

The Doctrine of Crucifixion between Islam and Christianity— A Dialogue and Comparative Study

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One of the issues that engage one's attention, especially in light of numerous simplified discussions, is the acute difference over the doctrine of crucifixion in the Christian faith. The more Christianity sticks to the doctrine of crucifixion and considers it a symbol of love, sacrifice and redemption, the highly critical Muslims become of this doctrine and the more they consider it mere falsehood and fabricated lies. The incidental observer of such muddled discussions can by no means get to a satisfactory positive or negative significance of this vehement argument over the crucifixion incident.

If such disagreement extends over the wide historical relationship between Christianity and Islam as well as over the reason behind the eruption of enmity between them, it is not right to take such disagreement as lightly as many people do; nor is it right to take it seriously in such a way as to appear arbitrary and supportive of one particular stand and not the other without a deliberate and comprehensive observation, given that the Qur'anic stand, which clearly disapproves of the doctrine of crucifixion, considers Christianity a divine religion and holds the Messiah, Jesus Christ, and his mother, Virgin Mary daughter of Imran, in high esteem.

Perhaps in order to conduct a constructive dialogue about the relationship between Christianity and Islam, which are arguably the two greatest world faiths today and which are considered the foundations of two greatest human civilizations ever known in human history, we ought to study this issue and address this doctrine with great care and depth and to place them in their comprehensive place within the context of the relationship and positive dialogue between the two faiths, given that the real reason behind this doctrinal confrontation is in effect the failure of both parties to comprehend the essence of the issue and their failure to consider each other's views in this respect.

What in fact makes understanding and communication all the more difficult is that Christianity hardly recognizes the civilizational project of the other party, i.e. Islam, and it has thus established the relationship on the basis of confrontation and enmity. We need, at the same time, to understand that the great burden in conducting dialogue about this particular issue falls upon Muslims with a view to establishing real communication and understanding as well as

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opening doors to dialogue, given that they were in fact the first to criticize and disapprove of the doctrine of crucifixion.

The first step to mend the dialogue foundations concerning this important issue is to make sure that the essence of dialogue in this regard must be founded on the Qur'anic treatment which has in the first place given rise to this issue in Islam. Furthermore, treatment and discussion must be carried out in a fairly comprehensive manner that complements all the aspects of the Qur'anic dialogue with Christianity and to understand the aspects and goals of such treatment, bearing in mind the time and space dimensions in which the Qur'anic discourse addressed the issue in the first place.

In the midst of the raging conflict between Christianity and Islam and bearing in mind the missionary work as well as the Orientalists' efforts to disparage Islam and disfigure its image and reputation, and also given Muslims' contempt of Christian beliefs and their efforts to demean the Christian faith, we need to ask ourselves whether the causes of this conflict are attributed to the fact that the Holy Qur'an embarked on the process of criticizing and correcting the distortions and flaws which negatively affected its foundations, especially with regard to the issue of the divinity of Jesus Christ. We also need to ask ourselves whether this conflict is confined to the issue of demeaning the figures of Christianity. The questions that arise here are: Does the Muslim stand in this respect aim to question its credibility and degrade it, or is the whole issue far more comprehensive and far deeper than this? Or is the superficiality of treating the issue and the fierceness of the raging conflict between the two faiths behind the concealment of the essence of the issues under study and blindness of the parties to the conflict to the reality and significance of this disagreement and conflict?

If we are certain as to the depth of the intents of the Holy Qur'an in this respect and aware of its comprehensive treatment of the issue as well as its sublime objectives, then we ought to review our understanding of the Qur'anic treatment of the subject and to acquaint ourselves with all its aspects with a view to becoming cognizant of the significance of the categorical Qur'anic stand which does not budge on the issue, nor does it hesitate to disapprove and censure the doctrine of crucifixion.

The fact that the Holy Qur'an criticizes and refutes the doctrine of crucifixion does not in any way mean that this is done in a spirit of enmity towards the Prophet who brought Christianity; rather it holds him in high esteem and spares no effort to defend him and his mother in the face of all types of attempts at demeaning him and degrading his noble status.

Besides, had Islam, which engaged—as soon as it was revealed—in a series of dialogues with the polytheist Arabs who had no knowledge of or interest whatsoever in the Christian faith, been motivated by enmity, it could have called into question the Christian faith and defamed it but it did not; rather, we find that it recognizes all the miracles attributed to Jesus (peace be upon him) as an infant born to a virgin mother and the performer of other miracles including the ability to raise people from the dead by Allah's leave; in fact, there is nothing much easier for the enemy to call to question and deny these miraculous deeds and fabricates lies about them. The Qur'an says, "Behold! The angels said: O Mary! Allah has chosen you and purified you—chosen you above the women of all nations." (*Surat Aal 'Imraan*, 3:42); "[And mention] when the angels said, 'O Mary, indeed Allah gives you good tidings of a Word from Him, whose name will be the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary—distinguished in this world and the hereafter and among those brought near [to Allah]. He will speak to the people in the cradle and in maturity and will be of the righteous.' She said, 'My Lord, how will I have a child when no man has touched me? [The angel] said, 'Such is Allah; He creates what He wills. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it 'Be' and it is. And he will teach him writing and wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel; and [make him] a messenger to the children of Israel, [who will say], 'Indeed I have come to you with a sign from your Lord in that I design for you from clay [that which is] like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird by the permission of Allah. And I cure the blind [from birth] and the leper, and I give life to the dead—by the permission of Allah. And I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your houses. Indeed, in that is a sign for you, if you are believers.'" (*Surat Aal 'Imraan*, 3:45-49)

Furthermore, the Holy Qur'an does not refrain from venerating and revering the righteous people from amongst the People of the Book and the followers of Christianity. The Qur'an says,

"They are not [all] the same; among the People of the Scripture is a community standing [in obedience], reciting the verses of Allah during periods of the night and prostrating [in prayer]. They believe in Allah and the Last day, and they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and hasten to good deeds. And those are among the righteous. And whatever good they do—never will it be removed from them. And Allah is Knowing of the righteous." (*Surat Aal 'Imraan*, 3:113-115)

"Then We sent following their footsteps Our messengers and followed [them] with Jesus, the son of Mary, and gave him the Gospel. And We placed in the hearts of those who followed him compassion and mercy..." (*Surat Al-Hadeed*, 57:27)

"And do not argue with the People of the Scripture except in a way that is best, except for those who commit injustice among them, and

say, 'We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you; and our God and your God is one; and we RE Muslims [in submission] to Him.'" (*Surat Al-Ankaboot*, 29:46)

Therefore, had it been a matter of enmity, the Holy Qur'an—which was revealed in the Arabic language and which addressed the illiterate and polytheist Arabs—would have denied the Christian faith its claim to such miraculous events, which are by nature hard to believe without witnessing them. In fact, even many of those who witnessed such miracles from amongst the children of Israel themselves fabricated numerous reasons to disbelieve in them and deny the noble status of the Prophet who was sent with them.

Strangely enough, the Holy Qur'an acknowledges the miraculous incidents attributed to the Christian faith and at the same time strongly disapproves of its claim of crucifixion and the set of beliefs that issues from this doctrine which grants humanity divine forgiveness of all the wages of sin and disobedience to God's commands.

In fact, those bent on destroying Christianity out of enmity and aggression would with all the more reason call to question the miracles attributed to this faith, especially if they are backed in this respect and are not the first to defame it. By the same token, those who wish to destroy and distort Christianity out of inequity, jealousy and aggression, it would not be wise to call to question a faith that calls to forgiveness, tolerance and absolution and then readily acknowledge the miraculous deeds that are hard for ordinary people to accept or believe following their customs and beliefs.

Indeed, the Qur'an is not unwary as to commit such grave mistakes which are known to every sensible person and which do not contradict the values of justice upon which the Qur'an is founded. The Holy Qur'an says,

"It is He who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth..." (*Surat At-Tawbah*, 9: 33)

"So is He who guides to the truth more worthy to be followed or he who guides not unless he is guided?" (*Surat Yoonus*, 10:35)

"...and when you judge between people to judge with justice." (*Surat An-Nisaa'*, 4:58)

"It is Allah who has sent down the Book in truth and [also] the balance (i.e. justice)." (*Surat Ash-Shooraa*, 42:17)

"Your Lord has decreed upon Himself mercy." (*Surat Al-An'aam*, 6:54)

"And We have not sent you [O Muhammad] except as a mercy to the worlds." (*Surat Al-Anbiyyaa*', 21:107)

Thus the significance of the whole issue which the Qur'an addresses must be far greater than that, and the issue which the Qur'an raises and discusses in such a way as not to lead to controversy cannot be based on enmity and suspicion.

On the face of it, Christians believe that by disapproving of the doctrine of crucifixion—which describes Jesus' death on the cross a redemption of the original sin which Adam committed and the burden of which his descendents still carry and which brought upon Allah's wrath upon all mankind—Islam completely rejects the spirit of love, sacrifice, tolerance and forgiveness which this doctrine embodies and to which it calls.

Regardless of any other considerations, whoever has some knowledge of the Holy Qur'an by no means understands that the Qur'an rejects or disapproves of the spirit of love, sacrifice, tolerance and forgiveness.

It is imperative, therefore, to comprehend the depth of such issue. We need to have a comprehensive view of the Qur'anic texts regarding the doctrine of crucifixion and Islam's view in this respect. We must look at its discourse in this regard and consider the overall context and all the texts addressing the issue. Our aim here is that such discussion should not be conducted based on preconceived ideas which issue from Jewish teachings that totally reject Christianity and its Prophet and degrade its noble position.

It is clear that Islam recognizes the lofty status of Christianity, and reveres it as well as its prophet whom it raises to the loftiest positions of human respect and veneration. It also recognizes him as a trustworthy messenger and defends him and respects his message which the Qur'an specifically has high regard for the spirit of love, affection and mercy to which it calls.

What is, therefore, the source of disagreement, misunderstanding and suspicion? It is important to understand that by disapproving of the doctrine of crucifixion, Islam does not necessarily gainsay the crucifixion incident or that it did happen in real life. What Islam actually establishes in this respect, however, is that Jesus (peace be upon him) did not die on the cross. What is of importance here is not the crucifixion incident but rather the belief that man's putting Jesus to death on the cross was the reason behind the removal of God's wrath upon Adam and his progeny for the sin he had committed and the means to His forgiveness and pardon.

It would be ludicrous to believe that man's second major crime is some people's intentional will to put Jesus Christ to death—whom

Christians believe he actually died on the cross—is an acceptable means for divine forgiveness and pardon for the first major crime which Adam committed and that the intentional will to unjustly kill Jesus and reject the message of truth is not to be criminalized.

The reason behind Islam's disapproval of this incident and the consequences issuing from it becomes easier to understand once we recognize the position that justice holds in Islam and in the Qur'an. It is upon the basis of this criterion that we readily comprehend that the idea of punishing the crime—which represents the essence of the doctrine of crucifixion—clearly contradicts the Qur'anic statement and its criterion for the simple fact that it actually contradicts the simplest fundamentals of divine justice and the goals of divine messages as well as their methods in guiding people and mending their ways.

Forgiveness, by the criterion of justice, cannot be attained through the punishment of crime and disobedience; otherwise, why did God's wrath fall upon those who committed the first crime and committed an act of disobedience in the first place?

Indeed, justice with regard to forgiveness can only be administered through punishment, or through the sinner's attempt to seek God's forgiveness by showing obedience to Him and demonstrating kindness towards others and working righteous deeds, or through seeking God's forgiveness and pardon. Forgiveness can also be attained in extreme situations through clemency granted by the wronged party without waiting for the criminal to beg for pardon or attempting to use it as a means to realize some interest or in return for some kind of compensation. However, to use forgiveness as a means for more crimes, harm and commission of acts of disobedience in way reflects the nature of justice, nor can it be considered an acceptable way of exhorting people or guiding them. The Qur'an says,

"And We will make him (i.e. Jesus) a sign to the people and a mercy for us; and it is a matter [already] decreed." (*Surat Maryam*, 19:21)

"Say, 'Peace be upon you; your Lord has decreed upon Himself mercy.'" (*Surat Al-An'aam*, 6:54)

"And We have not sent you [O Muhammad] except as a mercy to the worlds." (*Surat Al-Anbiyyaa'*, 21:107)

"And We placed in the hearts of those who followed him compassion and mercy..." (*Surat Al-Hadeed*, 57:27)

"...and then being among those who believed and advised one another to patience and advised one another to compassion." (*Surat Al-Balad*, 90:17)

"And [for] their saying, 'Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of Allah.' And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them. And indeed those who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no [definite] knowledge thereof, but only conjecture to follow, for a surety they killed him not." (*Surat An-Nisaa'*, 4:157)

The Holy Qur'an stresses that Jesus (peace be upon him) did not die, nor was he crucified, but he was made to appear to the people that he was crucified while he was not; for Almighty Allah saved His Prophet from the evil attempts of the children of Israel to put him to death by thwarting their evil plot.

"And when I restrained the children of Israel from [putting you to death] when you came to them with clear signs; and those who disbelieved from among them said, 'This is nothing but clear deception.'" (*Surat Al-Maa'dah*, 5:110)

"...for a surety they killed him not; nay, Allah raised him up to Himself. And Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise." (*Surat An-Nisaa'*, 4:157-158)

It becomes clear from the foregoing that disagreement and conflict between Christianity and Islam with regard to the doctrine of crucifixion does not pertain to the essence of the good qualities of goodness and tolerance. In fact, there is no disagreement between them in this respect. The disagreement actually lies in identifying of the material events and their significance as well as in guiding the discourse in this regard as well as regarding the lesson to derive from such events.

In essence, Islam unquestionably reveres Christianity and considers it a divine religion which was revealed by God; it also venerates the good qualities of love, tolerance and forgiveness to which it calls.

No one disputes that the Holy Qur'an admits that Christianity is a divine religion which does not oppose justice, nor does it legitimize crime, reward for it, give man a free hand to persist in committing crimes and sins, keep away from God's path or encourage him to harm people, wage war against the truth and kill the prophets and innocent people.

The disagreement in its prevailing form does not represent the Qur'anic discussion of the subject or the Qur'anic concepts and fundamental issues at which the Qur'an aims to correct the crucifixion incident as well as the consequent refusal of the doctrine of crucifixion due to the fact that it carries invisible or undesired intents which are slipped from memory or to which people are blinded.

Indeed, both parties to the disagreement, Muslims and Christians, are in agreement as to the goals and intents; the disagreement between them comes only as a result of mistakes related to the methodology employed by the discourse. Therefore, it is imperative for both parties, while conducting a dialogue, to understand each other's objective and each other's methodology of examining the issue and to strive hard to mend the relationship based on love and appreciation, which naturally emanates from good faith and common belief, to benefit from this dialogue, and to correct whatever errors there are in methodology and means that need correction with a view to realizing the goal of availing of the positive results of these methodologies in their attempts to realize the truth and goodness.

The forgoing Qur'anic corrections of the terminology used in association with the doctrine of crucifixion perhaps lead us to overcome the hurdles of understanding, help open up an opportunity to establish a constructive dialogue and understand each other's discourse methodology as well as each other's good intents. They also open up an opportunity for a more complementary and more harmonious discussion of the creeds, methodologies and methods of discussion employed by both Islam and Christianity.

The Christian doctrine of crucifixion represents, from an Islamic perspective, a major problem when it leads to associating others with Almighty God, for it professes the doctrine of the 'trinity' instead of 'monotheism' in that it considers Jesus, son of Mary, who is in human form, as God due to his miracles, and considers God to exist as three persons: as human form in the person of Jesus Christ, as absolutism and abstraction in the person of the Father and the Holy Spirit as a third pillar. The Holy Spirit, according to this doctrine, represents a connecting link between the limited material, the absolute exalted and thus grants the limited the power of working miracles.

The doctrine of crucifixion also causes another major problem, from an Islamic perspective, as it destroys another important principle of the pure human nature, namely that of responsibility, which is considered one of the most important principles of Islam and a major Islamic fundamental that is closely linked to the principle of justice. In the sight of Islam, every person is essentially responsible for his own deeds, and his worth lies in his deeds and will, not in his color, race or descent. The doctrine of crucifixion, however, in its attempt to justify crucifixion, does not recognize the principle of responsibility and makes the progeny bear the sins of the fathers as well as the responsibility of the sins. In this way it destroys the straight human relationship between crime and punishment and converts the concept of sacrifice—which is a noble expression of the good qualities of good and positive love towards the beloved—into a means to justify evil deeds and harm and evil inclinations and to give legitimacy to them. It

does this when man's sacrifice becomes a justification for giving free rein to evil, crime and harm and when the sacrifice of the beloved, Jesus, becomes the crime of human beings, only to receive in return for their crimes the reward of pardon and forgiveness.

Regardless of the obvious inconsistencies in the doctrine of crucifixion in its discourse to correct the doctrine of crucifixion, Islam agrees with this doctrine in the general conceptions as to its pillars but disagrees with it in its essence due to the details of its structure as well as being in direct contradiction to the fundamentals of the pure human nature.

While Islam agrees with Christianity regarding the general conceptions, it does indeed recognize the divinity of God, recognizes the miracles as well as tolerance and forgiveness; however, in its Qur'anic discourse to correct the doctrine of crucifixion, it rearranges these concepts in a paradigm that is characterized by harmony and complementarity and which responds to the dictates of the pure human nature and even employs it to attain its noble goals which both religions aim to attain.

To further clarify the point, it is perhaps useful at this point to review the manner in which the Holy Qur'an tackles these relationships and expounds these issues with the aim of realizing the principle of monotheism in a most accurate manner. Indeed, Islam, just like Christianity, acknowledges the divinity of God, but it maintains the principle of monotheism, recognizing the absolute power of God and exalting Him above the limitations of the matter. The Qur'an says,

"Say, 'He is Allah [Who is] One; Allah, the Eternal Refuge; He neither begets nor is He begotten; nor is there to Him any equivalent.'" (*Surat Al-Ikhlāas*, 112:1-4)

"There is nothing whatsoever like Him, and He is the one that hears and sees." (*Surat Ash-Shoora*, 42:11)

"Say. 'O people of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you—that we will worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with Him; that we do not take one another as lords and patrons other than Allah.' But if they turn away, then say, 'Bear witness that we are Muslims [submitting to Him].'" (*Surat Aal Imraan*, 3:64)

"So believe in Allah and His messengers, and do not say 'three'; desist — It will be better for you." (*Surat An-Nisaa'*, 4:171)

Islam attributes the power of creation to Almighty Allah alone, and anyone and anything other than Him derives power and strength from Him alone; Islam also regards miracles are mere types of His omnipotence in the creation of the universe in which all the creatures

are equal. Therefore, the miraculous feats performed by Jesus (peace be upon him) would not in any way change anything whatsoever in Allah's creation; indeed, He supported him in the performance of some miracles with the Holy Spirit who acted upon Allah's command without the direct intervention of the Divine Being who is exalted above the restrictions and limits of the material world. The Qur'an says,

"The similitude of Jesus before Allah is as that of Adam; He created him from dust, then He said to him, 'Be'; and he was." (*Surat Aal 'Imraan*, 3:59)

"Jesus Christ, the son of Mary, was [no more than] a messenger of Allah and His Word which He bestowed on Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from Him." (*Surat An-Nisaa'*, 4:171)

"We gave Jesus, the son of Mary, clear [signs] and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit." (*Surat Al-Baqarah*, 2:87)

"...and I bring the dead into life by Allah's Leave." (*Surat Aal 'Imraan*, 3:49)

"And We made the son of Mary and his mother as a sign." (*Surat Al-Mu'minoon*, 23:50)

"They disbelieved indeed those who say that Allah is Christ, the son of Mary." (*Surat Al-Maa'idah*, 5:17)

"They disbelieved indeed those who say, 'Allah is one of three [in a Trinity].'" (*Surat Al-Maa'idah*, 5:73)

"Such is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of all things; there is no god but He; then how are you deluded away from the truth?" (*Surat Ghaafir*, 40:62)

Indeed, Islam also considers the ultimate goal behind the creation of man to be that of trial, testing and responsibility whereby every member of the human race determines the position he deserves, for every person is responsible only for whatever he had done, and every soul draws the meed of its acts on one but itself. The Qur'an says,

Behold, your Lord said to the angels, 'I will create a vicegerent on earth.' They said, 'Will you place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood whilst we do celebrate your praises and glorify Your holy [name]?' He said, 'I know what you know not.' And He taught Adam the names of all things; then He placed them before the angels and said, 'Tell Me the names of these if you are right.' They said, 'Glory to You; of knowledge we have none save that you have taught us; in truth it is You who are perfect in knowledge and

wisdom.' He said, 'O Adam! Tell them their names.' When Adam told them their names, [Allah] said, 'Did I not tell you that I know the secrets of heaven and earth, and I know what you reveal and what you conceal?' And behold, We said to the angels, 'Bow down before Adam,' and they bowed down; not fro Iblees: He refused and was haughty; he was of those who reject faith. And We said, 'O Adam! Dwell and your wife in the garden and eat of the bountiful things therein as [where and when] you will, but approach not this tree, or you will run into harm and transgression.' Then did Satan make them slip from the [garden] and get them out of the state of [felicity] in which they had been. And We said, 'Get down, all [you people], with enmity between yourselves on earth will be your dwelling place and your means of livelihood for a time.' Then learnt Adam from his Lord certain words and his Lord turned towards him; for He is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful. We said, 'Get down all from here; and if, as is sure, there comes to you guidance from Me. Whoever follows My guidance, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve; but those who reject faith and belie Our Signs, they shall be companions of the Fire; they shall abide therein for ever.'" (*Surat Al-Baqarah*, 2:30-39)

"And their Lord called unto them, 'Did I not forbid you that tree, and tell you that Satan was an avowed enemy to you?' They said, 'Our Lord, we have wronged our own souls; and if you forgive us not and bestow not upon us Your mercy, we shall certainly be lost.'" (*Surat Al-A'raaf*, 7:22-23)

"Then We said, 'O Adam! Verily, this is an enemy to you and your wife; so let not him get you both out of the Garden so that you are landed in misery. There is therein [enough provision] for you not to go hungry nor to go naked.'" (*Surat Taa-Haa*, 20:111-118)

"Thus did Adam disobey his Lord and fell into error; but his Lord chose him [for His Grace]: He turned to him and gave him guidance. He said, 'Get down, both of you, all together, from the Garden, with enmity one to another; but if, as is sure, there comes to you guidance from Me, whoever follows My guidance will not lose his way nor fall into misery; but whoever turns away from My Message, verily for him is a life narrowed down and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgment.'" (*Surat Taa-Haa*, 20:121-124)

"Then shall anyone who has done an atom's weight of good see it! And anyone who has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it." (*Suarat Az-Zalzalah*, 99:7-8)

"Every soul will be [held] in pledge for its deeds." (*Surat Al-Muddath-thir*, 74:38)

"Then guard yourselves against a day when one soul shall not avail another, no shall intercession be accepted for her." (*Surat Al-Baqarah*, 2:48)

"Then shall every soul be paid what it earned, and none shall be dealt with unjustly." (*Surat Al-Baqarah*, 2:281)

"Who receives guidance , receives it for his own benefit; who goes astray does so to his own loss; no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another; nor would We punish until We had sent a messenger [to give warning]." (*Surat Al-Israa'*, 17:15)

"Say, 'Shall I seek for [my] Lord other than Allah, when He is the Cherisher of all things [that exist]? Every soul draws the meed of its acts on none but itself: No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another. Your return in the end is towards Allah: He will tell you the truth of the things wherein you disputed.'" (*Surat Al-An'aam*, 6:164)

It should be borne in mind, however, that justice and responsibility do not contradict the good qualities of mercy and forgiveness, for such qualities are rooted in human nature and they represent the tools whereby man can realize purification and spiritual advancement. Error and sins and the good responsibility issuing from them call for remembering the creator, turning to Him in repentance, demonstrating humility, seeking His forgiveness, begging for His mercy and working righteous deeds.

"Say, 'Peace be upon you; your Lord has decreed upon Himself mercy.'" (*Surat Al-An'aam*, 6:54)

"He said, 'So [it will be]: Your Lord said, 'That is easy for Me, and [We wish] to appoint him as a sign unto men and a mercy from Us,' and it is a matter decreed.'" (*Surat Maraym*, 19:21)

"And We placed in the hearts of those who followed him compassion and mercy..." (*Surat Al-Hadeed*, 57:27)

"...and then being among those who believed and advised one another to patience and advised one another to compassion." (*Surat Al-Balad*, 90:17)

"Verily in this [Qur'an] is a message for people who would [truly] worship Allah. We sent you not but as a mercy for all creatures." (*Surat Al-Anbiyyaa'*, 21:106-107)

"And those who, having done an act of indecency or wronged their own souls remember Allah and ask for forgiveness for their sins; and who can forgive sins except Allah? And are never obstinate in persisting knowingly in [the wrong] they have done. For such the

reward is forgiveness from their Lord and Gardens with rivers flowing underneath—an eternal dwelling: How excellent a recompense for those who work [and strive]." (*Surat Aal 'Imraan*, 3:135-136)

"say, 'O My servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah; for Allah forgives all sins. He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.'" (*Surat Az-Zumar*, 39:53)

It is clear from the forgoing discussion that both religions emanate from the same source and share the same pillars and goals; however, Islam is characterized, in its discussion of the subject, by accurate structures, harmonious elements, masterful presentation and clear vision. In fact, such characteristics should not offend anyone; rather, they should be regarded as the reasons behind the positive relationship between Islam and Christianity. They should also be used to bring into being feelings of respecting the common goal, appreciating the common interests, developing feelings of tolerance and good-neighborliness and suppressing feelings of alienation and enmity.