

PART 2: HELP FOR CONVERSATIONS WITH MUSLIMS

When Muslims Say...

Responses to Things that Muslims Often Say to Christians

I receive this article by email May 1st, 2014. When I corresponded with the author, he wanted to remain anonymous, but was happy for me to pass this on to whomever I thought could make use of it. I thought that his suggestions offer some good insights to use in talking with Muslims. And, even if they are not at the level that you are accustomed to engaging Muslims, and even if you disagree with some of the answers and assumptions he makes on occasion, they are a fresh reminder that it is possible to give helpful explanations to our Muslims friends. Though I have edited the original text to improve its readability, I have left a number of original features that remind us that he is not a native English speaker. – The Editor

Hi brothers and sisters,

Good morning. I trust that everything is going very well in your family and work by the grace of our Lord and Saviour.

Recently I spent some time listening to many Christian apologists and former Muslim converts on the internet. From them I learned some useful answers to those questions which Muslims are likely to ask during conversation. I prefer these answers to long theological discussion, because they are short and to the point. Instead of trying to avoid answering Muslim statements such as 'Jesus is not a son of God' or 'Jesus is only a prophet', these answers intentionally encourage Muslims to ask such questions. I think many people receiving this email may already know the appropriate answers to give to such statements or questions. But I do hope this short list of responses to Muslim misunderstandings and questions will be of some use to bring Muslims to Christ.

Let us go out and engage Muslim friends, colleagues and neighbours in conversation with love and boldness today!

God bless you, your family and work.

When Muslims say that God does not have a son:

When I was in the army, we called each other brothers. Did we call each other brothers because the same mother delivered all of us? Of course not. We were brothers relationally, not biologically. We behaved to each other as if we were brothers, caring and loving each other. This is what it means to say that Jesus is the Son of God. To Christians it is most absurd to say that God (the Father)

married a woman and Jesus (the Son) was born as a result of this sexual relationship. Jesus is the Son to God relationally, not biologically.

When Muslims say that they also believe in Jesus:

Your Jesus and our Jesus are not the same. In fact your Jesus never existed in history. He might exist only in your mind and imagination. Suppose that the name of my wife is Julie and the wife's name of another man is also Julie. Are my Julie and that man's Julie the same because they have the same name? Of course not. The Jesus you believe never existed in history. The real historical Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, who willingly chose to die on the cross to forgive all sins of mankind, because he loved them so much.

When Muslims say that they worship the same God:

The God of the Bible and Allah of the Quran are not the same. What is the most important attribute of Allah of the Quran? (Answer) The most important attribute of the God of the Bible is love. What is the relationship between Allah and mankind? (Answer) The relationship between God and mankind is that of a Father to his children. Does Allah of the Quran love sinners and those who disobey him? (Answer) The God of the Bible loves sinners and those who even disobey him. As you see, the God of the Bible and Allah of the Quran are not the same. Suppose that the name of my wife is Julie and the wife's name of another man is also Julie. Are my Julie and that man's Julie the same because they have the same name? Of course not.

When Muslims say that Jesus is only a prophet:

Do you think the Spirit of God or God's Spirit is eternal or created? (Answer) Since the Bible and the Quran agree that Jesus is the Spirit of God or Ruhullah, the unique title given only to Jesus, Jesus is eternal as you said just now with your own mouth. Jesus eternally exists as the Spirit of God.

If our spirit is taken away from us, we are not us anymore and we would be like an animal. Our spirit is the very essence of us and without it we are nothing. Jesus is the Spirit of God, the essence of God. Since Jesus eternally exists, he did not need the sperm of a father and the egg of a mother to be born like you and me. He needed only the womb of a virgin to take the flesh to come into the world.

Whenever God does a miracle, he always has a good reason for it. Jesus came into the world through a virgin, which is a great miracle in the world. But there is a good reason for it, because Jesus has already existed eternally as the Spirit of God. He did not need the sperm of a father and the egg of a mother. In the case of Adam, it was very natural for Adam to be born without a father, because there was no father and mother to begin with in the first place. He was created by the breath of God but he was never called the Spirit of God or

Ruhullah. Do you think your spirit and your breath are the same? Do you think a human has the ability to become God? On the other hand, do you think God has ability to come to earth as human? (Answer) Basically you limit God's power within your own reason. Your own reason is more important than God's ability. Do you not agree with me?

When Muslims say that Jesus did not die on the cross:

The death of Jesus was one of the most well documented historical facts from ancient times. Those who do not have any kind of faith or even oppose Christian faith accept the fact that Jesus died on the cross. This is not an argument between Muslims and Christians, but an argument between Muslims and believers of all other faiths including even atheists. '1 plus 1 is equal to 2' is a fact, never becomes 3 or 4 whatever conviction or belief you might have. Furthermore, not far from the cross Mary and the disciples of Jesus were closely watching Jesus on the cross. A mother can distinguish even identical twins without difficulty. Your argument that somebody other than Jesus died on the cross simply doesn't fit the historical evidence. How do you think?

When Muslims say that in the Bible Jesus did not say he was God:

When I go out with my family, people know that I am the father of the family and the husband of my wife. It is obvious by watching how I say and behave to my family. I do not have to shout to other people in the street 'I, XXX, am the father of this family and the husband of this woman!' Do you think I am not the father of the family and the husband of my wife, simply because I do not proclaim my status to other people?

There are numerous verses in the Bible that show the divine nature of Jesus. Here are just two of them.

Who do you think has the authority to forgive our sins? Of course only God. This is what Jesus said. 'When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven." The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, "Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"' (Luke 5:20-21)

Who do you think has the ability to give mankind eternal life? Of course only God. This is what Jesus said. 'I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.' (John 10:28)

When Muslims say that Christians worship three Gods:

How many families live in your house? (Answer) Yes, only one family, not four or five families. You are in the family and your wife is also in the family, but you are not the same as your wife. This is a simple illustration of Trinity, although it is not a perfect example. In your family, who is higher, you or your wife? Or you

and your wife are equal in nature? (Answer) Yes, you and your wife are equal in status. Even if you are physically stronger than your wife, you may bring more money to the family than your wife and your signature is above the signature of your wife, you are nevertheless still equal to your wife in nature. Do you not agree? The same is true with Trinity. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one God, like a family, even as there is only one family in your house. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are equal in nature, but they have different roles. The members of the Trinity always do things in perfect harmony and loving union.

When Muslims say that many Christians have converted to Islam, while no Muslims have converted to Christianity:

I know that some Christians have left their faith for Islam. I also know that many Muslims have left Islam to follow Christ. Conversion has always happened in both directions. Would you send me 2 or 3 YouTube videos of Christian converts so that I could watch them in entirety? When we meet next time, we could discuss why they have left their faith, and on what points I agree with them and on what points I disagree with them. I will greatly appreciate if you could send me links to such videos.

As I mentioned before, I know that many Muslims have also left Islam to follow Christ. Out of your respect for me, would you also watch 2 or 3 YouTube videos of Muslim converts telling their stories? I am sure you will watch them in their entirety just as I will watch the ones you send me. Here two videos:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qqcNX6GPCFY>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bc4A3eiUTJo>

When Muslims say that each person must pay the consequence of his own sins:

Suppose there is a deep lake beside your house. You have warned your son many times not to play near the lake, because he might be drowned. One day you find your son has slipped into the lake and is drowning. He is crying out to you to rescue him! What would you do? Will you say to your son, 'I have warned you many times not to play near the lake, but you did not listen to me! Because this is your own fault, you must pay the consequence of your disobedience. Good luck! Or will you jump into the lake to save your son, even risking your own life, because you love him so much? (Answer) That is what the God of the Bible actually did on the cross, because he loved the world so much. God reached out to us first because of his love for us, instead of sitting back and wishing us luck in saving ourselves!

When Muslims say that the Bible is corrupted:

Do you know exactly when the Bible was corrupted? Do you know exactly who changed the Bible? Do you know which part of the Bible was altered? Did you actually read and compare all the manuscripts of the Bible side by side to reach your conclusion? If I am not mistaken, you have believed whatever you have been told without really examining the evidence. Is this the way you learn new things?

All the *Bibles* we have now are based on the original codex manuscripts, which were written about 400 to 500 AD. By the time the *Qur'an* was compiled by 'Uthman in 651AD, the codex manuscripts of the Bible were widely distributed throughout the world, including in the Arabian Peninsula. These Bible manuscripts were called the light and guidance in Surah 5:44 & 46. Since all the Bible is the light and guidance, many Christians spend more than half of their Scripture reading time reading the Old Testament, which is also called the Torah, even if Jews still do not accept Jesus as the Messiah. But it does not matter whether they accept Jesus as the Messiah or not. The light and guidance is always light and guidance. What percentage of your time do you currently spend reading the Torah and the Injil? Twenty percent or ten percent or even less than five percent? Since the Bible (Old and New Testaments) contains at least 4 times as much content as the Qur'an, in terms of light and guidance. So, I ask again, how much time do you spend reading the Bible to learn some of this light and guidance? If you don't read the Bible, isn't your Islamic belief, that is solely based on the Qur'an, somewhat like a house without foundations and walls, that only has a roof. Do you not agree with me?

When Muslims say that the claim that Jesus took the penalty of their sins on the cross, and now forgives their sins, is simply to give a license to continue to sin:

Have you ever read the famous French novel entitled 'Les Miserables' by Victor Hugo? It is a very interesting story of a French prisoner named Jean Valjean. He was sentenced to a nineteen-year prison term of hard labour for the crime of stealing bread. Convicts at the time had to carry identity cards after release, however, and no innkeeper would let a dangerous criminal spend the night.

For several days after his release from prison after serving his nineteen years, Valjean wandered the village roads, seeking shelter against the weather, until finally a bishop showed kindness on him. That night Jean Valjean lay quietly in a comfortable bed for the first time in his life until the bishop went to bed for sleep. Then he rose from his bed, searched the cupboard for the family treasure, and ran away into the darkness.

The next morning three policemen knocked on the bishop's door, with Valjean in handcuffs. They had caught the convict in flight with the silverware,

and were ready to put the criminal in chains for life. But the bishop responded in a way that no one, especially Jean Valjean, expected. 'So there you are!' he said to Valjean. 'I am delighted to see you again. Had you forgotten that I gave you the candlesticks as well?' Jean Valjean was shocked and felt like a bomb had exploded in his heart. He stared at the old man with an expression no words can convey. The bishop assured the policemen that Valjean was no thief, saying 'This silver was my gift to him'. When the policemen left, leaving Valjean free to stay with the bishop, he gave the candlesticks to his guest, now speechless and trembling, and let Jean Valjean go after asking him to live a new life.

He kept the silver candlesticks as a precious reminder of grace and dedicated himself from then on to helping others as a new person.

If you were Jean Valjean, would you take the grace of forgiveness of the bishop as a license to keep stealing and cheating others, or would do the same as Jean Valjean did? (Answer) God does not seek people who abuse his grace as a license for sins or love him out of duty or out of fear of punishment, but he seeks those who love him back out of thanks for his unconditional love and grace, no matter how few they might be.

When Muslims say that they can go to heaven by keeping God's commands:

God has given mankind his laws through the prophets and commanded them to follow carefully all the words of his laws and decrees. If anybody follows all the words of his laws and decrees, he or she can have 'righteousness'. Righteousness is a state where the one with it can meet God face-to-face in heaven without harm. In fact it is the ultimate goal of mankind.

Jesus summarized all God's laws into two: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind, and Love your neighbours as yourself' Here is what 'Love your neighbours as yourself' means. Let us say that you knew a man who delighted in spreading bad rumours about you to other people and even attempted to kill you several times. One day when you walked by a lake, he was drowning in the deep water, and when he saw you, he cried out to you for help. Since the lake was very deep, there was a very high probability that you would die in the process of saving the man. 'Love your neighbour as yourself' means that you jump into the water to save this man with genuine compassion for him. If you can do it, then you have righteousness. If not, you do not have such righteousness, then you cannot go to heaven, because you do not follow all the words of his laws and decrees.

Nobody in history has ever achieved such righteousness by his own effort, with only one exception – that is Jesus Christ. When Roman soldiers drove huge nails into his hands and feet causing unbearable pain and humiliation, Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.' (Luke 23:34)

Jesus responded to their persecution which led to his humiliating and death, by forgiving and loving them.

Jesus is the only one in history who ever completely followed his own command: "Love your neighbours as yourself". Only Jesus has righteousness. When we invite Jesus as the Saviour and Lord into our heart, he comes into us with his righteousness. This is the way that sinful human beings can become righteous.

The presidential place of Korea is called the Blue House because the colour of its roof is blue. The best security guards of Korea guard the entrance of the Blue House. Suppose I stopped my car at the entrance to go into the Blue House. By looking at my face, the security guards would immediately reject my entrance and ask me to go back. But as soon as they noticed that the president of Korea was in the back seat of my car, they would let me in without question. They allow me to enter, not because of me but because the president was in the car. This is what would happen when we are at the entrance of heaven. God allows us to come into heaven because there is righteousness in us. This righteousness did not come by following all the words of his laws and decrees on our side, which is impossible, but by inviting into our lives and submitting ourselves utterly to Jesus, who alone is righteous.