EVANGELICAL REVIEW OF THEOLOGY

VOLUME 20

Volume 20 • Number 2 • April 1996

Evangelical Review of Theology

Articles and book reviews original and selected from publications worldwide for an international readership for the purpose of discerning the obedience of faith

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Published by
PATERNOSTER PERIODICALS

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This chapter from Dr Musk's latest book is a lively and fascinating survey of areas of the Muslims world-view inadequately understood by western Christians. It will help Christians to read the Bible with new eyes and discern the strengths and weaknesses of both Islamic and western cultures. It is a sequel to The Unseen Face of Islam *and* Passionate Believing, *both published by MARC.*
The Editor

He who has no sense of shame does as he pleases.

Loyalty to family and kin is fundamental to Middle Eastern societies. In cultures in which bonds between persons count for so much, it is not primarily law which channels and corrects human behaviour. Rather, it is the connected concepts of honour and shame.

GROUNDS FOR PRIDE

Honour (*sharaf*) refers to uprightness of character, integrity, glory even. It evolves from and announces the stainlessness of one's way of living. Honour may be derived from a variety of sources. It might come from one's lineage. An Afghan friend, for example, described to me how three major family groupings in his country carry prestige: the *Sayyids* (deriving from Prophet Muhammad), the *Khawajas* (deriving from Caliph Abu-Bakr) and the *Hazrats* (deriving from Caliph Umar). It is joked that 'he who has no family has no backbone'.

Piety brings honour. A person may be blind, or lacking many social graces, but if he has learnt the Qur'ân by heart, he is honoured as a *ḥâfiẓ*. A lovely tale is repeated amongst the Nubians of Dahmit in Upper Egypt about a local saint named Hazim Zild Mahmoud. This man was a humble Nubian shepherd. As far as formal education was concerned, he was a simpleton. He knew only two words in Arabic, those meaning 'stick' and 'goat'. Therefore, as the story goes, whenever he wanted to recite the formal p. 157 prayers of Islam, he would say 'My goat and stick. Please God, make my prayer longer'. One day a scholar from al-Azhar University in Cairo carne to the village to bring some formal religious education to the primitive people. Included among the students was the native saint. After several months, the Azharite felt that he had accomplished what he set out to achieve. With a big fanfare, he left the village by boat, setting off down the Nile. The local saint, Hazim, was left on the bank where he turned to say his prayers. A blank descended on his brain and out came the old familiar words, 'My goat and stick. Please God, make my prayer longer'. In frustration Hazim shouted after the departing Azharite, but the scholar couldn't hear him. In the end the saint walked over the water, caught up with the departing boat and asked the Azharite for assistance in remembering the lost phrases. The Azharite turned in amazement to Hazim and said, 'Don't worry about the formal prayers, the *baraka* you have is plenty! Pray how you like!' The simple saint's personal piety so overwhelmed the northern scholar that he could not but honour the charismatic southerner.[1]

[1] This story is recounted by Nowal Messiri in her essay 'The Sheikh Cult of Dahmit' in John E. Kennedy (ed.), *Nubian Ceremonial Life: Studies in Islamic Syncretism and Cultural Change*, (The University of California Press: Berkeley, 1978), p. 66.

Hard work, wealth, success, generosity—all bring honour. Honour commands politeness and respect. The father of a Lebanese friend of mine grew the nails of his little fingers about three quarters of an inch long. He was declaring his status as that of a person above involvement in manual labour, a point of honour. I also remember my frustration and anger when the company I worked for in Beirut moved offices. The two other foreigners and I rolled up our sleeves and helped in the hard work of hauling books, filing cabinets and furniture. We 'got our hands dirty'. The Lebanese who functioned at an equivalent level to ourselves in the company dressed as chic as normal and lifted not a finger to help. We got mad at them and they at us. In reality, we all got the kudos we were aiming for. We foreigners made it a matter of pride that we had mucked in and helped. Our Lebanese colleagues made it a matter of honour that they weren't seen to be involved in any menial tasks!

Age brings honour. Children frequently hear such sayings as 'He who is one day older than you is wiser by one year'. In societies in which vertical relationships dominate, children are brought up to respect the wisdom of grandparents, uncles and aunts, as well as parents. Any member of the older generation may participate in the disciplining of a child. The child's learned role is to show exaggerated respect. There is honour in having a hoary head.

In traditional Bedouin society the tented area reflects the honour of its inhabitants. It is a space entered only by invitation, except in special circumstances. A tribesman who has committed a crime might seek temporary refuge from his enemies in such a tent complex. The honour of p. 158 the lineage protects him until the dispute is settled. Generosity and hospitality, attitudes for which the Bedouin are justly renowned, still lie close to the heart of most Arabs. It is a point of honour to be hospitable.

Relationships between the sexes are governed by what the 'group' prizes. Here we need to note that concepts of honour strongly inform the preferences of the 'group'. It has to be admitted that there seems to operate a considerable double standard with regard to sexual behaviour. There is a rigorous compulsion upon women to retain their premarital virginity and later to refrain from any extra-marital sexual relationships. They are to keep their *'irḍ* (female honour) free from contamination at all costs. Similar restrictions do not apply to men, considerable numbers of whom (at some stage of their life) visit prostitutes in the towns and cities with comparative freedom. It is no loss to a man's honour to play with a prostitute, for she is nothing anyway. The Arabic word for 'virgin' (*'adhrâ*) is a feminine noun always used to refer to women. There is no masculine equivalent. A phrase has to be utilized to express the fact that a male has had no sexual experience before marriage. Perhaps the 'double standard' diminishes in intensity when it is understood that honour requires the protection (not restriction) of females because they are a precious commodity. In their purity is invested the honour of all the lineage.

The Semitic culture of Old Testament times reflects the tensions of a society operating along equivalent lines. At one stage a wronged woman, Tamar, made use of the accepted male access to prostitutes to claim the justice owing to her by her father-in-law, Judah. Old Judah, founder of one of the tribes of Israel, had a problem. His eldest son had married Tamar and had died, leaving her childless. He consequently married his second son, Onan, to her as custom required, but the relationship didn't work out. Onan was punished by the Lord for refusing to allow Tamar to have children by him. The penalty was death! Judah was fearful of marrying his third son to the woman in case he also ended up as a corpse. So he prevaricated. Eventually Tamar's patience wore out. She decided to trap Judah into acknowledging that he had not dealt properly with her. She dressed as a prostitute and sat by a road used by Judah. Soon he walked by, was attracted to the girl by the roadside and made an approach. A little later he was sleeping unwittingly with Tamar, thinking he

was merely playing with a harlot. Ironically, as a result of their intercourse, Tamar conceived twins. When Judah later heard that his widowed daughter-in-law was pregnant he was furious. She had dishonoured his family's reputation and he wanted to burn her to death. She, however, had proof that Judah himself was the father of the boys in her womb. The tribal leader had to admit that his failure to preserve the honour of the family (by refusing to marry his third son to her) had caused the situation in which she had to behave like a woman with no honour (Gen. 38). p. 159

WALKING THE TIGHTROPE

It emerges, therefore, that a major goal in many Middle Easterners' lives is to accumulate honour and avoid its erosion by shame. Social control, for such people, is essentially exercised by the dynamics of shaming. Such a control depends on everyone knowing everything about everyone. This is quite easily achieved in a community-oriented society. 'Gossip' is the public expression of the shaming mechanism. Saving face is all-important to such a culture. A single shame experience threatens to expose and damage the whole self.

Rarely, in the relating of Christian missionaries to Muslims, and especially to believers from a Muslim background, is the seriousness of 'saving face' understood. Western Christians, for example, consider dishonesty a serious sin. I have smacked my daughter once for doing the bad deed, whatever it might have been, and once more 'for lying to me about it'. At all costs, honesty must be adhered to. That same presupposition about the primacy of honesty dictates how I relate to brothers and sisters from a non-western background. What happens if the Muslim, or the believer from a Muslim background, gives the Westerner like myself an answer which he thinks the Westerner wants to hear, even though the answer isn't strictly truthful? In his view, he has 'lied' in order to preserve the Westerner's honour and to save his own face. To question the Middle Easterner, even in private, is to question his integrity. It is to announce that he has got his priorities wrong. It is to communicate that it is more important (more Christian?) to walk all over relationships for the sake of some impersonal ideal concerning 'honesty'. It is to shame him. Of course, lying is not approved of in Muslim cultures any more than it is in western cultures. There are subtle ways, however, of letting the other person understand that you know what is really the case. Those subtle ways maintain the human relationship:

> 'Face' [*wajh*] is the outward appearance of honour, the 'front' of honour which a man will strive to preserve even if in actuality he has committed a dishonourable act … One is considered justified, for instance, in resorting to prevarication in order to save one's face. If it comes to saving somebody else's 'face', lying becomes a duty.[2]

Lying and cheating in much of the Middle Eastern world are not primarily moral matters but ways of safeguarding honour and status, ways of avoiding shame. The Shî'a concept of dissimulation (*taqîya*) is a case in point. This allowance whereby true Shî'a Muslims may act as if they are not true Shî'a Muslims was actively promoted by Iman Khomeini during the Shah's reign. It was only at the appropriate moment that the dissimulation was laid aside and the true colours of Iran's clerics and people shown to the light of day.[3] Temporary marriage is another concept (seemingly hypocritical with p. 160 regard to

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[2] Raphael Patai, *The Arab Mind*, (Charles Scribner's Sons: New York, 1973), pp. 101 and 105.

[3] See Kenneth Cragg, *Jesus and the Muslim: An Exploration*, (George Allen & Unwin: London, 1985), pp. 280f. for a fuller explanation of the philosophy behind *taqîya*.

fidelity) which is intermittently promoted by Shî'a Muslims. A man away from home may take a 'wife' for the duration of his absence in order to stop him from flirting with other men's wives or behaving in equivalent, dishonourable ways. Again, the message is that the avoidance of shame ensuing from likely misconduct is the predominant concern. It eclipses any recognition that temporary marriage might be construed as straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel as far as sexual purity is concerned.

Often, in Middle Eastern cultures, a person will offer to accomplish something in order to save face, knowing that he cannot deliver the goods because he doesn't have the connections to achieve the promised end. The ensuing delays, postponements and renewals of promise are a bluff, providing time for a human connection to emerge which might save the day. A Westerner caught up in such dynamics quickly concludes that the person stringing him along is being dishonest. In reality the Middle Easterner is avoiding shame by making the promise today and not worrying about the consequences tomorrow. 'Not worrying about the consequences' in the future is less of an evil than the possibility of losing face should he not make the promise now.

Another common dynamic in Arab contexts is the expressing of generosity by one person towards another while the very person making the expansive gestures is actually plotting against the other. In these situations, everyone except the foreigner knows what 'games' are going on. High at stake in those games—higher certainly than any superficial reading of 'right' and 'wrong'—is the matter of honour and shame.

In the stow *The Haj* by Leon Uris, the patriarchal father of the main Palestinian family in the book finally dies when he is told about an incident in his family's life that had been kept hidden from him for years. Earlier, during a civil disturbance and consequent act of punishment by the authorities, Iraqi soldiers had run amok in the quarter of Jaffa where the family lived. The father, Haj Ibrahim, was absent at the time and, sadly, his womenfolk had been horrifically raped. Towards the end of the book, Haj Ibrahim murders his daughter after she defiantly refuses to marry a relative of his choosing, announcing that she is a virgin no longer but has willingly slept with men. Haj Ibrahim's son, who had witnessed the scene in Jaffa when he was a young lad, hates his father for killing his beloved sister. He seeks to avenge her death by telling his father about what had happened those many years before:

> 'Oh yes, yes. I am going to kill you Father, but I'll do it my own way. I don't need your dagger. I'm just going to talk. I'm going to talk you to death. So open your ears, Father, and listen very carefully.' He stared at me. I began. 'In Jaffa, I witnessed both of your wives and Fatima being raped by Iraqi soldiers!'[4]

The old man cannot believe it, but his son insists it is true and crudely describes the scene in detail. The shock of Haj Ibrahim's immense loss p. 161 of honour gives the old man a heart attack and he dies of shame.

The holy cities of Mecca and Medina are out of bounds to non-Muslims. Why? Because they are places, supremely, where the integrity of Muslim peoples must not be contaminated by the intrusion of non-believers. Even the more general geography of Arab territory has to be kept intact from any incursion that would bruise Arab pride. The United States of America learned, during the Gulf war, how critical it was to keep Israeli warplanes from overflying Arab territories despite the Jews' desire to avenge the Iraqi SCUD attacks on their country. With Arab already fighting Arab, it couldn't possibly be allowed to look as if some Arabs were actually co-operating with the Israelis.

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[4] Leon Uris, *The Haj*, (André Deutsch Limited: London, 1985), pp. 560f.

Shame is a social phenomenon. It is equivalent to disgrace or humiliation. It operates as a form of control on behaviour. 'What people say' or 'What people might say' is a strong constraint on actions.

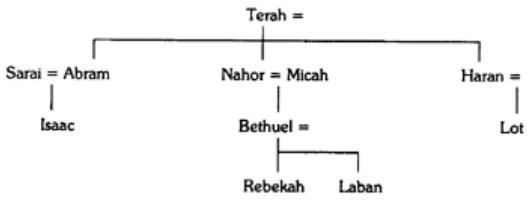
The use of oaths in such profusion in many Middle Eastern societies illustrates the lengths to which people go in order to avoid being shamed. Their frequent use betrays both the universal distrust and untruthfulness which abounds and the attempt to cover it up. Preserving appearances is very important. As one proverb declares: 'Eat for yourself and dress for others.'

Shame comes from being a 'bad' person. One may lose esteem through cowardice, having no money, being menial, remaining unmarried, letting down one's family or religion.

A POWERFUL THEME

In the honour/shame syndrome lies a strong motivation for making a success of a marriage. Personal human relationships, in Arab cultures, mostly begin with family honour and, hopefully, move on to mutual love. One is reminded of the story of Abraham's provision of a wife for his son Isaac. The girl has to come from his own extended family and that will require a long journey back to Babylonia for his trusted servant Eliezer. The faithful servant is led by the Lord to the very girl who would be most appropriate for Isaac to marry. She is the daughter of Abraham's brother's son (see Figure 1).

Figure 1.



Isaac and Rebekah p. 162

Eventually, Eliezer conveys the second cousin back to the Negev and Isaac married Rebekah. The Genesis account states: 'So she became his wife, and he loved her' (Gen. 24:67). This arranged marriage began with honour and progressed to love. In Arab cultures, a couple are encouraged to live in a harmonious relationship with each other partly because a divorce would bring unbearable shame on the whole extended family.

In the West, public interaction is ordered on a written, contractual basis. In a culture where human relationships predominate, oral contracts are deemed preferable. Written contracts imply distrust, constituting an insult to a person's honour.

The Arab-Israeli conflict cannot be understood apart from the intense shame the Arabs suffered in the overwhelming defeats they sustained in the 1948, 1956 and 1967 wars. A redemption of Arab honour on the battlefield was desperately needed, and sought. The Arab 'victory' of 1973 made it possible for peace in the Middle East to become part of the Arab agenda. Now, at last, they could sit across a negotiating table from Israelis as men of honour and integrity.

Inequality through performance is prized by Westerners. We don't mind promoting some people to high office and assigning others to menial tasks, but we do it on the basis of individual ability. In fact we make differentiation along the lines of personal achievement one of the major goals of our educational and economic systems. Inequality through honour or shame is despised by Westerners. 'Equal opportunities' is one of our slogans. We don't appoint people to lectureships in our universities because they happen to be upright relatives of the Chancellor or President. For Arabs generally, the shoe is on

the other foot. Honour and human connection are greater promoters of advancement than individual achievement. In international incidents like World War II, therefore, the Arab is not so much swayed by arguments of 'right' and 'wrong'. Rather, he will wait until he perceives who might win a contest and thereby gain honour. He will then want to join that team.

In the Old Testament, the word honour and its derivatives occur 115 times, and 73 times in the New Testament. Jabez, for example, is specially remembered for being 'more honourable than his brothers' (1 Chron. 4:9). Our western eyes quickly skip over this accolade. The culture of which we are a part would possibly commemorate a man for academic, political, sporting or media achievement, hardly for being honourable. In Semitic cultures, however, honour is carefully celebrated.

As a consequence, 'sinning' tends to be perceived, according to the evidence of the Bible, as the violating of honour. Such a perception is not just a facet of popular culture but is part of the authoritative teaching of the revealed text. In the case of Amnon's physical assault on his sister, a sense of shame pervades her being, although she has done no wrong. She pleads with him not to rape her, predicting the sure result in terms of a shattering of her honour: 'What about me? Where could I get p. 163 rid of my disgrace?' (2 Sam. 13:13). Job's confused complaint about his situation revolves around the fact that God has stripped him of his honour (Job 19:9) and yet the upright man is unaware of any disloyalty on his part.

The ultimate test of Jesus' loyalty to his Father is couched precisely in terms of the violation of honour. Is he willing to suffer unjust shame? The Son proves willing in the garden of Gethsemane. Hours later, at Calvary, he 'endured the cross, scorning its shame …' (Heb. 12:2). Not long after Jesus' resurrection and ascension, his apostles are twice arrested for preaching in his name in the centre of Jerusalem. Although they are saved from death by the judicious Gamaliel, they are all beaten severely and banned yet again from preaching. The apostles leave the Sanhedrin rejoicing 'because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name' (Acts 5:41).

One of the loveliest parables in the New Testament is often lost on western Christians who have learned to see it only in terms of 'the prodigal son'. Jesus' own introduction should at least warn us that as much attention should be paid to the two other main characters in the story: 'There was a man who had two sons' (Lk. 15:11). The story is about disloyalty, the breakdown of commitment to kith and kin. The younger son wants his father dead so that he can receive his inheritance straight away. The older son abandons his expected role of reconciler and mediator between violated father and disloyal younger brother. The stow is full of shame—easily perceived perhaps in the prodigal's abandonment of personal integrity, so that in the end he is worse off than the despised, unclean pigs. The older son is disloyal also, though more subtly so. He does not play his required role in the family when relationships begin to disintegrate. At the end, his abandonment of commitment to his father's joy and love displays the step he has himself taken away from the family. He speaks coldly of 'slaving' for his father. 'You never …' is on his lips. 'This son of yours …' is how he thinks of his brother now. As the parable concludes, is this second prodigal son about to slap his pleading father, turn on his heel and march away from the distraught parent? His words and actions are unthinkable, shameful.

Supremely in this story, as told by Jesus, 'shame' is featured in the father's willing embrace of it. He accepts the younger son's rejection of him and lets him go. He accepts the humiliation of having to plead with his elder son for the latter to join him in his celebrating. In the little words of verse 20, the incredible (for a Semitic culture) is disclosed. The father 'ran to his son'—down the street, through the village, showing his

undergarments! The old man runs to reach, accept and protect the lad who should by rights be disinherited and sent packing. In the Middle East, old men never run! They never have done! This old man embraces the shame and takes the initiative with his younger son, just as a little later he will embrace more shame and go p. 164 cap in hand to his elder son.[5] Jesus is hinting that such is the larger story of God and mankind. God is full of honour and integrity, yet dishonoured and shamed by his earthly children. Heaven's answer is to come in the Son to be dishonoured, to embrace the shame, to be beaten to death.

KEYS FOR COMMUNICATING?

The Arab Muslim lives in a group-oriented context where vertical relationships are predominant. The cultural theme most valued is honour. Shame is to be avoided at all costs. Daily living becomes a question, largely, of navigating successfully through the uncharted water that lies between honour and shame.

Western cultures, being deeply committed to individualism, tend to cohere around concepts of law and guilt, rather than loyalty and shame. Westerners must abide within the law. They are not overly concerned with saving one anothers' face. A strictly Law-based, guilt-oriented expression of the gospel may be appropriate within western cultures, but it doesn't make the most sense for cultures that operate by different convictions.[6]

In the Old Testament, the book of Jeremiah graphically expresses what 'sin' means, in terms of shame. Half the chapters in the prophecy contain the word itself. Others use words like dishonour, disgrace, blush, derision, hiss or phrases implying shame like 'lift up your skirts'.

The point of shame in Jeremiah's prophecy is that the Old Testament people of God have abandoned their loyalty to Yahweh, the God of their forefathers. They are engaging in every type of open sin including idolatry and yet they are denying that anything is really wrong because they are still offering sacrifices at the temple (Jer. 7:4). Jeremiah declares that Israel has become shameless:

> You have the brazen look of a prostitute;
> you refuse to blush with shame.
> Have you not just called to me:
> 'My Father, my friend from my youth,
> Will you always be angry?
> Will your wrath continue for ever?'
> This is how you talk,
> but you do all the evil you can

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[5] For a full treatment of this parable from within a Middle Eastern perspective, see Kenneth E. Bailey, *The Cross and the Prodigal*, (Concordia: St Louis, 1973). For other, similar, treatments of New Testament texts, see the same author's *Poet and Peasant* and *Through Peasant Eyes: A Literary-Cultural Approach to Parables in Luke*, (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1976).

[6] Helen Merrell Lynd, in her book *On Shame and the Search for Identity*, (Harcourt, Brace & World: New York, 1958), produces an analysis of the 'guilt-axis' and 'shame-axis' approaches to identity. She summarizes her findings in a diagram (pp. 208f), edited and reproduced here (Figure 2 below).

One conclusion to be drawn from Lynd's work is that, within western society, some individuals tend to function more on a shame axis than on a guilt axis. Nevertheless, in the declaring of the gospel by Westerners, 'sin' is most usually equated with Law-breaking rather than self-exposure; and the cancelling of guilt rather than the melting away of shame is emphasized in invitations to 'convert'.

(Jer. 3:3–5).

For sure, the people are breaking the law, they are guilty of lawlessness. p. 165
Figure 2.

Guilt Axis	**Shame Axis**
Concerned with each separate act	Concerned with the over-all self
Involves transgression of specific code	Involves falling short, missing an ideal
Process of deleting wrong acts and substituting right ones for them	Involves a total response that includes insight
Involves competition, measurement on a scale	Involves acting in terms of the pervasive qualitative demands of oneself
Exposure of a specific demeanour	Exposure of the quick of the self
Feeling of wrongdoing in specific act	Feeling that may have loved the wrong person
Trust built on conception of no betrayal	Trust slowly eliminating fear of exposure
Emphasis on decision-making	Ability to live with multiple possibilities
Feeling of guilt toward someone who had denounced one for a certain reason	Feeling of shame toward someone whose trust one had not met
Emphasis on content of experience	Emphasis on quality of experience
Surmounting of guilt leads to righteousness	Transcending of shame may lead to sense of identity, freedom

But the thing that hurts the Lord most is that, in their lawlessness, they are expressing their prior rejection of him. They 'sin' by refusing to really relate to him as Father or friend. They spit in his face and dishonour him before all the nations. What's more, they are not ashamed of themselves!

One clear expression of repentance comes out in the book. It is that of 'Ephraim', and it occurs after the judgement of God has begun to fall on the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Some of the leaders of the people are already in exile and God detects the inklings of sorrow among them:

> After I strayed
> I repented;

after I came to understand,
I beat my breast.
I was ashamed and humiliated
because I bore the disgrace of my youth.

(Jer. 31:19)

Repentance is expressed in terms of the recognition of shame and disgrace. The people are waking up to what has really happened in their relationship to God. That is why, in this chapter, the grounds are laid for a new relationship in a new covenant. 'I will be their God, and they will be my people' (v. 33) is how the Lord expresses it. The recovery is promised in terms of a renewal of kinship. p. 166

In sharing the gospel with Arabs and other Muslims who operate within honour/shame concepts, it will surely help if we learn to read our own faith from within those constructs.[7] There is plenty of assistance for us in the Bible, as we have seen. Phil Parshall comments that repentance and tears come quickly to people who function on an honour/shame basis when they know that they have been apprehended in an act that embarrasses them.[8] Can we convey to our Muslim friends that their disloyalty to God is known and is shameful? With regard to their answerability to the Lord of Heaven and earth, have they become people who do as they please because they have lost a sense of shame? The mechanical, outward ritual acts may be in place, but are they concerned about God's honour?

One western missionary describes a situation in which a young Christian from a Muslim background was being mercilessly punished for the 'shame' he had brought on his family by turning to Christ. A revelation was needed in order for the family to realize that the greater shame was theirs, in resisting God's work in the young man's life:

> His father was impossible. He would not respond to any of our explanations, or even to our returning good for evil. Seeing that the pressure was getting too much for the boy and that he might soon go back to Islam, I asked God to send his father a vision.
>
> God answered. That night a white shining figure appeared to the father and said, 'You have beaten your son and he did not recant. You had him bound in chains and he did not recant. If you touch your son again, you are going to die. He is showing you the way of salvation. Listen to him!'
>
> The next day the father became a Christian![9]

A legitimate apologetic for the difficult issue of Jesus' crucifixion could conceivably be expressed in terms of God's honour. Lordship and submission are scriptural concerns (Jn. 5:22–26; Philp. 2:9–11) and explain why Jesus acted as he did, why the cross was a means of bringing glory to God, not a contradiction of it. To emphasize the vertical relationship between Jesus and his Father is as valid as emphasizing the horizontal relationship between Jesus and mankind. Western Christianity applauds the latter emphasis, concentrating on incarnation and the personal self-giving of Christ so that whoever believes in him might be born again (Jn. 3:16). Perhaps it is time to stop expecting the Muslim to see the love of God in the cross of Christ. It might be easier for him to glimpse there something of Christ's loyalty to his Father, something of the Father's glory in watching his Son obey him to the end, vindicating family honour.

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[7] See the helpful exegesis of this theme in Lowell L. Nobel, *Naked and Not Ashamed*, (Jackson Printing: Jackson, Michigan, 1975).

[8] Phil Parshall, *New Paths in Muslim Evangelism*, (Baker Book House: Grand Rapids, 1980), p. 78.

[9] Source protected.

Evertt Huffard suggests that a 'Christology of honour' is as scriptural as any (western) emphasis on the 'love of God' being declared in p. 167 Christ[10] Of course such love is shown, but is it not significant that the synoptic gospels make little reference to it and Luke doesn't even mention *agapê* (God's special love for man) in his recounting of the missionary sermons of Acts? A concern for God's glory, honour, blamelessness and unmerited generosity seems rather to be documented—themes which make profound sense in the kind of cultural settings we are considering in this book.

In the difficult situation cited above (admittedly from a West African, Muslim context), the authoritative vision from heaven convinced the human father that he should no longer oppose his son's conversion to Christ. The vision-word from God was strong enough to nullify the traditional theological reservations which Muslims have about the crucifixion. Such present-tense experiences of God's holiness are perhaps the best attestation to the possibility that in the original crucifixion event itself, a holy God was also strongly in charge.[11]

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The Servant Songs of Isaiah in Dialogue with Muslims

Bruce J. Nicholls

The author gave this paper at a seminar on Islam at the Gujranwala Theological Seminary, Pakistan.
The Editor

INTRODUCTION

In this paper I want to offer the thesis that to understand the uniqueness and finality of Jesus Christ from an Islamic perspective we need to start our discussion from the unity and greatness of God and with the prophet as the servant of the Lord who brings forth justice to the nations and shows compassion and mercy to the weak and to the transgressors of God's commands. We need to focus on honour and shame rather than initially on love and guilt. The thesis is that the approach of the prophet in Isaiah 40–66 and especially in the so-called 'servant songs' is one with which the sincere and searching

[10] Everrt Huffard, 'Culturally Relevant Themes about Christ' in J. Dudley Woodberry, *op cit.*, p. 172.

[11] It is not my intention to minimize the difficulties of getting around traditional Muslim objections to the crucifixion. It is, however, to suggest that a shift away from intellectual argument towards a concern for the Muslim to be 'shamed' into allowing God to be God is valid. After all, Paul knew that it was 'word' and 'power' together that convinced many of his hearers (I Thess. 1:5) of the truth of his message. According to Luke, the story of Acts is really that of how Jesus *continued* from heaven, via his apostles on earth, to act and to teach—both aspects of proclamation going together (Acts 1:1).