**What Every Muslim Should Know About Christmas**

Al-Hamdulillah, All praise be to Allah alone, for making us

Muslims and bestowing us the Deen of Islam to distinguish right and wrong. The holiday

season is upon us again, and the ugly head of Satan is rising again to inspire people to

indulge in innovation and shirk.

What proceeds is an analytical view of Christmas and appropriate Muslim conduct during the

Christmas season.

Any belief system or ritual (Christmas or otherwise) in any religion should satisfy each

of the following criteria to be labeled as authentic:

1. It should have its evidence from the scriptures or from the

 authentic sayings of the Messenger.

 2. The Messenger himself and his companions should practice and propagate it.

 3. The Scripture or the Messenger's sayings in which this belief system is present should

 be preserved from alterations or perishment.

**Does Christmas have Biblical**

**Evidence?**

The word 'Christmas' is not even present in the entire Bible. The

Bible has closed lips on the entire feast of Christmas with one exception, the decoration

of tree. Fortunately, for the Christians, the Bible does has a word or two to say on the

decoration of the Christmas tree, but unfortunately for them, their own Bible criticizes

the use of decorating tree:

"The customs of the people are worthless, they cut a tree

 out of the forest, and a craftsman shapes it with his chisel, they adore it with silver

 and gold, they fasten it with hammer and nails so it will not totter" (Jeremiah

 10:3,4).

Pre-Christian pagans superstitiously believed that the evergreen

tree has special power of protection. In fact, the use of Christmas tree began in the 17th

century, in Strasbourg, France and from there it spread to Germany, Britain and then to

the U.S. "Tree worship was a common feature of religion among the Teutonic and

Scandinavian peoples of northern Europe before their conversion to

Christianity…German settlers brought the Christmas tree custom to the American

colonies in the 17th century. By the 19th century its use was quite widespread". (Compton's

Encyclopedia, 1998 Edition)

**Was Jesus Born on Dec. 25th?**

Neither the date 25th Dec. nor any other date on Jesus' birth is

mentioned in the Bible. Not until the year 530 C.E., that a monk, Dionysus Exigus, fixed

the date of the birth of Jesus on Dec. 25th. "He wrongly dated the birth of Christ

according to the Roman system (i.e., 754 years after the founding of Rome) as Dec. 25,

753". (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1998 ed.) This date was chosen perhaps in

keeping with the holidays already indoctrinated into pagans.

Roman pagans celebrated Dec. 25th as the birth of their 'god' of light, Mithra. "In

the 2nd century A..D., it (Mithraism) was more general in the Roman Empire than

Christianity, to which it bore many similarities" (The Concise Columbia

Encyclopedia, 1995 ed.)

"The reason why Christmas came to be celebrated on December

 25 remains uncertain, but most probably the reason is that early Christians wished the

 date to coincide with the pagan Roman festival marking the "birthday of the

 unconquered sun" (natalis solis invicti); this festival celebrated the winter

 solstice, when the days again begin to lengthen and the sun begins to climb higher in the

 sky". (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1998 Ed.)

Other pagan 'gods' born on Dec. 25th are: Hercules, the son of

Zeus (Greeks) Bacchus, god of wind, (Romans),Adenis god of Greeks Freyr the Greek-Roman

god.

**What about Santa Claus?**

Once again the word 'Santa Claus' appears no where in the bible.

However Saint Nicholas (Santa Claus) was a real person, bishop, who was born 300 years

after Jesus (pbuh). According to legend he was extremely kind and went out at night to

distribute presents to the needy. After his death on the 6th of Dec., school boys in

Europe celebrated a feast day every year on the anniversary of his death. Queen Victoria

later changed the celebration date from Dec. 6th to Dec. 24th eve.

Thus Christmas is an innovation (*bidah*) in their religion, associating it with

Santa Claus, and changing the original date of death anniversary of Saint Nicholas are

further deviations.

**Did Jesus or his companions**

**celebrated Christmas?**

Of course not. If Jesus meant his '*Ummah*' to celebrate

Christmas, he would have practiced it himself and enjoined it on his followers. Even the

'supposed pseudo-companions' of Jesus (and not the companions of Jesus mentioned in the

Quran who called themselves as Muslims) mentioned in the bible made many innovations in

their religion, but celebrating Christmas was not their endeavor.

"In fact, the church did not observe a festival for the

 celebration of the event until the 4th century" (Grolier's Encyclopedia).

Even if Christianity passed the above two test, they still have

to prove that their Bible have remained unaltered since its revelation. A whole separate

article could be written on this topic.

We'll mention three brief points, insha Allah. (1) Bible, unlike our Quran, was not

written down during Jesus' lifetime and no evidence of it ever being memorized. (2) The

oldest bible (*Codex Siniticas*) in possession of Christendom is only from the 4th

century C.E. (3) verses are missing or added as to the Bible throughout the centuries.

Compare different Bible versions (eg. compare the *King James Version* with *Revised*

*Standard Version*. For verse: 1 John 5:7, this verse is missing in Revised Standard

Version published in 1952).

How unfortunate and pitiful: parts of the original Bible has been lost. Part surviving has

been corrupted and the corrupted parts has been misinterpreted.

**How should Muslims React to**

**Christmas?**

Being the custodians of Truth and the 'Best Ummah created for

mankind" and "witnesses unto Mankind", we Muslims just can't stay still as

the society around us is entrapped by Satan. Enjoining good and forbidding evil should be

our theme.

The foremost thing to realize is that Christmas is a big innovation which is leading a big

part of humanity to *shirk* (associating partners with God). Christianity has

transgressed the limits set by Allah; therefore showing happiness and joy on Christmas,

Halloween, Easter, Good Friday is like shaking hands with Satan and telling him to carry

on the good work.

Remember Allah commandment to us in the Quran:

**"Help you one another in virtue and righteousness,**

 **but do not help one another in sin and transgression. And fear Allah, verily Allah is**

 **severe in punishment".** (Quran, 5:2)

Therefore, a Muslim can't enjoin in any aspect of Christmas in

the disguise that Jesus is our Prophet too, we are just honoring him by celebrating

Christmas. We should recognize the bidah of Christmas and the Prophet's warning that all

bidah should be rejected. Therefore, accepting Christmas invitations, attending Christmas

parties, buying small plastic Christmas trees to please the kids (some Muslims actually

do) should be avoided.

By greeting Christians with 'merry Christmas' we are legitimizing Christmas, by driving

out on Christmas eve to witness the decoration of houses, we are appreciating *bidah*

with our eyes, by placing our kids on the laps of Santa in the malls we are handing them

in the hands of a fiend, by closing our Islamic Schools or shops during Christmas we are

giving it our silent approval, by selling Christmas items in our shops, we are

strengthening the pillars of *Kufr*.

By purchasing for children books with Christmas themes ('The Night before Christmas'), by

watching Christmas movies and by giving holidays to our regular Islamic schools or weekend

schools, we are passing them a misguided message.

Indeed Islam came to tear down the pillars of *kufr* and replace them with the

pillars of Islam. Armed with facts on Christmas and eloquent words of Islam, the door of *Dawah*

to the Christians should be wisely open.

When the Christians see us restraining from observing Christmas, they will curiously ask

us for the reason. This opportunity should be used by each single Muslim to discuss Islam

and invite non-Muslims to Islam.

It is highly recommended for all Muslims to carry brochures on Islam with them to pass on

to non-Muslim classmates, co-workers, neighbors etc. after discussing Islam. Free

brochures on various topics on Islam can be obtained by calling 1-718-658-1199 (for U.S.

and Canadian residents).

Writing articles in campus and local newspapers on 'Jesus (pbuh)

in Islam', conducting soup kitchens in impoverished neighborhoods, clothing drives in

schools and college campuses for the needy etc. are some proper modes of conduct during

the Christmas holiday season.

Thus the hearts and minds of non-Muslims should be exposed to the beautiful message of

Islam.

Truth comes, falsehood disappears; Islam came, now *shirk* must clear.

Sabeel Ahmed October 1997.\*\*\*