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## Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition

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### ‘Īsā

Ḳur’ānic name for Jesus; the Ḳur’ān refers to him in 15 sūras and devotes to him 93 verses which are the foundation for Muslim Christology. Various traditions, containing additions drawn from the apocryphal gospels of the childhood of Jesus, or from mystic Christian literature, have enriched this Christology and, in certain respects, brought it nearer to the Christian Christology. Islamo-Christian polemic has tended through the years to harden the positions; most of these positions have become classic and are to be found unchanged in present day Muslim writers.

I. Etymology of the word ‘Īsā: Certain western writers (Marracci, ii, 39; cf. Landauer and Nöldeke in *ZDMG*, xlvi, 720) consider that the Jews induced Muḥammad to use the form ‘Īsā and he did so in good faith. In fact the Jews, in hatred, referred to Jesus as Esau (עֵשָׂו) maintaining that the spirit of Esau had passed into him (cf. Lammens, in *Machriq*, i, 334). Others (cf. J. Derenbourg, in *REJ*, xviii, 126; Frankel, in *WZKM*, iv, 334; Vollers, in *ZDMG*, xlv, 352; Nestle, *Dict. of Christ and the Gospels*, i, 861) state that Yasū’ derives, by a phonetic change, from the Syriac Yeshū’ (ܝܫܘܥ), itself coming from the Hebrew Yeshua’, with harmonization with Mūsā. But it should be pointed out that it is used only five times with Mūsā, while it is mentioned 25 times altogether (cf. Parrinder, *Jesus in the Qur’an*, London 1965, 16-7; Henninger, *Spuren christlicher Glaubenswahrheiten im Koran*, Freiburg 1951, 32-3). Finally some modern scholars have seen it as a reference to an ‘Īsā mentioned in the pre-Islamic inscriptions, *yt<sup>c</sup>*: a dialectical variant of *hys<sup>c</sup>*, a theory which has been strongly rejected by G. Ryckmans who disputes the reading in *Analecta Bollandiana*, lxxvii (1949), 62 and in *Les religions arabes préislamiques*, 1951, 48. For the Muslim writers, see al-Bayḍāwī on III, 45 (ed. Fleischer, i, 156, l. 2).

II. The various names of Jesus in the Ḳur’ān (see below for a study of the terms):—a) al-Masīḥ (eleven times).—b) *Nabī*, prophet (XXIX, 30).—c) *Rasūl*, “envoy, messenger” (IV, 157, 171, V, 75).—d) Ibn Maryam, “son of Mary” (33 times: 16 times ‘Īsā ibn

Maryam, 17 times Ibn Maryam alone or with another title, while in the Gospels the expression appears only once; cf. E. F. F. Bishop, *The Son of Mary*, in *Moslem World*, 1934, who considers that the name came from the Church of Ethiopia after the return of the second group of emigrants. The expression appears five times in the Arabic Gospel of the Childhood, and fifteen times in the Syriac version of this Gospel.—e) *Min al-muḳarrabīn*, “among those who are close to God” (III, 45), later explained by the fact of his “ascension” ( *su ūd*, *rafʿ* ).—f) *Waḍīh*, “worthy of esteem in this world and the next” (III, 45); al-Bayḍāwī explains this: on earth as a prophet and in Heaven as an intercessor.—g) *Mubārak*, “blessed” (XIX, 31): “a source of benefit for others” (al-Bayḍāwī), probably a bringer of *baraka* .—h) *Ḳawl al-ḥaḳḳ* (XIX 34), “sure word”, an obscure expression which is perhaps not a title but refers to the preceding statement; cf. al-Bayḍāwī, i, 580, l. 25.—i) ‘Abd Allāh, “Servant of God” (see below).

III. The annunciation, conception and birth of Jesus. There are in the Ḳurʿān certain features which, more or less directly, reflect the Gospels. Some writers, for example P. Hayek ( *Le Christ de l’Islam*, Paris 1959, 65) go so far as to state that apart from the dogma that Mary is the mother of God, rejected by the Muslims since they formally deny the divinity of Jesus, “all the other dogmas defined by the Church or transmitted by its traditions of worship, find a support in the Ḳurʿān, rather weak it is true, but certainly real: the Immaculate Conception, the Presentation in the Temple, the Annunciation, the Virgin Birth, Christmas and even the Assumption” [cf. MARYAM].

The Annunciation made to Mary is related with a touching freshness and recalls the scene in the Gospels. Mary, withdrawn into the Temple, receives the visit from the “Spirit of God” [see RŪḤ ALLĀH ], “then We sent unto her Our Spirit that presented himself to her a man without fault”, (XIX, 17), which tradition identifies with the Archangel Gabriel. He announces to her the miraculous birth of Jesus; miraculous because Mary has vowed her virginity to God and intends to retain it (LXVI, 22; XXI, 91). The Angel reassures her: this is easy for the Lord, who wishes to make of her a sign ( *āya* ) for men and a mercy ( *rahma* ) from Him (XIX, 21). “So she conceived him, and withdrew with him to a distant place”.

It seems that in the Ḳurʿān the distinction between the Annunciation and the Conception is not precisely made. According to Luke I, 26-38, the angel of the Lord who appears to Mary is distinct from the Holy Spirit who performs the miracle. The Ḳurʿān seems to unite these two ideas. In fact, while in XIX, 17, there is mentioned an angel who appears to Mary in the form of an actual mortal, in two other texts (LXVI, 12 and XXI, 9) where God mentions the Spirit (“Our Spirit”), there is no reference to the angel. The confusion between the annunciation and the conception led to the Angel Gabriele’s

being considered as the father of Jesus, a thesis supported by Gerock, *Versuch einer Darstellung der Christologie des Koran*, Hamburg-Gotha 1839, 36-46; cf. Michaud, *Jésus selon le Coran*, Neuchatel 1960, 20, a thesis based on the interpretation of certain Muslim exegetists stating that the angel breathed into a slit in Mary's cloak which she had taken off; when she put it on again, she conceived Jesus (cf. al-Thā'ālibī. *Kiṣaṣ*, 381).

In fact, the conception of Jesus was the result of a creative decree made by God: the creation of Jesus by God was after the example of that of Adam. The creation of Adam was at least as marvellous as that of Jesus, conceived by a virgin (cf. III, 52).

Mary was overtaken by the pangs of childbirth beside the trunk of the palm tree. To reassure Mary's fears of a scandai, the child addressed her from the cradle. She shows the child to her family. In order to silence their reproaches he declares: "Lo, I am God's servant; God has given me the Book, and made me a Prophet. Blessed he has made me, wherever I may be; and He has enjoined me to pray, and to give alms, so long as I live, and likewise to cherish my mother" (XIX, 16-35).

It is known that Islam does not admit the idea of an "original sin" transmitted to the descendants of Adam (cf. G. Anawati, *Islam and the Immaculate Conception*, in *The dogma of the Immaculate Conception*, ed. E. D. O'Connor, University of Notre Dame Press, 1958, 447-61). Concerning Mary and her son however, there is a tradition, accepted by al-Bukhārī and Muslim, which states that they were granted an extraordinary privilege: that of both having been preserved from any contact with the devil at the instant of their birth. "Every son of Adam when newly born", says the *ḥadīth*, "is touched (or probably squeezed) by Satan, except for the Son of Mary and her mother; it is at this contact that the child utters his first cry".

IV. The mission of Jesus: Jesus is a Prophet (*nabī*; XIX, 31) and the Envoy (*rasūl*; IV, 156, 169, LXI, 6). Like all prophets, he has a mission to fulfil, for to each separate people God has sent a special prophet. Of the son of Mary and of his mother He has made a sign, "and He has given them refuge on a quiet and dewy hill" which the commentators have identified with Jerusalem or Damascus. On the different interpretations concerning this topography (the influence of Byzantine iconography [Ledit], reference to the Assumption of Mary [Rudolph, Ahrens, Henninger], Srinagar [Afrmediyya]), cf. Michaud, 29, n. 3.

The "miraculous sign" shown by Jesus and his mother is apparently his miraculous birth. But he himself was to perform "signs", proving through miracles his prophetic

mission. Among these “proofs” ( *bayyināt* ) (cf. II, 254 and 81, III, 43, V, 110, XLIII, 63, LXI, 6), should be mentioned the following:—1. Jesus spoke even in the cradle (XIX, 30) and already with the authority of a grown man (III, 41).—2. He made small clay models of birds, breathed life into them, and “it will be a bird, by the leave of God” (III, 43). The modelling of birds is found in the apocryphal gospels: the Gospel of Thomas, ch. 2, the Gospel of the Childhood in Arabic, ch. 36, 46, 1; the Armenian book of the childhood, 18, 2. The Aḥmadiyya give a symbolic interpretation to this miracle: it signifies the spiritual flight of the Galilean peasants under the influence of Jesus (cf. Parrinder, *Jesus in the Qur’an* , 6).—3. Jesus cured the man blind from birth and the leper (V, 110).—4. He raised the dead, always “with God’s permission” (III, 43; V, 110).—5. At the request of the Apostles ( *ḥawāriyyūn* , [q.v.]), he made to come down from the sky a “Table prepared” ( *mā’ida* ); for them it was a feast ( *īd* ), a meal and a proof ( *āya* ) of his mission (V, in-14); cf. Bayḍāwī, i, 280; Hayek, 220-2; Gerock (46), followed by Rudolph, thought that this was either a réminiscence of the Last Supper or of the vision of Peter related in the Acts of the Apostles, X, 9). According to the traditional material collected by al-Ṭabarī, 86 (Hayek, 220-2) this is an echo of the miracle of the loaves and fishes (Matthew, XIV, 17 f.; XV, 32 f.). Michaud (56-7), following Masson (328-9), produces texts from the Old and the New Testament in favour of interpreting it as referring to the Last Supper. On the sources of the commentaries on this passage cf. Sidersky, 328-9. It is possible that the Qur’ānic passage was influenced by some apocryphal tradition of which nothing has survived. (cf. G. Rosch, *Die Jesusmythen* , 447).

Jesus comes to declare the truth of what has been given before him in the Torah (III, 44). The Scripture which belongs to Jesus is the Gospel [cf. *INDJĪL* ] which is judged favourably because it fills the hearts of those who follow it with meekness and pity (V, 82). Jesus covers with his prophetic authority not only the Gospel and the Torah but also the earlier writings, all of them taught by God to the Son of Mary (III, 43, V, 110).

V. Jesus the Messiah: We must here define certain terms applied to Jesus which, in Christianity, have a fundamental value: the terms Messiah and Servant of God. Concerning the first, in the structure of the New Testament the revelation was gradual and Jesus did not reveal himself to the disciples as the promised Messiah until after a long psychological preparation. This historical perspective is not found in the Qur’ān: the term Messiah is given to Jesus from the time of his birth, though in a narrow sense which in no way corresponds to the Christian concept. Jesus the Messiah in the Qur’ān is only one in a series of prophets which ends with Muḥammad. Like all the prophets he is only an ordinary man; the Qur’ān is entirely opposed to any doctrine of Jesus the

Messiah the Son of God (IX, 30-1). It reproaches Christians for having taken “their scholars and their monks as lords apart from God, and the Messiah, Mary’s son” (IX, 31). The uncompromising dogma of the unity of God removes any Christian overtones from the word Messiah.

The word Masīḥ is used eleven times in the Ḳur’ān, in passages all of which are Medinan (III, 40, IV, 156, 169, 170, V, 19 (twice), 76 (twice), 79, IX, 30, 31). The word is of Jewish origin, transmitted through Syriac. It seems to have been known in the north and the south of Arabia in the pre-Islamic period. The Hebrew *mashiaḥ* was used of the kings and the patriarchs and especially for the awaited Saviour. The Septuagint translates it by Christos. Al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī admit that the word is foreign and al-Fīrūzabadī states that there are fifty explanations for this word [see MASĪḤ]. In the Ḳur’ān the word is used only to signify Jesus.

The Arabic writers found two roots for it: 1. the verb *masaḥa*, to rub with the hand, to anoint; in the passive sense Jesus is Messiah, a) because he was anointed by means of blessings and honours (XIX, 32), b) because he was covered, from birth, by the wing of Gabriel to shield him from the bite of Satan, c) because he was anointed in Adam, like all men, but in a particularly way in order to be implanted in Mary. In the active sense, Jesus is Messiah, a) because he anointed the eyes of those born blind in order to cure them (III, 43), b) because he rubbed sick people with his hand, c) because he anointed with a holy oil. 2. The second root is the verb *sāḥa*, to travel, go on a pilgrimage, to wander. Jesus became for the Muslim mystic writers “the model of the pilgrims”, “the imām of the wanderers”, the example of the mystics. Cf. Abd El-Jalil, *Marie et l’Islam*, 59, based on the Commentary of al-Alūsī, iii, 142.

VI. Jesus the servant of God: *ʿabd*, literally “slave”, means in theological terms, “the creature”. Man is not only the “servant” of God but also his “property”. Cf. *ʿebedh* in the Old Testament (Isaiah, XLII, 1, LII, 13-LIII, 12, the fourth song of the Servant of Yahweh) and *δοῦλος* in the New Testament (Phil., II, 7). In the Ḳur’ān IV, 170, the angels are also called *ʿabd*. The basic meaning of adoration is found, with various nuances, in all the derived meanings (cf. Jeffery, *Foreign vocabulary of the Qurʾān*, 209). What must be remembered is that the Ḳur’ān insists on the status of Jesus as no more than that of a created being (XLIII, 59); it reacts against any belief in the divinity of Jesus. “Thus the first word he uttered was to recognize his character as a servant, to make more decisive the argument against any who might claim that he was God” (Hayek, 84; cf. Ibn al-Athīr, i, 220-1; al-Ṭabarī, i/2/, 733-4; al-Thaʿālibī. *Ḳiṣaṣ*, 386). Thus it would be wrong to exaggerate the meaning of this term (as does Ledit, *Mahomet, Israel et le Christ*, 145) and to interpret it in the Judaeo-Christian sense:

everywhere in the Qur'ān the word means a being created by God and subject to Him (cf. III, 52, 73).

VII. Jesus and Muḥammad: According to the Muslim commentators, who base themselves on LXI, 6, Jesus announced the coming of one who would come after him. According to the recension of Ubayy, this was “the seal of the Prophets” and of the messengers; in the Vulgate, it is “a Messenger” named Aḥmad. On the meaning of the variant of Ubayy, cf. Blachère, tr. 909. Islam recognizes Muḥammad in Aḥmad, both names deriving from the root *ḥ.m.d*. In St. John's Gospel Jesus announces the sending of the Paraclete (XIV, 16; XIV, 26; XVI, 7). The main early versions of the Gospels have merely transcribed the term without translating it: *parakletos* has given *fāraḳlīt*.

Sale, in his *Preliminary Discourse*, 1877, iv, 53 (quoted by H. A. Walter, *The Aḥmadiya Movement*, 30), following up a suggestion of Marracci, suggests that the Gospel text on which these are based had something like περικλυτός, meaning famed, illustrious, and rendered in Arabic by Aḥmad. The same explanation is found in C. F. Gerock, 109 and Zwemer, *The Moslem Christ*, 139, n. 1: the Muslim commentators accuse the Christians of having substituted παράμλητος for περιμλυτός which stood in the original. Cf. Michaud, 36-7; Henninger, 313; Parrinder, 96-100; L. Bevan-Jones in *Muslim World*, x, 112 ff.; A. Guthrie and E. F. F. Bishop, *ibid.*, xli, 251 ff.; M. Watt, *His Name is Aḥmad*, *ibid.*, xliii, noff.; J. Schacht, in *EI*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. AḤMAD.

VIII. Jesus and the Word of God: On the use of the word *kalima* in the Qur'ān see the thesis by Th. O'Shaughnessy, *The koranic Concept of the Word of God*, Rome, Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1948. On its origin and possible borrowing from the Christian Logos, cf. Gardet-Anawati, *Introduction à la théologie musulmane*, Paris 1948, 88 ff. For Pretzl, (*Die Frühislamische Attributenlehre*, Munich 1940, 26-7), the question of the Logos and that of the nature of the Qur'ān share earlier common sources.

As to the Muslim exegesis of the Qur'ānic texts referring to the “Word” coming from God to Jesus, four possible exegeses may be distinguished (cf. Abd El-Jalil, 39, using al-Alūsī, iii, 141):—1. Jesus is the fulfilment of the creating word of God, uttered at the moment of his conception (IV, 169, XIX, 30, III, 42).—2. Jesus is the prophet announced in the word of God, received and preached by the earlier messengers.—3. Jesus is the word of God because he speaks on behalf of God and thus leads men in the right way.—4. Jesus is a word of God because Jesus is, in his own person, “good tidings”.

IX. Jesus and the Spirit of God: In order to accomplish his mission, Jesus was fortified by the Holy Spirit ( *Rūḥ al-ḳudus* ) (V, 109, XIX, 30-3), first at his birth, and then during his adult ministry among the Jews (II, 81, 254). The complete formula: “we have . . . confirmed him with the Holy Spirit” is used in the Ḳur’ān only for Jesus. However the Ḳur’ān uses an almost identical formula in connection with the believers whom God confirais “with a Spirit from Himself” (LVIII, 22). On the Holy Spirit in the Ḳur’ān, cf. Henninger, 4-6, which is based, among others, on the article by Macdonald in *Moslem World* , xxii(1932).

X. Jesus and the Trinity: In the passage III, 40, Jesus is mentioned as being among those “close” to the Lord ( *min al-muḳarrabīn* ). Jesus will be glorious, honoured both in the present world and in the world to come. This privilege of being close to God is shared by Jesus with the angels (IV, 170). But, however sublime they may be, both they and he remain created beings. The unity of God is stated in III, 52-5 in a passage dealing with the person of Jesus. The reference is probably to the reply made to the Christian delegates of Nadjṛān in 631 (cf. Blachère, 865). In spite of his great veneration for the Son of Mary, Muḥammad is quite clear that he is in no sense divine. The Christians who insist on this divinity are “Liars”.

From the same period is the passage V, 19-21, in which Muḥammad once again insists on the entirely human condition of Jesus: “They are unbelievers who say, ‘God is the Messiah, Mary’s son’ “. And the Christians are no more the sons of God than is Jesus himself.

It will be clear that with such a perspective, the Ḳur’ān formally rejects any doctrine of the Trinity. It should however be pointed out that the Trinity as understood and rejected is not the same as that which is taught by Christian dogma, and defined by the councils which were held before the revelation of the Ḳur’ān. The Ḳur’ānic Trinity seems to be a triad composed of Allāh, of Mary his consort and of Jesus their child (cf. V, 116); a concept which is reminiscent on the one hand of the stellar triads of the pre-Islamic Pantheon (cf. T. Fahd, *Le panthéon de l’Arabie centrale à la veille de l’Hégire* , Paris 1968), and on the other hand of the cult of Mary verging on idolatry practised by certain Christian sects of Arabia, the Mariamites and the Collyridians.

It is important to note that the formal denials of the Ḳur’ān are directed towards these views, which are “heretical” from the point of view of Christian orthodoxy itself. Certain modern Muslim writers, taking note of the explanations provided by their Christian informants, are inclined to recognize the basic monotheism of the Christian religion,

without however admitting its revealed nature, (cf. J. Jomier, *Le commentaire coranique du Manār* , 308). For all this section, cf. Michaud, 77-83.

XI. Jesus and the problem of the crucifixion. On the subject of the death of Jesus, two questions require to be answered: (1) was Jesus really crucified and did he therefore die on the cross? (2) supposing that this was not the case, did he die a natural death?

Concerning the first question, the Ḳurʿān states its position categorically: against the Jews who claimed “we slew the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, the Messenger of God”, it states “yet they did not slay him, neither crucified him, only a likeness of that was shown to them ( *walākin ṣhubbiha lahum* ). Those who are at variance concerning him surely are in doubt regarding him; they have no knowledge of him except the following of surmise; and they slew him not of a certainty ( *yaḵān<sup>an</sup>* )—no indeed; God raised him up to Him”; (IV, 156-7). Muslim tradition completes the statements of the Ḳurʿān. According to some, Christ was replaced by a double, according to others it was Simon of Cyrene or one of the Apostles (Judas).

On the different modern explanations of the *walākin ṣhubbiha lahum* , cf. Michaud, 64-5, who mentions them and himself agrees with Hayek (41) in understanding “it seemed thus to them”, which this writer considers to be the most plausible interpretation. Certain *falāsifa* and some Ismāʿīlī commentators have interpreted this passage thus: the Jews intended to destroy the person of Jesus completely; in fact, they crucified only his *nāsūt* , his *lāhūt* remained alive; cf. L. Massignon, *Le Christ dans les Évangiles selon Ghazālī* , in *REI*, 1932, 523-36, who cites texts of the *Rasāʾil Iḵhwān al-Ṣafāʾ* (ed. Bombay, iv, 115), a passage of Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (about 934), and another of the Ismāʿīlī Muʿayyad Ṣhīrāzī (1077). But this interpretation was not generally accepted and it may be said that there is unanimous agreement in denying the crucifixion. The denial, furthermore, is in perfect agreement with the logic of the Ḳurʿān. The Biblical stories reproduced in it (*e.g.*) Job, Moses, Joseph etc.) and the episodes relating to the history of the beginning of Islam demonstrate that it is “God’s practice” ( *sunnat Allāh* ) to make faith triumph finally over the forces of evil and adversity. “So truly with hardship comes ease”, (XCIV, 5, 6). For Jesus to die on the cross would have meant the triumph of his executioners; but the Ḳurʿān asserts that they undoubtedly failed: “Assuredly God will defend those who believe”; (XXII, 49). He confounds the plots of the enemies of Christ, (III, 54).

On the origins of the Ḳurʿānic concept of the crucifixion (gnostic and docetic Christianity, as maintained by H. Gregoire, seeing here a concession to certain docetic Monophysites, in *Mélanges Charles Diehl* , Paris 1930, i, 107-19; a rejection of Ledit’s

view in *Mahomet , Israël et le Christ* , 151-6, where he attempts to find texts of the *Ḳur'ān* which refer symbolically to the mystery of the rédemption) cf. Michaud, 68-71.

Concerning the second question (the death of Jesus and his ascension to God), an examination of the *Ḳur'ānic* texts XIX, 34, III, 48, XXXIX, 43, and in particular the key text IV, 155-7 (which throws light on the preceding ones and reveals the true Islamic attitude to the death of Jesus), shows (1) that the resurrection referred to in XIX, 84 is the general resurrection which the *Ḳur'ān* proclaims for the end of the world; there was a special resurrection for Jesus, since Jesus did not die on the cross. Later tradition (cf. Hayek, 265-8) stated that it would be at the end of time, when Jesus returned again, that he would die the natural death announced in XIX, 34. (2) The word *tawaffā* usually means a death which is blessed, a return to God for the final judgement, but it is also used in VI, 60 for God's recalling the souls of those who sleep while they are asleep and returning them when they awake (cf. Fränkel, in *ZDMG*, lvi, 77). The verb is twice used of Jesus, in III, 48 and V, 119. The first passage could imply an elevation of the living Jesus to God. The second is ambiguous. The question is settled by the passage IV, 155-7, in which it is stated that Jesus was not killed by the Jews but was raised up to heaven. In other words, we have the following succession of events: apparent death, ascension, second coming, natural death, general resurrection. For all this section, cf. Michaud, 604.

XII. The return of Jesus: The only authority is the passage XLIII, 61, which contains some variant readings: the first reading, that of the Vulgate: *wainnahu la- ʾilm<sup>un</sup>* , “He (Jesus) is truly a knowledge of the Hour”, *i.e.*, he by whose descent the approach of the Hour is known; the second reading, the canonical variant: *wa-innahu la- ʾalam<sup>un</sup>* , “And he (Jesus) is truly a sign for the Hour”; the third reading, in the recension of Ubayy: *wa-innahu la-dhikr<sup>un</sup>* , “And he (Jesus) is truly a warning of the hour”; fourth reading: *wa-innahu*: the *hu* refers to the *Ḳur'ān*.

If the second coming of Christ is taken as established, his death is placed after the Hour, as mentioned above, and then the references in IV, 159 and XIX, 33 are easily explained. Similarly, the expression *kahl<sup>an</sup>* in III, 46 becomes clear, because when he was “raised” he was still *shābb* , young, and had not attained *kuhūla* cf. al-Bayḍāwī, in loco. On the positions of various commentators, cf. Hayek, 244-51.

On these few facts tradition has succeeded in accumulating a mass of detail (cf. al-Bayḍāwī on XLIII, 61, ed. Fleischer, ii, 241) and in producing books devoted specifically to this subject, among them: *al-Taṣriḥ bi-mā tawātara fī nuzūl al-Masīḥ* , of Muh. Anwar Shāh al-Kashmīrī al-Hindī (published in 1965 in Aleppo by Abū 'l-Fattāḥ Abū

Ḡhudda). Some of these details are as follows: Jesus, on returning to the earth, will descend on to the white arcade of the eastern gate at Damascus, or, according to another tradition, on to a hill in the Holy Land which is called ‘Afiḳ; he will be clothed in two *muṣarra* his head will be anointed. He will have in his hand a spear with which he will kill the Antichrist (al-Daḍjdjāl). Then he will go to Jerusalem at the time when the dawn prayer is being said, led by the *imām*. The latter will try to give up his place to him, but Jesus will put him in front of him and will pray behind the *imām* following the prescription of Muḥammad. Then he will kill all the pigs, will break the cross, destroy the synagogues and the churches, and will kill all the Christians except those who believe in him (following IV, 159). Once he has killed the false Messiah (al-Masīḥ al-Daḍjdjāl), all the Peoples of the Book will believe in him, and there will be only one community—that of Islam. Jesus will make justice to reign. Peace will be so complete that it will extend also to the animais among themselves and to man’s relations with the animais. Jesus will remain for forty years and then will die. The Muslims will arrange his funeral and will bury him at Medina, beside Muḥammad in a place left vacant between Abū Bakr and ‘Umar.

There has come to be grafted on to the belief in the second coming of Christ, sometimes merging with it, the doctrine of the Mahdī. This term, which at first had a mainly honorific meaning, gradually came to indicate the very person of him who, at the end of time, is to restore the lost faith. On this doctrine, [see MAHDĪ ].

Finally, it may be mentioned that the Aḥmadiyya sect holds that Jesus, after his apparent death on the cross and resurrection, emigrated to India, to Kaṣhmīr, to preach the Gospel there. He lived there until the age of 120. His tomb is at Srinagar. They believe that the Mahdī is an incarnation simultaneously of Jesus, Muḥammad and an avatar of Krishna [see AḤMADIYYA ].

XIII. Jesus and the Last Judgement: At the time of his nocturnal ascension (XVII, 1), Muḥammad met Abraham, Moses and Jesus. Questioned concerning the Final Hour, Jesus announced: “To me has been confided the knowledge of what will precede its occurrence. As to the occurrence itself, only God can determine this”. This verse enables us to understand the passages where Jesus is called “Knowledge of the hour”: he knows of its existence, but not the exact time, this being reserved to God alone. In spite of his ascension to God’s side and his purification (III, 48), Jesus will not assist God in the Judgement which will follow the Hour: it is God alone who decides, He is the only Judge. On the day of the universal Resurrection, Jesus will be a witness against the Christians, accusing them of having regarded him and his mother as equal with God, but he will not be their judge (cf. *infra*, the different position of Ibn ‘Arabī).

XIV. Jesus in tradition and in the mystic writers: The Christological elements contained in the *Ḳurʿān*, listed systematically above, have been the subject of méditation by ascetics and mystics. There has gradually grown up around the figure of Jesus an abundant hagiographie literature stressing the poverty of the Son of Mary, his detachment from the world, his teaching, his power of performing miracles, his devotion to prayer. These elements, with anecdotes, sermons and advice attributed to Jesus, are found in the classical works of the mystics such as the *Ḥilyat al-awliyā*ʹ of Abū Nuʿaym, the *Rawḍ al-rayāḥīn* of al-Yāfiʿī, the *Ḳūt al-ḵulūb* of al-Makkī, the *Nawādir* of al-Tirmidhī, and especially in the works of al-Ḡhazālī: *Iḥyāʹ ʿulūm al-dīn* , *al-Durra al-fāḵhira* , *Mukāshafāt* . Even in the “secular” writers like al-Damirī in his *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān* and Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih in his *Tkd* , there may be found interesting details on Christological literature. Fifty years ago, Asín Palacios had collected and translated the texts concerning Jesus in the works of al-Ḡhazālī and had published them under the title of *Logia et agrapha Domini Jesu* , in *Patrologia orientalis* (xiii (1919), 335-431; xix (1926), 532-624). In his turn, Father Michel Hayek collected and translated texts about Jesus and classified them systematically in a complete Christology ( *Le Christ de lʼIslām* , Paris 1959; Arabic text: *Al-Masiḥfi ʿl-Islām* , Beirut 1961). A large part of the work is occupied with Jesus’s teaching; it includes *logia* on poverty, on detachment from the life of this world, denunciation of false wisdom and of the specious sureties of this world, dialogues, pilgrim stories, the resurrection of the dead who bear witness against the vanity of the world against which Jesus constantly warned his Companions, his Apostles, the Children of Israēl and his listeners in general. His description is based on that of the Christian ascetics and monksc wearing a woollen habit, detachment, a life of solitude, the power of the initiate to perforal cures.

When, later, the Ṣūfīs came into direct contact with the Gospels, they took from them the elements which corresponded to their ascetic ideas, which they themselves attributed to Jesus: “this explains the gospel background of certain *logia* and accounts which are here almost always taken out of their original context” (Hayek, 136). IbnʿArabī (d. 638/1240) went even further: he stated that it is Jesus who merits “the Seal of universal Holiness” because he possesses the quality of faithfulness in the faith ( *amāna* ), because he holds in his hands the keys of living breath and because he is at present in a state of deprivation and journeying” (cf. Hayek, 262-3). “And”, he adds, “know that without doubt Jesus will descend and will be our judge, according to the law of Muḥammad” (*ibid.*).

XV. Islamo-Christian polemic concerning Jesus: The central place in the Christian religion of the dogmas of the Incarnation and the Redemption made inevitable

doctrinal conflict between Christian and Muslim theologians. The latter worked out fairly rapidly a System of apologetics which became accepted as classic and the features of which have been repeated without variation until the present time; cf. INDJĪL where a substantial bibliography is given. On the most recent Muslim books on Christ see the article by J. Jomier in *MIDEO*, v (1958), *Quatre ouvrages en arabe sur le Christ*, 367-86, and G. C. Anawati, *Polémique, apologie et dialogue islamo-chrétiens, Positions classiques médiévales et positions contemporaines*, in *Euntes docete*, Rome 1969.

Two works published in Cairo show a new tendency in the Muslim approach to the problem of Christ. The first (1952) is by the Egyptian essayist ‘Abbās Maḥmūd al-‘Aḳḳād and is entitled *The spirit of the Messiah* ( *‘Abḳariyyat al-Masīḥ* ). This work, which enjoyed wide success, may be described thus: the writer approaches Christ with great respect—the Christ of the actual Gospels and not only the ‘Īsā of the Ḳur’ān; he defends vigorously the historicity of Jesus and the authenticity of the Gospels, the only sources for our knowledge of Christ; he rejects nationalist prejudice against the miracles but, following a method which he has worked out for himself, he does not make use of them in his exposition. Finally, al-‘Aḳḳād has a clear grasp of certain aspects of Christ’s teaching: the insistence on love, the complementary role of the Gospel counsels, the primarily spiritual character of Christianity: this is essentially a demand for perfection made of the conscience and not a religious law bristling with texts. From the Christian side he has been criticized for announcing arbitrarily when he approaches the account of the Passion and death of Jesus: “This is where history ends and belief begins”, whereas the remainder of the book rests on the authenticity of the Gospels, which he defends vigorously. Furthermore, the dogmatic teaching of Christ is left in the background.

The second book (1954), *An iniquitous city* ( *Qariya zālīma* ) is by a doctor, Dr. Kāmil Ḥusayn, former rector of the University of ‘Ayn Shams (Cairo). It is presented rather as a work of imagination than a historical biography, being a personal meditation on the trial and condemnation of Christ, a trial considered as the greatest crime in history. The whole thread of the story unwinds on Good Friday and the work is conceived in the form of a triptych describing successively, in a style both sober and elegant, the attitudes of the Jews, the Apostles and disciples, and finally of the Romans. Concentrating on this or that scene (Calvary, the meeting of the Apostles), on this or that person (Caiaphas, Lazarus, Pilate, Mary Magdalene) the author is able to stress profound psychological details and to discuss great metaphysical or moral problems: liberty, authority, the existence of God, the relations between religion and the state, conscience etc. Without being described anywhere, the face of Christ is present

everywhere. The essential part of his mission is to remind men that conscience, which is a participation in the divine light, must be above everything, above even religion if need be. Very skilfully, in order to distress neither Christians nor Muslims, the author leaves the problem of the Crucifixion in the background. Although to a certain extent the whole book converges on this main event (all the characters speak of it, all the movement of the book leads to it, nature herself is covered with darkness on the afternoon of Good Friday), the author does not actually state that Christ was crucified. Nor however does he deny it. He merely repeats a Qur'ānic saying: "God has raised Jesus to Himself", a saying which in the context can receive an acceptable interpretation from Christian readers. Finally, in one of the last chapters. "Return to the Sermon on the Mount", the author movingly develops the words of Christ. He summarizes them for the modern world into the three following points: one should reject with all one's might all the false gods of money, the state, religion or the common good; one should truly live according to the precept of brotherly love; finally one should free oneself of any passion which might stifle the voice of conscience.

The book has been translated into English by Kenneth Cragg under the title *City of Wrong . A Friday in Jerusalem* . Djambatan-Amsterdam 1959 and into Spanish by Jose Maria Fornéas; the Spanish translation has as an introduction the long article on the book by G. C. Anawati in *MIDEO*, ii (1959), 71-134, entitled *Jésus et ses juges d'après "La Cité inique" du Dr. Kamel Hussein* .

On a portrait of Jesus by a contemporary Persian writer, Shīn Parto, in a short book entitled *Haft čehrè (Sept visages)*, cf. the article by P. de Beaurecueil in *MIDEO*, ii, (1955), 310-2.

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