

AN AMAZING INCIDENT REGARDING THE PARACLETE

Sheikh Abu Muhammad Abdullah bin Abdullah Al-Tarjuman, the Majorcan, who was once a **priest called Anselm Turmeda**. He was known as Al-Tarjuman (The Translator), because in less than five months after embracing Islam, the Sultan appointed him general of the Marine Administration where he learned the Arabic language and became a skillful translator in discussions between Muslims and Christians. After only one year, he excelled in the Arabic language and was appointed as the head of Translation Affairs.

He wrote "The Gift To The Intelligent For Refuting The Arguments Of The Christians. The book was a powerful blow to the structure of Christian belief because it was written by one of the greatest scholars of Christianity in those days, as admitted by Christians themselves. He began his book by mentioning the story of his guidance to Islam; how Allah freed his heart from the slavery of idolatry and polytheism, and how He opened his heart to Islam and filled it with His Light.

What follows is a summary extracted from his story as related in his own words: "Let it be known to you all, May Allah bless you, that my origin is from the city of Majorca -May Allah return it to Islam- which is a great city on the sea, between two mountains and divided by a small valley. It is a commercial city, with two wonderful harbours. Big merchant ships come and anchor in the harbour with different goods. The city is on the Island which has the same name - Majorca, and most of its land is populated with fig and olive trees.

My father was one of the respected men in the city. I was his only son. When I was six, he sent me to a priest who taught me to read the Gospel. I memorised more than half of it in a period of two years. Then I began to learn the language of the Gospel and logic, which I finished in six years.

After that, I left Majorca and travelled to the city of Larda, in the region of Castellion, which was the center of learning for Christians, in that region. A thousand to a thousand and a half Christian students gathered there. All were under the administration of the priest who taught them. I studied physical sciences and astronomy for six years. Then I studied the Gospel and its language for another four years.

After that, I left for Bologna in the region of Anbardia. Bologna is a large city, it being the center of learning for all the people of that region. Every year, more than two thousand students gather together from different places. They cover themselves with rough cloth which they call "The Hue of God" (*sibghat Allāh*). All of them, whether the son of a ruler, or the son of a workman, wear this wrap, in order to make the students distinct from others. Only the priest who teaches them controls and directs them.

I lived in the church with an aged priest by the name of Nicola Martello. He was greatly respected by the people because of his knowledge, religiousness and asceticism, which distinguished him from the other Christian priests. Questions and requests for advice came to him from everywhere, from Kings and Rulers, along with presents and gifts. They hoped that he would accept their presents and grant them his blessings.

This priest taught me the principles of Christianity and its rulings. I became very close to him by serving and assisting him with his duties until I became one of his most trusted assistants, so that he trusted me with the keys of his domicile in the church and of his food and drink stores. He kept for himself only the key of a small room where he used to sleep. I think, and Allah knows best, that he kept his treasure chest in there.

I was a student and servant for a period of ten years. Then he fell ill and failed to attend the meetings of his fellow priests. During his absence the priests discussed some religious matters, till they came to what was said by The Almighty Allah through His Prophet Jesus in the Gospel that a Prophet called Paraclete will come after him.

They argued a great deal about this Prophet and as to who he was among the prophets. Everyone gave his opinion according to his knowledge and understanding; and they ended without achieving any benefit in that issue. I went to my priest, and as usual he asked about what was discussed in the meeting that day. I mentioned to him the different opinions of the priests about the name Paraclete, and how they finished the meeting without clarifying its meaning.

He asked me: "What was your answer?" I gave him my opinion, which was taken from my interpretation of a well-known exegesis. He said that I was nearly correct like some priests, and the other priests were wrong. "But the truth is different from all of that. This is because the interpretation of that noble name is known only to a small number of well versed scholars. And we possess only a little knowledge." I fell down and kissed his feet, saying: "Sir, you know that I travelled and came to you from a distant country, I have served you now for more than ten years; and have attained knowledge beyond estimation, so please favour me and tell me the truth about this name."

The priest then wept and said: "My Son, By God, you are very much dear to me for serving me and devoting yourself to my care. Know the truth about this name, and there is a great benefit, but there is also a great danger. And I fear that when you know this truth, and the Christians discover that, you will be killed immediately." I said: "By God, By the Gospel and He who was sent with it, I shall never speak any word about what you will tell me, I shall keep it as a secret in my heart."

He said: "My son, when you came here from your country, I asked you if it is near to the Muslim's. And whether they made raids against you, or you made raids against them. This was to test your hatred for Islam. Know, my son, that Paraclete is the name of their Prophet, Muhammad." to whom was revealed the fourth book as mentioned by Daniel who says that this book shall be revealed, its religion shall be the True Religion, and its followers the True Community [lit. "white community," *al-milla al-bayḍā'*, Dan. 12:10], as mentioned in the Gospel. I said: "Then sir, what do you say about the religion of these Christians?" He said: "My son, if these Christians remained on the original religion of Jesus, then they would have been on God's true religion; because the religion of Jesus and all the other prophets is the true religion of God. But they changed it and became unbelievers."

I asked him: "Then, sir, what is the salvation from this?" He said: "Oh my son, embracing Islam." I asked him: "Will the one who embraces Islam be saved?" He answered: "Yes, in this world and the Hereafter." I said: "The prudent chooses for himself; if you know, sir, the merit of Islam, then what keeps you from it?"

He answered: "My son, The Almighty Allah did not expose me to the truth of Islam and the prophet of Islam until after I have become old and my body weakened. Yes, there is no excuse for us in this, on the contrary, the proof of Allah has been established against us. If God had guided me to this when I was your age I would have left everything and adopted the religion of truth. Love of this world is the essence of every sin, and look how I am esteemed, glorified, and honoured by the Christians, and how I am living in affluence and comfort! In my case, if I show a slight inclination towards Islam they would kill me immediately. Suppose that I was saved from them and succeeded in escaping to the Muslims they would say, do not count your Islam as a favour upon us, rather you have benefited yourself only by entering the religion of truth, the religion that will save you from the punishment of Allah! So I would live among them as a poor old man of more than ninety years, without knowing their language, and they would not know my real status and I would die among them starving. I am, and all praise is due to Allah on the religion of Christ and on that which he came with, and Allah knows that from me.

So I asked him: "Do you advise me to go to the country of the Muslims and adopt their religion?" He said to me: "If you are wise and hope to save yourself, then race to that which will achieve this life and the hereafter. But my son, none is present with us concerning this matter, it is between you and me only. Exert yourself and keep it a secret. If it is disclosed and the people know about it they will kill you immediately. I will be of no benefit to you against them. Neither will it be of any use to you if you tell them what you heard from me concerning Islam, or that I encouraged you to be a Muslim, for I shall deny it. They will trust my testimony against you but will not trust yours against me. So, do not tell a word, whatever happens." I promised him not to do so. He was satisfied and content with my promise.

I began to prepare for my journey and bid him farewell. He prayed for me and gave me fifty golden dinars. Then I took a ship to my city Majorca where I stayed with my parents for six months. Then I traveled to Sicily and remained there five months, waiting for a ship bound for the land of the Muslims.

Finally a ship arrived bound for Tunis. We departed before sunset and reached the port of Tunis at noon on the second day. When I got off the ship, Christian scholars who heard of my arrival came to greet me and welcome me to their dwelling place. Some local merchants also offered their hospitality to me and I stayed with them for four months in ease and comfort.

After that I asked them if there was in the Sultan's (Ruler) Palace a translator. The Sultan in those days was Abu Al-Abbas Ahmad. They said there was a virtuous man, the Sultan's Physician, who was one of his closest advisors. His name was Yusuf Al-Tabeeb ((Joseph the doctor). I was greatly pleased to hear this, and asked where he lived. They took me there and I met him separately. I told him about my story and the reason of my coming there; which was to embrace Islam. He was immensely pleased because this matter would be completed by his help. We rode to the Sultan's Palace. He met the Sultan and told him about my story and asked his permission for me to meet him. The Sultan accepted, and I presented myself before him.

The first question the Sultan asked was about my age. I told him that I was thirty-five years old. He then asked about my learning and the sciences which I had studied. After I told him he said, "Your arrival is the arrival of goodness. Be a Muslim with Allah's blessings." I then said to the doctor, "Tell the honourable Sultan that it always happens that when anyone changes his religion his people defame him and speak evil of him. So, I wish if he kindly sends to bring the Christian priests and merchants of this city to ask them about me and hear what they have to say. Then by Allah's will, I shall accept Islam."

He said to me through the translator, "You have asked what Abdullah Bin Salaam asked from the Prophet when he-Abdullah-came to announce his Islam. He then sent for the priests and some Christian merchants and let me sit in an adjoining room unseen by them. When they came he asked them, "What do you say about this new priest who just arrived by ship?"

They said: "He is a great scholar in our religion. Our bishops say he is the most learned and no one is superior to him in our religious knowledge." After hearing what the Christian said, the Sultan sent for me, and presented myself before them. I declared the two testimonies that there is (no one worthy of Worship except Allah, and that Muhammad is His Messenger), and when the Christians heard this they "crossed" themselves and said: "Nothing incited him to do that except his desire to marry, as priests in our religion cannot marry". Then they left him in distress and grief. The Sultan appointed for me a quarter of a dinar everyday from the treasury and let me marry the daughter of Al-Hajj Muhammad Al-Saffar.

When I decided to consummate the marriage, he gave me a hundred golden dinars and an excellent suit of clothes. I then consummated the marriage and Allah blessed me with a child to whom I gave the name Muhammad as a blessing from the name of our Prophet."

The following is stated in the Gospel of John, chapter 14, verse 15:

15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him : but ye know him ; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me:because I live, ye shall live also.

20At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.
27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.
28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.
29 And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.
30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.
31 But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

Chapter 15, verse 26 states:

26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:
27 and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

Chapter 16, verse seven onwards states:

5 But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou ?
6 But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.
7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.
8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:
9 of sin, because they believe not on me;
10 of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;
11 of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.
12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.
13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth : for he shall not speak of himself ; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.
14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.
15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you.

These are the words of ʿĪsâ ﷺ which he said before he could be raised up to the heavens. He said them in order to console his disciples, that they should not be vexed by the conspiracies and plots of killing of the Jews and that they should not be troubled and grieved by his suffering. He [ʿĪsâ ﷺ] will soon leave this world and go to a place where no one will be able to reach him. In other words, he will go up to the heavens. Allāh ﷻ has many places wherein He may station him. He will come down once again before the resurrection. He then gave the glad tidings of a Fâriqlîṭ (Messenger) declaring that there will come a time when a Messenger other than myself will appear. When he comes, he will glorify me (talk about my greatness) and severely punish those who do not believe in me, viz. the Jews. He will be the material and spiritual leader of this world. He will be of such a high stature that I possess nothing like him (hath nothing of me in him).

This glad tidings is related in the Qurʾân in the following manner:

وَإِذْ قَالَ عِيسَىٰ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَمُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَأْتِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِي اسْمُهُ أَحْمَدُ.

“When ʿĪsâ, the son of Maryam, said: ‘O children of Isrâʾîl! I am the Messenger of Allāh to you confirming what is before me of the Taurâh and giving the glad tidings of a Messenger who will come after me, his name is Aḥmad.’” (Sûrah aṣ-Ṣaff, verse 6)

The word “Aḥmad” was present in the original glad tidings, as is still found in the Gospel of Barnabas. However, when the Bible was translated from the Hebrew to the Greek language, the Greek translators used to translate the names of people as well. They translated the blessed name of Rasûlullâh ﷺ, Aḥmad, as Periclytos. The language spoken by

Jesus Christ was Aramaic. Unfortunately there are no ancient manuscripts available in the world today, to know the exact word spoken by the Christ. Whatever the original word, it was translated into Greek, which in turn has been translated as Comforter, Counsellor, Consolator, Assistant, Advocate, Consoler, Deprecator or Teacher in different English translations. What was the Greek word in the earliest Greek translations, can also be not known, as the oldest available Greek translation, today is from the 4th Century A.D. The present Greek Canon records it as Paracletus, while the Muslim scholars believe that it would have been Periclytos in the earlier Greek translations which are extinct today. Translating the names and then changing them with other words in different translations and versions is nothing new, they claim. Incidentally, 'Periclytos' may be translated as 'Ahmed', while Paracletus has been translated as Comforter or Teacher or other more than a dozen words.

The most correct translation of the word Paraclete is the word Ahmad. The Qur'ân also gives this glad tiding by using the same word. Allâh ﷻ says:

مُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِي اسْمُهُ أَحْمَدُ

“giving the glad tiding of a Messenger who will come after me, his name is Ahmad.”

Heraclius and Muqawqis, in the very lifetime of Rasulullah ﷺ, had explicitly stated that he was certainly the Rasul whose glad tidings the Bible gave. But they did not embrace Islam for they feared losing the kingdoms. As for those Christian scholars who were just and equitable, they embraced Islam, e.g. the Negus of Abyssinia, Daghâtir of Rome, Ibn Nâṭûr and others. Like the Jewish scholars, many Christian scholars wittingly and intentionally said that there are no glad tidings concerning Muhammad ﷺ in the Taurâh and the Injîl. This rejection of the Christian scholars is just like the rejection of the Jewish scholars who reject the glad tidings of 'Isâ ﷺ.

The glad tidings of that Paraclete contain many descriptions of him. These descriptions and attributes apply in totality and to perfection to Muhammad ﷺ.

1. As long as I do not go, he will not come.
2. He will give testimony in my favour.
3. He will apprise the world of what is wrong, what is right, and what is justice.
4. He will punish those who do not believe in me.
5. He will show the path of truthfulness.
6. He will give information of future events.
7. He will not say anything of his own accord. Rather, he will only convey what he is told by Allâh ﷻ.
8. He will be the leader of this world.
9. He will remind you of all that I said.
10. The matters that you are unable to bear at present will be shown to you by him. The matters that are incomplete will be completed by him.

This is only one of the many prophesies of the previous scriptures which prophesized the coming and appearance of Rasulullah (ﷺ). May Allah bless us with the ability to follow his message, imitate his way and practices, and convey his message to mankind at large.

(Extracted and condensed from 'A brief analysis of major world religions and ideologies through the insight of imaan' by Imraan Kajee)