

New Creation Book for Muslims 1

Soul Testing



Soiltesting

How welcome is the truth in your house?

Are you like our father *Ibrahim* (Abraham)?

When three men came to his dwelling,
Ibrahim could see who they really were
—angels in disguise.

So even though his wife laughed like a *kafir* (dis-believer),
our father Ibrahim
opened his heart

to their message¹.

Ibrahim not only recognized the truth
but he also fearlessly welcomed it.

THE FARMER AND THE FOUR KINDS OF SOIL

Different people react in different ways to the truth,
just as, when a farmer plants his seed,
various kinds of soil react variously.

¹This account is found in the first book of the Torah (*Taurat*), chapter 18. The material in the text above is intended to be read by Muslims; however, the footnotes are also directed toward those who may need additional information, because they are inexperienced in identifying with people of Muslim background.

The Parable (*Mathal*) Given

Imagine a farmer going out to plant seed.
As the farmer planted the seed,
some fell on the edge of the path,
and the birds came and ate those seeds up.

Others fell on rocky soil
where they sprang up quickly;
but as soon as the sun came up,
those that were rootless and shallow plantings
soon withered away.

Other seeds fell among thorns
which grew up and choked them.

Finally, there were seeds that fell on rich soil
and these seeds multiplied themselves
in the fruit they produced—
some a hundred times over,
some sixty times over,
some thirty.

The Parable (*Mathal*) Explained

The truth comes like seed from a farmer's hand.
The ears that hear the truth
are like different kinds of soil
receiving the farmer's seed.
Ears without understanding hear the truth
but *Shaitan* (Satan) comes
like the birds along the path
and carries the truth away
as soon as it is planted in the hearer's heart.
Ears with fickle attention hear the truth
and welcome it at first with joy
but such a hearer has no unwavering root in himself
and he does not last;
when a crisis or a persecution comes
on account of the truth,
such a hearer falls away at once.
Ears with divided desires hear the word,
but the worries of this world,
and the lure of riches,

and the pleasures of life,
 are like thorns that choke the truth
 which produces in such a hearer absolutely nothing.
 However, ears with understanding hear the word
 like rich soil receiving seed.
 Such a hearer yields a great harvest,
 since a hundred or sixty or thirty times
 as many hearers may receive the truth through him.
 He who has ears to hear the truth
 of the following *mathal* (parable), let him hear!

THE IBN DALL (SON OF ERROR)

There was once a *hanif* (one who desires true religion)
 who had two sons.
 The younger said to his father,
 "Father, according to the *wasiya* (will),
 let me have the *fara'id* (fixed share)
 of the *mirath* (inheritance)
 that is coming to me."
 And the father divided his means and his property
 between the younger and the elder son.
 Now the elder son was a devout believer who prayed
 regularly five times a day
 and had made the *Hajj* (Pilgrimage) as many times.
 No one was respected more among the townspeople
 for his religious devotion than this elder son.
 He was a man who performed his prayers
 in the mosque with absolute perfection
 and could read the Qur'an so well
 that he would hold the audience spellbound.

THE YOUNGER SON GOES ASTRAY

It wasn't long, however, until the younger son
 got everything he owned together,
 and left for a far country.
 There he squandered his money
 in a dissolute life of *fisq* (sinfulness)
 and moral depravity.
 And when he had spent his entire inheritance,

and had not one thing left to remind him of his wonderful father,
 there arose a terrible famine in that land;
 and the younger son began to feel his loss.
 So he hired himself out to a *harbi*¹
 who put him on his farm to feed the pigs.
 The younger son would willingly have filled his belly
 with the husks the pigs were eating
 but he was treated worse than the swine,
 for no one offered him even pigs' food to eat.

THE YOUNGER SON FORSAKES ALL PRIDE AND SELF-
 RIGHTEOUSNESS

He finally came to himself
 and started thinking like an '*aqli* (rational) being,
 like a true son having the disposition of his father.
 He said, "How many hired servants of my father's household
 abound in food and I perish with hunger!
 I will arise and stop straying from *fasaqa* (the right course) and
 go to my father,
 and I will say to him,
 "Father, I have sinned against heaven
 and in the presence of you.
 And I no longer think I am worthy to be called your son:
 make me not like my elder brother who thinks himself worthy
 but make me like one of your hired servants."
 Then he arose and came to his father.

THE FATHER WHOSE LOVE MAKES THE UNRIGHTEOUS TO BE
 RIGHTEOUS

Now it was the tenth day
 of the month of *Hajj* (Pilgrimage),
 but the elder son, having a self-satisfied heart,
 had some time before decided to forego the trip.
 But when the younger son was yet a long way off,
 his father saw him.
 And greatly moved with love and compassion,
 his father ran to the younger son

¹A *harbi* is a non-Muslim living in territory ruled by non-Muslims.

and clasped him in his arms
and kissed him with tenderness.
And the younger son said to him,
"Father, I have sinned against heaven
and in your sight,
and I am no longer worthy to be called your son."
But the father said to his hired servants,
"Bring forth the best robe
and put it on him;
and put a ring on his hand
and shoes on his feet;
and bring the calf we have been fattening and kill it;
we are going to have
a *Qurban* (Sacrifice) as on *'Id al-Adha*¹
such as has not been since the time Ibrahim
celebrated the redemption of *his* son.
Because this son of mine was dead
and has come back to life;
he was lost
and now he has been found."
And the great feast began.

THE ELDER SON REFUSES TO FORSAKE A SELF-
RIGHTEOUS AND PROUD RELIGIOUS SPIRIT

Now the elder brother
had just returned from the mosque,
and, on his way back, as he drew near the house,
he could hear the sounds of the *wisal* (communion)
of the father and his younger son.
Calling one of the hired servants,
the elder brother asked what all this was about.
And the hired servant said to the elder son,
"Your brother has returned safe and *salim* (sound)
and your father has personally sent word
for the *Qurban* (sacrifice) and the festivities to begin."

¹A sacrifice without blemish is traditionally required for every free Muslim at the climax of the pilgrimage that is to be taken at least once in a lifetime, and the sacrifice is made and shared in a communion meal at the time of the major festival even by those who do not make the pilgrimage.

Now the elder brother was furious and refused to go in.
 He would have nothing to do
 with this sort of *din* (religious practice).
 Would Allah act like his father?¹
 Would Allah bestow a *matwaba* (reward) on a son
 with an innate *qariha* (disposition)
 that was *asin* (rebellious)?
 And not only that, one who had no *tawab* (merit)
 because he had done absolutely no good deeds
 or *ihsan* (right conduct)
 —would Allah act like this sort of father?
 The elder brother resolved to never be like such a one
 and he sat down and brooded in the outer darkness.

FAILING TO RECOGNIZE THE WORD OF THE FATHER

Presently the elder brother
 thought he saw another servant approaching.
 But it was really his father
 coming to give him a personal word²
 in order that the elder son could start thinking
 like a '*aqli* (rational) being
 and enter into the spirit of the whole *jam'a'a* (house).
 So his father pleaded with him.
 Finally the elder son answered the man:
 "Look, all these years I have submitted *islam*³
 to you as an *abd* (slave)
 and I can boast without shame that
 I have religiously obeyed all of the *shari'a* (laws)
 of this whole *jam'a'a* (house).
 Yet I return from the mosque

¹Why does the text use *God* sometimes and *Allah* other times? Because the elder brother is presented as a Muslim in the story, and as a Muslim he would naturally favor the Arabic word for *God*.

²*Kalim* is the Quranic term for "word." Since Isa is called Allah's Word in the Qur'an 4:171 and since he is also the personal Word who took the form of a servant, the word choice is important here in English. Some of these parenthetical words are cues to the Arabic translator and some are added for nuance.

³See note 2 above.

and I hear the sounds of the *wisal* (communion)
between you and this *mufarrit* (prodigal)!
Am I now to humble myself
and enter a house with this sort of *zamala* (fellowship)?"

A COSTLY DEATH AND THE INHERITANCE OF THE FATHER'S
PERSONAL WORD TO HIS HEIRS

Then the father looked at him with anguished love
and said,

"You know the costly death a *murith* (testator)
must somehow undergo in order that his heirs
may receive all that he has.

And yet you seem to love me
more like a self-justifying slave
than a trusting and humble son."

The father put his arm around the man and said,

"Are you so far away from knowing me
that you cannot rejoice that the one
who strayed from the *fasaqa* (right course)
has found *tajaddud* (renewal)
and has been *rashid* (rightly guided)
to the *marashid* (salvation) of Allah?

For like you
your brother had a *sajiya* (natural disposition)
that was dead but now he has been *jadda* (restored)
to the abundant life of *wisal* (communion)
as an heir of his father's house."¹

ARE YOU WILLING TO RECEIVE THE NEW CREATION
HEART,
THE HEART OF A LITTLE CHILD,
THE HEART THAT RECOGNIZES THE TRUTH?

Have you not read what it says of Isa al-Masih
that he would "heal those born blind

¹Dr. Kenneth Bailey has written *The Cross and the Prodigal*, published by Concordia, dramatizing how a Muslim might see the Cross of Christ in Luke 15.

and the lepers...and raise the dead?"¹
 Why did he do this for people?
 Because it says in the *Zabur* (Psalms)
 that Allah "would send his Word and heal them
 and deliver them from the Pit of *jahannam*"² (hell fire)
 Have you not read,
 "The Messiah, Isa, Jesus son of Mary,
 was the *Rasul* (Messenger) of Allah, and his Word"³ ?
 Allah has always loved his Word
 as a father loves his only son.
 And his Word has always been
 the *sirr* (secret) of the mind of Allah,
 as a son is the likeness of his father.
 What blasphemer would breathe the name of Mary here?
 She was nothing but a loaner of flesh,
 for Allah has no wife and no mother and no partner
 nor did He need any human being at all
 to be what He has always been,
 the one and only God.

ONLY A CHILD-LIKE HEART RECOGNIZES THE TRUTH

Now the story goes that Isa who is Allah's Word
 had been healing many people in *Muqaddasa* (the Holy Land).
 And when he sat down,
 each *talib* (seeker) also brought unto Isa
 his *walad* (little child)
 in order for him to pronounce the *baraka* (blessing).
 And so, with tender love, Isa,
 who reverberates the love of the heart of Allah,
 picked each one up

¹Family of 'Imran. 3:49. All references in English are from A. Yusuf Ali: *The Holy Qur'an*, first published 1934. Those who, for whatever reason, object to the frequent quotations from the Qur'an in this book should remember that Paul quotes "one of their prophets" verbatim in order to win the citizens of Crete when what "one of their prophets" said lines up with the Word. See Titus 1:12-13. This book follows the rather unorthodox route of Pauline methodology.

²Psalms 107:20

³Women 4:171

and placed the *walad* (little child)
one at a time on his lap.
Just then his *hawari* (disciples)
impatiently interrupted him and told the parents
that they would have to leave.
But Isa loved little children who, as everyone knows,
humbly and whole-heartedly receive what is given to them.
Little children accept everything as a gift
with awestruck gratitude as if from the hand of Allah,
and not with any tendency
to think they deserve God's favor on the basis of merit,
since in their own small eyes
they wisely know themselves too little
to have done any good deeds.
Isa said,
"Allow the little children to come unto me
and forbid them not.
For it is to people with hearts like these
that the *Malakut* (Kingdom) of God belongs.
In very truth I say to you,
whosoever shall not welcome
the *Malakut* (Kingdom) of Allah
like a *walad* little child,
will never enter it."¹

THE TRUTH HAS NOT BEEN LOST IN TRANSCRIPTION SINCE
EVEN LITTLE CHILDREN CAN RECOGNIZE THE FATHER'S
PERSONAL WORD OF TRUTH

Isa had difficulty with his people,
because many suppressed the correct interpretation
of the Scriptures that spoke of his coming.
However, those who did attempt to "conceal
Allah's revelations in the Book"² did not succeed
as a Muslim child proved in 1947
when he discovered the Dead Sea Scrolls.
Extremely ancient parts of every book (but one)
of the Hebrew Bible were found there in manuscript form,

¹Luke 18:15-17

²Cow 2:174

greatly discrediting the skeptical scholars
who had attacked its infallible
accuracy and reliability.¹

ARE YOU WILLING TO READ THE ANCIENT PROPHETS
WITH THE HUMBLE HEART OF A LITTLE CHILD?²

¹These two thousand year old but newly discovered documents show that the scribal transcription has been trustworthy enough to insure that the original message has not been lost, for "none can change Allah's Words" (Cave 18:27). The Arab Bedouin who found (near the Dead Sea at Qumran) the scroll of Isaiah, the most important prophet of both the Hebrew and the Christian Bible, provided the world with scientific proof that the Bible has not been corrupted and lost. For this two-thousand year old perfectly preserved scroll matches our own version, proving that the original has *not* been lost in scribal transcription.

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