

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE ORTHODOX AND MU'TAZILITE APPROACH TOWARDS CHRISTIANS DOCTRINE

Dr. A. Rashid Rahmat

*Assistant Professor Department of
Islamic Studies, Islamia University
Bahawalpur*

Islam is the only one of the great non-Christian religions which gives a place to Christ in its book, yet it denies his divinity, his atonement for mankind, and supreme place as lord of all, in its sacred literature.¹

No doubt that not only the Qur'an itself but also the Muslim scholars criticised Christian doctrine of God throughout the history. More importantly, the orthodox and other Muslim sects such as Mu'tazilites etc. also vary among themselves in their approach to understand the Christian Doctrine.

The Orthodox mostly depended upon revelation. The Mu'tazilites, a famous rationalist theological movement of Islam, on the other hand criticised Christian doctrine through their logical and Philosophical way of argumentation. They were involved in the process of bringing Greek conceptions into the discussion of Islamic dogma.²

The Mu'tazilites were so extremists in their five points that they included the Orthodox Muslim as Kull-abiyya and Ash'arites with the Christian on the issue of the attributes of God. The Mu'tazilites regarded the divine attributes as being

10. Ibid, 275.
11. Ibn 'Abbas : *Kitab al-Lughat fi al-Qur'an*, p. 39.
12. *Al-Furuq fi al-Lughah*, p. 93.
13. Ibid, p. 194.
14. Ibid, p. 194.
15. Ibn 'Abbas : *Kitab al-Lughat fi al-Qur'an*, p. 1.
16. Jamil Sa'id/Dawud Salum ; *Mu'jam Lahajat al-Qaba'il wa al-Amsar*, 1: 143, Baghdad, 1978.
17. *Al-Furuq fi al-Lughah*, pp. 36-37.
18. Ibn 'Abbas : *Kitab al-Lughat fi al-Qur'an*, pp. 40, 46 ; Jamil Sa'id/Dawud Salum : *Mu'jam Lahajat al-Qaba'il wa al-Amsar*, 1: 19.
19. *Dalalat al-Alfaz*, p. 215, Cairo, 1976.
20. Chaudhry Mohammad Akram: *Hal Yaqa'u Taraduf al-Lughawi fi al-Qur'an al-Karim*, pp. 31-32, Makkah al-Mukaramah, 1985.
21. *Bayan I'jaz al-Quran*, p. 29, (three articles by al-Khattabi, al-Rumani and al-Jurjani in one volume), ed. by M. Khalf Allah and M. Zaghlul Salam, Cairo, 1963.
22. Al-Buti, M. Sa'id Ramadan : *Min Rawa' al-Qur'an*, p. 165, Damascus, 1972.
23. 'Aishah 'Abd al-Rahman bint al-Shati' : *Al-Ijaz al-Bayani li al Qur'an wa Masa'il Ibn al-Azraq*, p. 198, (footnote), Cairo, 1950.
24. *Min Balaghat al-Qur'an*, p. 57, Cairo, 1950.
25. *Al-'Ijaz al-Bayani li al-Qur'an*, pp. 193-198.
26. *Ta'ammulat fi Surat al-Haqah*, pp. 49-58, Makkah, 1977 ; *Ta'amulat fi Surat Maryam*, pp. 153-154, Makkah, 1978.

There are some, on the other hand, who whether or not, they believe in the occurrence of synonymy in Arabic in general side with Abu Hilal in the case of the Qur'an, for example, al-Jahiz²⁰, al-Khattabi²¹, al-Baqilani²² among the ancients, and Ahmad Amin²³, Ahmad Ahmad Badawi²⁴, 'Aishah bint al-Shati²⁵, Hasan Muhammad Bajudah²⁶ in modern times.

A close study of Qur'anic words which are considered to be synonyms reveals that they even if they are derived from different dialects, do not have quite the same sense. This can be verified by investigating the semantic implications of the words like كذب and افك , جهل and سئمه or the other assumed synonyms in the lexicons written in the last thirteen centuries. Moreover, we can credit Abu Hilal for the invaluable contribution to the Arabic semantics by giving new dimensions of understanding the words employed by al-Qur'an al-Karim.

Notes and Bibliography

1. Wafi, 'Abd al-Wahid : *Fiqh al-Lughah*, p. 108, 8th ed., Cairo, N.D. ; Ibrahim Anis : *Fi al-Lahajat al-'Arabiyyah*, p. 40, Cairo, 1965 ; for the characteristics of the common Arabic language see chapter : ظروف تكوّن العربية الفصحى وخصائصها : in *Fusul Fi Fiqh al-'Arabiyyah*, by Ramadan 'Abd al-Tawwab, pp. 62-78, Cairo, 1973.
2. There are discussions of this topic scattered throughout the various books on Lughah, and al-Suyuti has a detailed chapter in *Al-Itqan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an*.
3. *Kitab al-Lughat fi al-Qur'an* ed. by Salah al-Din al-Munajjid, Cairo, 1946.
4. Ibid. preface pp. 5-7.
5. *Dirasat fi fiqh al-Lughah*, p. 299-30, Beirut, 1978.
6. Ibid p. 300 ; Ramadan 'Abd al-Tawwab : *Fusul fi fiqh al-'Arabiyyah*, pp. 316-17.
7. *Al-Furuq fi al-Lughah*, p. 16, Beirut, 1973.
8. Ibn 'Abbas : *Kitab al-Lughah fi al-Qnr'an*, p. 22.
9. *Al-Furuq fi al-Lughah*, p. 272.

The same is held by Wafi 'Abd al-Wahid, Ibrahim Anis Ramadan 'Abd al-Tawwab, already referred to in previous pages. So the words *أقسم* and *حلف*, *بعث* and *أرسل*, *فضل* and *آثر*, are dialectal variants for the same meaning in each unit.⁶

Although Abu Hilal does not reject the popular view that the Qur'an was revealed in a language which represents an amalgam of many different dialects, he nevertheless, discriminate between the meanings in the Qur'an even of synonyms from different dialects. For example, he discriminates between the meanings of *نصيب* and *خلاق*⁷, although the latter is merely the equivalent of the former in the dialect of Kinanah⁸. He discriminates between *عصية*⁹ and *شرذمة*¹⁰, although the latter is merely the equivalent of the former in the dialect of Jurham¹¹. He gives distinct definitions of *جهل* and *سفه* viz. "a جاهل is one who considers himself to be knowledgeable—"¹² and *سفه* : ضعف أالرئ : سفه "weakness in judgment"¹³, and says : "ثم أجرى السفه على كل جهل"¹⁴, although *سفه* is merely the equivalent of *جهل* in the dialect of Kinanah¹⁵, and of *جنون* in the dialect of Himyar, and of *Tay*¹⁶. Abu Hilal discriminates between *انك* and *كنب*¹⁷, although the former is merely the equivalent of the latter in the dialect of Quraysh¹⁸.

These and many other examples show that Abu Hilal does not accept the occurrence of synonymy in the Qur'an, even in the use of words of identical meaning from different dialects. For the same reason, Abu Hilal has severely been criticised by most of the modern linguists. For example, Ibrahim Anis, in a context referring to Abu Hilal and those who held the same views, says :

"أما الترادف فقد وقع بكثرة في ألفاظ القرآن رغم محاولة بعض المفسرين أن يلمسوا فروقاً خيالية لا وجود لها الا في أذهانهم المتفرقة بين تلك الألفاظ القرآنية المترادفة"¹⁹

13	are derived from the dialect of Tamim and	ays 'Ilan ;
6	„ „ „	'Amman, Azd Shanu'ah and Khath'am.
5	„ „ „	Tay', Midhhaj, Madyan, and Ghassan.
4	„ „ „	Banu Hanifah, Hadramawt, and Ash'ar ;
3	„ „ „	Anmar ;
2	„ „ „	Khaza'ah, Saba', Yamamah, Muzaynah, and Thaqif ;
1	„ „ „	Asd ;
1	„ „ „	Khazraj ;
1	„ „ „	al-'Amaliqah, Sadus, and Sa'd al-'Ashirah ⁴ .

Most of the Arab linguists, both modern and ancient, are of the opinion that the language used in the Qur'an represents an amalgam of many different dialects then prevalent in the Arabian peninsula, besides the fact that overwhelming majority of the entries of vocabulary has been derived from the dialect of Quraysh, and that different dialectal variants for the same meaning, with the passage of time, were considered to be synonymous. For example, subhi al-Salih, on precisely these grounds says :

” وقد أتاح لهذه اللغة طول احتكاكها باللهجات العربية اقتباس مفردات تملك أحياناً نظائرها ولا تملك منها شيئاً أحياناً أخرى ، حتى إذا أصبحت جزءاً من محصولها اللغوي فلا غضاضة أن يستعمل القرآن الالفاظ الجديدة المقتبسة الى جانب الالفاظ القرشية الخالصة القديمة⁵“

ABU HILAL AL'ASKRI'S TREATMENT OF VARIOUS DIALECTS USED IN THE QUR'AN

Dr. Mohammad Akram Chaudhary

Department of Arabic Islamia University

Bahawalpur

The interaction and overlapping of various dialects (*lughat* or *lahajat*) of the Arabian peninsula has been a complex issue in the history of the Arabic language. Without going into details of various dialects, it seems important to point out that it is generally accepted that the Qur'an was revealed in the common Arabic language (*al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah al-Mushtarakah*) — a language understood in the whole of the Arabian peninsula, and used by poets and orators as a medium of communication.¹ A small book on the dialects used in the Qur'an² ascribed to 'Abd Allah b 'Abbas (d 68 A.H.)³ is transmitted by Ibn Hasnun, in which numerous entries from different tribes are listed. Although probably not comprehensive, this work determines the origin of at least 255 words used in the Qur'an.

Of these :

104 are derived from the dialect of Quraysh ;

45	”	”	”	Hudhayl ;
36	”	”	”	Kinana ;
23	”	”	”	Himyar ;
21	”	”	”	Jurham

79. Al-Isbahani, *al-Aghani*, vol. 3, P. 123 (Zayd was a Jahily poet)
80. Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Muhabbar*, PP. 171, 172 ; *al-Munammaq*, PP. 175-78
81. Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Ma'arif* PP. 27, 29 ; al-Mas'udi, *Muruj* vol. I, P. 89, vol. 2, P. 102
82. Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Ma'arif*, P. 27.
83. Al-Mas'udi, *Nuruj*, vol. I, P. 84
84. Ibid P. 87
85. Q. al-Bruj 85 : 4-7; al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, vol. 2, P. 123; al-Mas'udi, *Mruj*, vol. I, PP. 80, 81
86. Al-Mas'udi, *Mruj* vol. I, P. 88
87. Ibid.
88. Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Ma'aeif* P. 27.

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60. Ibid; al-Tabari, *Tafsir*, vol. 17, P. 97; al-Mas'udi, *Muruj*, vol. 2 PP. 242, 42
61. Ibn Qutaybah. *al-Ma'arif*, P. 266
62. Ibn Kathir *Tafsir*, vol. I, P. 104 ; al-Tabari, vol. I, P. 126
63. Al-Tabari. *Tafsir*, vol. I, PP 253
64. Al-Tabari. *Tafsir*, vol. I, PP. 252, 53 (10) ibid
- 65.
66. Al-Tabari, *Tafsir*, vol. I, P, 126
67. Ibn Habib, *al-Muhabbar*, P. 161 (He gives a list of eight people from the Quraysh who were known as *zindiq*, not one of them accepted Islam except Abu Sufyan, see *al-Munammaq*, PP. 487, 88
68. Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, see "zindiq" vol. 10 P. 147
69. Al-Maqdasi. *al-Bad wa al-Tarikh*, vol. 4, P. 302
70. Q. al-Jathiyah 45 : 24
71. Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil* vol. I, P 241
72. Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil* vol. I, P. 242; for further ideas of Mazdak see al-Tabari, vol. 2, PP. 92, 93
73. Al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, vol. 2, P. 92 ; Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Ma'arif*, P. 291
74. Al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, vol. 2, PP. 92, 93; Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Ma'arif*, P. 292:
75. Al-Tabari, *arikh*, vol. 2, P. 95 ; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil* vol. I, P. 243 ; al-Malati (d. 377 A. H) considered the Mazdaikiyyah as a sort of zandaqah, see *al-Taubih wa al-Cadd* (Baghdad, n. d) P. 92 ; al-Yaqubi, *Tarikh* vol. I, P. 257, al-Yaqubi mentions that Hujr b. 'Amar al-Kindi who converted to zanadaqah.
76. Kister, A. J., "al-Hira," (Arabica xv, 1968) PP. 144, 45
77. Ibid.
78. Al-Mas'udi, *Mruj* vol. 2, P. 103 ; The Qur'an also refers to this group see al-Mumtahinah 23 : 37 ; al-Jathiyah 45 : 24 ; also see al-Sharastani, *al-Milal wa al-Nihal* (Cairo, 1968) vol. 2 PP. 79, 80 ; He mentioned them as al-Mu'attilah.

42. Kister, M J., "Some Notes on Relations with Arabia", (Arabia xv 1968) P. 145
43. Q. al-Baqarah 2 : 105 ; Al-'Imran 3 ; 64, 70, 71, 72, 75, 98, 99
44. Q. al-Bruj 85 : 5-9 ; al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, vol. 2, P. 123 (According to al-Tabari, (some twenty thousand Christians were killed) ; al-Ms'udi *Muruj al-Dhahab*, vol. 2. P. 52 ; Wahb b. Munabbih, *Kitab al-Tijan* (San'a 1979), P. 312.
45. Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Ma'arif* (1970) P. 266
46. Al-Maqdasi, *al-Bad wa al-Tarikh*, voi. 4, P. 31
47. Al-Ya'qubi, *Tarikh*, vol. I, P. 257 ; Jawad 'Ali, *al-Arab Qabl al-Islam*, vol. 6, P. 514
48. Al-Samhudi, *Wafa al-Wafa*, vol. I, P. 177
49. Ibid P. 178
50. Q. al-Ma'idah 5 : 18
51. Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Ma'arif*, P. 226; al-Maqda'i, *al-Bad wa al-Tarikh*, vol. 4, P. 31
52. Al-Ya'qubi, *Tarikh*, vol. I, P. 257; *al-Maqdasi, al-Bad'*, vol. 4, P. 31
Ibn Qutaybah, *al-Ma'arif*, PP. 27, 29
53. Ibn Hisham, *Sirah* vol. 1, 35
54. Al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, vol. 2, P. Wahb b, Munabbih, *ai-Tijan*, PP. 312, 13
55. Ahmad Amin, *Fajr al-Islam* (Beirut 1969) P. 25
56. O'Leary, D.L., *Arabia before Muhammad*, PP. 125, 26, 169, 170 (It is note worthy that the Gospel is not found in the ancient arabic language is spoken by Jesus ; all the translations are based on Greek versions of the Gospels.
57. O'Leary, D.L., *op. cit.* PP. 126, 29
58. Lane E.W., *Laxicon* (Arabic—English, Beirut, 1958) ; Morony, M., article "Magus" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*
59. Al-Maqdasi, *al-Bad wa al-Tarikh*, vol. 4, PP. 26, 27

- mentions their names, see *Wafa al-Wafa*, vol. I PP. 162—214.
21. Wensinck, A. J., *Muhammad and the Jews of Madina* (Eng. tr. by Wolfgang, Berlin Adiyok, 1982) P. 32.
 22. Seargent R. B., "Sunnah Jami'ah", (B.O.S.A.S. XLI, 1278) P. 36.
 23. Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil*, vol. I, PP. 680, 81.
 24. Ibn Hisham, *Sirah*, vol. I, PP. 584, 85 ; al-Samhudi, *Wafa al-Wafa* vol. I PP. 218, 219.
 25. Smith, W. R., *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*.
 26. Jawad Ali, *Tarikh al-Arab qabl al-Islam*, vol. 5, P. 487.
 27. Ibid P. 488
 28. Ibid P. 488.
 29. Ibid P. 503 (Every tribe had its own hakim whose ability to administer justice was known to them, see Jawad Ali, *Tarikh al-Arab*, vol. 5, PP. 635-654)
 30. Jawad Ali, *Tarikh al-Arab*, vol. 5, P. 497.
 31. Al-Ya'qubi, *Tarikh*, (Dar Sadir, Beirut, 1960) vol. I, P. 258 ; Ibn Habib gives a list of thirty four *hukkams* of the clans of the Quraysh, see *al-Muhabbar*, PP. 132-37.
 32. Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab* see "al-kanin"
 33. Muwayei, *Subh al-A'sha* (Cairo, 1963) vol. I, P. 398 ; al-Muwayei, *Nihayat al-Arab*, vol. 3, P. 132.
 34. Al-Muwavri, *Nihayat al-Arab*, vol. 3, P. 128.
 35. Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirah*, vol. I, P. 208
 36. Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirah*, vol. I, PP. 15-18 ; al-Mawayri, *Nihayat al-Arab* Vol. PP. 129, 30; al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 2, PP 1121-114
 37. Al-Muwayri, *Nihayat al-Arab* vol. 3, PP. 132, 33; A similar contention between 'A'idh and al-Harith was brought to a *kahin* at, 'Usfan, see Ibn Habib, *al-Muhammaq*, PP. 107-108.
 38. Mitchell, E.K., article, "Prophecy in Christianity", Ency. of Religion and Ethics ; and Konig, E., "Prophecy Hebrew" in the same Ency.
 39. Ibn Khaldun, *al-Muqadimah*, (Eng. tr. Rosenthal) vol. I, P. 305
 40. Q. al-An'am 6 : al-Nahl 16 : 57; al-Saffat 37 : 149 ; al-Zukhruf 42 : 16 and al-Tur 52 : 39
 41. Al-Maqdasi, *al-Bad wa al-Tarikh* vol. 4, P. 32.

- problem of settlement in their respective areas, see Ibn Habib *al-Munammaq* PP. 31—36; al-Baladhuri, *Ansab al-Ashraf* (ed. Hamidullah) vol. I, P. 59; Kister, M.J. "Macca and Tamim" (J.E.S.H.O. viii, 1965) PP. 118—123; Ibn Habib, *al-Muhabbar* PP. 162, 63.
5. Ibn Habib, *al-Munammaq*, PP. 335—344; Ibn Hisham, *Sirah*, vol. 1, PP. 133—35; al-Mas'udi, *Muruj al-Dhahab* (Beirut, 1973) vol. 2, PP. 270, 71; Ibn Hisham *Sirah*, (Eng. tr.) P. 57.
 6. Ibn Hisham, *Sirah*, vol. I, PP. 129—30; Ibn Habib, *al-Munammaq*, PP. 530—31; Ibn Khaldun *Tarikh*, vol. 2, P. 693.
 7. Ibn Hisham, *Sirah* vol. I, P. 199; Ibn Habib *al-Munammaq*, PP. 143, 44; Wolf, E. R., "The Social Organization of Mecca and Origin of Islam", *Southwestern Journal Anthropology*, vol. 4, 1951, P. 337; Shaban, M.A., *History* vol. I, P. 7.
 8. Ibn Habib, *al-Munammaq*, PP. 143, 44.
 9. Ibn Habib, *al-Munammaq*, PP. 271, 72. The tribes of Khuza'ah, Kinanah, Banu 'Amir, Kilab, Ka'b Thaqif, 'Adwan and Yarbu' b. Hanzalah were included in *Hums*, see Ibn Habib, *al-Muhabbar*, PP. 178, 79; Ibn Manzur, *Lisan* (Beirut 1956) vol. 6, P. 58.
 10. Ibn Habib, *al-Munammaq*, PP. 144, 45; al-Azraqi, *Akhbar Makkah*, vol. I P. 175; Watt, M.A., article "Hums" in *Ency. of Islam*.
 11. Al-Azraqi, *Akhbar Makkah* (Dar Undulus, Beirut, 1969) vol. I, PP. 176, 77; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil* (Dar Sadir, Beirut, 1965) vol. I, PP. 451, 52.
 12. Al-Isbahani, *al-Aghani*, (Beirut, 1970) vol. I, P. 35.
 13. Wolf, "The Social Organization of Mecca" op. cit. PP. 341, 42.
 14. O'Leary *Arabia before Muhammad* (London, 1927) P. 184.
 15. For details see the battles between tribes and clans, a series of battles among the clans of Rabi'ah, and between Rabi'ah, and between Rabi'ah and Tamim, and between the clans of Qays and between Qays and Kinanah see Jawad 'Ali, *Tarikh al-Arab Qabl al-Islam*, vol. 5.
 16. Al-Sambudi, *Wafa al-Wafa* (Beirut 1971) vol. I, P. 177 Watt, W.M. article "al-Madinah" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (new ed.).
 17. Q. al-Hashar 59 : 7 & 17.
 18. Al-Sambudi, *Wafa al-Wafa*, vol. I, PP. 162, 199 (al-utum al-Mazdalif was particularly built for defence, lil hurub).
 19. Watt, W.M., "al-Madinah" in *Ency. of Islam*.
 20. *ibid*; al-Sambudi discussed the atoms of Madinah in detail. Even he