

Christmas is More than you ever imagined

Two presents are before you: one huge, heavy, and wrapped in gold paper nicely, tied with a red band; - the other placed in a simple container, ordinary and much less appealing. Which one will you choose? If only you could find out what is inside; or perhaps guess who is the likely giver, and make your choice based on the expectations you have to that person it might be easier to choose.

In a way our Christmas season presents us with a similar choice: Do I go for the spectacular display and advertising that strikes us watching the big supermarket display – especially by night! -, or will I look for something more, for the real thing, the original, the true meaning?

Christians, Non-Christians, Muslims and Hindus all enjoy the Christmas season in their own way.

[Nilufar Ahmed](#), Senior Lecturer in Public Health, Policy and Social Sciences, Swansea University, UK writes (Nov 2017) writes:

<<https://theconversation.com/muslims-can-and-do-celebrate-a-traditional-christmas-87384>>: **Muslims can and do celebrate a traditional Christmas**



“But what is it that Muslims do at Christmas, if they have no religious link? *The fact is that Muslims do the same as everyone else who is not a practising Christian at Christmas.* They spend time with loved ones, enjoying the holiday period. There is no requirement that one be a Christian to enjoy the season after all.

Almost certainly Muslims will be sitting down to a large family get-together at Christmas, facilitated by bank holidays and extra days off. Presents are shared, but usually because it is some time since the family has all been together.

If anything, *it can be argued that Muslims and migrants embody the true spirit of Christmas in the best possible way:* devoid of enormous demands and expectations, perhaps they are the ones that truly exemplify the spirit of togetherness, sharing food and company. One where there is no pressure to come up with hordes of gifts, or to cook a turkey and all the trimmings, or worry about how your presents will stand up to comparison.”

Thanks for sharing this, Nilufar, but can we dig a little bit deeper about “the true spirit of Christmas”? Are you aware that the word “Christmas” comes from the title “Christ” which was given to Jesus the Messiah (‘Christ’ simply is the Latin word for *Messiah*)? Or to make it more personal: My wife’s name is “Christel”, not simply because she was born close to Christmas, but because her Christian parents were grateful to Christ for blessing them with a beautiful firstborn daughter.

Shamshad Ahmad Nasir, an Ahmadi Missionary in the USA explains (27th December 2019) <https://www.baltimoresun.com/opinion/readers-respond/bs-ed-rr-muslim-christmas-letter-20191219-emfe3tf6ibaezlj4p3uel7zswu-story.html> **Why Muslims do not celebrate Christmas:**

“Today, Christmas has been all about receiving and not giving. Children expect adults to give them expensive gifts, rather than being content with what they have.

In a nutshell, Ahmadi Muslims do not celebrate Christmas because:

1. People should follow the teachings of their prophets and take the time for reflection, rather than make their birthdays occasions for merriment and enjoyment
2. The Quran and Bible both give evidence that 25 December is not the date of birth of Jesus Christ (peace be upon him)."

We do not need to dwell on the date for Christmas, since it does not matter whether Jesus was born in December or any other time of the year. But we surely agree that taking time for reflection of the Bible's authentic records in the early chapters of Matthew, Mark and Luke would immensely enrich our understanding about the true giver and His most valuable gift. Likely most Muslims have never read the original accounts, but rather relied on the version given in their book, the Koran.

We should note: "Significantly, the story of the birth of Christ is actually related in the Qur'an, in Sura 19:16-35. Some of the facts are the same (as in the Bible), but what is most important, the story is given a very different slant. The virgin Mary is told by an angel that she will give birth to a 'pure' son, 'as a sign unto men and a mercy from Us'. She withdraws to a desert place to give birth, alone, under a palm-tree, then returns with the infant to her people. When they chide her, supposing she has been unchaste, Jesus speaks up from the cradle in her defense, announcing himself to be a prophet. The passage concludes by denouncing the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, misinterpreted in gross polytheistic terms: 'Such is Jesus, son of Mary, the statement of truth about which they dispute. It is not befitting for God to father a Son, Glory be to Him! When He determines a matter, He only says to it 'Be' and it is.

Thus, although Muslims acknowledge Christ's miraculous birth of a virgin, they do not celebrate Christmas because the Qur'an misinterprets the Incarnation. The hope of salvation which the Incarnate Christ alone brings us is what they need, however. Perhaps this message would get through better if we as Christians would forgo the more superficial trappings of Christmas, innocent though they may seem, to make Christmas more an occasion to worship and praise God for this 'inexpressible gift'." (Source: *AWM*)

How do we as Christians display to people around us that we don't focus on the 'supermarket gifts', but indeed worship and praise God for giving us Jesus who opens the door back to a heavenly Father, the one real, original, incomparable gift that makes Christmas what it was meant to be? Let us remember and share the message that the angels gave to the shepherds in that splendid night: "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior – yes, the Messiah, the Lord – has been born today in Bethlehem ... Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

Dear reader, we pray that this Christmas might become a time for you and your loved ones that will become more meaningful than you ever imagined.

Walter Eric, 2020