

*Show us the straight way,
the way of those whom Thou hast favored,
not the way of those who earn Thine anger
or of those who go astray.*

Ummi'l Quran, 5-7

Questions Raised

The recent attacks on the World Trade Center have affected everyone who lives in America. Know that those who seek to follow Isa the Messiah (Peace be upon Him), who taught us to love friend and enemy alike, seek to be your friends and to stand with you against those who would use these sad events as a pretext for their own wrong actions.

These events have also raised profound questions and critical questions about life, death and eternity. The first is “Do those who die in a Jihad (holy war) really go to Paradise?” Many Muslims were as appalled at these attacks as non-Muslims, but others danced in the street and stand ready to join those who perished. Some believe this was a justifiable Jihad which guaranteed the attackers a place in Paradise, but others consider it abominable terrorism.

The larger question here is how can someone be sure of Paradise? How can God, who is holy and who hates all evil, grant forgiveness and heaven to men and women, all of whom are sinners and who have offended him in many ways by attitude, word, deed and omission?

Jihad or Sacrifice?

The Holy Injil offers us a clue:

Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins (Heb. 9:22).

Does this refer to Jihad, or to a blood sacrifice for sins? It cannot refer to Jihad for several reasons. First, salvation cannot come through the efforts of sinful man because “by observing the law no one will be justified” (Galatians 2:16 [in the Injil]). Elsewhere it says our own attempts at righteousness are as “filthy rags” before the holy God.

God himself has decreed “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13 and Deuteronomy 5:17 [in the Taurat]). Furthermore the Injil says “No murderer has eternal life” (I John 3:15 [in the Injil]). Clearly if our own efforts to obey God cannot earn us Paradise, then disobeying his holy commands and so showing contempt for His clear command will surely never earn us a place in Paradise.

Therefore the shedding of blood that brings forgiveness refers to a blood sacrifice. Consider Eid Al-Adha (Celebration of Sacrifice), which commemorates Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his son. What is the meaning of this sacred event but that it signifies the sacrifice of Isa the Messiah (Peace be upon Him)? Here then is the answer to our question. God sent Isa the Messiah into the world for the purpose

of paying the penalty for our sins for us. He purchased our forgiveness and offers it as a gift. He promises that all who put their faith in him and repent (turn from) their sins will be forgiven and will go to Paradise (John 3:16 and Acts 2:38 [in the Injil]). When God raised him from the dead, it was God’s sign of approval of this holy sacrifice and its sufficiency to pay for the sins of those who will believe.

Questions of Credibility

Some say the Taurat and the Injils have been changed and are no longer reliable. But this objection is not valid because those who make it are always unable to produce any evidence of the specific changes claimed—even though there are thousands of manuscripts and texts from antiquity. Furthermore God himself says of the Taurat, the Zabur and the Injil: “All scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16 [in the Injil]).

Some are confused about whom to believe in these great matters of eternal life and eternal death, of punishment and reward, of Paradise and Hell. God invites us to trust in Him, and promises that if we seek him and seek the truth with all our heart we will find Him and know the truth. Many of these issues are reducible to the question of credibility. And character determines credibility. If several people tell us contradictory things, if we are wise, we will believe the one with the most trustworthy character.

Of Isa the Messiah (Peace be upon Him) alone the scriptures say “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth” (Isaiah 53:9 and I Peter 2:22 [in the Injil]). As for the rest of mankind, and that includes even all other prophets and religious leaders, the scriptures say “There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away...their tongues practice deceit” (Psalms 5:9 [Zabur] and Roman 3:10-13 [in the Injil]).

Choose the Straight Way

Judge for yourself then who is worthy of your trust: the one who is without sin and who cannot deceive, or all the rest of us who are sinners who can and do deceive. Will you trust the one who is perfect or the one who is not?

Here then is the “the straight way, the way whom Thou hast favored,” the Way of God himself. Isa the Messiah (Peace be upon Him) said, “I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except by me” (John 14:6 [the Injil]).

Isa (Peace be upon Him) gives a very gracious invitation: “ Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest...” (Matthew 11:28 [the Injil]). He also gives an equally gracious promise “whoever comes to me I will never drive away” (John 6:37 [the Injil]). Come to Him now by faith and repentance, and receive the sure promise of Paradise.

Show Us the Straight Way