

***“Who Do You
Say I Am?”***

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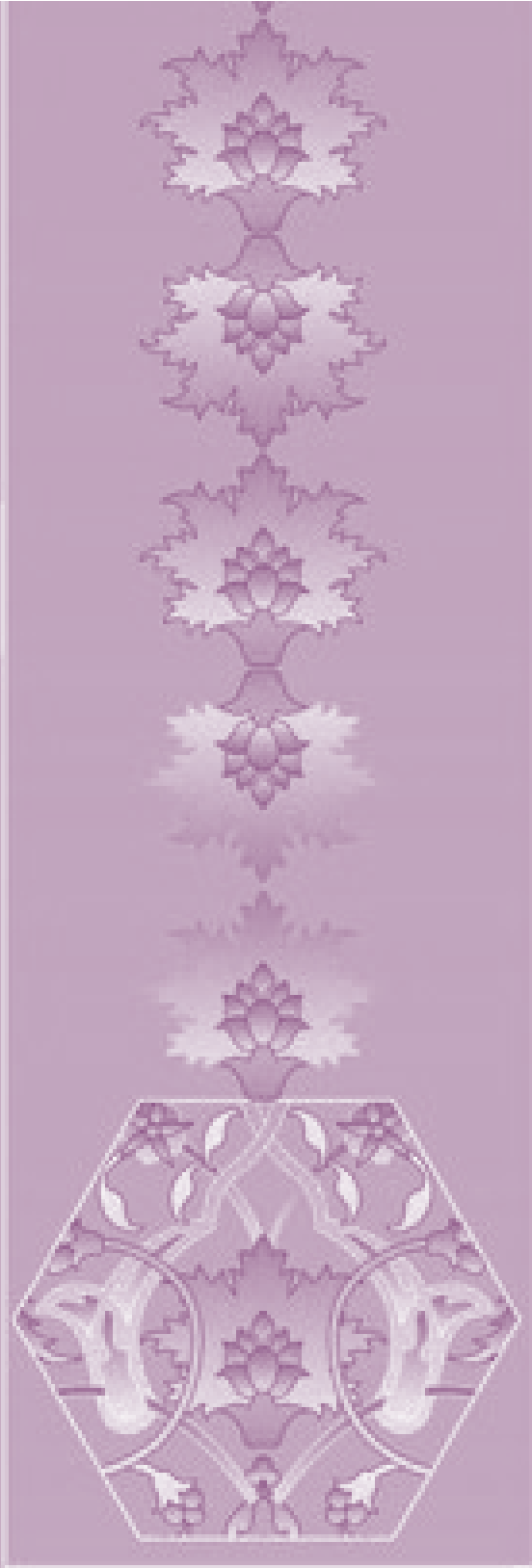
***If God Wills
(Inshallah)***

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Keys of the Kingdom:

***Blessed are those
who are persecuted
because of righteousness***

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Isa Describes Himself

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Please turn to page 3 and read the article, “*Who Do You Say I Am?*” Some thought Isa was a prophet from the past whom Allah had raised from the dead. Everyone had an opinion about him. Even today—everyone has an opinion about him!

Here is how Isa described himself as recorded in the Holy Scriptures:

1. I am the bread of life (Injil, John 6:35). Bread was an essential of life in Isa's culture. No meal was complete without bread. Are you spiritually hungry? Has life left you feeling empty? Consider the words of Isa: “*I am the bread of life.*”

2. I am the light of the world (Injil, John 8:12). Sin brings spiritual darkness into our lives. Isa is the antidote. Let him light up your life. Let him dispel the darkness of sin.

3. I am the gate (Injil, John 10:9). A gate is an entryway. Isa is the entryway, the gate or door, to spiritual life. No man can come to full spiritual understanding—except through him. Will you step through the door today?

4. I am the good shepherd (Injil, John 10:11). Isa is not just any shepherd, he is the Good Shepherd. He loves his sheep and they know his voice. Are you spiritually exhausted? Come to the Good Shepherd.

5. I am the resurrection and the life (Injil, John 11:25). If you are spiritually dead, you need nothing less than spiritual resurrection and new life. Isa said, “*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest*” (Injil, Matthew 11:28).


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6. I am the way and the truth and the life (Injil, John 14:6). Have you lost your direction? Are you groping for truth? Has all spiritual life been drained from you? Isa is your answer. He will point you in the right direction, supply truth for your error and give you a new life.

7. I am the Alpha and the Omega, [the beginning and the end] (Injil, Revelation 1:8). Isa will bring completeness to your life. Nothing is lacking in him.

The above statements are the answers Isa gave about himself! Only you can answer the critical question posed by Isa: “*Who Do You Say I Am?*” 

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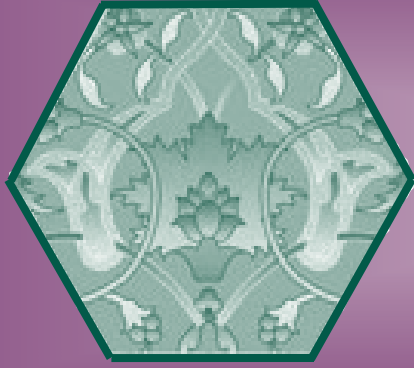
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“Who Do YOU Say I Am?”

by H.M.

 One day, in the region of the Holy Land, Isa asked his disciples what people were saying about him—who did people think he really was? The disciples answered that some of the people thought he was actually a prophet from the past whom Allah had raised from the dead. Then Isa asked his disciples directly:

But what about you? Who do you say I am? (Injil, Matthew 16:15).

That is when one of the disciples bore clear witness that Isa was Al-Masih! Today, 2,000 years later and all over the world, we find the same question being asked, “Who do people say Isa is?”

Most of you readers of *Noor ul Haq* already know about Isa, and many of you would also confess that he is indeed Christ, *Al-Masih*. But that is not all you know about him. Most Muslims believe the following: Isa was no more than an ordinary prophet; he was a prophet only to the Jews; he was raised to the second level of heaven at the end of his earthly ministry; and he will return to the world. When he does, he will defeat *Ad-Dajjal* and lead Muslims in the *Jumaa* prayer at a mosque in Damascus. At that time he will destroy all the crosses and kill all the pigs; he will take a wife; he will have children; he will die and be buried next to Prophet Muhammad’s grave; and like everyone else, he will be raised on the Day of

Resurrection. But the interesting thing about these beliefs is that they are found nowhere in the Qur’an!

Many Muslims believe that these traditional beliefs about Isa are the Qur’anic version of Isa, but they are not. This information comes from the traditions of the *hadith* literature. In fact, what the Qur’an has to say about Isa is in many respects contradictory to the traditional view. For example, many Muslims believe that Isa, son of Mary, was only an ordinary prophet, no different from the prophets before him. But notice how the Qur’an describes this Isa:

He was born of a virgin (Surat-u Maryam (19):20).

He was a holy son (Surat-u Maryam (19):19).

He is God’s Word (Surat-un Nisaa(4):171).

He was strengthened by the Holy Spirit (Surat-ul Baqara (2):87).

He has the power of miracles, not only to heal the leper, open blind eyes and raise the dead, but also to create life (Surat-u Ali Imran (3):49).

He is the Sign of the Hour (Surat-uz Zukhruf (43):61).

He is for all people—a Sign to mankind (Surat-u Maryam (19):21).

Allah raised Isa up to Himself (Surat-un Nisaa (4):158).

Most Muslims believe Isa is in the second heaven with John the Baptist (*Yahya*), but according to the Qur’an, Isa is where Allah is. Surely it is common knowledge that God Almighty sits upon His throne above the seven levels of heaven. In a related Qur’anic reference, we read:

His name will be Christ [Al-Masih] Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honor in this world and the Hereafter and of (the company) of those nearest to Allah (Surat-u Ali Imran (3):45).

Who are those nearest to Allah? The Qur’an gives us the

answer:

Christ [Al-Masih] disdaineth not to serve and worship Allah, nor do the angels, those nearest (to Allah) (Surat-un Nisaa (4):172).

In a related verse, we also read:

And thou seest the angels thronging round the Throne, hymning the praises of their Lord (Surat-uz Zumar (39):75).

Where are these angels who are nearest to Allah? They are around the throne of Allah, and we know that the throne of Allah sits above all the levels of heaven, highly exalted above everything else. That is precisely where Isa is!

These descriptions of Isa from the Qur'an are in agreement with the teachings of the Injil. For example, when Gabriel announced the birth of Isa to Mary, Mary asked, *How will this be...since I am a virgin?* (Injil, Luke 1:34). When one of Isa's disciples spoke about Al-Masih, he referred to him as *the holy and righteous one* (Injil, Acts 3:14). One of the titles for Isa in the Injil is *Word of God* (Injil, Revelation 19:13). In addition, the scriptures declare: *God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power and that he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil...* (Injil, Acts 10:38).

Elsewhere we read:

There was a great number of people...who had come to hear him and be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by evil spirits were cured, and the people all tried to touch him because power was coming from him and healing them all (Injil, Luke 6:17-19).

The Injil even records specific accounts of individual healings such as the blind man of John 9:1-11, the leper of Mark 1:40-45 and even the raising of the dead of Luke 7:11-17.

As for the power of creation and the breath of life, the holy scriptures refer to Isa as the *last Adam, a life-giving spirit*, (Injil, 1 Corinthians 15:45). Surely a *life-giving spirit* cannot simply be an ordinary human spirit. Also, notice the reference to Isa Al-Masih as the *last Adam*. Does not the Qur'an speak of the similitude between Adam and Isa? Yes, their human natures both originated from Allah, since neither one was born of the reproduction process of a male and female.

But the comparison does not end there! Do you remember the Qur'anic description of Adam's creation and Allah's command to the angels?

And behold, We said to the angels: 'Bow down to Adam' (Surat-ul Baqara (2):34).

Fall ye down in obeisance unto him (Surat-ul Hijr(15):30).

We will find a similar description about Isa and the angels. But first, we must answer the question, *Where is Isa now?* The Qur'an speaks of Allah honoring Isa by raising him up to Himself. The same truth is revealed in the Injil. For example, we read these words:

God exalted him [Isa] to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus [Isa] every knee should bow in heaven and earth (Injil, Philippians 2:9-10).

Of course, every knee in heaven and earth includes the angels! In a prophecy about the end time, the Injil gives this description regarding Isa who is to be the Sign of the Hour:

Many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. ... encircled the throne.... In a loud voice they sang, "Worthy is the Lamb [Isa] who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" (Injil, Revelation 5:11-12).

Of course, the throne mentioned in this verse is the throne of Allah, the throne that is above the heavens. And it is here, in this exalted state, that the angels bow to the *last Adam* (Isa), just as the angels bow to the first Adam in the Qur'an! We cannot deny the similitude! However, two questions arise from this description.

First, do not the Scriptures declare that Almighty God refuses to share His praise and glory with any other? That is true. But remember, Isa Al-Masih is the Word of Allah, *Kalimatullah*; and one cannot separate Allah's Word from Allah. He is Allah's Word who reveals the authority, power and mercy of Allah. Just as Allah's people may kiss the holy books of Allah's Word made of earthly paper and ink, so men and angels kiss the feet of him who is *Kalimatullah*!

Secondly, and more strangely, Isa Al-Masih is referred to in the Injil as *the Lamb who was slain*. This is an example of figurative or symbolic language used to refer to Isa as the sacrifice or *qurban* for the whole world. That is why John the Baptist (*Yahya*) introduced Isa Al-Masih as *the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*, (Injil, John 1:29). The *Lamb of God* is in reference to the sacrificial suffering and death of Isa for the payment of human sin. Isa Al-Masih willingly suffered on our behalf the punishment of sin so that we, as sinners, can be saved from Allah's wrath and completely forgiven. This is the good news, especially for those who join the community of Isa and become his people. Notice how the Scriptures confirm this truth:

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners (Injil, 1 Timothy 1:15).

Now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man

really is the Savior of the world (Injil, John 4:42).

She [Mary] will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins (Injil, Matthew 1:21).

This brings us to the most significant description of Isa in the Qur'an. When Mary asked how she, as a virgin, could give birth to this holy son, Allah responded through Gabriel by saying:

That is easy for Me; and (We wish) to appoint him [Isa] as a sign unto men and a Mercy from Us. It is a matter (so) decreed (Surat-u Maryam (19):21).

Of course, the very nature of Isa who is the Word of Allah [Kalimatullah] and the life-giving Spirit of Allah [Ruhullah] is shrouded in great mystery. But one thing is clear. His mission was to reveal the mercy of Allah to humankind! **He truly came to be the Savior of the world.** Yes, it is true, for many people, Isa healed the disease of the body. But his primary mission was to come for the healing of a greater disease, the disease of the heart—the disease of sin! This is humankind's greatest problem which brings us to humankind's greatest need, the need for mercy and forgiveness! That need is reflected throughout the Qur'an beginning with Adam and Eve. According to the Qur'anic narrative, the first and only recorded words of the first two people on earth were:

Our Lord! We have wronged our own souls. If Thou forgive us not and bestow not upon us Thy mercy, we shall certainly be lost (Surat-ul A'raf (7):23).

Notice very carefully in this verse the link between Allah's mercy and His provision of forgiveness for human sin. From this critical observation, it should not surprise us that the one whom the Qur'an describes as Allah's mercy to humankind is revealed in the Injil as the provision of Allah's forgiveness for

*The Christ [Al-Masih] will suffer
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to all nations,
beginning at Jerusalem.
—Luke 24:46-47*

the sin of the world. The good news which the Injil declares is this:

The Christ [Al-Masih] will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Injil, Luke 24:46-47).

This scriptural declaration leads us to the most important aspect of Isa's identity. He is the Savior of the world who has come to reveal Allah's ultimate mercy and provide Allah's wonderful forgiveness.

We close this article with the Qur'anic depiction of Isa as the *Sign of the Hour*. This, of course, is in reference to the Last Day, the Day of Judgment and confirms the teaching of the Injil in this regard, where we read:


At this time the sign of the Son of Man [Isa] will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call... (Injil, Matthew 24:30-31).

Elsewhere we read this about the Day of Judgment:

This will happen when the Lord Jesus [Isa] is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed (Injil, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10).

When Isa Al-Masih returns, he will come to intercede and intervene on behalf of his community of believers. He will also come to judge and rule the world on behalf of Allah's justice. When that happens, how will you respond when he asks you the question, *Who do you say that I am?*

Will you tell him that he is just an ordinary prophet, no different than those before him? Or will you declare him to be not only the Savior of the world, but your personal Savior as well? And like the angels of heaven, will you bow before him who is exalted at the right hand of Allah, and who is the Word of Allah?

Your answer about who Isa really is will determine the fate of your eternal destiny. The Injil is clear. Those who reject Isa Al-Masih as the Sign of Allah's mercy and the Savior of the world remain condemned in their sin. There awaits for them the doom of eternal suffering and separation from Allah. However, eternal life and heavenly bliss in the glorious presence of Him who is the Merciful and Forgiving One awaits those who believe and accept the true and complete identity of Isa Al-Masih! 



If God Wills (Inshallah)

by Ibn El-Amin

Many people today are confident they understand the future and can order their own lives. In the following story we meet a man who thought he knew his future and could control his life and destiny. But he found out that his ideas were not entirely correct.

There once lived a man who had no time for religion. He neither prayed nor fasted. He would not even invoke Allah's name or say "inshallah (if Allah wills)" before starting any activity. On sunny days, he worked his land and on rainy ones, he worked at his loom.

One night he said to his wife, "O woman, it looks like the sky is clearing, so tomorrow I will finish the sowing of my crop. See to it that the seeds are ready and pack me some bread and dried figs to eat during the day. I want to make an early start."

The wife said, "Let's see what tomorrow brings."

He said, "There's nothing to wonder about. If the day dawns clear I will sow; if it is rainy, I will work at the loom."

In frustration she said, "For once, O husband, say 'if Allah wills'." He would not listen to her, for he believed his decision had nothing to do with Allah's will.

The next morning the wife awoke early to bake some bread. Before the bread was ready to be baked, a loud knock came on the door. The husband opened the door and found a Turkish soldier on his doorstep.

"Omniscient God and Protector," said the weaver, "what have we here?"

"Are you the weaver, Abu Hasan?" asked the soldier.

Agreeing that he was, the soldier ordered him outside the house. "You will take me to the city," ordered the soldier, "for I do not know the way."

“But sir,” protested Abu Hasan, “I am busy today and have no time to spare....”

At that moment, the soldier began to draw his sword in the weaver’s direction. So Abu Hasan put on his belt and sandals and headed for the city ahead of the Turk, like a hunting dog being led by its master. No words were exchanged until they reached the city.



“May Allah see you safely home, my friend,” said the soldier.

The weaver turned on his heels without a word, to begin the long journey home, just as a downpour of rain began. When he finally reached home, it was dark. He banged on the door and his wife called from inside, “Who is it?”

“Open the door, woman! It is I... if Allah wills”...your husband.

“If Allah wills?”

Abu Hasan had discovered a profound truth: We can try to control our lives, but most of us can only do it to a degree. After that, we must accept our situation and the truth that Allah reigns in this world whether we like it or not. Indeed, *our* plans will only happen “if Allah wills.”

What we all discover is that we do not know the answers to two important questions: 1) where we have (really) come from and 2) where we are going. This is the common lot of all men and women.

There was only one man who lived who knew the answers to both of these questions. His name is Isa and in the following the passage in the Injil, Luke 9:20-22, we read about his knowledge of the answers to these two questions.

“But what about you?” he (Isa) asked. “Who do you say I am?”

Peter answered, “The Christ of God.”

Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. And he said, “The Son of Man (Isa’s name for himself) must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.”

In this passage Isa showed that he knew both where he came from and where he was going. In the Injil, John 8:14, Isa answered the objection of the religious people by saying, *“Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going.”* In the next verses, he said his Father’s testimony agreed with his, for it was his Father who had SENT HIM (verse 16). The Father, Allah himself, had sent him into the world to provide salvation for all peoples.

Isa also knew where he was going, for he had told his disciples he would be rejected by the unbelievers, be killed and the third day be raised to life (Luke 9:22). Then he would go again and join his Father in heaven, since he is Isa Al-Masih. This is recorded in John 7:33, *“I am with you for only a short time, and then I go to the one who sent me.”*

The reason Isa understood his past and future is not because he followed the idea “if Allah wills,” as that phrase is commonly used. For he already knew Allah’s will and had followed it completely as he told us in John 5:19, *“I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.”* Isa only does what he has seen his Father do.

The most important question for each of us is this, “Will I live hoping to know Allah’s will, hoping to know where I am going, or will I be like Isa Al-Masih, and know for sure my final destiny is with Allah in heaven?” 🌐

Life's Lessons

When a mother eagle decides it is time for her little chicks to learn to fly, she will actually push them out of the nest! This sends the baby eagle falling toward the ground as it flaps its wings, trying desperately to fly. But the young bird has never flown before. The little eagle's muscles are not strong enough, and its wings are not sufficiently developed to maintain flight.

It appears that the young eagle is about to crash to the ground and be killed. As it is falling rapidly toward the earth, perhaps the young eagle is thinking, "There is no hope for me. There is no one to rescue me. Surely I'm going to die!"

Is the mother eagle being cruel to her young chicks? Is she trying to kill her babies before they have opportunity to experience the joy of flying?


No, not at all! You see, Allah has put in the mind of the mother eagle the natural instinct how to teach her young to fly. When the mother eagle pushes her young out of the nest, she carefully watches the progress of the struggling little one that is learning to fly. If the immature eagle cannot flap its wings sufficiently to maintain flight, the mother eagle will jump from the nest and quickly fly toward it. She will position herself just below the struggling little one, stretch out her large wings and catch her precious offspring on her outstretched wings. The mother eagle will then glide to safety with the little one riding securely on her wing.

This is a beautiful picture of how Allah cares for and rescues his people. According to the Holy Scriptures, on two different occasions Prophet Moses [Musa] told the people that Allah "*carried you on wings of eagles*" (Tawrat, Exodus 19:4 and Deuteronomy 32:11). What did this mean?

Allah had delivered his people from the bondage of slavery in a foreign country of idol worshipers. The worshipers of the Most High God had traveled for many months through the barren wilderness experiencing extreme difficulties. Most of their problems were brought on by their own sins of rebellion and disobedience to Allah. At times they would cry out, "There is no hope for us. There is no one to rescue us. Surely we are going to die!"

In spite of their sin and disobedience, Allah rescued them from all their problems and from their enemies. Through Prophet Musa, Allah informed the people that their survival was a result of the mercy of Allah alone. Without His mercy, they would have died in the wilderness. Like the mother eagle that swoops down to rescue her little ones by carrying them on her outstretched wing, so Allah reaches out to rescue those who call on Him with a sincere heart.

Allah's message to the people through Prophet Musa contained this important statement: "*I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself*" (Tawrat, Exodus 19:4).

Allah not only brought His people to a place of safety, He brought them to Himself! This wonderful phrase in the Holy Scriptures indicates the desire of Allah's heart for nearness with His people. In spite of our sins, Allah cares for us so much He made a way for us to be brought near to Him. We can experience forgiveness of sins and nearness with Allah only through Isa Al-Masih. 



Carried on Wings of Eagles

by D.F.

Keys of the Kingdom

by T.H.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

This final key of the kingdom starts with a paradox just as the first one did. This one says that you are blessed when you are persecuted. How can you be blessed and persecuted—reviled, defamed or abused—at the same time?

Remember Isa had already said in the first key, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Just because you are poor doesn’t mean you are blessed. But Isa was saying you must have an attitude that says, “Allah, I need you to do something for me that I cannot do for myself—cleanse me from my sins.” Isa was well aware that this statement of blessing in the midst of persecution was difficult to grasp. However, he repeated the idea when he said, “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you...”

Remember the promise in the Holy Scripture that says, “Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (Injil, 2 Timothy 3:12). Perhaps that fact still fails to answer your question, “How can I be persecuted and blessed at the same time?” Isa Al-Masih is not focusing on the persecution, but on the cause of suffering—for righteousness sake. He is not encouraging people to suffer for religion. But if they have an abiding relationship with him, persecution will happen!

Why? Because we live like Isa Al-Masih in a world that is hostile to his teaching. We do not seek, nor do we ask for, persecution. Persecution comes because we are not like the evil world that we live in. One should expect to suffer *insults*—verbal abuse, *persecution*—harassing or molesting and *defamation*.

Perhaps you expect an easy path if you follow Al-Masih. On the contrary, Allah’s Word reminds us, “For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him...” (Injil, Philippians 1:29). Christ himself warned, “If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. ... Remember the words I spoke to you: ‘No servant is greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also” (Injil, John 15:19-20).

Followers of Isa have always been persecuted for righteousness in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. It has been that way from the beginning when Cain murdered his brother. The Holy Scriptures say, “And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother’s were righteous” (Injil, 1 John 3:12).

Believers are persecuted not on the basis of their own righteousness, but on the righteousness of Allah seen through their testimony. Elijah the prophet took a stand for righteousness against King Ahab, his wife Jezebel and the false prophets of Baal as told in 1 Kings 19:1-2:

Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, “May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them.”

The prophet Elijah had just witnessed Allah’s power, and the response of the ungodly—persecution—was just as expected. Elijah didn’t stand and trust Allah to deliver and enable him, but he ran. What would have occurred if Elijah had stood his ground and trusted Allah to deliver him as Allah had done before? We don’t know because he ran. It may seem easier to run than stand, but what does running accomplish in our lives or the life of one who is watching?

Why wasn’t Elijah able to just “rejoice and be glad”? We don’t know. Perhaps the difficulty of the situation seemed larger to him than the ability of Allah to work on his behalf. In the midst of persecution, “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you” (Deuteronomy 31:6). Allah is not only able, He has promised to be with us. So don’t run, just TRUST!

How do you know if you have the righteousness that is based on the work of Al-Masih? When you have accepted Isa as your redeemer, you will live a life consistent with his attitudes, characteristics and values. YOU WILL BE DIFFERENT! You will take a stand for what is right.

How should we respond to the persecution that we face? We should grieve for those who are so misguided and lost that they cannot see the love, light, joy and assurance we have because of our life-changing relationship with Isa Al-Masih. Remember Stephen’s last words in prayer at the time they were stoning him, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep (Injil, Acts 7:59-60).

Followers of Isa should not compromise. When we compromise, our testimony is damaged. When we try to escape a difficult situation rather than to receive his assistance to endure, we create an atmosphere where the specific will of Allah fails to be accomplished in our lives and hinders those watching us. We need to not only know the Holy Scripture,

we need to live by it for *“how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God”* (Injil, 1 Peter 2:20).

Perhaps you are saying, “I suffered so much before knowing Al-Masih and now that I know him and follow his teaching, I am suffering more. Why?” Persecution makes us different. It helps us to be more like Al-Masih. We grow in our relationship with him, as the Apostle Paul wrote:

“But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead” (Injil, Philippians 3:7-11).

Persecution not only helps us to grow stronger, it reminds us that our strength is not in ourselves, but in reliance upon Isa Al-Masih. In teaching the Corinthian church, Apostle Paul spoke of the work of Al-Masih in his life, saying, *“That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong* (Injil, 2 Corinthians 12:10).

In our weakness and sufferings, the power and strength of Al-Masih is revealed. How? He gives us the strength and ability to endure and persevere with the right attitude. The Holy Spirit uses our afflictions and our response to those afflictions to convict this world of all their ungodly deeds. We are privileged to suffer for Al-Masih in that those sufferings testify to his power working in us.

Persecution helps us grow and develop a greater faith in Al-Masih, and when we endure persecution, an eternal reward will follow: *“Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.... Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven....”*

This world is not the final home of the persecuted believer! We’re heaven bound! We rejoice as we rest in His promise—*“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him”* (Injil, 1 Corinthians 2:9).

We are blessed when we are persecuted because
Persecution Reflects our Relationship with Al-Masih,
Persecution Reveals his Righteousness is at work in us,
Persecution Reminds us to Rely on Him and
Persecution Rewards those who persevere.

As with all the Keys of the Kingdom, we determine whether to accept Isa Al-Masih’s admonition to be BLESSED! 

Keys of the Kingdom



*“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.*

*Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.*

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for
righteousness,
for they will be filled.*

*Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.*

*Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.*

*Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.*

*Blessed are those who are persecuted because
of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*

—Injil, Matthew 5:3-10



Heart to Heart

Finding Satisfaction in Isa

My dear friend Bony and family,

It has been many years since our family left your country to work in another country; now we find ourselves in our native land. Even though we have not communicated during these past years, you have been in our thoughts. We have prayed many times that God would bless you and enlighten you in His ways. The Prophet Moses [Musa] tells us in one of his songs that all of God's ways are just.

We have many fond memories of your friendship. Thank you for your many visits to our home and the many times you opened your home to us.

It was nice to have your sister and her family as our next door neighbors. We learned much about your religion as we observed their cultural celebrations. At the birth of their daughter, they gave her the same name as our daughter, Jennifer. This was an honor for us. Our daughter now has children. Perhaps the same is true of "Jenny." It seems that time passes so quickly.

I assume that you are still the director of the lottery in the northern region of your country. It was amazing to me that, no matter how little some of the people around us had, they would spend their last sum of money on the lottery. Always, their hope was to win and make life easier for themselves. Most of them gained nothing but increased poverty.

However, many others have found true and complete satisfaction in placing their reliance, not in the lottery, but on Isa Al-Masih. In the Injil, Philippians 4:19, the Apostle Paul tells us, *"My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."* Perhaps you can remember the time when I became very ill and required hospitalization for many days. God met my need for healing in my body. But even more importantly he has met my spiritual need through Isa Al-Masih. He has always been faithful to respond to our needs, both of the body and of the spirit, as well as the needs of our friends.

I hope to meet you again, insha-Allah, and share with you the joy I have as I have placed my total reliance on Isa Al-Masih. Until then, may Allah give us His peace.

Sincerely,

C. J.



Especially for Women...

Can I Be Hurting My Children?

by Sana B.

The other day I was with a friend who has two daughters and a son. My friend was excitedly talking about all of her son's activities and how he had done this and that. After a while I began to ask questions about her daughters. She was surprised I wanted to talk about them, but she politely answered my questions before returning to her favorite topic once again—her son.

It was apparent to me that out of all her children, she loved her son best. I am certain it must be equally obvious to her daughters.


Every mother who has more than one child should guard her heart carefully against favoritism. Having a favorite child is never a good idea because each child Allah gives us is special. Each one has unique talents and abilities.

Favoritism from the parents hurts children deeply. Favoritism creates bitterness in children that may take years to dispel. Each of our children has the capacity to be hurt when we show preference to another child.

Favoritism is wrong! In James 2:9 of Allah's Holy Book it says, "If you show favoritism, you sin."

ALL CHILDREN deserve to be loved unconditionally and equally by both parents!

If you have a favorite child, ask Allah to help you love your other children just as much. Ask Him to heal any family hurts your favoritism might have caused.

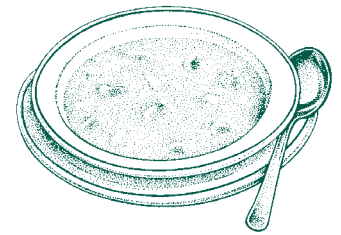
Allah can help you start your relationships with all your children over again if that is what you need to do. There is always hope with Allah. 

"I charge you, in the sight of God...to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism."

—I Timothy 5:21

What's Cooking?

POTATO & LEEK SOUP



Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon oil
- 4 big potatoes, peeled & thinly sliced
- 2 medium leeks, chopped & rinsed
- 2 cups water
- 1 ½ cups milk, divided
- ½ teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1 egg yolk
- ½ cup heavy cream
- chopped fresh parsley and coarsely ground black pepper, optional

Directions:

In a large saucepan over medium heat, put oil. Add potatoes and leeks and cook until leeks are wilted, stirring occasionally. Add water and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until potatoes are tender, 15 to 20 minutes. Stir in 1 cup milk, mustard, salt, and pepper. Working in batches, puree soup in food processor until smooth, about 20 seconds per batch. Return soup to saucepan and stir in remaining milk. In a small bowl whisk together the egg yolk and cream, then stir into soup and simmer until hot. Garnish each serving with chopped parsley, and black pepper if desired. Makes 6 servings.

Q: How can I perk up sandal-weary feet?

A: Gently heat 8 cups whole milk; add ½ cup warm water and 1 drop almond extract. Pour into a tub big enough to accommodate both feet.



Combine ½ cup coarse salt with ½ cup olive oil to form a paste. Smooth calluses with a buffer and file nails. Soak feet in milk mixture for 10 minutes. Gently scrub feet and lower legs with salt paste. Rinse with warm water; pat dry. To finish, apply moisturizer to feet and legs and polish toenails.



Isa Heals a Blind Man

The Injil tells us a story about a man named Isa who healed many people. Isa was a man Allah sent to earth to show people the way to live.


One day, Isa was walking through the streets with a crowd of people following him. The crowd had seen Isa do many great things. They were waiting to see what he would do next.

Along the side of the road sat a man who was blind since birth, so he could not earn a living doing anything besides begging. Every day he would sit and wait to hear the "clink clink" of money in his bucket so he would have enough to buy food.

One day, he could tell by the noise of the crowd that something was different. He could feel excitement in the air as lots of people surrounded him. Suddenly he felt a cool paste on his eyes. Isa had spit on the ground and made mud from spit and dirt, then smoothed the mud over the blind man's eyes.

Isa told the blind man, "Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam."

It was a strange request, but the man jumped up and went to do what Isa had told him. When he rinsed his eyes, suddenly he could see! He ran around, looking at all the things he had never been able to see before.

The Injil has many more stories of Isa healing people. Isa still has the power to heal today. All we need to do is ask him and believe in his power. 

Blind leading the Blind

Get together with a friend. Blindfold yourself and pretend you are blind. Have your friend lead you around the house, and then around the yard outside. Stop at several points along the way and see if you can identify where you are. Feel objects in different rooms to see if you can figure out what they are. Remove the blindfold from your eyes. Blindfold your friend and do the same.

Numbers Game

Cross out the following:

- The number of days in a week
- The number of months in a year
- The number of hours in a day
- The number of oceans in the world
- The number of fingers you have
- The number of ears you have



You should now have only one number left. It is the number of times Isa died for our sins. His death (and resurrection) is the only one needed for receiving forgiveness of sins. Now that is something to be thankful for!



Challenge

How excited the beggar must have been when he opened his eyes. For the first time in his life, he could see! We can only imagine what objects he saw for the first time when he washed the mud from his eyes in the pool of Siloam and was given sight by Isa. Perhaps he saw a dove, a rose, bird, furry spider, ladybug, caterpillar or butterfly. Can you see these objects hidden in the picture?



Your Questions Answered

Q: In your *Noor ul Haq* articles, why do you always include the scriptures of the Jews and Christians? Were not their holy books corrupted centuries ago, and isn't that why Allah had to send down the Qur'an?

H.K. —USA

A: Many Muslims contend that the Qur'an, Islam's Holy Book, came to replace the Holy Books of the Jews and Christians, the Bible, because they became corrupted, altered, outdated or lost. However, the Qur'an itself doesn't say that. Instead, the Qur'an declares that it was sent to confirm the previous revelations. If something is to be confirmed, that something is of extreme importance, especially if Allah does the confirming! Notice the following references:

And believe in what I reveal, confirming the revelation which is with you.... And when there comes to them a Book (Qur'an) from God, confirming what is with them....

—Surat-ul Baqara(2):41,89

To thee (Muhammad) We sent the scripture (Qur'an) in truth confirming (the revelations) which came before it.

—Surat-ul Maida(5):48

What was so important about these previous revelations that are now contained in the Bible? Why does the Qur'an say it came to confirm and guard them? The Qur'an itself gives us the answer. It tells us that the previous revelations were sent to humankind as admonition, insight, mercy, guidance and light—and, of course, this light is the only light that can lead people from the darkness of sin into the splendor of salvation and eternal life. Here are the testimonies of the Qur'an:

And He sent down the Law (of Moses) and the Gospel (of Jesus) before this (the Qur'an) as a guide to mankind.

—Surat-u Ali-Imran(3):3

It was We who revealed the Law (to Moses); therein was guidance and light.... We sent him (Jesus) the Gospel; therein was guidance and light.

—Surat-ul Maida(5):44,46

Once again it is important for the Muslim to realize that the revelations spoken of above are the same as those in the Bible. They are Signs from Allah, and as such, must be believed. The Qur'an is clear on this:

Then those who reject faith in the Signs of God will suffer the severest penalty, and God is exalted in might, Lord of retribution.

—Surat-u Ali-Imran(3):4

Those who reject the Book and the (revelations) with which We sent Our apostles: but soon shall they know,—when the yokes (shall be) round their necks, and the chains; they shall be dragged along in the boiling fetid fluid; then in the Fire shall they be burned.

—Surat-ul Mumin(40):70-72

But what about the claim that the People of the Book corrupted their scriptures? Nowhere does the Qur'an accuse the People of the Book of actually changing the written words of the sacred manuscripts of their holy books. It only accuses them of *taharif*—changing the meaning with their tongue while keeping other portions of Scripture hidden.

There is among them a section who distort the Book with their tongues....

—Surat-u Ali-Imran(3):78

Those who allege that the original Scriptures have been deliberately altered need to provide the true text in order to prove what exactly has been changed. The most common attempt has been the distribution of the *Gospel of Barnabas*. However, this attempt has proven embarrassing since the so-called *Gospel of Barnabas* contains contradictions to the Qur'an.

Though variant readings which differ in small details exist in the early manuscripts of the Bible, there is nothing to indicate deliberate changes for the sake of tampering with major doctrines. The existence of variant readings is also true of the Qur'an. Yusuf Ali, in his work, *The Holy Qur'an: Translation and Commentary* (2 Edition, 1977), points out some of these variant readings. For example, he tells us that one reading of Surat-ul Maida(5):6 is *wash your faces...and (wash) your feet*, whereas a different reading for the same verse is *wash your faces and wipe your heads and (wipe) your feet*.

If, however, there are people who continue to insist that major changes dealing with major doctrines were made in the scriptures of the Jews and the Christians, then two major questions must be addressed.

Question 1: Who changed the Scriptures?

It is often alleged that the Jews and Christians jointly altered the Scriptures in order to hold back the spread of Islam. But this is highly unlikely since the Jews and Christians themselves differed widely.

The Jews say "The Christians have naught (to stand) upon;" and the Christians say, "The Jews have naught (to stand) upon." Yet they (profess to) study the (same) book.

—Surat-ul Baqara(2):113

If the Scriptures had been changed to alter doctrine, surely someone would have protested, as many sects existed both within Judaism and Christianity. However, there is no mention of such accusations in the history of the Christian church. The accusations were that Scripture had been falsely interpreted, not that it had been altered.

Isa never accused the Jews of altering the Scriptures; instead, he drew their attention to them. If changes had been made, Isa certainly would have exposed them. During the time of Muhammad, true Christian scholars from among the Abyssinians who befriended the Muslims would also have exposed any attempted changes in the Scriptures.

Nearest among them in love to the believers wilt thou find those who say "We are Christians" because amongst these are men devoted to learning.

—Surat-ul Maida(5):82

Question 2: When were the Scriptures supposedly altered?

If the Scriptures of the Jews and Christians had been altered before the death of Muhammad, surely, he would not have been instructed by Allah to recite the following:

I believe in the Book (of the People of the Book).

—Surat-ush Shura(42):15

We believe in God, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to (all) Prophets from their Lord. We make no difference between one and another of them.

—Surat-ul Baqara(2):136

If thou (Muhammad) wert in doubt as to what We have revealed unto thee, then those who have been reading the Book from before thee (the People of the Book).

—Surat-u Yunus(10):94

It is highly unlikely that the Scriptures could have been altered after the death of Muhammad for several reasons.

By 600 A.D., Christianity had spread into Asia, Africa and Europe. There is no evidence of a worldwide council that met for the purpose of altering the Scriptures.


Since Muslims revere the Holy Books, converts from Judaism and Christianity would have retained the true texts. However, such texts that teach totally different doctrines from the material of today's Bible are nonexistent.

Early manuscripts of the scriptures of the Bible still exist from the fourth and fifth centuries (Muhammad was born in the sixth century). These manuscripts line up with today's translations of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures and any variant readings are noted.

In conclusion, the Qur'an itself claims no one can alter the Word of Allah:

The Word of thy Lord doth find its fulfillment in truth and in justice. None can change His Words.

—Surat-ul An'am(6):115

If certain people use these verses to claim that Allah has been able to protect the Qur'an from any corruption, then they should believe that Allah is powerful enough to preserve all the other Holy Books as well! 

**Allah is powerful
enough to preserve
all the other Holy
Books as well!**

Many of the readers' letters are written in Arabic. In translating them into English, we have tried to preserve their original style and structure. Because of the space availability, we have only excerpted most of the letters.

Letters to the Editor



*A s s a l a m u
Alaykum*

I am a Muslim lady living in the United States. I wish to convey my admiration, appreciation and respect to you for all your great

efforts. I am one of the many who are impressed with this magnificent magazine. It contains everything that is exceptional and beneficial.

May God richly reward you with every bounty. Please do not every deprive me of your magazine.

—S.A.
Michigan

Thank you for your subscription. It is a constant reminder of how Shaitan alters man's perception. Your many stories make clear to me the need to:

1. Intend to want the truth
2. Read and learn the truth and
3. Question what you read while praying for the guidance to know the truth when it reaches you.

I thank you for strengthening me in my belief, actions and intent. I pray that Allah will be pleased with me.

—A. I.
New York

From Overseas

Greetings and love to you in His most precious name!

Thanks for sending me *Noor ul Haq* reg-

ularly. Even though I was away from India the last two years, I am very happy to have these all and was delighted to go through its messages to send to our Muslim friends.

As I was going through all your periodicals, I found we need this kind of material for the Central Asian Russian language. I have been working in this area and I believe we need lots of good materials for the Kazakhs, Uzbeks and Turkish people of Central Asia.

Please send me your *Noor ul Haq* to my Kazakhstan address.

—S.A.
Kazakhstan

My name is M.R. and I find your magazines very interesting. I don't have much time to write because I am busy providing for my family working 3 jobs at one time. Please pray for me.

I read your magazine last year and never got a chance to write, so now I took off for about 2 weeks, I decided to write to you.

I wish to order every issue of your *Noor ul Haq*. They interest me as I seem to understand Christianity from a different angle being a Muslim.

I thank you for your cooperation again in sending me the magazine and wish you success in sending the true message of Christianity, clearing all the doubts of Muslims.

—M.R.
South Africa

I am an instructor at a college in Ethiopia. We have a Christian Education Ministry Major at the college with children's ministry as part of the track.

We would love to receive *Noor ul Haq* for our library.

—S.W.
Ethiopia

Grace and peace to you from our God and Jesus Christ our Lord.

I am longing to become a friend of *Noor ul Haq*. I want you to send me each issue as soon as it is out. I wish you to send me a Bible.

My first goal is for friendship, but there may be questions which need answers. There are also circumstances in this country and my school that I wish to share with you.

May God reward you according to your deeds.

—B.G.
Egypt

Editor's Note:

We are sorry but we do not have the personnel to reply to every letter personally. But be assured of our prayers and concern for each one of you.

Bissmillah Al-rahman Al-rahim

Good greetings and fragrant wishes to all the brothers in this great organization. For you take care of all the worries and problems of humanity.

I wish you to know I have been with you for 10 years. I have been in touch with *Noor ul Haq* because it is the light of the truth and justice, especially since it holds much knowledge, information and advice.

May God regard, keep and strengthen your country for the best.

—L.H.
Morocco

Arabic Proverbs

He who falls not rises not.

Meaning: In order to gain experience one has to fall into trouble first.

He spits and then licks it back.

Said of someone who promises or pledges and then changes his mind.

The tassel of a saddle bag neither balances the load, nor does it tilt it.

Said of a person whose influence or importance is nil.

Answer to Challenge

from page 13

