

ISKANDAR IBN AĦMAD'S EPISTLE IN REFUTATION OF CHRISTIANS*

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Abstract

This paper introduces the short epistle written by Iskandar ibn AĦmad as an anti-Christian polemic. Iskandar identifies himself as “a philosopher from Trabzon,” a city in the north-east of modern Turkey. No information about him is available other than this detail. The author of the polemic attempts to confute the basic Christian idea that Jesus Christ is God using biblical verses. As he refers to biblical verses accurately and in Greek (transliterated into the Arabic alphabet), one can be sure that he is very familiar with the New Testament. In addition to the biblical verses, he also uses logical arguments and Qur'ānic verses to show that Jesus Christ is only a human being. This paper starts with a brief history of Muslim anti-Christian apologetics and polemics in the Ottoman Empire and succinct information about Iskandar ibn AĦmad's epistle. Then, the paper provides the English translation and Arabic text of the epistle. Because the epistle is a unique copy, it is not possible for us to illustrate the differences among copies of the text. However, the footnotes provide biblical and Qur'ānic references, transliteration of the Greek biblical verses, and the author's mistakes in the usage of Arabic languages.

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Introduction

For centuries, Jews and Christians lived in peace as nationalities (*millet* in Ottoman Turkish/*milla* in Arabic) under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, apart from several polemical tracts (*raddiyya*),¹ neither Muslims nor Jews or Christians felt it necessary to write religious polemics and defenses to show the superiority of their own religions until the later periods of the Ottoman Empire. However, this peaceful environment was damaged during the period of the Ottoman Empire's decline with the introduction of missionary activities within the Empire. As missionaries who came to Ottoman lands to spread Christianity began to write and distribute to the Muslim people texts opposing Islam, Muslim writers felt inclined to write replies to these texts.² That polemics and defenses of the Ottoman Empire were written in opposition to Christians during the final periods of the Empire strengthens this belief.

Many polemics and defenses that oppose Christianity were written as a reaction to the missionary activities. Here, we will only make

¹ Sabine Schmidtke and Camilla Adang, "Aḥmad b. Muṣṭafā Tāshkubrīzāde's (d. 968/1561) Polemical Tract against Judaism," *al-Qantara* XXIX/1 (2008), 79-113; Schmidtke, "Epistle forcing the Jews [to admit their error] with regard to what they contend about the Torah, by dialectical reasoning (*Risālat ilzām al-yabūd fimā za'amū fī l-tawrāt min qibal 'ilm al-kalām*) by al-Salām 'Abd al-'Allām: A critical edition," in Camilla Adang and Sabine Schmidtke (eds.), *Contacts and Controversies between Muslims, Jews and Christians in the Ottoman Empire and Pre-Modern Iran* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag in Kommission, 2010), 73-82; Adang, "Guided to Islam by the Torah: The *Risāla al-bādiya* by 'Abd al-Salām al-Muhtadī al-Muḥammadī," in *Contacts and Controversies*, 57-72.

² See Maḥmūd As'ad Saydishahrī, "Allah'ın Kelamı ve Allah'ın Kelimesi İkileminde Hz. İsa [Jesus in the Dilemma of *Kalām Allāb* versus *Kalimat Allāb*] (=Mudāfa'a: Kalimat Allāh Ta'ālā'ya Dā'ir Khuṭba: I [Apology: Sermon on the Kalimat Allāh])" (translated from Old Turkish into modern Turkish by Muhammet Tarakçı), *Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi [The Review of the Faculty of Theology, Uludağ University]* VII/7 (1998), 740-741.

note of several.³

In his text entitled *Risāla-i Islāmiyya*, Ibrāhīm Mutafarriqa (d. 1160/1747), a former Christian priest who converted to Islam, notes the reasons for becoming a Muslim along with the prophecies of Muḥammad in the Bible.⁴

Ḥājī ‘Abd Allāh al-Patrījī (d. 1303/1886) wrote his book, *İdāb al-marām fī kashf al-zalām*, to warn Muslims against Christian propaganda. He makes note of the differences between the Gospels and the Qur’ān regarding the cross, and claims that the Gospels are corrupted. Al-Patrījī also handles subjects such as the Trinity and the prophecies of Muḥammad in the Gospels.⁵

Khoja Ishāq of Kharbūt (d. 1310/1892) also wrote a book entitled *Shams al-ḥaqīqa* as a response to the missionaries. In this book, he discusses the corruption of the Torah and the Gospels, the cross, the godhood of Jesus, and the prophecies of Muḥammad. Seventy-two difficult questions for Christians were included at the end of the book. Khoja Ishāq attempted to respond to Christian missionaries in another work entitled *Ḍiyā’ al-qulūb*. After making note of the conflicts in the Gospels starting with the narratives regarding the genealogy of Jesus Christ, Khoja Ishāq comes to the conclusion that the Gospels are corrupted. He also attempts to prove the falsity of the Christian belief of the Trinity through the use of quotations from the Gospels.

In his work entitled, *Nūr al-budā li-man istabdā*, Sirrī Pasha (d. 1313/1895) defended the idea that Muslims should learn about Chris-

³ For more information on Muslim apologetics and polemics against Christianity in the late Ottoman period, see Mehmet Aydın, *Müslümanların Hıristiyanlığa Karşı Yazdığı Reddiyeler ve Tartışma Konuları [Muslim Polemics against Christianity and the Controversial Issues]* (Konya: Selçuk Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1989), 99-110.

⁴ See Mahmud Esad Coşan, *Risāle-i İslāmiyye: Matbaacı İbrahim-i Müteferrika ve Risāle-i İslāmiyye Adlı Eserinin Tenkitli Metni [Risāle-i İslāmiyya: İbrāhīm Mutafarriqa, the Printer, and the Critical Edition of His Risāle-i İslāmiyyal]* (Istanbul: Server İletişim, 2010).

⁵ For more information about Ḥājī ‘Abd Allāh al-Patrījī and his apology against Christianity, see İsmail Taşpınar, *Hacı Abdullah Petrici'nin Hıristiyanlık Eleştirisi [Ḥājī ‘Abd Allāh al-Patrījī's Polemic against Christianity]* (Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2008).

tianity as a defense against Christian missionaries, and especially, attempted to confute the Christian idea that Jesus is God.

Perhaps the most important name in tradition of the Muslim polemics against Christianity during the Ottoman period is Aḥmad Midḥat Efendî (d. 1329/1911) due to the in-depth works that he wrote after forty years of labor.⁶ Four of his works on this topic are quite important: *Mudāfa‘a* (Apology), *Mudāfa‘aya Muqābala ve Muqābalaya Mudāfa‘a* (The Reply to the Apology and The Apology to the Reply), *Mudāfa‘a 3* (Apology, vol. 3) and lastly *Bashā’ir-i Şidq-i Nubuwwat-i Muḥammadiyya* (Prophecies that show the accuracy of the prophethood of Muḥammad). Aḥmad Midḥat Efendî states that he wrote these works as a response to the missionaries who wrote to attack Islam.⁷ Thus, his works should be regarded not as attacks, but rather, as defenses. In fact, the subtitle of his first work, entitled *Mudāfa‘a* clarifies his aim: it is “written in response to those who invite Muslims to Christianity.” Aḥmad Midḥat Efendî handles widely different subjects, such as the emergence of Christianity, Paul, the spread of Christianity by sword after Constantine, the negative effects of Christian clergymen on Christianity, the Trinity, original sin, and Christian morals.⁸

Apart from these works, it is known that authors such as Aḥmad Kamāl, ‘Abd al-Aḥad Dāvūd, and Ḥasan Şabrî also wrote works to defend Islam and warn Muslims against the claims and activities of Christian missionaries. In addition, many articles were published about or against Christianity in journals of the era, such as *Sabîl al-*

⁶ Aḥmad Midḥat Efendî, *Tārîkh-i Adyân* (Istanbul: Hürriyyet Matba‘asi, 1329 H [1911]), I, 11.

⁷ Aḥmad Midḥat Efendî, *Mudāfa‘a* (Istanbul: Tarjumân-i Haqîqat Matba‘asi, 1300 H [1883]), 8-9.

⁸ In his MA thesis, Yaşa Yumak attempted to determine the place and importance of Aḥmad Midḥat Efendî in terms of anti-Christian polemics in the Islamic tradition, see Yaşa Yumak, *İslâm-Hıristiyan Polemiği Açısından Ahmed Midbat Efendi* [Aḥmad Midḥat Efendî in the tradition of anti-Christian polemics] (MA thesis; Istanbul: Marmara University, 2001). See also Elif Karayel, *Dinler Tarihi Açısından Ahmed Mithbat Efendi* [Aḥmad Midḥat Efendî in the Science of History of Religions] (MA thesis; Istanbul: Marmara University, 2002), 11-19, 61-81.

rashād.⁹

About the Epistle

This epistle is a unique copy of a treatise on the refutation of Christian dogma about the divinity of Christ that is written by an otherwise unknown author named Iskandar ibn Aḥmad. The author introduces himself as a philosopher from Trabzon. The treatise was recorded as number 261 at the collection of Lala İsmail at the Süleymaniye Library (Istanbul, Turkey). The treatise is written in Arabic and consists of 27 small sized leaves. There is neither any other copy of this treatise nor any other book by the same author in any of the libraries in Turkey. Additionally, no information exists regarding the background of the writer or the date of the treatise. As stated above, as Muslim apologies such as these appeared during the decline of the Ottoman Empire as a reaction to Christian missionary activities, one can assume that this work was written during the nineteenth century.

The author of the treatise first states that Christians undoubtedly believe in the validity of their own religion, which, in fact, is false in all aspects, both intellectually and in terms of texts. Christians do not heed the intellectually correct arguments and the textual miraculous proofs of Muslims. Hence, the author's reason for writing this treatise is to rebut Christian beliefs through the use of the Bible. In other words, the method employed by Iskandar ibn Aḥmad throughout the treatise is as follows: narration of the Bible story in Greek using the Ottoman alphabet; translation of the story; explanation of the story in a manner that maintains that Jesus Christ is not God but a human being; and lastly, confirmation through verses from the Qur'ān.

What is striking in the anti-Christian polemical text *al-Radd 'alā l-Naṣārā*, from the Ottoman period, is that it provides biblical sentenc-

⁹ For more information on the articles about or against Christianity in the journal *Sabīl al-rashād*, see Aslı Kahraman, *1912-1925 Yılları Arasında Sebülürreşad Dergisi'nde Yayımlanan Hıristiyanlıkla İlgili Makaleler ve Tablilleri [The Papers concerning Christianity Published in Sabīl al-rashād between 1912-1925 and Their Analysis]* (MA thesis; Adana: Çukurova University, 2009); Hilal Esen, *Sebülürreşad'da Öteki Dinlerle İlgili Yazıların Değerlendirilmesi [A Study on the Papers concerning Other Religions in Sabīl al-rashād]* (MA thesis; Sakarya University, 2008).

es in Greek (using the Ottoman alphabet). It can be concluded that the author is familiar with Greek and the New Testament. However, because some Persian translation appears underneath the words of the citations in Greek from the Bible, we are led to doubt this conclusion. Did the author know Greek and add these Persian translations for the reader? Or did he receive help from someone who knew Greek? As a third possibility, could a scribe have added these translations to the text? These questions are left unanswered because we have no information about the author's life and no other copy of the epistle.

Another striking feature of Iskandar ibn Aḥmad's polemical text is that citations from the Bible are used to rebut Christian beliefs. According to Iskandar, sections of the Bible that Christians believe prove the godhood of Jesus are far from accomplishing this proof. Indeed many sentences in the Bible depict Jesus not as a god but as a human being and these sections are in accordance with the teachings of the Qurʾān. Conversely, our author approaches the Bible story about the raising of Jesus from the dead with some suspicion. Hence, it can be assumed that Iskandar ibn Aḥmad believes that falsification exists in *some* parts of the Bible. Christians have also interpreted some sections of the Bible inaccurately, which has thus led to further falsifications.

Iskandar ibn Aḥmad is not the only polemicist author who used sentences from the Bible to rebut predominant Christian doctrines. Centuries ago, al-Ghazālī used the same method in his book, *al-Radd al-jamīl li-ilābiyyat ʿĪsā bi-ṣarīḥ al-Injīl*. Other similarities exist between the texts of Iskandar ibn Aḥmad and al-Ghazālī. Both texts accepted or assumed the validity of the biblical text and claimed that Christians interpreted it inaccurately. Each of the two polemical texts viewed the refutation of the godhood of Jesus as the central problem. Neither text mentioned predominant anti-Christian Muslim polemic topics, such as the cross, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, original sin, and redemption. Al-Ghazālī took into account the miracles of Jesus Christ; however, he concluded that these miracles are not sufficient to prove the godhood of Jesus. Conversely, Iskandar ibn Aḥmad approached the portions of the Bible that describe the miracles of Jesus Christ with suspicion. In opposition to al-Ghazālī, Iskandar ibn Aḥmad supported citations from the Bible with verses from the Qurʾān.

Citations from the Bible by Muslims often contain mistakes and omissions, especially in earlier polemical texts. That the citations from the Bible in Iskandar ibn Aḥmad's treatise that are first provided in Ottoman alphabet in Greek and then in translation are exact quotations is an important feature of the treatise.

An Epistle in Refutation of Christians¹

by Iskandar ibn Aḥmad, the Philosopher of Trabzon

Praise be to Allah. There is nothing whatever like unto Him. He is the One Who heareth and seeth (all things). He is the judge. No associate has He. He hath power over all things. He is the one, has taken neither a wife nor a son. Allah is He on whom all depend. He is neither Father nor Son.² There is none like unto Him. He is the creator who created the heavens and the earth. Then, he began the creation of man from clay and made his progeny from a quintessence of despired fluid. So, blessed be to Allah, the best to create! He is the wise, who breathed into him of His spirit and gives life to him, then causes him to die, then brings him to life with a new creation. He is full of honor, who said “throw into Hell every contumacious Rejecter (of God)!” Peace be upon Muḥammad of Quraysh, of Mecca, the most honored one, the master of the prophets and the messengers, the illiterate, the prophet of the cherisher of the worlds. Peace be upon all of his family, companions, and successors.

Then, because Christian infidels believed in the authenticity of their religion, which is false in all aspects, both rationally and in terms of texts, alleging that it is true according to their false claim and do not heed our intellectually correct arguments and textual miraculous proofs, this poor slave (of Allah), Iskandar ibn Aḥmad, the philosopher of Trabzon, wanted, with Allah’s Help, to make them abide by the Bible.

It is said in the first chapter in the beginning of the Gospel that “en archē ēn o logos kai o logos ēn pros ton theon kai theos ēn o logos,” that is, “in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”³ Considering that the Gospel said that the Word is God, the infidels are using this verse as evidence and saying that now that Jesus is the word of God, he is God either because he is word, for he descended in it and heralded it, or because he is God. However, this conception is not so because the word “kai” in the

¹ رسالة في رد الملة النصرانية بالإنجيل من قبل علم الكلام (An Epistle in the refutation of the Christian religion through the Gospel and the science of *kalāmi*)

² Literally, “He neither begets nor is born.” (Q 112:3).

³ John 1:1.

sentence “kai theos ēn o logos” is a conjunction (*al-wāw al-‘āṭifa*/the conjunction “*wa*”), and if it is read as “theos,” it means “God” in their language. Conversely if it is read as “thios,” it means “magnificent,” “grand,” “glorious,” and “artful.” This second sense is appropriate here, not the first. It reads that the word is magnificent, grand, glorious, and artful. The infidels are making a mistake and saying that “كَنْوَسُ اَيْنِ اَوْ لَوْغُوسُ” (the word is God). This statement is not true because there would have to be many gods if the word were a god. Therefore, the antecedent (*lāzim*) is null, and the consequent (*malzūm*) is also null. The antecedent is null because if it were true, everything to which the word of God is suitable to apply would have to be a god. Then, Yaḥyā (bpuh) (John the Baptist) would be a god, for the Almighty Allah said, “O Zakariyyā! We give thee good news of a son: His name shall be Yaḥyā.”⁴ Also, the snake of Moses would have to be a god, for Allah says, “(Allah) said, throw it, O Moses! So he cast it down, and lo! It was a serpent, gliding.”⁵ He also says, “(And remember) when the angels said: O Mary! Lo! Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a word from Him, whose name is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary.”⁶ In addition, that everything for which the word of God is suitable to apply must be a god is obviously void. As to the consequent, when something is placed and appears that it is void, this consequent is also void. Therefore, Jesus is not said to be a god, considering that he is the word of God. It is the necessary consequence (*maṭlūb*). This idea is compatible with a Qur’ānic verse: “O People of the Book! Commit no excesses in your religion: Nor say of Allah aught but the truth. Christ Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) a Messenger of Allah, and His Word, which He bestowed on Mary and a Spirit from Him.”⁷

It is written in the second chapter of the Gospel of Matthew that “otan de elthē o uios tou anthrōpou en tē doxē autou kai pantes oi angeloi met autou.” This [quote] means “when the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him.”⁸ Jesus (pbuh) declared explicitly that he is a son of man, not a son of God, and he is

⁴ Q 19:7.

⁵ Q 20:19-20.

⁶ Q 3:45.

⁷ Q 4:171.

⁸ Matthew 25:31.

created and is neither eternal nor self-subsistent (*wājib al-wujūd*), for being self-subsistent by himself means that he is self-existent from all of his sides. This idea means that none of his attributes changes. This idea is compatible with a Qurʾānic verse: “They say: ‘Allah hath begotten a son.’ Glory be to him. Nay, to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth: everything renders worship to Him.”⁹

It is written in the fourth [Gospel] that “ēdē de tēs eortēs mesousēs anebē o iēsous eis to ieron kai edidasken. kai ethaumazon oi ioudaioi legontes pōs outos grammata oiden mē memathēkōs. apekrithē oun autois o iēsous kai eipen ē emē didachē ouk estin emē alla tou pempantos me. ean tis thelē to thelēma autou poiein gnōsetai peri tēs didachēs poteron ek tou theou estin ē egō ap emautou lalō. o aph eautou lalōn tēn doxan tēn idian zētei o de zētōn tēn doxan tou pempantos auton outos alēthēs estin kai adikia en autō ouk estin.” This [segment] means that “Now, about the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. And the Jews marveled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? Jesus answered them and said, my doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.”¹⁰ Jesus (pbuh) declared that he is not God, saying, “my doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me.” Then, Jesus is not God. He also said, “Whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.” In this sentence, Jesus (pbuh) showed the greatness of the Almighty God and his lowliness in regard to the Almighty God. This idea is compatible with a Qurʾānic verse: “It is not (possible) that a man, to whom is given the book, and wisdom, and the prophethood, should say to people: be ye my worshippers rather than Allah’s.”¹¹ This meaning is apparent among the people and in the custom. Whenever people hold a command in high esteem, they say that this command is not from them, but from the administrator. In doing so, they show their lowliness and the greatness of the administrator.

⁹ Q 2:116.

¹⁰ John 7:14-18.

¹¹ Q 3:79.

It is written in the fourth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew that “kardias autōn ina mē pisteusantes sōthōsin. oi de epi tēs petras oi otan akousōsin meta charas dechontai ton logon kai outoi rizan ouk echousin oi pros kairon pisteuousin kai en kairō peirasmou aphantantai. to de eis tas akanthas peson outoi eisin oi akousantes kai upo merimnōn kai ploutou kai ēdonōn tou biou poreuomenoi sumpnigontai kai ou telesphorousin. to de en tē kalē gē outoi eisin oitines en kardia kalē kai agathē akousantes ton logon katechousin kai karpophorousin.”¹² This [passage] means, “he spake by this parable: A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way-side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other [seeds] fell on good ground, and sprang up, and brought forth fruit a hundredfold. [And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.] And his disciples asked him, saying, what might this parable be? And he said: [Now the parable is this.] The seed is the word of God. Those by the way-side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock are they who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which, for a while, believe, and in time of temptation, fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they who, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. However, those on the good ground are they who, in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.”¹³ This [quote] negates the idea that the word of God is God and attests that the word of God is not an attribution that is exclusive to Jesus, but can be applied to many. This idea is compatible with a Qurʾānic verse: “By His Command doth He send the spirit (of inspiration) to any of His servants He pleases.”¹⁴ The word of God and the person of God are not identical, for the word is different from the speaker be-

¹² Kata Loukan 8:12-15.

¹³ This story appears in the fourth chapter of the Gospel of Mark, not of Matthew. However, the details in the story seem to correspond much more closely to the Gospel of Luke (8:4-15. See also Mark 4:2-20; Matthew 13:3-23).

¹⁴ Q 40:15.

cause he (Jesus) likened the word to the seed and the speaker to the sower. Then, if Jesus (pbuh) were a god simply because he is the word of God, it would be necessary that everything to which the word of god is suitable to apply would also be a god, so there would have to be many gods. Therefore, the antecedent is obviously null, and the consequent is also null. This idea is compatible with a Qur'ānic verse: "If there were, in the heavens and the earth, other gods in addition to Allah, then verily, both (the heavens and the earth) had been disordered."¹⁵ As to the consequent, when something is placed and appears that it is impossible and invalid, this consequent is also void and impossible. It is the necessary consequence.

It is written in the fourteenth chapter of the Gospel of John that "ean agapate me tas entolas tas emas tērēsate. kai egō erōtēsō ton patera kai allon paraklēton dōsei umin ina menē meth umōn eis ton aiōna to pneuma tēs alētheias." This [passage] means, "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another paraklaytos that he may abide with you forever; he is the spirit of truth."¹⁶ This passage indicates that the word "father" means "the guide" and "the educator," not "the pater [one who has child or children]," for when it is used absolutely, it is known among all creatures that it means "the guide" and "the educator." If Jesus, one of the created beings, were a god, it would be necessary that every individual is also a god. Therefore, the antecedent is null, and the consequent is also null. This idea is compatible with a Qur'ānic verse: "They have taken as lords beside Allah their rabbis and their monks and the Messiah son of Mary, when they were bidden to worship only One God. There is no God but He. Be He glorified from all that they ascribe as partner (unto Him)!"¹⁷ This idea also indicates that Jesus (pbuh) is a created being, not eternal, for whoever demands is necessarily a needy, created, and possible (*mumkin*) being. Whoever is created and possible is not eternal. The Almighty God, conversely, is an eternal and self-subsisting being. Therefore, Jesus (pbuh) is not self-subsisting and not God. It is the necessary consequence. Jesus' statement that "he shall give you another paraklaytos" indicates Aḥmad, for he describes him as the spirit of truth, and this is the greatest attribute, namely, Aḥmad. This idea is compatible with a

¹⁵ Q 21:22.

¹⁶ John 14:15-16.

¹⁷ Q 9:31.

Qurʾānic verse: “[Jesus, son of Mary said:] O Children of Israel! Lo! I am the messenger of Allah unto you, confirming that which was (revealed) before me in the Torah, and bringing good tidings of a messenger who cometh after me, whose name is Aḥmad.”¹⁸ The limitation of “another” in Jesus’ statement about “another paraklaytos” dismisses the words of the infidels, who say that “paraklaytos” is Jesus. [This idea is compatible with a Qurʾānic verse: “Those who follow the messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find mentioned in the Torah and the Gospel (which are) with them.”¹⁹].

It is written in the same chapter that “ei ēgagate me echarēte an oti eipon poreuomai pros ton patera oti o patēr mou meizōn mou estin.” This [sentence] means, “If ye loved me, ye would rejoice because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.”²⁰ It appears that Jesus is lesser and lower than God, and his nobleness is due to his connection with the Almighty God. There is no doubt that the lesser and the lower one cannot be identified with the greatest. If it were so,²¹ the greatest would number two. If Jesus were a god, there would be two gods. Then, the antecedent is obviously null, so the consequent is also null. This idea compatible with a Qurʾānic verse: “Allah has said: take not (for worship) two gods: for he is just one Allah.”²² He also declared that he is the servant (*ʿabd*) of God. Because Jesus is the lesser and not the Almighty God, he is not but the slave of God, for every created being is the servant of God, and the Almighty God is sovereign, creator, eternal, ruler, mighty, generous. This idea is compatible with a Qurʾānic verse: “Christ disdaineth not to serve and worship Allah, nor do the angels who are near to Him.”²³

It is written in the same chapter that “o de paraklētōs to pneuma to agion o pempsei o patēr en tō onomati mou ekeinos umas didaxei panta kai upomnēsei umas panta a eipon umin.” This [quote] means, “But the paraklaytos, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to

¹⁸ Q 61:6.

¹⁹ Q 7:157.

²⁰ John 14:28.

²¹ If the lesser and lower one could be identified with the greatest.

²² Q 16:51.

²³ Q 4:172.

your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”²⁴ This [quote] indicates the blessed coming of Muḥammad (pbuh), for the word “paraklaytos” means “the discoverer of the hidden things.” In addition, Jesus described him as the Holy Ghost. It is the greatest attribute, the meaning of which is Aḥmad. Moreover, Jesus said, “in my name,” namely, as a prophet. He is no one but Muḥammad (pbuh). This idea is compatible with a Qur’ānic verse: “It is He who has sent His messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, to proclaim it over all religion: and enough is Allah for a Witness. Muḥammad is the messenger of Allah.”²⁵

It is written in the Gospel that “egō eimi ē ampelos ē alēthinē kai o patēr mou o geōrgos estin. pan klēma en emoi mē pheron karpon airei auto kai pan to karpon pheron kathairei auto ina pleiona karpon pherē.” This [quote] means, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”²⁶ This [idea] signifies that Jesus’ aim is to show who his maker, creator, and educator is, and to show that he, Jesus, is a being who was created. Every creature is produced (*ḥādith*) and needy. Whatever is needy and produced is neither eternal nor self-subsisting. Then, Jesus is not a God because the Almighty God is eternal and self-subsisting. It is the necessary consequence.

It is written in the Gospel that “patera mou kai patera umōn kai theon mou kai theon umōn.” This [quote] means, “my Father and your Father, and my God, and your God.”²⁷ This [quote] indicates that when Jesus said, “my father and your father, my God and your God,” his intention for the word “father” was “the guide” and “the instructor.” If his intention for the word “father” were “the pater [one who has child or children],” he would not say “your father.” This idea is compatible with a Qur’ānic verse: “They surely disbelieve who say: Lo! Allah is the Christ, son of Mary. The Christ (himself) said: O Children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Lo! Whoever ascribeth partners unto Allah, for him Allah hath forbidden Paradise.

²⁴ John 14:26.

²⁵ Q 48:28-29.

²⁶ John 15:1-2.

²⁷ John 20:17.

His abode is the Fire. For evil-doers there will be no helpers.”²⁸ If Jesus were the son of God simply because he said “my father,” the apostles would be the sons of God and gods because Jesus also said “your father.” Therefore, the antecedent is obviously null, so the consequent is also null. This idea is compatible with a Qurʾānic verse: “It is not befitting to (the majesty of) Allah that He should beget a son. Glory be to him! When He decreeth a thing, He saith unto it only: Be! And it is.”²⁹ This [quote] also indicates Jesus’ being servant, for everyone who adopts a god must be His servant. It is the necessary consequence. This idea is compatible with a Qurʾānic verse: “It is Allah who is my Lord and your Lord; then, worship Him. That is a straight path.”³⁰

It is written in the Gospel that “sumpherei umin ina egō apelhō ean gar egō mē apelhō o paraklētōs ouk eleusetai pros umas... otan de elthē ekeinos to pneuma tēs alētheias odēgēsei umas eis pasan tēn alētheian ou gar lalēsei aph eautou all osa an akousē lalēsei kai ta erchomena anangelei umin. ekeinos eme doxasei.” This [quote] means, “It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the paraklaytos will not come unto you... 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. He shall glorify me.”³¹ This [quote] indicates that Jesus told his apostles the good news of the blessed coming of Muḥammad, the prophet of God. Jesus declared the superiority of Muḥammad (pbuh) over himself, saying, “It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the paraklaytos will not come unto you... When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.” Jesus appeared to have said, “Because you will not get every profit from me, it would be better that I should go away from you, and he, the Spirit of truth, should come. He has superiority and profits more than me in order that you may benefit from him more than me,” while saying that “he will guide you into all truth.” This idea is compatible with a Qurʾānic verse: “O Prophet! Truly We have sent thee as a witness and a bringer of good tidings and a warner. And as a summoner unto Allah by His permission, and as a lamp that giveth

²⁸ Q 5:72.

²⁹ Q 19:35.

³⁰ Q 3:51.

³¹ John 16:7, 13-14.

light. And give the believers the good news that they shall have a great grace from Allah.”³² Jesus encouraged people to believe in him, accept him, and believe in the Holy Qurʾān, saying, “He is the Spirit of truth. He shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak,” namely, [he shall speak] from the Almighty God, and it is the Qurʾān. This idea is compatible with a Qurʾānic verse: “Nor doth he speak of (his own) desire. It is naught but revelation sent down to him.”³³ Jesus also encouraged people to accept him and believe in what he said because of the truth that he spoke: “He shall glorify me.” This idea is compatible with a Qurʾānic verse: “O ye who believe! Believe in Allah and His Messenger and the scripture which He hath sent to His messenger.”³⁴

It is written in the Gospel that “ēlei ēlei lema sabachthanei tout estin thee mou thee mou inati me enkatelipes.” It means “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”³⁵ This [quote] indicates that Jesus (pbuh) declared explicitly and clearly his enslavement, weakness, and desire for mercy, aid, and recourse from the Almighty Allah, for “*الى الى لم سبحتنى*” is an Arabic expression, and it means “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” As there is no letter “h” in the Christian alphabet, it was dropped, and the expression “*الى الى*” remained [instead of *إلهى إلهى*]. This rectification is evident in the explanation that Jesus gave shortly afterwards, saying, “tout estin” that is, “thee mou thee mou,” which means “My God, my God,” as in language of the Christians, “thee mou thee mou” means “My God, my God.” The unbelievers do not deny this meaning, for when the Jews wanted to kill Jesus, and when he cried, scared, prayed, and shouted loudly, he said in the Gospel, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” This idea is compatible with a Qurʾānic verse: “Certainly they disbelieve who say: Surely, Allah is the Christ, son of Mary. Say: Who then can do aught against Allah, if He had willed to destroy the Christ, son of Mary, and his mother and everyone on earth?”³⁶ Therefore, Jesus showed clearly his enslavement and weakness. This idea is compati-

³² Q 33:45-47.

³³ Q 53:3-4.

³⁴ Q 4:136.

³⁵ Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34.

³⁶ Q 5:17.

ble with a Qurʾānic verse: “He said: I am indeed a servant of Allah: He hath given me the Scripture and hath appointed me a Prophet.”³⁷ (Jesus also showed that) he needs, wishes, and expects aid, help, and mercy from God, like other human beings. This idea is compatible with a Qurʾānic verse: “O ye men. It is ye who have need of Allah: but Allah is the One free of all wants, worthy of all praise.”³⁸ Everyone who is needy is produced (*ḥādith*), and nobody who is produced is eternal or a god, but created and the servant of the creator. However, the almighty God is eternal and self-existent. Then, Jesus is not a god, but created one like all the other creatures. This idea is compatible with a Qurʾānic verse: “Lo! The likeness of Jesus before Allah is as that of Adam. He created him of dust, and then, He said unto him: Be! And he is.”³⁹

Many justifications and evidences like these exist in the Gospel. However, these are enough to nullify the divinity of Jesus, prove that he is a servant of God, prove the blessed coming of Muḥammad (pbuh), and prove that he is the messenger and the prophet of God.

The rest of the Gospel contains stories, legends, and miracles, most of which are attributed to Jesus by the tongues of the apostles. These stories are not stories about the mighty God like those of the Holy Qurʾān. Whoever knows about the Qurʾānic verses, its eloquences and its pureness knows and believes that it is the word of God and prodigious. No one nor all of the individuals, from the human beings to the jinns, can produce the like of the Qurʾān, as the mighty God said, “Say: Verily, though mankind and the Jinn should assemble to produce the like of this Qurʾān, they could not produce the like thereof, though they were helpers one of another.”⁴⁰

Among such stories is the following: “archōn eis elthōn prosekunei autō legōn oti ē thugatēr mou arti eteleutēsen alla elthōn epithes tēn cheira sou ep autēn kai zēsetai. kai egertheis o iēsous ēkolouthēsen autō kai oi mathētai autou. kai idou gunē aimorroousa dōdeka etē proselthousa opisthen ēpsato tou kraspedou tou imatiou autou. elegen gar en eautē ean monon apsōmai tou imatiou autou sōthēsomai. o de iēsous epistraphēis kai idōn autēn eipen tharsei

³⁷ Q 19:30.

³⁸ Q 35:15.

³⁹ Q 3:59.

⁴⁰ Q 17:88.

thugater ē pistis sou sesōken se kai esōthē ē gunē apo tēs ōras ekeinēs. kai elthōn o iēsous eis tēn oikian tou archontos kai idōn tous aulētas kai ton ochlon thorouboumenon. legei autois anachōreite ou gar apethanen to korasion alla katheudei kai kategelōn autou. ote de exēblēthē o ochlos eisēlthōn ektratēsen tēs cheiros autēs kai ēgerthē to korasion. kai exēlthen ē phēmē autē eis olēn tēn gēn ekeinēn.”

This [section] means, “While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and he worshipped him, saying, ‘My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.’ And Jesus arose and followed him, and so did his disciples. And behold, a woman, who was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: For she said within herself, ‘If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.’ However, Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, ‘Daughter, [be of good comfort,] thy faith hath made thee whole.’ And the woman was made whole from that hour. And when Jesus came into the ruler’s house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise, he said unto them, ‘Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth.’ And they laughed him to scorn. However, when the people were put forth, he went in and took her by the hand, and the maid arose. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.”⁴¹

Allah knows best.

⁴¹ Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:22-43; Luke 8:41-56.