

SEEDBED

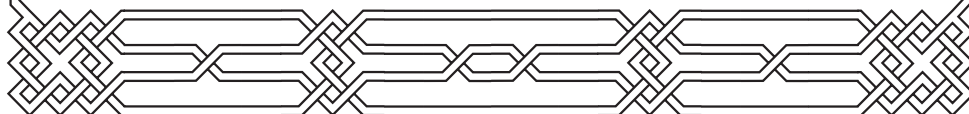
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Contents

Editorial	1
Letters to the Editor	2
The Theological Basis of Al Qaeda	3
That's a Good Answer by I.L.	10
Honour and Shame by Bob Blincoe	13
Testimony of Ahmed Abaza (Abridged) by permission of A.A.	16
Mentoring Cross-Culturally by John Haines	19
Book Reviews:	
<i>History Testifies to the Infallibility of the Qur'an</i> by L.Fatah and Prof. S. Al-Dargazelli	21
<i>Secrets of the Koran</i> by Don Richardson	23

Editor Pro tem: Abe Wiebe; Contributing Editors: David Lundy; I.L.
PO Box 4006, Worthing, West Sussex BN13 1AP UK





Editorial

Ravi Zacharias says that our present generation reads with their eyes and thinks with their emotions. How, then, do we get people to consider, weigh and draw appropriate conclusions?

Roland Allen (*The Compulsion of the Spirit*), pondering what he observed in his own Anglican Communion, asks: 'What moves us to action?'

I have long thought about how to motivate people, and reflected on what motivates me to take action. It has always seemed somewhat of a mystery. On many occasions when I have preached from my heart and mind, I hear a simple, 'Thanks for the good sermon'. Does this mean that something else will transpire in that person after the event? Maybe the significant thing is merely that people are blessed as they hear or read, and that the real change in them happens under the impulse of the Spirit. In any case, what moves you to action?

We have a list of striking articles in this edition of *Seedbed*! It presents challenges that face us and which we must meet. Read the testimony of A.B. and identify with those who are presently being persecuted for the Name of Christ. Read about 'Encountering the Lost' and the reality of spiritual warfare in ministry to Muslims. Do you agree that 'Folk Islam is the most pressing issue we face in reaching Muslims?' Don Richardson, of *Peace Child* fame, has ventured into the arena of Islam. The second half of his book tells of Islam's very determined efforts to bring increasing pressure to bear on Christianity and Western Civilization. The 'Theological Basis of Al-Qaeda' should be read through twice to grasp its import. Perhaps these and the other articles constitute a call to action. Remember Kennedy, who said, 'Evil triumphs when good men do nothing.'

With that I must bid you 'Farewell' as *Editor pro tem*. Many will have heard that Gary Corwin has been appointed AWM Missiologist and, as part of his job description, he assumes the editorship of this little magazine. Let us help Gary in this task so that *Seedbed* remains an important point of interaction and vital thinking. I will continue to be linked to *Seedbed* as one of his associates. My brief tenure has been a privilege.

Abe Wiebe (Editor)

a.wiebe@sympatico.ca

Letters to the Editor

Seedbed on CD?

I enjoyed reading Vol. 18 No.1 very much. Thanks for your work in putting it together. Are there any plans to put the archived articles on CD or on the company website? It would be great to have them indexed on CD as .pdf or even MS Word for easy access and make them available to newer colleagues. Or are they available and I don't know it? Blessings.

J.A.

Ans: Good idea. I don't think anyone has tackled what you propose. Ed.

Mohamed... the best of the prophets?

Ya Sidi Editor,

I read the last edition from cover to cover and found it interesting and stimulating. I remember an occasion in a remote village in M. It so happened one evening that the school inspector for the area and I were invited by the chief for supper. While waiting for the meal, the inspector asked me a very pointed question. 'Do you think that Mohamed was the best of the prophets?' Normally I avoid giving a direct answer, but

on this occasion I responded more directly and as follows...

It is written in the Q and in the Christian's Holy Book that Adam sinned and that he asked God for forgiveness. This is true of Noah, Moses and even Abraham, the Friend of God. On more than one occasion, the Q mentions that Mohamed the Prophet of Islam prayed that God would forgive his sins. I have found seven passages in the Q where Mohamed was conscious of sin. But nowhere is it recorded either in the Christian's Book or in the Q that Jesus ever sinned or asked God to forgive him.

All other prophets and apostles were conscious of sins and failures. That is why they repented and turned to God for forgiveness. And without God's grace and forgiveness, not one of them could enter into God's Paradise. Only Jesus never asked God for forgiveness because he pleased God in everything he said and did. This is one reason why we believe Jesus was unique and different from all the other prophets and apostles.

After a period of silence, the inspector replied. 'I see. You believe that Jesus is the best of all the prophets.'

Bill

The Theological Basis of Al Qaeda

In the war against terrorism, Al Qaeda and associated groups **should** be able to be swept away by military might, vigilant police forces and all sorts of under-cover operations. This seems to be the view of many in the West. They are going to be disillusioned! The reason is that Al Qaeda and similar organisations are deeply rooted in theological/ideological ideas. Unless these theological/ ideological issues are addressed and challenged, the West will never win a war on terrorism!

Our political leaders speak of UN resolutions, weapons inspectors, multi-lateralism and a host of other things. But none of these things speak to the profoundly important issues underlying Islamic terrorism. Our religious leaders, at least as we hear them in the media, are liberal thinkers, and they seem to have no concept of the war of ideas that is being fought.

The Intellectual Founder of Al-Qaeda

Although Osama bin Laden is a Saudi, the son of one of the directors of a major construction company in Saudi Arabia, the Laden clan comes from the border region between Northern Yemen and the Abha region of Saudi Arabia. The Laden clan also has ideological roots in the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and the Egyptian Islamic Group. These are two radical Islamist groups. They both have their roots in the 1960s Muslim Brotherhood movement in Egypt.

At the heart of the theology/ideology of these groups stands Sayyid Qutb—the intellectual hero of the Islamists. Sayyid Qutb is to Islamists what Karl Marx is to Communists. The heart of Qutb's writings is a commentary on the Qur'an called, *In the Shade of the Qur'an*.¹ It consists of fifteen large volumes in English, and it is from this work that the theological basis of Al Qaeda is taken.

Sayyid Qutb's Background

He was born in Cairo in 1906 and was initially taught through a traditional *madrassa*. By the age of ten, he had memorized the Qur'an. Later he switched to a modern secular education.

In the 1920s and 1930s, he was a socialist and wrote novels, poems, short stories and even a book on literary criticism. In the late 1940s, he studied in the USA at the Colorado State College of Education from where he received his MA. Even before going to the USA, he wrote a book entitled, *Social Justice and Islam*, in which he outlined some of the basic tenets of Islamic radicalism — Muslim fundamentalism.

In 1952, Gamal Abdul Nasser and a group of nationalist army officers overthrew King Farouk, and Egypt became a republic. Nasser strongly advocated pan-Arabism based on socialist, secularist nationalism. Briefly, Nasser and Sayyid Qutb tried to co-operate in the dream of rescuing the Arab World from the legacies of

the imperial colonial powers and crushing the brand new Zionist state. Both wanted to be up-to-date on economic and scientific issues. Both wanted to restore the old Arab Empire under one ruler.

But Sayyid Qutb wanted his new empire to be based on Qur'anic principles. He pictured a resurrected Caliphate as a theocracy strictly enforcing the Shari'ah. When Nasser came to power, he began to put pressure on the Muslim Brotherhood, especially after one of them attempted to assassinate one of his leaders. Some leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood went into exile. Sayyid's brother, Muhammad Qutb, was one of these. He went to Saudi Arabia and became a distinguished Saudi professor of Islamic Studies. Osama bin Laden was one of Muhammad Qutb's students.

In 1954, Nasser put Sayyid Qutb in prison. He briefly released him, only to imprison him again for ten years. He released him again for a few months and then finally hanged him in 1966.

It was during these years in prison that *In the Shade of the Qur'an* was written. Prison conditions were very bad, and torture was routine. He was locked in a large cell with forty other men. A loudspeaker broadcast Nasser's speeches for twenty hours a day! Somehow, Qutb managed to smuggle out what he had written, the ideological and theological basis of Islamic revolution. In his multi-volume book, he builds an enormous theological

criticism of modern life and of other worldviews.

Qutb's Analysis of the World's Problems

Qutb understood that the world and human beings were in a mess. The human race had lost touch with its intrinsic nature. Man's inspiration, intelligence and morality were all degenerating. Relations between the sexes were deteriorating 'to a level lower than the animals'. Man was miserable, anxious, hopeless and cynical. He was slowly sinking into idiocy, insanity and crime. In their unhappiness, people were turning to a mindless hedonism, to drugs, to alcohol and to existential despair.

Many thoughtful people in Europe and North America were asking deep questions after the horrors of the Second World War and the advent of nuclear war. Many pointed out the Age of Enlightenment as the fatal error in western civilisation, an arrogant and deluded faith in the power of human reason. This error was at the root of the philosophical position of modernity. In the 1950s and 1960s, this produced the tyranny of technology over life.

The modernity of enlightenment was a recovery of the worldview of the humanistic Renaissance, from Thomas Aquinas onwards. This, in turn, was rooted in the philosophy of the early Greeks such as Aristotle and Plato. This worldview was challenged by a biblical worldview, both by the early Church and by the Reformation. (See Francis Schaeffer's book, *Escape*

From Reason,² *that was written at this same time.*)

However, Qutb did not think the root of the problem was Greek philosophy. He thought it was the way that **Semitic thinking** had altered. He recognised that nearly 60% of the world's population is influenced by Semitic thinking: Muslims, Jews and Christians. As a Muslim, Qutb saw the teachings of Judaism, as originally given, as divinely revealed by God to Moses and the other prophets.

Judaism instructed man to worship the One God and to reject all other gods (centres of authority). Judaism also instructed man how to live in this world in a way that conformed to the will of God. This was accomplished by obeying a system of divinely mandated laws — **the Mosaic Law**.

In Qutb's view, the problem with Judaism was that, in time, it had withered into 'a system of rigid and lifeless ritual' disconnected from God. So God sent another prophet — Jesus. In Qutb's view, Jesus brought much-needed reform to revealed religion. What Jesus brought was a new spirituality to the legalism of Judaism. But something terrible happened to Jesus' teaching after his lifetime. Perhaps in trying to communicate to the Greek-speaking world, the followers of Jesus took, in Qutb's view, 'a deplorable course', and this caused the message of Jesus to be diluted and perverted.

Writing from his miserable prison in Cairo, Sayyid Qutb thought that the disciples of Jesus, in their persecutions and deaths, were never able to pro-

vide an adequate and systematic exposition of Jesus' message. So, according to him, the Gospels are badly garbled and are not divinely inspired. Accordingly, the sad result was a clear separation and animosity between Jews and Christians. So Judaism was not reformed, and Christians rejected much that they should have accepted! Christians emphasised Jesus' message of spirituality and love, but they rejected Judaism's legal system. Instead, they made the fatal mistake of introducing Platonism into Christianity and so separating the life of spiritual existence from physical life in the world.

In Qutb's analysis he called this, 'the hideous schizophrenia' of the Christian worldview. The old Mosaic code was holistic, a unified worldview; essentially, a theocracy. There were laws for an entire way of life that was theocratic: diet, dress, marriage, sex and everything else. This was all linked into the worship of the unique Creator-God at the centre. The 'hideous schizophrenia' of Christianity in separating the secular from the spiritual is clearly wrong.

Christianity went wrong particularly in the fourth century when the Roman Empire became 'Christian'. Roman paganism was introduced into Christianity (idols, morals, laws, etc.). Qutb sees the monastic asceticism that arose in the fifth century as a strong reaction to this 'paganisation' of Christianity. But monasticism merely perpetuated the 'hideous schizophrenia' — the spiritual-secular

divide. The church councils of the fourth and fifth centuries put into cement the 'absolutely incomprehensible, inconceivable and incredible' teachings about the Trinity, the deity of Jesus Christ etc. All of these teachings were irrational and misguided principles, resulting from the mixture of paganism with the clear teachings of Jesus.

So in the seventh century, God delivered a new revelation to his prophet Muhammad to establish the true and undistorted way that man, God and nature should relate to each other. Muhammad brought man back to true religion and to a holistic worldview. He re-introduced a strict legal code that integrated man with the physical world in a better way than the Mosaic code on which it is broadly based. Muhammad re-enforced the concept that man is God's vice-regent on earth and so is to take charge of this physical world. In Qutb's analysis, this integrated worldview gave rise to the 'scientific method' in the Arab World in the eighth to eleventh centuries. *[For a far more accurate analysis of the origins of modern science, see Re-building the Matrix³ by Dr. Denis Alexander.]*

Sadly, in Qutb's analysis, Islam **also** began to depart from its true beginnings after 300 years. When under attack from the Crusaders, Mongols, and others, the theocratic, holistic ideals began to crumble, and they were unable to capitalise on their discovery of the scientific method. The scientific method was exported

to Europe and re-enforced the 'hideous schizophrenia', with the result that God and the spiritual world became completely divorced from the physical world—the Church **against** science. The Church divided into two everything that Islam knew to be one. This break eventually became final, and in the Western World, the result was a small, ineffective Christianity versus an atheistic, secular humanism. In Qutb's view, the latter was winning, and Christianity was doomed. But there is something worse than this! The scientific and technical achievements of the West have allowed it to dominate the world and inflict its 'hideous schizophrenia' on all people everywhere. The result is misery everywhere: anxiety, a sense of moral drift, purposelessness and the craving for false pleasures.

So, the crisis of the West is being forced on the Muslim World. It is producing Muslim 'moderates' who have accepted the same 'hideous schizophrenia'. Qutb sees this as a great 'shame' (humiliation) and disastrous for Islam. Qutb's agony was to live in a Muslim World increasingly being dominated by liberal, secular ideas. It was a Muslim World being split by pragmatic dualism, just as happened to Christianity in the third century.

Qutb's analysis is soulful and heartfelt. It is a theological analysis of western culture over the centuries. It has its parallels in Francis Schaeffer's analysis of the same history from an evangelical point of view at about the

same time. [See *Escape from Reason; The God who is There; He is There and He is not Silent* and *How Should We Then Live?*⁴]

There are many points of agreement in Qutb's analysis and Schaeffer's analysis, as well as some major differences! Essentially, Qutb sees the fault of the West as its acceptance of a plurality of sources of authority. To him, this is paganism — an immense backwards step into a life without reference to the One Creator-God. Such a life, according to Qutb, can never be satisfactory or fulfilling.

Qutb writes bitterly about the West (mainly European imperialism and sometimes America), not because it was hypocritical in having double standards in its liberal policies, but **because** of these liberal policies. Liberal policies are the 'hideous schizophrenia' of the separation of the Church from the State—the secular from the sacred. So, the great problem with the West is not its political agenda, its individualism, its Hollywood morality, or its exploitation of the world's resources, etc. **What is wrong with the West is its theology!** Qutb says that the conflict between western liberalism and the world of Islam, 'remains, in essence, one of ideology [*this is the word in the English translation; in Arabic, the word used is 'theology'*] although over the years it has appeared in various guises and has grown more sophisticated and, at times, more insidious'.

Because the liberal West does not understand theology, it keeps on

using pejorative words like 'fundamentalism', 'fanatics', 'backward people', etc. But Qutb says,

The confrontation is not over control of territory or economic resources. It is not for military domination. If we believed that, we would play into our enemies' hands and would have no-one but ourselves to blame for the consequences.

So, the real issue is theology. Qutb is absolutely clear. The West, consciously or unconsciously, is mounting a huge campaign to weaken Islam by forcing onto it the 'hideous schizophrenia'. He was furious that the West was succeeding. He used Turkey as an example. In 1924, the remnants of the Caliphate in Turkey were finally removed, and Ataturk introduced a secular state with a complete separation of religion from the state. Ataturk spoke very strongly against the concept of an Islamic state. To Qutb this was an attempt by a Muslim (!) to destroy the very heart and soul of Islam. He spoke of secular Muslim rulers launching a great offensive all over the Muslim World. He said,

It is an attempt to exterminate this religion even as a basic creed and to replace it with secular conceptions that have their own implications, values, institutions and organisations.

Ataturk was not the only one. There was Jinnah in Pakistan, Nasser in Egypt, the Shah in Iran, etc.

Qutb's Solution

Step One is to open the eyes of Muslims to see what is going on. They need to recognise the danger and understand that the major assault is

coming from inside the world of Islam by people who call themselves Muslims! These poor Muslims have had their ideas polluted by the 'hideous schizophrenia'. They are 'false' Muslims who have aided and abetted the West.

Step Two is the creation of a vanguard (a term he borrowed from Lenin). This is a group of people whose eyes have been opened, and who are fired with the spirit of true Islam. The goal of the vanguard is to bring revival to Islam. It is to attack 'false' Muslims and 'hypocrites'. It is to found a new state based on the Qur'an and Shari'ah. It is to resurrect the Caliphate and unite the Muslim World into one state.

Step Three is to take Islam from this renewed Muslim World to the rest of the world, just as Muhammad and the early Caliphs did. Qutb wrote,

We are certain that this religion of Islam is so intrinsically genuine, so colossal and so deeply rooted that all such efforts will succeed.

This vanguard must take responsibility for Jihad, the struggle for Islam.

To Qutb, the imposition of Shari'ah is the true liberation, liberation from man-made (and therefore, arbitrary) laws. He said,

The resurrection of the Caliphate will enable every person to be free of the servitude of others and to live in the service of God.

For Qutb, Shari'ah was utopia, perfection, the natural order of a world created by God. It was freedom, justice and dignity. It was a vision

greater than communism, the 'total liberation of man from the enslavement by others'.

It is a sad fact that Shari'ah requires a total dictatorship in order to enforce the vision. Since Shari'ah is very intricate and complicated, it really needs a dictatorship of **theocrats** that can seek to interpret Shari'ah to the ordinary masses. *[There are four 'schools' of interpretation of the Shari'ah, and within these, there is diversity of interpretation.]* The twentieth century generated a number of despotic, totalitarian, revolutionary projects—the Nazis, the Fascists and the Communists; to these should be added Sayyid Qutb and his followers.

Islamists are often well educated and wealthy in spite of attempts by the western press to make them look weird. They are possessed of a powerful philosophy that explains their own unhappiness, that gives them an explanation of thousands of years of theological error and corruption, and that also gives them a blueprint for the principles of a perfect, God-given society. They believe they are preserving Islam from extinction. They believe they are doing the world immense good as well as doing the will of God.

Our Response

We must ask ourselves, 'Are we speaking to the deep philosophical / ideological / theological ideas that are presented by Sayyid Qutb?' As the West, we have nothing to say! Much of Qutb's criticism is justified, and we would agree with him. As biblical,

evangelical believers, it is clear that we need to be much more holistic in our thinking, in our actions and in our interaction with Muslims. We need to focus on understanding our own biblical worldview and working out a way of explaining it to Muslims. We need to help Muslims understand the Fall, the function of the Mosaic code, the purpose of the Mosaic sacrifices and the job description of the Messiah. Sayyid Qutb's misinterpretation of the Old Testament is profound, and this is the root of all his analysis.

The sort of apologetics of 'anti-Deedat', picking over the minutiae of differences, is not going to be sufficient. We need an apologetic of broad, deep, theological counter-ideas. Perhaps we need to re-read Francis Schaeffer and re-interpret his philosophical framework into the Islamic

terminology of Sayyid Qutb — contextualise Schaeffer!!

The advocacy of post-modern liberalism is not going to stem the tide! The West misunderstands an 'ideological' war and relegates this thinking to the sixteenth century. For this reason alone, it will never win the 'War on Terror'.

Footnotes

- 1 Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shadow of the Quran*, Islamic Foundation, ISBN 0 86037 303 7.
- 2 Francis Schaeffer, *Escape from Reason*, Intervarsity Press, ISBN 0 85110 340 5.
- 3 Denis Alexander, *Rebuilding the Matrix*, Lion Publishing, ISBN 0 7459 1244 3.
- 4 Francis Schaeffer, *Escape from Reason* (as above);
He is There and He is not Silent, ISBN 0 340 19358 1;
The God Who is There, ISBN 340 04466 7;
How Should We Then Live? ISBN 0 8007 0819 9

That's a Good Answer: The Death of Christ

By I.L.

We all know that Muslims deny that Christ actually died. I usually try to avoid answering this point directly, preferring first to take people through the Old Testament. After they have seen the need for a sacrifice in the Exodus, Isaiah 53, etc, they are more ready to accept that Christ died, because they see the necessity. With most people, though, we will never get the time to show these things from the Scriptures. With *The Passion of the Christ* film bringing Christ's death as a subject of conversation, it is time to review some possible replies to the Muslim denial of the facts.

Surveying the different replies, we find the following types of argument.

1. Presentation of historical and documentary evidence that Jesus did, in fact, die in the way the Gospels explain. Much of the literature on this subject includes this material. It is also home ground for most of us.

Finlay has a useful summary of these arguments (I have conflated a few for brevity):

- The Bible teaches it, including the prophecies of the Old Testament.
- No one in the first century ever denied that Christ died; they only deny he rose again.
- Pagan historians agree with the facts presented in the Bible.

This material is worth having ready. Some Muslims declare themselves as atheists or agnostics; such people are often ready to consider the objective evidence.

2. Direct discussion of the Qur'an: the weakness of the argument, and the contradictions, both in the various Muslim viewpoints and in the Quranic evidence. The Call of Hope material does a good job of summarising these. But unless you are an expert in Arabic and Islam, such discussion is often difficult and even counter-productive. I do not like it when Muslims tell me how to interpret the Bible, so I do not reciprocate. In addition, I try to avoid either attacking the Qur'an, or getting involved in any discussion which becomes a battle between religions.

3. Material specifically geared to the arguments raised by Deedat, as encountered in places like South Africa. Gilchrist's booklets (in English and Arabic, available at the websites below) deal specifically with this. If people you know are influenced by these questions, you will find Gilchrist useful. Where I write from, the material is not relevant.

4. Various logical answers. These include:

- It is blasphemy to suggest that God who is Holy and Just would be a deceiver and a liar, and therefore would leave us with the impression that Jesus died when he did not. Are you saying that God deceived? If so, how can I believe the Qur'an?
- It is unbelievable that the early Christians were ready to suffer and die for a lie.

- How could the gentle words of Jesus on the Cross have come from another man wrongly nailed there?
- Jesus went to considerable lengths after the resurrection to prove to people that it really was himself who had died. Take for instance, his appearance to Thomas. Why did he do this if he had not really been crucified?

The trouble with all these answers is that they do not address the core issue: most Muslims believe Christ did not die. They believe that the Qur'an says this (and attempts to show them differently are not treated kindly, since only a Muslim can interpret the Qur'an); therefore, that is the end of the matter. This is similar to the classical Christian position: The Bible says it, I believe it, so that is the end of it. We Christians can have all the arguments we want; all must be false. So all the arguments so far presented are usually to no avail. Somehow, we need to get over this hurdle.

5. Quick answers that may open the crack. These all rely on trying to agree with the Muslim, then adding something more. Some of them hinge on the key verse, *Surah* 4:157.

- Who are 'they'? The Christians? The Jews? You are right: 'they' did not kill Jesus—the Romans did. This is confirmed by *Surah* 8:17. A variant of this with some is to say 'we killed him' because Jesus died for the whole world. It was not only 'them' who killed him.
- No one killed Jesus. Jesus chose to die. Then quote John 10:18:

No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it again.

Also Luke 23:46:

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said that, he gave up the Ghost.

Note that the Arabic is conveniently closer to a literal translation than versions like the NIV. The beauty of this answer is that a few short phrases can be memorized, and it is always good to quote scripture. In addition, the incidents are shown in the film; and the passage in John, in the context of the Good Shepherd, is an excellent passage with a story line to it that explains why Christ died.

6. Supplementary related questions.

- Many Muslims will say that any evidence presented from the Bible that does not correspond with the Qur'an or with what they believe (the two are not always the same) must, by definition, mean that the Bible has been changed and corrupted. At that point, the arguments reviewed in the last edition of *Seedbed* can be used. In addition, in this context, it is very interesting that the Jews, who firmly deny that Jesus is the Messiah, still did not dare to alter their Scriptures. They still transmitted passages like Isaiah 53, which clearly speak of a suffering Messiah. Is this not evidence that the Old Testament, at least, is not corrupted?
- We bring shame upon God by saying that he allowed such an important

prophet to die this way. Perhaps you have good answers to this point. I know of four. If you have others, please do send feedback via the editor.

a. You are right; it was a shameful event. If that was the end of the story, we agree with you. But the story did not end. God raised Jesus from the dead and gave him the place of highest honour in heaven above all other prophets. Jesus will come back again one day; in fact, he will come back in triumph and victory and will judge each one of us. The story ends with honour.

b. But the Jews repeatedly rejected and killed their prophets; what is so different about Jesus?

c. Do you know more than God? Are you wiser than God?

d. For a great person to get dirty and messy in public is a shameful thing. But doctors routinely get covered in blood and extremely messy as they operate and try to save lives. They see parts of the body that are shameful to see. They do so because of the result—healing people. Jesus died a shameful death in order to receive the greater honour.

• **The swoon theory**, that Jesus did not really die, but only lost consciousness. Some say as evidence, that when the soldier pierced the side of Jesus and blood came out, this proves that he was still alive. If people use this argument, they need to hear the

medical answer. Blood does not congeal immediately inside dead bodies, and the 'blood and water' that flowed out showed that the red blood cells had separated out from the serum—a sign of traumatic death. Jesus did not just swoon: He issued a cry of triumph, then dismissed his Spirit, his heart ruptured, and he died immediately—to the great surprise of the onlookers.

References:

1. MH Finlay. *Face the Facts*. English and Arabic.
2. Iskander Jadeed. *The Cross in the Gospel and the Quran*. Call of Hope, English and Arabic.
3. Faris al-Qayrawani. *Was Christ really crucified?* Call of Hope, English and Arabic.

Websites:

Call of Hope publications: www.light-of-life.com and www.al-nour.com.

Most of the printed materials are available here for download, either as html files or as booklets reformatted as three columns on A4 paper.

Various documents on www.answering-Islam.org. In particular, see the pages www.answering-Islam.org/cross/shame.html and www.answering-Islam.org/morin/crucifixion.html, as well as the articles by M. Anderson, 'Jesus the Light and the Fragrance of God', found under www.answering-Islam.org/mna/frag*.html.

Note: this whole site is available on CD for cost-free distribution.

HONOUR AND SHAME

by Bob Blincoe

The following article has been reproduced with the permission of the author and relates to the events of September 11.

What is behind the September 11 attacks? What drives clear-minded Muslims to such extreme, calculated acts? The answer derives from two all-important values in Muslim culture: **honour and shame**. When these values are twisted by sin, people can become selfish, remorseless and sometimes desperate in their actions. In the Middle East, gaining and maintaining honour is more to be valued than life. Avoiding shame and, as a result, shifting the blame to others is the only response when one's honour is threatened. We had best fix this in our minds if we would understand that what Muslims—even moderate Muslims—know, drives some Eastern people to violence. As David Pryce-Jones says in his classic book, *The Closed Circle*,

Honour is what makes life worthwhile: shame, a living death, not to be endured, requiring that it be avenged. What otherwise seems self-destructive in Arab society is explained by the anxiety to be honoured and respected at all costs and by whatever means (p. 35).

The Bible is an eastern book. Read it with the eyes of a Palestinian or Pakistani, and you are transported back to Bible times.

Then Leah said, God has presented me with a precious gift. This time my husband will treat me with honour, because I have borne him six sons (Gen. 30:20).

The Lord has done this for me, she said. In these days He has shown favour and taken away my disgrace among the people (Luke 1:25).

If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory and in the glory of the Father and of the Holy Angels (Luke 9:26).

He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap (1 Tim. 3:7).

These are not isolated verses. I have counted six hundred Scriptures mentioning honour, shame or disgrace. Muslims live in this biblical world of a shame/honour dialectic. The word 'honour' (*sharif*) is a common name for males throughout the Muslim world. The word for 'shame' (*ayb*) is a dirty garment to be cast off by every effort. Women must acquire and maintain honour for the whole family; otherwise, they bring disgrace, which only their death can erase. In Japanese society, someone who is shamed must sometimes kill himself. In a Muslim society, one who is disgraced must sometimes kill someone else.

What was behind this latest carnage? It is always best to let people speak for themselves. *Time* magazine interviewed Osama bin Laden following the bombing of the two U.S. embassies in Africa.

Time: 'Do you know the men who have been arrested for these attacks?'

Osama bin Laden: 'What I know is that those who risk their lives to earn the pleasure of God are real men. They manage to rid the Islamic nation of disgrace. We hold them in the highest esteem.'

In a 1998 conversation with ABC News, Bin Laden had this to say:

The call to wage war against America was made because America has spearheaded the crusade against the Islamic nation, sending tens of thousands of its troops to the land of the two holy mosques (Saudi Arabia). And then there is Israel. For over half a century, Muslims in Palestine have been slaughtered and assaulted and robbed of their honour and their property. They kill and murder our brothers. They compromise our honour and our dignity and dare we utter a single word of protest against the injustice, we would be called terrorists.

Bin Laden says that America compromised Muslim honour. This is the point Bin Laden wants to make. Honour is more to be sought and disgrace more to be avoided than all the jewels in a king's crown. If there were no Israel, the honour/shame axis would still control the thoughts and actions of Easterners just as gaining wealth largely controls the thoughts and actions of people in the West.

For Muslims, the main defence against personal shame is, unfortunately, blaming others. Instead of examining themselves, my Muslim friends have learned to point outside themselves for the source of their problems. I do not mean that Christians do any better. Christ calls every-

one to take the first step by confessing, 'Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner.' This way is particularly difficult for people who fear God's wrath for every sin or blemish. Christ's good news for Muslims is that 'Everyone who puts his trust in Him shall not be ashamed' (Rom. 10:11).

The Bible says that Jesus suffered shame and rejection; however, for this very reason Muslims reject His crucifixion, because Allah would not cause a prophet to undergo such humiliation. 'But we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour because He suffered death' (Heb. 2:7). The writer of Hebrews calls us to go to Christ where He is, outside the camp, and like Him, bear the disgrace that He bore.

The good news for all people, East and West, is this encouraging word, to go along with many others to Him. I say to our Muslim friends, who admire Him as a prophet, 'He is outside the camp, despised and rejected.' To follow Him there will cost you and me our so-called reputations. With Him, we will suffer rejection, for 'everyone who lives a godly life will suffer persecution' (2 Tim. 3:10).

Muslim belief has twisted honour into the vanity of reputation. And everyone who does so will be—and should be—ashamed. The Kurds have a proverb, 'No man admits his yoghurt is sour.' The Turks have this saying, 'Even if guilt were made of silk, no one would wear it.' No confession of sins is possible in a system where every man and woman

works full-time to avoid taking responsibility for the bad things in their lives. The only solution, then, is to blame others for your problems. The very way to salvation—repentance and pardon—is closed to them. For this reason, Ernst Renan, the father of comparative religious studies, called Islam ‘the heaviest chains which have ever shackled humanity’.

Just last week a dear Muslim friend asked me to help him: he wanted me to tell things that were not true in order for him to get out of one lie and into a bigger one. I said I could not, and would not, and I warned him to come back to God. He called me once more to say that I had ‘broken our relationship’ and ‘Good-bye’.

Testimony of Ahmed Abaza (*Abridged*)

by permission of A.A.

I write this testimony to those who are earnestly searching for the truth in response to the invitation of God, the Truth Himself. I responded to the call of Christ to carry my cross without fear of what I would face in leaving my earthly religion. Was it not the Lord who said, 'Do not fear those who kill the body'? I follow the Lord, carrying my cross, knowing that in the cross of Christ I will find, not only my salvation, but also my strength. It is the road to his Kingdom. In the cross, we have eternal life, virtue, sanctification and daily abundant life. Think of all the saints and martyrs of Christianity. Did any of them live without carrying his cross? Was it easy to do so? But look how the eternal peace flowed from their faces as they faced torture and death. Even the Lord of glory Himself lived through pain every minute of His life on earth. 'For Christ must also suffer and die and then rise from the grave.' Thus, if we suffer with Him, we shall reign with Him also. What a blessed thought. Should we then ask for a life of complacency and comfort here? Of course not!

After I accepted Christ as my Saviour, took off my old clothes and put on Christ, I continued to live with my beloved family. I prayed and cried to the Lord to give me courage, strength and wisdom that I might bring happiness to my family, and that they might receive the Light. I started talking to them gradually. Sometimes they ignored me; other times they

threatened me. Several times, they called me crazy. The Holy Spirit in me continued to prompt me to talk to my family despite their ridicule. I never became angry with them. In January 1987, I was able, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to overcome the satanic spirit in my father and brother and announce to them that I had become a Christian and that I had one God and one Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ. My father continued to ridicule me and called me names. He tried to bribe me to convince me to denounce Christ. I refused. How could I turn back to darkness after receiving the light?

My father called a family council to discuss this very important matter, which reflected on the family name and its social status. Among them were my uncles; one of them being the Minister of Hydro in Egypt, another being a famous writer and historian. The discussion started quietly but then turned to screams and mutual accusations. My beloved father was in hot water because of the family honour. No conclusion was reached. The family delegated my father to deal with me and to work on restoring family honour. I noticed the silence of one uncle who seemed convinced of my answers. Suddenly my father stood in the middle of the room and vowed to solve this problem at its roots, even if he had to kill me and bury me in his garden. He denied my

sonship, saying I was a bastard. Over the next few weeks, our house turned into hell, showing its real face when it was exposed to the light of Christ.

My father started beating me with his hands. Mercy had no place in his heart. In contempt, he tortured me in the name of Islam. At times, he despaired of breaking me. All manner of attempts were made to make me submit. Ultimately, my body collapsed, full of wounds and injuries, but inside, my soul was clinging to hope and trust in God. For four months, fever ravaged my body, ending with my father leaving me to die. Yet my mother stayed near me; her soul was close to mine, trying to console my soul. My greatest comfort came from God Himself.

On the night of July 13, 1987, God glorified and raised my weak, poor body, asking me to move. I looked at Him, saying, 'I can't, my Lord'. But He said, 'Wake up, give me your hands.' As I did this, a great power revived my body. On that day, I escaped from the place of captivity, the family house where I had spent over nineteen years. I put my hands on the steering wheel but did not know where to go or which road to take. Yet, I found the way to my professor, who hugged me with compassion.

Then my father pursued me in another way, this time through Islamic guards. Coming to the professor's house, they told me that my father was sick and dying and wanted to see me. I said, 'Give me five minutes.' I

entered my room to pray and asked God to lead me, and coming out, I said to the guard, 'Let's go.' The officer took me to the Public Security building, welcoming me to enter. Thereupon followed seventeen months of suffering and torment. Every day I had a visitor, a sheikh, various committees from Al Azhar or other famous names trying to get me back by friendly ways, as my family had charged them to do. When the first three months proved fruitless, they used more brutal means. I do not know how many days I spent suffering. In the end, I found myself in a dungeon like a dog cage, with a pail of water and another where I could relieve myself.

At one point, the brigadier brought in a well-known sheikh, but his visits produced nothing. I had hoped to see my father coming to see me, but this did not happen. None of the pressures produced the desired result; the victory was for Jesus.

In the prison, the keepers became my friends when they understood what it meant to be faithful to the Truth in spite of increasing torture. They told me of many others whom they had witnessed being tortured for the sake of Christ. Christ was my only companion in the prison, but the prayers of the saints were my support. I felt the presence of my Lord and was comforted. In His time, I was released from prison, seeing the sun for the first time after seventeen months. After spending some time in a mon-

Seedbed XVIII No. 2

astery in the Egyptian desert, I fled my country, hidden inside a container.

I have written elsewhere of my experiences, but I would like to encourage all Christians and free people everywhere to take a coura-

geous stand on behalf of those who are unjustly accused and tortured for the Name of Christ. May we all call on God to save His people and glorify His Name in the lands of Islam.

Mentoring Cross-Culturally

by John Haines

The question I want to pose at this point is a vital one. How does this 'one-anothering' work itself out in a cross-cultural context? Particularly, what do we, as westerners, need to keep in mind as we encourage Muslim-background believers? What do they have to keep in mind as they, in turn, encourage us?

1. Your Arab friend is counting on you. This thing of relationships is 'old hat' to them. They grew up in interdependent families, something which many of the rest of us know little or nothing about it. When you befriend your Arab neighbour, you are taking on a task much bigger than you imagine. Unlike our shallow American model of transitory relationships that last for a period of time, they expect the relationship to last and develop over time.

2. Your friend is, in fact, uniquely yours. Of course, there are exceptions to this rule. Still, I have seen that the tie between East and West, when set, is hard to break, at least from the eastern end. At times, even when the older Christian is wrong, the young one can cling to him or her. Loyalty is a great trait. Let us be aware that it may also blind you or your friends from taking a distance or giving a word of rebuke, when needed.

3. This investment is a costly one. Nothing is free these days, it seems. Friendship certainly is not. Are we willing to stick with our friend,

through rain and sunshine? Can we bear the pressure of personal scrutiny or dependence, even when that comes at an inconvenience to us? In giving to others, we lose some of our time and independence, only to gain it again.

4. Mentoring also means moving on. Here we come to the most difficult aspect of coming alongside another. We all know of the damage done by overly exclusive friendships. It may be that our friendship with one will mean that another with whom we are not as close will be driven away.

Not long ago, I had the delight of a meal with three North African men and their wives. We all knew this time together was a last farewell. All went well until the end, when I embraced the man I had known the longest. Then, in tears, I said, 'and you, too!' Tears come as I write.

Yet, if we had not moved from his city years ago (when other tears were shed), he would not have moved further with others who could help him in areas we could not. He went on to form a close friendship with another man present at the meal. That relationship lasted through hard times, when one slowed down in his walk with the Lord for a period of time.

5. Don't despise your seemingly limited results. The other day a Christian lady said rather glibly, though sincerely: 'Have you seen a lot of converts?' I paused and then

answered, 'No.' After a pause, and some shock on her part, I believe, I told her the wonderful things God is doing in France and North Africa today. Look at a graph of existing Muslim-background believers and note the contrast with what you saw twenty years ago! Today, this group is exercising its unique influence in its own circles and in local churches and is showing growth at an upward angle of possibly seventy-five degrees. Admittedly, such numbers would not likely make the headlines, even of Christian magazines.

Why is this? The Holy Spirit enables you to develop a close relationship with a younger believer. While you see that person's progress, you have difficulty seeing the wider view. However, is this not how our Lord Jesus Christ and, after him, the apostles, transformed the world? Our work—Christ's work—progresses through one person at a time. Our close-up view of our relation with one person over a period of time may blind us to its importance.

We forget the impact of the interrelation of one believer with others. We noticed this in the *Oasis Groups* in

France. This interlocking aspect of training brings great joy to them as well as to us. The growth then deepens in them and through them to friends and churches. Often it will spill over to their country of origin, as does the work of *ACEB* amongst the Kabyles of Algeria.

This One Thing I Do

What is the greatest thing in the world? Simply taking time with people. Often we focus our prayers on a few, especially those going through great struggles. We ask God, 'Where should I go in my friendships? Is it time to move on or should I stay alongside? Is it time to take away the crutch that I may have become to him or her?'

When you remember the experiences of life, I believe you, like me, are warmed by the memory of a man or woman, older in the Lord, who was willing to spend time with you. They gave you advice; they showed compassion. Even when they were not trying to be a blessing, their commitment to the Lord prompted you to say, 'No, I won't give up; just think of what my friend did for me!'

Book Review: **History Testifies to the Infallibility of the Qur'an**

Reviewed by Jim Romaine

HISTORY TESTIFIES TO THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE QUR'AN, by Fr. Lousy Fatah and Prof. Shetha Al-Dargazelli, Kuala Lumpur, published by A.S. Noordeen.

Dr. Fatoohi has a Ph.D. in Historical Astronomy and Prof. Al-Dargazelli has a Ph.D. in Physics. Neither claims to be a biblical or Qur'anic scholar. Both are followers of the Sufi Tariqa Aliyyah Qadiriyyah Casnazaniyyah. One of the highlights of this work is the Appendix, which outlines the origin and teachings of the *tariqa*. I found this section very helpful and believe that if the authors had written the entire book dealing with that topic alone it would have been a more useful study.

The book is easy to read. One of the greatest lacks, however, is that there is no index of any kind. Its main theme is the comparison and contrast of certain elements in the history of Israel found in the Old Testament and in the Qur'an. The authors state there is a renewed interest in the study of the Old Testament history because of the 'growing amount of information retrieved by archaeological excavations'; yet, at the same time, they claim that scholars have totally neglected another ancient independent source from the seventh century, viz., the Qur'an. Perhaps this is because scholars do not consider the Qur'an a valid 'independent scriptur-

al source', as it did not appear until more than 1600 years after the events referred to in the Old Testament.

The authors make many claims for the Qur'an. 'The Qur'an implies that the Bible is an inauthentic account of the truth.' The Qur'an 'does not contain any internal discrepancy' and is 'free from claims that fly in the face of external evidence. There is not a single Qur'anic statement that is contradicted by a single established historical fact.' This is truly an amazing statement since authors have found more than one thousand such historical, scientific and grammatical errors in the Qur'an. The book references several biblical scholars, mostly liberals, and rehashes several old and flawed theories.

It is unfortunate that the authors are inconsistent themselves when they address the same subjects in the Qur'an. The book opens with a chapter on the inconsistencies in the Bible. They make a very helpful statement about their view of the Bible in chapter four under the 'Qur'anic Verdict on the Bible'. They openly state that they believe the Bible we have is not to be equated with the books mentioned in the Qur'an as given to Musa and Isa, because the Bible contains material outside the times of Musa and Isa. Yet, the Qur'an itself makes reference to

events and people outside the Pentateuch and the Gospels and treats them as true events of history. The material supporting the testimony of the Qur'an and its infallibility does not address any of the problems in the Qur'an itself. Here everything is taken at face value and assumed to be true. But there are problems in the Qur'an, too. For instance, in Surah 18: 83-86, the Qur'an states that the sun was 'found setting in a muddy spring'. In Surah 28:8,38 Haman, the minister of Pharaoh, is said to be the minister of Pharaoh. In Surah 20:85-88 it says that the Samaritans made the Golden Calf in the wilderness. Surah 10:3 says the world was created in six days, but Surah 41:9-12 says two days plus four days plus two more days giving a total of eight days. And what are we to make of the grammatical and lexical problems in the Qur'an, which claims to be pure and clear Arabic? Finally

there is no mention of the problem of abrogation in the Qur'an. In Surah 22:52 we read, 'Allah abolished that which Satan proposeth. Then Allah established His revelations.' Does this mean some verses were originally proposed by Satan and then Allah established His verses? We have at least one example in the Qur'an of this in Surah 53:18-23. How many more could there be? This is an interesting question because the Qur'an says 'no one can change Allah's true word'. Yet Allah Himself changes it at will.

Perhaps before being so minutely critical of the Bible, our Muslim friends need to be honest about their own book and how they look at it. Then we shall be able to take them more seriously. All in all, the book was interesting to show the bias of the authors but presented no new material.

Book Review: Secrets of the Koran

Reviewed by Neil Bulloch

SECRETS OF THE KORAN, by Don Richardson, Regal Books, Ventura, CA., 2003.

Richardson has written a readable, but at the same time, somewhat appalling book. I was shocked as I read it. The first half of the book gives a new meaning to 'inflammatory'. It begins with the title. Why spell the Muslim Scriptures as 'Koran' rather than the preferred 'Qur'an'? Moreover, the title is somewhat misleading as nothing secretive is revealed. The alleged secrets are plainly in the Qur'an and in the Hadith. Perhaps his frustration can be tied to what he says on page 19, 'The more digging I did into the Koran, the more I realized when it comes to Islam, the redemptive analogy approach cannot work.'

I believe he has come away with an understanding of the basic evil inherent in Islam as practiced by 'fundamentalists or extremists', but I do not detect a love for Muslims. Although he does point out the core beliefs of the Muslim holy book, it is his attitude that leaves me in shock.

However—and happily—after the initial waves of harsh and aggressive criticism, Richardson seems to settle down and say some useful things. It would appear he wants to show us the danger inherent in Islam to our western civilization, and he calls us to take up the task of rebutting the Koran, openly and now. Tolerance merely persuades Muslims that we

have no answers, and that, in fact, we fear them. Intimidation is the name of the game. He says that informed Muslims know that the Qur'an does not advocate moderation, so why should we be compliant and complacent? Of course, if we are not careful, we can easily be accused of being 'hate-mongers'.

The best part of the book is the last one hundred pages. Richardson spells out some of the strategies that Muslims are already using in the West to advance their cause. Some of his comments border on being hypothetical, but he often makes a very good case for sounding the alarm. The parable of the farmer who has goats and raised chickens but is pestered by a mongoose is worthy of reflection. Wanting to protect his chickens and their eggs, the farmer kills the mongoose, forgetting that the little animal was the best protection against predatory snakes. Ultimately he loses chickens and goats to pythons. Richardson goes on to say that in the West, secular humanists, agnostics and atheists have tried to get rid of Christianity, believing that no other religion would replace it. But man is a religious being; if he can't have one religion, he will have another. Only a strong Christianity has the wherewithal to stand up to the dangers confronting our world. Islam, Richardson maintains, sees all this and is moving in accordingly.

Seedbed XVIII No. 2

In the end, Richardson calls on us to 'wage truth on Islam'. That is a more balanced response to the world-wide advance of Islam. Let us point

them to Jesus Christ as the only Saviour for all mankind.

Yes, read the book, but read it with care.