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THE THEOLOGY OF GOD'S WORD FROM THE BIBLICAL AND QUR'ANIC PERSPECTIVES

MUHIB OMOLAYO OPELOYE

Introduction

THE word of God known in the Old Testament as *La debar Yahweh* and in the New Testament as *Ho Legos tou Theou*, and variously referred to in the Qur'ān as *Kalām-Allāh*, *Kalimat-Allāh* (pl. *Kalimāt*) and *al-kalimu* is an expression of divine will. According to the Scriptures the word of God is not only supreme and immutable, it is eternal. The divine word has several theological significations three of which shall be explored in this paper because of their contribution to the Christian-Muslim understanding of the revealed word of God. These are the word of God as a message, the word as an operative force and the word as a personified force.

The Bible and Qur'ān as Words of God

The Bible is the English coinage of Latin and Greek *Biblia* (plural of *Biblion*: book). The name 'the books' without qualification indicates the special position which these books occupied and also shows that the Bible is a collection of books or a library rather than a single literary composition.¹ The word Qur'ān on the other hand is an infinite noun from the Arabic triliteral verb *qara'a* meaning 'to read.' The Qur'ān is so called to signify the frequency with which the book is read. The Bible and Qur'ān as sacred books respectively constitute the foundation for the Christian and Muslim beliefs. All over the world devout Christians revere the Bible in the same way devout Muslims revere the Qur'ān because the two scriptures are perceived as material transcriptions of divine revelation.

The sacredness of the Bible derives from the fact that it was written under divine inspiration. It is not easy to determine with precision the number of the inspired writers because some books of the scripture

were written by more than one author while some writers wrote more than one book. Huffman suggests that forty inspired writers wrote the different books of the Bible.² Sometimes, the author of a book dictated to a professional scribe as Jeremiah and Paul did.³ Some of the Biblical books are ascribed to well known Biblical personages while controversy surrounds the authorship of some.

As regards the duration of revelation, it is believed that the Old Testament books were written during a period of one thousand years beginning about 1100 B.C. while the 27 New Testament books were written in less than one hundred years between 50 - 150 C.E.⁴ It is evident that in both cases the revealed words were not committed to writing very early, a factor which accounted for reliance on oral tradition for a long time.

The Biblical books are not only sacred, they are canonical. The canon of the Bible refers to the collection of books which passed the test of authenticity and authority and were consequently compiled together as Bible. Such books are measured by the standard of divine inspiration and were adjudged to be God-breathed.⁵ Two factors necessitated the process of canonization: the emergence of dubious religious writings and the infiltration into the Church of heresies such as gnosticism and marcionism. It was an attempt to get rid of the spurious books and the heretical teachings that a test of canonicity had to be passed before a book could be adjudged to be God-breathed.⁶

The books of the Bible are those that survived the tests of canonicity and therefore form the canon of the scriptures. Several other religious books were written which fell below the standard of divine inspiration and were therefore not canonized. The process of canonization was gradual. Each Biblical book became canonical as from the time the Church accorded it recognition. According to Wiley and Culbertson, the books of Law were recognised as part of the canon by 440 B.C., the books of the Prophets by 200 B.C. and the writing by 100 B.C.⁷ Similarly the formation of the New Testament Canon was gradual. There was no agreement among the Church fathers as to which books formed the New Testament Canon until about 400 C.E.⁸

Credibility and authenticity of the canonized scriptures have been attributed to the following:

- i) the claim in I Tm. 3:16 that all scripture is God-breathed;
- ii) proof from Jesus's reception of the Old Testament as evident in Mt. 5:17 - 18, Jn.10:34 and Lk. 24:27;
- iii) the influence of the holy spirit on the inspired writers as claimed in Mk.12:36; Act. 1:16, Act.4:24-25;
- iv) validity of many historical facts recorded in the scripture;
- v) fulfilment of many prophetic predictions;
- vi) confirmation of many Old Testament and New Testament accounts by ancient manuscripts discovered in the recent past.

The question may be asked, if the Biblical inspiration is divinely based why is there a preponderance of textual errors and discrepancies in the scripture which come to light when we compare the following passages:

- i) 2 Chr. 36:9 and 2 Kg.24:8;
- ii) 2 Sm. 10:18 and 1 Chr. 19:18;
- iii) 2 Chr. 9:25 and 2 Kg. 4:26;
- iv) 1 Kg. 7:26 and 2 Chr. 4:5;
- v) Gen. 1:1 - 2 and Gen. 2:4 - 8.

The causes of the errors are not left unexplained. Metzger⁹ identifies the following factors as responsible for the errors in the Bible:

- i) Speed of production of the scripture which outran accuracy of execution because of rapid increase in the number of Christian converts during the first century;
- ii) Faulty translation as a result of imperfect knowledge of the original languages of the scripture;
- iii) Cumbersome method of transcription coupled with extensive dictation of the text by the lector.

Besides the foregoing, changes were sometimes deliberately made in good faith. According to Metzger these include changes involving harmonistic corruption, addition of natural complements, and adjuncts, clearing up historical and geographical difficulties, conflation of readings, changes due to doctrinal consideration and addition of miscellaneous

details. It must be admitted that it is on account of the errors arising from these latter reasons that the Qur'ān perceives the Bible as an interpolated scripture and it strongly rebukes those who are responsible for this.¹⁰ The problem of textual errors in the Bible gave rise to the two forms of criticism generated among the Biblical scholars viz: the 'lower criticism' (which concerns with the preliminary task of getting back to the writings as composed by the original authors) and the 'higher criticism' (which deals with the questions arising out of their contents and their trustworthiness).¹¹

The sacredness of the Qur'ān on the other hand derives from the fact that it was revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad by God through the archangel Jibrīl (Gabriel), a fact attested to by the Qur'ān itself in *Sūrah* II:97, and *Sūrah* XXVI:192 - 195. The revelation came to the Prophet Muḥammad piecemeal for a period of 23 years before it was completed (610 - 632 C.E.).¹²

Each time a revelation was brought he not only committed it to memory together with his Companions, he instructed his scribe Zayd b. Thābit or others to write it down dictating the sequence of the chapters and verses. The literate ones among his Companions also kept written records of the revelation. Though the Qur'ān was not compiled as a bound book during the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, the arrangement of its chapters and verses effected by the Prophet made possible the various uses to which it was put in his time. The loss of life of many Qur'ānic memorizers (*Huffāẓ*) in the Yamāmah war during the reign of Caliph Abū Bakr led to the compilation of the Qur'ān, while variation in the mode of reading led to the standardisation of its text during the reign of Caliph 'Uthmān.

The claim of divine authorship of the Qur'ān rests on certain assertions enshrined in its different passages, viz:

- i) Do they not consider the Qur'ān, had it been from other than God, they would surely have found therein much discrepancy? (*Sūrah* IV:82).
- ii) This Qur'an is not such as can be produced by other than God.... (*Sūrah* X:37).¹³

- iii) We have without doubt sent down the message and we will assuredly guard it from corruption (*Sūrah XV:9*).¹⁴
- iv) Verily this is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds (*Sūrah XXVI:192*).
- v) It is for us to collect it and to promulgate it (*Sūrah LXXV:17*).

These assertions debunk the orientalist's claim that the Prophet Muḥammad was the author of the Qur'ān. Such a claim is certainly contrary to the evidence in the Scripture. Apart from the passages exonerating the Prophet from the charge of forging the Scripture he was warned against making any verdict in anticipation of revelation,¹⁵ just as he was urged to resist temptation to invent his own scripture.¹⁶

The Qur'ān being a direct communication from God to the Prophet, instances are preponderant when God talks in the first person in the Scripture,¹⁷ apart from instances when divine words are put in the mouth of the Prophet with the use of prefixing imperative verb *Qul*.¹⁸ The proof of the divine source of the Qur'ānic revelation is strengthened by the fulfilment of many divine promises recorded in the Qur'ān as will be discussed later.

The Word As a Message

The divine message enshrined in the Bible can be understood in the context of the Biblical central themes. The themes are creation, sin, fall, redemption and salvation. In the beginning God created man and he was in the state of well-being until he was tempted to sin and consequently fell. God started a plan of redemption with Abraham and made promises contained in Genesis 12. Thus Israel was to be a prototype to reach out to the entire world. Under the leadership of Moses, God made a covenant with the Israelites. They settled in Canaan and established a monarchy. Corruption reigned supreme. Consequently, prophets appeared on the scene. The kingdoms later fell, the north was captured by the Assyrians in 721 B.C. and the south (Judea) was subjugated by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. This incident was followed by the exile of the Israelites. The first of the exiles returned to Jerusalem in 538 B.C. The return saw the beginning of the intertestamental period when the Messianic expectation

was rife.

The New Testament era was ushered in by John the Baptist. With the advent of Jesus (the expected Messiah) the Gospel was declared and after him the apostles propagated it with emphasis on the second coming of Jesus, while the eschatological events were being anticipated as enunciated in the book of Revelation. Thus God's singular programme developed progressively from Genesis to Revelation.

The programme of salvation requires faith in God, His worship and good work. This is reflected not only in the Old Testament but also in the New Testament. For instance, the injunction to believe in God is contained in Ex.20:3 and Mk. 12:29; the injunction to worship God is enshrined in Ex.20:4 while the injunction to engage in good work is found in the rest of the ten commandments as well as in the Sermon on the Mount.

From the rhetorical question of Prophet Jeremiah in the Old Testament it can be easily discerned that faith in God has to be complemented with good work as a condition for salvation. The question is asked:

Will you steal, murder,
commit adultery, swear
falsely, burn incense to Baal
and go after other gods -
that you have not known and
then come and stand before me in this
house which is called by my name
and say: 'we are delivered'
only to go out doing all these
abominations?¹⁹

What can be understood from the message here is that faith in God is of no meaning if it is unaccompanied by good work. It is in the same vein that other prophets decry external ritual observance that is not backed up with good work. Prophet Isaiah for instance declares:

What to me is the multitude of
your sacrifice?... I have had
enough of burnt offering of rams
and the fat of the fed beasts...
when you spread your hands I will
hide my eyes from you. Even
though you make many prayers,
I will not listen, your hands
are full of blood.... What the
Lord wanted is not rituals and
prayers but simply that each
man should cease to do evil
and learn to do good.²⁰

Similarly for Prophet Hosea, true faith is a matter of the heart and not of external ritual, hence he remarks: I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offering.²¹ It would be pointed out that in the foregoing passages it is not the rituals in themselves that are to be condemned but the hypocrisy behind them.

The picture would not be different in the New Testament if the messages of Paul and James are understood to be complementary in this regard. While the former's emphasis is faith, the latter's is on good work. As far as Paul is concerned faith is the means of salvation, man is justified by faith apart from works of law.²² According to James, faith without work cannot save man, faith by itself if it has no work is dead; it is through work that man's faith can be confirmed.²³ It is important to note that in spite of Paul's posture described above he still recognises the importance of work of law as evidenced by his testimony that the law should not be overthrown by faith.²⁴ This is why we believe that the stand of the two apostles are not necessarily contradictory.

The central figure of the New Testament message is Jesus Christ whose advent is believed to have been predicted in Isaiah 7:10 - 17 and through whom the Christians hope to secure salvation.²⁵ The Jews to whom Jesus was sent forfeited their chance of salvation for their lack of

belief in his messiahship. The faithlessness of the Jews is acknowledged not only in the New Testament but also in the Old Testament as evident in Mt. 10:6, Rm. 11:7 - 10 and Jer. 3:6. The Gentiles who were more receptive of the message became the focus of attention even though initially the Gospel was not meant for them.²⁶

The Qur'ān as the word of God is a message to the entire humankind sent through the Prophet Muhammad.²⁷ It consists of 114 *Sūrah*s incorporating different subjects including law, history, theology, liturgy, sociology, sufism, science etc. The Qur'ānic message which according to *Sūrah* XLI:43 bears resemblance with messages brought by the earlier prophets is essentially to guide man to that which is right²⁸ and to bring him out of darkness to light.²⁹ Hence the Scripture is referred to as a guide (*hudā*) and mercy (*rahmah*).

Apart from its function of guidance (*hidāyah*), the message is to explain to man his duties to God and his duties to his fellow man which is why the Scripture is known as *al-Bayyinah*.³⁰ The message is elsewhere referred to as *Sharī'ah*.³¹

The kernel of the divine message enshrined in the Qur'ān is the call to belief (*al-īmān*) and to engage in righteous work (*al-'amal al-ṣālih*). These being the two basic requirements for salvation in Islam a Muslim is required to believe in God, His angels, His prophets, His revealed books, and the Last Day.³² Moreover he is called to engage in the works of righteousness. This is many-faceted as it requires man to observe the prescribed acts of devotion, to keep within the limits of the law, the limits of divine commands and prohibitions to be able to maintain good relation with God. Equally important is the need to maintain good relation with a fellow man. While the former comes under worship (*'ibādah*) the latter comes under transaction (*mu'āmalah*).

The elements constituting the works of righteousness are spelt out in the different passages of the Qur'ān with different emphasis:

- i) Emphasis on belief (*Sūrah* IV:136).
- ii) Emphasis on worship (*Sūrah* XXIII:1 - 11).

- iii) Emphasis on prohibition (*Sūrah* VI: 151).
- iv) Emphasis on relation with others (*Sūrah* XVII:22 - 29)
- v) Combination of all (*Sūrah* II:177).

The Qur'ānic message is for the believers and non-believers alike. This is why sometimes mankind in general are addressed as in *Sūrah* II: 21³³; sometimes the unbelievers are the target as in *Sūrah* 'al-Kāfirūn.' In other passages the People of the Book (*Ahl al-Kitāb*) are in view,³⁴ while in many instances the believers are the focus.³⁵ According to *Sūrah* LXXIII:19 the message helps only those who choose to take it as a straight path to their Lord.³⁶ In other words man is not compelled to accept it. Neither is the bearer of the message to resort to imposition in compliance with the principle of religious freedom enshrined in *Sūrah* II:256. His was to deliver the message and give the promise of eternal bliss to the righteous and the promise of perdition to the unrighteous, thus performing his role as a bearer of glad tiding (*bashīran*) and a warner (*nadhīran*).³⁷

The Word As an Operative Force

The word is not only a message, it is also an operative force. The Biblical revelation views the word as an operative force behind the accomplishment of the divine will. This assertion is explicitly stated in Isaiah 55:10 - 11 which reads:

As the rain and snow came down
from heaven and return not
thither but water the earth
making it bring forth and
sprout giving seed to the
sower and bread to the eater,
so shall my word be that goes
forth from my mouth, it shall
not return to me empty but it
shall accomplish that which I
purpose and prosper in the thing
for which I sent it.

The perception of the word for this purpose is first noticed in the work of creation as contained in Genesis where it is evident that everything God created came into being through divine fiat. The formula is 'let there be' and 'it is.' It is through this formula that the light, the firmament, the land and vegetation, the moon and stars, the bird and fish, the animals and the man are all created.³⁸

Psalm 33:6 - 9 in corroboration of this assertion says: 'By the word of the Lord, the heavens were made and all their host by the breath of His mount... for He spoke and it came to be, He commanded and it stood forth.' Moreover, the efficacy of the divine word in this regard is brought to light in Psalm 147:15 - 18 as it reads:

God send forth His command to
the earth, His word runs swiftly.
He gives snow like wool,
He scatters hoarfrost like ashes;
He casts forth His ice like morsels;
Who can stand before His cold.
He sends forth His word and melts
them, He makes His wind blow and
the waters flow.

As regards divine healing and the operative force of the word, Psalm 107:17 - 20 has this to say:

Some were sick through their
sinful ways and because of their
iniquities suffered affliction;
they loathed any kind of food and
they drew near to the gates of
death; then they cried to the
Lord in their trouble and He
delivered them from their distress;
He sent forth His word and healed
them and delivered them from
destruction.

Even though the 'sick' in the passage is figurative according to J.W. Rogarson *et al.*, the power of the word is not undermined. It is a word of encouragement and 'word of hope.'³⁹

Also in the Biblical revelation, the operative force of the word accounts for fulfilment of God's future plans. These are future events which came to pass as predicted by the prophets being spokesmen of God. Isaiah alone made several of such predictions. He predicted that Jerusalem would be a city to be visited by people of different nations to gain inspiration⁴⁰; he predicted deliverance of Jerusalem from the attack of the Assyrians⁴¹; he foretold the fall of Babylon saying that wild beasts would lie down there and its houses would be filled with howling creatures⁴²; he predicted the destruction of Jerusalem but according to him only the erring people would be affected as the righteous would survive and would return to Zion.⁴³

Also in the Qur'ān the word is an operative force behind the accomplishment of the divine will. This assertion is emphatically stated in not less than eight passages of the Qur'ān, viz:

- i) They say: 'Allāh has begotten a son,' glory be to Him, Nay to him belongs all that is in the heavens and on the earth everything renders worship to Him, and to Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth when He decrees a matter He says to it: 'Be' and *it is*, (*Sūrah* II:116 - 117).
- ii) She said 'O my Lord how shall I have a son when noman has touched me? He said: 'Even so: Allāh creates what He wills when he decrees a plan He says: 'Be' and *it is*. (*Sūrah* III:47).
- iii) The similitude of Jesus before Allah is that of Adam. He created him from dust then said to him: 'Be' and *it is*. (*Sūrah* III:59).
- iv) It is He who created the heavens and the earth in true (proportion). The day He says: 'Be,' behold, *it is*. His word is the truth.... (*Sūrah* VI:73).
- v) They swear their strongest oath by Allah that Allah will not raise up the dead. Nay but it is a promise (binding) on Him in truth.... For to anything which We have willed, We but say the word: 'Be' and *it is* (*Sūrah* XVI: 38 - 40).

- vi) It is not befitting to (the majesty of) Allāh that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him when He determines a matter, He only says to it 'Be,' and *it is*. (*Surah XIX:35*).
- vii) Is not He who created the heavens and earth able to create the like thereof? Yes indeed, for He is the Creator Supreme of skill and knowledge (infinite). Verily when He intends a thing, His command is 'Be' and *it is*. (*Surah XXXVI:81 - 82*).
- viii) It is He who gives life and death and when He decides an affair He says to it, 'Be' and *it is*. (*Surah XL:68*).

In the foregoing passages, the creative power of God is demonstrated by the power of the word. The verses are meant to show that work of creation is the prerogative of God in consequence of which He is known in the Scripture as *al-Khāliq*. The instrument of creation used in the eight verses is the imperative verb *kun* (be). According to al-Qurṭubī⁴⁴ *kāf* signifies *kaynūnah* (i.e. the being) while *nūn* signifies *nūr* (i.e. light or power of God to effect creation). The mention of Jesus in some of the passages is with a view to presenting him as a special creation of God in contradistinction with the Christian notion of his being God's incarnate. We shall in the next section focus on Jesus as the word of God or word from God which the Bible and the Qur'ān regard him to be.

Aside from creation, other divine actions are associated with the operative force of the word. The Qur'ān (*Sūrah XXXVIII:42*) offers an example of the work of healing through the power of the word. Ayyūb (the Biblical Job) was a prophet afflicted by a disease which got healed after receiving the divine word that instructed him to stamp his foot on the ground resulting in the gushing out of water by God's command, drinking from which and washing with which served as the remedy of his disease.⁴⁵

The work of healing is sometimes performed by man as exemplified by Jesus. Man is only able to perform this function in consequence of divine grace. While the Christians may attribute Jesus's ability in this regard to the divine nature ascribed to him, the Muslim would see it as a divine gift bestowed on him as a prophet of God to facilitate his mission.⁴⁶

The operative force of the word equally accounts for the

realisation and fulfilment of God's future plans. Several examples of this abound in the Qur'ān. In *Sūrat 'al-Fath*, the Prophet Muhammad was assured of triumphant entry into Makkah after eight years of exile in the city of Madinah. This was realised in the year 630 C.E. when he subjugated the holy city without any resistance. In *Sūrat 'al-Hajj* Prophet Ibrāhīm was made to proclaim the pilgrimage among men and he was assured of the believers' enthusiastic desire to perform *Hajj*. It goes without saying that up till the present day pilgrims from all over the world continue to go to the holy lands of Makkah and Madinah to perform *Hajj* rites.

At the opening of *Sūrah 'Rum'* reference is made to the defeat of the Roman empire under Heraclius by the Persians at which the pagan Quraysh of Makkah were joyous because of their pro-Persian leanings. They were in the same passage informed that the Persian victory would not last as the tide would soon turn against them. True to the Qur'ānic prediction, the Romans defeated the Persians at the battle of Issus in 622 C.E. under the same Heraclius.⁴⁷

The Word As a Personified Force

So far we have examined the word as a verbalised concept. In this section we shall focus on the personification of the word. In the contexts of the two Scriptures the word is personified in Jesus Christ (the Qur'ānic 'Īsā). According to the forth gospel at the very beginning of creation the word already was; the word dwelt with God; and the word was God and through Him all things came to be... and the word became flesh and dwelt among men.⁴⁸

This New Testament passage is meant to prove the pre-existence, the personality as well as the divinity of Jesus.⁴⁹ The passage in verse 14 demonstrates that God became man and temporarily lived on earth when the word became flesh, thus God is believed to have revealed Himself in Jesus. This Biblical conception of the word serves as the basis for the Christian doctrine of Trinity. This is the belief that in God there are three persons who subsist in one nature.⁵⁰ The three persons are designated as Father (the God), Son (Jesus Christ) and Spirit (the Holy

Ghost). To the Christian, the import of the Trinity doctrine is inherent in the divine scheme of salvation of all men. According to the Christian theology all men became sinners as a result of Adam's sin and they can only be liberated from the inherited depravity by the blood of Jesus who was made to die on the cross because of the sin of men.⁵¹

According to Christianity, God's purpose for sending His beloved Son to the world is to atone the sin of man with his blood. This God has done as a demonstration of His love for humanity. Thus the saving will of God is seen to have been executed in Jesus Christ and communicated to men through him and God's grace is seen to have appeared in his incarnation. Therefore salvation in the Biblical conception is a work of God's mercy,⁵² and a work of His grace⁵³ shown through Jesus, the God who became man for the purpose of man's salvation. Evidences abound in the Bible affirming that salvation comes through Jesus Christ.⁵⁴

The Qur'ān on the other hand regards Jesus as word from God (*kalimatun minhu*)⁵⁵ because he was born without the usual agency of a father as God brought him to being simply by sending a command that Maryam (the Biblical Mary) should become pregnant in consequence of which conception took place. The command is : 'Be' and 'it is.'⁵⁶ As far as the Qur'ān is concerned Jesus was neither God nor the son of God but a prophet sent to the children of Israel as evident in *Sūrah* III:49 - 51. If the Bible ascribes divine nature to Jesus in consequence of his miraculous birth, the Qur'ān does not consider the miraculous birth sufficient to justify his deification because Adam was brought into existence in a more miraculous way being a creature with neither a father nor mother.⁵⁷

The Qur'ānic passages are preponderant refuting the Christian doctrine of Trinity, Jesus' divinity and his being the son of God.⁵⁸ The Qur'ān sees absurdity in the existence of more than one God arguing that if there were to be many gods, each god would have taken away what he had created while some would have lorded it over others.⁵⁹ In another passage it is asserted that if there were in the heavens and the earth other gods besides Allāh there would have been confusion in both.⁶⁰ Just as the doctrine of Trinity has no basis in Islam, so is the doctrine of vacarious

sacrifice extraneous to Islamic teachings. Islam believes that salvation can be secured without God shedding the blood of Jesus for the remission of the sins of humankind. What is required of man is faith and good deeds.

Conclusion: The Unresolved Problem

In spite of all the similarities in the Christian-Muslim understanding of the word of God, a problem remains unresolved. The problem is not the discrepancies in any particular Scripture for these can be explained. Neither is it the different perception of Jesus's status for Jesus remains what he is regardless of whatever conception of him we may have. The problem lies in the seeming unreconcilability in the Biblical and Qur'ānic accounts in certain respects examples of which include:

- i) The Biblical view that Adam's sin was inherited by the human kind and the Qur'ānic belief that the sin was forgiven.
- ii) The Biblical assertion that Abraham was to sacrifice his son Isaac and the Qur'ānic view that it was Ishmael.
- iii) The Biblical attribution of the worship of the molten calf to Aaron and the Qur'ānic attribution of the action to one Samiri.
- iv) The Biblical teaching in the New Testament that God is one in Trinity and the Qur'ānic teaching that He is absolutely One.

This is a problem because of the two Scriptures' claim to have emanated from one and the same God and the belief that God's word is eternal, immutable, unchangeable and consistent. This is the basis for the Qur'ānic call for dialogue between the Muslims and the People of the Book when it declares:

Say: O People of the Book, come to common terms as between us and you; that we worship none but Allāh that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not from among ourselves lords and patrons other than Allāh; if they turn back say ye: Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims (bowing to Allāh's will).

It is through dialogue that the theological differences can be

discussed and where they cannot be resolved it should afford the parties in dialogue the opportunity to understand one another's point of view. However, this will only be possible if we are prepared to widen the margin of our religious tolerance and understanding.

NOTES

- (1) J.L. McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible* (Geoffery Chapman, London, 1978), pp. 95-96.
- (2) J.A. Huffman, *God's Wonder Book* (The Standard Press, Winona Lake, Indiana, 1945), p. 53.
- (3) See Jn. 36:4; I Cor. 16:21 and Gal. 6:11.
- (4) Huffman, *op. cit.*, p. 54
- (5) M.F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Moody Press, Chicago, 1957), p. 174.
- (6) E.C. Ryrie, *A Survey of Bible Doctrine* (Moody Press, Chicago, 1976), p. 43.
- (7) H.O. Wiley and R.T. Culbertson, *Introduction to Christian Theology* (Beacon Hill Press, Kansas, 1946), p. 59.
- (8) Huffman, *op. cit.*, pp. 61 - 62.
- (9) B.M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1968), pp. 14 ff. and pp. 195ff.
- (10) *Sūrah* II:79.
- (11) Stanley Cook, *Introduction to the Bible* (Penguin Books, 1958), p.35.
- (12) This mode of revelation is known as recited revelation to which reference is made in *Sūrah* XLII:51. It is one of the three modes of revelation in the passage.
- (13) Cf. *Sūrahs* II:23; XI:13; XI:35; XVII:88; XXXII:3.
- (14) Cf. *Sūrahs* XVI:89; LXXVI:23.
- (15) *Sūrahs* XX:114; XXV:16.
- (16) *Sūrah* X:15.

- (17) Examples are found in *Sūrahs* XV:9; XXI:25; LXV:17.
- (18) Instances like this are preponderant in the Qur'ān. The following are only a few passages: *Sūrahs* II:80; II:91; II:97; II:135.
- (19) Jer. 7:9 -10.
- (20) Is. 1:11 - 17.
- (21) Hos.6:6.
- (22) Rm. 3:21 - 31.
- (23) Jm. 2:14 - 26.
- (24) Rm. 3:31.
- (25) Lk. 2:11; I Tm. 4:10.
- (26) Rm 11:11 - 24; Cf. Rm. 3:2; Mt.10:5.
- (27) *Sūrah* XXI:107; cf. *Sūrah* XXXIV:28.
- (28) *Sūrah* XVIII:9.
- (29) *Sūrah* LXV:11.
- (30) *Sūrah* XVI:89.
- (31) *Sūrah* VI:18.
- (32) *Sūrah* V:136.
- (33) Cf. *Sūrah* II:168; IV:1; IV:174; VII:158; X:23; X:108; XXII:1.
- (34) See *Sūrahs* III:64; III:99; IV:171; V:15; V:19 etc.
- (35) See *Sūrahs* II:104; II:153; II:254; III:118; IV:29; V:1 etc.
- (36) *Sūrah* LXXVI:29.
- (37) *Sūrah* II:119.
- (38) Gen.1:3 - 31.

- (39) J.W. Rogarson *et al.*, *The Cambridge Bible Commentary: The Psalm 101-150* (Cambridge University Press, London, 1977), p.52.
- (40) Is. 2:2 - 3.
- (41) II Kg. 19:32 - 34.
- (42) Is. 13:19 - 22.
- (43) Is. 10:4 - 23: The fall of Jerusalem was also predicted by Jeremiah, Amos, Micah
- (44) Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān*, vol. 2 (Maktab Dār al-Kutub al-Misriyah, 1949), pp. 86- 91.
- (45) S.A. Maududi, *The Meaning of the Qur'an*, vol. 5 (Board of Islamic Publications, Delhi, n.d.), p. 395; cf. *Tafsīr al-Murāghī*, vol. 8, part 23 (Dār al-Fikr, Beirut, 1974), p.124.
- (46) The Christian view does not explain how man with no divine nature is able to perform miracles.
- (47) The Muslims preferred victory of the Romans because they were 'People of the Book.' See A. Y. Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary* (The Islamic Foundation, London, 1975), p. 1008; cf. Sayyid Qutb, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, vol.6 (Beirut, 1971), p. 434 ff.
- (48) Jn. 1:1 -14
- (49) A.M. Hunter, *The Cambridge Bible Commentary: The Gospel According to John* (Cambridge University Press, 1965), p. 18.
- (50) Mckenzie, *op.cit.*, p. 899.
- (51) Rm.3:21 - 24.
- (52) Tt.3:5.
- (53) Eph.2:5; Tt.2:11
- (54) Lk.2:11; Jn. 10:9; Act 13:23; Rm.15:11.
- (55) *Sūrah*s III:45; IV:171.
- (56) *Sūrah*s III:45 - 47; XIX:16 - 22; cf. Abu'l-Qāsim al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, vol. I (Mataba'at Mustafā, Cairo, 1972), p. 584.

(57) *Sūrah* III:59.

(58) On Trinity see *Sūrahs* V:75, on divinity of Jesus see *Sūrahs* V:19; V:75; V:119-120, on sonship see *Sūrahs* IX:30; II:116; X:68; XVII:111; XVIII:4; XIX:88 etc.

(59) *Sūrah* XXIII:91.

(60) *Sūrah* XXI:22.