

Insider Movements: An Example

Brother Jacob and Master Isaac: How One Insider Movement Began

by Rick Brown

The following account is based on the testimony of Brother Jacob and a foreign missionary. It was also investigated and verified by several Christian leaders in the country concerned.

There was a holy man, a Sufi master, whom I'll call Isaac. He lived in a remote and traditional region of the country, where he had a large following. Several thousand people were looking to him for spiritual guidance, for blessings for their crops, for prayers for health, and most of all for intercession for their eternal salvation. Master Isaac, however, was worried about his own salvation, and it troubled him that his thousands of followers believed that he himself could save them on the day of judgment. So he began to pray in earnest that God would show him the *sirāt mustaqīm*, the true path to salvation.

One night in 2002, while Isaac was praying to be shown the way of salvation, the Lord Jesus appeared to him in radiant white clothing. Jesus told him to travel to such-and-such a town and consult a holy man from such-and-such a village whose father was named so-and-so and whose grandfather was so-and-so. Jesus showed him in a vision the way to the house. Isaac realized that this man's grandfather had been his very own Sufi master, and this excited him.

Although it was still very early in the morning and there was a terrible rain storm outside, Isaac vowed not to eat or drink until he met the man of God to whom Jesus had directed him and had discovered from him the way of salvation. So he walked through the storm to a bus station, boarded an early bus, and traveled some 40 miles to the town.

It was about six in the morning when Isaac reached the place that Jesus had revealed to him in the vision. When he knocked on the door, he was surprised to see a man wearing ordinary clothes rather than the robes of a Sufi master. It was Brother Jacob, who was the leader of an "insider movement" of Messianic Muslims. Isaac asked Jacob about his father, his grandfather, and the village he came from, he realized that this was the very man that Jesus had told him to

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consult. So he told Jacob about the vision and asked him to reveal the way of salvation.

Citing passages from both the Qur'an and the Bible, Brother Jacob told Isaac the story of God creating the world as a good place, about Adam and Eve and the temptation of Satan, and about their disobedience of God. He declared that as a consequence of their sin, Adam and Eve became alienated from the presence of God and enslaved to darkness, sin and death. So how could their relationship with God be restored? How could they return to the Garden?

Brother Jacob went on to talk about Cain and Abel, the descent of the world into evil, and the rescue of Noah and his family. He noted that God called Abraham from Babylon to follow him and gave him eight sons. He talked about the descendants of Abraham, about David, about the disobedience of his son Solomon and his descendants, until it came to the true son of David, the true heir of Abraham's promises, the second Adam, Jesus, who was the first human being in history to completely submit himself to the will of God. He said that it was the will of God that Jesus the Messiah should suffer death on the cross to save mankind, and that God raised him back to life. God exalted Jesus to sit at his own right hand as Lord and Savior of the world.

Brother Jacob said that the Lord Jesus had appeared to him as well, in 1969, and had showed him that He is the way of salvation. He read in the Gospel where Jesus said, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” Jesus, he said, was Himself the *sirāt mustaqīm*. Master Isaac said he believed in Jesus and was ready to serve Him and wanted to be baptized right then and there. Brother Jacob, however, counseled him to wait. He said, “God has made you a great leader, and he wants all of your followers to know that Jesus the Messiah, and He alone, is the way of salvation. Go home and tell your wives and children first that Jesus is the Lord and Savior, and then tell your closest disciples. Isaac agreed, and they set a date for Jacob to come and share the Good News.

About two weeks later, at the appointed time, Jacob arrived to find a gathering of two hundred or more of Isaac's leading disciples. The Sufi master began by telling them all the story of his prayer and the vision he was given by God. He described traveling during a storm to get to Brother Jacob's house to ask him the secret of salvation. He then asked Brother Jacob to tell them all the way.

So Brother Jacob told the story again, starting with the Qur'an and then moving to the Bible. He told the story of creation, the fall, and the descendants of Adam down to Jesus the

Messiah. He called them to put their faith in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. All of the leaders agreed, but they said they must first share this news with their wives and children.

A few weeks later Master Isaac sent word to Brother Jacob to come back. Brother Jacob arrived to find that the Sufi master and 250 of his leading disciples were ready to be baptized. So brother Jacob baptized Isaac and his wives and son. Then he told Isaac's wives to baptize their daughters. He then instructed Isaac to baptize the 250 senior leaders of his movement, and to send them home to baptize their own wives and children, and to share the word with others and to baptize those who believe. On that day several thousand people were baptized into the Kingdom of God. Thus began a “faith movement to Christ” within a culturally Muslim community.

Brother Jacob had brought along three cases of New Testaments, and he gave these to Master Isaac for distribution to his leaders. But three days later, Isaac returned the cases saying they were obviously not for his people, as they were not in his language, at least not the way they used it. There were too many foreign and ecclesiastical terms, and too many occurrences of words that pertained to a different ethnic group. Brother Jacob, however, had a poetic paraphrase of the Gospel story which he had prepared, using familiar and acceptable language, and he offered that. Master Isaac thought this book was wonderful, and he took a large quantity back with him for his flock. At that point Brother Jacob realized that these new disciples of Christ needed a Bible in familiar and intelligible language, and so he initiated a Bible translation project for them, starting with the Gospel of Mark.

These two insider movements continue as culturally sensitive house church movements, in spite of slander, threats and persecution instigated by traditionalist churchmen. Master Isaac has died, but the movement he led continues under the pastoral care of his sons. They are confident that since it was the Lord Jesus Himself who directed them to Brother Jacob and his insider approach, the Lord will also guide and protect them and through them bless the Muslim community to which they belong. **IJFM**