

Bright Milestones

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

AL - ALAZHAR

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Dr. Ahmad Mohamad Kais

Member of the Lebanese Writers Union

Bright Milestones

in the Christian-Islamic Heritage

Islamic Study of the Lives of some Saints in Christianity

- 1 - John the Baptist***
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- 8 - Saint Fatima***

Presented by:

Honorable Minister of Endowments

Professor Mohamad Mokhtar Jumaa

& Eparcb Michel Aoun, the Maronite Eparchy of Jbeil

Translated by: Zeinab Elkhansa

Prepared and Authorized by: Dr. Ahmad Mohamad Kais

***In the Name of Allah, the Most
Gracious, Most Merciful***

*Arab Republic of Egypt
Ministry of Endowment*

The Minister

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

In the Name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Praise to Allah, Lord of the Worlds

Peace and Blessings be upon the most honorable creatures and messengers, Prophet Muhammad and prayers and peace be upon his Household

This book, (Bright Milestones in the Christian - Islamic Heritage - Islamic Study of the Lives of Some Saints in Christianity) written by the Lebanese researcher, Doctor Ahmad Mohamad Kais, coincides with an important timing, in which humanity is witnessing in general a stage of ignorance and backwardness of thought, in addition to extremism and fanaticism which our world is suffering from, despite all the scientific and technological progress the mankind has achieved.

It is truly regrettable that what controls the desires of human beings are their instincts, the material disease as well as fanaticism followed by rush, frivolity and imprudence. There are many kinds of fanaticism, such as: the intellectual, sectarian, factional, racial, ethnic, eastern, western and inhuman fanaticism.

It goes without saying that the goal of all these heavenly messages is to rise from the human level to the angelic level, after God, the

Almighty has honored the human being and created him in the best of forms.

However, the sincere people of preachers and the people of thought, opinion and science attach the highest importance to work on returning people back to their human kind after they had become fascinated by their animal kind.

Hence, this book tried in a literal and news style to introduce Christian brothers to Muslims and vice versa (as expressed by the writer in the prelude of this book). It is worth noting that the author of this book has launched more than one book which call for the convergence of doctrines and upholding the communalities that are called for by the divine religions such: righteousness, good, beauty, tolerance, accepting others...etc...

Among these books are (Egypt and the Household), Encyclopedia (the recombinant and the difference in the interpretation), and other books....

The writer emphasizes that he already knows that we are in a time where no one reads, however, this does not prevent us from performing our humanitarian duty for the call, and praising his work and efforts.

This book came to highlight some bright milestones in the Christian - Islamic heritage through reviewing the biography and life of some saints of the followers of the two honorable religions (Islam and Christianity) in a way in which he tried to consider the respective differences as much as possible. It has a smooth way far from complications, taking into consideration the chronological order of the events he wrote about.

We have faith in Allah, the Almighty that the distinguished readers in Egypt and in all the Arab and Muslim countries would

seek to read this useful book to know what is stated therein, so that the desired benefit would prevail and the human fraternity would replace hostility and hatred which are led by ignorance, radicalism and fanaticism...

Minister of Endowment
Doctor Mohamad Mokhtar Jomaa
On, 01\03\2018

Introduction of the Maronite Eparchy of Jbeil

Jbeil, on 14/03/2018

Introduction for the Book

I have the honor to write an introduction for this book “Bright Milestones in the Christian - Heritage - Islamic Study of the Lives of Some Saints in Christianity” written by Dr. Ahmad Mohamad Kais, as it includes a call to highlight the importance of the mutual knowledge between the Christian and Islamic religions as a means for consolidating communal living and overcoming radicalism and fanaticism, the result of ignorance and intellectual retardation.

The dissemination of the concepts of love, respect and convergence through focusing on the common and positive points between the two religions is a duty for the educated Christians and Muslim. This is what Doctor Ahmad Kais did when he presented to us this study which helps Muslims and Christians to be introduced to what the Holy Quran says about the lives of some Saint.

This openness, which we seek in the book written by Dr. Kais and which reflects his admiration for the Christian religion, will help many of our Muslim brothers to accept the other, and will encourage them to acquire knowledge as a means to stabilize the mutual relation between Christianity and Islam. This openness is also one of the Christian constants expressed in the statement of the Pope’s of the Second Vatican Council about the relationship of the Church to non - Christian religions. In the paragraph about the religion of Islam, the Council states that: *they adore the one God, living and enduring, the all - powerful Creator of heaven and earth who has spoken to people; they strive to obey wholeheartedly His inscrutable*

decrees, just as Abraham did, to whose faith they happily link their own.”

The truth which was the starting point for the thinking of the Popes of the said Council is that all human beings constitute one family. Therefore, they first sought to articulate the common beliefs between Islam and Christianity in terms of faith and morals and then they objectively looked at the past that prevailed among the followers of the two religions and called upon them to forget hostility and disputes, so that they would be engaged in mutual understanding and maintaining justice, morality, peace and freedom, and thus, their cooperation would benefit all people.

Highlighting these bright milestones in the Christian - Islamic heritage is a call for those who are confined to the darkness of fanaticism and extremism to realize that the religious freedom is rooted in the dignity of the human being and that it is unacceptable to ignore his transcendent nature because God has created man and woman in his image and likeness. Therefore, each human being has the sacred right to a full life at the spiritual level. If he was prevented from being opened by his spiritual entity to what is sublime, the human being will become shut off and he would not be able to find the questions of his heart, the meaning of life and having strong ethical values and principles.

The Holy Scriptures reveal the profound value of human dignity, and this is what we read in Psalm VIII when it says: “What is man that You remember him, the son of man that You look after him? You made him little less than God, and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him lord over the works of Your hands; You put everything under his feet.” This transcendent dignity, which gives the human being the ability to transcend the material issues and search for the truth, is a fundamental value for every human being,

and must be considered a universal good which is indispensable to build a society directed towards achieving human perfection.

The Christian view to others starts from the deep respect for each person according to his conviction and choices, especially when it is based on good and seeks it. It also respects every person in his search for God in the religion he chooses, believing that major religions of the world make a significant contribution in the development of civilization.

In response to the religious fanaticism and aggression towards believers who abuse deep human freedom and civil society, we say that the true religiosity that links man to his Creator by faith is a prosperity for people and their morals, since it includes principles and values that are considered indispensable heritage which addresses directly men and women of reason and conscience, reminds them with the requirements of the moral repentance, and urges them to exercise virtues and approach each other under the ensign of brotherhood as members of the great human family.

In the face of the world globalization which contains multi-ethnic and multi-confessional societies, and in the face of extremism that distorts the essence of religion and harms the human dignity, great religions can be an important factor of unity and peace for the human family. Hence, believers, based on their own religious convictions and rational research of the common good, are called upon to live responsibly their own commitment in a frame of religious freedom, because deep and sincere faith helps people in diverse religious cultures to ward off what is contrary to the dignity of every man and woman and receives as precious treasure whatever leads to fraternal coexistence.

Thanks for the writer for this valuable study which in highlighting this precious heritage, increases our conviction that, correct religious education which is far from intolerance and ignorance of

the other is a distinctive way to give new generations the possibility of considering the other as a brother or sister, and being able to walk side by side and cooperate with each other. So, everyone feels that they are members of the one human family and this enriches and strengthens living together Christians and Muslims in Lebanon as well as in the Middle East countries.

Maronite Eparchy of Jbeil
Eparch Michel Aoun

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

{Who believe in that which is revealed unto thee (Muhammad) and that which was revealed before thee, and are certain of the Hereafter (4) These depend on guidance from their Lord. These are the successful (5)} [Al-Baqara 4-5]

“I treated the patients and I cured them, by God’s will, I healed the blind and the albino people, I treated the dead people and I brought them back to life, by God’s will, but I treated the fool and I was unable to lead him (to the right path).” He was asked: “O Spirit of God, and who the idiot person is?” He said: The admirer of his opinion and himself, who sees that all the favor is attributed for him, and requires all the right for himself and does not incumbent any right upon himself. He is the fool whom I am incapable of curing him.”

Jesus Christ, Son of Mary (a.s.)

“If you like, I will tell you about Jesus the son of Mary (‘a). He used a stone as his pillow, wore coarse clothing and ate rough food. His stew was hunger and his lamp in the night was the moon. His shade in the winter was the east of the earth and its west. His fruit and his basil were what grows from the earth for the cattle. He had no wife to try him, and no son to grieve him. He had no wealth to distract him, nor greed to abase him. He had no mount to ride but his feet, and none were his servants but his own two hands.”

Imam Ali Bin Abi Taleb (a.s.)

The truth, any truth, has many aspects and different effects, each of which is different and distinct from one another. Human science reveals the aspects gradually and realizes the effects one by one as it progresses and leaks into the depth of the truth.

As - Sayyed Moussa As - Sader

DEDICATION

To Az - Zahra' and he father

Her husband and her two sons

To Virgin Marry and her son

who is Allah's Word and Spirit

To Malika and her sole son

Allah's promise to the nation of our Prophet

May Allah Accept

Introduction

Humanity in general lives in a stage of ignorance and intellectual backwardness, despite the scientific and technical progress it has achieved.

Hence, it is governed by desires and instincts, and is plagued by the material and fanatic disease of all kinds, intellectual and sectarian, fanatic and ethnic, ethnic and racial, and eastern and Western, until reaching inhumanity.

Although the goal of the divine messages is to raise the level of the human species to the angelic type, after being honored from the animal kind. However, the sincere people who calls for Allah, works hardly to return people back to their human kind after they had become fascinated by their animal kind.

Hence, this present book tries, in a literal and news style, to introduce Christians brothers to Muslims and vice versa, after Allah, the Almighty bestowed success on us in introducing Muslims to each other through our book (Egypt and the Household) and the encyclopedia (the recombinant and the difference in the interpretation), although we already know that we are in a time where no one reads, however, this does not prevent us from performing our humanitarian duty for the call.

This book came to highlight some bright milestones in the Christian - Islamic heritage through reviewing the biography and life of some saints of the followers of the two honorable religions in a smooth way far from complications taking into consideration the chronological order of the events he wrote about. We also did not mention the various references and resources since they are already famous while taking into consideration the storytelling that we

wanted to simulate the context as much as possible. At the end of each chapter, we stated some similar events and milestones in the Islamic heritage.

We have faith that Allah, the Almighty would inspire people to read this useful book to know what is stated therein, so that the desired benefit would prevail and the human fraternity would replace hostility and hatred lead by ignorance, radicalism and fanaticism in the entire world, replacing hostility and hatred led by animal ignorance.

At the end, I would like to thank the Honorable Minister of Endowments in the Arab Republic of Egypt, Prof. Dr. Mohamad Mokhtar Jumaa, for presenting this work.

I would also like to thank Eparch Michel Aoun, the Maronite Eparchy of Jbeil for presenting this work too.

Praise is to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds

Dr. Ahmad Mohamad Kais
Beirut, on 12\02\2018

Yahya the Messenger, John the Baptist
Allah's Glad Tidings and the
Oppressed Martyr



Yahya the Messenger, John the Baptist

Allah's Glad Tidings and the Oppressed Martyr

Allah say in the Holy Quran: *{... Every time Zechariah entered upon her in the prayer chamber, he found provision with her. He said, "O Mary, from where is this [coming] to you?" She said, "It is from Allah. Indeed, Allah gives those whom He wills without account. (37) Then Zechariah prayed to his Lord: 'O Lord! Grant me from Yourself out of Your grace the gift of a goodly offspring, for indeed You alone heed all Prayers (38) As he stood praying in the sanctuary, the angels called out to him: 'Allah gives you good tidings of John (Yahya),³⁸ who shall confirm a command of Allah,³⁹ shall be outstanding among men, utterly chaste, and a Prophet from among the righteous (39)}* [Surat Al - Imran: verses: 37 - 39].

He also says in Surat Mariam: *{ Kaf - Ha - Ya - 'Ain - Sad (1) This is a mention of the mercy of your Lord to His slave Zachariah (2) When he secretly called out his Lord (Allah) (3) Saying: "My Lord! Indeed my bones have grown feeble, and grey hair has spread on my head, And I have never been unblest in my invocation to You, O my Lord! (4) And Verily! I fear my relatives after me, since my wife is sterile. So give me from Yourself an heir (5) Who shall inherit me and the posterity of Ya'qub (Jacob) (inheritance of the religious knowledge and Prophethood, not the wealth, etc.). And make him, my Lord, one with whom You are Well - pleased!" (6) (Allah said) "O Zakariya (Zachariah)! Verily, We give you the glad tidings of a son, His name will be Yahya (John). We have given that name to none before (him)." (7) }* [Surat Maryam 1 - 7].

Talking about John (the Baptist) as to the Christian literature, or Prophet Yahya, necessarily requires us to talk in brief about Prophet Zachariah (a.s.) (Zakariya), as an introduction or a prelude to the biography of Prophet John.

Who is Zakariya, the Prophet (a.s.)?

He was one of the prophets of the sons of Israel, a descendant of Haroun (Aaron), namely Moses the son of Imran, and he was the chief of the press, so the money, the vows, and the gifts of the children of Israel were presented to him. He was much anxious about the state of affairs since he had no offspring and there was no suitable person to hold the office priesthood after him, and for that he was in sorrow and grief, especially that there were wicked Jews among his relatives who were out to get him and rob the money of the poor and the needy sons of Israel. Zakariya was the guardian of Al Batoul (Virgin) Mariam (a.s.). He used to take care of her and serves her, as she was his wife's niece. He kept her in a mihrab (chamber) to protect her. Each time Zachariah came to the mihrab to check on her or bring her food or serves her needs, (he would find that she had ready food) which he did not know from where it was coming to her from, so he asked her: "O Mariam, from where is this [coming] to you) and from where does it come from?" She replied: "It is sustenance from Allah, for Allah grants whomever He wills, whenever he wills." Encouraged by the high rank of Mariam (a.s.) and the miracle he witnessed, he had hope that the Almighty, would grant him a child from his barren wife who had already reached an extreme old age ninety eight, while he was one hundred and twenty years. (Zakariya prayed to his God, he said: "My Lord, grant me from yourself a good, blessed and pious offspring. Indeed, You are the Hearer of supplication and generous." Allah responded to his prayer, so the angel called him while he was standing in prayer in the

mihrab: *“Allah gives you good tidings of Yahya (John),”* the son who will be (confirming a word from Allah - meaning, the word is Jesus (a.s.), the son of his aunt’s daughter, who was born six months later - and [who will be honorable (master), abstaining [from women], but confines himself to desires and prevents himself from Vanities, and one of the righteous prophets). Nevertheless, Zakariya was astonished by the news. He burst out and wondered saying: *“My Lord, how will I have a boy when I have reached old age and my wife is sterile?”* The angel replied: *“Such is Allah; He does what He wills.”* Allah will grant you a son from an old age woman without transforming her to the state of youth, and that was easy to Him. He said: *“My Lord, make a sign for me.”* and a sign indicating the date of conception, He said: *“Your sign is that you will not [be able to] speak to the people for three days.”* except by gesture and you become like a dumb, unable to speak unless you try, except by exalting to the Allah, the Almighty, and this is a great miracle in itself. The angel told him: *“And remember your Lord much and exalt [Him] with the praise] in the evening and the morning.”*

Allah, the Most Exalted has mentioned the same story another time at the beginning of Surat Mariam (a.s.). He said: *“My Lord! Indeed my bones have grown feeble (due to aging, as well as flesh and nerves) and grey hair has spread on my head (from old age). And I have never been unblest in my invocation to you (and neither upset nor deprived in the past in my supplications to you, because you have always been answered me generously. So, do not disappoint me in my request) O Lord! Now I fear what my relatives and colleagues will do after me: but my wife is barren (does not give birth to a child). Give me an heir from Your grace and generosity. Give me such an heir that will truly represent me, and represent the posterity of Jacob (Yaquub) (bin Ishaq bin Ibrahim, or Jacob bin Mathhan) and make him, my Lord, one with whom you are Well - pleased!”* Therefore

the angel told him in response to his invocation, by Allah's saying: *"O Zakariyah! Verily, We give you the glad tidings of a son. His name will be Yahya (John), We have given that name to none before him."* He is the first to be named Yahya. Then (He) Zakariyah said: *"My Lord, How can I have a son, when my wife is sterile, and I have reached the extreme old age?"* He said: "So (it will be), Your Lord says, It is easy for Me. Certainly I have Created you before, when you had been nothing. He said: My Lord! Appoint for me a sign. He said: "Your sign is that you shall not speak unto mankind for three nights, though having no bodily defect." Then he came out to people from Al Mihrab." he told them by signs to glorify Allah's Praises in the morning and in the afternoon. He knew that his wife was pregnant.

Then, while he was standing in prayer in Al Mihrab, the angels, fronted by Gabriel (a.s.) came to him. Zakariya was terrified when he saw Gabriel who appeared as a young man. "Allah gives you glad tidings of Yahya", Gabriel told Zakariya.

John, the Baptist or Yahya bin Zakariya (a.s.)

Yahya was the first to believe in Issa (a.s.) while each of them was still in his mother's womb, since as we have mentioned above, Zakariya kept Mariam (a.s.) in a mihrab far away from people to protect her. He used to bring her food and serves her by himself. In one of his visits to her he recognized the signs of her pregnancy, so he felt terrible and panic since he feared that the sons of Israel would accuse him of raping her. Thus, he went to his wife to tell her and at that time his wife was pregnant with Yahya (a.s.). She told him: "Bring her to me so I can look at her." When Mariam entered (a.s.), Zakariya's wife did stand up to greet her. She showed fury and condemn. Suddenly, she felt a strong movement and push in her womb from her child. Then she heard the voice of her fetus saying:

“The lady of women came to you, embracing the master of men (in her womb), and you do not stand up for her?” She felt as if her fetus in her womb bending with respect for what there was in Mary’s womb. So, she stood up quickly. What happened was an answer to her suspicions and doubts and that of her husband who realized that this is a miracle of Allah,, the Most Exalted... and this was the first believe in Issa (a.s.). Yahya was born six month before the birth of Issa.

Following his birth, Allah has granted Yaya the prophecy at an early age and it is said that when he was three years old. Allah, said to him: *“O John, hold on the Scripture firmly”*. He also said: *“and We gave him wisdom in his youth. And tenderness from Us, and innocence.”* Meaning that we have bestowed passion and mercy upon people to invite them to obey the Allah Almighty. *“and innocence(Zakat).”* Meaning that we have made him an innocence for the one who accepted his call and obeyed his orders. *“and he was devout.”* He had never committed a sin. *“And kinf to his parents; and he was not a disobedient tyrant”*. Then, Allah, the Most Exalted praised him by saying: *“And peace be upon him the day he was born, and the day he dies, and the Day he is raised alive”*. This is a true pride and honor for him.

Yahya has reached an ultimate level of asceticism, worshiping, and weeping for awe of God, since he was very young. Hence, he entered Jerusalem from as a boy and saw the Popes and monks putting hairdressers and woolen burnouses. They have also punched their clavicles and entered chains into them and hitched them to the mosque. Therefore, he was impressed by them and came to his mother asking her to weave a hairdresser and a burnouse for him to look like the popes and to participate in worshiping. His mother said that they had to wait until his father came they would take his permission. When his father arrived, his mother told him about his

request, so his father said: “My son what calls you for that while you are still ver young?” He answered, “O father, did not you see or know a boy younger than me who had tasted death?” He said: “Yes”. Then, he ordered his wife to make for her son whatever he asks for. Therefore, Yahya (a.s.) put the hairdresser and the burnouse on his head and dedicated himself to worshiping God in the mosque with the popes and monks while he was much younger than them. He wept day and night fearing of Allah, until his body dried up, his eyes became drowned and his bones became weak, to the extent that the popes and monks as well as his parents cried for him being impressed by his devoutness. Even his father avoided talking about Heaven and Hell during his sermons in the presence Yahya fearing of Yahya’s graveness. One day, his father asked him about his frequent weeping and wailing while he was still in a young age. He said to his father: “You are the one who push me to that.” Zakariay replied: “And when was that, my son?” He said: “Did not you say, father that there is a burden between Heaven and Hell which only the weepy for fear of Allah could surpass?” “Yes dear son, and what about you!”, Zakariya said.

Yahya often goes out to the barges, raging on his face to go to his Lord far away from people. Iblis, the dreaded devil used to come and talk to him. One day, Yahya asked him about his methods and manners of trapping people and seducing them. “Have you ever trapped me?”. Iblis said: “No, but you have a feature that I like.” Yahya said in confusion: “What is it?” “You are a greedy man, if you eat, you got stuffed and this prevents you from performing some worships and praying at night,” Iblis replied. Then, Yahya said: “I will give Allah an oath not get satiated from food until I see His face.”

In more than twenty years, before the appearance of Jesus Christ (a.s.) John preached people that the Christ (a.s.) will come.

Therefore, when Jesus (a.s.) appeared with his call to people, he taught them the Laws of the Gospel. Yahya (a.s.) believed in him and followed him. Issa (a.s.) used to send messengers and apostles to parties of the children of Israel to preach them and teach them the rules of religion and law. Once, he sent Yahya to a tribe, where the governor of believed in Yahya, consulted him, and obeyed his orders. The king had an old woman and wanted him to marry her daughter from a previous husband, Yahya prevented the king from marrying her and said to him: "It is impermissible to marry your wife's daughter." The mother became very angry and kept her reaction to her herself. The reason beyond this prohibition according to all the heavenly messages is that the daughter of the wife is considered as one of the husband's wives, meaning as his daughter - in - law and one of his Maharam (unmarriageable kin) forever.

When the night came, the old woman made the king totally drunk and he completely lost his consciousness. Then she dressed her daughter with the most beautiful clothes and adorned her with the most bodily inducements. So the king became fascinated with her and desired her. When he approached her, she said to him, "I will not accept until you pay me a dowry that pleases me." When he asked her about the dowry that pleased her, she replied: "The head of Yahya ibn Zakariya." So He called Yahya and ordered to him be beheaded. Yahya was beheaded in her presence and his head was put in a golden platter.

In order to complete the benefit, especially because we talked at the beginning about Prophet Yahya (a.s.), his martyrdom was according to historical narrations as following: The devil (may curse be upon him) appeared to people in the form of an honest man and circulated among them lies and fabrications that Zakariya (a.s.) has rapped Virgin Mary (a.s.). He started to incite people to kill him.

Some was affected by him and wanted to kill him. Zakariya (a.s.) managed to flee. With Allah's will, a tree opened up its trunk and allowed Zakariya (a.s.) to hide inside it, and then wrapped him up in its depths. However, Satan pulled a fragment of Zakariya's (a.s.) clothes through the cracks, thus exposing him. According to some reports, the pursuers initially wanted to set the tree on fire, but then decided instead to saw the tree in half, along with Zakariya (a.s.) in it. Thus, he followed his ancestors, the righteous prophets and the honored servants. Allah has honored him by sending a group of angels who washed and enshroud him and pray for him with the glory and honor he deserved.

All of the above is according to the Islamic heritage, whereas the news of prophet Zakariya (a.s.) and John (a.s.) is according the heritage of the Christians and they are almost identical to the general opinion, although expressions and terms might be different. John (a.s.) was mentioned in the New Testament, especially in regard of the circumstances of his birth, his growing up and his condition in general. We are also going to narrate this history in short according to the Christian texts, with some editing, and from several sources and references, without prejudice to what is required.

His Birth and Family

According to the official sources in Christianity, the father of John is Prophet Zakariya (a.s.) and his mother is Elisabeth, both of whom are from the tribe of Israelites, particularly the tribe, which was entrusted, according to the Old Testament since the days of Prophet Moses, with the affairs of the religious services of the tribes of Levites. The task of the tribe included the service of the Ark of the Covenant which was in the Temple of the old Jerusalem. This service was very special, in which fathers inherit their profession for their sons. Each tribe was usually divided into groups of teams, each of

which consisted of the offspring of one of the elder of the tribe. According to the Gospel of Luke, John belonged to the Abia sect, [Luke 1:5]. Elisabeth also belonged to the tribe of Levi. Luke's Gospel indicates that she is one of the descendants of Aaron, the brother of Moses. It is known that the tribe of the Levites is the offspring of Prophet Aaron, according to narrations [Luke 5\1]. The reason of the division of the Leviticus into parties in particular was due to their large number. During the reign of King Herod, there were about twenty thousand priests throughout the country, a large number of priests to be able to serve at the same time. Therefore, the priests were divided into twenty - four separate bands, each of which consisted of 800 to 1000 priests, according to the instructions listed in Chronicles 1 (4).

The Gospel says about the life of this family: *“Both were upright in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord.”* [Luke 1\6] But Elisabeth was barren and her husband was old. In ancient Eastern societies, including the Jewish community, the value of women was measured by their ability to have children. So aging without childbirth often leads to personal problems and social shame. In addition, this was regarded as a trial by God, for family failure. This, constitutes from the perspective of the community, an additional reason for social ostracism and isolation. Therefore, the verse of Luke Gospel implies a diminution from the point of view of the community at that time: Both were upright in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was sterile. And they were very old in age. [Luke 1\6 - 7] Hence, the Gospel of Luke attempts to prove that what might be apparently considered as a contradiction, is not an inevitable contradiction from God's viewpoint. According to the Gospel of Luke, the family of Zachariah lived in the Judean Hill that

is located on the southeast of Jerusalem on the road to Bethlehem. Most of the church fathers, as well as contemporary historians, said it was the village of Yatta near Al Khalil village, historically known as Hebron.

The Glad Tidings to Zakariya

When it is time for the Abia's tribe, to which Zakariya belonged, to serve in the temple which lasts for two weeks according to the traditions inherited from Chronicles 1, Zakariya travels to Jerusalem where the priests draw a lot to see who enters the temple to burn the incense, which might not happen not even once in the life of the priest. Incense burning is performed in the inner chamber of the Temple known as "Jerusalem". In general, the Temple is divided into three sections: the first is for the public and the second is for Jerusalem, which allows only for priest to enter it. The third is for "the Holy of Holies" which only the High Priest is entitled to enter it once a year on Yom Kippur. The incense is burned twice a day every morning and evening as mentioned in the Psalms of David. Incense burning coincides with the raising of people for their prayers and request to God.

While Zakariya was burning the incense, an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. [Luke 1\10]. Luke Gospel reveals by the Angle that he is the same Angel who brought the glad tidings of pregnancy to Virgin Mary. Zakariya's reaction was intense fear, so the angel said to him: "Fear not, Zakariya, for your request was heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son". [Luke 1\13]. In the Old Testament, there are several similar stories about the evangelization of an angel in the birth of a person. This happened with the mighty Samson and Prophet Elijah. As in the following glad tiding of Jesus, the angel told Zakariya what the child could be called when he is born: "and you shall call his

name John.” [Luke 1\13]. The angel continued that the birth of John would bring Joy and gladness, and many will rejoice over his birth, [Luke 1\14], as the angel says in Luke Gospel, since he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, *“beginning yet in his mother’s womb”, he will return many of the children of Israel towards the Lord, their God”, And he will precede in front of Him, in the spirit and power of Elijah, such that the hearts of fathers will turn toward their children, and the disobedient toward the outlook of the righteous, prepared people will be arranged for the Lord, for he will be great in the eyes of Him. Wine and intoxicating beverages by no means shall he drink.* [Luke 1\18]. This is considered a part of the person’s vows to God as stated in the Torah.

Zakariya and his Wonder about the Glad Tidings

The question of doubt is a prominent feature in various stages of the Bible. When receiving messages, Abraham, Sara, Moses, the tribes and Jed’un both showed doubt about the possibility of achieving it. Similarly, Zakariya did when Gabriel the angel came to him, thinking that it was impossible for him and his wife, the was sterile in their old age, to be able have a child despite the decisive words of the angel and the subsequent bestowal characteristics about the promised child. But the angel’s answer was clear: I am Gabriel standing before Allah, and was sent to speak to you, and I will inform you of this (glad tiding). "[Luke 1\19] After Zakariya asked for proof of the angel’s words to be fulfilled at the time, [Luke 1\19] the angel told him that he will not be able to speak until the child is born. [Luke 1\19]

According to the Gospel of Luke, Zakariya spent a long time inside the temple, and the people were standing outside waiting for the priest who burned the incense to offer the daily porcupine as mentioned in the Book of Numbers. When Zakariya came out and

could not speak, people knew that he had seen a vision inside the temple (Luke 1:23). Then, the Gospel of Luke described the incident of pregnancy as: "And after those days, Elizabeth was pregnant." [Luke 1:25]. However, she has kept the matter of her pregnancy secret and showed pleasure. "This is what the Lord did to me in the days when he looked at me, to get me out of shame among people." [Luke 1:25]

The Glad Tiding of Maryam and her visit to Elizabeth

After her glad tiding, Mary traveled from Nazareth to the house of Elizabeth in the mountains of Judah. [Luke 1\39] When saluted Elizabeth, according to the Gospel of Luke, the fetus jumped in her belly. "You are blessed among women, blessed with the fruit (Yahya) in your belly," Elizabeth said. [Luke 1\42] The Church later added this phrase to the angelic greeting. (Luke 1:44) She added: Once I heard you greeting, my fetus jumped joyfully in my womb. [Luke 1\44]. Then Mary sang the anthem known as her name. The Bible states that Mary stayed in Elizabeth's house for three months and that after John was born she returned to her house. [Luke 1\56]

Child's Birth and his Circumcision

John was born to the family of Zakariya, and joy spread among the inhabitants of the area and the relatives of the family. [Luke 1\58] At the circumcision ceremony of the child in accordance with Jewish law on the eighth day of his birth, during which he shall be given a name, the family almost called him Zakariya, (Luke 1\60), similar to his father's name. However, Elizabeth refused and asked to name him John. People expressed their surprise no one in the family has been named so. They asked Zakaria about his opinion on the matter, so took a tablet and wrote in that his name is John" (Luke 1\62) just as angel Gabriel requested him to do when he came to him in the

temple. Then, as stated in the Gospel of Luke, Zakariya's tongue opened and spoke praising Allah and echoed a poem which the scholars of the Bible described as the "Song of Zakariya," through which Zakariya recalled a summary of the history of the sons of Israel, recalling the greatness of God's works through Abraham and "forever." [14] Then he prophesied to his son: [Luke 1\76 - 78]

Some of What was stated in Zakariya's (a.s.) poem

(You child, you will be called the prophet of the Most Exalted, because you will come before the Lord to preparing his ways. To give his people the knowledge that salvation is by the remission of their sins, thanks to the compassionate feelings of our God, those which the dawn which shine from God, the Most Exalted, considers us.

The incident of the birth of John has become the subject of discussion "in all the mountains of Judea" as mentioned in the Gospel of Luke. [Luke 1 65] People were asking about the future of this child: "God's hand was with him." [Luke 1\66]

John's Activity and Preaching

The Gospel of Luke says that John began his public activity in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius. [Luke 3\1] Historically, Tiberius became an emperor in 14 AD, meaning that John the Baptist began his activism between 28 AD and 29 AD, [15]. He is called in the Biblical text "John the son of Zakariya". It also states that he moved from the wilderness to the surrounding areas of the Jordan River, and biblical scholars refer to a special symbolism in the choice of the River of Jordan. In this particular place and according to what the Book of Joshua states, the children of Israel renewed their covenant with God after wandering in the desert for forty years. [16] From there, he started to call for the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins". The Gospel of Matthew adds

another detail: "John the Baptist preached, "Repent, the kingdom of Heaven is near." [Matthew 3: 2] Thus, as in the Gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, he fulfills the prophesy which was stated about him in the Book of Isaiah.

The voice of a herald in the wilderness said: Pave the way of the Lord, and make his ways righteous. Every valley will be bridged, and every mountain and hill will be lowered, and the places that are twisted will become straight, and the rough places will be straight roads, and all men will see the divine salvation.

Thus, according to theology John, the son of Zakariya was not calling for repentance to God and for the forgiveness of sins only, but paved and prepare the way to the coming of Jesus after him. According to the official narration in the Gospels, the activity of John received resonance and response in those areas, and the masses came to him for repentance until "the people of Jerusalem, the whole Jewish area and all the villages bordering on Jordan came out to him." [Matthew 3\5] The practical interpretation of the New Testament [18] states that with no doubt, some people came to him out of curiosity, especially since the attributes of John were strange as described by all Gospels and that he used to wear a garment of camel lint, fasten the belt of leather around his waist with and eat locusts and honey. [Matthew 3: 4] This generally suited the wildlife that John lived, though we do not know the details about his life. One of the characteristics that contributed to the attraction of people to John, critics say, was his violent offense against King Herod Antipas and the religious leaders of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and his reveal to their errors in public and their need for repentance as public people.

John used to preach all people and scold them to the extent that he described them as the children of snakes. [Luke 3\7]. The Gospel of Matthew refers that to the pre - Pharisees and Sadducees only.

This may be due to the fact that the Gospel of Luke was addressed to Greeks who do not know the divisions of the Jewish community and its parties, contrary to the Gospel of Matthew which was addressed to the Jews of the Diaspora. [18] In any case, the context of the text shows that John was only addressing those who were baptized for the remission of sins without supporting them with works: "So they brought fruit worthy of repentance." [Luke 3: 8] He called them not to be baptized out of fear of punishment but in love with God. John also addressed the Jews criticizing the doctrine of the "chosen people of God": "Do not tell us Abraham is our father, I tell you that God is able to get children from these stones to Abraham." [Luke 3: 8].” The practical interpretation of the New Testament states that many Jews were shocked when they heard John saying that descent and filiation do not avail, and that the relationship with God is not determined by lineage. [19] He also present a statement that had a prominent role in subsequent theological discussions in Christian life on the relationship of faith and salvation: "The ax also is placed on the root of the trees: every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into fire." [Luke 3: 9] John reiterated that the union of good works with true faith. When the people asked him about the commandments to follow, John advised them not to greed, to support the poor, share with the needy, as well as to stay away from selfishness and apathy. Not only did John call upon the Jews but also the Roman soldiers. When they asked him, he replied, "Do not oppress anyone, nor complain falsely to anyone." [Luke 3:14]

John’s baptism was a symbol of washing of sins and thus constituted a practical ritual of his mission based on repentance and reform. The activity of John the Baptist took place during a difficult period in the history of the Israelites. The prophet of Israel was not sent since four centuries ago, specifically since the time of the

prophet Malachi according to the Jewish religion. This created a state of waiting for the Israelites not only for the prophet but also for the Messiah who was promised by the days of David as a Savior to the sons of Israel, and as a founder of justice and peace on earth. [19] Therefore, everyone was asking himself about John: Is he Christ? [Luke 3:15] John's answer was clear that he was not the Christ "But he said that when Christ comes after him, he confessed that he was not even worthy to unfasten the lace of his shoes. He also said that when Christ comes, he will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. [Luke 3\16]. According to Christian doctrines, John was referring to Jesus himself. Many theologians and fathers of the Church wrote about John's use of baptism, and it is possible to gather the most prominent views that John has used symbolic work that people can see to realize what is required from them to do. Hence, the external washing is the symbol of "the inner washing of sin" Yet, John was baptizing people as a sign that they have been baptized by God to forgive their sins. However, Baptism remained an outward sign, but the real sign was to change their attitudes and their retreat from sin. In addition to the fact that baptism is common in Jewish society, Jews often used to baptize non - Jews who wish to convert to Judaism, but the First Church described baptism for a new interpretation.

The Gospel of John in turn reviews John, the Baptist in its own theological way, and it is agreed among the biblical scholars that the Gospel of John is not a "history of life" but merely an intellectual presentation of Jesus. This is largely the theological and philosophic nature of the words of Jesus, his teachings and even his miracles. In the Gospel of John, the Jewish priests ask John about him and his role, in which he denies that he is the Messiah, or that he is the new Elijah or even a prophet. And when they asked him why he practice baptism, he pointed out to the one coming after him." [John 1: 13 - 27]

His Blessed Martyrdom

King Herod married Herodias the wife of his brother. Herod feared John when he told him that it was not permissible for him to marry his brother's wife. Therefore, Herod imprisoned John and held a grudge against him. On the birthday of King Herod, he called the prominent personalities and leaders for a sumptuous dinner. The daughter of Herodias (Salome) entered to pierce Herod the king and those who were sitting with him. The king said to her, "Ask for whatever you may desire and you will have even if it was half of my kingdom. I swear on that before all those masses. The young girl went to meet her mother and discuss the matter with her. Then she asked for the head of John the Baptist on a platter, so the king was very sad for the oath. The king sent a swordsman and ordered him to come with John's head. Then, he presented his head to the girl who in her return gave it to her mother. The blessed head was buried in Umayyad Mosque in Damascus currently, where there is a well-known shrine for him.

His Nickname and the Reason for calling him the Baptist

John's most famous name is "the Baptist" because he was the baptizer of Jesus, according to the Christian doctrine. However, this title was not widely used in the writings of the New Testament rather; it was used to refer to Jesus himself as in the letter to Hebrews 6\20. John the Baptist was the first to be named John by the Heracles of Gnosticism in the second century during his explanation of the Gospel of John. Later, it was used by a number of prominent church fathers, such as Clement of Alexandria and Origen, through which it was widely used. The Church, in its capacity as the official founder of Christianity, accepted the name of the Baptist, the Predecessor, the Christ's Baptizer, the First Martyr, the Fasting, the closest friend

to the Messiah, and other titles attributed to him. Nevertheless, the title of the "Baptist" was the most common in both the churches of the Eastern heritage and that of the Western heritage until it became a corollary to his name nowadays.

The View of the Christian Doctrine Regarding John the Baptist

The Eastern Orthodox Church

The Eastern Orthodox Church believes that John was the last of the Old Testament prophets, and that it serves as the bridge between the period of Revelation and the New Testament. They also say that during his death, he preached that Jesus Christ would follow him. They also believe that John the Baptist at the time of his death appeared to those who had not heard of Christ, and preached them with the Christ.

John is also one of the saints of the Eastern Orthodox Church and every Tuesday day is dedicated to his anniversar **The Eastern Orthodox Church also celebrated his memory in six separate days:**

September 23: the anniversary of Conception of St. John.

January 7: the day of St. John. (The memory of the transfer of the remains of his right hand from Antioch to Constantinople in 956)

February 24: the day of finding the head of St. John for the first and second time.

May 25: the day of finding the head of St. John for the third time.

June 24: the birthday of St. John.

August 29: The anniversary of beheading St. John.

In addition to September 5, which is the anniversary of the celebration of Zakariya the priest and Elisabeth, the parents of John the Baptist. On October 12, the Russian Orthodox Church also celebrates the transfer of Saint John's right hand from Malta to Gatchina in 1799.

The Roman Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Church celebrates John the Baptist in two days of the feast:

June 24 The birth of St. John the Baptist.

August 29: the anniversary of beheading St. John the Baptist.

Other Religions

Islamic View

Although we have previously dealt with this subject in details, yet the context requires us to talk about it in details.

John the Baptist known by Yahya in Arabic and in the Holy Qur'an in which he was mentioned in Surat Mariam, the son of Zakariya, Mary's guardian and the son of the aunt of Mary, Issa's mother. The Qur'an mentions a story similar to that in the Gospel of Luke, including the sterility of the wife of Zechariah, and the glad tidings of the birth of Yahya brought by the angels to Zakariya.

Yahya, from an Islamic point of view, he was granted with the Book and wisdom while he was still very young. Allah, the Almighty says: *"O John! Hold the Book with all your strength. We had bestowed wisdom upon him while he was a child."* [Surat Mariam, verse: 12]. He also described him as a "prophet of the righteous". Allah said: *"As he stood praying in the sanctuary, the angels called out to him: 'Allah gives you good tidings of John (Yahya),³⁸ who shall confirm a command of Allah, shall be outstanding among men, utterly chaste, and a Prophet from among the righteous.'" [Surat Al-Imaran, verse: 39].*

The Sabean - Mandaean

The Mandaean sanctify John the Baptist and believe in him. They call him Yahya. As to them, he is the last and the greatest

prophet. The Mandaean agree that he had baptized Jesus (Issa), but they refuse to acknowledge that Jesus is a Savior or a Prophet. They also consider that Yahya is the true Messiah.

According to the text of their Holy Book, *Ginza Rabba*, Yahya died at the hands an angel, who appeared to him as a three - year - old child to baptize him. Yahya knew that he was an angel and knew what had been sent to him. As soon as he touched his hand, he died instantly. After that, the angel buried Yahya.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter - day Saints

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter - day Saints acknowledges the existence of John the Baptist. According to their belief, John was appointed by an angel, when he was 8 days old, to overthrow the kingdom of the Jews and prepare people for the Lord. He also claims to have been baptized after a while during his childhood.

Followers of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter - day Saints believe that John the Baptist appeared on the banks of the Saskohiana River, Pennsylvania, to Joseph Smith and Oliver Kudry on May 15, 1829, and he appointed them as priests. According to the Book of Mormon, John the Baptist is the last of the Old Testament prophets, the first prophets of the New Testament, who was sent to appoint their priesthood.

The View of Bahá'ísm

In many of the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of Bahá'ísm, John the Baptist is considered a prophet as to the Bahá'ís. [34] Bahá'u'lláh claimed that Hazrat al - Bab was the embodiment of the spiritual return of John the Baptist. However, Baha'is consider Hazrat al - Bab as having higher rank than John the Baptist.

The View of Gnosticism

The Gnostics believe that John the Baptist is the embodiment of the prophet Elijah. Because Elijah was one of the prophets of the Old Testament, so Elijah did not know the Messiah in (the New Testament), and therefore his soul had to be reincarnated according to the Gnostic theology. According to the prophecy of Malachiite, the prophet, Elijah should have return first to preach the coming of Jesus Christ.

The Church of the Monotheists (Al - Muwahideen)

The followers of the Korean Church of the Monotheists believe that God sent John to help Jesus preach his message in the land of Judea. John had to do his best to convince the Jewish people that Jesus was the Messiah. This mission was necessary to ensure Jesus' success in preaching his message. However, John's failure in his mission was the main obstacle for Jesus to preach his message.

Before concluding, we must point out that during the preparation of this research, we found some opinions of a group of contemporaries who raise suspicions about the sincerity of the martyrdom of Prophet Yahya (a.s.), since they assume that he is alive as the case of the Christ (a.s.).

Upon reviewing their opinions, we found that they do not deserve to be commented on or explained. Most of their statements and claims are not based on a logical assumption (scientific or historical). Therefore, we chose to just refer to them, so that the reader knows that we are acquainted with such matter.

In conclusion, we say: peace be upon Zakariya the Prophet of Allah. Peace be upon Yahya (or John the Baptist), the Prophet of Allah. Peace be upon Issa, the son of Mary, the spirit of God and His Word. Peace be upon the holy martyrs, the prophets and their pure

descendants, especially the martyr, Al Hussein bin Ali bin Abi Taleb (a.s.), whose head was cut off and taken from one country to another until it reached the tomb of Prophet Yahya (or John) in the Umayyad Mosque in the Levant.

Therefore, the ways of the Freeman and the Unsullied meet in earth, and their rank meets in Heaven.

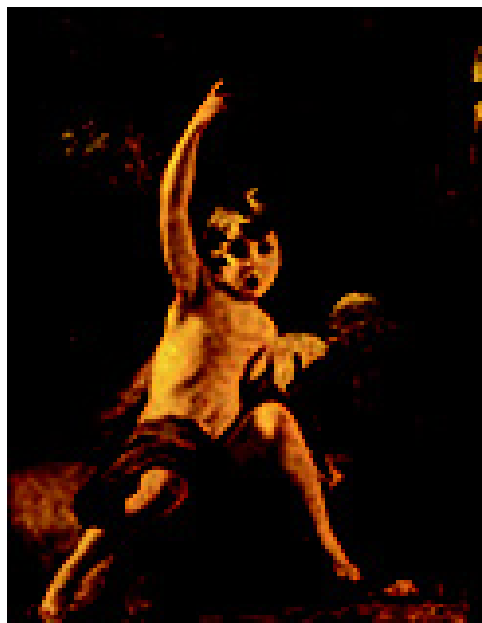
Our Last prayer is: Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Wolds.



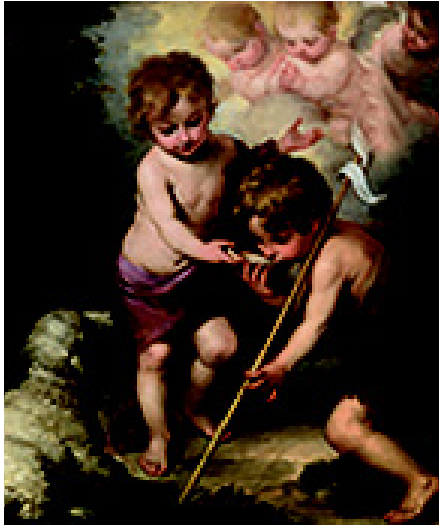
An artistic image that symbolizes Virgin Mary (a.s.) and her aunt Elizabeth congratulating her for being pregnant with Yahya (a.s.)



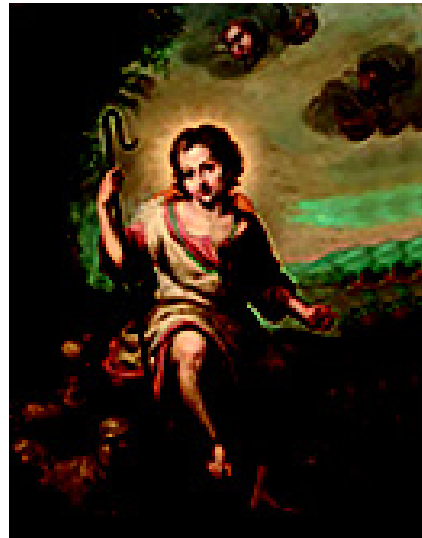
An artistic image that symbolizes Prophet Zakariya (a.s.) receiving congratulations on the birth of Yahya (a.s.).



An artistic image symbolizes Prophet Yahya (a.s.) while he was still young.



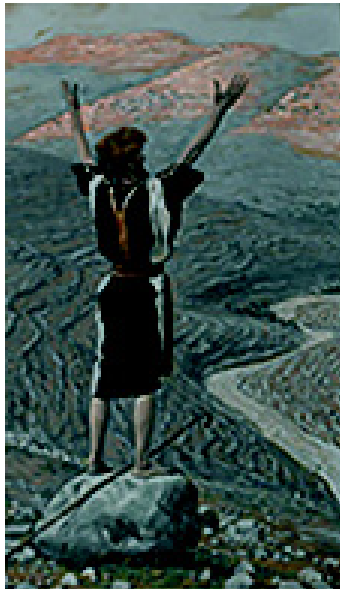
An artistic image symbolizes Jesus Christ (a.s.) and Prophet Yahya (a.s.) while they were young.



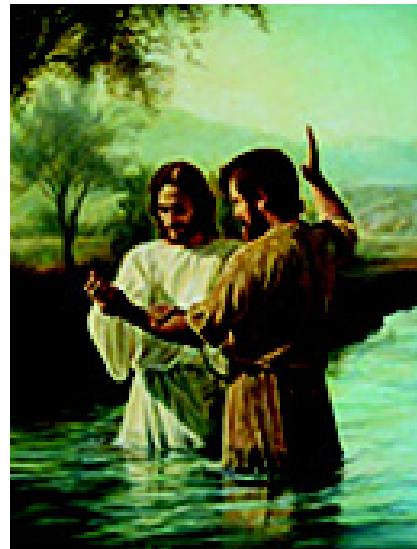
An artistic image of Prophet Yahya (a.s.) while he was at an older age.



An artistic image of Prophet Yahya (a.s.) while he was at the age of puberty.



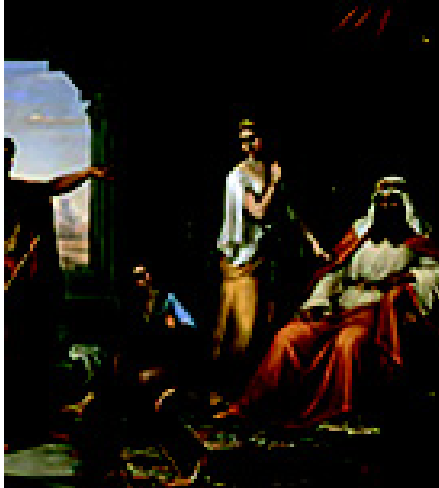
An artistic image of Prophet Yahya (a.s.) while he was in the wilderness preaching of worshipping Allah, the Most Exalted.



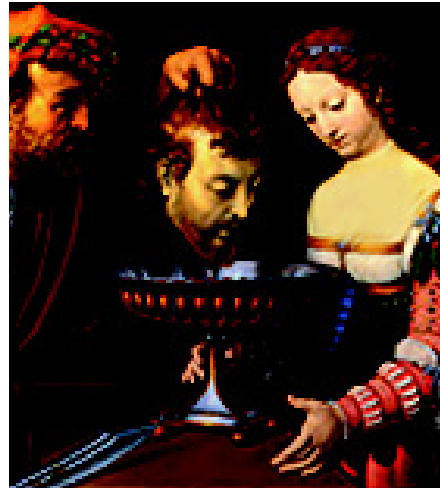
An artistic image symbolizes the baptism of Jesus Christ (a.s.) by Prophet Yahya (a.s.) in Jordan River.



An artistic image symbolizes the masses that were gathering around Prophet Yahya (a.s.) to listen to him.



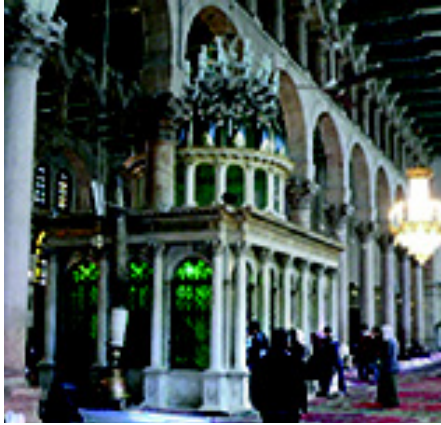
An artistic image symbolizes Prophet Yahya (a.s.) while he was warning Herodus about the prohibition of his marriage.



An artistic image symbolizes Emperor Herodus while he was presenting Prophet Yahya (a.s.) to his daughter's wife.



artistic image symbolizes Prophet Yahya's (a.s.) head put in a dish after being beheaded.



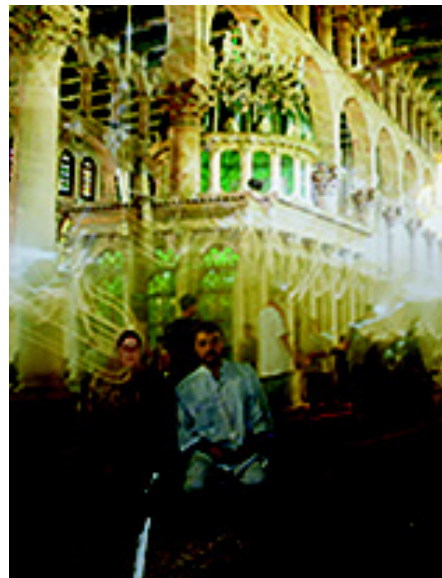
An image of Prophet Yahya's (a.s.) shrine in the Great Umayyad Mosque in Damascus-Syria.



A nearer image of Prophet Yahya's (a.s.) shrine in the Umayyad Mosque in Al-Sham.



An old image of Dr. Ahmad Kais with his family in the inner circle of the Umayyad Mosque.



An old image of Doctor Ahmad Kais with his family during his visit to the shrine of Prophet Yahya's (a.s.) head in the Umayyad Mosque.

Saint Jacob, the Great

A Symbol of Martyrdom in the Path of Righteousness



Saint Jacob, the Great

A Symbol of Martyrdom in the Path of Righteousness

Allah, the Almighty, says in His Holy Book: "When Jesus found Unbelief on their part He said: *"Who will be My helpers to (the work of) Allah?" Said the disciples: "We are Allah's helpers: We believe in Allah, and do thou bear witness that we are Muslims. (52) "Our Lord! we believe in what Thou hast revealed, and we follow the Messenger; then write us down among those who bear witness." (53)*

Imam Ali (a.s.) also said: **"Do not be a slave to others when Allah created you free."**

- It was reported that Jesus Christ (a.s.) said: **"The one who eats from his hard - work becomes wise."**

Human intellectual freedom has always been a concern to tyrants over time. The freedom of thought and belief, especially the one related to Heaven, still upsets and worries the unjust rulers and politicians whose ruling is based on oppression and tyranny, not withstanding, imposing and dictating concepts and ideas in all matters of human life.

The more dangerous than those politicians and rulers are those who have proclaimed themselves as preachers for religion - whatever their religion is - throughout the history of mankind.

From here, we understand that the mission of the Spirit of God and His Word, Jesus, the son of Mary (a.s.), is just an uprising or a revolution against those tyrannical concepts which had prevailed in the Palestinian society at that time. The word of Jesus Christ (a.s.) against the clergy in Jerusalem, is just an embodiment of this

meaning and this concept in which he described them as the Thieves of the Temple.

The meaning of the word “Thieves of the Temple” according to what can be understood from the abovementioned words is that they have stolen and deprived people of the freedom of thought and belief and not to mention their money, etc. Thus, they confronted him and conspired against him as they considered him a threat to their worldly cheap interests. When Jesus found conspiracy and danger on their part, he called upon his loyal followers who believed in him and in his call to support the religion of God. They responded to him, stood up for him and by his side, endured harassment and had patience for injustice and tyranny practiced against them as well as against everyone who believes like them.

According to history in the broader sense (the humanitarian and religious sense), the number of those followers or apostles was twelve among them was Jacob who was called the Great.

Who is Jacob the Great?

He is Jacob, son of Zebedee who is named “the Great” to distinguish him from another man having the same name who is Jacob, son of Alpheus who is called Jacob “the Less”.

Jacob the Great is the brother of John, known as John the Beloved to whom a collection of sacred writings on the Christian heritage is being attributed. His writings are: the Bible which has his name and is known as The Bible of John and, the Revelation of John which includes some indications to some metaphysical and future events, and a group of three letters. All of these writings of John the Beloved form an integral part of the Bible adopted by the Christians and which is known as the New Testament, with the addition of the transcripts about Prophet Moses, which are attributed to him and known as the Torah or the Old Testament. Later, it formed the Bible

in its both sections, the Old Testament and the New Testament. If God wills, we might speak about this Beloved John in a single article.

Back to Jacob the Great, the subject in question, he grew up in the city of Sidon in Lebanon. His father Zebedee was a fisherman and according to some narrations he had lived in affluence due to his father's profession which was a source of money to him. Some other narrations state that Jacob and John the Beloved were followers of John the Baptist, or Prophet Yahya (a.s.) in the Islamic sense. Moreover, his mother who was called (Salome) was also said to be a follower of Prophet Yahya (a.s.).

When Jesus Christ rose up in his call and uprising against the thieves priests, he was five years old or less. Jesus Christ (a.s.) called him and his brother John to join him and they responded to him, followed him and never left him.

Jacob was one of those who witnessed the first miracle of Jesus Christ (a.s.) in Cana of Galilee, a village which is currently known as the village of Kana in Lebanon - Jabal Amel where the Zionist Enemy committed a massacre against women and children in 1966.

Jacob and his brother John were characterized by their psychological strength and consciousness in addition to their enthusiasm to the call for believing in God and following Jesus Christ (a.s.).

As a result for these characteristics, it is said that Jesus the Christ (a.s.) called them (Boanerges) which means the Sons of Thunder. There are also some uncertain narrations which talk about a family relationship between Salome, the mother of Jacob and John, and Virgin Mary, the daughter of Imran, peace be upon her.

History tells us that Jacob never got married and he had no descendants like Prophet Yahya and Jesus Christ (a.s.) because he

was occupied with calling and preaching to God through believing in the Call of Jesus Christ (a.s.).

His Martyrdom

After the ascension of Jesus Christ (a.s.) into Heaven, following the conspiracy of the priests against him and his followers, those thieves priests continued to put pressures on the Roman ruler to kill the Jesus's (a.s.) followers and in a bid to obliterate the features of this new religious thought which ran counter to their interests and desires.

Accordingly, the Romans responded to their demands since Jerusalem or Beit Al Maqdis was a strategic need for the Roman Empire at that time, and since these priests were able to flip things over and destabilize those areas.

On 44 or 45 AD, during his reign and as a result of the insistence and pressures made by the priests, King Herod Agrippa, grandson of King Herod the Great ordered the beheading of Jacob after being arrested while preaching Christianity.

Indeed, he was beheaded with the soldier who was taking him to execution because he was influenced by him, by his morals and by his call and thus believed like him in God. Therefore, Jacob the Great became a martyr in the path of righteousness and belief in God the Almighty at the age of nearly fifty years spent in worshipping God and so his is considered the first of the Apostles of Jesus Christ (a.s.) to be martyred.

Where was Jacob the Great buried?

There are three narrations regarding the burial of Jacob:

The First: It states that Jacob was not taken out from Palestine and thus he was buried in Palestine after being executed and

martyred. This is the opinion of the Father Macarius, one of the senior historians of Christianity.

The second: It talks about transferring his body after a long time of his martyrdom from Palestine to France during the reign of the Christian kings in Europe and states that his body is still preserved and found in the Church of Saint Saturnine in Toulouse in France.

The Third: It talks about the preaching and call of Jacob in the Iberian Peninsula which currently includes both Portugal and Spain. It states that after being martyred in Palestine, his body was transferred to those countries, particularly to a city named Compostela in Spain where there is the Cathedral and Church of Santiago de Compostela.

Brief Overview of the Church in Spain

Santiago de Compostela Church is located in the region of Galicia in Spain. This Cathedral and Church derives its rank in the Catholic world from being the place of the supposed burial of the remains of St. Jacob the Great, son of Zebedee. This made it in early Middle Ages a destination for Catholic Christian pilgrims. On 1985 A.D, the Church was included in the World Heritage List and in 2007 A.D. it was added into the List of Spain's Twelve Treasure by a referendum made on this matter.

As for the reason beyond the construction of this Cathedral and Church, narrations say that it was after the body of Jacob was transfer to Spain and its burial in a tomb dedicated to him. His tomb however was abandoned as a result of persecution of Christians by Romans in Spain at that time. The tomb was not discovered until the hermit Pelagius claimed he had witnessed strange stars in the sky which led him to the place of the tomb. Bishop Theodosius recognized this as a miracle and informed King Alfonso II. The King ordered the construction of a chapel on the site.

Narrators stated that King Alfonso was the first pilgrim to this shrine and tomb. In 829 A.D. the church has been expanded and in 899 A.D. King Alfonso III of León ordered the construction of a huge Church on that site and this prompted Christian pilgrims to go to this city which turned to be a significant destination for the Catholic pilgrimage.

Construction of the church in its present form was not completed until 1122\1128 A.D. in the presence of King Alfonso IX of León.

Pope Urban II (who was the first to demand the formation of the crusade armies to liberate Jerusalem from Muslims) raised this cathedral and church to an archiepiscopal see. The church was expanded and embellished with additions throughout history and to this day, where continued maintenance and restoration work still include it.

Due to its symbolism, the Church remains to be a destination for thousands of pilgrims every year to be enriched with this spiritual and cultural value embodied by Saint Jacob the Great.

Finally, we cite Allah's, the Most Exalted saying: *“Such days We alternate between the people, that God may know those who believe, and take martyrs from among you. God does not love the evildoers.”* [Al Imran:140].

We comment by saying: The case of Saint Jacob is similar to the case of Hujr bin Adi al Kindi, the honored Companion (may Allah's peace be upon him), who converted to Islam in his youth at the hands of the Prophet (pbuh) and was martyred in 51 Hijira at the age of fifty years.

Hujr was characterized with knowledge, piety and bravery in which he disobeyed the orders of the Calipha and participated in the burial of Abi Zar Al Ghafari (may Allah's peace be upon him), while he was in his exiled in the region of Al Rabza. Hujr (may Allah's

peace be upon him) was one of Imam Ali's (a.s.) companions who refused to pay homage to Muawiya bin Al Sufian. Thus, Muawiya ordered the execution of Hujr along with his three sons. Hujr Al Kheir (his nickname) has never weakened or retreated from his pledging allegiance to Imama Ali (a.s.). he presented his sons to the sword before him. When he was asked about the reason of doing so he replied: "I fear that when they see the blood they might retreat from paying homage to Imam Ali (a.s.). in this way, Hujr and his sons were martyred beheaded, not for a sin they have committed, but for the freedom of conviction, thought and belief.

The honorable tomb in the area of Adra in the Levant nowadays was not safe from the acts of desecration and bombing at the hands of a rogue group of terrorists who claim to be falsely affiliated to Islam, while Islam is innocent from them. They did not stop at this, but they abused his pure remains, disentombed and humiliated it, and wasted its features so that it could no longer be found or known.

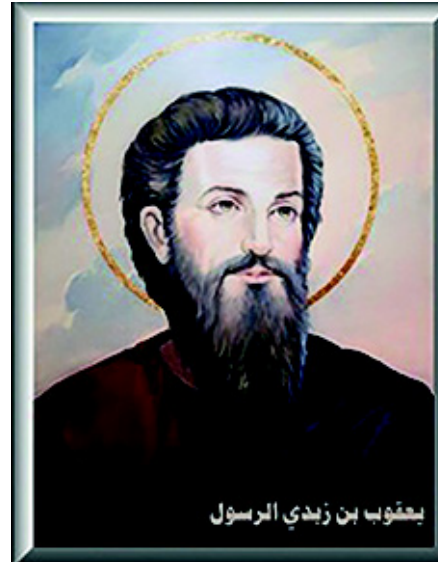
Therefore, the past is similar to the present and only the divine promise remain the hope in which Allah, the Most Exalted said: "Soon will the wrong - doers know the end that they shall reach."

Peace be upon Saint Jacob the Great, peace be upon the honorable martyred companion, Hujir bin Adi (Hujr Al Kheir), and peace and blessings be upon his Allah's honest and pious servants.

Our last supplication is praise is to Allah, Lord of the worlds.



An artistic drawing of Saint Jacob, the Great.



Also, an artistic drawing of Saint Jacob.



An old artistic drawing revealing the execution of Saint Jacob.



A modern panoramic image of the Saturnine Cathedral in Tolosa (Toulouse) in France where it is believed that there are remains of Saint Jacob, the Great.



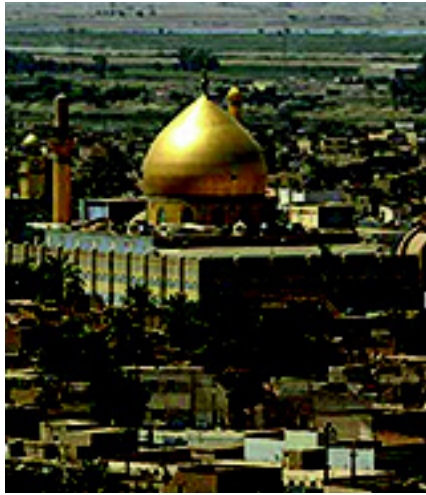
A panoramic view for the Church in France.



An image of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Spain.



A nearer image of the interface of the Cathedral and Church in Spain.



A public image of the Shrine of Hjr Bin Adi before devastating it.



An image of the Companion Hjr bin Adi Al Kindi from the inside before devastating it.



An sorrowful and painful image showing the vandalism and desecration of the shrine and the sand stone, which has attacked the shrine of Hjr bin Adi Al Kindi (may Allah's mercy be upon him) from inside and outside.

**Shamoun Al-Safa and Habib Al-Najjar
Messengers of Peace and Martyrs of Truth**



Shamoun Al - Safa and Habib Al - Najjar

Messengers of Peace and Martyrs of Truth

Allah, the Most Exalted, has immortalized the names of the Apostles of Jesus Christ (a.s.) as well as the man who supported them, by stating them in His Holy Book in Surat Ya - Sin, in which He, the Almighty says: *“And present to them an example: the people of the city, when the messengers came to it (13) When We sent to them two but they denied them, so We strengthened them with a third, and they said, “Indeed, we are messengers to you. (14) ”*[Surat Ya - Sin, 13 - 14]

In the same Surah, Allah also says: And there came from the farthest end of the city a man, running. He said, O my people, follow the messengers. [Ya - Sin:20]

Allah, the Almighty, tells us in Surat Ya - Sin about the events which happened with the apostles of Jesus Christ (a.s.) whom He sent from a village to another to call for Allah and preach to Jesus Christ and the Gospel.

Therefore, it is necessary to know about this village, what had happened with the apostles there, the role of the pious man who supported them.

According to the historic narratives, the village is Antakya (Antioch). A land of Rome whose people adopted idolatry. Antioch is a big city, it is the capital of the Greek Salukis in the Levant “*Bilad al - Sham*”, which was built in 300 BC (Before Christ) and was attributed to Antichos from Alexanders' successors. It was said that the village was attributed to the people of Antibes, the name of one who built it. There was also the Pharaoh who was called Antiochus,

the son of Antiochus, worshipping idols. (Antaky) is of the largest towns of Sham, which was build - according to some narratives - in 300 BC and considered one of the three largest Roman cities of that time in terms of wealth, education and trade.

Antioch is one hundred kilometers far from the city of Aleppo, and sixty kilometers far from Alexandria. It was opened by Abu Obayda Ibn Jerrah in the time of the Second Caliph. The people of Antioch accepted to pay Al Jizyah (tax) and remain on their religion.

Antioch is considered for Christians as the City of Medina as to Muslims, and it is the second important city for them after Jerusalem (Beit Al Maqdis), from which Jesus Christ starts his call. Some of those who believed in Christ - Paul and Barnabas - immigrated to Antioch and called people there to Christianity and thus Christianity spread.

This village and the apostles sent to it were stated in many Islamic resources. So, what is the story of the apostles of this village?

The Story of the Apostles: Imam Muhammad al - Baqir said that Allah sent two men to the people of Antioch. Those two apostles came to preach people with what they did not know, but people behaved harshly with them and imprisoned them in their idol - temple. Allah sent a third person as His messenger who after entering the town asked people to take him to their king. When they reached the gate of the royal palace he said, I was worshipping in the forests and now intend to worship the Lord of your king. So, they conveyed his message to the king who ordered them to take him to their temple. Accordingly, he was sent to the temple of the idols where he along with the two apostles continued to worship Allah.

In short, when this third messenger met with the earlier two messengers he told them that it was strange that they acted harshly in their effort to make the idol worshipers leave the religion and

embrace a new one and inquired as to why they did not take a lenient approach. Then he told the two not to make it known to the people that they knew him. Then he went to the court of the king. The king told him that he had heard that he had worshipped his god and therefore he was his brother - in - faith and so it was his duty to assist him and hence he may tell him (the king) whatever he needed. He said, «O king! I do not need anything but I have seen two persons imprisoned in your temple. Who are they? The king retorted that they had come to him with an intention to turn him away from his religion and to falsify his religion they invited him to worship the heavenly god.»

The third Messenger said, «O king! It is better on our part to have a regular and systematic dialogue with them. If it is proved that truth is with them then we may follow them and if it is established that the truth is with us then they should enter our religion and become eligible for all the relief and concessions available to us. The king agreed to this proposal and called the two from the temple. When they arrived in the court the third messenger asked them as to why they had come there? They replied “So that we may invite the king to the religion of worship of that Lord who has created the earth and the heavens and who, in the womb of a mother creates whatever (male or female) He wills and gives it the shape of his liking. He created the trees and made fruits. It is only He who sends rain from the sky.” The third messenger then asked them, “Is your god able to heal a blind man and make him see? They replied, “We will pray to Him and if He wills He will heal the blind.” Then the third messenger requested the king to call for a blind person who has never been able to see anything in his life. Accordingly, a man who was blind since his birth. The two messengers were then told to pray to their Lord to heal the blind man in order to see if they were true in their claim. The two arose, prayed two Rakat (bowing) of prayer and prayed to

Allah, then blind man opened his eyes and saw the sky. Then the third messenger requested the king to call another ailing person.

So another ill man was brought there. Then the third messenger himself made a Sajdah (prostration) before Allah and prayed for enabling the second blind man to see. He too was healed. Then he (the third messenger) said to the king, "If they have proved before us an argument we too have proved one before them. Now call a person who being handicapped is unable to walk." On the arrival of such a handicapped person. The third messenger asked the two to pray for his recovery. They again offered Salat (prayers) and asked Allah who made the immobile man healthy and able to walk.

Thereafter the third messenger requested the king to call for one more handicapped person who too was cured through his prayer to Allah. After this he told the king that like the two proofs given by the two we also have produced similar two. Now only one thing remains. If they fulfill it I will enter their religion. O king, I have heard that you had a son who has died. If they are able to bring him back to life, I will embrace their faith. The king retorted, "In that case I also will follow their religion." So the two (earlier men) were told that only one thing had remained for settling the matter that the king had a son who was dead and buried. If you bring him back to life we will enter your faith. Hearing this those two messengers of Allah fell down in prostration before Allah, made long prayers and then raising their heads said to the king, "O king, send some persons to the grave of your son. They will find him alive and out of his grave, by the will of Allah." People rushed to the grave of the prince where they saw that the dead prince had come out of his grave and was shaking off the dust from his head.

They took him to the king who recognized him and asked, "O my son, how are you?" He replied, "I was dead, but then I saw two persons prostrating before my Allah and praying to Him for my life.

Allah accepted their prayer and made me alive.” The king asked him, “O my son, if you see those persons can you recognize them?” He said, “Yes.” So the king went along with the prince to a jungle and made him stand there. Then a number of people paraded before the prince. After hundreds had passed before his eyes, one of the two messengers was brought before him and he at once spoke, “Yes, this aged gentleman is one of the two.” Then many more were made to pass before the other messenger came before him and the prince again recognized him instantly and said that he was the other person. Seeing this the third messenger said, “I put faith in your Allah as I am convinced that the message brought by you is the Truth.” The king also became a believer and so did all of his people who became believers. This was the narrations of Ali ibn Ibrahim Al Qummi in his interpretation.

Meanwhile, Allamah (Religious Authority) Tabtabai, said in his narrative research: “They said in the synod: “Isa sent two messengers of his apostles to the city of Antioch so that they might guide the people there. On reaching there, they saw an old man grazing his sheep. He was Habib of the family of Yasin. Both of them saluted (told Salam to) him. Habib inquired them: “Who are you?” They replied: “We messengers sent by Isa, who advised people to worship only one Allah instead of Idols.” Habib asked them: “Do you possess any sign (of their being messengers) they replied that they could heal the ill and make the blind and the leprous healthy. The Sheik (Habib) told them: “I have an ill son who stays in bed for years.” The said to him: “Take us to your house to see him”. Habib too them to his house where as soon as the two messengers applied their hands to him, he arose hale and hearty by the Grace of Allah, the Most Exalted - The news went round the city resulting in many people’s recovery from their illness . The news also reached the king of that city who used to worship idols. The king called for both of

them as to who they were. They told him: We are the messengers of Isa and that they were sent to tell the people not to worship the idols that could neither hear nor see and to convey to the Commandment of the only one Allah who sees and also hears. He said, Perhaps your Allah is someone other than the idols. They replied, “Yes and it is He who has created you and also your Gods.” He said: “Well, for the present you can go but I will ponder over what you have said.” So people took them to the market where they hit them.

According to some traditions when Isa sent his two messengers to Antioch they could not find a way to approach the king for quite a long time. One day when the king came out for a royal round the two came in his path, pronounced Allahu Akbar (Allah is the Greatest) loudly and began to explain Tawhid (Divine Unity). The king became angry and ordered their arrest and flogging of a hundred whips each.

When Isa came to know about it he sent Shamoun Al Safa, the leader of his companions for helping the earlier two messengers. Reaching there the third (Shamoun) did not reveal that he was a messenger of Isa but cultivated contacts with the royal court men. Then he entered the king’s court. The king liked his manners. Therefore, he befriended him. After some days, Shamoun asked the king about the two persons he had imprisoned and inquired as to whether he had at all talked to them and had ever asked for any evidence in support of their words? The king said, No, I was very angry with them then. Then he called both of them from the jail. Shamoun asked the two who sent them there? They said the One who has created everything and who never associates anyone in His Godhood and Sovereignty. Shamoun asked them to describe His attributes briefly. They said, “He does what He wills and commands what He desires.” Shamoun asked them what the proof of what they had said was. They inquired what was his desire and what did they

want? Then the king called for a boy who did not have eyes and not even any blocks or holes in place of eyes. His forehead was plain. He asked them to make him see. Then the two messengers prayed as a result of which two holes appeared at the place of eyes. Then they made two clay balls and placed them in those holes in the forehead of that blind boy and he began to see. The king was astonished. Then Shamoun told the king that had he also made such a request to his Allah and had He responded similarly it would a matter of honor for both him and for his Allah. The king said he did not hide anything from him and that it was a fact that the Allah whom he worshipped neither could hear anything nor see anything, nor could he harm or benefit anyone. Shamoun told the two messengers that if their Allah could make a dead man alive he would put faith in Him.

They said their Allah was able to do everything. The king said here is the dead body of a boy and I have not allowed its burial for the last one week, make him alive before his father arrives. The corpse was then brought there. It had become swollen and decomposed. Then the two messengers prayed openly and Shamoun silently to Allah until the dead boy arose and said, æI was dead for the last seven days and I was pushed into seven vales of Hellfire. I disown the religion that you are following. Put faith in Allah Who is the Only One Allah. The king and some groups became believers and the rest remained infidels.

He said: The same was narrated by Al Ayyashi in attribution to Al Thamali and others that Abi Jaafar (a.s.) and Abi Abdullah (a.s.) have said, except in some narratives: Allah sent the two messengers to Antioch, then He sent the third. Other narrations said that Allah has revealed to Isa to send them and after that he sent his apostle Shamoun to save them, and that the dead person who he brought back to life was the king's son and that the dead son came out of his grave and was shaking off the dust from his head. The king asked

him: “O my son, how are you?” He replied, “I was dead, but then I saw two persons prostrating to Allah and praying to Him for my life. The king asked him, “O my son, if you see those persons can you recognize them?” He said, “Yes”. So, the king went along with the prince to the desert. After a number of people paraded before him, one of the two messengers was brought before him and she at once said, “Yes, this is one of the two.” Then the second passed before him and he again recognized him pointing out with his hands to them and therefore, the king and all the people of his kingdom became believers.

Ibn Ishaq said: “The king disbelieved and decided with his people to kill the messengers, so Habib knew that while he was at the remote gate of the city and came to them running and calling upon them to obey the messengers, He is the man whom Allah, the Almighty mentioned in His Book: *“And from the remote part of the city there came a man running; he said, O my people! Follow the messengers: Follow him who does not ask you for reward., and they are the followers of the right course.”* (36:15 - 21)

Even though, Allah, the Most Exalted did not indicate to the name of this man, the narrators described that the name of that man was Habib Al Najjar and the that the very first person to put faith in the Messengers when they entered the township was he. His house was located on the outskirts of the town. When he heard that all the people of his community disbelieves in them and wanted to kill them he came down running to his people and advised them saying: *“O people, follow the messengers whom Allah has sent to you and recognize their message.”* They said: “Maybe, he recognized that they are prophets since when people called him he asked them: Are you given a reward for that? They said: “No”.

The truth is that he was a believer before the messengers came to the town. The proof is what has been reported by the interpreters

and the narrators such as Tabtabai in his interpretation pf “ In Al Dor Al Mnthour, Abou Dawood, Abou Naem, Ibn Asaker and Al Dolaimi reported that the Prophet has said (peace be upon him and his household): “The believers were three: Habib Al Najrrar, Mu’min believer of the family of Yasin, who said: O people, follow the messengers”, Hazqil, Mu’min of the family of Pharaoh who said: How dare you kill a man who said my Lord is Allah.” And Al Bin Abu Talib and he is the best among them.”

I say: as it was also reported by Al Bukhari in talking about the history of Ibn Abbas (a.s.): the believers were three: Hizqil, the believer of the family of Pharaoh, Habib Al Najjar, the believer from the family of Yasin and Ali Bin Abi Talib who is the best among them.

In the synod interpretation of Al Thalabi in reference to Abd El Rahmaan bin Abi Leila, reported that the Holy Prophet said: among all the communities there were three persons who had topped all in the matter of following and obeying the Truth and who never disbelieved in Only One Allah for even a second and they were: Ali Bin Abu Talib, the believer of the family of Yasin and the believer of the family of Pharaoh and Ali is the most excellent among them.

I say: The same meaning was narrated in Al Dor Al Mantgiur about A; Tabran, Ibn Marwiah, Ibn Abbas said: the predecessors are three: the predecessor of Moses IS Youshaaa bin Noon the predecessor of Isa is the believer of the people of Yasin and the predecessor of Mohammad (a.s.) is Ali bin Abi Talib”

Thus, Habib Al Najjar used to worship Allah, the Most Exalted alone since He is the Only One who derives to be worshipped, so he did not worship him in greed of His Heaven, neither in fear of His Hellfire. So whoever hopes for the meeting with his Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord.” [Surat Al Kaf, verse: 110] Ali Bin Abi Talib (a.s.) Amir Al

Mu'mnin, the Imam of believers and the guardian of monotheist said: "O My Lord, I do not worship You out of fear of the Hellfire, nor do I worship You of in greed of Your Heaven. Rather, I worship you because You are worthy of worship." This is Habib Al Najjar, one of the three best believers and Imam Ali (a.s.) is the best among since he called upon his people to monotheism, to worship Allah, the Only God, and to follow the messengers who does not ask for a reward for their message. Therefore, which message is worth to be accepted and praised other than this message brought by such people? It is a call from the people of guidance who do not ask for a reward for guiding people. So, why to refuse a good deed spent with no price? This refusal is made on due to ignorance and insolence together.

(I believed in your God. So, listen to me), this what Habib Al Najjar says explicitly and in a resounding manner in face of the people. It is the word of survivor which he adhered and be that as it may...! Otherwise, let them hear it in a loud and challenging way. It is the word of truth that should prevail over all other word and any other call.

When Habib Al Najjar declared his belief in Allah, the Most Exalted, and called his people to Tawheed (monotheism) and Ikhlas (sincerity in worship), and forbid you from polytheism and tyranny. They bounded at him in one man's leap and killed him. They weakened him since he was so weak and sick and nobody defended him. It was said that" After killing him, they threw him in a well which is called Al Rass and they are the people of Al Rass whom Allah mentioned in (Surat Al Furqaan, verse:38) and in (Surat Kaaf, verse: 12)

The Shrine of Habib Al - Najjar is still exists to this day in the mosque that holds his name (Mosque of the Shrine of Habib Al Najjar) in the city of Antioch in Turkey, where Muslims from all the

around the world visits the Mosque. Whereas, unfortunately Christians do not visit him although he was martyred in defense of the messengers of Jesus Christ (a.s.).

As for the names of the three apostles who were sent by Jesus Christ, as narrated and transmitted by Tabarsi in (Majma' al - Bayan):

(Shuaba said: The names of the two Messengers were: Shamoun and John (Youhanna), and the name of the third was Paul (Boulos). Ibn Abbas and Qaab: Sadiq and Sadouk, the third is Shalom. It is said that: They are Isa's apostles whom he sent by his order. **“And they said, Indeed, we are messengers to you”**, which means that: they told them: “O, people of the village, Allah has sent us to you.” The people of the village said, they are not good for the message as we also are not good for it. So, you are lying in what you claim. They thought that whoever was like them, is not good to be a messenger and they did not know that Allah, the Exalted, chooses whom He likes to preach his message and that He knows that they are good for His message and are capable of bearing the burdens. **“And they said: Our Lord knows that we have been sent on a mission to you”**. [Surat Yasmine, verse: 36]

It was said that: They are two: Thomas and Peter (Botrous). It was also said that they are Simon (Samaan) and Yahya, and that: The name of the third is Peter in Romanian, Simon in Arabic and Shamoun in Syriac who is Shamoun Al Safa. Many narrations and words were said in this regard.

Ibn Kathir also said that those three men were Messengers sent by the Messiah as narrated by Ibn Katada and others. It seems that they are messengers sent by Messiah since Allah said: **“We sent to them”**. Allah said that the people of this city disbelieved the messengers and that He has sent on them one shout and immediately they were

extinguished. Hence the interpreter was direct to the point in his interpretation.

What is most striking is that the interpreters and historians did not confirm the authenticity of the name of these apostles, except for Simon or Shamoun, to whom the Mosque which is located in the village of Shamaa in Jabal Amel in Lebanon.

What is the authenticity of this attribution?

In a special article about Prophet Shamoun Al - Safa, Qabas Association for Preservation of Lebanon's Religious Monuments published an overview about him, his conditions, death and place of his burial. It stated that: (He is Shamoun Al - Sfa. He was born on 10 BC and martyred at the age of 77. He is Shamoun bin Hamoun, who was called Peter, which means the smooth hard black stone.

He was born in 10 BC in the region of Jalaska, now known as the town of Al Jish, north of Palestine, as mentioned by Edward Robinson as reported by St. Jerome. His mother is the sister of Prophet Imran, the father of Mary, and thus he is Mary's cousin (from her mother's part) and her cousin from her (father's part) at the same time.

Among the names which he was known as: Peter (Butros), Kefa - Simon the Pure (Shamoun Al Safa). He is one of the disciples (students) of Christ and his trustee. He is the grandfather of Imam Al Mahdi (May Allah hasten his appearance) from his mother's part, Malika, daughter of Caesar Joshua, the king of Rome. He accompanied the Messiah in all his settlements and travels and visited Lebanon with him.

The Association stated that there are two opinion about his death and the place of his burial:

The first opinion: It states that he died in Roma and was buried

there (nowadays known as St. Peter's Basilica) and this is believed by the Catholic Church.

The second opinion: It states that according to the narrations of some Muslim historians, he was killed before his people in Al Jalil Mountain and its surroundings and was buried in Shamaa village where his shrine is well known.

The Shrine of Prophet Shamoun consists of two parts: the lower part which is not known when it was built. The upper part which was built during two stages: the first is unknown and the second was built on 490 Hijira, at the time of the Fatimid state and it is considered one of the most significant Shiite monuments in Jabal Amel...). This information became circulated among people and is opposed only by Christians of the first opinion.

On our part, we comment on the second opinion by saying: There is a suspicion in the name of the messenger Shamoun, and this seems to be the result of confusion between the names of the Apostles, as there are two of them known as Simon and Shamoun.

Since, the names of the disciples and apostles of Christ (a.s.) are:

- 1 - Andrew, the son of Jonah (John) and he is the First - Called Apostle by the Messiah (a.s.).
- 2 - Simon, the son of Jonah, who is known to the Christians by St. Peter.
- 3 - Jacob (John or Yacoub), the son of Zebedee, (named the Great). He is the first to Apostle to be martyred on 44 AD.
- 4 - John, the son Zebedee (named the Beloved) (Youhanna Al - Habib) to whom the Gospel, the Book of Revelation and the Acts of the Apostles are attributed.
- 5 - Simon, the Jealous. He is from Galilee (Qana Al Jalil).
- 6 - Mathew, the Tax - Collector (he was named so since he used to collect taxes)

- 7 - Thomas (who was called Doubting Thomas).
- 8 - Jacob (Yacoub Al - Saghir), son of Alphaeus (who is named the Less) (Yacoub Al - Saghir).
- 9 - Juda (Yahouza) Labbaeus, brother of Jacob, the Less (who is named Thaddeus).
- 10 - Philip, from Bethsaida (Galilee).
- 11 - Bartholomew (Bar - Talemai). He is Philip's friend.
- 12 - Judas Iscariot. He is described as having betrayed Jesus (a.s.).

The names of these Apostles are mentioned in the Gospel (Mathew-10), (Luke - 6), (Markos - 3) as well as in the Acts of Apostles (Acts - 1) and in other Christian Heritage.

Based on the above, it turns out that Apostle (2) and Apostle (5) have the name of Simon, and it was stated that the name Simon is called in Syrica (Shamoun).

Therefore, the name of Apostle (1) is Shamoun and he is called (Peter). In the context, It will become clear to us the reason beyond this denominate. Historical evidence and Christian narratives will confirm the martyrdom of Peter in Rome during the reign of the Emperor Nero in 67 AD in which they confirm that he was crucified according to Roman traditions with head down to the ground. Therefore, it is unlikely that his body was returned to be buried in Jabal Amel (north of Galilee) in Lebanon.

A for the cause of naming him Peter, it is attributed to the smooth rock, in which Christian historians say the Christ called him so when he told to him, **“You are the rock on which my church is built.”** Since then, he was known as Peter the Apostle, which means the Rock.

Based on this, Christians adopted this saying in building and establishing the Firs Church where Apostle Peter was buried in Rome.

As for the Apostle Simon (Shamoun), who is called the Jealous.

According to St. Jerome and others from the Village of Galilee in Canaan, he was called Al Qanouni as to be distinguished from Simon (Peter). Even the Catholic Church or its historians do not know the exact place of his burial, but rather they have a variety of opinions regarding this subject. As for calling him (the jealous), the prevailing belief in the Eastern and Western Churches was that he was strongly adhered to his religion and its rituals, and thus, he is said to be jealous about his religion and Pure by His God, the Most Exalted.

What we are going to confirm in this respect is that the Shrine which exists in the village of Shamaa in South Lebanon, belongs to (Shamoun, the Jealous and the Pure) and not to (Shamoun, Peter) and only God knows best.

However, peace be upon Issa, the spirit of Allah. Peace be upon his messengers and apostles, especially (Shamoun, the Pure or the Purity). Peace be upon Mo'min Al Yasine (Habib Al - Najjar). Peace be upon the Saviors and Freeman, in the cause of Allah, where they are, because their real Thrones are in the hearts of believers, guarding them with the warmth of their tenderness and their love for what they have sacrificed for Allah's cause.

Does not the beloved poet says:

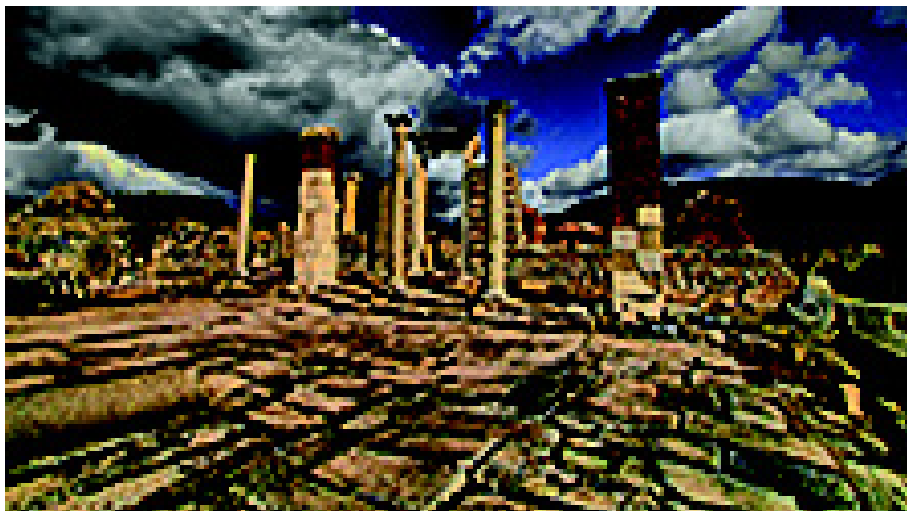
Do not ask about the tomb of Al Hussein in the East and West a the Land,

Let all come to me since the tomb is placed in my heart.

Our last prayer is praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.



An antique photo of the ancient Antioch (Antakia).



An antique photo of the village Antioch.



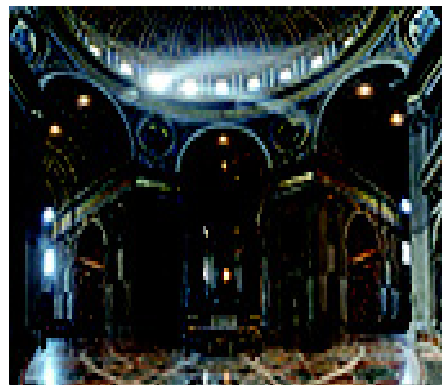
An image of the mosque of Habib Al-Najjar (a.s.) in Antioch in Turkey.



An image of the Shrine of Habib Al-Najjar (a.s.) inside the mosque in Turkey.



An image of Saint Peter's Basilica.



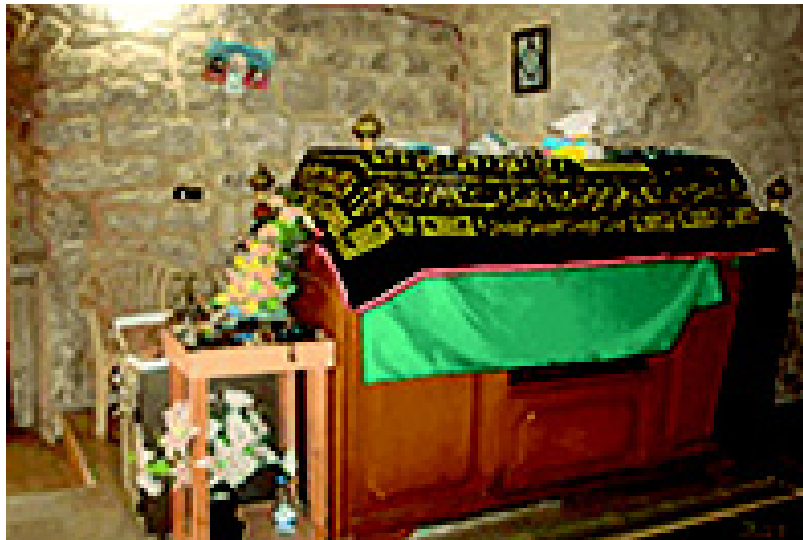
An image of St. Peter's Basilica from the inside.



An image of the shrine and mosque of Shamoun Al-Safa (the Jealous) in Shamaa village, South of Lebanon.

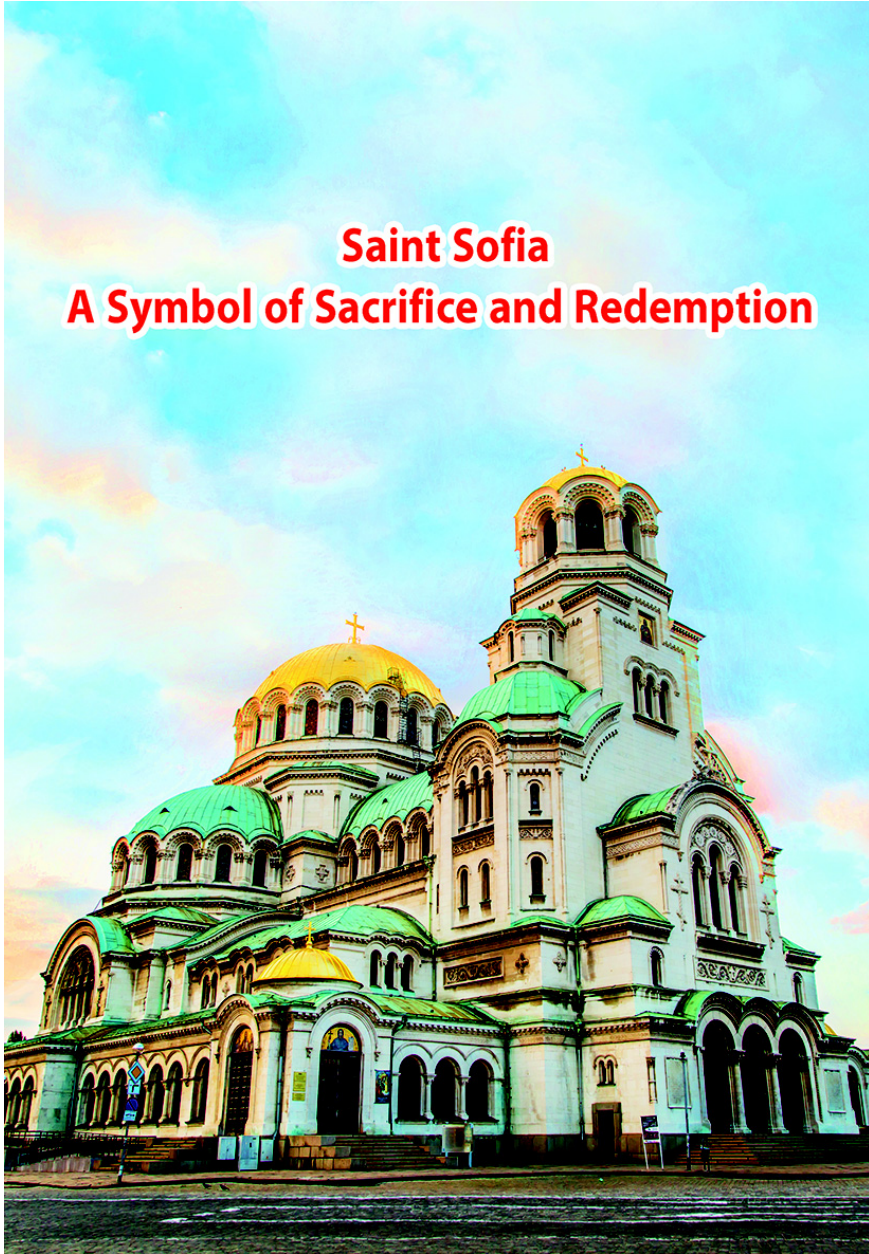


An image of the entrance of the mosque and shrine of Shamoun Al-Safa (the Jealous) in Lebanon.



An image of the tomb and shrine of Shamoun Al-Safa (the Jealous) inside the mosque attributed to him in Jabal Amel in Lebanon.

Saint Sofia
A Symbol of Sacrifice and Redemption



Saint Sofia

A Symbol of Sacrifice and Redemption

Allah, in His Holy Book, says: *“O mankind, indeed we have created you as male and female and made you people and tribes to know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.”* [Al Hujurat, verse: 13].

Imam Ali (a.s.) is the gate of knowledge; represented by the Messenger of Allah who said: “Man is the brother of Man, whether he loves or hates that. He is either equal to you in creation, or a brother of you in religion”.

Based on the abovementioned verse or the noble Hadith (Imam Ali’s (s) sayings), in addition to many other verses and Honorable Hadiths having the similar meaning and content, we say with confidence that: People should be acquainted with the thoughts and beliefs of one another so that they can understand and take advantage of each other’s ideas or even of their common experiences which simulate the experience and the humanitarian process in general. This is nowadays known as the dialogue of civilization. This meaning is required from the Muslim in particular, especially in our present time, in which Islam, as a religion and faith, became distorted in the eyes of the vast majority of people, as a result of the misconducts and heresies falsely attributed to this true religion, to the extent that Takfir became the most popular currency among Muslims themselves, not to mention non - Muslims, as if Muslims forgot the words of God, the Almighty when slandering and bashing the extraneous concepts in Moses Judaism, or even Christianity, as

in the Holy Book: “The Jews and the Christians say, “*We are the children of Allah and His beloved. “Say why does He punish you for your sins?” Rather, you are human beings among those He has created. He forgives whom He wills, and He punishes whom He wills. And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them, and tot Him is the [final] destination.* [Al Ma’dah, verse: 18].

Just as some of these Jews or Christians did yesterday, many Muslims are doing today! They recite the book, pray and perform the rest of the Islamic rituals in a meaningless manner, far from the broad mercy of Allah that was manifested in the Holy Quran as well as in the mission of Prophet Muhammad bin Abdullah (peace be upon him and his household).

Therefore, it is necessary for every preacher to Allah, and every knowledgeable person to introduce his people to the heritage and thought of the other, and works on trying to get them out of their intellectual, factional and sectarian cell and thus inspire them with knowledge, science, consciousness, openness and mercy among all people.

In this context, and based on the abovementioned meaning, we present this article which talks about a special and pious personality in the Christian thought and Heritage. She is **Saint Sofia**.

Who Is Sophia?

St. Sophia was born in the second century (117 - 138 AD) of pagan parents. She grew up in Egypt in a village known as Al - Badrshin, in the area that is now known as Menofia . There are other narrations about her origins in Antioch or in Rome, but the closest to validity is that she grew up in Egypt, since she secretly received her Christian teachings and thoughts in secret, from one of the Christian

professors who was known as Menof Al - Ola , to whom Menoufia Governorate is now attributed in Egypt.

Christianity in its beginning and progress was severely persecuted and suppressed by Roman emperors, governors and rulers in all parts of the Roman pagan, where idolatry and idol worship were the official religion.

Christianity, as a religion and heavenly call did not know any kind of rest or peace, until shortly before the year 325 AD, and after the Roman Emperor Constantine adopted this religion, by the hands of his mother Helena. She is now known as St. Helena, according to some narrations. for her great role in spreading Christianity and abolishing oppression from it, and her role in building the Church of Nativity in Jerusalem in Palestine. She also has many roles which there is no room for reviewing it now.

At the time of Sofia's birth and growth, Christianity, as a heavenly religion, was still at its beginning, purity and first teachings transmitted from Jesus Christ or some of his Apostles. Hence, the Christian belief was not totally crystalized until the year 325 AD in which the first Synod was established in Nicaea, after which the current Christian thoughts and beliefs were adopted, and all other Christian thought and beliefs which are contrary to them were abolished and suppressed, especially those that talk about the nature of Nasut of Jesus Christ (a.s.).

Egypt, in general and particularly its desert regions used to constitute the safe haven to Christians who fled from the ruins of tyranny of Roman authority since these regions were relatively far away from the rulers' centers and the major big cities. This happened again following the year 325 AD, that was after the formation of Synod of Nicaea, where a group of monks and priests did not agree on the situation of the church in Rome and what was happening at that time. Therefore, they moved to the Egyptian desert where they

settled in caves and grottos and built what was known by cells (Mahabis) in order to stay away from the world and its decorations and lived the state of monasticism and asceticism. This movement is known in the Christian History as (the division of monasteries) after which the Church was later formed in relation to the Copts who lived in Upper Egypt and converted to Christianity because of these monks.

In this atmosphere of persecution and repression practiced against the Christian religion in the second century, especially during the reign of Cesar Hadrian or Hadrianus (Adrian), Sophia was influenced by the morals and treatment of some of her neighbors who converted to Christianity in secret, so she started to visit them frequently, and learn from them until she met Menof who helped her and strengthens in her mind the original Christian concepts and beliefs.

Thus, Sofia turned from paganism to Christianity with great awareness, knowledge, bravery, and courage, as we will go through when talking about her martyrdom.

As a result of her courage and spreading the religion of Christianity, she became very well known. Cesar Hadrian knew about her, so, he ordered the Wali or governor in her region to bring her and exert pressures on her. He tried to seduce her by various means to return back to paganism and refuse the belief of Christianity which was being spread in secret.

According to narrations, at that time, she was married to a Christian man and she had three daughters from him. What confirms that her husband was Christian was she named her daughters after three Christian virtues: Faith, Hope, and Love. Thus, she would not be able to name her children without the consent of her husband and this made us believe that he was Christian. However, the information about him is virtually non -

existent especially he was not present on the day of the martyrdom of his daughters and wife.

When she was brought before the ruler, he tried to seduce her, but she was not influenced by all his temptations, so, he threatened to torture and kill her, but this made her more persistent and she responded to him with challenge, reiterating her saying that she was Christian and believed in Christianity. He lashed out in anger and ordered her three daughters to be brought in order to press her through them. Sofia started to calm down her daughters and asked them to steadfast and not submit or retreat. The daughters responded to the governor in the same way their mother Sophia did. The governor then ordered the elder sister to be killed in front of her mother and sisters. Sofia endured and was patient and calmed her daughter by talking to her until she died in front of her. When this wicked ruler found that Sofia is steadfast, he ordered the killing of the second daughter, the middle one. The same thing happened to her, then the ruler ordered the killing of the youngest sister in which Sophia felt sorry for her but she did not waver or become weak. When her youngest daughter was killed, she fell to the ground and thanked God that her daughters did not become weak or afraid and they were martyred for the sake of defending the Christian religion.

The ruler wondered about her since she witnessed the murder of her three daughters and did not weaken or change her position, so he ordered to cut off her tongue, by which she preaches to the new religion (Christianity), and to release her in the hope that she would die in sorrow and grief for the death of her daughters and her for her situation.

In fact, before her release, she pointed out to the bodies of her daughters and their cut off heads that she wanted to take with her. She took them and get out from the castle. Following this incident and after the burial of her daughters, Sophia did not live for more

than three days in which she died in grief, oppressed and a martyr with her three virgin daughters, as they are called in modern Christian literature.

Another narration states that the rulers ordered Sophia to be beheaded after her daughters. Later, her body was saved from the hands of the soldiers by a Christian woman hiding her faith in Christianity. This woman paid them lots of money. However, in either cases she was martyred persistent in her religion knowingly, consciously and bravely. Therefore, after her death, she became a symbol of sacrifice and redemption in the Christian and humanistic world. Through this great sacrifice, she represented a high model of human freedom of thought. No wonder that history glorified her name which has become a sacred Christian name, an honor for each person who is named so. This name was given to many churches including three in Lebanon in the area of Safra, Ballat and Ehmej, and to the Cathedrals all over the world, especially the followers of the Eastern Church, including the Copts. This is a further proof that she is from Egypt (Al Menof)

Where is St. Sophia buried?

There are two narrations regarding the place of Sofia's burial: **The First** says that she was buried in Egypt after transferring her body to Constantinople. (currently Istanbul).

The Second: States that she was buried in the Roman tombs, which were destroyed over centuries and built by many churches that also disappeared before the construction of the current cathedral. This region was under the authority of the Roman Empire at that time, which means in the region now known as the city of Sofia in Bulgaria, but this city was named Sofia in relation to the famous Church there.

According to historical events, it is more likely that she was

buried in Constantinople, in the huge cathedral that turned into a mosque during the Ottoman Empire. Before turning it into a museum, that still holds her name.

This is because Emperor Constantine built the city of Constantinople and, after embracing Christianity, he heard lots about the honor of Sophia in Egypt. He ordered his mother, Helena to transfer her body to the place which he had started its construction in Constantinople, but the cathedral did not take its final shape until during the reign of Emperor Justinian on the year 537 AD, where it became famous for its great architecture.

What we are interested in is to present the biography of this virtuous woman, more than the archeological research about the place of her burial for it is not our main subject.

The Coptic Church in Egypt and around the world continues to commemorate the martyrdom of St. Sophia on the sixth of the month of Tout according to the Coptic calendar, and this is an additional indication of the authenticity of her affiliation to the East and especially Egypt.

The church in Bulgaria, holding her name, is a very old church. Maybe it was built on the late 5th century and it does not contain a mausoleum for St. Sophia. The reason of being an archaeological site and one of the old churches over the world particularly Europe, and the renewal of its architecture in the 9th century, and its ongoing repairs and maintenance, is that it has become listed as UNESCO - World Heritage Sites.

Before concluding, we say, Peace be upon the worshipers of Allah, the faithful and the believers of Him, the Free who have confronted injustice and tyranny, and those who have sacrifice for the sake of truth and peace and peace be upon Saint Sophia and her martyred and oppressed daughters.

Among the evidence of the authenticity of her faith and the greatness of her sacrifice is the prevalence and immortality of her name in the world until this day. All what is for Allah's sake grows.

As for the tyrant ruler, his fate was like all the world's oppressors throughout history. He suffered from visual blindness after being internally and morally blind as well as many diseases and awful death.

In conclusion, the suffering of St. Sophia is similar to some of the calamities of Sayyida Zaynab Al Koubra (pbuh). Hence, St. Sophia scarified herself and her daughter for the sake of Allah, and her suffering lasted no more than four or five days at most.

Sayyeda Zaynab (pbuh), to whom I would sacrifice my soul , sacrificed her master, Imam and brother, Imam Hussein (a.s.), along with her other brothers, especially Abi Al Fadl Al Abbas, her four sons, the children of her brothers and some girls and women. Furthermore, she was whipped, captivated from Iraq to the Levant, and endured all this harm with suffice her Allah with determination, patience and certainty as which the history has never witnessed before and will never witness.

This was manifested when she put her hands under the beheaded body of her brother, Imam Al Hussein (a.s.) and said: **O God, accept this sacrifice from us in honor for Your...** Her suffering lasted until her death in a period of not less than two years.

Peace be upon Saint Sofia and peace be upon Saida Zaynab (a.s.), since the good tree has firm roots and its branches extend to the Sky.



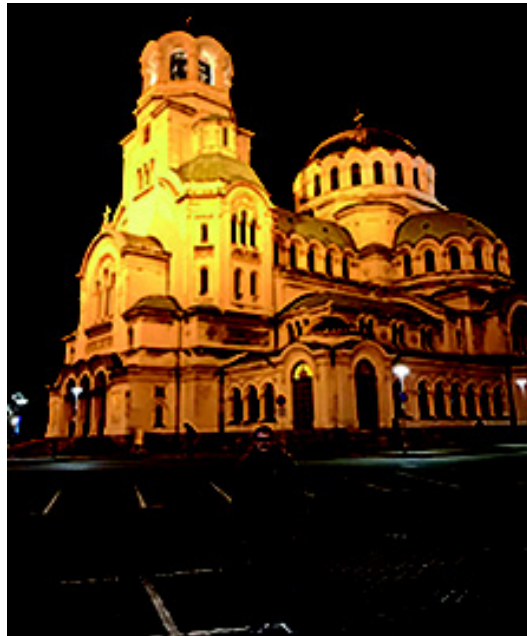
An image showing Dr. Ahmad Kais on the road leading to Church of Sofia in Bulgaria.



A general view of the Church and Cathedral of Sofia in Bulgaria.



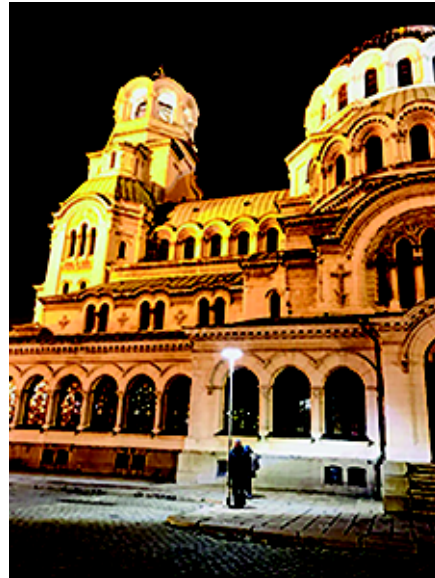
An image of this Church from the front side of the Church.



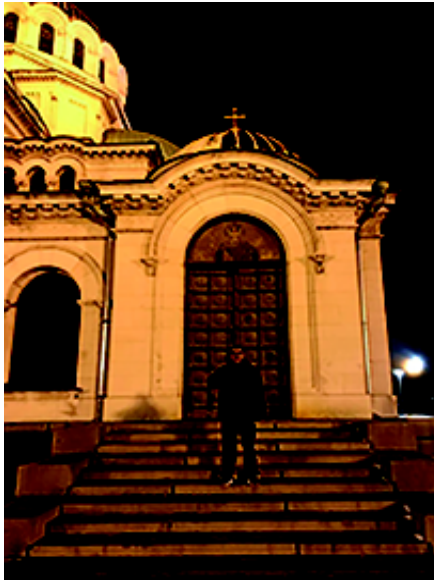
An image of the side of the Church where Dr. Ahmad Kais looks in the middle of the image.



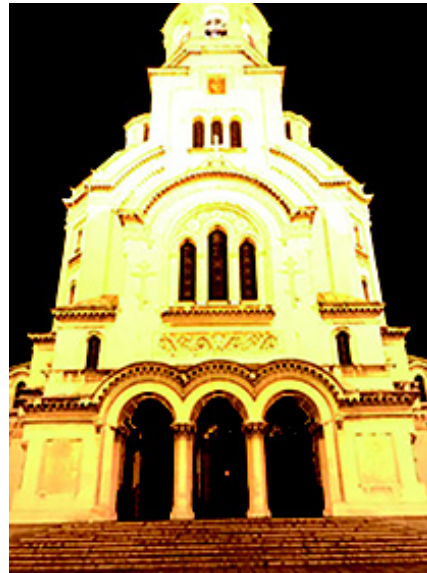
Another image of the entrance of the Church and the Cathedral from the northern side.



An image of Dr. Ahmad Kais in front of the entrance of the Church and the Cathedral from the right side.

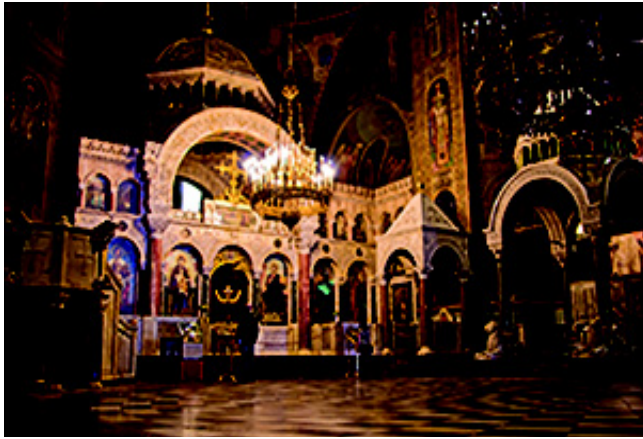


An image of Dr. Ahmad Kais at the stairs of the Cathedral from the right side.



An image of the façade of the Saint Sofia Church and Cathedral in Bulgaria in which Dr. Ahmad appeared in the middle.





An image from the inside of the Church showing the traditional Christian artistic murals.



Another image showing the architecture of the domes from the inside of the Church.



An image of the inside of the Church from the side showing the ancient architectural monuments and pillars.



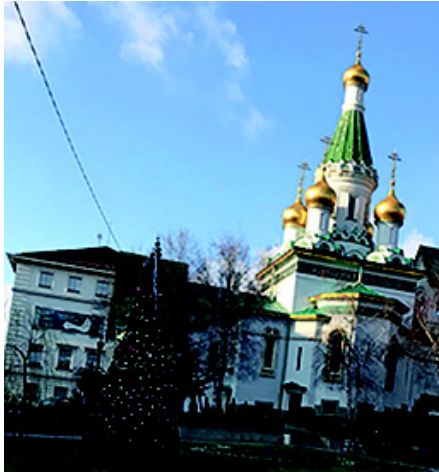
A mural about the Church's successive fathers who used to supervise it.



A mural showing in its middle the image of the Orthodox King and in both sides the name of the kings and rulers in Bulgaria.



Another image of one of the Bulgarian Kings.



An image of the Russian Orthodox Church that is located near Church Sofia.



An image of the golden domes of Church Sofia as it appears from afar.



Hagia Sofia Church in Istanbul that were turned into a mosque, then to a famous museum.



A panoramic image of the inside of Hagia Sofia Church in Istanbul.



AN image of the inside of Hagia Sofia Church in in Istanbul showing the artistic Christian murals and drawings.

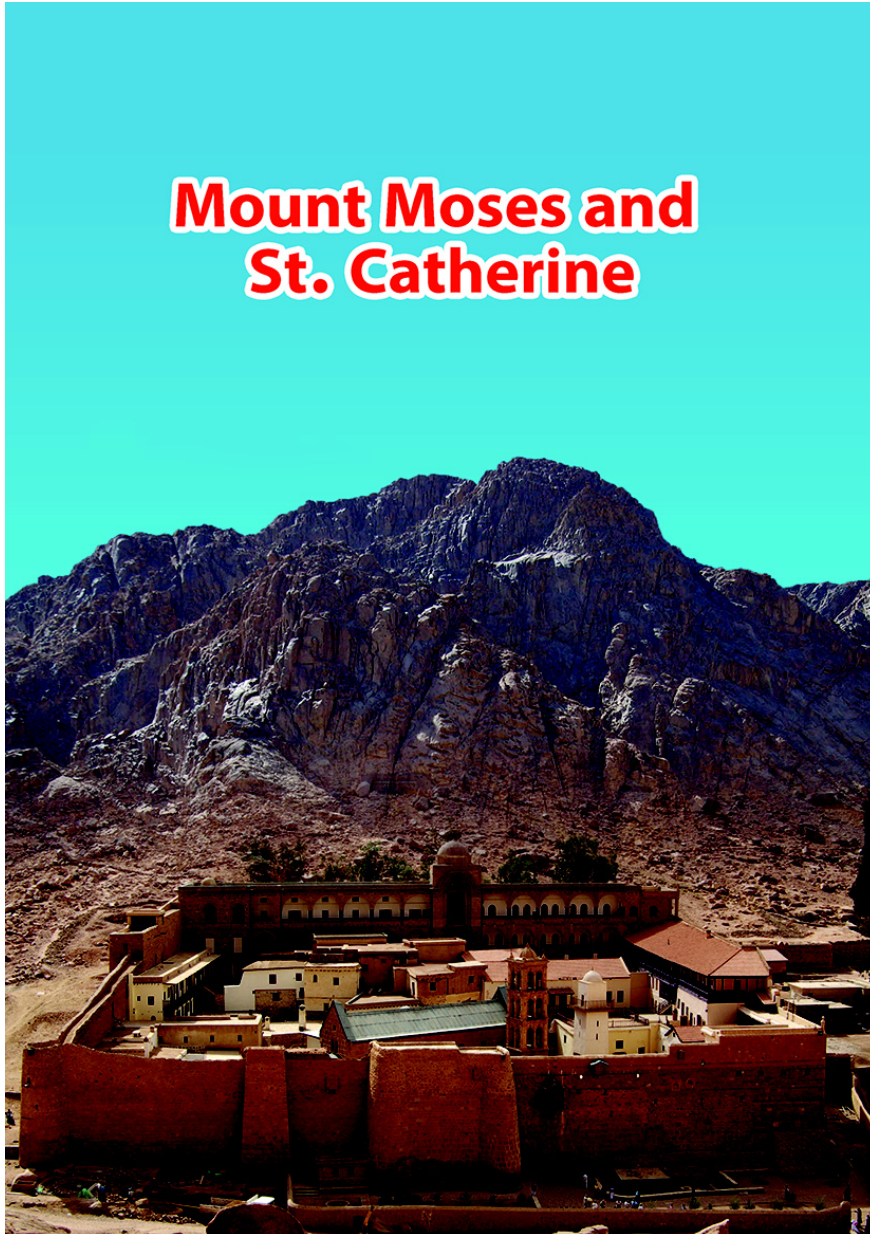


Very beautiful artistic Christian murals and drawing from the inside of Hagia Sofia Church (Istanbul).



An image of Saint Sofia and her daughters.

Mount Moses and St. Catherine



Egypt is an Ancient Symbol of Human Civilization and Intellectual and Religious Diversity

(Mount Moses and St. Catherine as models)

At first, it is important to emphasize that I have chosen this subject not as a compliment, advertising and nothing like that, but as a way to show the truth of the scientific and practical reality. Dear reader, this is what you are going to notice spontaneously in the context of this article since in any kind of an overview or a study in the human history, the reader finds himself introduced to models that have an objective link to Egypt, in a way or another. As Egypt imposes itself on history and present as well as on the future in fields and contexts that have no chance to be mentioned in this subject.

As I mentioned above, Egypt is the one that imposes itself and its presence and does not need anyone to introduce it and talk about the importance of its geographical, cultural and educational role, because it has constituted a significant milestone in human history in all its stages through times and history.

It is a true honor for it to be the land which kissed the feet of Prophets, Saints and Scholars and it was mentioned in the Holy Quran in more than one occasion which could not be stated in such a rush.

It was also mentioned in the heavenly books and others. God spoke to Moses (a.s.) on one of its mountains, which is known as Mount Moses or Jabal Al Tur.

If the mountains were to speak and reveal their secrets, it would have told lots and lots of news and stories, such as: From here,

Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.) passed and here, on these rocks, sat the spirit of Allah, Isa (a.s.), and from here passed the convoy that transported Joseph (Youssef) (a.s.). On that mountainside, Prophet Jacob (Ya'coub), met Joseph (a.s.), his beloved. Between those valleys, the two prophets, Moses (a.s.) and Harun (a.s.) lived. Under those gravels and dust, prophet Saleh (a.s.) rest and prophet Harun also next to him in a nearby place.

In the region of Mount Moses, known as Sinai, hearts unites in search of forgiveness, where it embraces uncountable miracles and dignities. Therefore, it is a place where hearts and souls meet, religions unite and man rises high to touch the Heaven with his mind and soul.

Mont Moses is the second largest mountain in Egypt and is located in the province of Sinai. It is 2285 meters high.

It was called Mont Moses in relation to Prophet Moses (a.s.) whom his Lord spoke to him and where he received the commandments that were engraved on the stone tables, as confirmed by all Heavenly religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam. This mountain is considered one of the most famous mountains in Sinai, then comes Mount Catherine, which will be mentioned in this context.

Thousands of tourists from all over the world visit Mount Moses for its magnificent scenery, which can be seen from the top of the mountain, especially at sunrise or sunset. The road to the mountain in general is difficult and rugged, thus it is both an interesting adventure and a religious and natural tourism.

Tourists are usually accompanied by a group of tour guides to help them in significant stage of the religious history which touches the hearts and consciousness and moved the mind towards the Only Lord, the destination of all the former peoples and the later peoples, Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

Mount Catherine is located next to Mount Moses, where St. Catherine's Monastery is located at a height of 2629 meters, so it is higher than Mount Moses and the highest mountain in all Egypt. However, in general, it is in the second rank on the level of the tourist's interests.

This mountain holds the name of Saint Catherine who is a Christian originated from Alexandria and she is the most significant saint in the West and has a great role in preaching Christianity and she died in sacrifice for that cause.

In this region, there is a monastery which is called Sini Monastery or St. Catherine Monastery.

The story says that the monks of a monastery found her body at the top of the mountain after she was executed in Alexandria, then the body disappeared. Therefore, according to the Christian concepts, or even the righteous Christians at that time, it is believed that the angels took her body to the highest mountain.

However, she was buried there and the monastery was expanded and became a pilgrimage for both the Christian believers and tourists.

There is also a special chapel on the top of the mountain where her body is buried. Near the Chapel, there are two chambers where pilgrims can stay on the mountain. The road to the mountain is somewhat difficult, but it could be climbed from a crossing built by a monastery priest.

From the top of the mountain, the Gulf of Aqaba and Suez can be clearly seen.

The Specificity of the Monastery of Saint Catherine: The Monastery of Saint Catherine in Egypt below Mount Catherine, the highest mountain in Egypt, near Mount Moses. It is said to be the oldest monastery in the world and it is an important tourist

symbol which tourists from all over the world come to visit.

This monastery is isolated and run by the Abbot, who is the bishop of Sinai, and it is not subject to the authority of any Patriarchate or a Holy Synod, but it is in a close relation with the Patriarch of Jerusalem. Therefore, the name of the Patriarch of Jerusalem is mentioned in the Christian services although the guardianship of the monastery belongs for long periods to the Russian Orthodox Church. The monks and priests of the monastery are Greeks and not Arabs or Egyptians, similar to the bishops of the Greek Orthodox Church in Jerusalem, which has long been dominated by Greeks. In addition to the monastery, the Bishop of Sinai manages the churches and holy shrines of Christians located in South Sinai in the Jebel Sinai region as well as in Ferran and Tarfa. The monastery was built upon the order of Empress Helen, the mother of Emperor Constantine, but it was the Emperor Justinian who actually built it in 545 AD to house the remains of St. Catherine who lived in Egypt.

The Story of Saint Catherine:

Narrations say that Saint Catherine is descended from a pagan aristocratic family born in Alexandria in 194 AD. She was also called Zorussian and was educated like other children of the wealthy aristocratic families. She was also so pretty that everyone desired her for her beauty and social prestige, but she refused all of them and believed in Christianity during the reign of Emperor Maximianus and the persecution of Christians, and publicly accused him of worshipping idols and presenting sacrifices to them. The emperor summoned 50 of the best pagan preachers to dispute with her, hoping that they would refute her pro-Christian arguments, but the surprise was that all those preachers were conquered by her eloquence, declared themselves Christians. This made the pagan Emperor furious.

raged with anger and condemned her to death and then her body was lost.

However, three centuries after her death, the body was found, thus Emperor Justinian ordered to be put in a marble box in the monastery that he built in 545 AD. It is said that a constant stream of the fragrance issuing from her body. This fragrance produced countless miracles for Christians. This monastery holds where her body is found, holds her name since the eleventh century. Many churches were called by her name , especially those in Alexandria.

It is also noteworthy that there is a small mosque for Muslims inside the monastery built by an Egyptian ruler in the Fatimid era in order to find a protector to defend this monastery from attacks, which was exposed to from time to time.

Later, during the French Campaign against Egypt, Napoleon Bonaparte built and strengthen the Wall surrounding the monastery until it reached the height of 200 feet. He also set up defenses in its surroundings to protect it from invasion or attacks.

The value of this religious monument is that it contains many precious gifts sent by kings and princes. There is also a well that is said to be the well of Moses, which he (a.s.) had blew it up for the Asbat (tribes). It is also said that it contains Moses's tree which caught fire and through which God talked to him. In addition, the monuments contains the second largest library of manuscripts after the Vatican, where von Tischendorf, the German scientists, painter and a biblical scholar discovered the oldest manuscript of the Bible ever found from the VI century as a manuscript in St. Catherine's Monastery on 1843 AD.

Ninety years later, this manuscript was revealed to the public in 1933 AD, when Joseph Stalin called the British government to buy the Gospel found by von Tischendorf as a result of the severe economic crisis of the Soviet Union. The manuscript was sold for

100,000 / (pound sterling). It was the highest price of a manuscript in the world and which exists now in the British Museum.

After Tischendorf's discovery of this manuscript, which is in 1834 AD, the two sisters Margaret and Agnes Smith discovered in the basement of St. Catherine's Library the oldest manuscript of the four Gospels ever written on the II century, that is four centuries before the writing of the Tischendorf's manuscript. This discovery was in 1870.

This new discovery is intended to be the oldest ever and written in Syriac, the language spoken by Jesus Christ (a.s.).

The two sisters took more than thousands of photographs for these manuscripts.

As a result, a scientific mission consisting of the two sisters Smith, Bruce Ransa Harris, and Professor Francis Birkitt, was formed to study this discovery closely.

After observation and investigation, the validity and history of the manuscripts were confirmed and the copies of the Gospels were kept in the monastery library and no thing is known about them at present except the photographs currently found in the British Museum.

In addition to the presence of the remains of St. Catherine, there are also the remains of a large number of monks who lived in this monastery and served there.

It is worth mentioning that administration of the monastery obliges all Western tourists and others to wear modest clothes when entering it providing them loose with clothes for that purpose. The monastery can be accessed from a small door at a height of 300 meters with a box shaped like a crane in the form of an elevator in our present time or through a small door that was later built at the bottom of the wall.

At the end of this article, I must mention that during my reading of the biography of this virtuous woman, the faithful believer and the free martyr I was influenced and impressed by her. I also felt and grief for life history and sacrifices have been a part of the biography, life and sacrifices of my Lady Saida Zaynab (a.s.).

Peace be upon the worshipers of Allah who are free in His path, who sold the world, made obedience to Him and mad great sacrifices in the name of God.

Is not Saida Zaynab (a.s.) who said following the martyrdom of her brother Imam Hussein (a.s.): **O God, accept this sacrifice from us in honor for Your....**

Therefore, I am not embarrassed or reluctant to say: peace be upon you Saint Catherine and good for you the martyrdom for God's sake.

And good for the people of Egypt you presence among them.

Finally, thanks for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.



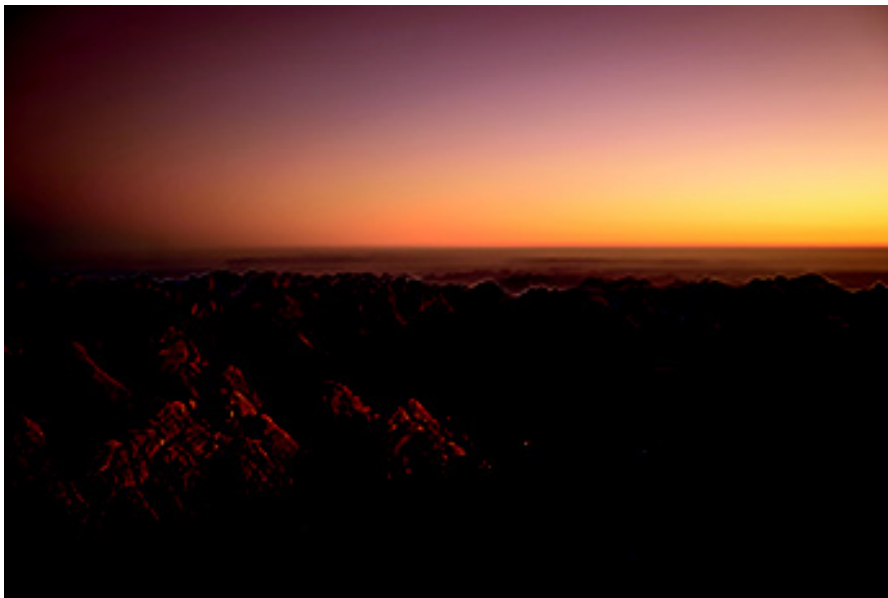
An image of Moses Mountain and Catherine Mountain next to it.



An image showing the rugged terrain leading to the top of the mountain and the need for riding the camels to reach there.



An image of the tourists during their break after reaching the top of the mountain.



An image showing how amazing are the scenes which can be seen from the top of the mountain, especially at sunrise or sunset.



An image showing Catherine Mountain where at the bottom of the mountain appears the Monastery of Catherine.



An image showing the Monastery of Saint Catherine in general with the fence surrounding it.



An image showing the fence of the monastery and the marks of the additions in their different stages,

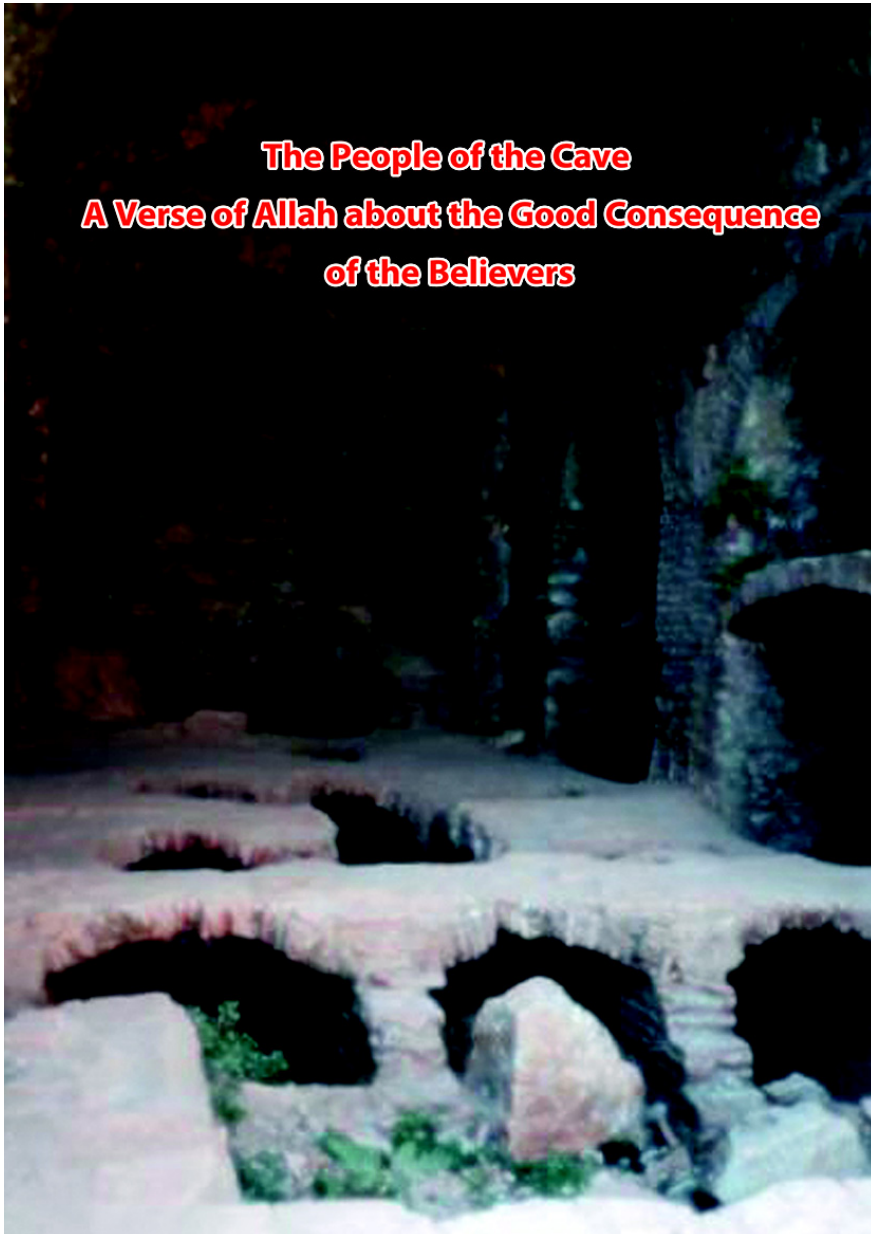


An image of the steeple and next to it, the minaret of the mosque, which was built on the Fatimid stage.



A scene of the inside square of the Church.

The People of the Cave
A Verse of Allah about the Good Consequence
of the Believers



The People of the Cave

A Verse of Allah about the Good Consequence of the Believers

Allah, the Almighty, eternalized the People of the Cave (Ashab Al Kahf) through mentioning them in the Quran where their blessed story was stated in Surat Al Kahf (the People of the Cave), in which Allah, the Almighty says: *“Or have you thought that the companions of the cave and the inscription were, among Our signs, a wonder? (9) [Mention] when the youths retreated to mercy the cave and said, “Our Lord, grant us from Yourself mercy and prepare for us our affair right guidance.”* [Surat Al Kahf, verse: 9 - 10].

At the beginning, it should be noted that the Companions of the Inscription (Ashab Al Raqeem) whose names were mentioned in the blessed verse are different from the People of the Cave, the subject in question, hoping that Allah, the Almighty, might pave the way for us to talk about them later in a special research.

As for the People of the Cave, may Allah be blessed with them, they held the name of the Cave that they resorted to, and their names are going to be mentioned in the context. The Cave in Language: is like a grotto in the mountain but wider. If it was small, it is called a grotto, such as Ghar Hira (Hira Cave) where the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) used to worship Allah. It is the place where the first Surah of the Holy Quran was revealed on Him (pbuh).

Based on the historical writing and narrations, it seems that the story of the People of the Cave was known to the Jewish, because they were Christians believing in the religion of Jesus Christ (a.s).

Moreover, the event of this story took place on the period between the time of Jesus Christ and the mission of the Prophet (pbuh).

As the narration proceeds, it will be revealed to us that the stories about the People of the Cave are so contradictory and inaccurate in terms of the history and the time of its occurrence and some other details. But, the occurrence is affirmed and admitted since it has been stated in the Good Book and the Honorable Prophet Tradition (Sunnah). The Religious Scholar (Allamah), Sayyed Loasani, outlined their story in his book, (The History of Prophets), in a beautiful literal way and saved us from the trouble of searching and investigating. May Allah reward him with good.

Sayyed Loasani stated about the story of the People of the Book that: As for the People of the Cave, it was narrated in their story that, in a city of Rome named “Ephesus” or even “Afsus” (nowadays Turkey) , a king called Daqyanus (Decius) was very oppressive and cruel against Christians who believed in Jesus Christ (as), a long period after his (as) ascension to Heaven, after the religion of Christianity was spread in monasteries surrounding Palestine and further away.

Lots of stories were narrated about the decorations of his palace. He has built great and high castles, broad marvelous halls with pillars, cushions and blinds studded with precious jewels, as well as golden and silver chairs and plates. He took men wearing fine silk garments with bright and shiny colors and patterns. He had maids wearing beautiful and bright garments, anklets and bracelets around their hands and necks.

He had great power and pre - eminence until he became blinded by his own arrogance and vanity. He humiliated all people to the extent that he claimed godhood and ordered people to worship him. He defeated his enemies and whoever violates his claim, until he

became confident with that and people became in line with his call and allegations.

Daqyanus appointed six of the scholar's sons as his ministers, keeping three of them on the right of his throne whose names were Tamilkha, Mazimiliano and Menclina, and three on his left whose names were Mernus, Dernos and Sethrios. He used to consult them in all his affairs and entrusted them with the important tasks, having confidence in their sincerity and good conduct and management.

Every year, Daqyanus annually hold an anniversary dedicated to worshipping him where many people attends, the elders of his kingdom , notables, chiefs of priests, army's leaders and masses of people to exalt him and spend their day screwing around and getting wasted, enjoying parties, food and wines.

On the morning of one feast day, King Daqyanus prepared to go out to the people and start the celebrations, one of his men came to him and informed him that the king of Persia overcome him is still in progress towards his capital. Fear and anxiety appeared on Daqyanus and a feeling of extreme anguish clearly revealed on his face.

When Tmilkha saw that, he was astonished and started to wonder: "If Daqyanus was really a God as he claims, he would not fear, and he had to know before his close associates and the men of his entourage that the enemies' army is marching towards his countries. Even, no army in the world would be able to invade any of his territories...). Then, he realized something that he missed, which is that the King, eats, drinks, and defecates like any other person. These characteristics are not the deeds of God. He though deeply all over his day.

In the evening, Tamlikha and his his five fellow ministers were in

the house of one of them every day and that day were in the house of Tamlikha. They started discussing issues as usual, but Tamlikha did not join them, rather he seemed to be worried and anxious. When pure food was presented, Tamlikha did not eat anything, his companions asked him what was wrong him. Finally, he opened his heart to them and started the telling them about his doubts and worries. He said that he is thinking about the high heavenly sky, the simple earth, the high mountains, the Creator of sun, moon and stars, the Director of the universe, the Creator of man, the Feeder of the embryo, etc... Is he Daqyanus, who eats like us, forgets like us, needs like us, fears like us? He continues asking and showing the impossibility of Daqyanus to make all these creations.

The other five ministers were knowledgeable and insightful and some of them had the same thoughts before. At first, when Tamlikha was encouraged to express his worries, they were astonished, then, they admitted the correctness of his thoughts and asked what they should do in order to get rid of Daqyanus, the incapable slave, and devote themselves to worshipping Allah, the Almighty. Tamlikha said: "As to me, I have converted to the religion of Jesus Christ (as) who called for worshipping One God, the Absolute, the Able, the Gracious and the Merciful". They all said in one voice: "And we are like you, monotheists, believing in the God of Jesus Christ (as) and his teachings, so what do you think we should do?" Tamlikha said: "If you are asking about me, I have decided to leave Daqyanus's and his palace and abandon the world, and run to an unknown place to worship Allah, the Most Exalted until I die and get out of the world while I am on the religion of monotheism and the law of abstraction". They all said: "We are also with you. We do not want this deceitful mortal life, nor this perverted and deceptive worship. We will no longer help this pagan tyrant."

They all decided to run away at the same time and started to sell

their things in secret. Then they rode their horses together and left the territory of Daqyanus in a late hour so that no one would see them.

When they were far away from their city, Tamlikha advised them to walk on their feet saying: “O brothers, the king of the world has gone the King of the Hereafter has come.” Walk on your feet towards Allah, the Almighty, perhaps He will make a way out for him and lead us to a shelter from Daqyanus and his soldiers.” Therefore, they dismounted and walked seven faraskh until their feet bleed, and got exhausted after they starved from hunger and thirst. They started searching for a place to resort to or a person to support them with food.

In the meantime, they met a shepherd herding his goats with a dog in front of them guarding and accompanying them. They stopped him and asked him for a drink, milk or a dose of water. The shepherd said: “By Love and dignity, I have what you want, but be honest with me. I see in you faces the face of the King. I think you are not from the public and it is not unlikely that you have escaped from Daqyanus, the King.” They felt that he has good faith and fidelity. They told him: “O Shepherd, lying is prohibited, would honesty save us from you?” He said yes and gave them promises and pledges, thus, they told him the truth and explained for him the reasons which caused them to immigrate seeking Allah and leave their homes, families and positions. The shepherd said to them: “I agree with you and I will not let you go without me.” He asked them to wait for him to restore the goats and the dog to their owner and come right back again to them. They agreed and waited for him.

The shepherd went to his country and delivered the goats to their owner and came back to accompany them. The dog that was guarding the goats followed him. It was a black dog named (Qitmir).

When the shepherd arrived to his friends and started walking, the dog followed them. They feared that the non - believers might hear the barking and know their places, so they threw stones at it, but the dog remained following them. Allah, the Exalted, magnificent, made the dog speak. It said: “O people! Let me be with you. I also want to be among the group of believers who immigrates for Allah’s sake. I can protect you from your enemies”. This miracle was an evidence on the guidance of their steps and Allah’s blessings upon them... Therefore, they continued their journey with the dog accompanying them.

The shepherd guided them to a remote cave that he had discovered in a high mountain during herding his goats and his journeys in the mountains, valleys and plains. Near the cave, there were a water spring, trees and shades which they were enjoyed and took as a refuge since it was far from the sight of Daqyanus and his army. They rested there, ate their food, drunk from the pure water and felt asleep after a hard day of quick walking. They laid down to sleep with the dog also stretching its paws across the threshold of the cave.

Allah, the Most Exalted, revealed to the angel of death to take their spirits calmly while they were sleeping without feeling the pain of death or any feeling other than sleeping. Allah, ordered that their bodies remain as they are and stay soft like those who sleep with their eyes opened while sleeping, so that the one who looks at them thinks that they are looking at something. However, they were sleeping, even dead. If one was to look closely at them would be frightened and run away.

For each of men of them Allah appointed an angel to turn them on their left to right for the sleeping person needs to turn on both sides. Allah commanded the sun to be at the time sunrises by biased

emits light into the cave from the right, and when almost sunsets so that the light began to desert them from leftward.

Allah, the Almighty has referred to these facts in many verses in his Holy Book in Surat Al Kahef.

Following the celebration, Daqyanus asked about his six ministers. He discovered that they have escaped from him and denied him. He became very anger and prepared groups of his soldiers to search for them, after he had ordered their families and relative to be presented before him and tortured them, but to no avail since they did not know anything about them.

At last, a group of the soldiers searching for them discovered the cave and saw them sleeping and informed Daqyanus about that. Daqyanus came with a group of his soldiers, men and followers intending to punish them severely so they would be a lesson for whoever dares to violate or disobey him. When Daqyanus and his soldiers approaches them, they were terrified by them for their eyes were widely opened and they looked very strange. He did not dare to chastise them or even to approach them, but he was satisfied to build a barrier at the entrance of the cave to prevent them from going out and thus die inside it from hunger and thirst. He said to his men in an arrogant manner, challenging the God of their ministers. "Let them pray to their God whom Jesus Christ has called for to save them from the destiny I drew for them if He is really able to do so." Daqyanus returned back to his country after he had left them as they are in their cave.

Years passed, Daqyanus died and the Roman Empire also changed much, the last part of them were Christians believing in the teaching of Isa (as). Three hundred and nine years after the event of flight of Tamlikha and his companions, Allah, the Almighty ordered to bring the People of the Cave back to life after their death as if they

had not been dead and their spirits had not left their bodies. They started to fidgeting, yawning and stretching as if they have just woken up. They opened their eyes without knowing that centuries and generations have passed, looking at each other and exchanging salutations as if they have spent hours sleeping for one night.

One of them asked as he estimated that they had slept due to their exhaustion when they fell asleep: “How long did we sleep?” They answered “One full day.” One of them said, “We stayed one day of less than a day.” Then they recognized that their estimation is not compatible with how high the sun is in the skyline. They said: Let us stop wondering. Allah knows best how long we stayed. Anyhow, let us send one of us with some money to bring us some food. That person must be alert and smart. No one should recognize him, or else he would be followed. Then King Daqyanus and his followers would be told. They would know of our place and would inflict various types of torture on us until they deviate us from our Religion.”

Allah, has stated these facts and sayings in his Holy Book in Surat Al Kahef (The People of the Cave).

Therefore, Tamlikha said: “No one but I will go for your needs”. He was afraid that any of them might misbehave and thus they will be exposed. He wore the clothes of the shepherd and headed towards the city on the same road from which they came from. He saw scenes that was unfamiliar to him, so he thought that he had lost his way. When he reached the city, he saw different roads, new markets and faces he did not recognize. He heard reprehensible dialects which he could barely understand. He investigated about Daqyanus and what people say about him and his friends, while he was disguised with his clothes and trying to hide his face as much he can. He was astonished that no one cared for him or mentioned Daqyanus or his friends, until he was astonished to hear someone swearing by Jesus Christ (as). He started walking in the city as a distracted and drunk man

who does not know what to do and unable to explain what was going around him.

He felt hungry and remembered that his friends is waiting for him and decided to solve this problem first. He came to a baker in the market to buy bread and run out of this town that he doubted it was another town. He gave the baker a coin from the reign of Daqyanus to pay for the bread. The baker took it surprisingly, turned it on both sides and examined it. It was unfamiliar to him. He went to his neighbor and showed it to him. When other neighbors saw it, they were surprised by this golden dinar and though that this man has found a big treasure hidden under the ground, and definitely, there are other dinars similar to this heavy golden one. Tamlikha feared that they have recognized and would take him to Daqyanus.

They asked him: “O young man, where did you come from? What is wrong with you? Where is the treasure you have found? Let us share the treasure with you and we will cover you up. Otherwise, we will hand you over to the ruler who will take it all from you.” He began to stutter and got confused without knowing what to tell them. He said to himself: “All what I fear has happened to me. The men took him to their king after they tied his mouth with a piece of his clothes and drove him in tracks as if he is a prominent personality in which he drew the attention of many people.

Tamlikha found that it is useless to talk or defend, as they will not believe him and he waited his father or any of his brothers to come to save him and introduce him to them. Until they brought him to two of their leaders, Abus and Aselatius, who were righteous. One of them said: “This coin reveals that you have found a treasure. So, where is it?” Tamlikha answered: “I have neither found a treasure, nor taken others’ money. This coin is the price of my own land, which I have sold three years ago. It bears the stamp of the seal of

this city. My father and grandfather have also used it. Yesterday exactly, I left this city and when I returned back, I saw many scenes, faces which I could not recognize and strange dialectics. I even doubted that I have lost my way and that this is not my city. But, when I asked about it, they told me that it is the same city.” The leader told him: “Do you know any people in it”. He said “Well... then say is there someone here who does not know me?” I am the Prime Minister in your present city. If you do not believe me, ask anyone in the territory of Daqyanus who is the Prime Minister! People look at each other surprised, amazed and doubtful. One of the people asked him: “Who is Daqyanus, and who his ministers are?” “Daqyanus was the king of these territories since three hundred years. If you think that you are deceiving us with your words and distracting us from finding the treasure, you are wrong.” Another man asked him: “Do not you have parents, relatives or any friends here?” He said: “Yes. My father is so and so...my brothers are so and so...” He counted some of his friends and contacts. They got out asking about them but they did not find any of them.

At the end, Tamlikha went with them to guide them to his house and his father’s house and introduce them to his brothers. He reached a house which was one of the most significant houses in the city. He stood in front of them and said: “This is my house”. An elderly man came out, whose eyebrows covered his eyes because of his age came out and asked them about what they wanted. The leader of the folk replied: “This person is saying strange things. He claimed that this house belongs to him”. The old man said to him: “Who are you?” “I am Tamlikha of Philistines, and no one has believed me. We are young men whom Daqyanus forced us to worship idols and slaughtering tyrants. Then, he ordered us to worship him. We fled from him yesterday night to a Cave in the mountain (Angelus) where

we slept yesterday. When we waked up today, I went out to buy food for my companions and know what is going out. But here I am, as you see”. Tamlikha replied. When he finished, the old man fell at his feet and kissed them, he said: “I swear by God, he is my grandfather and the Chief of my tribe”. Then he turned towards the folk and said: “He is one of the six men who escaped out of fear from King Daqyanus during the age of atheism and tyranny. Allah must have saved them and sent them today for a reason no one knows except Him.”

They took Tamlikha to their king who were pious believing in the teachings of Jesus Christ (as). When he was sure that Tamlikha was a verse of Allah and a miracle made by Him, he got down from his throne, with due respect to him, and made people kiss his hands and legs for blessings. They told him that Daqyanus has died long ago and the reign of polytheism has also vanished. They now follow the teachings of Prophet Isa (as) and they are monotheisms believing in the Sacred Book. When they counted the period during which he fled with his companions at the time of Daqyanus until his return, it was revealed that it is three hundred and nine lunar years. Allah the Almighty said: *“And they stayed in their cave for three hundred years, adding nine”*. (Surat Al Kahf: verse: 25).

The King asked him about his companions to bring them to the city to honor them and grant them the praise they deserve for their faith and rank which Allah has bestowed upon them. Tamlikha said, “They are in a Cave in Mont Bengalus. Let us go to them together”. Tamlikha headed towards the cave followed by the King, his ministers, leaders, many soldiers and lots of people. Arriving near the cave, Tamlikha stopped and asked them not to enter the cave until he first gets in and tell his companions about what happened and the duration they slept and that King and his people came to bring them back and honor them. That was because he was afraid

that until they hear the sounds of army, they would suspect Daqyanus come with his soldiers to arrest them and they would die all of fear. The king agree and let him enter the cave alone.

At that time, Tamlikha's friends were afraid as he was too late and expected that Daqyanus and his armies have arrested him. They were reluctant whether to stay in their cave trusting that Tamlikha would not tell the folk about their place, whatever they might do to him, and between fleeing from the cave to another shelter, fearing that Tamlikha might become weak under torture and be forced to tell about their place.... See Tamlikha came, after long last and great hunger, some were anxious, troubled and trembling and others were blaming him for being late, they asked him: "Did anyone see you from our contacts or family? Did any of Daqyanus's soldiers become aware of you? Tamlikha said while crying wholeheartedly and painfully: "Do you know how long have you stayed here?" "We have stayed a day or part of a day," they replied. "No!" Deny Tamlikha. "You have stayed here for three hundred and nine years. Daqyanus died long time ago and many kings came after him, while we were sleeping by Allah's will and wisdom." Then he told them what happened to him since he left the cave until he met the new king and that the teachings of Jesus Christ (as) have prevailed in their city and all people are believers in his religion. He told them that they are outside waiting a glimpse from him to enter and take them back to the city. At that time, they knew that all what happened was a verse from Allah, the Almighty to be a lesson for people and an example for resurrection (Qeyamah) and that people will come back to life again. It is also a proof of Allah's Will, the Most Exalted.

Some of them said that it would be difficult for us to live after three centuries with another people of different generations having different traditions, thoughts and morals. Others feared that life might distract them after retuning back to it and thus they might die

on what Allah does not accept, after being sure that Allah, the Almighty has particularly chosen them to make his great verse come true. Therefore, they all decided not to meet the people outside and prayed to Allah to take their souls and return them back to death. Therefore, Allah responded to their supplication and suddenly they fell on the ground dead as they were.

After a long time, the king and his courtiers became impatient and decided to enter the cave, but when they arrived to the entrance and looked inside, they did not see the faces and persons clearly, since there were darkness all around the cave. However, in darkness they saw staring opened eyes as if they were looking at something, while the people of the cave were dead without making any movement. Some were sitting and others looked like a hard, rough wood.

When the King's men saw this scenery, they were terrified and ran away. Others did not even dare to approach the dead bodies in the cave. The king as well as his ministers and consultants wondered what to do. Some of them said: "Build a construction that would stand as a landmark and a memorial of the location which Allah has chosen for them and thus prevent the access of curious and wicked people. Other pious men said: "Build a mosque for praying and seeking blessings as they are elected people whom Allah loved and made them worthy of respect and appreciation."

After setting up a construction over the People of the Cave, they returned to their city wondering about their numbers since they were not able to count their number clearly because of the darkness prevailing the cave. Some people would tell they were three and the fourth is the dog, others would tell they were five and the sixth is the dog, still others told they were seven and the dog is the eights. Allah, the Most Exalted, says in His Holy Book that: *"So it was, that We caused them to be discovered, that they would know that the*

promise of God is true, and that of the Hour there is no doubt. As they were disputing their case among themselves, they said, "Build over them a building." Their Lord knows best about them. Those who prevailed over their case said, "We will set up over them a place of worship." They will say, "Three, and their fourth being their dog." And they will say, "Five, and their sixth being their dog," guessing at the unknown. And they will say, "Seven, and their eighth being their dog." Say, "My Lord knows best their number."

Allah's verses are many but man forgets a lot and often takes lessons.

As for the narration of the story in the view of Non - Muslims, Al Allamah Tabtabai discussed this issue in his interpretation saying that: "The story in the opinion of Non - Muslims: Most narrators and historians say that the event took place in the period between the era of Prophet (pbuh) and the era of Jesus Christ (as). Therefore, the People of the Cave were mentioned either in the Old Testament or in the New Testament. The Jewish did take this story into consideration though many narrations stated that Quraish (tribe) has heard the story from the Jewish. However, Christians attached importance to this story formerly and recently. What was narrated about the People of the Cave is close to what Ibn Ishaq stated in Al Araes as reported by Ibn Abbas. Whereas, there are some differences concerning some issues between the narrations of Christians and that of Muslims.

The first is that the Syriac resources state that the number of the People of the Cave was eight, whereas, Muslim narrations as well as Greek and western resources say that they were seven.

The second is that their story is a fairy tale and a proof of that is the presence of the dog of the People of the Cave.

The third is that: Most Muslims say that the period of staying in the cave was three hundred and nine years as indicated in the Holy

Quran, but they consider that the period during which the People of the Cave stayed in it is two hundred years or less, showing that the oppressor who used to force people to worship idols and whom the youngsters have escaped from was Daqyanus whose period of ruling was on 451 - 449 and the People of the Cave woke up on 125 AD, 437 AD or 439 AD, and thus the time remaining for their sleep is two hundred years or less. The historian who talked about them was the Syriac, James El Sarouhie who was born on 541 AD and died on 521 AD, then others reported what he has stated.

The Location of the Cave

As for the place where the event took place. Al Tabtabai said:

In different places in the world, several caves and grottos were found having in their walls three, five or seven statues and their dog while offering a sacrifice in their hands, portraying the story of the People of the Cave. However, noting, that these engravings and statues referred to the story of the youngsters which was broke and circulated all over the world after it occurred until it became a memory for monks and those devoting themselves for worshipping Allah in these caves.

The cave in which the youngsters thought refugee is a matter of debate among people:

The First Cave: It is Ephesus Cave. Ephesus is a city of Khirbet which is an ancient city in Turkey, 73 kilometers from Izmir. The cave is one kilometer or less far from Ephesus, near (Ayasoloc) village at the foot of Yanardag Mountain.

It is a wide cave - as it is said - there are hundreds of graves built of bricks and it is in the mountainside, its door is headed towards the north - east and has no traces of a mosque, cell or a church. It is the most known cave to Christians. It was also mentioned in many of the Muslims' narrations.

Despite of its wide fame - it does not apply to any of the characteristics stated in the Holy Book.

The Second Cave: It is Rajeeb Cave, at a distance of eight kilometers of Amman city, the capital of Jordan, near a village named Rajeeb. The mountain is engraved on a rock in the southern foothills, and its edges are from both sides, the eastern and the western are open from which the sunshine enters. The cave door faces the south side. Inside the cave, there is a small hall that approaches three meters by two and a half meter on one side of the cave surface, equivalent to approximately three by three. In the cave, there are several tombs in the shape of Byzantine sarcophaguses, which might be eight or seven.

On the walls, there are inscriptions and lines of ancient Greeks and Tammudis, which are erased and not read. There is also an image of a reddish dog and other motifs.

Above the cave, there are remains of Byzantine cell in which the coins discovered scattered within as well as other finds indicate that it was built in the time of Justin II in 427 - 418. There are also other findings indicating that the cell has been changed after Muslims seized the land and build on it an Islamic mosque, including a mihrab, minaret and fireplace. The square facing the cave door there are remains of another mosque built by Muslims in the Islamic era which was reconstructed several times. It was built over the ruins of Byzantine church as well as the mosque over the cave.

Despite the people's interest and care about it as revealed that by archeology, this cave was abandoned, forgotten. It was ruins and a ruthless debris over time, until the Department of Antiquities of Jordan finally was interested in drilling and exploration where they discovered it after being hidden for centuries. Many archaeological evidence and signs showed that it is same the Cave mentioned in the Holy Quran.

As we indicated above, it was reported in Muslim narrations that Cave of the People of the Cave is located in Amman as stated by Yaqout in the Encyclopedia of Countries, that “Al Raqem” is the name of a village near Amman where there was a castle for Yazid Bin Abd El Malik and another castle in another nearby village named Al Mowaqar.

The city of Amman is also built in the place of a city of (Philadelphia), which was one of the most famous cities of its time and in the pre - Islamic call. It was under the seizure of the Romans since the beginning of the second century until Muslims opened the Holy Land.

The fact is that this cave includes the characteristic of the cave of the People of the Cave more than any other one.

The Third Cave: It is a cave located in Mount Qasioun near Salihya in Damascus - Sham. It is attributed to the People of the Cave.

The fourth Cave: Petra Cave in Palestine and it is also attributed to the People of the Cave.

The Fifth Cave: It is a cave discovered - as what was said - in a Scandinavian peninsula in northern Europe where seven unspoiled bodies look like Romans were found and they are said to be the People of the Cave.

Perhaps, some other caves are said to be attributed to the People of the Cave. It is also said that, near the town of Nakhjwan, in the country of Qafqaz, a cave which the people of these regions believe that it is the cave of the People of the Cave and people used to visit.

Nothing confirms that any of the caves stated above is the real cave mentioned in the Holy Quran. However, other historical resources refutes the claims of others since, the story is a Roman one

and the authority of the Romans have never reached the Northern Europe countries.

Based on the above, Allamah Al Tabtabai inclined towards the cave being located in Jordan, North of Palestine according to the context of his discussion of the subject.

The best thing we conclude with is Allah's, the Most Exalted saying: *"These are of the reports of the towns - We relate them to you. Some are still standing, and some have withered away."* [Surat Hud, verse: 100].

In addition to what is attributed to Tamlikha, after waking up from their long sleep and seeing people and the world around them, the people of the Cave said: "All friends and enemies have died and they have gone simply and easily. The clock is ticking. All this noise and confusion, love and hatred, friendship and hostility, torture and prisons, all those soldiers and palaces, all those gods!! What a sorry irony. Everyone bowed, All what I see is surrender. Only one power has conquered everyone and everything. No one has the ability to violate and fight. If we examine time, we would see that all those who have beaten the drums of war with Allah, each of them has considered himself as a God whom the sermons starts with his name. They are only messing clowns, rotating where they do not feel themselves that they are living within the Will of Allah, despites of all their violation."

In his prayer to Allah, he said: How could the falcons which were created in the Heaven of your love to descend to earth and take a house for them. We have stood up to the false gods to reach you. Life smiled for u from the beginning but we left it for your sake."

The supplication of Tamlikha reminds us with the supplication of Imam Al Hussein (a.s.) in the day of Ashura in Karbala in which he (a.s.) said:

“My Lord, I left creation for the sake of your love... And I orphaned the children so that I May see you... So if the sword cut me into pieces for loving You... My heart would not love anyone other than you.”

Our last supplication is praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Words.



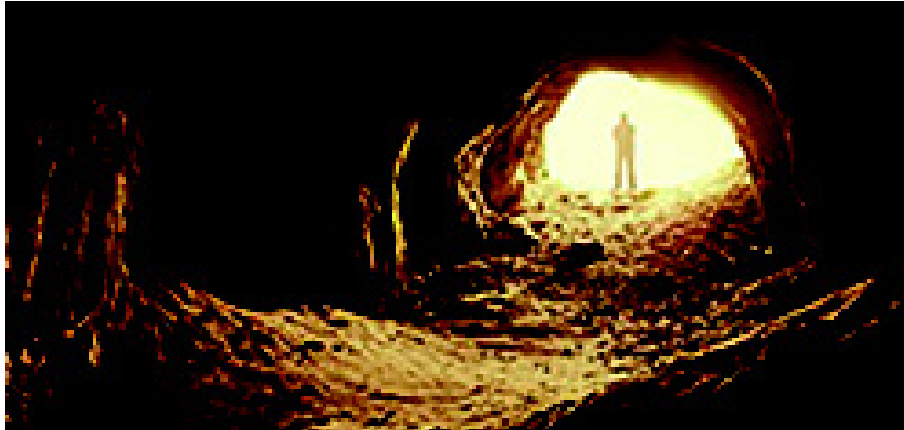
An image about the cave in which the sunlight looks inside it.



An image about the form of the grotto and how it is distinguished from the cave.



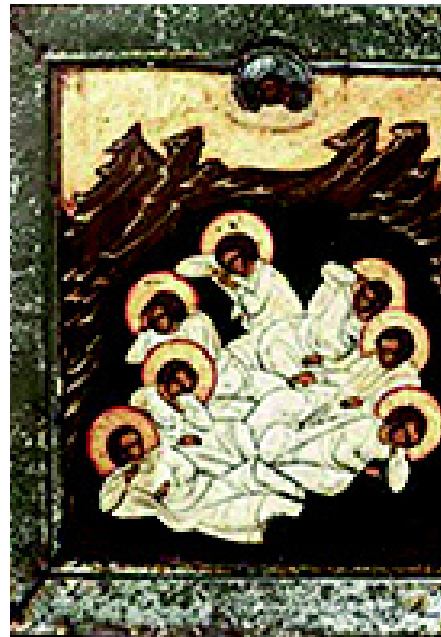
An image of Ghar Hir-aa, in Jabal an-Nour in Mecca, where the Prophet used to worship Allah.



An image of the shape of the cave in general in which it looks to be wide unlike the grotto.



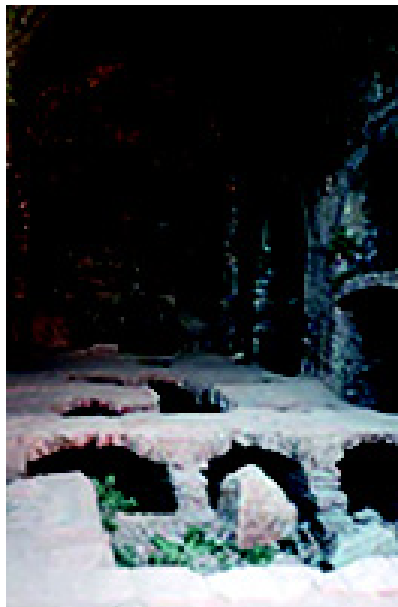
An artistic image symbolizes Daqyanus ordering the closure of the cave while the youngsters were still in it, after he found them.



A very ancient artistic image showing the stay of the People of the Cave.



An artistic image symbolizes the People of the Cave with the dog sitting at the doorstep.



An image of Ephesus's Cave near Izmir in Turkey.



An external view of the Cave in Rajeeb region in Amman, Jordan.

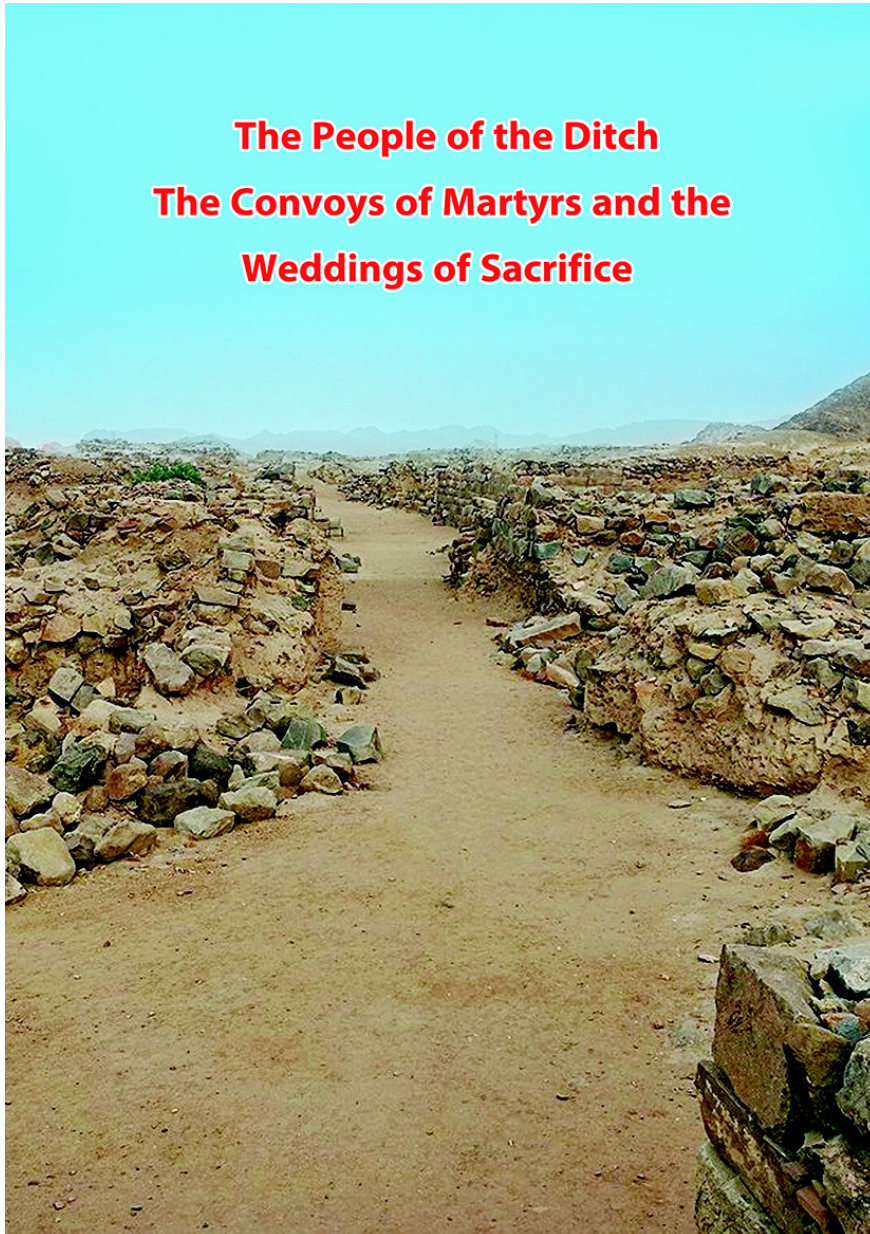


An image of a currency and a skeleton in addition to a number of skull and do not believe in its authenticity.



An image of the ancient currency found in the Cave attributed to the People of the Cave.

The People of the Ditch
The Convoys of Martyrs and the
Weddings of Sacrifice



The People of the Ditch

(Ashab Al Okhdood)

The Convoys of Martyrs and the Weddings of Sacrifice

Allah, the Almighty, says in his Holy Book: “*Woe to the makers of the pit (of fire), (4) Fire supplied (abundantly) with fuel (5), hen they sat by it, (6) And were themselves the witnesses of what they did to the believers (7) They had naught against them save that they believed in Allah, the Mighty, the Owner of Praise, (8) Him unto Whom belongeth the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth; and Allah is of all things the Witness Him unto Whom belongeth the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth; and Allah is of all things the Witness (9).*” [Al Bourooj, verses:4 - 9].

In general, human heritage is full of many heroic and honorable attitudes of many persons whom history has immortalized. These positions were often based on a number of principles that are correlated with the material sense, although in some cases they are connected to unseen, regardless of whether this correlation is true or not.

In other words, there are many honorable stands in which persons made sacrifices in the name of their principles that are related directly to material things or to moral and material issues. For instance, how many positions did history immortalize for some persons who have laid down their lives for their lands, funds, or any other material items? This fact is termed (the material). The issues which can be termed (moral and material) are such as defending honour, indignity or freedom and the like.

In general, these things, in both aspects, are not necessary to have

any relation to religion. However, they are movements and stands imposed by circumstances and nature of human integration at different stages of development, which were included by human societies throughout history.

As for those things related to the unseen or metaphysics, history also tells us about many of them. For example, the doctrinal or ontological beliefs, such as the existence of man and the multi - God, the question of life after death, or even the interpretation of death and the like. The examples of all of the above are many, so, one needs a little time to learn about them, especially with the existence of new media such as internet and the like.

In a relatively short period, one can learn about many historical figures whose names have become familiar, especially on the levels of tournament, sacrifice for the sake of land, honour or even any kind of belief.

However, what is noticeable and shall be a fundamental difference to be taken into consideration is that the heritage has become almost extinct and many legends and myths were brought into it making it unreliable and unpractical matter, which we cannot depend or rely on in our time. Though, we find that the same human heritage has preserved and still preserves those great and honorable stands in a reliable and scientific way for the names of some persons or groups that had a connection to heavenly messages in general without exception. This indicates that the person who connects his work, his position, or his self - sacrifice to the Divine, Eternal, and Immortal Entity, this Sacred Entity grants him some of its privacy in terms of raising his name and immortalizing him over time and space, until Allah inherits the earth and whatever exists on it. Among those whom Allah, the Exalted has honored by immortalizing their names as a result of their blessed sacrifice, are Ashab Al Oukhdood, the People of the Ditch.

Who are the people of the Ditch, what is their story?

At first, the meaning of the ditch should be clarified in the Arabic Language as what linguists say. Thus, the ditch is a: great hole in the ground dug in a rectangular form. The plural of ditch is ditches and the source is a groove.

In our modern expression: it is the large groove that is hollowed out in rectangular form

The People of the ditch, according to the interpreters there are two opinions: **The first:** states that they are wicked tyrants who have dug a ditch, set fire in it and ordered people to rush into them and thus they burnt them in revenge for their belief. This saying refers to the quote, which means that the criminals are to be burnt and tortured in the Hereafter. The second: states that the People of the Ditch is the believers who were killed as per the context and Quranic expression. This opinion is the most prevailed among interpreters.

In any case, their story happened as follows:

In the time of Dhu Nuwas, the last Himyarite King, one of the ancient Yemini tribes known in the Yemini land, this king converted to Judaism as a religion and his tribe, Himyarite also followed his religion. This lasts for a period of time called Yussuf.

Later, he was informed that in the suburbs of Najran (southern of Yemen) there are some people who are still Christians following the teachings of Prophet Issa (as) and the Bible, unlike the King and his tribe who have converted to Judaism. He went to Najran to force them to convert to his religion. He gathered the Christians people there and asked them to convert to Judaism, when they refused, he argued them and promised them to be killed. They did not care about him or about his threat. He ordered his men to dig a ditch, gather firewood in it and sat fire on it. He started to throw them alive into the burning ditch one by one. Others were executed with the

sword then thrown into the ditch as well. According to narrations, the number of those killed and burnt has reached twenty thousand people.

A Christian man called Doush Zou Thaakban, from Najran was able to flee and went to the Roman Caesar and complained to him about what had Dhu Nuwas done. The Caesar said: Your land is far away, but I am going to send a letter to the King of Abyssinia and ask him to take revenge for the blood of the Christians who were burnt in Najran.

When the King of Abyssinia read the letter, he was very influenced by it and decided to revenge for the blood of martyrs. He sent his army to Yemen and met the army of Dhu Nuwas, and defeated him after a fierce battle between the two armies.

Narrators have also stated a very touching scene, in which they said: When it was the turn of a woman with her child who was no more than two months old, she hesitated, fearing fire being afraid on her child. The child said” Mother do not fear, throw me and yourself into fire, you are on the right path.” Therefore, she threw herself into the fire. The child spoke in the cradle as a miracle of dignity to those martyrs.

There are also other narrations for the People of the Ditch, whereas, the abovementioned narration is the most reliable for most interpreters.

As a memorial to those martyrs, Allah, the Almighty mentioned them in his Sacred Book in Surat Al Bourooj since they have believed in the call of Jesus Christ (as).

The narration of this story in the Holy Quran was revealed to Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) as a matter of entertainment to him and in consolation to the abuse and oppression practiced against him by the people of Quraish.

Therefore, the far yesterday is similar to the near yesterday, or as Allah, the most Almighty said: *“Such days We alternate between the people, that God may know those who believe, and take martyrs from among you. God does not love the evildoers.”* (Surat Al Imran, verse: 140).

Therefore, this type of injustice, persecution and oppression was practiced later in the Islamic heritage, ie, after the mission of the great Prophet (pbuh) and was repeated in many Islamic historical milestones, especially in the Abbasid period or the Abbasid state, coinciding with events and calamities that affected the descendants of the noble Prophet (pbuh) in particular. To name but a few, what most historians such as al - Tabari, Ibn al - Atheer, and Mohsen El Amine and many others of the Islamic scholars said when they talked about the events of 125 Hijira. They said: In the period of Marwan bin Mohamad, the last King of Bani Umayyah, Bani Hachem gathered in the city and pledged allegiance to Mohammad Bin Abdullah Bin Al Hassan Al Muthanna bin Al Hassan AL Mujtaba Bin Ali Bin Abi Talib (May Allah be pleased with him).

Among those who pledged allegiance was Mahammad Al Saffah (The blood shedder) and Al Mansour (the victorious) , while Imam Jaafar bin Mohamad Al Sadiq did not pay homage to him, therefore, Abdullah bin Al Hassan Al Muthanna asked him about the reason, Al Sadiq replied: “The Caliphate will become to Al Saffah and his brothers and sons. He also told him that the Mohammad and Ibrahim will be killed and that the owner of the yellow robe, who is Mansour will kill Mohammad. When Mansour was informed about that after his brother Saffah, he feared so much Mohammad and Ibrahim, the sons of bin Al Hassan Al Muthanna since he had paid him allegiance in the city before his brother Saffah.

During his pilgrimage to Mecca, Abu Jaafar Al Mansour went to

visit Abdullah Al Nuhad bil Al Hassan Al Muthanna, and asked him about his son Mohammad, Abdullah replied: "I do not know." Al Mansour said: "Get him here", Abdullah said: "If he were under might, I would not raise them." Al Mansour got angry and imprisoned him for two years. He appointed a governor for the city who was named Riyah and ordered him to arrest the sons of Al Hassan and imprison them. The so - called Riyah was hateful towards Ahlulbeit (the Household of the Prophet) (a.s.), and he imprisoned twelve men among them, the sons of Al Hassan, rather than Abdullah Al Mahd. Among them were a young boy and a worshipper man named Ali bin Al Hassan who came by himself and asked Riyah to imprison him with them and Riyah responded to his demand and imprisoned also Mohammad bin Abdullah, of the sons of Othman bin Abdullah Al Mahd who were their brother from their mother's part who was Fatima, the daughter of Al Hussein (May Allah be pleased with him), as well as two of his sons.

When the Hajj season ended, Al Mansour ordered to transport those prisoners to Iraq. Thus, they were taken shackled and handcuffed. When they got out, Imam As Sadiq stand behind a thin curtain and when he looked at them and shed a tear over his beard and said: "I swear by Allah, Allah will not to preserve a dignity after what has been made to them"

Moreover, Al Mansour imprisoned them in Iraq in a place called Ibn Hubira Palace, east of Kufa. They did not know the night of the day, neither the times of prayer except verses of the Holy Quran which read by some of them. If any of them dies, he was left in his place.

When Mohammad bin Abdullah Al Mahd rebelled against Al Mansour, the later ordered to destroy the prison with all the prisoners inside it.

Finally, we say, are not these pure, believing souls immortalized by Allah, the Most Exalted, despite the attempts of tyrants and arrogant rulers over time?

Is not this an evidence of the rank and dignity of these innocent believers in God, the Almighty? We have already said in the context of the research: Whoever associates his deeds with Allah, he would be have been associated with Allah, the Eternal One, the Immortal One. Thus, his name would never be forgotten either in a text, or a tradition, despite the plots of the conspirators and the malice of the malevolent ones, but God refuses except to complete His light, even though the disbelievers dislike it.

Peace be upon the martyrs, the People of the Ditch and peace be upon the martyrs of the Prophet's Households.



The entrance of Najran county on the borders of North Yemen.



A board indicating to the area of the Ditch.



Remains of Najran Shrine which is the oldest Church built in the Arabian Peninsula.



A general view of the area of Akdood Archeological Area.



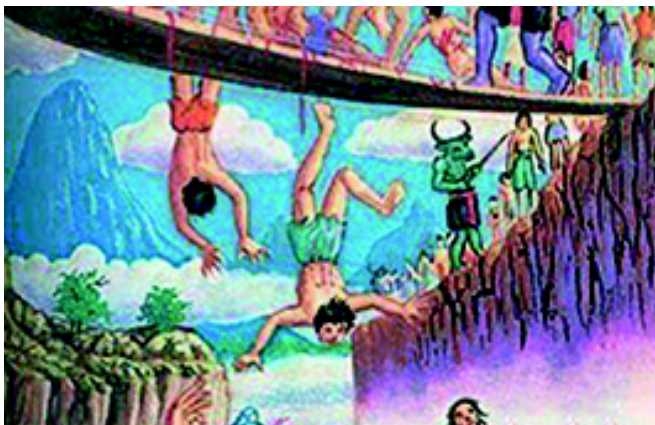
An image from the inside of Akdood Archeological Area.



An image emulating the form of the ditch.



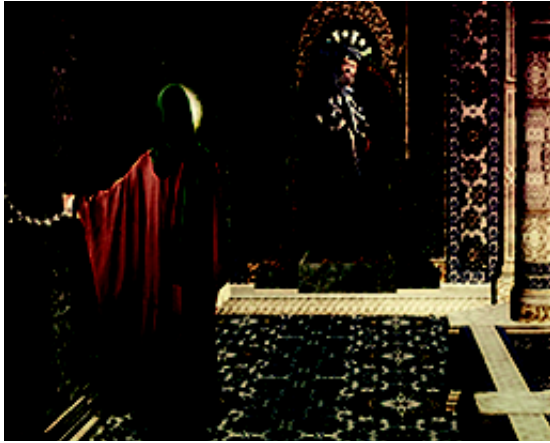
An artistic image about burning the believers.



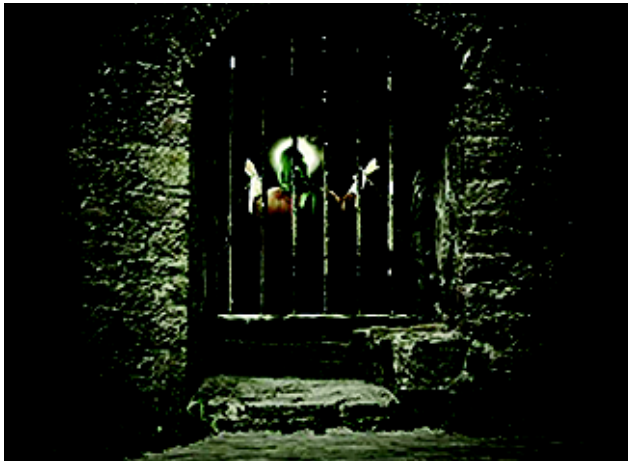
Another image about dropping them in fire.



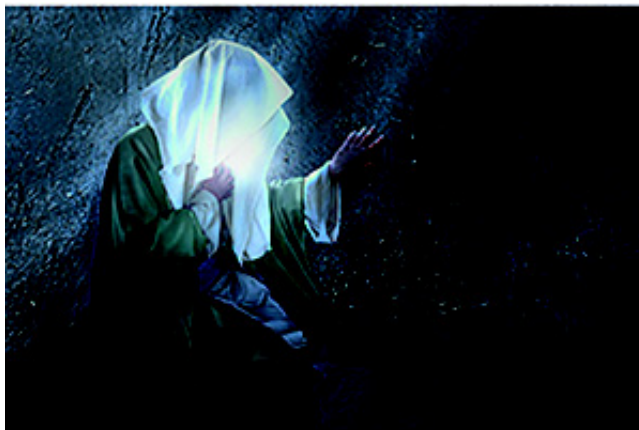
An artistic image about beheading the believers before dropping them in fire.



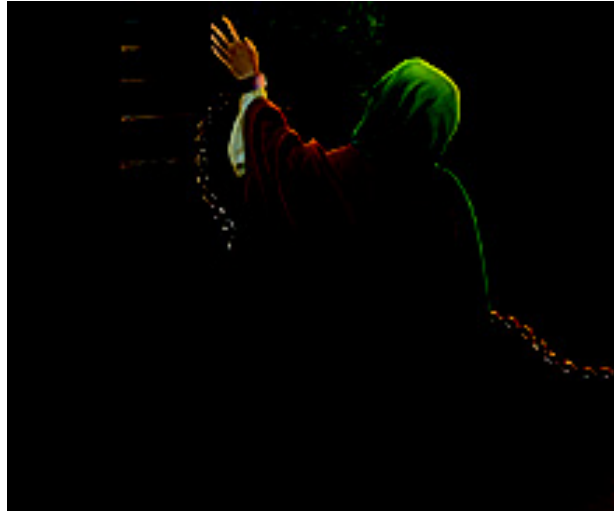
An artistic image emulating Abdullah Bin Al Hassan Al Muthanna presenting before Al-Rachid.



An artistic image of the ancient prisons which known as landfills since they are underground.



An image emulating a prisoner of the Prophets (pbuh) Households inside the prisons.

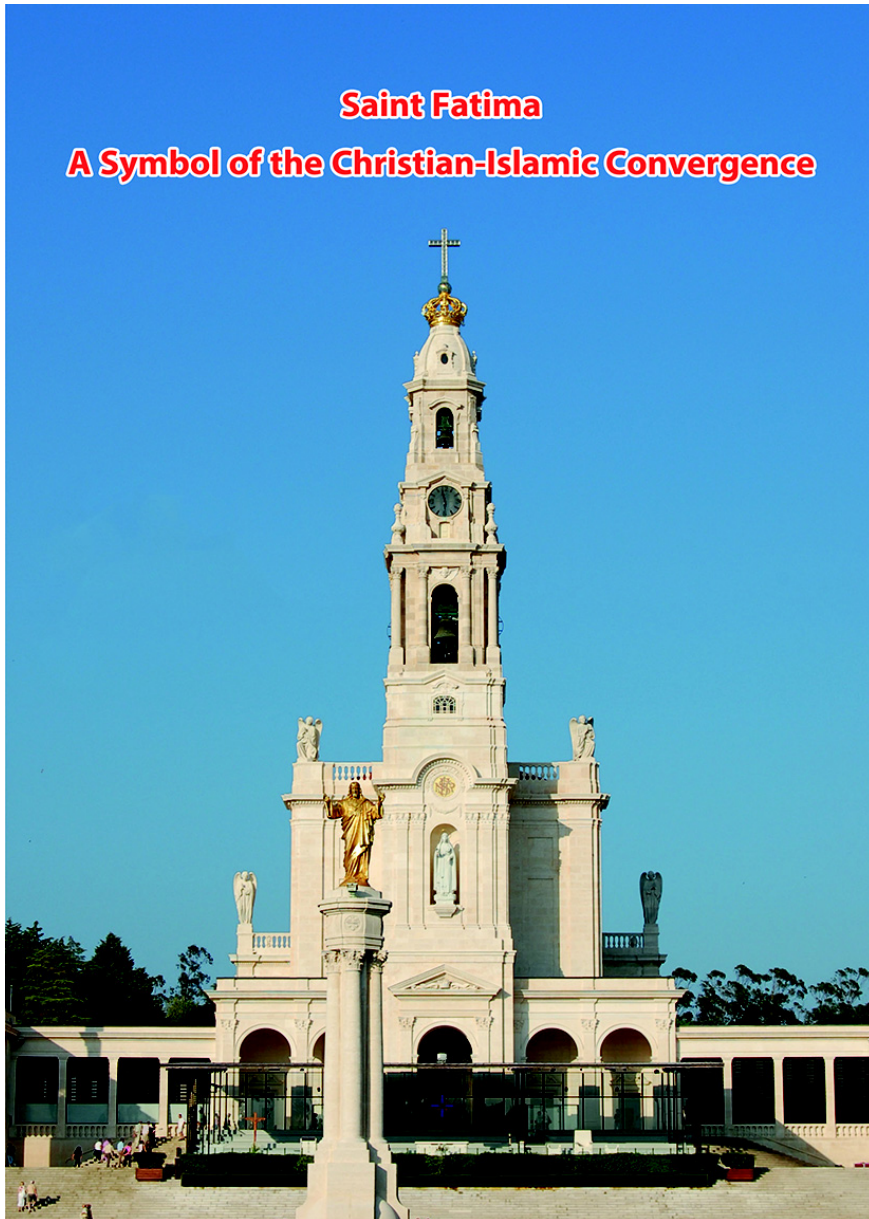


Another artistic image of a prisoner of the Prophets (pbuh) Households during Al-Rachid's time.



Another artistic image of the Prophets (pbuh) Households inside the landfills where in this scene, the elderly, the youngsters and the children appear.

Saint Fatima
A Symbol of the Christian-Islamic Convergence



Saint Fatima

A Symbol of the Christian - Islamic Convergence

“You will find that the people most hostile towards the believers are the Jews and the polytheists. And you will find that the nearest in affection towards the believers are those who say, “We are Christians.” That is because among them are priests and monks, and they are not arrogant. (82) And when they hear what was revealed to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears, as they recognize the truth in it. They say, “Our Lord, we have believed, so count us among the witnesses. (83)”. [Surat Al Maida, verses: 83 - 83].

The relationship between Christianity and Islam, on both the intellectual and human aspects is based on the mutual cordiality and respect. These deep mutual respect and admiration have emerged since the dawn of Islam. All started during the immigration of Muslims from Mecca to Abyssinia led by Jaafar bin Abi Talib (May Allah be pleased with him) after the persecution of Muslims. Meanwhile, the Prophet (pbuh) asked the Muslim community to go to the Abyssinia where the Christian King does not wrong anyone, as expressed by the Holy Prophet (pbuh). This was more obvious through the visit of the delegation of Najran of the priests and monks to the Prophet and the events that took place during this visit. This relationship became clearer and stronger through the marriage of the Prophet to the honorable Christina woman, Maria Coptic, known as the mother of Ibrahim, who became after this marriage one of the mother of the believers, may Allah be pleased with her.

Moreover, Islamic history is full of many bright stands in the interreligious relationship between Christianity and Islam.

Perhaps, one of the most prominent of these attitudes and this relationship which is based on mutual cordiality and respect, is the marriage of Imam Hassan bin Ali Al - Askari (a.s.) to the great Christian lady Malika or Narjis, in which this blessed marriage has resulted in the birth of Imam Al - Mahdi (may Allah hasten his return) who shall fill this world with justice and equity like it would be fraught with injustice and tyranny. This is what all Muslims believe in.

However, this does not mean that the common history between these two religions is impeccable. There are many milestones and periods which were full of disputes, conflicts, and hostilities, as a result of the political ambitions and personal differences, in which religion was used as a justification and as a soul - stirring. Since man is a human being regardless of the time which he lives, and since greed is the same in every time and place regardless of the titles and addresses, we will always find such positions on both the positive as well as the negative aspects until Allah inherits the world and whatever exist on it.

Therefore, at least the intellectual Christians and Muslims have to spread the concepts of cordiality, respect and convergence through concentrating on the positive common points among them.

Among these common points and positive stands is the Shrine of Saint Fatima in Portugal.

So, what is the story of Saint Fatima? Why was she named Fatima? In other words, what is the secret beyond linking this Christian religious thriving edifice which is being visited from all over the world with the Sacred Islamic name of the Chief of the women of the world. (a.s.)?

The city of Fatima is located within the municipality of Urim, about 123 kilometers from the capital, Lisbon in Portugal. It includes a monastery and a huge church established in 1928 AD. The height of the tower in it is about 65 meters.

The place is considered an important religious symbol especially for the catholic Christians, who arrive throughout the year on the 13th of each year for reasons that will be clarified in the context of the research.

This city has mountainous nature, characterized by a chain of mountain and hills surrounding it and forested with green trees all over the year. Its climate is also characterized with the moderate Mediterranean nature. In summer, temperature tends to be high and in winter, it becomes cold and mild with a beautiful and moderate climate in both spring and weather seasons. On one part, this city or “village” did not receive any attention since it was far from the capital city on one hand, and it is small and the number of residence in it is few on the other hand, as most narrations state that, the number of its habitants does not exceed twenty five houses maximum. This was before the year 1917, before the event took place and which has changed the image of the small village into a big city today, currently considered as the most Portuguese cities. It is also one of the most important countries visited for religion and tourism, especially by Christians from all over the words.

Portugal have witnessed a quantum leap in 1910, after the overthrow of the monarchy and replacing it with the republican system, which to a certain extent was influenced by Bolshevism. This new system remained relatively unstable until it was replaced by the dictatorial regime known as the dictatorship of “Estado Novo”, following the Portuguese colonial war. In the atmosphere of this new political transition to Portugal, and specifically on 15 May 1917, in this geographical spot, an event called “Fatima” took place. Three

little shepherds were herding their goats: Lucia Santos, who was 11 years old and her cousin Francisco Marto, who was 9 years old and his sister Jacinta Marto, who was 7 years old.

This honorable lady asked the three children to meet her at the same time and place of each month to tell what she wants. Indeed, according to narrations, she appeared to them monthly for six consecutive months. At last an astronomical heavenly event happened in which the sun reputedly the earth or the opposite which seems to the viewer as if it is going to fall on earth. This solar phenomenon was witnessed on 13\10\1917 by a massive population and local press, especially the two newspapers,” Daily News and “Osceola”.

Through these six apparition of this lady to the three children, she informed them about some issues which were later known as the three secrets, which we are going to state some of them in this context.

The news of these eclipses received the attention of Catholic Christians, mainly Italians and Spaniards who agreed to build a large church in the site of the revelation or apparition. This was in 1928 AD, with the help of the only surviving witness of the three children Lucia Santos after the death of Francisco and his sister Jacinta, with the pandemic influenza that ravaged Europe 1919AD. Whereas, Lucia became older and entered the monastery where she studied priesthood and her name became Sister Lucia.

This huge church was built on the hill where the apparition or manifestation took place. It became a religious center for other villages, it was called “St. Fatima’s Church”. It is still known today as the town of Fatima, Therefore, based on all the above, what is the reason behind this blessed name that brought together Christianity and Islam?

The answer to this question will be clarified after reviewing the

different opinions on this issue which are not more than four, and are as follows:

Fist opinion: In an attribution to the palace resided by a Princess who was named Fatima who was captivated after the defeat of Islamic influence in that country.

Second Opinions: The claim made by the woman who appeared to the children telling that her name is Fatima and for this reason she was called Saint Fatima.

Third Opinion: The incorrectness of all of these sayings where there is no miracle or any manifestation revealed. This is similar to the words of AbI Sufyan, the Prophet's (pbuh) enemy when he said in battle of Hanine: "There has not been any revelation or story."

Fourth Opinion: In an attribution to the old name of the city at the period of Andalusia.

In order to know the identity of the righteous opinion among these viewpoints, we are going to review each one and comment on it, in order to reach finally the desired result from this research.

However, first, before we go on a tour into this religious edifice to be introduced to it and look closely to its contents and the nature of rituals which are practiced in it or when entering it or in its surrounding.

The first thing that draws the attention of the visitors to this religious edifice is its large area decorated with greenery on every side, as well as a calm atmosphere filled with tranquility and reverence. On the right side of the entrance, a huge modern church comprises large numbers of worshipers. Facing the entrance of the church, there are several statues carved for Christian religious figures, with a golden statue situated midway on the top, which embodies the shape and form of Christ (a.s.) according to the Christian belief. To the left of the entrance, there is an altar and a

semi - enclosed chapel where Christian services are held most of the time. Alongside, there is a special place for lightening and setting candles for vows and the like. The main Church (St. Fatima) is located on a high altitude accessible by climbing the wide staircase. On the downside of these staircases, there is an external altar in which the religious services are held outside for the great masses of visitors, especially during the events as well as in the spring and summer days. In the hallway outside the church, there are many mural that emulate the story of Jesus Christ (a.s.) according to the Christian belief. They are very beautiful artistic murals in terms of colors and perfection. When entering the Church (St. Fatima) which is composed of unseparated two - storey you are attracted and fascinated by the splendor, grace and style of the church from the inside. On both sides you find the magnificent gilded murals that emulate Jesus Christ (a.s.), the events that took place according to the Christian belief. You are also attracted by the beauty, grandeur and elegance of the altar where religious services and prayers are performed made of fine marble, surrounded by many special statues of the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ (a.s.). On the right side of the altar from inside, there is the tomb of Francesco Marto, and on the left side there are two tombs, one for Francesco's sister Jacinta Marto and the other for their cousin Lucia de Santos or Sister Lucia as she was later called.

These three graves are of special concern and care to all visitors, where they stand on their graves, and pray for them or pray for themselves, as they pray to God to respond to their wishes and supplications. What is exceptionally remarkable are those vows which are believed and presented by most pilgrims. Hence, they enter the courtyard of the church outside, and up the stairs, and into the inside, all crawling on their knees, which is a very long and

exhausting distance, and requires a company for assistance to perform this vow or ritual.

In general, this Church and its surrounding constitute a spiritual oasis in an atmosphere of tranquility, cleanliness and order, all of which make you feel that you are in an exceptional place that spontaneously takes you to Heaven.

In return to the land, the subject in question and the four opinions that we have mentioned regarding the reason of naming this woman as (Saint Fatima), the group of the first opinion state the following: (... The European Christian army launched a war against Muslims to restore the land that was ripped from them and fell under the Islamic power and which was known by Andalusia on 1158 AD, and during this was against Muslims and expelling them from most of Andalusia (except Granada, which had fallen in 1492 and was the last regions to be subject to the Islamic power. Through this victory, the army of King Alfonso seized a lot of wealth, in addition to many captives, including a princess of the palace who was called Fatima.

When distributing the spoils of war among the Christian army leaders, Princess Fatima was the share of the governor of Ourem, who was called Gonzalo Herminguez, who forced Princess Fatima to convert to the Catholic faith before marrying her.

After that, this princess lived in that city that rest of her life until she died there. Since she was known by her education, good morals and high level of personal hygiene, kind hearted, generosity, pleasantness, sweetness of the tongue, whether with the courtier of the palace or the public people, she became beloved by everyone, to the extent that her name prevailed over the name of the palace where she lived outside the city of Ourem, therefore, people started to call the palace as Fatima as well as the surrounding area. As the days passed, a village there became known as Fatima. This small village which used to constitute of just 25 houses was known to most

Portuguese before the early 20th century that is the (the apparition of the Lady) in that remote and unknown area.

They also say that no one knows where this princess was buried as they did not find any tomb or name for her among the royal tombs which belong to the governor of Ourem or the like.

Following the incident of the woman's apparition in that village to the three children on May 13, 1917, people started to explain the incident and attribute it to the name of the village call the village as Saint Fatima in relation to the miraculous event in the said region Fatima.

Commenting on the first opinion, we say:

At first sight, this opinion seems to be scientifically and accurately approved, but the truth is different for the following reasons:

- 1 -The state of the scientifically approved history and some people's tales which no proof of their validity at all, are one of the most dangerous types of delusion in the documentation of historical events. That is because the researcher in historical issues should not merge the information in one context until they look like historical postulates, such as the case of the group of the first opinion. Hence, the documented historical information about the fall of Andalusia was merged with the names, places, and the like, with some unfounded allegations and stories as will be clarified later. The issue of the captivity of a princess of Umayyad palace in Andalusia at that time is one of the groundless tales even at the popular customary level. The most significant proof of this is the saying of Aisha, the daughter of Mohammad bin Al Ahmar, known as Aisha al Hurra (the Free) to her son, Abi Abdullah Mohammad XII, last king of Granada in Andalusia, when departing it on ships with their entire courtier: "Cry like women over a King whom you did not safeguard like men do". This was an evidence that

the entire people of that palace accompanied by the governor and his mother have left the castle. If the group of this opinion were humble and said that the captive woman was a maiden, this possibility could have been considered to be verified but this is not true.

- 2 -Saying that this Muslim princess was baptized in accordance with the Christian beliefs and has converted to the Catholic doctrine to enable the governor of Ourem to marry her, is very ridiculous. Since, in the Christian belief, it is impermissible for the Christian man to marry more than one woman even if he is a king, although it is permissible for him to have many mistresses regardless of their religion or belief. However, history states that the wife of the governor of Ourem was called (Oriana) and was Christian.
- 3 -The group of this opinion recognize that the place of burial of this Andalusian Muslim princess is unknown despite the fame she gained in her community and this led them to call the palace and village where she lived with her name. However, this is a further proof that this saying is untrue.
- 4 -The group of this opinion also acknowledge that this princess lived in the governor's palace in a remote village far from the city of Ourem, which was unknown and uninhabited except by a small number of people before the events of 12 May 1917. However, there were no more than 25 rural houses in it and the village as well as its surrounding have no features for a ruined palace or the like. It is well - known that the wife of any ruler shall live with him or next to the place of his residence in the same region. But, how could he let her live in another remote area without servants? Meanwhile, they claim that she was so beloved to the servants?!
- 5 -If these claims were true, though they are not, how could not

the Muslim ruler who is exiled from Andalusia try to redeem this Muslim princess with money, knowing that according to the original customs, Arabs would give almost everything for that sake of their honor, to the extent that they used to burn the girls for fear of shame before Islam.

For this reason and for other reasons, we find that this opinion does simulate reality and is untrue, though it is supported with some historical information.

- As for the opinion which says that the lady who appeared to the children has introduced herself as Fatima, it is not true at all for the following reasons:

- 1 -These claims are not based on any scientific or realistic evidence in any way. One of the most significant manifestations of this denial is that Lucia de Santos, one of the three children stayed on the religion of Christianity. She entered the monastery and learned priesthood, dedicated herself to it until she died at the age of 97 years, committed to the Christian religion, according to the Catholic canonical belief which is absolutely incompatible with the Islamic faith, particularly with respect to the nature of the Christ (a.s.).
- 2 -According to the events, Lucia is the one who conveyed the demands of the noble lady who appeared to them. Those demands were later known as the three secrets which Lucia transferred them later to the Pope, Vatican Pius XI. All of which talk about the Christian belief and defending it and the church. In a part of the second secret, it was stated that: “You have seen hell where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace. The war is going to end:

but if people do not cease offending God, a worse one will break out during the Pontificate of Pope Pius XI.”

Therefore, what is the relation between this text or the transmitted secret with the women’s saying and the Islamic faith?

Moreover, what is the relation between this text and the Islamic concepts? Would not it be better if she addressed her speech to the disputing and competing rulers of power in the Islamic world, if it is true that she is Fatima Al - Zahraa (a.s.)?

3 - What is stated in the secret or the third story, which alone, in its content, makes it impossible for the group of the second opinion to say that the woman who appeared to the Children is Fatima Al - Zahraa (a.s.) as it states that:

“We saw an Angel with a flaming sword in his left hand; flashing, it gave out flames that looked as though they would set the world on fire; but they died out in contact with the splendor that Our Lady radiated towards him from her right hand: pointing to the earth with his right hand.... Other Bishops, Priests, men and women Religious going up a steep mountain, at the top of which there was a big Cross of rough - hewn trunks as of a cork - tree with the bark; before reaching there the Holy Father passed through a big city half in ruins and half trembling with halting step, afflicted with pain and sorrow, he prayed for the souls of the corpses he met on his way; having reached the top of the mountain, on his knees at the foot of the big Cross he was killed by a group of soldiers who fired bullets and arrows at him, and in the same way there died one after another the other Bishops, Priests, men and women Religious, and various lay people of different ranks and positions. Beneath the two arms of the Cross there were two Angels each with a crystal aspersion in his hand, in which they gathered up the blood of the Martyrs and with it sprinkled the souls that were making their way to God.....”

So where are the Islamic concepts and beliefs in this text? What is

the relationship between Al - Sayyeda Al - Zahraa (a.s.) and this text?

- 4 -The wrong basis of the group of this opinion is the issue of tasbih (praise). Since, the children to whom this noble woman appeared said that she asked them to praise God a lot, in which the group of this opinion has linked this issue with the subject of the so - called praise of Al - Sayyeda Al - Zahraa (a.s.).

They missed that among the rituals of worshipping in the Christian religion, there is the matter of praising which is the Tasbih of Mariam, worship performed by Christians since the formation of the Catholic Church in 325 AD.

Unfortunately, this issue turned to a state of polemics, absurdities, and contradictions among Muslims and we are not going to mention them and we rise above them. Recently, a group of Christians came in order to defend the Virgin Mar, insulting Muslims who try to attribute this to them.

This is wrong from whatever the point of view was, for the religious beliefs should not be based on empty arguments and false claims. Everyone must respect the freedom of belief and thought of any human being regardless of how this though is false according to others.

Focusing particularly on the popular statements with a proof. This is what I have personally recognized during my visit to this religious edifice, where I met the deputy director of the National Library in Lisbon, Marie Teresa who told me in voice and image kept in the archive that many people in Portugal say that the name of the lady who appeared to the children is Fatima without any proof. During our conversation, I also discovered that she is an atheist and does not believe in anything. This issue is ironical and strange at the same time.

For these and for other reasons, we find that this opinion is absolutely incorrect as well as logically and Islamically speaking.

As for the third opinion, which says that the event and the apparition of the Lady to the Children are not true, they mainly relied on the following issues:

- 1 - Their absolute rejection of the religious thought in general and the metaphysical questions in particular.

As the group of this opinion were followers of the school of thought performed by the Bolshevik Revolution, which relies primarily on the materialistic dialectical thought rejecting the Gnostic religion though, who were later known as the Communists, the followers of Engels, Marx and Lenin, especially if we know that the history of the apparition of this honorable lady was during the victory of the Bolshevik Revolution, the invasion of its ideas and its aspiration to the Western world, including Portugal.

- 2 - Considering that the spread of this superstitious incident according to their claim aims at confronting their new ideas and materialistic ambitions, and works on strengthening the role of the Church in the social and political life.

They supported this view with regard to the content of the second sacrament that the children conveyed to the world, which states that: "... To prevent this, I shall come to ask for the Consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart, and the Communion of reparation on the First Saturdays. If my requests are heeded, Russia will be converted, and there will be peace; if not, she will spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions of the Church. The good ones will be martyred; the Holy Father will have much to suffer; various nations will be annihilated. In the end, my Immaculate

Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me, and she shall be converted, and a period of peace will be granted to the world.”

It is known that the Bolshevik revolution was launched in Russia after the coup against the Czarist Christian rule, so the group of this opinion considered that in the invention of this incident, there is an attempt to restore the Christian rule in Russia and confront the new material thought.

Thus, Portugal in general, and Christians in particular, experienced a state of bloody repression after the incident of the apparition and continued for a long time, so the construction of the first church in the place of the apparition was in 1928 AD, that is, ten years after the incident, the form of its capacity building was to some extent small and humble at the first stage.

- 3 -Saying that the focus was on the name of Pope Pius XI at that time, is an obvious attempt to strengthen his stature as well as his religious and political authority against the new communist thought. So, if this incident was true, it must be general and directed to the whole world and does not serve only he interest of a specific party in a direct manner. Besides, focusing on the birthplace of the new thought that is Russia, without other Western countries, is an attempt to serve a political target, in a religious, metaphysical and superstitious clothing according to them. The danger they saw in this target was to try to stir up and mobilize the masses in Russia against the new communist regime, so they tried to refute it and suppress it in all means.

Commenting on this view, we say: It is true that some of those having sick spirits, have long traded in religions for their own narrow personal interests, and have always invested the peoples' emotions and noble beliefs in the Creator in order to fulfill their

goals and plans. Hence, how many wars were launched in the name of God while Allah, the Most Exalted is innocent of them? How many people were killed, honors were perished, money was robbed in the name of their owners and religion is innocent of them. Religion here is a heavenly religion; it was a Jewish, Christian or Islamic religion. History is full of such exploits of human thought and especially the religious thought.

For those who want an evidence on this saying, it is sufficient to look at the history of the divine messages and what happened with the messengers and their followers to recognize that the oppression practiced against the religious thought in particular in terms of repression or distortion or investment, is not a new thing and will remain so, since man is man with his goodness and nobility, evil and greed, cheep and earthy desires.

Moreover, it is true that the people of desires, misconceptions and incomplete thought have launched wars on people and damaged their souls, perished their honors and destroyed their civilizations under many untenable and false titles. A proof is that is they have been working on that since the dawn of the human civilization to this day. They have been working on that and failed despite their arrogance and tyranny. The reason behind their failure, is that what is associated with Heaven will live up despite all the storms and twisters that try to distract or blur it.

Have all these opinions and theories managed to keep people away from the Creator? This conflict will remain between the earth and heaven until God inherits the earth and all those on it.

Based on the foregoing, we do not believe in the validity of this view, although it holds with it the interpretation of some events in a scientific and controversial manner with some offensiveness.

- As for the fourth opinion, this incident took place in an area

bearing a blessed Islamic name since the days of Andalusia, and this is what we strongly adopt. Our proof of that is as follows:

1 - It is a customary in the humanitarian gathering, especially in the early stages of the formation of the small communities to attribute themselves sometimes to a moral party such as to a certain person, and this is what the tribes used to do. The human communities were first consisted of group of human tribes reproduced from one another or allied with others. They might also attribute themselves to a place, such as a mountain, a valley, a river, a well or the like. This is what anthropologists or anthropologists have discovered and confirmed.

Many tribes often invade other tribes, dominate them, their property, land, money and the like. Accordingly, the first name of the invaded tribe changes over time, to bear the new name of the invading tribe, and so forth.

If we want to present some evidence on this issue: the old country of Gala, having different names currently, was the largest part of the European countries. Same goes for the land of Hijaz which has become a group of countries and kingdoms in our time.

As well as the Levant, which included Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine and Cyprus.

Thus, it was a customary for the conquerors to include the invaded country to their sultan and give them new names, such as the case of Alexandria in Egypt, where it bore the name of Alexander the Macedonian and remained for our history known as Alexandria. No one knows the name of this region before Alexander except the specialists in archeology, or archeology and ancient civilizations.

In the same context, the same happened with this region, which bore the name of Fatima in Portugal.

When Muslims opened the country of Andalusia (ancient Spain)

during the days of the Umayyad state by the hands of Tariq bin Ziyad and Moussa bin Naseer in 711 AD, in the late days before their defeat by the state and the Abbasid caliphate, Abdulrahman bin Muawiyah bin Hisham bin Abd al Malik known as (Saqr Quraish) fled to it and died in 788 AD.

He established in Andalusia his state which was far from the Abbasid authority, where science, literature, architecture and art prospered following the beginning of the rise of the Islamic and Arab culture in Andalusia. It reached an advanced stage of cultural civilization. Then, the Ummayyad state in Andalusia became a major cultural center in the western part of the Islamic world. This continues until the fall of Granada, the last Islamic kingdom in Andalusia in 1492 AD.

In this long period of the Arab and Islamic rule in this region, many demographic and geographical changes took place in the country. It is very natural that these regions in Andalusia bear Arabic and Islamic names.

However, this small and remote village bears the Islamic name of Fatima since the beginning of the Arab conquest of Andalusian. The additional and semi - decisive evidence is that the adjacent region to the village of Fatima as shown in the attached image, which indicated to the region of Mohammad Al Mohamadioun in the Portuguese language to date.

Accordingly, the issue is as follows: After the incident took place on May 13, 1917 in that region, regardless of whether it was true or not, the incident was attributed to the name of the place where it happened and people repeated the event and attributed it to that place. They said: The miracle or the apparition of Lady Fatima or Saint Fatima, that is the apparition of the Virgin in the village of Fatima, the word saint means the holy, or the guardian on the Arab and Islamic expression.

Therefore, there is no room for doubt or interpretation, especially since we have reviewed all other opinions.

The result is that: this huge edifice bears the Christian Identity and it was constructed on a region bearing a blessed Islamic name which is Fatima. Therefore, peace be upon you my Lady Mariam, the Virgin, and peace be on the Lady of women, Fatima Azzahraa (a.s.). May Allah's peace and blessings be upon you her father, husband, and pure offspring.

Before concluding: I would like to point out that I felt a bit discomfort and sorrow to see all those coming to visit the estimated religious edifice and not visiting the birthplace of Jesus Christ (a.s.) in Jerusalem, the land which with no doubt has kissed his (a.s.) feet when he walked on it.

How long will this avoidance for this Holy Land last? O, the beloved of Christ and Mohammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon them.

And praise be to Allah, the Lord of the World.



An image of the country of Fatima in Portugal showing a hologram emulating the event, which occurred in it.



An image of Dr. Ahmad Kais in the road leading to St. Fatima Church.



An image showing St. Fatima Church with its square.



Dr. Ahmad Kais indicating to the tower of the Church and facing it the Altar of the external Masses.



An image of Dr. Ahmad Kais in front of a sculpture which symbolizes Pope Paul VI facing the Church.



An image showing the statue of Pope Paul VI and how his face is directed towards the Church.



An image of the modernized huge church that has a capacity of a large number of people. It is located at the right side of St. Fatima Church.



An image showing the performance of the ritual of crawling on knees towards St. Fatima.



Another image showing the way of crawling on knees.



A nearer image showing the way of crawling on knees in which the Church seems to be modernized..



Dr. Ahmad Kais in front of the golden statue which symbolized to Jesus Christ (a.s.) and the church behind him.



An image of the statue and the externa altar steeple.



An image of the Christian service performed in the outer square.



An image of the prayers in outer side of the Church.



An image in which Dr. Ahmad Kais indicating to the platform of the altar on which the Christian services are performed for the crowds who gather during spring and summer, especially on May 13th of every year.



An image showing a priest holding a candle for a vow while heading towards the place of putting the candles.



An image showing people gathering to put the candles in the place dedicated for that.



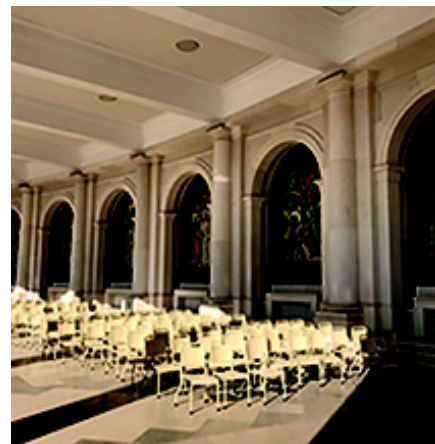
An image of the high stairs leading to the Church where Dr. Mohamad Kais appears sitting on it.



A nearer image of the stairs where Dr. Mohamad Kais also appears sitting there.



A clearer image of Dr. Mohamad Kais in which the high stairs appears with the Church's entrance and the steeple.



The external Hall of St. Fatima Church and the amazing artistic murals.



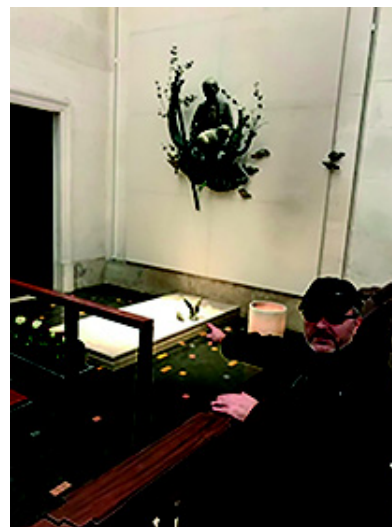
A general view of St. Fatima Church's entrance.



An image of Dr. Mohamad Kais in front of the Church



An image at the right side of the altar where Francesco Marto's tomb appear behind the wooden fence.



Dr. Mohamad Kais pointing to Francesco Marto's tomb, one of the three children buried inside the Church's edifice at the right side of the person entering it.



1- A profile image from the inside of the Church showing a golden mural.



2- An image of Dr. Ahmad Kais pointing to the tomb of Jacinta Marto, Francesco Marto's sister and next to it sister Lucia de Santos who are buried inside the Church's to the north side of the person entering it.



A nearer image of the two nearby graves and the artistic murals on the wall.



Stone Statues emulating the apparition on the three children



A real image of the three children. At the right Jacinta Marto, in the middle Lucia de Santos, and at the left Francesco Marto.



A real image of the masses who gathered to witness the solar phenomenon on 13/10/1917 AD.



Another image of those masses on 1917.



An image of the small church which was built in the place of the woman's apparition on 1918 AD.



An image of Pope Pius II during his pilgrimage to St. Fatima Church with a massive population receiving him.



A real image of Sister Lucia de Santos in her old age wearing the nun's dress.



An image of Pope John Paul II .during his pilgrimage to St. Fatima Church



Statues in the external square emulating the event of the apparition on the three children.



An image of a board indication to the name of Mamede (Mohammad) which is located nearby St. Fatima Church and which confirms that the names of this area were Islamic since the Andalusian period.



An image of Dr. Ahmad Kais in the external square of St. Fatima Church following his visit to it.

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