

Azra Kulic
Professor Pinky Babulal
EN 102
November 03, 2014

The Most Essential Research

Probably, when we want to buy a car, house or even a new computer, we research about them to be certain to get the best and the most convenient one. What about our religion? To me, my religion is very important, as to almost everyone. Do we take that seriously? Have we ever researched about our religion as for less important things in our lives? Or do we just take that for granted and follow our parents or someone else blindly in that merit regard. Every religious person believes that his or her religion is correct. Probably, it is a natural way of thinking. Have you ever wondered who is really our God? Who is the Creator of the Universe in the Holy Scriptures, and who is the Prophet of our time? Eagerly, I have decided to research deeply about our beloved Prophet Muhammad and Almighty God, and compare the true Jesus' teaching, monotheism, to St. Paul's doctrine, trinity, because our Holy Scriptures were corrupted.

Even though I have a little private library at my lovely home, I have decided to visit our Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC) library to find some books for the essay because if I research only from my own books someone may think that I am biased. I wanted to see what other say about these topics. After a couple hours of looking for books, I found some amazing and interesting books from Western authors, scholars, and historians for my research paper. I was so excited and could not wait to read these books to see what the Western, non-Muslim opinions are on my topic.

First of all, I decided to write about Muhammad, peace be upon him, the last of God's Prophets and Messengers because he has the greatest influence on my life. He taught me very

important lessons about my religion, Islam, and Almighty God, Allah. Also, he was not only my best teacher; he was my role model and excellent example because of his noble character.

However, Muhammad was not only the most influential person in my life; he was the most influential person in our history as well. Well-known American historian Michael H. Hart in his book, *The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History*, has written, “My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world’s most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels” (3). As we may see, the writer of the book not only selected Muhammad into the 100 most influential people in our history, but he chose Muhammad to lead the list of that chosen people.

Additionally, Jesus was third on his list, and the author explains why he did so. Hart says, “Christian theology, however, was shaped principally by the work of St. Paul. Jesus presented a spiritual message; Paul added to that the **worship of Christ**. Furthermore, St. Paul was the author of a considerable portion of the New Testament, and was the main proselytizing force for Christianity during the first century”(17,18). And the author added, “For these reasons, some people even contend that it is Paul, rather than Jesus, who should be considered the founder of Christianity” (18). Actually, Hart acknowledges that Jesus was a devout Jew, and he also said, “It has been frequently pointed out that Jesus was in many ways very similar to the Hebrew prophets of Old Testament, and was deeply influenced by them” (19). Also, Hart says, “At the time of Jesus’ death, his followers simply formed a small Jewish sect...he left behind a limited number of disciples” (18). So, according to the book, St. Paul was the founder of Christianity who added the worship of Christ and changed the faith. The author considered Jesus as a devout Jew and similar to the prophets of the Old Testament as well.

Furthermore, Muhammad's family traced back to the Prophet Abraham through Ishmael. According to the book *When the Moon Split: A Biography of Prophet Muhammad*, the author states, "Lineage being an important consideration in Arab society, the Prophet's family tree was well-documented. He was born into a family that traced its ancestry back to the Prophet Abraham through Ishmael" (Safiur 17). Additionally, the Bible talks about that as well. The article "What does the Bible say about Muslims/Islam?" states, "The history of the Muslim peoples, therefore, begins with the prophet Abraham and his descendants through Ishmael, his firstborn son." Also, the article talks about Abraham's son Ishmael and his great nation: It is in the Bible – the Torah – Genesis 17:20, RSV: "As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him and make him fruitful and multiply him exceedingly; he shall be the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation" ("What does the Bible..."). Therefore, Prophet Muhammad's family traced its ancestry back to Prophet Abraham through his first born son Ishmael, and they are that "great nation" that the Holy Bible is talking about. The Prophet Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. Muslims are descendants from Ismael and Jews and Christians are descendants from Isaac. Therefore we should be brethren in faith.

Certainly, Muhammad was mentioned and prophesized in the Bible. For example, Muhammad was mentioned by his name in the Hebrew Bible: "Hikko Mamittakim we kullo **Muhammadim** Zehdoodeh wa Zehraee Bayna Jerusalem" (Song of Solomon 5:16). But in the English Bible this verse looks like this, "His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is **altogether lovely**. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem" (Song of Solomon 5:16). As we may see, in the Hebrew Bible, Muhammad was mentioned by his name, but people who translated the Bible from Hebrew into English language try to hide that, and instead of

Muhammad's proper name, translators of the Bible gave only the meaning of Muhammad's name – altogether lovely. Maybe because they do not like to admit that Muhammad is the Prophet who was prophesized in the Bible. By this, they misguide their followers. For everyone who would like to find more where Muhammad was mentioned in the Holy Bible, I would like to recommend the brilliant book *Prophet Muhammad the Last Messenger in the Bible* written by Kais Al-Kalby.

Additionally, some Christian scholars praised and acknowledged the greatness of Muhammad. William E. Phipps, author of the book *Muhammad and Jesus :A Comparison of the Prophets and Their Teaching*, states, “Timothy, a Nestorian Christian and an eight-century patriarch of the Assyrian Church has had kind word for Muhammad when stated, ‘Muhammad is ‘worthy of all praise’ and ‘walked in the path of the prophets’ because he taught the unity of God. He taught the way of good works; he opposed idolatry and polytheism’ ...” (8). Also, Phipps states that George Sale, a Protestant lawyer, who translated the Quran from Arabic into English for the first time in 1734 writes in his introduction, “Muhammad gave his Arabs the best religion he could, as well as the best laws; preferable, at least, to those of the ancient pagan lawgivers” (Qtd. in Phipps 9). Additionally, Phipps states that European historian Johann Doellinger asserted: “No other mortal has ever, from the beginning of the world, exercised such an immeasurable influence upon the religious, moral, and political relations of mankind as has the Arab Muhammad” (Qtd. in Phipps 9). Also, Phipps says, “In the twentieth century, non-Muslim scholars have increasingly acknowledged the greatness of Muhammad.

For five decades Anglican bishop Kenneth Cragg has been writing books to publicize the admirable qualities of Islam. He writes: ‘Muhammad as Prophet, was unique, final, irreparable... The Quran is the final Evidence of the Divine origin of the Prophet's mission. Its

Arabic eloquence is indicative of its source in God” (Phipps 9). We can see that some non-Muslim scholars acknowledge and admit that Muhammad is the final Prophet who was chosen by our God as all other Prophets before him. Not only that but Muhammad is highly respected by these scholars and historians.

Furthermore, Muslims believe that Islam is not a new religion; it is a universal religion for all people, not only for certain and chosen people, for all times from beginning until Day of Judgment. Many prophets have been chosen by God and were sent to their people in their times because Allah says in the Quran, “And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], "Worship Allah and avoid false gods." And among them were those whom Allah guided, and among them were those upon whom error was [deservedly] decreed. So proceed through the earth and observe how was the end of the deniers” (Quran 16:36). So, God’s Messengers came with the same message; they taught people about God (Allah) and how to worship Him alone. Probably, because of the teachings of our previous Messengers, that message still remains, but unfortunately teaching is corrupted and changed a lot; now-a-days, most people say that they believe in one God, but they name God differently because Holy Scriptures were corrupted.

Certainly, knowledgeable Muslims and their scholars believe that all Prophets and their followers have been worshiping the same God (Allah). God in the Arabic Christian Bible is *Allah* like in the Quran. According to the Arabic Bible and the Quran, our creator and the creator of the Heavens is Allah. The very first sentence in the Arabic Bible states, “Fee al-badi khalaqa **Allahu** as Samaawat wa al-Ard,” which means in English, “In Beginning **Allah** created the Heavens and the earth.” The words *Allah* and *Ellah* appear throughout the entire Bible. *Ellah* means God, but *Allah* is the proper name for Almighty God. Only on the first page of the Arabic Bible the word *Allah* is mentioned seventeen times. Therefore, Almighty God in the Arabic

Bible as in the Quran is Allah, whom Muhammad, Jesus, all other prophets and their followers have been worshipping.

Furthermore, Islam means peace and submission to the will of the One true God. Indeed, Muslims believe that Jesus, all God's Prophets from Holy Scriptures and their followers were Muslims and called their followers to Islam. For example, Jesus himself submitted his will to the will of God and taught people to do so. There are a couple examples from the Holy Bible which support my belief. Jesus said, "Not everybody who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will get into the kingdom of heaven. Only those who **do the will** of my Father who is in heaven will enter" (Matthew 7:21). Additionally, Jesus said, "I can't do anything by myself. Whatever I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just. I don't seek my own will but the **will** of the one **who sent me**" (John 5:30). Also, Jesus very clearly distinguished between himself and Almighty God when he said in the Bible, "This is eternal life: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you sent." (John 17:3). The Bible also states, "A man approached him and said, 'Teacher, what good thing must I do to have eternal life?' Jesus said, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There's only One who is good. If you want to enter eternal life, keep the commandments" (Mathew 19: 16, 17). As we may see, Jesus was a teacher, who was sent by God like all other Prophets; he submitted his will to the will of God. Most importantly, he distinguished himself from the true God, and he called people to obey God's Commandments. Unfortunately, after his departure people started worshipping him instead of Almighty God because St. Paul and others distorted the Bible.

In my opinion, St. Paul's doctrine, trinity, contradicts the teaching of the Bible as well as Jesus' teaching. For example, Jesus called his followers to worship the One and Only God; but St. Paul teaches people to worship Jesus instead of God. Also, Jesus called people to obey God's

Commandments, but St. Paul convinced people not to obey God's commandments anymore because Jesus, according to Paul's teaching, set people free from the law. There is one of many examples from the Bible, "Before faith came, we were guarded under the Law, locked up until faith that was coming would be revealed, so that the Law became our custodian until Christ so that we might be made righteous by faith" (Galatians 3: 23,24). Additionally, Jesus never mentions trinity in his life during his teaching. We could see from all these examples what he had been teaching; indeed, he taught pure monotheism. I want just to remind individuals that Jesus said, "Whoever loves me will keep my word..." (John 14:23). So, we should really learn what the true teaching of Jesus was and compare it with Paul's doctrine to see whom we really love and follow. If someone wants to find what true teaching of our dear Jesus was, I would highly recommend the book *The True Message of Jesus Christ* written by Dr. Bilal Philips.

Nevertheless, all this is not well known to people in the West because many denigrate, libel and minimize our beloved Prophet Muhammad. Phipps in his book says:

"Reciprocal generous appreciations of Muhammad by non-Muslims are hard to find. In religions as in politics, vilifying a rival leader is a sleazy but often effective way of promoting one's favorite. Montgomery Watt, who is both an Episcopalian and a widely respected contemporary biographer of Muhammad, notes, 'None of the great figures of history is so poorly appreciated in the West as Muhammad. Western writers have mostly been prone to believe the worst of Muhammad'" (2).

Additionally, Phipps acknowledges, "Libel toward Muhammad has been common in Eastern Orthodoxy, in Roman Catholicism, and in Protestantism" (3). Furthermore, Phipps quotes from the book *Islamic Conception of Intellectual Life* by Naser, "For more than half of (sic), the adversary that Christians have most loved to hate has been Islam. The cultural superiority of

Islam during the first millennium after [its] rise was not appreciated. While Christianity was in its 'Dark ages,' art and sciences were flourishing in Muslim states" (Qtd. in Phipps 3). Some people libel and minimize Muhammad, but that can hurt only them and their followers.

Sadly, many people do not know who the Prophet is of our time and which Holy Book is the Book of the present time. However, all the time through history there were people who followed their Prophets; on the other hand, there were people who rejected and attacked them. Muslims love and highly respect all God's Prophets who were mentioned in our Holy Scriptures, but follow Prophet Muhammad, the final Messenger and seal of the prophets, the one who was mentioned in the Bible — the altogether lovely — because he is the Prophet of our time. To whomever likes to find more about this, I would like to recommend the book *Muhammad: A Prophet For Our Time* written by Karen Armstrong. Surely, I believe that people who had followed and obeyed Jesus' true teaching in his time will be saved like all other people who have been following their prophets in their times, but those who rejected them will be punished.

I have learned through these years not to blindly follow anyone. We research about many things in our life, but when it comes to religion most of us just blindly follow our parents or someone else. Yes, Islam teaches me to respect, help, and honor my dear parents, but not to follow them blindly. In fact, everyone should choose religion by themselves and not be a blind follower. In fact, this choice should be made very carefully and seriously because of our happiness in this life and hereafter. Also, as a Muslim, I like to have not only faith, but proof for everything in my religion to be certain and content; I like to use my intellect and comprehend. The more I read the more I am certain and confident. Probably, many of you were surprised and shocked by my research paper. I put my heart, time, and effort into this essay because I believe that people who love Jesus very much follow unknowingly Paul's doctrine, trinity, instead of

Jesus' teaching, monotheism. Even though I am certain, I do not like to say this is right and that is wrong. Thus, my brethren in faith, my real brothers and sisters in humanity, I just want to encourage everyone who wants to find more about this to read, learn and research; now, you have reason to do the most essential research by yourselves.

Edited for grammar by Antarah Crawley, with limited modifications made where the intended meaning was obvious. Copyright © 2014 by Azra Kulic. All rights reserved.