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# Salvation: Blood or Mercy?

*Special Edition:*  
Yusuf Estes  
Explains

# Q&A with Sheikh Yusuf Estes

Yusuf Estes is an American Muslim preacher who converted from Christianity to Islam in 1991. He was a Muslim Chaplain for the United States Bureau of Prisons through the 1990s.



## **Question in an Email to Sheikh Yusuf Estes:**

Why don't you Muslims believe in the blood of Jesus on the cross as salvation and Divine Justice? You said to me, "Because God never punishes the innocent for the sins of somebody else."

That is true and I agree with that: God is just, no doubts about that.

But from your answer, it seems to me you are indicating that Jesus on the cross is not in line with God's Divine Justice, because you say God never punishes an innocent one for the sins of the guilty ones. Right?

... Let the most perfect and most innocent one remove the sin and forgive the children (us) without hurting the children. Now, I ask you something - when children do something bad, aren't the parents in grief over it? Yet they still love their children, right? Think about it like this: suppose the parents are righteous people and they teach the child the right path, yet the child goes astray somehow. Is this the fault of the parents? I do not think so. So why do they suffer?

I think that they suffer for the child, because they love him. In Christianity, I have been told that the Lord loves His creation. I do not know if you agree with me on this point. I know that the Coran (Quran, Koran) states that Allah is Merciful and Mercy-Giving, yet I do not know whether He loves the creation. Yet if God loves the people of this world, even when they turn their back to Him, then God may suffer too (if you allow this unsuccessful comparison- will suffer as a parent suffers when the children turn away). Therefore I would reply to you that indeed, God would never punish somebody for somebody else's wrong, yet we can make God 'suffer' by our disbelief and our actions. While Divine Justice ensures that nobody will be punished for somebody else's actions, the Lord can be afflicted by our sins. Thank you again.



## Answer:

*Bismillah Rahman Rahim. Al-Hamdulillah Rabbil Alamin was-Salat was-Salam Ala Rasulihi Al-Kareem. Amma Ba'd.*

Allah A'lam. Allah has all Knowledge.

Thank you for your question.

OK. First you are correct in some of what you say, however there should be clarification in the story you are mentioning and then the conclusion should be reconsidered.

You understood exactly what I said. But the argument that you are bringing is not in keeping with the teachings of the Bible. The Bible states:

“Spare the rod and you spoil the child.”

Do you see that God Almighty has instructed the followers of Moses and the Jews to use the stick to punish the children?

*(cont'd pg 4)*

It is clear from the many examples given in the Bible that Almighty God has no problem in punishing the wicked and evil doers. I fail to see why anyone who reads the Bible could overlook such an important teaching.

shortcomings and evil. He is never effected by His Creation. This is preposterous. He is far above and beyond these human failings. He is God. The real One and Only God.

**And we do not compare Almighty God to anything that He created, for He is Glorified far above what they are trying to attribute to Him.**

You tried to bring in a story of parents and their children. God is not a Father, nor are we His "children." The correct word or more appropriate meaning of the word "son" in this case would be "servant" or perhaps "worshiper", not "son" or "daughter" or "child." You can verify this is the dictionary of Strong's Concordance, by the way. I did.

This is clear from the teachings in the Old Testament and in the Quran. It is only in the New Testament that you find things like, "For God so loved the world..."

In fact, if He loved it, He would not allow many things to happen as He does. This place, our universe and in particular, our planet are all a part of the great creation of Almighty God to do what? What is it that Almighty God is doing with us every day? It is the same thing that He has been doing with all of the humans since the beginning. What is it?

Even in the case of the parents that you mentioned, have you ever heard of parents who beat themselves or some innocent child because they loved their child so much and did not want to punish him? That is sick. And you are not talking here about beating or hitting; you are talking about murder.

He also does not "suffer" as a result of our

What kind of front page headlines would

Allah Says in Qur'an 3:47

Regarding The Angel Gabriel Telling Mary of Jesus (peace be upon him)

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.

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that be for parents that murdered each other or someone else's child, because their own child was bad and they just couldn't stand the suffering they were feeling while the child was being bad?

Come on. Let us try to keep our brains in our heads while we are thinking here.

Think of Adam (Peace be upon him). He was in the Paradise, his wife was there with him, and they were told that they could eat of anything there in the Paradise. And they did.

But they were also told not to eat of a specific fruit. Did they do it?

Yes.

Why?

Because they had to in order for everything to be like it is.

**Let me clarify for you. Almighty God is always under complete and total control. There is never a time when He is asleep or not paying attention to all that He has created. So He knows in advance everything that is going to happen and all of this that we call the universe and everything in it is under His control.**

He did not have to put the fruit in there with Adam (Peace be upon him), right?

He did not have to let the devil tempt them, right?

He did not have to kick them out of the Paradise as He did, right?

Of course.

So, why in fact, did Almighty God create everything?

It is for us.

It is a test.

Adam passed his test.

Eve passed her test.

How?

They were created to be human, not gods. So naturally, they are like you and I in the fact that they are weak and they do things that are wrong and even sinful.

Do you acknowledge that all of us are sinners? I do.

So how is it that I say that Adam and Eve PASSED their test?

After all, they ate from the fruit of the forbidden tree. That was bad, right?

They did it.

What the Bible has lost is the true moral to the story. Others came along later and began to try to make a totally different meaning out of it, even blaming Eve for the first sin and for influencing Adam to do the same. And then suddenly she is going to be punished with the affliction of menstrual periods and child birth, and all of this is her punishment. Adam, according to the Biblical account is tossed out of the Paradise because of this sin, along with Eve.

According to Islam, the story is pretty close, but adds the true moral understanding and teachings.

All along, Almighty God was going to put them out of the Paradise into the earth so that they could be tested.

**The real test was not whether or not they would eat the fruit. The real test is what would they do after they ate the fruit.**

*(cont'd pg 6)*

# “Repentance”

is the word that we are looking for here. After Adam and Eve were put out of the Paradise (near the Holy Land), Adam went one way and Eve wound up going some other way. They did not see each other for a while.

Adam (Peace be upon him) repented and placed his head down on the ground on a place that became a historic land mark from that time forward. Do you know where that is?

## Bakkah.

Today it is called Makkah, and it is in the Arabian Peninsula.

Adam put his head down on the ground and prayed to Almighty God to forgive him, for he realized that he had really done more than eat forbidden fruit. The fact is that he had disobeyed Almighty God and that is the worst thing. He knew now that he had to do something for what he had done. So, he prostrated to Almighty God.

God accepted from him.

The story of Eve is the same. She disobeys and she also repented to Almighty God.



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Almighty God accepted her repentance as well.

Then Adam and Eve met each other in a place that is near Bakkah (Makkah in Saudi Arabia) called Arafat.

By the way, another mistake that many people make is to believe that the devil is a “fallen angel.” This does not make any sense at all. After all there is no power in the universe except the One Almighty God. Right?

So how could the devil have been an angel and then suddenly go against God’s Will?

**The devil is actually from the earlier “people” before humans, known as “jinn” (our word “genie” comes from this).**

The angels are made from pure light and so you cannot see them with the normal eye.

The jinn are made from a “smokeless fire.”

The humans are made from the clay or dirt of the earth.

The one we call the devil, was from the “jinn.”

When he observed that Allah had made a new kind of creation and He was ordering everyone to bow down to it due to it being the “Best of Allah’s Creation.”

What really bothered the jinn that we call the devil is that he was no longer the preferred favorite of Almighty God.

He was jealous. And that destroys us from the very moment that we begin to practice it.

Almighty God ordered all of His creation to “bow down” due to the creation of Adam (Peace be upon him).

The Devil (Iblis) refused to obey Almighty God, and as a result Almighty God ordered him to go to Hell for what he had done. That was before Adam or Eve had even had life in them.

**From the Islamic perspective, we are all here on this earth as a test. This is not our Paradise and it is far more like a prison where we must be careful of what we say and do, for everything will have its consequences.**

Almighty God tells us that He has only created us to worship, praise and devote

ourselves to Him and to do so without making any partners with Him in devotion or worship. Those who make sins are to repent to Him and to seek for His Forgiveness and to ask for His Mercy. And He says that He does not forgive setting up partners with Him in worship (the First Commandment), but anything less than that, He can forgive.

## Over all picture:

Allah created the heavens and earth and all that is in the universe only to test us (although He already knows what the outcome will be, before He even created us.) The test is not for Him.

### It is a test for us.

He will have to deal with what we have done on the Day of Judgment. There can be no second opinion on this one. Each and every person will see anything that he has done that is good, even an atom's weight of good, and

the same for doing even an atom's weight of bad, we will all see it then.

**All the Prophets (Peace be upon them) taught the same message: "Worship God alone without any partners."**

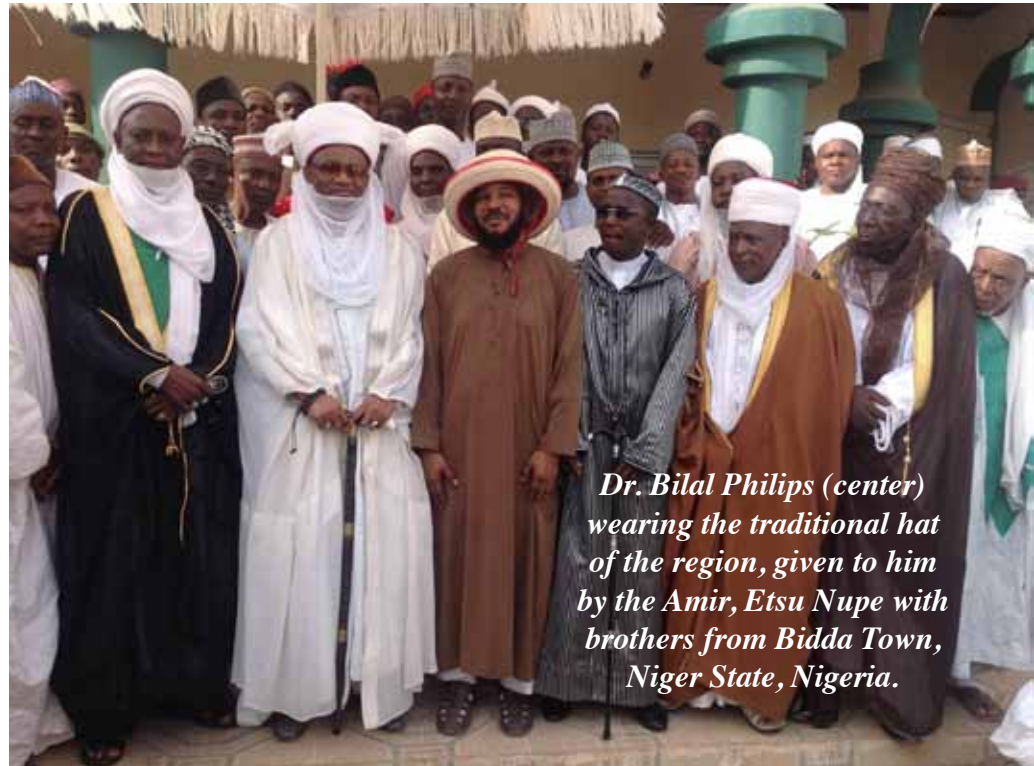
But people are weak, very weak. So before long they will begin to worship something else, unless you really keep them focused on Almighty God and don't let them stray away.

Reference the story of the followers of Moses (Peace be upon him) when he was up in the mountain receiving the tablets from Almighty God. What happened?

They built a calf out of their gold and then began to worship it. This is why they had to wander for 40 years in the wilderness, for the crime of worshipping other than the Almighty God.

The Pharisees at the time of Jesus (Peace be upon him) had also corrupted the message

*(cont'd pg 8)*



*Dr. Bilal Philips (center) wearing the traditional hat of the region, given to him by the Amir, Etsu Nupe with brothers from Bidda Town, Niger State, Nigeria.*

and were out there selling and buying money because they told people that they could not buy anything for the sacrifices with money from Rome or any other government. It had to be their money. They were called “money changers.”

**What did Jesus (Peace be upon him) do (according to what you have in the Bible)?**

He took a whip and drove them out.

Now if he is so compassionate and can't stand to punish the evil doers, what does this story mean?

The New Testament says that Jesus went to a tree to get some fruit to eat from it, but he found it barren and without fruit, so he cursed the tree. Does this sound like Almighty God to you?

God has to eat?

God doesn't know which trees have fruit and which ones don't?

God gets angry at the tree?

God curses the tree?

And you said that “God so loved the world...” (except for certain trees).

By the way, he cursed the Pharisees too, and he said they did not have enough righteousness to even enter Paradise.

And then what about his statement, according to the Bible, that says he ordered them to sell their cloaks and coats and buy swords?

And at Gethsemane, when the Roman soldiers and the Rabbis from the Sanhedrin came and tried to capture them and fighting broke out, they actually cut off the ear of one of the servants of a leader. These were Jews from the Jewish faith at that time.

Wouldn't it be a bit hypocritical to blame and punish certain people and then claim that you can't punish people because you just “love

them too much”?

Finally, now let us go back to the story of the person who really did go to the cross. The one who “looked like” Jesus.

There is a name that is in the Arabic and Aramaic language that is pronounced “Taw'am.” When it was taken into the Koine Greek (after Jesus time) and later on into the Latin, that became known as “Thomas.” This word means “twin” or “look alike.” (You can look this up in a name dictionary -- that is how I learned it).

The name of the one who sold Jesus out for thirty pieces of silver was what?: Judas Iscariot. Right?

Did you know that he had a nickname? I have a book of apocrypha that mentions his full name with the nickname in it.

Can you guess what it was?

**Judas THOMAS Iscariot.**

What is the big deal? That shows you that he “looked like” someone.

**Who do think he looked like?**

Remember, he told the Romans that he would go to the one that was Jesus and kiss him to indicate to them who he was. When this took place what happened next? The ground trembled and shook and the curtain on the temple was torn in two and everyone fell down on the ground. When they got up, they grabbed the one that they thought was “Jesus” and took him in custody.

When they asked him questions, he was no longer able to give the kinds of answers that they were used to hearing from him and when they asked who he was, he would answer by saying, “That is what you say about me.”

For sure, God Almighty is Just, Fair and Merciful. He would never punish anyone for the sins of another; especially someone who loved Almighty God so much, and had prayed in tears and sweat to “Let this cup pass from me. Even so, Thy will be done.”

And finally, what are the words that come



from the mouth of the one on the cross just as he is dying? "Eli! Eli! Lama Sabach Thani?" The translation is put in brackets for us to see for ourselves. (My God! My God! Why has Thou forsaken me?) This is outright blasphemy. Who could say such a thing? This person is not happy with the "plan of salvation" that everyone is so quick to jump on and hope it works. This person is distraught with his condition and he is blaming his God.

Now consider this again: If Jesus (Peace be upon him) went to the Garden of Gethsemane with his companions and posted them to be on the lookout so that he could pray and beg Almighty God to let this thing pass from him, but Almighty God would not accept his prayers, would not spare him this humiliation and torture and even death, then what hope would we have in front of God on the Day of Judgment?

If God Almighty loves the earth as much as you say, and He loves us so much, and He

loved Jesus so much, then what difference does it make to Him which one of the things He loves so much, that He is willing to destroy one of them for the other?

**The whole idea is bizarre.**

The Justice and Mercy of Almighty God are very much served in the version of the cross mentioned in the Quran. Someone who "looked like him" (the hypocrite, Judas Thomas Iscariot) goes to the cross instead. Didn't the Bible mention that he was "hanged on a tree?" (It also contradicts that statement in another gospel, saying that he fell off a cliff and burst into flames).

I agree with you in all that you said. God is Merciful. God is Just. God is Fair. These are the very attributes that He names Himself with in the Quran. And He is the LOVING GOD.

*(cont'd pg 10)*



**Sometimes,**  
our eyes need to be washed  
**by our tears**  
so that we can see  
life with a clearer view!

*Dr. Bilal Philips.*

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That is in the Quran. But He clearly tells us what it is that He Loves and what it is that He hates. And He does hate that anyone set up anything or anyone in partnership with Him in worship. That is the first commandment in the Old Testament and it is the same in the New Testament.

### **Read Mark 12:28-30**

*28 And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?*

*29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:*

*30 And thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.*

**This is the exact meaning of the “Shahadah” or testimony of faith in Islam: “There is no god worthy of any devotion or worship, except the One True God Almighty.”**

Let us now come to the final conclusion to this matter and discover what makes this such a popular notion with people.

All of us are sinners and we all agree to that. All of us know that we are unworthy to inherit

the Kingdom of God, that is in Islam as well.

The prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) also taught the very same concept as did Jesus (Peace be upon him). He was preaching the message of salvation by Grace. He told his companions:

**“None would enter into the Paradise except by the Grace of Almighty God.”**

*They asked him, “Even you, O messenger of God?”*

*He said, “Yes. Even me.”*

## **What is the Grace and how do we get it?**

By knowing that there really is only **One God** and that He alone is worthy of all of our devotion, love, praise and thanks.

By repenting to Him and saying that we are truly sorry for what we have done.

And then making sacrifices for His sake and obeying Him even if it means that we might not get to do our own will, but rather we are doing His Will instead.

Why isn't this method (Grace in Islam by repentance, obedience and sacrifice) acceptable to most people?

They much prefer a short-cut. Anything, as long as they can continue to do the things that they want to do and then feel like somehow they are going to be automatically and completely forgiven - then that is good enough.

Now I'm going to say something strange to you. I'm going to tell you to go back and read your Bible - Really.

But this time, pray to God (direct, not to Jesus) and ask Him to open your heart and your mind to His Words in that Book. Some of it is still there, even though many have tried to change and corrupt it. Go back and read it again. But when you see something that is definitely contradictory to the teachings of the Old Testament and absolutely against any common sense, leave that part out of your formula.

If you want to have some idea of what the



**Nobody has the right to hear your confessions of sins and mistakes, except Almighty God.**

**And only He can forgive them.**

No human can guarantee that someone will enter Paradise or Hell.

No one can make up some worship for himself or for others and then expect that Almighty God has to accept that from them.

There is no compulsion in Islam. If you want to worship God on His terms, then you are welcome as a brother in faith. If not, that is your choice.

No one can carry the burden of another's sins or guilt.

None shall be asked (much less punished) about the sins of another.

Every atom's weight of good and every atom's weight of evil is recorded.

*Any good is from Allah and the mistakes were from myself. Please pray for me and ask Allah to Forgive me. May Allah guide all of us to His Truth, Ameen.*

*Salam Alaykum*

*Sheikh Yusuf Estes*  
[www.JustAskIslam.com](http://www.JustAskIslam.com)

Quran has in it, you are welcome to write to me and I'll arrange for one to be delivered to you. It might be that you already have one and maybe you would like to look in it for some ideas. It is up to you. The whole story of your life and your walk with God, is all up to you. We have nothing for sale here. If you come to Islam, there is no promise of anything other than a chance to try to be one who worships Almighty God without any partners. If you are successful in that, then He will reward you and forgive your sins and grant you His Paradise. But it is all up to Him in the final analysis.

### **In closing I would like to mention a few points:**

Islam is wide open and you are free to ask any questions that you like.

You do not have to accept the statement, "Just believe. It is a matter of faith. Don't question."

Islam has proofs to back up its statements. The Quran and teachings of Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) are all preserved in tact and in the memories of over 9 million people.

The proofs are available to everyone.

There is no clergy in Islam or any hierarchy to deal with. We are all the same in front of Allah.

Faith works side by side with proof so that your mind and heart are never at odds with each other.



**Pray the Way  
Jesus Prayed**

**"And he (Jesus) went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed..."- Bible - MATTHEW 26:39**

# The Prophet Muhammad's Last Sermon

This sermon was delivered on the Ninth Day of Dhul Hijjah 10 A.H. in the 'Uranah valley of Mount Arafat' (in Mecca).

After praising, and thanking Allah he said:

*“O People, lend me an attentive ear, for I know not whether after this year, I shall ever be amongst you again. Therefore listen to what I am saying to you very carefully and TAKE THESE WORDS TO THOSE WHO COULD NOT BE PRESENT HERE TODAY.*

*O People, just as you regard this month, this day, this city as Sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that you will indeed meet your LORD, and that HE will indeed reckon your deeds. ALLAH has forbidden you to take usury (interest), therefore all interest obligation shall henceforth be waived. Your capital, however, is yours to keep. You will neither inflict nor suffer any inequity. Allah has Judged that there shall be no interest and that all the interest due to Abbas ibn 'Abd'al Muttalib (Prophet's uncle) shall henceforth be waived...*

*Beware of Satan, for the safety of your religion. He has lost all hope that he will ever be able to lead you astray in big things, so beware of following him in small things.*

*O People, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women, but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives only under Allah's trust and with His permission. If they abide by your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your*

*women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with any one of whom you do not approve, as well as never to be unchaste.*

*O People, listen to me in earnest, worship ALLAH, say your five daily prayers (Salah), fast during the month of Ramadan, and give your wealth in Zakat (charity). Perform Hajj if you can afford to.*

*All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over black nor a black has any superiority over white; except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim which belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly. Do not, therefore, do injustice to yourselves.*

*Remember, one day you will appear before ALLAH and answer your deeds. So beware, do not stray from the path of righteousness after I am gone.*

*O People, no prophet or apostle will come after me and no new faith will be born. Reason well, therefore, O People, and understand words which I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the QURAN and my example, the SUNNAH and if you follow these you will never go astray.*

*All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and may the last ones understand my words better than those who listen to me directly. Be my witness, O ALLAH, that I have conveyed your message to your people”.*

For Questions about Islam, Comments, Suggestions or other inquiries about this publication please contact: [Editor@DawahMonthly.com](mailto:Editor@DawahMonthly.com)

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