

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Submitters Perspective

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The Religion of Submission

The answer for:

A New Judaism for a New World

A New Christianity for a New World

A New Islam for a New World

In his book *Rescuing the Bible From Fundamentalism* and more recently *A New Christianity for a New World*, Bishop John Shelby Spong addresses some of the failings of Christianity, and where the majority of Christians went wrong. Bishop Spong is the 8th bishop of Newark Diocese of the Episcopal Church. He is now retired. The Bishop makes it quite clear that the words of the Bible are not the words of God. For example, he says, "This is the word of the Lord," the liturgical phrase used in Christian churches to mark the end of a reading from the Bible, "is a strange, even a misleading, phrase. Yet Sunday after Sunday it is repeated, reinforcing in the psyches

of worshipers a rather outdated attitude toward Holy Scripture. In many of its details, the Bible is simply wrong!"

To one of the questions posed to him, Bishop Spong states: "The real question is what is Christianity? Is it what the Pope says it is? Is it what Billy Graham says it is? Is it what Al Sharpton says it is? Or Jerry Falwell or James Kennedy or Robert Schuler? You see when we pose the issue this way, we discover that there is no consensus, and when the various defenders of Christianity discover that, when each defines what he or she believes Christianity to be, there is no consensus."

He argues that while liberal, mainline churches have abandoned the Bible, fundamentalists have made an idol of it. Bishop Spong denies virtually everything about Jesus that orthodox Christianity has believed for the last two millennia. The virgin birth, the deity of Christ, the atoning death on the cross, the resurrection, the miracles, everything that would verify the biblical claims of Christ's authority and uniqueness are discounted. Spong argues that "the essence of Christ was confused with the form in which that essence was communicated."

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Corruption of Religions

It is an unfortunate fact that innovations, traditions, politics and false doctrines corrupt any religion over time one way or another. Most people are happy with following blindly the footsteps of their parents. They are comfortable with following the majority. Going along with the crowd gives them a sense of security. They contemplate: How could millions or billions of people be wrong? However, there are people like Bishop Spong who realize the corruptions in the religion. They recognize that they have been taught certain things that do not make sense. They start looking for answers. Some turn to others whom they think have the answers for them. But eventually such people will want to reassure their hearts. How can they know or trust if the answers given to them are correct?

Is it possible to let go of one wrong, and adopt another equally detrimental one for our salvation? Of course, this is entirely possible unless we put our trust in God and do what is best. So what should we do? The solution is to study and learn God's message directly from His scripture. Therefore, one should go to the source of the religion.

Read the Scripture

The best way to learn about a religion is to read critically the scripture it is based on. If there is something in the scripture that does not make sense, it cannot be from God. There has to be some logical explanation where the information comes from and why it does not

make sense. We can ask several questions. If it is a scripture translated from the original, is the translation correct? Are there other translations that give different meaning? What is the origin of the scripture?

We know that all God's scriptures have the basic truth in them that our God is the Creator of all things, and that He is the only one to be worshipped. He does not have any partner in His dominion, nor does He have a son. But to arrive at that conclusion and see the truth, one has to sift out several layers of human intervention and interpretation. Where do we find a scripture that we know for certain is from God in its entirety, and exists in its original language? Is there such a scripture? The answer is yes. This scripture is the Quran, the Final Testament. Its original is intact. However, this was not enough to spare the Muslims from corrupting their religion. Unfortunately the interpretation of its verses based on other sources plagued the Muslims en masse. So they also turned their religion into something against God's teachings.

It almost seems hopeless to find a religion in its pure form. Should we then despair, or is it really possible to sort through the interpretation of traditional Muslim scholars and look into what God is really telling us? Yes, it is. It does not make sense that God should send a final scripture for humanity, and have it inaccessible to people in different languages. One only needs to be sincere and have an open-mind, and read the Quran in their language. God promises to teach him or her the truth. Of course, a good translation is a big help. Here we recommend highly the contemporary English translation of the Quran by Dr. Rashad Khalifa.

The Quran Has The Right Answers

The following is a portion taken from the Introduction of the English translation of the Quran by Dr. Rashad Khalifa (1989), except for minor changes.

The Quran is God's final message to humanity. All of God's prophets have come to this world, and all the scriptures have been delivered. The time has come to purify and consolidate all the messages delivered by God's prophets into one message, and to proclaim that henceforth, there is only one religion acceptable to God, "Submission" (3:19, 85). "Submission" is the religion whereby we recognize God's absolute authority, and reach an unshakeable conviction that God ALONE possesses all power; no other entity possesses any power that is independent of Him. The natural result of such a realization is to devote our lives and our worship absolutely to God ALONE. This is the First Commandment in all the scriptures, including the Old Testament, the New Testament, and this Final Testament.

Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is One God!

Therefore you shall adore the Lord your God

with all your heart,

with all your soul,

with all your mind,

and with all your strength.

[Deuteronomy 6:4-5,

Luke 12:29-30,

Quran 3:18]

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Let us meditate on God, His glorious attributes,

who is the basis of everything in this universe as its Creator,

who is fit to be worshiped as Omnipresent, Omnipotent, Omniscient

and self existent conscious being,

who removes all ignorance and impurities from the mind

and purifies and sharpens the intellect.

[Gayatri Mantra, Yajur Veda]

While every religion has been corrupted by innovations, traditions, and false, idolatrous doctrines, there may be “Submitters” within every religion. There may be Submitters who are (at the outset) Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, or anything else. These Submitters, collectively, constitute the only religion acceptable to God. Therefore, all Submitters who are devoted to God ALONE, and do not set up any idols beside God, are redeemed into God’s eternal kingdom (2:62). A criterion of the true submitters is that they will find nothing objectionable in the Quran.

With the advent of this Testament, God’s message to the world is now complete. We have now received the long awaited answers to our most urgent questions—who we are, the purpose of our lives, how we came into this world, where do we go from here, which religion is the right one, was it evolution or creation, etc.

Perfect Happiness:

Now and Forever

One of the most elusive objectives of every human being is “Happiness.” The Quran reveals the secret of attaining perfect happiness in this life and forever. We learn from the Quran that happiness is an exclusive quality of the soul. Thus, a body that attains all the material successes it longs for—money, power, fame, etc.—often belongs to an unhappy person. Happiness depends totally on the degree of growth and development attained by the soul, the real person. The Quran provides a detailed map towards perfect happiness for both body and soul, both in this world and in the eternal Hereafter.

In the numerous verses throughout this proven Testament, God personally guarantees the believers’ happiness, now and forever:

Absolutely, God’s allies will have nothing to fear,

nor will they grieve.

They are those who believe and lead a righteous life.

For them happiness in this life, and in the Hereafter.

Such is God’s inviolable law.

This is the true triumph

[10:62-64]

All Believers Constitute the One Acceptable Religion

As expected from the Creator’s final message, one of the prominent themes in the Quran is the call for unity among all believers, and the repeated prohibition of making any distinction among God’s messengers. If the object of worship is one and the same, there will be absolute

unity among all believers. It is the human factor, i.e., devotion and prejudice to such powerless humans as Jesus, Muhammad, and the saints that causes division, hatred, and bitter wars among the misguided believers. A guided believer is devoted to God ALONE, and rejoices in seeing any other believer who is devoted to God ALONE, regardless of the name such a believer calls his or her religion.

Surely, those who believe,

those who are Jewish,

the Christians,

and the converts;

anyone who

(1) believes in God,

(2) believes in the Last Day, and

(3) leads a righteous life,

will receive their recompense from their Lord;

they have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.

[2:62, 5:69]

Abdullah

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MASJID TUCSON United Submitters International

PO Box 43476 Tucson AZ 85733-3476 USA

Tel/Fax: (520) 323 7636

internet web sites www.masjiduntucson.org www.submission.org www.submission.info

e-mail: info@masjiduntucson.org

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The recent disaster in Hajj - a consequence of ignoring the Quranic law

Saudi Arabia's top religious cleric promised measures on February 2, 2004 to prevent more tragedy at the annual pilgrimage a day after 251 people were trampled to death there. The cleric's statement did not elaborate on what measures would be taken, but it is likely that he will issue an "Islamic edict" related to the ritual that turned deadly called stoning the devil. In 1998, following a stampede during the ritual in which 180 people were killed, religious authorities issued an edict permitting the stoning to begin at dawn instead of after midday. The idea was to give worshippers more time and enable authorities to control them. Please note that pilgrims also were trampled to death on their way to the stoning ritual in 1994, 2001 and 2003.

We learn from the Quran that nothing bad comes from the Most Merciful God - *"Anything good that happens to you is from God, and anything bad that happens to you is from you. We have sent you as a messenger to the people, and God suffices as witness."* (4:79)

From the above verse we know that bad things cannot originate from Merciful God. Additionally, God is the best lawmaker as understood from this verse - *"Is it the law of the days of ignorance that they seek to uphold? Whose law is better than*

God's for those who have attained certainty?" (5:50)

All problems and disaster have been happening in and around the Hajj season because Saudi Arabia abandoned God's law for Hajj that we find in the Quran. According to the Quranic law, Hajj can be observed any time during the four sacred months. Sadly, Saudi Government restricts Hajj to a few days for their own convenience.

Over-crowding is prevailed during the Hajj season. We learn from the Quran - *"Hajj shall be observed in the specified months. Whoever sets out to observe Hajj shall refrain from sexual intercourse, misconduct, and arguments throughout Hajj. Whatever good you do, God is fully aware thereof. As you prepare your provisions for the journey, the best provision is righteousness. You shall observe Me, O you who possess intelligence."* (2:197).

The four sacred months in Islam were observed before the time of Muhammad - *The count of months, as far as GOD is concerned, is twelve. This has been GOD's law, since the day He created the heavens and the earth. Four of them are sacred. This is the perfect religion; you shall not wrong your souls (by fighting) during the Sacred Months.*

However, you may declare all-out war against the idol worshippers (even during the Sacred Months), when they declare all-out war against you, and know that GOD is on the side of the righteous. (9:36)

The Arabs are violating God's sacred months despite this Quranic command - *"O you who believe, do not violate the rites instituted by God, nor the Sacred Months, nor the animals to be offered, ... You shall observe God. God is strict in enforcing retribution."* (5:2)

Is it not true what God Almighty says about Arabs? - *"The Arabs are the worst in disbelief and hypocrisy, and the most likely to ignore the laws that God has revealed to His messenger. God is Omniscient, Most Wise."* (9:97)

We would like the top Saudi religious cleric to stop issuing so-called "Islamic" edict and start following the Quran - *"Have you considered the watering of the pilgrims and caring for the Sacred Masjid a substitute for believing in God and the Last Day, and striving in the cause of God? They are not equal in the sight of God. God does not guide the wicked people."* (9:19)

God be Glorified

Irtaza