

كلمة اب عادة للمعنى الروحي والمعنى العام ايضا فيقولون
ابو الرحمة وابو الحق وابو الشجاعة وابو الفضل الخ
وبعد ان ازلنا الاوهام عن كلمة ابن في اصطلاحها
اللغوي ننتقدم الان الى شرح معناها حسب مفهوم الديانة
المسيحية في تلقيها المسيح ابن الله . فهو الابن الوحيد الذي
كان في حضن الاب منذ الدهور بصفته كلمة الله لا ابن
مريم اي ان كينونته الازلية هذه هي بحسب لاهوته لا
بحسب ناسوته الذي هو حادث في تكوينه . واننا نجد ما
يوضح هذا القول في ذات العقيدتين الاسلاميتين المختلفتين
الشاعتين والمقبولتين عندهم

العقيدة الاولى اعتقادهم في نور محمد فانهم يقولون
انه من الله اصلاً وموجود قبل خلق ادم والعالم اجمع فهذا
القول ماخوذ ولا شك من التعليم المسيحي القائل بالكلمة
الازلية وفيه مشابهة كلية لما نقوله عن كلمة الله الاتي من
الاب . وانك تجد الكلام عن ازلية نور محمد في جملة كتب
نذكر منها كتاب دقائق الاخبار في الجنة والنار وهو
كتاب يباع في جميع انحاء العالم الاسلامي ومع كل ما فيه
من الافوال الاخرى فانه مقبول عند الجميع ومعتبر
اما الاعتقاد الثاني الذي يقربنا كثيراً الى قضيتنا
فهو اعتقاد المسلمين كافة بازلية القرآن وانه غير مخلوق . فهم
يقولون انه غير مخلوق ليس عن ورقه ولا مادته ولكن عن
كلماته المعاني من الله ويقولون انه ازلي غير مخلوق لانه
كلام الله . فان كان كلام الله غير مخلوق وهو بالطبع قبل
كل مخلوق فبالاحرى جداً تكون الكلمة التي ارسلها الى
مريم او حسب تعبير يوحنا والكلمة صار جسداً وحل بيننا
فهو اذاً ازلي

لغيرك يلقى بنا جداً ان نبين للمسلم القيمة الفلسفية
والادبية لعقيدة الثالوث وبنوية المسيح الازلية . وفي هذا
الصدد نشير عليه بمطالعة كتابين مهمين جداً افادانا فائدة
عظمى في هذا الامر وهما كتاب اسمه التوحيد والثالوث .
والاخر العقيدة بالثالوث الواحد لهوتن تفلن بيوسنن باميركا
مطبوع سنة ١٨٩٦ والاخر لالتجورث طبعه مكلن بلندن
سنة ١٩٠٢
ولا مراء في ان المسلم يسلم بدون جدال بسمو اصل

على اننا ايها الاخ العزيز عند تقديم هذه الحقائق
لاخينا المسلم يجب ان نتذكر اول كل شيء انه لا يعترف
بالوهية مختصنا الا كل من خضع لسلطانه وسلم ارادته لارادته
الصالحة وهذا لا يتم بمجهودات عقليه او براهين فلسفيه بل
هو عمل النعمة الالهيه لانه لا يستطيع احد ان يقول
يسوع رب الا بالروح القدس ولذلك كانت الصلوة اول
واجب على العامل الديني . يجب عليه ان يصلي وان يدعو
اخاه الباحث عن الحق ان يصلي معه ووحده فيعلن له الله
هذا السر العجيب . يجب اننا في كل محادثاتنا ومباحثنا مع
اخينا المسلم ان نعطي للروح القدس ما يستحقه من الاحرام
والعمل ونساله ان يرينا المسيح الهاً ومخلصاً لانه هو وحده
الذي يعلن امور المسيح وهو وحده قادر ان يقنع الناس
بخطيتهم في رفضهم المسيح وبالبرابيس برم الذات بل البر
الكامل الذي في المسيح وبنينونة الله لكل الذين يرفضون
ان يقبلوا الشهادة التي اعطاها لنا في ابنه . ان القوات
الشيطنيه ليست بنائمة ولا تزال تضع امام الناس ذات
السوء ال الذي وضعته امام المخلص قديماً بل لا يزال هذا
السوء ال محور اعمال الجرب الى يومنا هذا وهو « ان كنت
ابن الله ؟ » ولكننا نحن نعلم ان المسيح تعين ابن الله بقوة
من جهة روح القدس بالقيامة من الاموات

فليت الله يهب روحه القدس للجميع ليقتنعهم ويعلمهم
ويثبتهم في الايمان الاقدس ايمان ربنا ومخلصنا يسوع
المسيح . ودمت معاني لاخيك في الرب القس
صموئيل زوير

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Translated by A.M.S.

Cairo, Egypt, 21 April 1913

My Dear Mister Takle:

In response to your question (to me) about how we should respond to Islamic objections regarding the issue of the Divine Sonship [of Christ] I say that there is no dispute, according to your statement, that this objection is on the lips of every Muslim and that it requires wisdom and deliberateness in [one's] response to [this objection] with that which will convince and make the truth clear. There is also no disputing, in spite of what [is written] in the Koran and the Hadith concerning the lofty description of Jesus (Isa) Christ above all of the prophets and messengers; the statement about His sinlessness; the purity of His life; and His might, etc. as [I have written] in my book, "Christ in Islam" {i.e. *The Moslem Christ*}, that notwithstanding all of this, Muslims are not satisfied to consider Him [anything] more than a man.

It is appropriate, at the start of [this] discussion, that we understand the reason for their objection to our saying, "Son of God." In my opinion, I feel that they [base] their objection on the statement from Surah "Al-Ikhlās," which is [also] used in their daily prayers: "Say, 'He is God, the indivisible; God, the everlasting. He does not beget nor is begotten, and there is no one equal to Him.'" The statements of the Imams are divided as to whether this Surah "descended" on the Prophet in Mecca or in Medina. The predominant opinion, [based] upon much evidence, is that it is Meccan and not Medinan. [Based] upon that, [this verse] cannot have as its intention the clarifying of the differences between Islam and Christianity or even between [Islam] and Judaism but was fully intended to confront the worship of idols among the Qureish which ascribed sons and daughters to God.

Even though we [stop] the confusion concerning this expression ("Son of God") and we dispel from their understanding the clouds of bias and error, we say to our Muslim brother that the Book of God, the New Testament, does not say [even once] in its description of Jesus as the only Son of God, that God, the strong and glorious, is a [biological] father (Ar. waalid) but always uses, to His glory, the word, "Father" (Ar. ab) in a general, spiritual sense. There does not appear in the New Testament, concerning Jesus, that He is the [biological offspring] (Ar. walad Allah), that is, a [biological] son [physically] begotten from God. What appears, instead, is that He is the "Son" of God (Ar. ibn Allah) and the difference between the two expressions are as clear as the [shining] sun to him who has eyes! An adopted son is called, by common convention, "a son" (Ar. ibn) [as opposed to] a [biological] son (Ar. walad). What is a [biological] son (Ar. walad) but one born from a [physical] birth to two parents, from a real, natural birth? The Arabs [also] commonly use the word, "father," in a spiritual sense, as well as in a general sense. They [often] say, "father of mercy" (Abu Al-Rahma), "father of truth" (Abu Al-Haqq), "father of encouragement" (Abu Al-Shujaa'a), "father of generosity" (Abu Al-Fadl), etc.

After we have [cleared] up the errors of the word, “son” (ibn) in its linguistic usage we now [come] to the explaining its meaning according to Christian religious thought as used in the appellation of “Christ, Son of God.” He is the only Son who was in the bosom of the Father from ages past. This is [clear] from His description as the Word of God, not as the “son of Mary,” that is [to say], His eternal existence is according to His deity and not according to His humanity, [the latter] being a more recent [development] in His being created [at the Incarnation]. We [also] find that which will help to clarify this expression [at the core of] two different Islamic beliefs, that are [both] widespread and commonly held among them.

The first belief is the doctrine of the “light of Muhammad.” They say that it is originally from God and existed before Adam and the entire world was created. This [concept] is undoubtedly taken from the Christian teaching of the eternal Word in which is [found] a complete similarity to what we say about the Word of God who comes from the Father. You will surely find [mention] about the eternity of the “light of Muhammad” in a number of books [of which] we only mention one of them, that is, “Details of Heaven and Hell” (Daqaa’iq Al-Akhbaar fi Al-Janna wa Al-Naar). [This] book is sold in all of the Islamic world, and even though it [contains] other teachings [than simply the “light of Muhammad”], is accepted and esteemed by all.

The second belief really brings us near to our [topic], namely the belief of Muslims, one and all, in the eternity of the Koran and its uncreatedness. They say that it is uncreated, not [referring to] the paper and the physical materials [itself] but its inspired word[s] from God. They say that it is eternal and uncreated for it is the Word of God (Ar. Kalaam Allah). If then the Word of God (Ar. Kalaam Allah) is uncreated, it is by [its] nature before all of [creation]. How much more so is the Word which was sent to Mary, or according to the phrase in John, “the Word which became flesh and dwelt among us” eternal!

Finally, it is very fitting that we show to Muslim[s] the philosophical value and morals of the doctrine of the Trinity and the eternal Sonship of Christ. In this regard we point to two very important books for study that will greatly benefit us in this matter. They are: “The Being of God as Unity and Trinity” [by Peter H. Steenstra], and “The Doctrine of the Trinity.” The former is published by Houghton, Mifflin and Co. in Boston, USA, published in 1896, and the latter is by J.R. Illingworth, published by MacMillan in London, 1907.

It is an incontrovertible fact that Muslim[s] admit, without dispute, in the superior nature and origin of Jesus’ humanity but they do not understand it according to its truth as I have shown in my book, “Our God and Their God” [i.e. *The Moslem Doctrine of God*],” [which was] translated in “Al-Murshid,” [the weekly paper published by the American (Presbyterian) Mission in Egypt]. This superior human origin of Jesus [within Islamic belief] and [their] confession that He is still alive [as well as] sinless adds to our proof that He is the Son of God as the New Testament [lit. “Gospel”] so strongly states. You will not find in the Gospel’s explanation of this essential doctrine [any] contradiction to

what the Koran [says] if it [that is, “Son of God”] were understood according to its truth and the meaning of [the Koran’s] texts without [Islamic] interpretation and alteration of the expression from its [proper] sense and meaning. “May God guide all of us on the level path!”

Nevertheless, we, dear brother, in presenting these truths to our Muslim brother, must first remember, above everything else, that [no one] confesses the deity of our Savior except for all those who have submitted to His authority and surrendered their will to His good will. This is not accomplished by intellectual effort or by philosophical proofs but is the work of divine grace. No one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. Because of this, prayer is the first duty for the [Christian] worker. It is necessary that he pray and call his seeking brother to the truth and pray with him and for him that God would reveal this wonderful mystery to him. It is incumbent upon us in all of our conversations and studies with our Muslim brother that we give the Holy Spirit the [place that rightly belongs to Him] in this work and ask Him to show us Christ as God and Savior. He alone reveals the things of Christ and He alone is able to convince people of their sin for their rejection of Christ; of righteousness—not self-righteousness—but perfect righteousness which is in Christ; and of God’s judgment for all those who reject to receive the witness which He has given to us in His Son. Truly Satan’s power is not at rest and does not cease to pose before people the very same question that he posed of old before the Savior; this question does not cease to be the axis of the Tempter’s works to us this day, and it is, “If you are the Son of God...” However, we know that Christ has been declared to be the Son of God with power by the spirit of holiness in raising Him from the dead.

May God [pour out] His Holy Spirit to convince them, teach them, and establish them in the holy faith of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. [May the Lord bless you] continually with health.

Your brother in the Lord,

Rev. Samuel Zwemer