his coming should have been to abolish the belief in trinities that was prevalent on earth before he came!

Reason says that it is not befitting for Jesus (peace be upon him) to fight these gods and abolish them, then appoint himself in their place and in the same manner. Did Jesus (peace be upon him) come to bring them out of trinity and lead them into trinity that differs from the former in name only?

10. *Muqaaramah al-Adyaan al-Maseehiyyah*, by Dr. Ahmad Shibli, p. 133, quoting from *Tareekh al-Falsafah*, by Dr. Ibraaheem Madkoor, p. 65

Christianity took the idea of trinity from idolatrous religions, and the way in which it was copied was stupid because it was almost literal. I will read to you a precise comparison drawn up by Robertson.

In *Pagan and Christ* (p. 338), Robertson says: Mithraism was a religion of Persian origin which flourished in Persia six centuries before Christ, then spread to Rome around 70 CE. It spread throughout the Roman Empire and reached as far north as Britain. Some of its relics have been discovered in York, Chester and other English cities. This religion says that:

- Mithras was an intermediary between God and man
- Mithras was born in a cave or some corner of the earth
- He was born on December 25th
- He had twelve disciples
- He died to save mankind from their sins
- He was buried but he came back to life when he rose from his grave
- He ascended to heaven before his disciples whilst they were praying and

bowing to him

- He was called saviour and redeemer
- One of his attributes was that he was a peaceful lamb
- In his memory a Eucharist was held every year
- One of his rituals was baptism
- Sunday was regarded as a sacred day of worship

Robertson says: The religion of Mithras did die out Rome before its main elements were transferred to Christianity as follows:

Mithraism Mithras	Christianity Jesus (peace be upon him)
Mithras was an intermediary between God and man	Christ is an intermediary between God and man <i>"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12)</i>

He was born in a cave	He was born in a stable or cattle shed <i>"and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger" (Luke 2:7)</i>
He was born on December 25th	Westerners celebrate the birth of Christ on December 25th
He had twelve disciples	He had twelve disciples <i>"He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness" (Matthew 1:10)</i>
He died to save the world	He died to save the world. Such was the teaching of Paul: <i>"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3)]</i>

He was buried but he came back to life	He was buried but rose on the third day. Such was the teaching of Paul: <i>"that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures"</i> (1 Corinthians 15:4)
He ascended to heaven before his disciples	He ascended to heaven before his disciples 9. <i>"After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight"</i> (Acts 1:9)
He was called saviour and redeemer	Paul gave him the titles of saviour and redeemer <i>"while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ"</i> (Titus 2:13)

One of his attributes was that he was the humble lamb of God	These Gospels quote John the Baptist as describing Christ as the Lamb of God: <i>"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'"</i> (John 1:29)
Ritual of the Eucharist	Paul prescribed the Eucharist when he said: <i>"[Jesus] took bread, 24. and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me'"</i> (1 Corinthians 11:23-25)

Ritual of baptism	The ritual of baptism started with a correct beginning – <i>“And he [Peter] commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord” (Acts 10:48 – KJV) – but it ended with trinity: “baptiz[e] them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19)</i>
Regarding Sunday as holy	<i>“After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week” (Matthew 28:1) – even though the fourth commandment confirms that Saturday is to be regarded as holy: “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy” (Exodus 20:8-11)</i>

How will reason judge after this comparison?

Can it say that this is the religion of Jesus (peace be upon him) with which God

sent him?

Doesn't this prompt everyone who hears it to save himself first from this *shirk* (polytheism) that leads to the fate of eternal punishment from God?

Doesn't this call for a true revolution to restore purity and true monotheism to the religion of Jesus (peace be upon him)?"

Professor of Gospel Studies Bob: "If what you say is true, why didn't Christianity go back to the religion of Jesus after Paul died?"

Abu Haamid: "I want to remind you that historical facts are not subject to personal opinion or to doubt. When I mention these historical facts to you, you are the first one to know they are sound and you know their sources and you are able to check the references quickly.

This is one thing. Furthermore, you remember that Paul's attempt to change Christianity went through two stages. In the first stage there was oppression, killing, expelling, imprisoning and so on, but that did not succeed. In the second stage, Paul entered Christianity and changed it from within, and this dealt the fatal blow to Christianity. If Paul had

died after the stage of persecuting Christians, his death would have been a day of celebration and those who lived after him would have seen an overwhelming return of the religion of Jesus. But Paul did not die until after he had changed all that he could, and he left behind thousands like him throughout the world. Moreover, he lived a long time, until there was no one left of the generation who adhered to the sound religion. And he confirmed his alterations in written books, and did not leave them in the form of verbal advice, which would diminish with his demise. His epistles became the basis of Christian references and it is on this basis that the distortion of the Gospel itself is to be understood. Moreover, those who took control of the Christian lands for a long time after Paul were all followers of Paul, and they forced people to follow his teachings and alterations whether they wanted to or not, and all of them were religious rulers.

Finally, any hopes that Christian doctrine could return to the teachings of Christ were dashed at the hand of Constantine.

It remains for us to ask: Why was the Jew Saul able to change the Gospel and de-

stroy Christianity, and put an end to the proponents of monotheism? Why is there no one among us with energy like Paul, who could revive this nation and bring it back to the monotheism that Jesus (peace be upon him) brought?"

Professor of Gospel Studies Bob: "In fact, what we fear is that you Muslims – frankly – want to take revenge on the Jews by using us. You want us to get involved in this conflict so that after all these centuries of being the Jews' victims, you want us to become your victims!"

Fear of betrayal holds us back

Abu Haamid: "What you are saying is very important, because it is admitting an important fact, which is that you were and still are victims of the Jews. You are acknowledging the truth and you would follow it, were it not for your fear that we will take advantage of your following the truth. I tell you that I am not here to represent any Islamic political system, and I am certain that you know your friend from your enemy – us, or the Jews. We are your friends and we are sincere in our friendship. We love Jesus son of Mary and we are utterly sincere.

What is truly surprising is that you hate

the Jews, but as a system you are utterly afraid of them! As individuals, you hate them but you follow them without realizing.

You hate the Muslims for their sake, even though we do not represent any regime. Let reason judge, for you take a strange stance against us."

Professor of Gospel Studies: "There is a matter of great importance: we want to know what is the difference for you between us, and the Jews? It seems to most of us that you and the Jews are the same. What is the difference?"

Abu Haamid: "Wake up, people! Restore reason to its rightful position. Adhere to the rule of reason, which we agreed to appoint as judge. What comparison can there be between us, who are your friends, and the Jews who hate us, and you?"

The Jews deny Jesus (peace be upon him) whereas the Muslims believe in him. Can the one who denies and the one who believes be equal?

The Jews curse Jesus (peace be upon him) whereas the Muslims love Jesus (peace be upon him) and send blessings

upon him. Can the one who curses and the one who sends blessings be equal?

The Jews boast that they crucified Jesus (peace be upon him) and did what they did to him when they crucified him – as they claim – whereas the Muslims deny that he was crucified or harmed by the Jews or anyone else. Is the one who makes hateful accusations equal to the one who defends?

The Jews accuse Mary (peace be upon her) of immorality, whereas the Muslims say that she is one of the purest women in the world. According to us – Muslims – any Muslim who accuses Mary of such things has put himself out of Islam altogether.

The Jews want the Christians to serve their purposes, so they are taking them for a ride in order to get what they want. When they get it, they will abandon them, as they say: 'The Gentiles were created as donkeys for us. Every time one donkey dies we ride another.'

In Leviticus it says:

44. *"Your male and female slaves are to come from the nations around you; from them you may buy slaves.* 45. *You may*

also buy some of the temporary residents living among you and members of their clans born in your country, and they will become your property. 46. You can will them to your children as inherited property and can make them slaves for life, but you must not rule over your fellow Israelites ruthlessly" Leviticus 25:44-46

But we say what it says in the Qur'ân, in *Surat al-Ma'idah*:

"Verily, you will find the strongest among men in enmity to the believers (Muslims) the Jews and those who are polytheists, and you will find the nearest in love to the believers (Muslims) those who say: 'We are Christians.' That is because amongst them are priests and monks, and they are not proud" [al-Ma'idah 5:82].

The Muslims want to bring you out from polytheism to monotheism (*Tawhid*), from the constrictions of this world to the bounty of this world and the Hereafter, from enslavement of your minds to freedom. But the Jews confirm this misguidance that you follow.

Even with regard to that in which we differ from you, we single you out for spe-

cial treatment, unlike other people. We call you 'People of the Book,' and there is a big difference between the People of the Book and other nations. We single you out from among the People of the Book for special love, as it says in the verse that we have just quoted from *Surat al-Ma'idah*, in which God says:

"Verily, you will find the strongest among men in enmity to the believers (Muslims) the Jews and those who are polytheists, and you will find the nearest in love to the believers (Muslims) those who say: 'We are Christians.' That is because amongst them are priests and monks, and they are not proud" [al-Ma'idah 5:82].

Giving you the name of People of the Book is not just an empty slogan, rather it has its own rulings and it is an honour, because we, you and the Jews share this name, but how often the Qur'ân singles you out by this name in various contexts. It says in *Surat Aal 'Imran*:

75. "Among the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) is he who, if entrusted with a *Qintar* (a great amount of wealth), will readily pay it back; and among them there is he

who, if entrusted with a single silver coin, will not repay it unless you constantly stand demanding, because they say: "There is no blame on us to betray and take the properties of the illiterates (Arabs)." But they tell a lie against Allah while they know it.

76. Yes, whoever fulfils his pledge and fears Allah much: verily, then Allah loves those who are pious" [*Aal 'Imran* 3:75-76]."

Fear of
losing a
leading
position

Archbishop Richard: "Do you want us to follow you so that we will give up our leading position among the nations as we are today, and come down to the level of your nation, the Muslim nation?"

What kind of rational judgement do you want us to follow?"

Abu Haamid: "I know for certain that this obstacle that Richard mentioned is a real obstacle that put a barrier between reason and many people, and it was mentioned by the Noble Qur'ân before, where Allah says to His Messenger Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him):

"It is not you that they deny, but it is the Verses (the Qur'ân) of Allah

that the wrongdoers deny” [*al-An‘am* 6:33].

Some of you know the truth and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as a father knows his son, but do not follow him. God says in *Surat al-Baqarah*:

146. “Those to whom We gave the Scripture (Jews and Christians) recognise him as they recognize their sons. But verily, a party of them conceal the truth while they know it.

147. (This is) the truth from your Lord. So be you not one of those who doubt.

148. For every nation there is a direction to which they face (in their prayers). So hasten towards all that is good. Wherever you may be, Allah will bring you together (on the Day of Resurrection). Truly, Allah is Able to do all things” [*al-Baqarah* 2:146-148].

But fear of losing certain interests is what is keeping many from following their rational convictions in accordance with the truth. This is a calamity when fear of losing some gains that he makes by adhering to his original religion or fear of suffering some hardship or per-

secution and the like constitutes an obstacle to the one whom people trust with regard to their beliefs. I do not think that any of the people present doubt the accuracy of my words. A rich brother asked me about a bank owned by his large, rich family. The partners were his father, his paternal uncles and a few other partners. This brother's concern was how to get rid of the father's share of this bank that dealt with usury. The father's share was 40% of the bank and the uncles and other partners had similar shares. The brother came and was prepared to pay the price of this decision even if it meant taking all his dues from the bank then getting rid of it in whatever Islamically acceptable ways were suggested to him. I suggested to him that he should try to turn the bank from one that dealt in usury to one that did not deal with usury, or what is known as an 'Islamic bank.' He was very happy with this, but he was confronted with what appeared to be the persistence of all the others.

He came to me a second time and a third, carrying the weight of the world on his shoulders, afraid that he would die and God would bring him to account for usu-

ry, and the punishment for usury in Islam is major.

I said to him: Try to convince them. He said: Convincing them is impossible!

I met him yesterday – i.e., about thirty hours before writing these words – and I said to him: Tell them that if they turn their bank into an Islamic bank, they will never lose a single *dirham* or even a single customer. On the other hand they will get many more customers, and much new capital, because the bank will offer new services to new customers in addition to their original customers. He liked this idea very much and I am waiting to meet them and see their response.

Based on this logic, I say to every listener on a personal level: Take this matter as seriously as the matter of saving yourself. Think of saving yourself on an individual level, then think of how to save others. If everyone else refuses and is happy to continue following a course that will lead to disaster, then reason says: save your own capital. And the greatest capital you have is yourself, no matter what it costs you.

As for the archbishop's view that enter-

ing Islam means going from being in the front to being in the rear, I say to the archbishop, with apologies: Do you think that the modern European Renaissance began with anything but a revolt against your church? What did your church people have to do with the scientific Renaissance? Moreover, this scientific renaissance only came about after the westerners were nursed by the Islamic scientific renaissance. Your greatest and most fair-minded thinkers have testified to this.

Acceptable
testimonies

Dr le Bon says: 'The west is the offspring of the east, and the key to past events is still in the east. The scholars have to look for this key there (in the east).'¹¹

He also said: 'Every time we ponder the civilization of the Arabs and their scientific books and other fields, new facts appear to us. We soon realize that it is thanks to the Arabs that the Middle Ages came to know the knowledge of the ancients. For five centuries, western universities did not have any scientific references except the books of the Arabs.'

11. From *Nubuwwat Muhammad sall Allaahu 'ala - hi wa sallam fil-Fikr al-Istishraaqi al-Mu'aasir* by Dr Lakhdar Shaayib, p. 86, quoting from *Hadaarat al-'Arab*, p. 40

They are the ones who civilized Europe, physically, mentally and morally.*¹²

*For thirteen centuries, at times of war and times of peace, Islamic history was mixed with our history and our civilization developed on the same basis. What we added to that – meaning the materialistic aspect – created this profound difference. This contrast helps us to better understand ourselves and others. For these reasons it seems essential for the history of the Muslim world to occupy a high position in our culture. It is essential to know that before Saint Thomas there was Ibn Sina, and that the mosques of Damascus and Cordoba existed before the cathedrals of France and Germany. It is essential to put a stop to the scorn with which we regard contemporary Muslim peoples.*¹³

Marcel Bouazar says: "Writers who do not attribute to Christianity most of the man-made systems of international relations refer in their research firstly to ancient civilizations, especially the Greek, then after that they jump straight to modern times, taking it as a given that the

12. op. cit, p. 87 quoting from op. cit. p. 38

13. op. cit., p. 128

so-called middle ages covered the whole world. Yet historical objectivity, indeed mere fairness, dictates that we should remember that the civilization that took care of Mediterranean culture during the seven centuries of the Middle Ages was Islamic civilization.¹⁴

How come you think, Archbishop, that embracing Islam means abandoning science and knowledge, and giving up your pioneering position?

Do you think that someone will say to you, some day: Leave your country and come and live in our country?

Or will they tell you to change the colour of your skin?

Or will they tell you to change the style of your clothing and dress like this or like that when you enter Islam?

Or will they tell you to change your language? Or will they tell you to make your leadership in the east?

Haven't you seen the numbers of those who are entering Islam in Europe, America and worldwide? Have you seen these

14. op. cit., p. 210, quoting from *Insaaniyyat al-Islam*, p. 11, 12

people migrating from their countries to Makkah and Madinah or to the east?

Or do you think that they became poor after being rich? Or do you think that they left their jobs and gave up their wealth?

Or do you think that they gave up their nationality and passports? Or do you think that they gave up their studies and science, and cursed science?

Yes, if there is any change, it is in their attitude and worship. I don't doubt that you know many of those who have become Muslim. Ask them yourself or ask those whom you know. Do a study on them as a sample at the local, state or society level.

The facts you will learn if you follow your reason in this matter will cause you to attain harmony between your heart and your reason, and combine two types of leadership: leadership in religious terms and leadership in worldly terms, or leadership in this world and leadership in the Hereafter.

The Turks have never been Arabs, and they were never known for any glory, knowledge or power before Islam. When they became Muslim, they conquered

Europe itself, and indeed the Arab world was subjugated to them.

The great benefit that we wish for you is that you will experience great happiness in your own life, and that each one of you will say 'I have been born again'. What we wish for you is that you will stop all these crowds who are headed for torment every day, who are headed for your graveyards, or if you wish you may say they are headed for Hell.

Your greatest enemy is the one who stands between you and salvation. Can we say that a person is just being polite when it leads to doom?

Let us assume that some losses are incurred when returning to the path of *Tawhid* (monotheism) that was brought by Jesus (peace be upon him). But what loss can equal the loss of oneself many times over in the eternal abode?

The costs that you may pay for changing are indicative of the greatness of the aim. These obstacles become a sign that your path is the path of the Prophets. No matter what you face, what the Prophets faced was more severe and more serious.

The question that you should ask yourself – and do not try to fool yourself – is:

Do you love Jesus the son of Mary or not?

Do you follow his commands or not? Do you remember what Jesus enjoined upon his people?

Does this matter deserve sacrifice?"

Archbishop Richard: "I want to ask you a question and I hope that it will be the final question.

Isn't there a middle way in this issue, whereby we compromise a little and you compromise a little and we meet half-way?"

Abu Haamid: "Yes, there is a middle way. That is if we agree to follow what we have in common, and leave what is controversial, until there comes a time when we agree on a way to solve what we differ about. What do you think if we take what we agree upon and set aside what we differ on?"

Archbishop: "Is it possible to implement this in practical terms?"

Abu Haamid: "Imagine that last year

The
comprom-
ise
between
us and
you.

we took part in a stair-climbing race. I climbed 100 steps but you say you only climbed seventy, and a third person says that you did not take part in the race at all!

What is the solution? How do we apply the idea of what we agreed on? You and I are agreed that you took part in this race, first of all. Secondly, for the one who knows, his knowledge is evidence against the one who does not know. Hence we should disregard the third person's statement. You and I are agreed that you reached seventy steps. As for one hundred, there is no agreement on that. So why not – for now – adopt the view that is agreed upon, which is seventy steps, and set aside examination of the issue that we disagree about, which is whether you reached one hundred, until we are able at some point to agree on it or forget about it. Isn't this wisdom concerning which we should not differ?"

Dr. Drima: "Yes, it is an important step in the right direction. For the first time I feel that we can come to an agreement based on proper methodology, and it is not just for the sake of being polite.

I am fully convinced that there are impor-

tant points on which we agree, because we are all followers of religions of divine origin, and we can agree on most of the main points, and we can walk united on one or two parallel lines.”

Abu Haamid: “What do our other friends think?”

All: “Yes, we will start with the blessings of God.”

Abu Haamid: “We and you are agreed that Mary was a *Siddeeqah* [i.e. she believed in the Words of Allah and His Books (cf. *al-Ma'idah* 5:75)], pure and innocent of immorality or fornication. The Jews differed from us and said that Jesus (peace be upon him) was the result of an illicit relationship.

Let us focus on what we agree on, which is that his pure and chaste mother was one of the noblest women in this world, and let us turn our backs on the views of those among the Jews who accuse her of immorality, as she could never do that.

We are also agreed that the beginning of Jesus (peace be upon him) occurred with a breath, but we differ as to what came before that breath: did he exist or was he a god or something else? So let us follow

that which you and we are agreed on.

We all agree that Jesus (peace be upon him) was a Messenger sent by God, but we differ as to whether this Messenger turned into a god after that. So let us follow that which we are agreed upon, and ignore the view of the Jews who criticize and accuse him.

We are all agreed that one of the meanings of the word 'son' is the beloved who is close, but we differ as to whether it means the one who is born, in the literal sense. So let us adopt the meaning of son as the beloved who is close, especially since it was only ever mentioned in the Books of divine origin with this meaning. And let us set aside the other, disputed meaning.

We are all agreed that one of the meanings of the word 'father' is educator, but we differ as to whether the attribution of fatherhood to God in the Gospels means fatherhood in the literal sense, especially since the same word appears in the Torah, Psalms and Gospel, referring to God in the sense of an educator only. But let us follow that which we are agreed upon.

We are all agreed that the foundation

of Judaism, Christianity and Islam is monotheism and fighting polytheism and idolatry. But the divinity of Jesus, Mary and the Holy Spirit is something that is disputed. Reason dictates that we should follow that which we are agreed upon, which is monotheism, and set aside that which we differ on, which is idolatry and the association of others with God.

We and you, are agreed that Jesus (peace be upon him) came by means of a noble and pure breath, but we differ as to whether that breath turned Jesus (peace be upon him) from a human – the ‘son of man’ – into a god. So let us follow that which we are agreed upon, which is that he is a human being who came about through a noble, pure breath, and let us set aside that on which we differ, which is that he turned into a god, so that we may decide together and put an end to the issue of his divinity.

We and you are agreed that Jesus (peace be upon him) appeared in human form, and we are agreed that his mother bore him as a human being, and gave birth to him as human women give birth, and breastfed him as human women breast-feed their infants; he passed through the

stages of childhood, crawling, growing up, sleeping, standing, sitting, getting hungry, walking, speaking... He did all that and more, as all humans do. He did it on the basis that he was human. But we differ as to whether he did that in order to act as a human. So let us follow that which appears to us to be the case, which is that he is human, and let us set aside for now that for which there is no evidence, so that we may agree.

We do not differ with you or the Jews concerning the idea that worship should be directed to God, the Lord of the Worlds, but we differ as to whether worship may be directed to anyone other than God. So let us follow that on which we are agreed, which is that worship is only for God alone and no one else, and direct our worship to Him alone and no one else.

Although we differ as to whether the miracles performed by Jesus (peace be upon him) are indicative of his divinity, we do not disagree at all that these great signs are indicative of his honoured status before God, so let us follow that which we are agreed upon.

Although we differ, concerning all the

Gospels that are extant, we are agreed that the Gospel of Jesus (peace be upon him) itself is not extant, and we are agreed that the Qur'ân has not been distorted. So let us follow the Qur'ân.

Although we and you differ with regard to the ascension of Jesus, since you say that God took him up as a god and we say that He took him up as an honour to him, and others say that he was crucified in humiliation, then let us follow the rule of honouring, which says that he was taken up as an honour to him, and he was not taken up after being crucified, spat on, beaten, reviled, humiliated, dying and being buried.

We are agreed that Gabriel (peace be upon him) was the Holy Spirit and he was a messenger from God to the Prophets and to Mary, but we differ as to whether he was the life of God or a god. The Jews, on the other hand, reviled him and regarded him as an enemy. So let us follow that which we are agreed upon, which is that he was the Messenger of God to the Prophets and to Mary, and let us set aside the contradictory views on which we differ.

As we and you are agreed that we should

eat good things, but we differ concerning the consumption of pork and alcohol, why don't we adopt the view of eating and drinking good things, and give up eating pork and drinking alcohol, and let us adopt circumcision, until such a time as we can agree on all these issues, especially since you know that we and the Jews are agreed on that, and it is proven in the books of divine origin, the Torah, Psalms and Qur'ân. How can these Gospels disagree with them when you know that these are the changes of Paul and this is not the Gospel of Jesus?"

Professor Reno: "From my reading of the meanings of the Qur'ân, I read the invitation to all the people of the Book. I paused and read it many times, but I did not understand it as I should. It seems that we need to read the Qur'ân with the correct understanding. In fact this is the first time I have understood these details, and for the first time I understand that we have a great deal in common. What do you think of reciting for us the Qur'ânic verse which states these issues?"

Abu Haamid: "I know that you are referring to the verse in *Surat Aal 'Imran*, in which God says:

“Say: ‘O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians): Come to a word that is just between us and you, that we worship none but Allah (Alone), and that we associate no partners with Him, and that none of us shall take others as lords besides Allah.’ Then, if they turn away, say: ‘Bear witness that we are Muslims’” [*Aal ‘Imran* 3:64].

I ask everyone to think about the words of God: “Come to a word that is just between us and you”; it does not say ‘for us alone’.

What is the rational implication of all the points in common that we mentioned?

I do not want you to answer now, but what I am afraid of at this point is that you will think and think and think, then all this thinking will fade away as usual.

Come and look again at the points we have in common. We and you believe in the Hereafter, even though the details that you have are few, but for us it is described in detail. Let us follow that which we are agreed upon, and let us ask: what if death came suddenly to one of you when he was associating others with God. How will he answer God when He

What will
you do
on that
Day?

asks him: Why did you take another god alongside Me?

What will he do when Jesus (peace be upon him) disavows his worship, and the Virgin Mary disavows his worship of her, and the Holy Spirit disavows his worship of him?

What if this world were to pass away and you saw the truth with your own eyes in the arena of Reckoning, and you saw Jesus (peace be upon him) who was one of the Messengers whom God sent throughout the life of this world and was not a god?

What will you do when you realize that the matter is serious with no element of jest, and that there is no going back to this world, because this world has ceased to be altogether, and the verdict is abide forever in the Hereafter in the Fire of Hell?

Then you will look and you will discover that the reason for that is your delay in making a decisive decision at some moment in this world, and that So and so was saved because he took this decision, and no matter what he went through, compensation was there.

So long as you believe in the Hereafter, let your reason decide and compare the harm that may befall you with what you will get there.

This noble aim deserves all the sacrifices that you fear. Didn't those who came before you sacrifice their lives and souls for that – including Jesus son of Mary, as you claim?

Do you believe that God, in Whom you believe, will hand you over to your enemies, or that He will raise your position as He raised and will raise the position of those who believed in Him, before and after, until the Hour begins (i.e. Judgment Day).

Isn't the Paradise of delights enough for you – as it really is and not as it is depicted in the distorted versions, because it is delight for the soul and the body in an eternal life that will last forever and ever?

I will quote these words of the Qur'ân which you now know for sure is the only Book that contains the words of God as they were revealed, with nothing added or subtracted. Think about these scenes of the Hereafter, and look at this reality,

which is inevitably coming.

Decide before it is decided for you when you are one of the people in this scene, which is described in the Book which has not been touched by the pen of distortion.

109. "On the Day when Allah will gather the Messengers together and say to them: 'What was the response you received (from men to your teaching)?' They will say: 'We have no knowledge, verily, only You are the All Knower of all that is hidden (or unseen).'"

110. (Remember) when Allah will say (on the Day of Resurrection). 'O 'Eesa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary)! Remember My Favour to you and to your mother when I supported you with *Ruhul Qudus* [Jibreel (Gabriel)] so that you spoke to the people in the cradle and in maturity; and when I taught you writing, *Al-Hikmah* (the power of understanding), the *Tawraat* (Torah) and the *Injeel* (Gospel); and when you made out of the clay, a figure like that of a bird, by My Permission, and you breathed into it, and it became a bird by My Permission, and you healed those born blind, and the

lepers by My Permission, and when you brought forth the dead by My Permission; and when I restrained the Children of Israel from you (when they resolved to kill you) as you came unto them with clear proofs, and the disbelievers among them said: "This is nothing but evident magic."

111. And when I (Allah) inspired *Al-Hawariyyun* (the disciples) [of 'Eesa (Jesus)] to believe in Me and My Messenger, they said: 'We believe. And bear witness that we are Muslims.'

112. (Remember) when *Al-Hawariyyun* (the disciples) said: 'O 'Eesa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary)! Can your Lord send down to us a table spread (with food) from heaven?' 'Eesa (Jesus) said: 'Fear Allah, if you are indeed believers.'

113. They said: 'We wish to eat thereof and to satisfy our hearts (to be stronger in Faith), and to know that you have indeed told us the truth and that we ourselves be its witnesses.'

114. 'Eesa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary), said: 'O Allah, our Lord! Send us from the heaven a table spread (with

food) that there may be for us — for the first and the last of us — a festival and a sign from You; and provide us with sustenance, for You are the Best of sustainers.'

115. Allah said: 'I am going to send it down unto you, but if any of you after that disbelieves, then I will punish him with a torment such as I have not inflicted on anyone among (all) the *'Aalameen* (mankind and jinn).'

116. And (remember) when Allah will say (on the Day of Resurrection): 'O 'Eesa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary)! Did you say unto men: "Worship me and my mother as two gods besides Allah?"' He will say: 'Glory be to You! It was not for me to say what I had no right (to say). Had I said such a thing, You would surely have known it. You know what is in my inner self though I do not know what is in Yours; truly, You, only You, are the All Knower of all that is hidden (and unseen).

117. 'Never did I say to them aught except what You (Allah) did command me to say: "Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord." And I was a witness over them while I dwelt amongst them,

but when You took me up, You were the Watcher over them; and You are a Witness to all things. (This is a great admonition and warning to the Christians of the whole world).

118. 'If You punish them, they are Your slaves, and if You forgive them, verily, You, only You, are the All Mighty, the All Wise'" [*al-Ma'idah* 5:109-118].

End of the final gathering.

Can there be anyone left at this moment – the moment of bidding farewell to these gatherings – anyone who is so hesitant that he has not made his final decision?

Yes, perhaps there is, but he is not one in whose reason there is the slightest grain of fair-mindedness!"

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