

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE QUR'AN
AN ASSESSMENT FROM A CHRISTIAN
PERSPECTIVE

By

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, do certify that the content of this dissertation is my own original work and was not previously submitted to any other University for a degree either in part or in its entirety.

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ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to gain an understanding of the *al-ruh* (Holy Spirit) from a Muslim perspective and a comparison with the Christian perspective. Chapter 1 is an introduction. Chapter 2 and 3 are textual study; the meaning and usage of the *al-ruh* (Holy Spirit) in the Qur'an will be examined, especially in Muslim Dictionaries, Encyclopaedias and Commentaries as compared with the meaning and usage in the Biblical and Jewish scriptures. Obviously, the Holy Spirit plays an active role with humankind in creation and in revelation; the *al-ruh* has evidently inspired all the prophets and even believers according to the Qur'an. The experience of Muhammad with respect to the *al-ruh* is also mentioned in the Qur'an even when he was not yet aware of the work of Holy Spirit as well as the person of the Holy Spirit, as the third person of the Trinity in Christianity. Chapter 3 carries on the findings from the Qur'an, and furthermore give explanations as well as evaluate exegeses and various commentators' opinions regarding *al-ruh*. Moreover, there are some disagreements among various Muslim commentators as manifested in their interpretations. Such disagreement is discernable with respect to the doctrine of Holy Spirit as a Person in the Trinity. In addition to this, various issues are investigated like: 'Where did the divisions and disunity come from?' Is it possible to find a satisfactory answer? 'Is *al-ruh* the angel Gabriel?' since the angel Gabriel is only mentioned once (66:4). Nevertheless, most of the commentators indicate that the Holy Spirit and the Spirit as the angel Gabriel are the same. Is there a gap in understanding between Muhammad and commentators? Is there a gap between classical and contemporary commentators? Chapter 4 presents a report of the empirical fieldwork carried out through interviews. Questionnaires are designed based on findings in the Qur'an and what commentators have said. A cross section of Muslims in the Western Cape of South Africa as well as Muslims from other African countries presently in Stellenbosch is selected for interviews. Several Islamic sects (i.e. Sunni, Sufis) who are found in South Africa are included in these interviews along with relevant information obtained from Internet sources. An analysis of data provides the basic thoughts for the assessment and response from the Christian point of view in Chapters 5 and 6.

Chapter 5 is a comparative study. The aim is to find out similarities in both Christian and Muslim religious concepts, thereby attempting to build up on common grounds;

and to find out the differences in understanding about the Holy Spirit and to restore an agreeable understanding of the concept of the Holy Spirit. The ultimate goal is to use the idea of the *al-ruh* from Qur'anic and Islamic concepts in order to build a bridge to the understanding of the Holy Spirit in Christianity. Some concepts are common to both Christianity and Islam, i.e. spirit (*ruh*), soul (*nafs*) and conscience (*fitrah*). Some fundamental doctrines are essential for both religions. For instance, The Oneness of God is understood in Islam as *Tahwid* (i.e. Oneness of Allah), and in Christianity, as Trinity, the Godhead or Triune God. Besides, both religions in terms of this doctrine contain elements of the transcendence and immanence of God in relation to creation. The key issue investigated further is 'whether the Spirit is created or eternal' and 'Is *al-ruh* the created Spirit or the creator Spirit'? The question of how a Christian explains to a Muslim that Jesus is ultimately the *Ruh* Allah (the Spirit of God) introduced in the next chapter.

Chapter 6 is a Missiological approach which is based on the fundamental knowledge of the Holy Spirit and the Trinity in Systematic theology and Missiology. Certain topics are examined from a comparative religious point of view; firstly, a comparison of the natural human with the spiritual human to find out the function of the conscience and of spirituality from a Biblical point of view. Secondly, a comparison of Jesus with Adam and an angel in terms of the purpose for which God created the whole world is made with a focus on Jesus in humanity. Thirdly, a definition of the divinity of Jesus in terms of two aspects: Jesus as the first-born Son of God and Jesus as Messiah (the anointed one and saviour of the world), using a historical, traditional and Christological understanding. Fourthly, a Pneumatological approach is applied as an innovation to this study. Its endeavours generally explore the human religious experience, in order to initiate a 'dialectical dialogue'; and subsequently to focus on the Trinitarian experience in Islam. An interesting example of martyrdom as an imitation of Christ on the cross can be found among Sufi Sunni Muslims. This is an evidence of the freedom of the Holy Spirit working wherever he wills.

In brief, although the Person and the work of the Holy Spirit are not very obvious in the Qur'an, a careful study makes it increasingly apparent. Finally, the work of the Holy Spirit is still alive in all religions, not least in Islam, as the resulting evidence of my research suggests.

Kort samevatting

Hoofstuk 1 dek die inleiding tot die navorsing. Die vraagstuk, motief, hipotese en metodologie word bekend gestel. Agtergrond en motivering, voorgestelde bydrae en moontlike waarde van hierdie navorsing word ook gedek. Hierdie studie is 'n poging om 'n begrip te vorm van die *al-ruh* (Heilige Gees) vanuit 'n Moslem-perspektief en 'n vergelykende beskouing vanuit 'n Christelike perspektief.

Hoofstuk 2 behels 'n tekstuele studie. Die betekenis en gebruik van die term *al-ruh* (Heilige Gees) in die Koran sal ondersoek word, veral soos vervat in Moslem woordeboeke, ensiklopedieë en kommentare en sal op sy beurt weer vergelyk word met die betekenis en gebruik daarvan in die Bybel en Joodse skriftuur. Dit is voor die hand liggend dat die Heilige Gees aktief betrokke is by die mensdom in terme van skepping en openbaring; dit is ook duidelik dat die *al-ruh* al die profete en navolgers wat hul geloof vestig in die Koran geïnspireer het. Die Koran verwys ook na Mohammed se ervaring met die *al-ruh*, selfs al was hy nog nie bewus van die werking van die Heilige Gees of van die Persoon van die Heilige Gees as die derde Persoon in die Christelike Drie-Eenheid nie.

Hoofstuk 3 is ook 'n tekstuele studie waarin ek sal uitbrei op my bevindings in hoofstuk 2 betreffende die Koran. Ek maak ook my bevindinge bekend rakende die verduideliking, eksegeese en opinies van verskeie kommentators rakende *al-ruh*. Daar is egter meningsverskil onder verskeie Moslem kommentators. Dit kom veral na vore in die debat oor presies wanneer die leerstelling van die Heilige Gees as 'n Persoon in die Drie-Eenheid uitgeklaar en alom bekend word binne die Christelike milieu. Vraagstukke wat ondersoek sal word is die volgende: 'Waar het die verdeeldheid ontstaan?'; 'Is dit moontlik om 'n bevredigende antwoord te vind?'. 'n Ander vraag is byvoorbeeld: 'Is *al-ruh* die engel Gabriël?', aangesien daar slegs eenmaal melding gemaak word van hom (66:4). Tog het meeste van die kommentators aangedui dat die Heilige Gees en die Gees van die engel Gabriël een en dieselfde is. Handhaaf die kommentators 'n ander siening as Mohammed? Verskil die klassieke en hedendaagse kommentators van mekaar?

Hoofstuk 4 behels empiriese veldwerk by wyse van onderhoude. Vraelyste is ontwerp, gegrond op die Koran en bevindings rakende die kommentators in Hoofstukke 2 en 3.

‘n Groot verskeidenheid Moslems in die Wes-Kaap, sowel as Moslems uit ander Afrika-lande wat nou in Stellenbosch woon, sal gekies word vir die onderhoude. Verskeie Islam-sektes in Suid-Afrika (bv. Sunni en Sufi) sal bespreek word en ek sal verskeie Internet-bronne insluit. ‘n Ontleding van die data sal as basis gebruik word vir ‘n reaksie vanuit ‘n Christelike perspektief. Dit sal geskied in hoofstukke 5 en 6.

Hoostuk 5 is ‘n vergelykende studie. Die doelwit is om gemeenskaplike grond te vind tussen beide godsdienste in ‘n poging om daarop voort te bou. Die verskille in die verstaan van die Heilige Gees moet ook geïdentifiseer word en daar moet gepoog word om die situasie aan te spreek. Die groot doel is om die gedagte van die *al-ruh* binne die Koraniese en Islamitiese konsepte te benut as brug vir Moslems vir die verstaan van die Heilige Gees binne die Christelike konteks. Sommige konsepte word gedeel deur die Christendom en Islam, bv. gees (*ruh*), siel (*nafs*) en gewete (*fitrah*). Sekere fundamentele leerstellinge is wesenlik aan beide godsdienste: Die Eenheid van God word *Tahwid* (Eenheid van Allah) genoem in die Islam, en in die Christendom word verwys na die Godheid, die Drie-Enige God of die Drie-Enigheid. Bo en behalwe dit, bevat beide godsdienste elemente van die bonatuurlike inwoning van God in die mens. Die verdere sleutelvraagstuk wat ondersoek sal word is of die Gees geskep is of ewig is. Is *al-ruh* die geskape Gees of die Skepper-Gees? Die wyse waarop die Christen aan Moslems kan verduidelik dat Jesus die *Ruh* Allah (die Gees van God) is, sal in die volgende hoofstuk aandag geniet.

Hoostuk 6 volg ‘n missiologiese benadering en is gegrond op die fundamentele kennis van die Heilige Gees en die Drie-Eenheid in die Sistematiese teologie en Missiologie. Sekere onderwerpe sal ondersoek word deur godsdienste met mekaar te vergelyk, bv.: eerstens, vergelyk die natuurlike mens met die geestelike mens en bepaal so die funksie van die gewete en spiritualiteit binne ‘n Bybelse benadering. Tweedens, die vergelyking tussen Jesus, Adam en engele en God se doel met die skep van die wêreld. Dit sal die fokus vorm van Jesus se menslikheid. Derdens, word die goddelikheid van Jesus gedefinieer in twee opsigte: Jesus as die Eersgebore Seun van God, en Jesus as Messias, die Gesalfde en Redder van die wêreld. Dit word gedoen met uitsluiting van die historiese, tradisionele en Christologiese benadering; In die vierde instansie: Pneumatologie is ‘n opwindende en nuwe benadering in hierdie veld. Die benaderingswyse is oor die algemeen om agter die individu se godsdienstige ervaring te kom om sodoende ‘n dialektiese gesprek te inisieer. Daarenbove, in die

ondersoek rakende die Drie-Eenheids-ervaring in die Islam, word 'n interessante voorbeeld gevind van 'n Christus-agtige martelaarsfiguur aan 'n kruis. Dit word aangetref by sowel die Sufi as Sunni Moslems. Dit is ook 'n duidelike aanduiding dat dit die Heilige Gees vrystaan om werksaam te wees waar Hy ook al wil. Hoewel nie baie duidelik nie, is daar dus tog wel genoegsame sinspeling op die Heilige Gees in die Koran. Ja, ... die werking van die Heilige Gees is inderdaad lewend in alle godsdienste, ook in Islam.



DEDICATION

To

--My Heavenly Father

Whose indwelling Spirit within me

even since and forever

--My earthly Father

Mr. Tao Yi Ming

Who is in heaven with my Lord

since 1992, I shall see him



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Lastly, I would like to conclude by quoting a Chinese saying, “a cast a brick to attract jade”; meaning that to offer a few preparatory remarks by way of introduction may encourage others to come up with better ideas. Although this research is not groundbreaking not that many practitioners have invested their time in sharpening their evangelism tools and discovered new methodologies in order to develop more effective outreaches. This is why the writer has been willing to invest her time in research so as to provide something of eternal value for the heart of many Muslims who would love to know and experience *al-ruh* themselves. The writer strongly believes that it will never be in vain to spend time deepening our understandings and developing other perspectives while we wait for God’s timing in reaping the harvest. I hope that this work will set the ball rolling with its few ideas and suggestions and that it would eventually ‘attract jade’ as a result of this research.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Problem statement

Islam is the closest religion to Christianity besides Judaism. It is a post-Christian religion and monotheistic. It claims to be the one and only true religion to worship the oneness of God. The Arabic word for God is Allah. Some of the contents in the Islamic holy book, called the Qur'an, are similar with some parts of the Old and New Testaments of the Christian Bible.

The founder of Islam, Muhammad (who was born in 570 AD), was residing in Mecca in Arabia; as a trader he had opportunities to travel and to be in contact with Jews and heretical Christians (e.g. Nestorians). With this background in mind, it is possible that fragmented knowledge of Christianity was one of the sources of the Qur'an. Muhammad, who claims to be the seal of the prophets in the religion of Islam, said he received a direct revelation from Allah through the mouth of the Angel Gabriel into his ear without any "human influences".

In the Qur'an it is said, "the Spirit¹ brought down the true revelation" (Sura 26:193): and "the Holy Spirit² has revealed it from thy Lord with truth, that it may confirm (the faith of) those who believe and as guidance and good tidings for those who have surrendered to Allah" (Sura 16:102). In both places, commentators refer to the Spirit as Gabriel (especially according to Pickhall's commentary). The Angel Gabriel is only mentioned six times in the Qur'an, and according to Zwemer³ "The only distinct assertion that Gabriel was the channel of Muhammad's revelation occurs in Medina Sura (2:91) and Gabriel is only mentioned once besides (66:4)⁴". Nevertheless, most of the commentators indicated that the Holy Spirit and the Spirit as Angel Gabriel are the same.

The Bible also mentions the important function of the Spirit in terms of God's

¹ Spirit (*Ruh*) is Gabriel -- the Interpretation of the meaning of the Noble Qu'ran (Al-Tabari, Al-Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir with comments from Sahih Al-Bukhari summarized in one volume by Dr. Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali Books & Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (1996)"It is a revelation of the Lord of the Worlds, which the True Spirit hath brought down." (Sura 26: 193). "Ibn 'Arabi sadi, 'Muhammad is the Seal of Prophets, and Jesus is the Seal of the Saints.'" (Parrinder 1965:49)

² The Holy Spirit i.e. Gabriel (Pickthall 1930).

³ See "The Moslem Doctrine of God (Zwemer 1987:88).

⁴ Ibid.

revelation and in guiding his disciples. “All Scripture⁵ is God-breathed or inspired⁶ and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16) “But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit⁷, whom the father will send in my name, will teach you all things.” (John 14:26) “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.” (John 16:13)

The Spirit is mentioned reverently both in the Qu’ran and in the Bible in a significant way. Jesus is even called “a spirit of Allah”⁸ according to the Qur’an. However, the question is who this Spirit is whom Muhammad mentioned in the Qur’an? When Muhammad was asked this question, he said little knowledge was given to him. What Muhammad he himself⁹ mentioned, understood and experienced about the Spirit when he was in Mecca, still seems to be very little?

This study is therefore an attempt to gain an understanding of the “Holy Spirit” from a Muslim perspective, especially as contained in the Islamic holy book the Qur’an, and to make a comparison and present a response from a Christian perspective. This also involves an understanding of the opinions of contemporary Muslim scholars, leaders, as well as ordinary Muslims in South Africa as a whole.

Furthermore, it is a fact that the Qur’an rejects the Christian teaching on the Trinity in the strongest terms. Here is an example: “They do blaspheme who say: God is one in a Trinity: for there is no God except One God. If they desist not from their word (of blasphemy), verily a grievous penalty will befall the blasphemers among them”.¹⁰ Was this a misunderstanding of Muhammad regarding Christianity? Samaai¹¹ said that Islam actually rejects all forms of the concept of a Trinity, either ‘father, mother and son’ or ‘father, son and spirit’”.

⁵ Scripture is the word of God according to the Christian faith, which was revealed by God through the Holy Spirit, so called the Bible.

⁶ God-breathed, “breathed into by God, inspired. The rabbinical teaching was that the Spirit of God rested on and in the prophets and spoke through them so that their words did not come from themselves, but from the mouth of God and they spoke and wrote in the Holy Spirit.” (Reinecker, Fritz/Rogers, Cleon. *A Lilinguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*. 1976, 1980 Grand Rapids: Zondervan).

⁷ The word Comforter (Holy Spirit) is “*paracletos*” in Greek. Some Muslims explain it should read “*periklutos*” meaning “the praised one”, which is the meaning of Muhammad in Arabic.

⁸ *ruhu minhu*, Sura 4:171.

⁹ Sura17:85 “They will ask thee concerning the Spirit. Say: The Spirit is by command of my Lord, and of knowledge ye have been vouchsafed but little. (Pickthall 1930:209).

¹⁰ See Sura 5:76 Pickthall translation.

¹¹ An interview with Imam Fuad Samaai from Gujatul Islamic Mosque (Dec 2004).

In spite of this strong rejection of the Trinity, the Qur'an speaks about the Holy Spirit (in Arabic the *Ruh al-Qudus*) in the most positive way. Greyling¹² mentioned in his article "Christianity and Islam" (Rec Focus Jun 2003 vol.3, no.2), that the Holy Spirit plays an active role with regard to humankind. Greyling argues, "According to the Qur'an, the Holy Spirit was active in the creation of mankind. Allah blew of his Spirit into Adam.¹³ In the same way Allah blew of his Spirit into Mary for the conception of Jesus.¹⁴"

Moreover, Greyling further asserts, "According to the Qur'an, all the prophets were also inspired by the Holy Spirit.¹⁵, inspiring them to be 'warners of mankind'. Evidently, Muhammad believed that he was inspired in the same way to be a prophet.¹⁶ Jesus was inspired in a special way by the Holy Spirit.¹⁷

Above all, the question is why does the Qur'an reject Trinity so strongly and yet speaks so positively of the Spirit? In light of this, it is critical to define the Spirit in the Qur'an and in the Muslim belief, in bringing about better mutual communication in inter-faith dialogue.

1.2 Background

The writer was born in Taipei of Taiwan and born again into God's family in 1977 at the age of sixteen. Having been a Christian literature worker since 1983 for three and half a years, she felt inadequate in terms of her biblical and theological training which led her to a four-year study in a local Seminary in Taipei. After her graduation, she was involved in full-time service in Churches for four years among the Chinese and Taiwanese. Her interest in World Religions and Missions was aroused, with the result that she went for a year of Inter-Cultural Studies in the multi-racial city of Singapore. Her interest was more focused on the Hindu and Islamic religions, regardless of the fact that both religions are foreign to her, considering where she comes from.

She did not have a chance to experience some friendship with Muslims until she gained an opportunity to work in South Africa, sent by her home church; and on arrival, she was based in Cape Town since 1998.

¹² <http://community.gospelcom.net/Brix?pageID=4729> (9/12/2004).

¹³ See Sura 15:29; 32; 38:72.

¹⁴ See Sura 21:91; 66:12.

¹⁵ See Sura 16:2; 40:15.

¹⁶ See Sura 16:102; 26:192-195; 42:52.

¹⁷ See Sura 2:87; 2:253; 5:113.

Muslims are generally hospitable and friendly as personally experienced by the candidate. She discovered their piety and sincerity in their faith except when it comes to the matter of their tolerance towards the Christian faith. For instance, the authority and authenticity of the Bible, the deity and sacrificial love of Jesus Christ, the doctrine of Trinity.... etc. is all unacceptable to them. Muslims also generally have very little knowledge of the Holy Spirit, which in Christians' experience is given to them the moment they receive Jesus as Saviour and who then guides them in their daily walk with the Lord.

1.3 Motivation

During her five years of living in Cape Town and experiencing inter-faith dialogue, her interest in Christian and Muslim related issues and topics has grown. “God is a Spirit, and his worshipers must worship in Spirit and in truth.” (John 4:24) However, the failure of Christians in communicating the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to Muslims has been due to a lack of understanding of the teaching in the Qur’an, concerning the Holy Spirit.

One of her motivations for doing this research is to correct the Christians’ general lack of proper understanding of the Qur’an’s position on the Holy Spirit. During the literature search and survey, she was surprised concerning how little is written on the topic “The Holy Spirit in the Qur’an” in the existing literature. There are only a few articles or books which are related to the topic, but most of them were written at least half a century ago. Such imperishable and aged material in Christian writings on the topic ‘The Holy Spirit in the Qur’an’ is evidence of a neglect of research in this area.

Another motivation for doing this research is her realization of the lack of interest in inter-faith studies and mutual friendship between Christians and Muslims. In her few of years experience in the Christian circle, she has also kept in touch with non-Christian friends. She has discovered many misconceptions of Christians concerning other religions due to a lack of interest in gaining an understanding of the Islamic holy book and Muslims’ personal profession of faith. The same misconceptions of Muslims towards Christian' doctrines also exist.

Another motivation for doing this research is that she recognizes the significance of discovering the real meaning of the Holy Spirit in Islam as well as Muslims' understanding of this topic in South Africa today. This recognition needs to be

emphasized. People who are serious about this topic need to explore themselves for a broader interpretation as well as in a wider range of concepts in order to investigate further. I believe that it is essential to ascertain an authentic understanding of the Holy Spirit in the Qur'an, as compared to the Holy Spirit in the Bible in order thereby to communicate the Gospel more clearly and more effectively.

1.4 Hypothesis

The assumption is that a proper understanding of the Qur'anic teaching on the Holy Spirit will be a means and premise of introducing the authentic meaning of the Biblical concept of Holy Spirit to Muslims. Nevertheless, there is a step to be taken before a Muslim crosses the line of the religious boundary of Islam. Madany's study 'the "Bible and Islam" (1987) gives the following observation: Madany (1987:35) argues, "It is only after a Muslim has accepts the fact of his sinfulness and the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour that the Trinity ceases to be a problem. When a Muslim receives Christ as Saviour, through the grace of God and the working of the Holy Spirit ... he has no problem with the doctrine of the Trinity."¹⁸ Madany indicates that the work of the Holy Spirit is a key issue for understanding the Trinity and that can happen during or after the conversion. Obviously, the Christian concept of the Trinity can be an obstacle for a Muslim to understand. The core of this research therefore cannot separate the Holy Spirit from the concept of Trinity when dealing with the comparison of the Holy Spirit in Islam and Christianity.

The apostle Paul said, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (Rom. 10:13) and he explained further, "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ." (Rom 10: 17). It is therefore evident that every conversion requires two basic factors: 1) Hearing the clear and correct message of God's word, and 2) Experiencing the work of the Holy Spirit". The former, one can achieve by investigating further and sharing the Gospel more sensitively. The latter is the work of the Holy Spirit himself; one can do nothing except pray.

1.5 Proposed Contribution of the Research

Learning from the Muslims' holy book is an essential and a critical requirement for an

¹⁸ See "The Bible and Islam are sharing God's word with Muslim" by Rev. Bassam M. Madany (Potchefstroom 1987:35).

objective and scientific approach towards researching and sharing the faith. Some Christian evangelists do not acquire an essential knowledge of Islam before they start sharing the Gospel. A number of misunderstandings can result from ignorance of each other's faith. It is believed that it is essential to build a bridge from the known to the unknown, and put one's feet into others' shoes. It is my hope that this research will enable Christians and evangelists to ponder over crucial Islamic concepts and the understanding of the Holy Spirit from both Islamic and biblical perspectives as Christians attempt to communicate the Gospel with Muslims in South Africa and worldwide. Over all, the aim is to build a bridge from Christians to Muslims by means of understanding and experiencing the "Holy Spirit".

1.6 Methodology

The purpose of this research obviously is not to satisfy a personal curiosity only, but to present a reliable result, which can be convincing to both Christians and Muslims. In-depth literature reviews and questionnaire interviews will be the major methods practised in this study. Besides this, a response and assessment from a Christian viewpoint is an exercise in comparative religion. Finally, apart from the biblical and the Christological and missiological approaches, the pneumatological approach is attempting experiments in the adventure of communicating the Gospel with Muslims in this research.

1.7 Possible value of the research

The effort of doing this research is also aimed at arousing Christians' interest in other faiths and vice versa. In addition, it would promote the mutual interest between Christians and Muslims as well as Christian and other Non-Christian religions in inter-faith dialogue. It is believed that it will eventually benefit all Christian workers in witnessing to Muslims, and it may set up an example of sharing the faith in our pluralistic world based on finding common ground by means of an objective research.

CHAPTER TWO

WHAT THE QU'RAN TEACHES ABOUT *AL-RUH*

2.1 Etymology of *Ruh* and *Nafs*

2.1.1 Etymology of *Ruh*

In the study of the development of the idea of Spirit in Islam by Macdonald (1932:25), he indicates that *ruh* in Arabic is originally a noun and later on has become widely equivalent in meaning to the Latin *spiritus*, which is equivalent to the English “breath,” “wind”, and “Spirit”. Its connotation were also includes nouns with the meaning of “rest,” “wind,” and “odour”. He states:

To separate and clarify the tangle of meanings and uses which it originally possessed it assumed different forms (as *nafas* was differentiated from *nafs*) and *rawh* and *rih* came into existence; *rawh* with the ideas of wide space, comfort, rest and *rih* first specifically “wind” (pls. *riyah*, *arwah*, *aryah*) and then with the metaphorical applications of evening, rest, comfort, pleasant odour, changing fortune.

On this basis, it may be inferred that different forms developed into various uses and implications. Macdonald (1932:25) further discovers that the development and usage of *ruh* in Hebrew is actually quite similar to Arabic as it denotes the meaning “wind” and “spirit”; and its adjective “spiritual.” Despite this, the Qur’anic usages are set apart from those of the post-Quranic period. He argues that *ruh* never appears in the Qur’an with the meaning “soul”. Nevertheless, later theologians applied this meaning. This idea will be discussed further in the next section. Furthermore, no plural of *ruh* is used in the Qur’an. There is evidence that when it is used of an individual angel, it is intended for a particular application. However, if *ruh* is used in the plural form, it always refers to *malaika* or spirits in general.

Macdonald (1932:26) also argues that the Arabic *ruh* was understood theologically as “spirit” even prior to Muhammad’s use of it in the Qur’an. Even though the root *r-u-h*, *r-y-h* already existed in Arabic, it was only used as ‘wind’, ‘rest’, ‘odour’. When one looks back to the authentic old Arabic verse, *ruh* is not used as a “spirit” or as *jinni*, but it meant ‘breath’ as *arwah* meant ‘winds’. However, Macdonald (1932:26) finds that “some of the angels were called *ruhani* in later Islamic theological language, which described a higher class of angels than those created of light”. He suggests that this is evidence of later efforts in the distinction of the ideal of “spiritual”

development.

In view of this, it could be concluded that *ruh* was only used as a singular noun with the meaning of breath or wind. It is Muhammad who brought the meaning of *ruh* as Spirit into the Qur'an. *Ruh* was not used as *jinni* in ancient Arabic and was never used as indication of a human soul until later Islamic theologians introduced this meaning.

However, various usages confuse a number of people, who do not know that *ruh* itself is actually a foreign word to the Arabs. Shellabear (1932:356) has indicated that the word *ruh* was borrowed from Hebrew language and is used commonly among the Jews. Therefore, he suggests the significance of understanding the word *ruh* in Jewish Scriptures as a key to grasping its meaning in the Qur'anic usage.

Figure 2. 1 A comparison of the word “spirit” in Hebrew, Arabic and Latin

Language	Hebrew	Arabic	Latin
Meaning	<i>Ruach</i> : wind, spirit (Adj.) spiritual	<i>Ruh</i> : breath, wind, life Noun (Singular)	<i>Spiritus</i> Breath, wind, spirit
	In Jewish scripture means spirit of God, does not apply to angelic being	Does not mean soul No plural form Plural noun refers to <i>malaika</i>	
		Understood as ‘spirit’ since Muhammad used it in the Qur’an	
		<i>Ruh</i> in old Arabic was not used as Spirit <i>jinni</i> , it meant breath	

Figure 2. 2 The word *ruh* in Arabic usage

Ancient Arabic	<i>Ruh</i> in the Qur’an	Post Qur’anic period
Does not mean <i>jinni</i> but ‘breath’	Means Spirit Since Muhammad introduced it	Islamic theologians used <i>ruh</i> as soul

In the *Taurat*, the Spirit is described in various ways as a life-giver, as profound characteristic of God, i.e. the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge; it also represents the life-giving power of God (Job 33:4). Shellabear (1932:357) further argues that even in the later prophetic writings, “*ruh* is used of the

spirit of prophecy, but it is always recognized that it is the Spirit of God himself and not an angelic being who breathes into the prophet the spirit of prophecy.”

Consequently, Shellabear (1932:360) concludes that the word *ruh* is originally a Hebrew word. He never explored its meaning in Arabic before it was used in the Qur’an. Shellabear suggests that the authentic meaning of the word can be deduced from the way it was used in the Jewish Scriptures prior to its adoption into the Arabic language.

Figure 2. 3 Arabic relations with Hebrew

Language	Hebrew	Arabic
Holy Book	Jewish scripture (<i>Torah</i>)	Qur’an
People	Jews	Arabs
Religion	Judaism	Islam

2.1.2 Etymology of *Nafs* (Soul)

According to Hobson (The concise Encyclopaedia of Islam: 1989:295), *Nafs* is the soul.

“The Arabic *nafs* corresponds to Latin *anima* and Greek *psyche*. It is the individual (sic) substance and corresponds to the respective pole of Being (sic). It exists alongside *ruh* (spirit), corresponding to Latin *spiritus* and Greek *pneuma*, which is non-individual and represents the active pole.

Because *Naf* and *Ruh* are used interchangeably in the post-Qur’anic literature, it is necessary to understand the meaning of *Nafs* in Islam in order to clearly understand the meaning of *ruh*.

Shellabear (1943:254) defines the doctrine of the *Nafs* (*Nafs* and *Ruh*) in Islam as soul.¹⁹ *Nafs* is used as ‘self’ or a person in the early Arabic poetry. “While *ruh* meant breath and wind, since the Qur’an *nafs* also means soul, and *ruh* means a special angel messenger and a special divine gift. Only in the post-Qur’anic literature are *nafs* and *ruh* used interchangeably and both applied to the human spirit, angels and *jinn*s.” Shellabear (1943:244,245) describes the Qur’anic usage of *nafs* and its plural forms in two ways: It either refers to the human self or person or it means the human soul. This soul has three characteristics, which are: *ammara* commanding to evil, *lawwama* upbraids and *mutma’inna*, tranquil. These three terms form the basis of much of the

¹⁹ This definition is adopted into Bill’s Short Encyclopaedia of Islam later on in 1991 Vol. viii.

later Muslim ethics and psychology. He argues that *nafs* is not used in connection with the angels.

Figure 2. 4 Usage of *Nafs* and *Ruh* in different stages

	<i>Nafs</i>	<i>Ruh</i>
Early Arabic poetry	Self or person	Breath and wind
Beginning with Qur'an	Soul	A special angel messenger and divine gift
Post-Qur'anic literature	Used interchangeably	

In his article “Holy Spirit in Islam” James Kritzeck (1975:101)²⁰ compares *nafs* and *ruh* to *yin* and *yang* in the Chinese Taoist philosophy. He states that these two terms seem to be in contrast as they are in their Semitic cognates. *Nafs* mean soul, self, the subjective; whereas *ruh* is wind, breath, the objective; the former one is “freshly” spirit, the later one “heavenly” spirit.

Having looked at the Qur'anic usage of *Nafs* and *Ruh*, Shellabear (1943:255) concludes in the Qur'an *ruh* does not mean angels in general, or man's not soul or spirit, nor is it used reflexively to refer to his person or self The plural does not occur.”

2.2 Comparison of the Holy Spirit in Judaism and Christianity

2.2.1 The Holy Spirit in the Biblical concept and usage

The word for Spirit in Hebrew is *ruach*. In attempting to understand the Biblical meaning of Spirit, Heron (1983:3-7) discovers that the root meaning of *ruach* had to do with the movement of air, in the wider sense; it could mean “wind”, “breath”, and “life”. It is used mostly in an impersonal way²¹, and appears as natural or supernatural strength, force, power, and energy. However, it has nothing to do with a good or evil “spirits”, even though he notes that there are “evil spirits” from God.²² In spite of the Old Testament saying very little about demonology, it does use *ruach* to talk about a good or evil influence coming from God on the individual or a group. It is worthwhile to ponder the kind of spirit that brought revelation to Muhammad.

²⁰ This article is edited by Edward D.O' Connor, C.S.C. in Perspectives on Charismatic Renewal in 1975.

²¹ For instance: The strong wind divided the Red Sea at the Exodus (Ex 14:21); Ezek 13:13-14; Hosea 8:7; 13:15.

²² For instance: God sent an evil spirit which tormented Saul (I Sam 16:14); God allowed a “lying spirit” to deceive the prophets advising Ahab (I Kings 22:22).

Heron (1983) states that *ruach* even came to be applied to the human “spirit” (soul) or “self” later on. It could mean “mood” or “temper” as a more independent agent. In some instances its meaning is also linked to God. He makes clear that “*ruach* is used to speak of God as present and active in the world and in particular among human beings.”(Heron 1983:7) *Ruach* may apply to the personal activity²³. Men’s *ruach* is not something they one by himself. It is a gift from God. In Ezekiel’s vision, God sends his *ruach*, his angels or his words to dwell in the temple (Ezek 8-11). He found that this is described as God’s transcendence, and complemented by his immanence.

Karkkainen has indicated (Pneumatology 2002:23-25) that instead of presenting the work of the Spirit systematically, the Bible describes it with symbols and stories. He points out that one of the earliest biblical conceptions of the Spirit is Life-Breath (Gen 2:7). It is described as wind (Gen 8:1, Num: 31; Is. 27:8). John uses the image of wind for the Spirit of God; He causes people to be re-born (Jn 3:6-8). Other biblical symbols like fire (Is 4:4), about the baptism with the Spirit and fire (Mt 3:11-12; Lk 3:16-17), water (Is 32:15; Jn 4:10; 7:38-39), cloud (Ex 24:15-18; 40:36-38), dove (Jn 1:32) are used of the Holy Spirit. An example of this can be found in the preaching of John the Baptist.

In terms of God’s *Ruach* in Biblical usage, Heron (1983) points out four contexts where the *ruach* of God is in action in the Old Testament: creation, outstanding gifts, prophecy and future hope. In creation, it is giving and preserving of life; when it is used with *debhar*, “word”, it means “the breath of speech” rather than “the breath of life”. The outstanding gifts include wisdom (Ex 28:3), ability, intelligence, and knowledge (Ex 35:31). Prophecy is mentioned in I Samuel Chapter 10 and 19, but he feels that that “prophet” is almost the same as the Islamic dervish. In the period of Exile, Isaiah ascribed his vision and prophecies to the inspiration of the *ruach* of God (Is 61:1-3). The future hope is referring to the Davidic king (Is 11:1-5; Is 42:1-4); to the people of Israel (Is 63: 7-19) and shows God’s active presence (Num 11:29; Joel 2:28).

2.2.2. The Holy Spirit in Jewish Scriptures and Jewish thought

Shellabear (1932) found that *ruach* is used in the Jewish scriptures over a hundred times. It normally describes the wind, breath from man’s mouth, source of life, or

²³ For instance: Pharaoh’s spirit is troubled by his dream (Gen 41:8).

prophecies from God. In the TORAH, the Spirit of God not only brought life to humankind but also character; for instance, righteousness, kindness, faithfulness ... etc. Joshua is a man in who is the Spirit. (Num 27: 18) Others own the Spirit of wisdom, of knowledge, of understanding, and talents of workmanship. It mentions the earliest prophetic utterances of the earliest prophets (Num 24:2). The *ruach* is also used as representing the life-giving power of God (Job 33:4), in one of the earliest Hebrew books. Although Spirit is used of the spirit of prophecy in the later prophetic writings, it is still applied to the Spirit of God himself, but not an angelic being. Subsequently the Spirit of God as a sign points to the Messiah (Is 11:2); it also describes the figure of Messiah whom the Jewish people were expecting for thousands of years (Is 61:1) Shellabear drew attention to the fact that Spirit of God was not merely an angelic being but is present everywhere.

Talking about the Holy Spirit in Jewish thought, the study by Cohen²⁴ (as cited in Poyneer) provides the Talmudic thought on the Holy Spirit. Poyneer describes the idea of the Holy Spirit as being “the nearness of God and His direct influence on man”, which is called *Ruach Hakodesh*. Sometimes it expresses the divine immanence in the world, when identified with the *Shekhinah*. The similarity between the Talmud and the Qur’an is obviously that the Holy Spirit brought down the revelation from God to human beings. For example “The Holy Spirit alighted on Solomon and he composed three books: Proverbs, the Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes” (Midrash Rabbah, Song of Songs 1.1).

2.2.3 The Islamic view of the Holy Spirit

Schlörff (1986:352-3) discovers that the Holy Spirit as spoken of in the Bible is foreign and unknown in Islam, although “the Qur’an speaks of ‘the Spirit’ and even ‘Holy Spirit’ (*Ruh-al-quds*, Sura 2:87); and the ‘Faithful Spirit’ (*al-ruh al-almin*, Sura 26:193).” “Allah breathed into Adam His Spirit (Sura15: 29). Jesus is referred to as ‘a Spirit from Allah’ (Sura 4:171), and so Muslims frequently call him ‘the Spirit of Allah.’” Despite all these ‘signs’ of Gospel, it does not convey the true Biblical concept of the Holy Spirit in Islam. Most Muslims equal ‘the Holy Spirit’ and ‘the Faithful Spirit’ with Gabriel, the Angel of revelation. When the Qur’an states that Jesus, Muhammad, and others, were strengthened by the Holy Spirit, it is clearly referring to the Angel Gabriel in the process of revelation.” According to Schlörff

²⁴ Cohen, A. *Everyman’s Talmud*. Copyright 1949, New York: Schocken.

(1986:353) we find some references in the New Testament to angels as agents of revelation (Gal 3:19, Heb. 2:2), but these are not central to the same revelation in the New Testament.

Evidently, “The Muslim’s concept of God conflicts with the deity and personality of the Holy Spirit (1) the concept of the absolute unity of God precludes the possibility of the Holy Spirit being God. (2) The personality of the Holy Spirit, and indeed the possibility of knowing God in a personal way through the indwelling Holy Spirit, is incompatible with the Muslim’s concept of Allah's absolute transcendence.” “Since man is a servant (*‘abd*) of Allah, he does not look for a close communion with God through the Spirit of adoption. The very idea of the Spirit indwelling the believer is incompatible with Islamic ideology”. “Only the Sufis (mystics) aim at union with God, but for them this is achieved by man’s striving upward and not by the coming down of the Holy Spirit to dwell in their hearts.”

2.3 Role and function of the “Holy Spirit” in the Qur’an

2.3.1 His creation work on the Humankind

In creation, Allah blew of his Spirit into Adam, giving life to Adam’s body (Sura 15:29; 32:8-9; 38:72), Macdonald (1932) points out that it was something of divinity. The fact that it remained in man was the reason why human beings are different from other creatures. On the other hand, this *ruh* in him allow him to have some kind of relationship with the Divine Presence. This enables him to acknowledge and worship the creator; through *ruh*, he may access and communicate with Allah.

In a similar way, Allah blew of his Spirit into Mary for the conception of Jesus. (Sura 21:91; 66:12) Baidawi (Macdonald 1932:26) points out that it is “some of the *ruh* which is by our command alone”. He asserts *ruh* means Gabriel, the angel of revelation in “we sent to her (Maryam) our spirit” (19:17). However, the Qur’an claims that it was a messenger and a personality. Assuredly, how can Allah blow of his angel Gabriel into Mary? It is suspected that the usage of the spirit is not clearly being understood in the Qur’an.

2.3.2 His work in his prophets, Jesus, Muhammad and in his believers

According to the Qur’an, all the prophets were inspired by the Holy Spirit to be “warners of mankind” (Sura 16:2; compare 40:15). Allah blew of his Spirit into Mary for the conception of Jesus (Sura 21:91; 66:12). Jesus was inspired in a special way

by the Holy Spirit (Sura 2:87). “We gave Moses the Book and followed him up with a succession of Apostles; we gave Jesus the son of Mary clear (signs) and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit”. This is repeated in Sura 2:253 (compare with Sura 5:113). Sura 4:171 Jesus is called “a Spirit proceeding from Him”. The Holy Spirit also has tremendously impact and influence on Muhammad to the extent that he claims that he himself was inspired by the Holy Spirit.

2.4 The Quranic usage of the Spirit

The Arabic word *ruh* is used about twenty times in the Qur’an, the Islamic holy book. In a study of the meaning of the word “Spirit” as used in the Qur’an, Shellabear (1932:355-356) categorises the Qur’anic usage of the *ruh* chronologically²⁵ in six ways: In the Meccan period, *ruh* was likened to angels, particularly to the angel Gabriel. Later, it was used in connection with the creation of Adam, as well as breathed into Mary for the conception of Jesus. Near the event of the Hijrah, *ruh* is four times linked with *amr*. In the Medinan period, it was used as Spirit (*ruh al-qudus*): It means that Jesus was assisted by the Spirit, and Jesus was a spirit from Allah, and even the believers had been assisted with a spirit from Allah. Shellabear’s study reveals that Muhammad had also noticed the connection between the Spirit and the Messiah which will be discussed in 6.3.2. Let us have a closer look at these passages and its usages.

2.4.1. In the Meccan period, *ruh* was used for angels (Sura 78:38; 97:4; 70:4), particularly for the angel Gabriel. McDonald (1932) stated that besides the angels, *ruh* is implied as a personality as well. Therefore, these three verses would make more sense by putting them this way: “The angels and *ruh* ascend to Allah; the angels stand silent in rows in the presence of Allah; the angels and the *ruh* descend on the Night of Kadr, concerning this *amr*”.

2.4.2. In the second Meccan period, *ruh* was used in connection with the creation of Adam (Sura 15: 29; 38:72; 32:8), as well as breathed into Mary presented as the conception of Jesus (Sura 21:91; 66:12²⁶; 19:17). In addition, Jesus is represented as a spirit from Him (Sura 4:169; 58:22)²⁷. At creation, Allah blew of his Spirit into Adam, giving life to Adam’s body (Sura 15:29; 38:72; 32:8).

²⁵ This chronological order is established by Theodor Noldeke and improved by Regis Blachere.

²⁶ Sura 66:12, Thomas O’Shaughnessy (1953) categories in the Medina period.

²⁷ Sura 4:169; 58:22, Thomas O’Shaughnessy (1953) categories in the Medina period.

2.4.3. Near the event of Hijrah, *ruh* is four times linked with *amr* (affair, command, will to action in Sura 17:87; 16:2; 40:15; 42: 52), and the meaning here is very uncertain and critical. In the first three *ruh* is *al-ruh min amrihi*, in the last one it is *ruhan min armina*. *Ruh* here expresses a special equipping by Allah for prophetic service. This reminds one of Bezalel who was filled with the spirit of God in wisdom and in knowledge (Ex. 35:30-31).

According to Macdonald (1932), apart from its regular meaning of “affair” and “commanding”, *amr* has developed its special meaning in the Qur’an as “divine command” or “creative command”. It does not only mean, “say, speak”, but could be related to *logos*²⁸.

The meaning of *ruh* in these four passages can be various. In Sura 16:2, Allah sends down his angels with the spirit of his command upon all of his creatures whom he wills. Here spirit is an inspiration (*wahy*), brought to life in those whose hearts are dead through ignorance. It is a spiritual influence coming from outside other than a person. In Sura 17:87, Muhammad answered a Jew’s question: “Concerning the spirit (of inspiration), say the spirit *amr* by command of my Lord: of knowledge it is only a little which is communicated.” *Ruh* is explained as Allah’s affair or one of Allah’s immediate creations; it comes by a creative word or proceeding from the *ruh* of Allah, but it is not formed out of matter nor propagated. In Sura 40:15, it is stated: “Lord, by his command he sent the spirit of inspiration, that he may warn of the day of mutual meeting.” “By his command” is just an extra explanation. In Sura 42:52, “And thus we revealed to thee, a spirit from our command.” Baidawi interprets that “what was revealed is called a spirit because the spirit gives life to the heart or we sent a spirit that is Gabriel, to thee with inspiration” (Macdonald 1932:30); whereas Yusuf Ali translates “By our command, sent inspiration to thee”. We can conclude that it is difficult to interpret the relation in the Qur’an of the *ruh* to the *amr* of Allah; this issue is also related to whether *ruh* is created or uncreated. This topic will be further discussed in Chapter 5 later on.

2.4.4. In the Medina period, *ruh* was used as ‘faithful spirit’ (*ruh al-qudus*) who

²⁸ In “The Vision of Islam” (Chittick and Murate 2000: xxiii) “God’s words presented as being are eternal and uncreated, while the words of his messenger are inspired by God, but they must not be confused with God’s own words.”

brings down the revelation to Muhammad (Sura 26:193)²⁹. Jesus was assisted with the spirit of holiness (Sura 2:81; 2:254; 5:109), and Jesus was a spirit from Allah, and even the believers had been assisted with the spirit of holiness (Sura 16:104)³⁰, (Sura 58:22; 4:169).

Who is the *ruh al-qudus* at this stage? Arabic-speaking Christians generally translate *ruh al-qudus*, as ‘the spirit who is holiness’. Is he the Holy Spirit in the Christian context, or is he a sanctified spirit in Muhammad’s mind? Is it the Angel Gabriel, or are there any other possibilities? In Syriac usage, it can mean both “a sanctified spirit” and the Holy Spirit. Obviously, it is difficult to catch the exact meaning through translation, as it is indirect; therefore, it is important to look at the text itself.

Macdonald (1932) points out that *ruh al-qudus* is the trustworthy spirit, which descends with the Qur’an (26:163), which is trusted by Allah in bringing the revelation upon Muhammad’s heart; the spirit is Gabriel, the angel of revelation. Baidawi notes it is either a “physical heart” or “spiritual ideas” that descend to the *ruh* and are then transferred to the physical heart. Supposedly, there is a physical side of the human spirit, which is an intermediary between the body and spiritual world. It is suspected that the former *ruh* is the “bearer” of the later one.

Furthermore, he asserts that *ruh al-qudus* is applied to the same angel of revelation, Gabriel, in other passages (Sura 2:81; 2:254; 5:109; 16:104). Baidawi emphasises that the meaning of the spirit of holiness is “to be kept from any imperfection”. There are four possibilities indicating *ruh al-qudus* specifically: Gabriel, the *ruh* of Isa because of his purity, the *injl* and the Most Great Name of Allah by which *Isa* raised the dead.

It is believed that the sinless spirit of Jesus and the power of the almighty Allah would make sense as it leads to a meaningful conclusion. Besides this, interestingly, *ruh* in Sura 5:109 means *kalam*³¹, it means by the teaching of *Isa*, the *din* or the *nafs* are vivified to eternal life and purified from sins.

²⁹ Sura 26:193, Thomas O’Shaughnessy (1953) categories in the second Meccan period.

³⁰ Sura 16:104, Thomas O’Shaughnessy (1953) categories in the Third Meccan period.

³¹ In Chittick and Murate (2000: xxviii) the root meaning of the word *din* is to obey, to be submissive, to serve. The Arabic dictionary provides a number of possible English synonyms for *din*: obedience, submission. It means one serve God; belief in the unity of God; the religion of Islam ...etc. In a broad sense (2000: xxx-xxxii), it designates the submission of every prophet to God. In its Qur’anic sense (2000:242), it simply means understanding the teaching of the religion. *Kalam* has also been called *usual al-din*, “the principles” or “root of the religion”.

Jesus is a spirit from Allah (Sura 4:169), Baidawi explains it means “the possessor of a spirit which proceeded from Allah by no intermediation acting as source and having material.” (McDonald 1932:27) It is an interesting point when compared with the idea of having intermediary transfer from the spiritual to the physical world when the faithful spirit brings revelation warning the Arabic speaking people (26:193). When this spirit from Allah is used to support his believers (Sura 58:22), Macdonald then explains it as “a light in the mind, or Qur’anic victory over enemies” (Macdonald 1932:27). He believes that “the coincidence between *ruh al kodus* and Christian doctrine of the Holy Ghost cannot be accidental” (Macdonald 1932:32).

Evaluation

According to Shellabear (1932) one may assume that in the beginning as Muhammad started his prophetic career, he believed the spirit is somehow different from the angels, and yet in some way associated with them. A little while later in Mecca, Muhammad taught that Allah breathed his spirit into Adam, and in a similar way, Mary conceived through his spirit. Near the end of Mecca period, it is discovered that the usage of spirit is connected with *amr* and the interpretation of *ruh* is more difficult. At the end, when Muhammad reached Medina, his concern about the spirit was the connection between the spirit and the Messiah. This idea about al-Masih (3:45) will be further discussed in Chapter 6; how the spirit anointed Jesus as to consecrate him for his office.

Although the usage of Spirit in the Qur’an is very complicated and confusing, for instance, whether 78:38 and 5:109 carry on the same divine authority and share the same meaning. Nevertheless, it is believed that through this analysis, the meaning of spirit in Qu’anic usage of Muhammad’s understandings, and refinement of this term took place over a period of twenty-three years.

Kritzeck (1975) argues concerning this development of the meaning of the Spirit in the Qur’an, which ironically reached its logical conclusion and fit into Christian context. He feels that “the Holy Spirit is clearly proposed to Muslims in the Qur’an, and speaks in His own name.” (O’Connor 1975:105) He concludes that the Holy Spirit was alive in Islam. This allows philologists, exegetes, tradition (*hadith*) collectors and evaluators, legists and theologians (*mutakallimun*) as well as ordinary Muslims to ponder over this unclear subject.

CHAPTER THREE

WHAT MUSLIM COMMENTATORS SAY ABOUT *AL-RUH*

How do commentators explain *ruh* and these twenty relevant verses in the Quran? It was extremely difficult to find relevant books and articles about this topic in this century. The writer has spent two years in collecting materials all over the world, even purchasing from Internet second-hand bookshops or getting copyright for a book that is already out of print through the effort of Stellenbosch University library, and finally it all arrived from Germany, Italy, Malaysia, and the United States. Most of the authors are deeply concerned with the variety and unclear meanings of *ruh* in the Qur'an, and tried to reason and clarify it. Unfortunately, seldom Muslims' voices are heard among these materials. Because of the scarcity of the resources, this will also limit the scope of this discussion, especially from a Muslim perspective. Nevertheless, this also shows that the spirit in the Qur'an has been a neglected topic that needs to be investigated.

There are a number of problems, which were discovered among the commentators. Because of the ambiguity about the meaning of the Spirit, the questions which will be investigated, are the following: (1) the fact of divergence among various translators and commentators; (2) the discovery that historically there is a gap between classical & contemporary commentators; (3) the existence of a misunderstanding or misinterpretation concerning the Holy Spirit between Muhammad and Muslim commentators, (4) and the religious evolution of Muhammad and his understanding and experiences of the Spirit.

3.1 Divergence among various translators and commentators

The meaning of *ruh* in the Qur'an is still a mystery for most Muslims and even for commentators. Mylrea (1910:2) explains the reasons: as the result of their ignorance of the theology of other creeds and their dislike to seek light from other resources than Islam, Muslim commentators experience tremendous difficulties in solving the mystery in these passages. For instance, each passage in the commentaries which explains more than one possibility is clear evidence of commentators' uncertainty about this subject.

Although the Qur'an is claimed to be a light and guidance to all man, the discovery of

truth on this subject is hardly making any progress because the theories on this subject are seldom tested outside the Islamic circle.

Why can the explanation of *ruh* not stand on its own in the Qur'an? Mylrea (1910:2-3) states the reasons: The necessity of seeking insight from other resources on this subject is because the spirit in the Qur'an was taken from those Jews or Christians who were familiar with it in the Old and New Testaments. The subject of Spirit existed in the Bible as a clear concept earlier than the Qur'an. Mylrea (1910:4) argues further, for instance: The meaning of Spirit in the Christian Scriptures is generally obvious according to the context; whereas, Muslim commentators seem to define the various possible meanings of *ruh* in the Qur'an; then try to test which fits the context the best. Therefore, it is important to use the scripture as a framing structure to discover the meaning of *ruh*.

3.2 Historically there is a gap between classical & contemporary commentators

It is appropriate to have a chronological study of the available materials on this subject. Mylrea points out this chronological³² order, which assists us in studying the evolution of the Muhammad's ideas and conceptions regarding this subject. This section will briefly introduce three other analyses about the meaning of *ruh* in the Qur'an, and focus on the analysis from Mylrea (1910) and O'Shaughnessy (1953).

3.2.1 The study of the Holy Spirit in Qur'an and Bible

The study of 'the Holy Spirit in Qur'an and Bible' by Rev. C. G. Mylrea and Sheikh Iskandur 'Abdu'l-Masih's, publications in 1910, are the earliest resource available at hand. Mylrea classified *ruh* in four categories based on some Muslim commentators' opinion like Al-Baidawi, Al-Jalalain and Al-Kashshaf, Al-Tabari, Al-Zamakhshari. Mylrea (1910: 6-7) divided the references to the Spirit chronologically into four groups regarding the meaning of Spirit in the Qur'an: 1) References in which the word spirit is generally identified with the angels; and especially with Gabriel. 2) References that identify the spirit with creation and especially man. 3) References that identify the spirit with inspiration. 4) References that identify the spirit with Jesus. Mylrea emphasises that this as the best way to group these passages based on common agreement. He not only offers interpretations from three Muslim commentators for each text, but also remarks on the chief commentators. Finally,

³² This chronological order is according to Rodwell's order (Watt 1970:205-212).

Mylrea presents the teaching on the Spirit from the Torah and *Injil*.

Figure 3. 1 Mylrea’s (1910) references and the chronological order he presents.

Meaning of the Spirit	Suras referred to (Rodwell’s order)
Angels (especially Gabriel)	97:4(2); 78:38(1); 70:4(3); 26:193(4); 16:104(12)
Creation (especially man)	15:29(5); 32:8(9); 38:72(7)
Inspiration	16:2(11); 17:87(10); 40:15(13); 42:52(14); 58:22(18)
Jesus	2:81,254(15,16); 4:168(17); 5:109(20); 19:18(6); 21:91(8); 66:12(19)

The number in the () is the chronological order of references according to O’Shaughnessy

Based on the above table, Mylrea (1910) analysed these passages as follows:

(Please refer to the twenty *ruh* related verses in the Qur’an, *Ruh* in Yusuf Ali’s translation and commentary in 4.2).

3.2.1.1 In section 1, Spirit and angels are used interchangeably and refer especially to Gabriel.

In terms of Sura 97:4, some commentators refer to “angels of the highest rank”³³; in Sura 78:38, mostly refer to Gabriel³⁴, the spirit can also refer to some being greater than angels³⁵, or heavenly host³⁶ and a being more honoured than the angels by being nearest to God³⁷. In Sura 70:4, the spirit can also mean guardians³⁸ over the angels and man. In Sura 26:192-3, the faithful spirit is Gabriel³⁹. In Sura 16:104, although the spirit is mentioned as Holy Spirit by Al-Baidawi, yet the spirit refers to Gabriel specified as holy, which means pure. Al-Kashshaf expressed a similar view that it is just a grammatical explanation of the expression “Holy Spirit”. Finally, Mylrea

³³ See Pickthall’s footnote (1994:446) “Some commentators think, a general term for angels of the highest rank”. An-Nisaburi in Mylrea (1910:10) explains that the word “rank” here is used collectively and may mean a rank consisting of the “spirit” and the angels together.

³⁴ Al-Jalalain & Al-Tabari in Mylrea (1910:9-10) identified the spirit as Gabriel. Al-Baidawi refers to Gabriel who is mentioned separately because of his superiority over other angels.

³⁵ Al-Baidawi in Mylrea (1910:9) comment: “The spirit is an angel who is entrusted with the charge of the spirits.”

³⁶ Al-Jalalain in Mylrea (1910:9) says that the spirit refers to Gabriel or to a heavenly host.

³⁷ Al-Zamakhshari in Mylrea (1910:9) approaches al-Baidawi in his explanation and asserts this assumption; however, he also suspects other alternatives: i.e. the spirit is “a great angel than whom God created nothing greater except the throne”, or the spirit is not an angel who eats food, or the spirit is Gabriel himself.

³⁸ Al-Kashshaaf in Mylrea (1910:12) explains that the spirit means guardians over the angels in the same way that angels are guardians over men.

³⁹ Al-Baidawi in Mylrea (1910:12) explains because the spirit is the faithful messenger of God for revelation.

remarks for this section that the later commentators mostly agree accordingly in identifying the Spirit with Angel Gabriel, except for At-Tabari who gives an alternative by explaining further in order to avoid trouble and discussion.

3.2.1.2 In section 2, these verses is all related to the creation and man.

In Sura 15:29, although others describe spirit as meaning breath that makes a human alive⁴⁰ or a living creature⁴¹, Al-kashshaf (Mylrea 1910:14) however explains it differently: “There was no actual breathing in reality, nor was there anything breathed into.” It is just “an allegory describing the creation life in man”. In Sura 32:8, some commentators says that God wanted to show that man was a wonderful creation, that’s why “God breathed into man something particularly of himself and His knowledge”⁴², and somehow man was related to the Divine Majesty; therefore, “whosoever knows himself knows his Lord”⁴³ (c.f. John 17:3). However, Al-Jalalain says, “man was mere inorganic matter” but “God gave him life and made him a sensible and rational being”. In Sura 38:72, “when I have fashioned him and breathed into him of My spirit, then fall down before him prostrate” (Pickthall). Al-Baidawi suggests that “‘My spirit’ shows his honourable rank and purity”, Al-Jalalain (1910:16) says that “The fact that the spirit is an honour to Adam”, the spirit is “an ethereal substance by which man lives.” Throughout the passages in this section, it seems all the commentators have avoided all reference to Gabriel. Obviously, the spirit here can not be explained as any angelic being. How can God blow Gabriel into Adam? The Torah says that man was created in God’s image (Genesis 1:26).

3.2.1.3 In section 3, these verses are related to the spirit and inspiration

In Sura 16:2, according to Al-Kashshaf, (as cited in Mylrea 1910:19) “The Spirit means that which quickens dead hearts by revelation which is to religion what the spirit is to the body”. In Sura 17:87, Al-Baidawi says, “They will ask thee concerning the Spirit by which men live and carry out their purposes. Say, the Spirit is from my Lord’s command”. It was the answer to an interesting story behind the scene (Mylrea

⁴⁰ Al-Baidawi in Mylrea (1910:15) explains, “As the spirit depends for its existence on the ethereal vapour which radiated from the heart, and after receiving vital force permeates through the arteries, God made it connection with the body by means of a breath.”

⁴¹ Al-Jalalain in Mylrea (1910:15) says that this connection with the spirit was “an honour to Adam”.

⁴² Al-Kashshaf in Mylrea (1910:15) that “no human being can understand its being except God”, and “the spirit is a matter of my Lord”.

⁴³ This word said by Al-Baidawi in Mylrea (1910:15), and Mylrea suggests these words might have been written by a Sufi. He comments further that this thought is more advanced than those Sunni commentators are.

1910:21):

The Jews sent instructions to the Quraish to test the Prophet's claim by three questions—about the people of the cave, about Alexander the Great, and about the Spirit. If the prophet answered all of the three questions or refused to answer them, he would not be a prophet; but if answered the first two and remained silent about the third, then he would truly be a prophet. So, the prophet only answered the first two questions, and left the third as vague.

In this context, some say the Spirit is Gabriel, others say the Spirit is a very spiritual creation or greater than angels, others assert that it is the Qur'an. "A matter of my Lord" means inspiration or a matter of His revelation. The questions both Al-Baidawi (20) and Ar-Razi (24) raised here is whether the spirit is eternal or created. Ar-Razi (26) asserts, "It was created and only came into being by the act, and creative fiat of God." In Sura 40:15, the spirit is inspiration, the source of life by His command, or in this text means revelation or Qur'an, which God revealed unto Gabriel. In Sura 42:52, "Thus have we sent the Spirit to thee with a revelation at our command" God calls inspiration spirit because hearts live by it. Some Commentators refer the spirit to Qur'an⁴⁴, Gabriel, or "which is revealed". Al-Baidawi (28) says, the spirit means "inspiration, or the Book⁴⁵, or the Faith – has been made by God a light by which He guides whomsoever He pleases." In Sura, 58:22, "On the hearts of these hath God graven the faith and with His own Spirit hath He strengthened them". Most of the commentators agree that the spirit means the light of heart⁴⁶; a light from God, or a light and guidance⁴⁷, except for Al-Kashshaf who asserts that Spirit means grace by which hearts are quickened. Yusuf Ali comments (1946:1518) that God strengthened the Prophet Jesus with the Holy Spirit (Sura 2:87,253). "Here we learn that all good and righteous men are strengthened by God with the Holy Spirit". Mylrea (30) concludes that in this section Spirit here is reduced to the level of merely a spiritual being with spiritual influence. Despite of the spirit referring to the supreme rank, which is higher than that of humans and angels, and even all created things, the Spirit is not identical with God. Mylrea argues that commentators are clinging to the vague and unintelligible explanation and avoid the idea of ascribing to the spirit divine rank. Mylrea (1910:31) states further "the God of pure transcendence cannot be identified

⁴⁴ Al-Jalalain in Mylrea (1910:28) says, "Spirit here means the Qur'an by which hearts live. And At-Tabari in Mylrea (1910:28) says that "We have inspired thee with the Qur'an as we inspired all our prophets, by a spirit, i.e. by inspiration and mercy at our bidding."

⁴⁵ Book refers to scripture in Pickthall's (1997:347) version.

⁴⁶ Al-Baidawi in Mylrea (1910:29) says that the spirit can also mean the Qur'an, or triumph over enemies.

⁴⁷ At-Tabari in Mylrea (1910:29) says that "God strengthen them by a clear sign from Himself, both a light and guidance."

with Allah as actually conceived by Islam. It is suggested that the doctrine of the oneness of God (*Tawhid*) in Islam could be a boundary in discovering the original meaning of the Spirit as to the God of self-revelation. This idea will be discussed in Chapter 5 (5.2). The question “whether the Spirit is eternal or created” has been troubling numerous theologians for over a thousand years both in Christianity and in Islam and will be discussed later in 5.4.

3.2.1.4 In section 4, these verses are related to the spirit and Jesus.

In Sura 2:81, Jesus was strengthened by the Holy Spirit. Most of the commentators agree that the spirit is Gabriel; others suggest that the spirit of Jesus is holy because it is undefiled by Satan; or the spirit can mean Gospel; or Al-Kashshaf (Mylrea 1910:34) describes the spirit as “being holy to show the special relationship between God and Jesus and the supreme honour”; or “great name of God by which the dead were raised to life.” In Sura 4:168: “And his Word which he conveyed into Mary and a spirit proceeding from himself”. Apart from the interpretation of the spirit as Gabriel; Al-Baidawi (34) suggests; “Possessing a spirit emanating from God and not coming to him by the ordinary channels” or Al-Kashshaf (34) suggests that the spirit means the words by which faith lives”. In Sura 19:16: “And we sent our spirit to her and he took before her the form of a perfect man.” Most of the commentators still point out that the spirit is Gabriel. In Sura 21:91: “Into whom we breathed of our spirit.” All the commentators agree that the spirit refers to Gabriel⁴⁸, although each one explains it a little bit differently. In Sura 16:12, “Into Mary’s womb we breathed of our spirit”. Al-Baidawi points out “The spirit was created by God from nothing.” In an overview of the above passages about the nature, birth and life work of Jesus, Mylrea (1910:38-39) argues that in order to avoid the difficulties, commentators reduced the meaning of spirit to a figurative one. He states further, “Muslim is confronted by his spiritual guides. Gabriel; a supreme angel; an archangel; a breath; inspiration; light; faith; and Qur’an; prophecy; the Gospel; Jesus; human beings; pure human spirits; an influence; a victory; a being greater than angels; God’s great Name”. These indications are therefore confirming Mylrea’s viewpoint that “commentators neither understand the

⁴⁸ Al-Baidawi in Mylrea (1910:37) says “The Spirit which is by our command or from the direction of our Spirit, which is Gabriel.” Al-Jalalain in Mylrea (1910:37) says, “The Spirit here is Gabriel who breathed into the fold of Mary’s robe and she conceived.” Al-Kashshaaf in Mylrea (1910:37) explains, “We breathed the Spirit into Jesus in her,” it means, “We quickened him in her womb.” It may also mean, “Gabriel was commissioned actually to breathe into, for he did in fact breathe and his breath went into her body.”

true meaning of these titles, nor present a rational and consistent theory of His nature.” Mylrea sums up the meaning of spirit in this section as follows: 1) The Spirit emanates directly from God. 2) The Spirit was the unique means by which the Virgin Mary conceived. 3) The Spirit inspired the words of God in the Gospel. 4) The Spirit was the strengthener of Jesus.

Overall, it is noticed that the divergence of opinions among Muslim commentators and Western scholars is problematic. Research by Thomas O’Shaughnessy suggests that his study in chronological order provides a better solution.

3.2.2 The study of the Development of the Meaning of Spirit in the Qur’an

O’Shaughnessy in 1953 draws our attention to the influence of pre-Islamic Christian and Gnostic sources in Arabia. According to Levonian (1954:145), the intention of this study is to determine the influence exerted by Judaism, Christianity and Gnosticism upon the founder of Islam that is evident throughout the Qur’an. O’Shaughnessy divides the references to the Spirit chronologically⁴⁹ into four groups, according to Muhammad’s preaching in four periods of time: 1) The Spirit is a certain person playing an active part with angels; 2) The Spirit is an impersonal entity, a breath of life, originating with Allah; 3) The Spirit is from the *amr* of the Lord (Sura 17:87); 4) “Spirit of holiness” indicates a person or sometimes an impersonal being. Finally, there are two verses relating to the birth of Jesus. Levonian (1954:146) notices that the extensive use of writings by Judeo-Christian and Gnostic sects indicating a parallelism with the verses of the Qur’an is an excellent contribution in exploring the meaning of the Spirit in the Qur’an. He further comments that although the chronological order of the verses and the context are a good procedure, the divergence of opinions among Muslim commentators and Western scholars are still problematic. At the end, Levonian concludes that Muhammad combined the information taken from those sources to accommodate his purpose and his followers’ religious needs.

⁴⁹ This chronological order is according to Noldeke and Blachere (Watt 1970:205-212).

Figure 3. 2 O’Shaughnessy’s’ (1953) references and the chronological order

	Meaning of the Spirit	Sura referred (Noldeke and Blachere)
First Meccan	The Angels and Spirit	78:38; 97:4; 70:4
Second Meccan	A share of Allah’s Spirit	26:193; 15:29; 19:17; 38:72; 21:91
Third Meccan	Spirit from the <i>amr</i>	32:8; 17:87; 16:2; 16:104; 40:15; 42:52
Medina Period	The Spirit of Holiness	2:81,254; 4:169; 58:22; 66:12; 5:109

According to O’Shaughnessy (1953:10-11), the variety of meanings of *ruh* based on the Bible, on which Islam depends, has made the task of analysis extremely difficult. Although a number of the non-Arabic religious terminologies of the Qur’an is from Aramaic that was used commonly in Muhammad’s time, he found that “the ultimate sources of the *ruh* are still unknown, and were obscure even to the early Muslim exegetes”. Moreover, modern Orientalists have applied the variety of interpretations of *ruh* widely without paying attention to its development. On the base of the divergence of opinions among classical and contemporary Muslim commentators, it may be inferred that historically there is a gap between them. Subsequently, O’Shaughnessy stresses the necessity and significance of discovering the development of the meaning of *ruh* throughout the different stages of Muhammad’s preaching at Mecca and Medina from AD 610 to AD 632.

O’Shaughnessy (1953:11-12) found that there are three problems that need to be addressed in the existing interpretation of the meaning of *ruh*. Firstly, *ruh* is always used in the singular form in the Qur’an, and *ruh* is never an equivalent for angel, nor *nafs*, human soul, self, although these meanings exist in post-Qur’anic and modern Arabic. Secondly, because the philologists who compiled the great Arabic lexicons have been greatly influenced by later doctrinal developments in Islam; for instance, Greco-Arabic scholasticism and traditions, he states, “the Muslim theologians and commentators on the Qur’an have multiplied the meanings of *ruh*, often with little probability”. Thirdly, the Qur’an was not compiled chronologically and with abrogated verses revealed. In response to the second assumption, we could say that the evidence seems to be strong as one review how each verse was applied to various meanings in the previous section (3.1).

According to O’Shaughnessy’s chronological order; we can have a closer look at

these four categories: Without describing the detail, since this is extremely complicated in terms of the divergent interpretations by the commentators, and just by getting an analysis of the meaning of *ruh* based on the interpretation of four Muslim commentators: i.e. Tabari, Zamakashari, Razi, and Baidawi.

3.2.2.1 In the first Meccan period:

The Spirit is a certain person playing an active part with angels (Sura 78:38; 97:4; 70:4). These verses appeared in the first four years of Muhammad's ministry from AD 610, they all represent this stage in Muhammad's conception as to the nature of spirit. *Please refer to Table 3.1; (O'Shaughnessy 1953: 24) at appendix 1: Spirit refers to a personal being, appears as a created personal being, either a superior angel or a member of species above the angels.* O'Shaughnessy categorizes the following: A being above the angelic species, a superior angel, a great angel, an undetermined being, neither angel nor man, and something human. This analysis shows that the highest possibility of the meaning of spirit among all these commentators' opinions is the angel Gabriel⁵⁰, and second is the supreme angel⁵¹. How has the idea of the spirit formed in Muhammad's mind in this period? O'Shaughnessy (1953:16) reports "the spirit is associated with the angels in several parallels in Jewish and Christian literature of which Muhammad may have acquired some indirect knowledge through oral sources." There are examples in Sura 78:38⁵² and 97:4⁵³ which compare with 1Kings 22: 19-21. Furthermore, Saint Ephraem's writing, referring to the spirit frequently, has been shown to have been known indirectly to Muhammad. Besides this, other ideas⁵⁴ about the spirit (O'Shaughnessy 1953:19), for instance, Didymus of Alexandria asserts that, "The Holy Ghost was created in nature inferior to God and superior to the angels". Others taught⁵⁵ "the existence of a spirit, superior to the angels, able to descend upon the earth at will, which they identified with Adam, later reincarnated in Jesus." According to O'Shaughnessy (1953:21) this is vivified in Jewish tradition and in teachings of the Judeo-Christian Gnostic sects

⁵⁰ Among these four commentators' (Tabari, Zamakashari, Razi, and Baidawi) interpretation of these three verses (78:38; 97:4; 70:4), the spirit refers to the angel Gabriel, as mentioned 9 times in Table 1.

⁵¹ Same as above, the spirit refers to the supreme angel mention 4 times in Table 1.

⁵² "I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the army of heaven standing by him on the right hand and on the left ... and there came forth the spirit and stood before the Lord."

⁵³ "In the night of power the angel and spirit descend".

⁵⁴ These words come from "Didymus of Alexandria rebukes Macedonius, whose followers still linger on as late as the fifth century" (O'Shaughnessy 1910:19).

⁵⁵ The Essence Ebionites, whose influence extended beyond the Transjordan over a great part of southwestern Asia as late as the fourth century of the Christian era" (O'Shaughnessy 1910:19).

(O'Shaughnessy 1953:22): "The spirit, sometimes identified with Christ, is a messenger from God; revelation is imparted by a giant angel (Christ) aided by a female being called the holy ghost." This reference to Christ and the Holy Ghost seems to be so strong that it has an influence on later Qur'anic developments of the idea of spirit. When one compares these three texts with the teaching of the Judeo-Christian Gnostic sects, it seems unlikely that Muhammad identified the spirit with Gabriel at this early period.

3.2.2.2 In the second Meccan period:

The concept of spirit in Muhammad's mind was transformed from a personal being into an impersonal thing. The Spirit is an impersonal entity, a breath of life, originating with Allah (Sura 26:193; 15:29; 19:17; 38:72; 21:91). (*Please refer to Table 3.2; O'Shaughnessy 1953:32 in appendix 2: "Spirit refers to something impersonal"*): part of Allah's own life spirit emanating from him, a created being wonderful in nature, not clearly matter and not clearly spirit, a material substance animating the body by penetrating it or Allah's life-giving breath which issues from his spirit, i.e. from Gabriel. This analysis shows that the highest possibility of meaning of the spirit among all these commentators' opinions is again the angel Gabriel⁵⁶ or, impersonal, that which animates⁵⁷.

As O'Shaughnessy (1953:27) has shown clearly that some ideas of the spirit were borrowed from Syrian Christians⁵⁸ as well as from the Jewish apocrypha; he suggests that "such borrowings of Christian concepts during these years seem to have been part of the Prophet's strategy aimed at obtaining the support and confirmation of Christians, who then possessed a certain prestige in half-Christian Arabia." Other evidence (O'Shaughnessy 1953:29) shows that the prophet was influenced by the doctrines of Nestorian theology⁵⁹; for instance, in Sura 15:29, instead of applying the spirit as creative breath, he implied the theory of the soul's insensibility after its separation from the body in death.

⁵⁶ Among these commentators' interpretation of these verses (26:193; 15:29; 19:17; 38:72; 21:91), the spirit refers to the angel Gabriel as mentioned 4 times in Table 2.

⁵⁷ Same as above, the spirit refers to impersonal that which animates, mentions 4 times in Table 2.

⁵⁸ According to O'Shaughnessy (1953:27), Grunbaum and Andrae have shown that the entire Qur'anic account of Adam, including the command the angels received to worship him is found in the context of Sura 15:29 and 38:72. Another example he (1953:29) lists is the Qur'anic expression "he breathed from his spirit into him, to indicate the creative inbreathing.

⁵⁹ According to O'Shaughnessy (1953:29) "this idea Andrae shows to have come to Muhammad from Aphraates though Babai the Great and Nestorian Arabs of Hira with whom the inhabitants of Mecca maintained close relations."

Despite of all these influences from the influences that prophet received, it seems that all the commentators agree that the spirit is impersonal in those passages. However, O'Shaughnessy (1953:31) suggests that the spirit may be a person, Gabriel, from whom, as an intermediary, Allah's breath of life comes to Adam and Jesus; when the preposition, i.e. "from", "some of" is understood as designating origin matter than participation. It is believed that the spirit here is equivalent to the life breath in Adam and Jesus. O'Shaughnessy argues that the Qur'an never speaks of the life breath as a spiritual being; consequently he points out that "the contrast sometimes made between the Qur'anic *ruh* and *nafs* as the spiritual and vegetative souls in men in general is hardly defensible." Nevertheless, the impersonal role of the spirit in these passages is in harmony with Allah's unity and his omnipotence reflected in man's creation and future resurrection.

3.3.2.3 In the third Meccan period:

The Spirit is from the *amr* of the Lord (Sura 32:8; 17:87; 16:2; 16:104; 40:15; 42:52; Please refer to Table 3.3; O'Shaughnessy 1953:43 in appendix 3: *Spirit: Impersonal: revelation or Personal - an angel or angel-like being*). This analysis shows that the highest possibility of the meaning of spirit among all these commentators' opinions is revelation⁶⁰; next to it is the Qur'an⁶¹ or once again Gabriel⁶². O'Shaughnessy (1910:41) argues, "The interpretation for *ruh* here as a person, and especially Gabriel, comes from a desire to bring the earlier suras into harmony with those composed later at Medina."

Because of the complicated explanation on the combined use of *ruh* and *amr* in these four texts, O'Shaughnessy (1910:35) suggests that the simplest way is to interpret literally. Furthermore, O'Shaughnessy (1910:41) points out that the personal and semi-personal use of *amr* in the suras of this period sometimes depend on the theory, common to most Gnostic systems. However, in Sura 16:2, 40:15, 42:52 the *amr* of the Lord, is clearly connected with the divine command, or message from Allah; in explanation, most of the commentators are in favour of the meaning as impersonal sense of revealed matter originating from Allah. O'Shaughnessy (1910:41) argues that the reason for the interpretation of *ruh* here as a person, and particularly referring

⁶⁰ Among these commentators' interpretation of these verses (32:8; 17:87; 16:2; 16:104; 40:15; 42:52), the spirit refers to revelation mentions 11 times in Table 3.

⁶¹ Same as above, the spirit refers Qur'an mentions 7 times in Table 3.

⁶² Same as above, the spirit refers Qur'an mentions 6 times in Table 3.

to Gabriel, is to bring the earlier suras into harmony with those composed later at Medina. It is assumed that Muhammad has known the functions attributed to Gabriel in the Medinan suras and incorporated them into later Muslim belief at the time these texts were composed. O'Shaughnessy (1910:42) analyses the meaning of spirit in these four texts as follows: The spirit would be a vaguely personal being (Sura 17:87), a personal being linked with the transmission of divine revelation (Sura 16:2), and an impersonal equivalent for prophet-hood and for divine revelation itself (Sura 40:15; 42:52). It is O'Shaughnessy's view that "Muhammad's gradual modifying of the sense of spirit, while retaining an established terminology, and his skilful handling of a matter of which he understood little or nothing, the nature of spiritual substance, are proofs in him of great practical intelligence."

3.2.2.4 In the Medinan period:

"Spirit of holiness" indicates a person or sometimes an impersonal being (Sura 2:81,254; 4:169; 58:22; 66:12; 5:109).

(Please refer to *Table 3.4 (O'Shaughnessy 1953:52) in appendix 4: "Spirit: Impersonal ruh: as various manifestations of Allah's power, revelation or personal ruh"*). This analysis shows that the highest possibility of the meaning of the spirit among all these commentators' opinions is still Gabriel⁶³, although in company with other options with little possibilities.

In the Medina period, Muhammad first learned of the radical distinction between the Old Testament and New Testament, while his expectation of being accepted as a religious leader did not materialised. How has Muhammad received the idea of the spirit as Gabriel in the Medina period? It is noticed that a Medinan verse (Sura 2:91), which initially substituted Gabriel for the spirit of holiness for the very first time, was probably composed sometime after the first years in Medina, and it was at that time that 'spirit' had become a vague synonym for Allah's strength. O'Shaughnessy (1953:48, 49) points out that the prophet identified Gabriel as spirit of holiness in Medina, which is implied in the Ascension of Isaiah from the beginning of the second century. Besides this, the Gnostic sects also professed belief in an angel (Christ) assisted by a giant woman (the Holy Spirit) who brought relation to Sobias. Moreover,

⁶³ Among these commentators' interpretation of these verses (2:81,254; 4:169; 58:22; 66:12; 5:109), the spirit refers to revelation as mentioned 14 times in Table 4, which is higher than others where it only appears from 1 to 4 times.

the “faithful” spirit in Sura 26:93 is used to describe Gabriel as found in the versions of Umayyad ‘bnu Abi ‘-Salt. Evidently, it is a demonstration of how documents were borrowed in connection with the present verses, and yet their content is an indication of the general belief in the environment in which the prophet lived. Just by looking at Sura 2:81, 254, 5:109; in all these verses, the spirit of holiness is interpreted sometimes as a person and sometimes as an impersonal being, which is really a vague manifestation of Allah’s influence or power.

3.2.2.5 Spirit and Word in the annunciation to Mary

Both of these two verses (Sura 4:169; 21:91) originated in Meccan period, concerning with the conception of Jesus. According to O’Shaughnessy, two issues are discussed in his research: Gabriel the Spirit and Jesus the Spirit.

Firstly, Gabriel the Spirit in Sura 19:17, “We sent to Mary our spirit, who took for her the form of a human being, shapely”. It is evidently that the prophet himself identified the Medinan spirit of holiness with Gabriel. This idea is actually coming from all the borrowed sources⁶⁴ for instance, Gabriel, who is the one who announced Mary’s conception of Jesus. It is believed that the prophet made the connection between Gabriel and *ruh* after hearing the details of the Annunciation story⁶⁵ at Medina. Consequently, he asserts that Allah strengthened Jesus by the spirit of holiness. Other sources may have influenced him, regarding this idea, as found in Coptic apocryphal texts, Coptic Egypt, and Christian Copts, the Old Testament⁶⁶, Jewish apocrypha⁶⁷ and traditions. However, commentators considered Gabriel as especially loved by Allah.

Secondly, Jesus is the Spirit in Sura 4:169, “Jesus ... is the messenger of Allah, and his word... and a spirit from him”. It would represent a late development of the prophet’s understanding regarding the spirit. *Please refer to Table 5 (O’Shaughnessy 1910:65) ‘Jesus is a spirit from Allah’ in Appendix 5.* Evidently, the combination of “word” and “spirit” appeared long ago in the Qur’an, in the Fathers and ecclesiastical

⁶⁴ These are Heretical, apocryphal and Gnostic sources, on which rather than on canonical Scripture.

⁶⁵ In the Gospel of Luke 1:19, 28.

⁶⁶ Gabriel who appeared in human form bringing revelation and comfort to the Hebrew prophet in Daniel 8:16 and 9:21.

⁶⁷ In O’Shaughnessy (1953:56), Jewish legend Gabriel is also a beneficent agent. In the Book of Henoch, Gabriel and Michael appear together with other archangels, and the title “angel of the holy spirit is used instead of the name of Gabriel.

writers⁶⁸; and the combination of the usage of the spirit with Christ is found in the Gnostic apocryphal Gospel⁶⁹. Consequently, the image of Jesus is portrayed as a creature and servant of Allah and is associated with Adam. It is noticed that the creative command “Be” is always in connection with Jesus or the final resurrection of the dead (O’Shaughnessy 1910:61, 63). In his being created by a word, without carnal generation, Jesus is like Adam.” Jesus is similar to Adam because both of them were created by the command of Allah. Therefore, “the direct creation of Jesus by a creative command or word would explain his title ‘a word’” It is reasonable that, in the same verse Sura 4:169. Jesus is being called “a spirit” or creative breath from Allah. Nevertheless, commentators constantly, make Gabriel, at Allah’s command, breath into the bosom of Mary’s garment.

O’Shaughnessy (1910:64) points out that the spirit in Sura 19:17 and 4:169 eventually could not fit into any one of the categories; considering this, although the two verses are closely related the sense of the various texts rather than their exact chronology. Therefore, he proposed the following category to indicate the development of spirit in Quran’ic usage.

Figure 3. 3 O’Shaughnessy’s’ revised references and the chronological order

	Meaning of the Spirit	Sura referred to (Noldeke and Blachere)
First Meccan	The Angels and Spirit	78:38; 97:4; 70:4
Second Meccan	A share of Allah’s Spirit	15:29; 38:72; 21:91; 32:8; 66:12 (19:17; 4:169)
Third Meccan	Spirit from the <i>amr</i>	17:87;16:2;40:15; 42:52
Medinan Period	The Spirit of Holiness	16:104;26:193;2:81;2:254;58:22;5:109

In his reflection on the above figure, O’Shaughnessy (1953:67) reports that this represents the spirit as a mysterious being above angels in the earlier suras, which was influenced by the Gnosticism. Later on, when Muhammad had closer contact with Christianity and Judaism, the biblical concepts of spirit is adopted, which is breath of life, inspirer of revelation, strengthening force. O’Shaughnessy concludes that

⁶⁸ According to O’Shaughnessy (1953:58, 59), the spirit in combination with “word” to refer to his place in the Trinity. In Isaias even that Christ being the word and spirit of the Creator, had prophesied of John.

⁶⁹ O’Shaughnessy (1953:59), Gnosticism influenced some of the Judeo-Christian sects strongly, whose doctrines were still spread about at the rise of Islam.

Muhammad combined other sources and refashioned his material in order to achieve his own purpose and his religious needs of his countrymen.

3.2.3 The study of “Who is the Spirit from Allah in Islam?”

The study of “Who is the Spirit from Allah in Islam?” by Abd Al-Masih in 1997 presents a critical analysis of relevant Qur’anic passages in comparison with the Gospel. Al-Masih categorizes the Spirit into five discussion areas: 1) The Spirit from Allah and the creation of Adam. 2) The Spirit from Allah and Mary, the Mother of Jesus. 3) The Spirit from Allah and Jesus Christ. 4) The Spirit from Allah and Muhammad. 5) The Spirit from Allah and final Judgement. (References only)

Figure 3. 4 Abd Al-Masih (1997) references

The Spirit from Allah relating to	References
The creation of Adam	--
Mary, the mother of Jesus	19:16-22; 21:91; 66:12
Jesus Christ	4:171-172; 5:110-111; 2:253; 2:87-88
Muhammad	97:1-5; 53:1-18; 26:192-197; 17:85;16:101-103; 2:97-98; 66; 1-5; 16:1-2; 58:14-20
Final Judgement	40:15-17; 70:1-9; 78:38; 56:11-26,77-96; 56:27-46

3.3 The existent Misunderstandings on the Holy Spirit between Muhammad and Muslim commentators

Although the founder of Islam, Muhammad, has progressively increased his awareness and the significance of the Spirit, apparently this subject was still an incomprehensible mystery for him. Evidently, when the Jews questioned Muhammad about *ruh*, he answered “at my Lord’s command” (Sura 17:87). Mylrea (1910:5) states, “It is this mystery which we wish now to unveil.” Nevertheless, many devout Muslim commentators try to trace Muhammad’s understanding of *ruh* in the Qur’an. For instance, the reason why Muslim commentators, al-Baidawi and al-Razi are unable to reconcile the absolute divine transcendence as taught in Islam with God’s relation to His creation (Sura 15:29; 32:8) is because they fail to distinguish between the material and spiritual aspects of the subject. Mylrea justified these commentators, as Muhammad himself was not sure as to whether Jesus was Himself Spirit, or simply strengthened by the Spirit. The result of this confusion is that the commentators are

unsure as to whether the Spirit himself is material or spiritual.

Another reason, which caused the existing misunderstanding or misinterpretation concerning the Holy Spirit, between Muhammad and Muslim commentators, is mixed-up use of other sources in the Qur'an. According to O'Shaughnessy (1953:19), as mentioned earlier on, the rise of Islam among the Judeo-Christian heretics and Gnostic sects has evidently influenced the religious environment⁷⁰ of Arabia in Muhammad's time. O'Shaughnessy (1910:23) found that "Used in conjunction with other sources, then, and not as self-sufficient criteria, the Muslim commentaries may serve to confirm an interpretation already established as probable by independent reference to other information available to Muhammad." Furthermore, it seems that Muhammad ignored the fundamental differences between Judaism and Christianity throughout the entire Meccan period of his mission.

In order to understand the authentic meaning of *ruh*, it is suggested that there are three important principles, which should apply: firstly, read the Qur'an chronologically. Secondly, interpret the word contextually. Thirdly, rethink the proper Qur'anic exegesis.

Talking about rethinking the proper Qur'anic exegesis, it is important that every word must be understood in its context. Because the present Qur'an is not compiled in chronological order, the exegetes of early Islam felt the need to establish this order, especially of certain Qur'anic passages, which are abrogated by the verses revealed. For this reason, some European Orientalists began to apply the criteria of internal evidence, allusions, vocabulary and style to sort out chronological difficulties.

Jane McAuliffe (as cited in Johnson 1999:115) has noted: "Classical and modern exegetes will not entertain theories about cultural borrowing or extra-Islamic influence. Qur'anic passages that appear to echo versions of Biblical narratives are not examined in order to discover their possible lines of transmission and various shaping undergone along the way." Furthermore, Johnson (1999:115) points out that "because questions of authorship and evolution of content and form are outside the proper domain of *tafsir* (exegesis), only particular types of textual analyses are performed." They are classified as being based upon 'transmission' (*tafsir bi' l-*

⁷⁰ According to O'Shaughnessy (1953:21) "remnants of Judeo-Christian beliefs that had been spread in various forms in Arabia of the first three centuries of the Christian era, religious opinions that had penetrated from Hellenistic Syria, from Iranized Iraq, from Palestine, Abyssinia and Egypt, acquired orally by random contacts with ill-instructed Christians and Jews of the lower classes."

ma'thur), 'sound knowledge' (*tafsir bi'l-ra'y*) and 'indication' (*tafsir bi'l-isharah*).

According to Johnson (1999:115-117) *tafsir bi'l-ma'thur*: 'transmission' is the most highly regarded form of exegesis traditionally, and it contains three types of analysis. The meaning of a particular verse in the Qur'an may be explained by referring directly to another verse in the text.

1. "The highest form of *tafsir bi'l-ma'thur* is exemplified by those examples in which one verse from the Qur'an is used to explain another." 2. "A second variety of exegesis by transmission includes those verses that may be understood by reference to statements of the Prophet." 3. "The third type of exegesis by transmission, which ranks below explanations drawn from the Qur'an and Prophet, is that provided by the Companions of the Prophet." Second, *tafsir bi'l-ra'y*: Interpretation based upon sound knowledge, which is rather controversial. Thirdly, *tafsir bi'l-isharah*: Exegesis by signs or indications is particularly associated with Sufism, the mystical tradition of Islam, since its purpose is to uncover the subtle allusions of the text."

Johnson (1999:121-121) defines "the goal of Qur'an exegesis according to Muslims is to clarify the meaning of the text employing information found within the Qur'an itself and interpretations that the Prophet's own explanations to the greatest extent possible". Because the Prophet is protected from sin and error (*ma'sum*), therefore, it is considered the second source of sure guidance. The third source of authoritative interpretation is his companions who could be trusted to convey knowledge from their masters back to Muhammad.

Now to the question, which Johnson (1999:122) points out "Whether a Muslim could make use of the legacy of Judaism and Christianity to supplement the Qur'an?" There are three categories in answering this question. Firstly, it seems the negative answer was already given in the time of Muhammad. As Johnson (cite note 28) points out:

"The people of the scripture (Jews) used to recite the Torah in Hebrew and they used to explain it in Arabic to the Muslims. On that, Allah's apostle said: "Do not believe the people of the scripture or disbelieve them, but say: 'We believe in Allah and what is revealed to us.'" (Sura 2:36)

Secondly, other opinions neither accept nor reject information provided by Jews and Christians⁷¹. It is believed that Muslim religious scholars have agreed that their

⁷¹ In Johnson's, note 29 & 30 (1999:122) "If the people of the Book tell you something true and you

fellow monotheists are in error; it is just a matter of error in their scriptural material or errors in interpretation of the text by the Jewish and Christian communities, when their scriptures contradict the Qur'an, which Muslims believe is the final dictated word of God. Subsequently, exegetes reject contradictory material and report details extracted from Jewish and Christian texts. Thirdly, it is neither to be accepted nor rejected as false.

Johnson (1999:123-126) states that, if the “Muslims reject any notion of human influence upon the style or content of the Qur'an and describe the contributions of Judaism and Christianity as being of limited importance in the production of Qur'an exegesis”, then “to what extent was the Qur'an shaped by their influence?” Some western scholars in response to this challenge contribute by discussing the history of the Qur'an's compilation and variant readings of the text. Some new converts from Islam to Judaism and Christianity brought their former knowledge with them. Some have been quoted to explain the history of Israelite prophets and patriarchs. Some have used biblical passages in the service of Islam instead of presenting an alternative source of authoritative guidance to the Qur'an. Some have quoted Jewish and Christian scripture to explain their belief and practices to curious Muslim readers. Furthermore, some even have used the Bible for apologetic purposes. Johnson (1999:127) concludes, “The distance that separates proper analysis of the Qur'an as defined by traditionally trained Muslim exegetes and methodologies employed by modern Western-trained scholars is vast indeed.”

3.4 The religious evolution of Muhammad and his understanding of *al-ruh*

Muhammad's understands and experiences of *ruh* in the Qur'an, particularly in three representative verses in various chronological periods: the Spirit (26:193), Holy Spirit (16:102) and Gabriel (2:97-100), are as follows:

Warren Larson, the Director of Zwemer Centre for the Study of Islam, (Nov. 22, 2004) in his class states that “Muhammad's understanding of his revelations seems to evolve as time goes on.” Larson gives this example: “For example, in mid-Mecca, the Qur'an says he was visited by 'spirit' (26:193). Then, later in late-Mecca, he said it was the Holy Spirit who came to him (16:102). Finally, in Medina, he concluded that

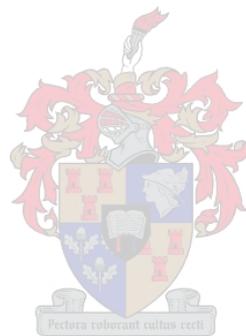
may reject it as false or tell you something which is false but you may accept it as false.” Ibn Mas'ud reported to have answered, “Do not ask the people of the book about anything for they cannot guide you and are themselves in error.”

it was Gabriel, (2:97). Therefore, it seems he was not sure. It is tragic that he was confused as to where his revelations were coming from.” In addition to that, Larson states further, “According to Jeremiah and Ezekiel, it would seem that some of them, at least, were coming out of his own heart and mind.” For instance, In Ezekiel: “Have you not seen false visions and uttered lying divinations when you say, ‘Their visions are false and their divinations a lie, they say, ‘The Lord declares,’ ‘when the Lord has not sent them: yet they expect their words to be fulfilled. The Lord declares’, have you not seen false visions and uttered lying divinations when you say, ‘the Lord declares, though I have not spoken.’” (Ezekiel 13:6, 7) In Jeremiah talking about the false prophet Hananiah: “But the prophet who prophecies peace will be recognized as one truly sent by the Lord only if his prediction comes true.” (Jeremiah 28:9) However, Hananiah was condemned to death, “The Lord has not sent you, yet you have persuaded this nation to trust in lies.” (Jeremiah 28:15) It is possible that Hananiah had the idea that this was divine inspiration when in fact it was the working of his own imagination.

Furthermore, considering the Qur’an according to PJJS Els (2004) “There were certain important gaps in his knowledge and proclamation of what God had revealed in the previous eras of the ‘history of revelation’”. It is Muhammad’s belief that “Allah, whom he proclaimed, was actually the same one and only true God who also acted in the histories of the Jews (Old Testament) and the Christian ‘nation’ (New Testament). Bible characters are mentioned e.g. Adam, Ibrahim, Isaac, Ishmael, Moses (Musa), David (Da’ud), Elijah, Jesus (‘Isa). However nothing is said or reflected about the ministry and messages of very important Biblical prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, and Malachi etc. Therefore, “the wonderful and most important prophecies in the O.T. concerning the coming Messiah and his crucial ministry are totally absent from the Qur’an.” The evidence seems to indicate that the authority and authenticity of the Qur’an is doubted.

Besides this, John Gilchrist states that the source of the Qur’an is sometimes parallel to that of the Bible but lack accuracy. For instance, in reference to Lot (Lut) in the Qur’an early in his understanding, Muhammad compared “an old woman” with Lot; later he realized it was “Lot’s wife”. Finally, Muhammad straightened the story as he got other details into the story of Abraham and Lot’s visitor. Larson therefore argues that the Qur’an is very much a human book and that Muhammad’s understanding

evolved gradually. He therefore argues that the Qur'an does not seem to be very divine at all.



CHAPTER FOUR

WHAT MODERN MUSLIMS AND SCHOLARS UNDERSTAND ON *AL-RUH*

4.1 The Introduction of Interviews

We have looked at the twenty verses mentioning *ruh* in the Qur'an and *ruh* in the Qur'anic usage in Chapter 2. We also discovered the interpretations of several classical Muslim commentators in Chapter 3. In this Chapter, questionnaires were reflected to find out how modern Muslim scholars and ordinary Muslims understand *ruh* in the Qur'an. Interviews using these questionnaires were conducted among Muslim scholars, leaders and ordinary Muslims in Stellenbosch and in Cape Town; some of the interviews were done in an informal way. Besides this, since internet usage is common in people's daily lives, different opinions regarding the Qur'anic teaching about *ruh* can be found on the Internet of both Muslims and Christians' viewpoints, in this way providing a mutual communication to promote dialogue between them on the topic of the Holy Spirit according to the Qur'an. For this reason, some of the information is taken from the resources of the Internet.

In 4.1, the Questionnaire is designed for Muslims in general. However, because the Qur'an is written in Arabic, which is regarded as the real divine revelation according to Muslims, and no translation into any other languages is accepted, interviewees who are selected are preferably Muslims who understand Arabic. After some interviews, the original questionnaire (A) and the reversed one (B) are both based on the same information. Another sheet of information (C) about The Holy Spirit (*Al-ruh*) in the Qur'an is designed as information for interviews with scholars; however, it is a conversation, a question-and-answer type of interaction. As the discussion on the questionnaires is mostly based on the twenty *ruh* related verses in the Qur'an, *Ruh* in Yusuf Ali's translation and commentary is edited in 4.2 as a standard text for interviews as well as for analysis and comparison.

4.3 contain the data and analysis of the interviews, and include three parts: Informal interviews, Interviews with Questionnaires by appointment and Interviews with scholars. Sometimes people are not comfortable with the interviewer keeping record, and sometimes both interviewer and interviewees have limited time and knowledge,

therefore informal interviews are just a means to acquire a surface idea on this topic. However, some intellectual and devout Muslims who know the Qur'an would not like to express their own opinions without evidence in the Qur'an; Questionnaires are selected for Muslims in this category. In general, Sunni Muslims are the majority in the Cape. Concerning theological and doctrinal differences, there are Sunni, Sufi and Sunni pro-Sufi representatives included in the interviews of scholars.

The last part of this chapter shows modern Muslim's opinions on the Internet, which will be shown in 4.4. This part will broaden the scope of interviews beyond geographical limitation, since today people live in a global village, and can easily access websites without long journeys and read about other people's thoughts and opinions about any topic of mutual interest. Some of the issues about *ruh* will focus on this. Questionnaire for interviews (A) Table 4.1 and (B) Table 4.2 *The Holy Spirit (Al-ruh) in the Qur'an, please see appendix 6 and 7; Questionnaire for interviews (C) Table 4.3 Information for interview of Muslim scholars; Al-Ruh in Qur'anic Usage, please see appendix 8.*

4.2 *Ruh* in the Qur'an in Yusuf Ali's translation and commentary

What is your understanding of *ruh* in the following verses? The Qur'an Translation and commentary by Yusuf Ali (1946: Islamic Propagation Centre International)

In the **Meccan** period, *ruh* was used in connection with angels, particularly with the angel Gabriel.

Sura 78:38: "The Day that the Spirit⁷² and the angels will stand forth in ranks, none shall speak except any who is permitted by (God) Most Gracious, and he will say what is right."

Sura 70:4 "The angels and the Spirit⁷³ ascend unto Him in a Day, the measure where-of is (as) fifty thousand years"

⁷² Yusuf Ali (1964:1677) footnote 5911: "The Spirit: see n. 5677 to 70:4. Some commentators understand by 'the Spirit' the angel Gabriel as he is charged specially with bringing Messages to human apostles: see 21:193, n.3224. Or perhaps he may be considered the chief of the angels. But it is better to take a wider meaning.—the souls of men collectively as they rise to the Judgment-Seat of God."

⁷³ Yusuf Ali (1964:1605) footnote 5677: "*Ruh*: 'The Spirit'. Cf. 78:38. 'The Spirit and the angels'; and 97:4, 'the angels and the spirit.' In 16:2 we have translated *Ruh* by 'inspiration'. Some commentators understand the angel Gabriel by 'the Spirit'. But I think a more general meaning is possible, and fits the context better. Man is gifted with the Spirit of God: 15:29. In the spiritual kingdom we are all raised to the light of the Countenance of God, and His glory transforms us."

Sura 97:4: “Therein come down the angels and the Spirit⁷⁴, By God’s permission, on every errand:”

4.2.1 In the creation of Adam (Sura15: 29; 38:72; 32:8/9)

Sura 15:29: “When I have fashioned him (In due proportion) and breathed into him of My *spirit*, Fall ye down in obeisance unto him⁷⁵.”

Sura 38:72 “When I have fashioned him (In due proportion) and breathed into him of My *spirit*⁷⁶, Fall ye down in obeisance unto him.”

Sura 32:9: “But he fashioned him in due proportion, and breathed into him something of⁷⁷ His Spirit. And He gave you (faculties of) hearing And sight and feeling (And understanding): Little thanks do ye give!

In Sura 15:29, according to Yusuf Ali (1964:643 n. 1698) “Adam is not mentioned by name, but only Man, whose symbol is Adam.” Therefore, it is believed that the life-giving spirit given to Adam is also given to all the human beings since Adam is the first human.

According to Yusuf Ali (1964:1574), “in 32:9, it is said of Adam’s progeny, man, that God “fashioned him in due proportion, and breathed into him something of His spirit”. In 15:29, similar words are used with reference to Adam. The virgin birth should not therefore be supposed to imply that God was the father of Jesus in the sense in which Greek mythology makes Zeus the father of Apollo by Latona or Minos by Europe. And yet that is the doctrine to which the Christian idea of “the only begotten Son of God” leads.

4.2.2 Breathed into Mary for the conception of Jesus (Sura 21:91; 66:12; 19:17)

⁷⁴ Yusuf Ali (1964:1765) footnote 6219: “The Spirit: usually understood to be the angel Gabriel, the Spirit of Inspiration. But names are hardly necessary in the mystic world. See n. 5677 to 70:4”.

⁷⁵ Yusuf Ali (1964:643) footnote 1698: “Note that here emphasis is on three points: (1) the breathing of God’s spirit into man i.e. the faculty of God-like knowledge and will, which if rightly used, would give man superiority over other creatures; (2) the origin of evil in arrogance and jealousy on the part of Satan, who saw on the lower side of man (his clay) and failed to see the higher side, the faculty brought in God’s sincere servants, purified by His grace (40:40,42). Adam is not here mentioned by name, but only Man, whose symbol is Adam.

⁷⁶ Yusuf Ali (1964:1232) footnote 4227 indicates these verses are same as Sura 15:29.

⁷⁷ Yusuf Ali (1964:1094) footnote 3639 “The third stage is indicated by “fashioned him in due proportion. After fashioned into shape; its limbs are formed; its animal life begins to function; all the beautiful adaptations come into play. The fourth stage here mentioned is that of distinctive Man, into whom God’s spirit is breathed. Then he rises higher than animals.”

Sura 21:91: “And (remember) her who⁷⁸ guarded her chastity: We breathed into her of Our Spirit, and We Made her and her son A Sign for all peoples.”

Sura 66:12: “And Mary the daughter of Imran, who guarded her chastity; and We breathed into (her body)⁷⁹ of Our spirit; and she testified to the truth of the words of her Lord and of his Revelations,”

Sura 19:16/17: “Relate in the Book (The story of) Mary, from her family to a place in the East⁸⁰. She placed a screen (To screen herself) from them; Then We sent to her Our angel and he appeared before her as a man in all respects.”

In Yusuf Ali (1964:843 n.2748), it is an interesting point that Jesus’ miraculous birth enables him to resist evil. One may learn how Jesus overcomes the temptation and return from the desert in the power of the Spirit in Injil (Luke 4:1-14).

4.2.3 Ruh is connected with amr four times. (Sura 17:87; 16:2; 40:15; 42: 52) *Ruhan min’amrina*

Sura 17:85: “They ask thee concerning the Spirit (of inspiration)⁸¹. Say: “The Spirit (cometh) by command of my Lord: Of knowledge it is only a little that is communicated to you, (O men!)”

Allah sends the angels with the “Spirit of His command” unto whom He wills to inspire them to act as warners of humankind (16:2; 40:15).

Sura 16:2: “He doth send down His angels with inspiration of His Command,

⁷⁸ Yusuf Ali (1964:843) footnotes 2748 “Mary the mother of Jesus. Chastity was her special virtue: with a son of virgin birth, she and Jesus became a miracle to all nations. That was the virtue with which they (both Mary and Jesus) resisted evil.”

⁷⁹ Yusuf Ali (1964:1574) footnotes 5552 “Cf. Sura 21:91. As a virgin she gave birth to Jesus:

⁸⁰ Yusuf Ali (1964:771) footnote 2471. “To private eastern chamber, perhaps in the Temple. She went into privacy, from her people and from people in general, for prayer and devotion. It was in this state of purity that the angel appeared to her in the shape of a man. She thought it was a man. She was frightened, and she adjured him not to invade her privacy.”

⁸¹ Yusuf Ali (1964:719) footnote 2285: “What is the nature of inspiration? Who brings it? Can it ask its Bringer questions? Can we ask anything which we wish? These are the sort of question always asked when inspiration is called in question. The answer is given here. Inspiration is one of those high spiritual mysteries. The Spirit (Gabriel) does not come of his own will. He comes by the command of God, and reveals what God commands him to reveal. Of the sum total of true spiritual knowledge what a small part it is that ordinary mortals can understand! They can be only given that which they can understand, however dimly. We are not in a position to ask anything that we wish. If we did so, it would only make us look foolish, for the guidance comes from God’s Wisdom, not from our worldly knowledge.”

to such of His servants⁸² as He pleaseth, (saying): “Warn (Man) that there is No god but I: so do your duty unto me.”

Sura 40:15: “Raised high above ranks (Or degree), (He is) the Lord of the Throne (of authority): By his command doth He send the spirit (of inspiration) to any of His servants He pleases, that it may warn (men) of the Day of Mutual Meeting.”

4.2.4 Ruh al-qudus in terms of how Jesus was assisted by the Spirit (Sure 2:87; 2:253; 5:113).

Sura 2:87: “We gave Moses the Book and followed him up with a succession of Apostles; we gave Jesus the son of Mary⁸³ clear (Signs) and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit. Is it that whenever there comes to you An Apostle with what ye yourselves desire not, ye are Puffed up with pride?—some ye called impostors, and others ye slay!”

Sura 2:253: “Those apostles We endowed with gifts, Some above others: To one of them God spoke; others He raised to degrees (of honour); To Jesus the son of Mary We gave a Clear (Signs),⁸⁴ and strengthened him with the holy spirit. If God had so willed, Succeeding generations would not have fought among each other, after Clear (Sign) had come to them, but they (chose) to wrangle, some believing and others rejecting. If God had so willed, they would not have fought each other; but God fulfilled His plan.”

Sura 5:113: “Then will God say: “O Jesus the son of Mary! Recount My favour to thee and to thy mother. Behold! I strengthened thee with the holy spirit, so that thou

⁸² Yusuf Ali (1964:1266) footnote 4377. “The choosing of a man to be the recipient of inspiration--to be the standard bearer of God’s Truth--is the highest honour possible in the spiritual Kingdom. And God bestows that honour according to His own most perfect Will and Plan, which no one can question, for His is the fountain of all honour, dignity, and authority.”

⁸³ Yusuf Ali (1964:40) footnote 90: “As to the birth of Jesus, cf. 19:16-34. Why is he called the “Son of Mary”? What are his “clear signs”? What is the “holy spirit” by which he was strengthened? We reserve to a later stage a discussion of the Qur’anic teaching on these questions. See 3:62 n. 401” Yusuf Ali (1964:138) footnote. 401: “We are now in a position to deal with the questions which we left over at 2:87. Jesus is no more than a man. It is against reason and revelation to call him God or the son of God. He is called the son of Mary to emphasize this. He had no known human father, as his birth was miraculous. However, it is not this which raises him to his high spiritual position as a prophet, but because God called him to his office. The praise is due to God. Who by His Word gave him spiritual strength- “strengthened him with the holy spirit”. The miracles, which surround his story, relate not only to his birth and his life and death, but also to his mother Mary and his precursor Yahya. These were the “Clear Signs” which he brought. It was those who misunderstood him who obscured his clear Signs and surrounded him with mysteries of their own invention.”

⁸⁴ Cf. 2:87. See n. 401 to 3:62.

Didst speak to the people in childhood and in maturity. Behold! I taught thee the book and Wisdom, The Law and the Gospel.”

4.2.5 Jesus is “a spirit from Allah” and Allah strengthens his believers with the Spirit (Sura 4:171), (Sura 58:22; 16:102)

Sura 4:171: “O People of the Book! Commit no excesses in your religion: nor say of God aught but the truth. Christ Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) an apostle of God, and His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from Him: so believe in God and His apostles, Say not “Trinity”: desist⁸⁵: It will be better for you: For God is One God: Glory be to Him: (Far Exalted is He) above Having a son. To Him belong all things in the heavens and on earth. And enough is God as a Disposer of affairs.”

Sura 58:22: “Thou wilt not find any people who believe in God and the Last Day, loving those who resist God and His Apostle, even though they were their fathers or their sons, or their brothers, or their kindred. For such he has written Faith in their hearts, and strengthened them with a spirit⁸⁶ from Himself ... etc.”

al-Ruh al-Amin brings down the revelation to Muhammad (Sura 26:193; 42:52; 16:102)

Sura 26:192-5: “Verily this is a Revelation from the Lord of the Worlds: With it came down the Spirit of Faith and Truth.⁸⁷ To thy heart and mind,

⁸⁵ Yusuf Ali (1964:234) footnote 676: “Christ’s attributes are mentioned: (1) that he was the son of a woman, Mary, and therefore a man; (2) but an apostle, a man with a mission from God, and therefore entitled to honour; (3) a Word bestowed on Mary, for he was created by God’s word “Be” (*kun*), and he was; 3:59; (4) a spirit proceeding from God, but not God: his life and his mission were more limited than in the case of some other apostles, though we must pay equal honour to him as a man of God.. The doctrines of Trinity, equality with God, and sonship, are repudiated as blasphemies. God is independent of all needs and has no need of a son to manage His affairs. The Gospel of John (whoever wrote it) has put in a great deal of Alexandrian and Gnostic mysticism round the doctrine of the Word (Greek, Logos), but is simply explained here, and our Sufis work on this explanation.

⁸⁶ Yusuf Ali (1964:1518) footnote 5365: “Cf. 2:87 and 253, where it is said that God strengthened the Prophet Jesus with the Holy Spirit. Here we learn that all good and righteous men are strengthened by God with the Holy Spirit. If anything, the phrase used here is stronger, “a spirit from Him”. Whenever any one offers his heart in faith and purity to God, God accepts it, engraves that Faith on the seeker’s heart, and further fortifies him with the divine spirit, which we can no more define adequately than we can define in human language the nature and attributes of God.”

⁸⁷ Yusuf Ali (1964:969) footnote 3224: “*Ruh ul amin*, the epithet of Gabriel, who came with the inspired Messages to the holy Prophet, it is difficult to render in a single epithet in translation. In n. 3187 to 26:107. I have described some of the various shades of meaning attached to the adjective Amin as applied to a Prophet. A further signification as attached to the Spirit of Inspiration is that it is

that thou mayest admonish in the perspicuous Arabic tongue.”

Sura 42:52: “And thus have we, by Our Command, sent Inspiration to thee: Thou knewest not (before)⁸⁸ what was Revelation, and what was Faith; but we have made the (Qur’an) a Light, wherewith we Guide such of our servants as we will; and verily thou dost Guide (men)⁸⁹ to the Straight Way.”

Sura 16:102: “Say, the Holy Spirit⁹⁰ has brought the revelation from thy Lord in Truth, in order to strengthen those who believe, and as a Guide and Glad Tidings to Muslims.”

4.3 Data and Analysis of interviews

4.3.1 Informal interviews

There are some records of interviews as follows:

(1) A 30-year old Libyan man (7 May 2005, Stellenbosch) says that Spirit is given by Allah for their life’s time, and it would be taken away when one passes away.

(2) A 60-year old South African man (8 May 2004, Stellenbosch Mosque) expressed three important things in Muslim belief: Firstly, one has to believe in the Oneness of God. Secondly, Allah has no partner, if one does say so, then it will be the greatest sin called *shirk*. Thirdly, Allah has no son.

(3) A 50-year old woman (20 May 2005, Macassar), she says that the saints are everywhere; spirit and soul are the same.

(4) A 12-year old girl and two high-school girls (20 May 2005, Habibia Mosque/Cape Town) say they do not know anything about the Spirit.

(5) A 50-year old Moroccan man (20 May 2005, Habibia Mosque/Cape Town) says that the spirit is the soul.

the very quintessence of Faith and Truth, unlike the lying spirits, which delude men with falsehood. On the whole, I think “the Spirit of Faith and Truth” will represent the original best here.”

⁸⁸ Yusuf Ali (1964:1322) footnote 4601. “Before the receipt of his mission in his fortieth year, the holy Prophet, though a man of steadfast virtue and purity and unflinching in his search for Truth, was yet unacquainted with Revelation in the highest sense of the term, and with the certainty that comes from perfected Faith, or realised nearness to God. *Ruh*, which I have here translated Inspiration has also been understood by some Commentators to refer to the angel Gabriel. The vehicle of Revelation. The Light of the Qur’an made all things clear to man, and to the world.”

⁸⁹ Yusuf Ali (1964:1322) footnote 4602. “The Qur’an and inspired Prophet, who proclaimed it, are here identified. They were a Guide to men, showing the Straight Way. This Way is described in various ways.”

⁹⁰ Yusuf Ali (1964:684) footnote 2141: “The title of the Angel Gabriel, through whom the revelations came down.”

(6) A Liberian man (15 June 2005, Stellenbosch) says that *Ruh-al-kudus* is another name of Gabriel.

(7) A 66-year old Indian lady, (24 June 2005, Stellenbosch) who has lived in Stellenbosch for almost all her life says that the Spirit is the ancestors' spirit in which they come to visit the house the night before fasting and there should be no music because there is no music in heaven, but one should burn incense for the spirits. Another thing about the Spirit is that when a Muslim is sick, they should go to Macassar to pray to the dead saint for healing at 12 pm mid-night.

(8) A 55-year old Indian Suni Muslim woman (4 July 2005, Cape Town) who lives in Rylands says that *ruh* is a life force. *Ruh* is pure when a baby is born, and yet when a baby grows up, it becomes both influenced negatively by bad things and social factors. If one acknowledges *ruh*, then one may be raised above calamities, because *ruh* has power to rule above it. One can learn and needs to be taught about *ruh*. Jesus is a pure spiritual prophet; he never got angry because of his spirituality. *Ruh* brings peace to one's life, so that one may see all the beauty in everything, for instance, God's majesty. Everywhere you turn, you see the face of God. When one reaches high spirituality, one may become more positive by means of meditation; one can deal with life issues more easily and even face the reality of death. One can actually feel the *ruh* inside of you, and he is with you all the time. She explains that the reason why a Muslim rejects the doctrine of Trinity in Christianity is that Muslims believe themselves to be servants of Allah but not equal to God. She says that in the history of Christianity, Unitarians were killed because they did not believe in the Trinity.

Overall, the *ruh* in the Qur'an is not an easy topic for ordinary Muslims as shown in the variety of their answers without looking at the Qur'an; in the limited number of interviewees among Muslims in Stellenbosch and Cape Town, evidently most of them do not acquire much knowledge about it. In general, some say that Allah gives the spirit in one's lifetime that will be taken away when one dies. Another forbids relating the spirit to Allah; some say that the spirit is soul without much explanation; others say the spirit is the ancestors' spirit existing everywhere, and that this spirit would come to visit the human world. One may even visit a *kramat* (grave of a Muslim saint) to ask for Allah's blessings or healing through their relationship with Allah; still others say that Holy Spirit is the name of the angel Gabriel. One person mentioned the function of the spirit inside human beings through spiritual exercises,

which would bring peace and closeness to Allah.

4.3.2 Interviews with Questionnaires by appointment

1) A 23-year old Arabic-speaking Libyan woman, (27 June 2005, Stellenbosch) reads the whole Qur'an (*Hatma*) once every one or two months and prays five times a day. She says that Islam is for the whole world, and there is only one God. Allah does not have any children. Every Muslim is a slave of Allah. For her, Allah is love, and willing to forgive sins. She learns about Islam from TV, Radio, and Internet that the spirit will be alive after death. (a) She says that in the creation, spirit is the same as soul; (b) in the conception of Jesus the spirit is Gabriel (Sura 21:91; 66:12) and in Sura 19:17, Gabriel is like a man; and it is part of Allah's soul. (c) Spirit is 'revelation' in Sura 16:2, 42:52. (d) *Ruh al-qudus* is Gabriel in Sura 2:87 (e) *ruh* is part of Allah's spirit and given to everyone (Sura 4:169-171). (f) *Ruh* is Gabriel who is someone that can be trusted and will keep the revelation of Allah (Sura 26:193) for her; God is *Tawhid*, which means God has no partner, no son, and no holy spirit.

Using the Arabic Qur'an and English translation⁹¹ (1996: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia), we spent one and half hours going through all these twenty verses in the Qur'an.

2) A 33-year old Arabic-speaking Moroccan woman, (28 June 2005, Stellenbosch) reads the Qur'an once a month; she was fasting at the time of the interview in order to pay back for last Ramadan. She does not go to the congregation's pray in the Mosque on Fridays, she says women are not obligated to go, and she believes that everyone can read the Qur'an by himself or herself and does not have to depend on Imam's teaching, as humans may make mistakes sometimes. She says not all the Hadith can be trusted, she recommends Abu-Kari's one. For her, Allah is a creator, love; she feels Allah very close to her, and he comforts her, and supports her. She prays for her own needs and prays apart from the five prescribed prayers, for instance, to give thanks, to ask for support, for passion, for exams, to be nice, for blessing, and a marriage partner. Spirit is Allah's business (Sura 17:85), there is little humans can understand. The body would die, and yet the Spirit will live forever. Spirit is part of Allah. In the questionnaires, (a) *Ruh* is breath (b) *Ruh* is part of Allah's spirit (c) *Amr* is book, command. *Ruh* is inspiration (Sura 16:2, 40:15, 42:52). In Sura 40:15 the Spirit is

⁹¹ Interpretation of the meanings of The Noble Qur'an in the English language: A summarized Version of At-Tabari, Al-Qutubi, and Ibn Kathir with comments from Aahih Al-Bukhari, Translated by Dr. Muhammad Taqu-up Din Al-Hiiali, Ph. D. (Berlin) and Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan.

inspiration to Allah's servants. (d) *Ruh al-qudus* is Gabriel (Sura 2:87; 5:110) (e) in 16:102, *ruh* is Gabriel, in Sura 58:22, maybe *ruh* is an angel strengthening believers. In Sura 4:169, *ruh* is spirit. Jesus 'a spirit from Allah' means it was a spirit blown into Mary, so Jesus was a spirit proceeding from Allah. (f) Gabriel brings down the revelation. It shows that he is a faithful and trustworthy spirit. To conclude, (1) our spirit is part of Allah, which allow us to be close to Him and believe in Him. (2) *Ruh* is a name for Gabriel; (3) *ruh* is an inspiration. However, *ruh* is not angels; spirit is also different from body (soul). She suggests reading the *Torah*.

The Arabic and Yusuf Ali's English translation of the Qur'an were used. (1956: Islamic propagation Centre International) We spent two hours going through all these twenty verses in the Qur'an

3) A 30-year old Arabic-speaking Libyan man, (29 June 2005, Stellenbosch), reads the Qur'an sometimes slowly but for understanding. He feels he has a strong relationship with Allah, and he thinks humans should worship Allah alone because humans are created to worship Allah. In the understanding of the Qur'anic teaching about *ruh*, he says because Muhammad does not know much about it, there is nothing more Muslims can understand. *Ruh* sometimes refers to human spirit or sometimes angel Gabriel. In the questionnaires, (a) *Ruh* is spirit. (b) *Ruh* is spirit like the one blown into Adam. (c) In Sura 40:15, *ruh* is Gabriel, and Sura 16:2, he is not sure. (d) *Ruh al-qudus* is Gabriel (Sura 2:87; 5:110) (e) in 16:102, *ruh* is Gabriel, and he is not sure about Sura 58:22. Jesus is similar to Adam, without an earthly father.

The Arabic and Yusuf Ali English translation Qur'an were used (1956: Islamic propagation Centre International) and we spent half an hour just highlighting one verse of each group.

4) An Arabic-speaking Libyan man in his late twenties, (29 June 2005, Stellenbosch) reads the Qur'an about three times a week, and says he would read Sura 18 on Fridays so as to follow Muhammad as much as he can. He says *ruh* is a secret only Allah knows. *Ruh* is given from Allah, when one dies, his/her spirit will be separated from the body and fly to heaven. In the questionnaires, (a) *Ruh* is spirit from Allah (my spirit). (b) Allah blows his own spirit into Mary. Just as Adam, Jesus was without an earthly father. (c) In Sura 16:2, *ruh* is Gabriel, but Allah sends his messenger to do Allah's Duty. (e) In Sura 16:102, the Holy Spirit refers to Gabriel who brought the

revelation in truth in order to strengthen the believers. In Sura 4:169-171, Jesus is the word, when God says the “word” and it is to “be”; Jesus is only a prophet, not the son of God. Jesus is a spirit from God means he is the spirit from Mary, same as every one has the same spirit as Adam from God. Allah gives his spirit but Allah is not spirit, he is alone, spirit is not part of Allah. It seems that sometimes he thinks of the spirit as an angel. He questions Christians’ belief in the Trinity, when they believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the Holy Spirit is God?

Arabic and Yusuf Ali English translation Qur’an were used (1956: Islamic propagation Centre International). We spent forty-five minutes with some of the verses; it was interesting that he insisted on knowing my opinion at the last question regarding the Spirit and Trinity.

5) A 30-year old Arabic-speaking Libyan man, (30 June 2005, Stellenbosch) reads the Qur’an once a week, prays five times a day and says he understands 60 % of the Qur’an. He believes that Islam is the real way to God, and he feels close to God when he prays. He says that about the *ruh* from Allah, there is only little knowledge given to humankind (17:85). (a) In the creation, *ruh* is the spirit (Sura 38:72). (b) In the same way, Allah’s *ruh* blew into Mary for the conception of Jesus (Sura 66:12) (c) Allah sent angels to bring the message to the prophets (Sura 16:2). (d) *Ruh al-qudus* is the Holy Spirit (2:87; 2:253), which is the same spirit as in the creation and Mary’s conception. *Ruh al-qudus* is one of Allah’s names because Allah has spirit, so Holy Spirit is from Allah to make us strong. (d) This Holy Spirit is the same spirit given to Jesus. Both Adam and Jesus had supernatural births without an earthly father, compared to the natural birth of other human beings. The spirit also aids all the believers (Sura 58:22; 16:102). (f) *Ruh* is Gabriel who brings down the revelation to Muhammad. One of Jesus’ titles is *Ruh Allah* this means Allah blows his *ruh* into Mary for the conception of Jesus, which is a special birth. In responding to the rejection of the Trinity, he says because Christians believe in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He agrees that the Holy Spirit is part of Allah and comes from Allah, but not the Son.

The Arabic and Yusuf Ali’s English translation of the Qur’an were used (1956: Islamic propagation Centre International) We spent over an hour with some of the verses, it was interesting to hear that he uses the term “Holy Spirit”, and his agreement that the Holy Spirit is with Allah and also part of Allah.

Most of the interviewees were familiar with Sura 17:85, that *ruh* is Allah's business; one only acquires little knowledge about it. However, in an overview these overseas Arabic-speaking Muslims from an Islamic country understand more about the Qur'an and have more knowledge about *ruh*, even if some of their explanations differ from the English translation and interpretation. *Ruh* is breath, spirit in Adam's creation. *Ruh* is the name of Gabriel in some verses. In terms of the questionnaire, it shows that most of them believe that the spirit in Adam is the same as the one in Jesus. Besides this, Jesus' birth is similar to Adam's in the sense that they were both without an earthly father. It seemed that the concept that some believe *ruh* comes from Allah and is part of Allah contradicted the concept of the Islamic doctrine of *Tahwid* at the same time but they are not aware of it. On the contrary, the concept of the Holy Spirit as part of the Triune God is being rejected very strongly in the Qur'an as well as in some Muslims' responses. Some showed an interest in the Christian belief on the doctrine of Trinity as compared to the Oneness of God in Islam.

4.3.3 Interviews with scholars

Imam Fuad Samaai who was the senior Imam of Gujatul Islamic Mosque (12 Nov. 2004) says that *al-ruh* which is life is created. It has its role and functions, and can distinguish good and evil. It comes from Allah to all human beings; it does not differentiate between races, colours of the skins ... etc. *Al-ruh* is a commandant; one needs to obey this "inner voice" in order to do good deeds. *Al-ruh* is a conscience; it needs to be acknowledging God in order to fulfil its function. It needs to be feed, as the physical body needs food.

Imam Samaai (29 Nov. 2004) says that firstly, *al-ruh* is life and spirit of God in the creation and in human beings, because humans are made out of clay. Secondly, *al-ruh* is indestructible; thirdly, *al-ruh* can differentiate between right and wrong; fourthly, humans have a free will, if they decide whatever they want to do, the consequence of making mistakes will be danger and make them to become weak; fifthly, *al-ruh* is inspiration. In comparison with the body, which is perishable, and will lose its function, *al-ruh* cannot be destroyed.

Moulana Nukadam (4 July 2005, Cape Town), Dean of ICESA (Islamic College of South Africa) in Rylands who is a Sunni Sufi, expresses that *ruh* is more appropriately translated as soul in English. *Ruh* is the essence or essential centre of the body, which

is part of human existence. God places *ruh* into human beings who are limited in time and space; *ruh* is created and immortal. At death, one's essence starts its journey back to the first place. *Ruh* may be free and travelling in one's dreams. *Ruh* continues after death in the place of paradise or hell. *Ruh* may develop to become more spiritual, and body may block by impurity. *Ruh* is breathing, the essence of the human being. (Sura 17; 85) Soul is the nature of relationship by creation and by command; body is created with soul by command in time refers to space. However, *ruh* is not fiat of God. Revelation (*wahy*) opens the knowledge of God. *Ruh* brings the divine relationship and communication with God. Only prophets received revelation (*wahy*) from Allah; and a non-prophet only receives inspiration (*Ilhaam*), which can be received through channels like dreams and through spiritual exercises, for instance: meditation, prayer, praise and invocation. *Ruh* is at the core of the existence of humans and facilitates the realization of God, including self-knowledge.

Tawhid is the science of unity, not equality. The reason why the Qur'an rejects the Trinity is that God is the creator of Jesus and the creator of spirit from nothing to something. *Ruh* of human beings can progress beyond angels or regress to be lower than animals. In Sufism, it is important to emphasise the exercise of repentance and to act humanly because Allah loves, is forgiving and merciful. Allah blows his *ruh* into all the human beings through Adam and to all the prophets, as well as to the Prophet Muhammad in bringing the revelation of Qur'an to all humankind, in which the angel Gabriel conveys the message as the means of communication. Jesus' birth is a "command" of Allah, by "word" and it means, "be ". Jesus' birth is an exception of circumstance to the norm as being without agency of earthly father, but it is not a miraculous birth although it is extraordinarily against the norm. Every spirit comes from Allah. N.B.: The translations of the Qur'an by Yusuf Ali and Pickthall are commended.

Overall, *Ruh* is consciousness, commandment, inspiration, life and breathing. *Ruh* may develop through spiritual exercise or regress to a lower level, apart from various functions discussed. It is noticed that both scholars mention that *ruh* is created but immortal or indestructible. It is interesting to know that Sufis believe *ruh* (soul) travels through dreams, and *ruh* brings divine relationship with God. Revelation (*wahy*) given to a prophet is different from inspiration (*Ilhaam*) given to ordinary Muslims. Some showed an interest in wanting to know the Christian belief on the

doctrine of Trinity as compared with the Oneness of God in Islam.

4.4 Modern Muslim opinions on the Internet

Nowadays, different opinions regarding the Qur'anic teaching about *ruh* is commonly found on the Internet. Some interesting contributions were found during Dec. 2004 on different issues as follows. These questions reflect some of the heart burning issues, in interfaith dialogue. These answers also provide a general idea concerning the understanding of these core issues. For instance:

Question 1: Is the Holy Spirit in the Qur'an the same as the Holy Spirit in Christianity?

Issues on Spirit (10 Dec. 2004) on the question of “Christians speak about the spirit. (<http://www.pakistanlink.com/religion/99/06-18.html>) The Qur'an also speaks about the spirit. In the Sura al-Qadr it says Angels and Spirits come down with the permission of God. Are they the same or different?” It is said that *ruh* “primarily means ‘spirit’ which is a creation of Allah and its true nature is known to Allah alone.” *Ruh* refers to the following: (1) *Ruh* are the angels in general that is spiritual beings. (2) Angel Gabriel who brings down the revelation (*wahy*) to Prophet Muhammad, because the night of Qadr is the night of the revelation of the Qur'an, so Allah honours this Night by sending his angels and especially Gabriel in order to emphasize his position and importance (Sura 97). (3) *Ruh al-qudus*: The Spirit of Sacredness or the Sacred Spirit (2:87,253; 5:110; 16:102). (4) *Al-ruh al-amin*: the Trustworthy spirit (Sura 26:193). (5) Jesus is called in the Qur'an *Ruhun minhu* (a spirit from him), because Mary's conception of Jesus' miraculous birth happened after the annunciation of angel Gabriel. (6) *Ruhan min 'amrina*: The Qur'an (Sura 42:52).

Question 2: Who is *Ruh al Qudus* in the Qur'an?

Ask about Islam (10 Dec. 2004: Mahmoud Mahran) on the question of who is *Ruh al Qudus*

(<http://64.233.167.104/search?q=cache:JcAZT7ec32wJ:www.islamonline.net/askaboutislam/display.asp%3FquestionID%3D7628+Islam+ruh&hi=en>). Allah aided Jesus the son of Mary with *Ruh al Qudus* (2:87; 253) as well as Muhammad, who is *Ruh al Qudus* in the Qur'an? Allah brings the truth to the prophets through the Holy Spirit (angel Gabriel), and brings inspirations to strengthen those who believe, so they will not go astray (Sura 16:102). After studying the Noble Qur'an on Sura 2:97-98,

Mahmoud discovers that the Holy Spirit is angel Gabriel in some instances because he is the one who connected the heavenly divine message to the human race. Holy Spirit is the English term for the Arabic *Ruh al Qudus*.

Question 3: Why is Jesus called *ruh* Allah and a spirit from him?

According to Hazrat Isa (10 Dec. 2004) the title *Ruh*, Jesus is given the title of *kalimah*. Jesus is also called *Ruh* (spirit) and a spirit from him (Sura 4:171)

(<http://64.233.167.104/search?q=cache:j8cNOW8gTzgJ:www.interislam.org/Biographies/Hazisa56.html+Islam+ruh&hl=en>). The word *Ruh* literally means soul, spirit (in all senses), breath of life, revelation, mercy. Jesus was given the title of *Ruh* Allah for the following reasons: (1) *Ruh* is related to *Rahmah*, because Jesus was a mercy for the people. (2) *Ruh* is related to *Nafakhah*, which means breath (Sura 66:12, 21:91). (3) *Ruh* is related to *Al-Wahy*, which means revelation. “In this case it would pertain to the revelation sent to Mary in the form of glad tidings of the birth of Jesus.” (4) *Ruh* refers to Qur’anic verse, which means a sign, because Jesus was a sign from God as Jesus performed miracles. “He said: ‘so (it will be): Thy Lord saith, ‘that is easy for me: and (We wish) to appoint him as a Sign unto men and a mercy from us.’”⁹²

Ruh is used for the meaning of soul and spirit as to explain why the title of *Ruh* is given to Jesus. One reason suggested by Allman Alusi, is that Jesus was able to bring the dead back to life, which is similar to the soul that is a life-giving source. Another reason stated by Imam Qurtubi in his *tafsir* is that when God created all the souls, he placed them in their relevant bodies, except for the soul of Jesus until the time of his birth came close and then Jesus’ soul was breathed directly into Mary and Jesus was created.

Question 4: Trinity explained to Muslims (10 Dec. 2004) on the question *Ruhullah* (<http://www.arabicbible.com/islam/trinit.htm>). Jesus is called *Ruhullah*, it means, “Spirit of Allah” Abdullah Ibrahim argues, “Either the Spirit of Allah (the thoughts) or the Word of Allah (the mind expressed) can have been created because

⁹² Yusuf Ali (1964:771) footnote 2473. The mission of Jesus is announced in two ways (1) he was to be a Sign to men; his wonderful birth and wonder life were to turn an ungodly world back to God; and (2) his mission was to bring solace and salvation to the repentant. This, in some way or other, is the case with all apostles of God, and it was pre-eminently so in the case of the holy Apostle Muhammad. Nevertheless, the point here is that the Israelites, to whom Jesus was sent, were a hardened race, for whom the message of Jesus was truly a gospel of Mercy.

whatever proceeds from God himself is part of Him and therefore have existed eternally.” Abdullah argues that Muslim theology states that the Qur’an is uncreated and has existed in eternity with God. This is the plurality within unity; something other than God but at the same time one with God. It seems difficult for a Muslim to explain *Tahwid* in this sense.

Question 5: Muslim Hope (10 Dec. 2004), Question on the Trinity for Muslims (<http://www.muslimhope.com/questionthetrinityformuslims.htm>). It explains Trinity that “there is only one inseparable God, but three distinct beings: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” It says that there is no perfect analogy to illustrate the Trinity.



CHAPTER FIVE

AN ASSESSMENT ON THE ISLAMIC CONCEPT OF *AL-RUH*

Having obtained an understanding from contemporary Muslims, one needs to clarify some of the issues regarding *ruh*. Why do Muslims call *ruh* (spirit) “soul”? How does one distinguish spirit (*ruh*), soul (*nafs*) and body in the Islamic concept? Is *ruh* created, uncreated or eternal? New ideas like *fitrah* will be introduced in 5.1.1 and *aql* in 5.3.3 in this Chapter. Furthermore, is *ruh* an angel or Gabriel? What about the idea of *ruh* as the Creator Spirit rather than the created Spirit as had been debated and discovered in early Christianity? How is the Qur’anic teaching on *ruh* affected by the Islamic doctrine of *Tawhid* in the Muslims’ belief, and how does a Muslim perceive the Christian doctrine of Trinity? How does the existing view on *ruh*, which was written in the Qur’an in the past, now influence Muslims in their religious experiences? How is it possible for a creature to experience the transcendent Allah in an immanent way? These above-mentioned questions will be explored and discussed in this chapter.

5.1 *Ruh* (spirit), *Nafs* (soul) and *Fitrah*:

In the study and interviews about *ruh* (spirit), Yasien Mohamed recommends one of his writings: *Fitrah* –The Islamic concept of human nature. (Mohamed Yasien, 1996, London: Deluxe Printers) since it is relevant concerning *ruh* and it is also significant for understanding the Muslim concept of spirit. One ordinary Muslim explains *Fitrah* in this way (Interview, June 2005). *Fitrah* has two meanings: Firstly, it is natural, as when a baby wants to drink when it is thirsty. Secondly, Human beings have the inclination, intention to do good deeds, for instance a Muslim gives *zakad* to the poor in the month of *Ramadan*. What is *Fitrah*? Is *fitrah* created or uncreated? How does *fitrah* function together with *ruh*, body and soul?

5.1.1 What is *fitrah* and how is *fitrah* significant in understanding *ruh*?

Fitrah (Chittick & Murate 2000:315) is “the innate recognition of *tawhid*” (the belief in the unity of God). *Fitrah* is “the original human nature as created by God; its fundamental attribute is the understanding of *tawhid*”. According to Mohamed (1996:16), “*Fitrah* (The Islamic concept of human nature), is “the faculty, which He has created in mankind, of knowing Allah”. It is “the natural constitution, with which the child is created in his mother's womb, whereby he is capable of accepting the

religion of truth.” (Cf. Psalm 104:30)⁹³ Mohamed (1996:162) also points out that “*fitrah* may be described as an inborn primary motive force or drive to believe in, worship and obey Allah”. Furthermore (166) “*Fitrah*, as an internal source of guidance, is centred in the *ruh*, it is spiritual, not a psychic or biological instinct.” On this basis, it may be inferred that *Fitrah* is the agent where by humans acknowledge Allah. (Cf. Romans 2:14, 15)⁹⁴ “Since Allah’s *fitrah* is engraved upon the human soul, mankind is born in a state in which *Tawhid* is integral. However, *fitrah* does not function properly until the creature acknowledges the creator.” Mohamed (1996:18) explains further, by Iman an-Nawawi’s definition: “*Fitrah* is the unconfirmed state which exists until the individual consciously acknowledges his belief.” Therefore, Mohamed describes the religion of Islam in this way: “Islam is also called *din*⁹⁵ *al-fitrah*, the religion of human nature, because its laws and its teachings are in full harmony with the normal and the natural inclination of the human *fitrah* to believe in and submit to the Creator.” A human being is supposed to submit to Allah and perform rightly according to Allah's will; because of this, sometimes people are able to overcome the negative influences of their environment and achieve the highest level of psycho-spiritual development, because of man's free-will and intellect. Mohamed (1996:22) states, “At this level⁹⁶, his inner and outer being, his soul and body, are able to conform to the requirements of his *fitrah* and the dictates of the *Shariah*.” In this way, one may finally reach harmony and peace with oneself, one's creator and environment.

5.1.2 How does *fitrah* function and is it relevant to the concept of *ruh*?

Mohamed (1996:22) makes it clear in the beginning, that *Fitrah* exists at the birth in all human beings, and *Fitrah* is integral to man's spirit (*ruh*) that was created by Allah; in this way humans may acknowledge Allah as the Lord who has power over all things. Allah’s *fitrah* exists within the human soul before one is born when the concept of *tawhid* is ingrained. Furthermore, “*Tawhid*” is intrinsic to man's *fitrah* because Allah in His infinite wisdom intended for man to know Him as the One God.”

⁹³ “When you send your Spirit, they are created.”

⁹⁴ Roman 2:14, 15 “Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.”

⁹⁵ *Din* in Mohamed 1996:20, also means *fitrah*, “*Fitrah* is the pattern according to which God has created all things.”

⁹⁶ In Mohamed 1996:22, that is *an-nafs al-mutma'innah*, ‘the self made tranquil.’

Because everyone is “endowed with the innate knowledge of *tawhid*”; one may be held accountable for one's belief in Allah because of one's *fitrah*. Mohamed (1996:30) suggests that Muslims believe that a human is born in a state of original goodness or *fitrah*, but is subject to temptation and folly. Although this is different from the original sin (25) that the Bible teaches, it is not avoidable to mention (188) that “‘inner struggle’ (Cf. Romans 7:18b-20⁹⁷) against the lower self would attain spiritual transformation” achieved by religious renewal and moral reformation in a modern society.” In other words, “*Fitrah* can be obscured by the negative impact, for the sake of this; humans must turn to Divine revelation for guidance.” Mohamed (1996:31-32) concludes, “*Fitrah* may be defined as a natural innate predisposition for good and for submission to the One God.” It can therefore be said that *fitrah* is conscience (Cf. Rom 2:14, 15), and *ruh* the agent and essence of knowing God, as well as a sense of spirituality. Because of this, *fitrah* can be influenced by outside factors or transformed by the spirit.

In order to understand *ruh*, Mohamed (1996:68) also emphasises the significance of distinguishing the spirit (*ruh*) from the psychic self (*nafs*). Mohamed (1996:67-68) points out “the carnal self (*nafs*) of man is naturally sensitive to stimuli from the environment and is susceptible to misguidance.” Nevertheless, it does not mean that “*nafs* itself is naturally evil” and “spirit is not bound to perish but will return to its origin which is Allah” (Sura 96:8)⁹⁸. Yasien Mohamed (1996:90) also recognizes the spiritual dimension (*ruh*) as distinct from the psychological (*nafs*) aspect of man. Since *tawhid* is intrinsic to *fitrah*, it means that man naturally turns to belief in and worship of Allah.

5.1.3 How does *ruh* (soul) relate to *nafs* in Islam?

What is the belief concerning *ruh* in Islam? Chittick & Murate (2000:343) define *Al-ruh* as follow

Al-ruh is the divine breath that God blew into Adam's clay. Angels are said to be spirits, or spirits blown into bodies of light. All visible things have invisible spirits. When spirit is

⁹⁷ Roman 7:18b-20: “I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For, I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do – this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me.”

⁹⁸ Sura 96:8 “Verily, to thy Lord is the return.” In Susuf (1946:1762) footnote 6209, “Man is not self-sufficient, either as an individual, or in his collective capacity. If he arrogates God's gift to himself, he is reminded—backwards, of his lowly physical origin (from a drop of animal matter), and forwards, of his responsibility and final return to God.”

differentiated from soul, it is typically understood as lying on a higher level and partaking of all the attributes of God in a direct manner.

This spiritual impulse in man is rooted in the very essence of human nature without exception; it is that, which the Qur'an refers to as *ruh*. It is believed (Chittick & Murate 2000:100) that "Spirit has the qualities of light, and body has the qualities of clay; something that is produced when spirit and clay are brought together, is called *nafs*, which can be translated as 'soul' or 'self'. In Arabic, soul is often used as a synonym for spirit."

In addition to that, Mohamed (1996:90-91) explains that although *ruh* may be translated in English as "spirit", it is also often referred to as "soul". It is noticed that this "soul" represents the incorruptible and immutable transcendental essence and should be distinguished from the "*nafs (psyche)*, which is the constantly changing aspect of man". On the contrary, *Nafs* is the negative tendency in man, which is capable of rebellion against Allah and which should be trained and disciplined so that it may become re-united with *ruh*". *Al-ruh* Allah has breathed into Adam enabling humans for the noble status of *khalifah*⁹⁹ or vicegerent of Allah on earth, which is given to human beings alone. The important role of *ruh* in relation to *fitrah* and *nafs* can be understood in this way: "The soul (*ruh*) is the very essence of human nature"; "the realisation of the *fitrah* means the reunion of the self (*nafs*) with the human soul (*ruh*)". In other words, *ruh* brings *fitrah* back to the self. That is why a number of Muslims believe that "He, who knows himself, knows his Lord." There are three perceptions described by Mohamed (1996:93), namely sensory perception, rational perception and spiritual perception; the last one is obtained through the process of intuition, intellection, and inspiration. Mohamed infers that the highest level of spiritual development is "when man's entire being is in total harmony with his *fitrah* and when the principle of *tawhid* is manifested in his total submission to Allah."¹⁰⁰ Between *ruh* and *nafs*, *fitrah* is a spiritual instinct, tending towards its source – Allah. In other words (167), when someone endows one's *nafs* with the qualities of the *ruh* by consciously obeying Allah's commands and by establishing a harmony between *nafs* and *fitrah*", then "a state of psycho-spiritual equilibrium" will be existing.

⁹⁹ *Khalifah* in Mohamed 1996:97 means "viceregent of Allah, a successor, one continuing the institution of governance of the Prophet Muhammad."

¹⁰⁰ This highest level of spiritual development according to Mohamed 1996:91 it is referred to as *an-nafs al-mutma'innah* "the self made tranquil."

Furthermore, how can *ruh* transform *nafs*? Mohamed (1996:101-103) points out that although man is born in a state of *fitrah*, one also has potential to do wrong. Wrongdoing: for instance, “*kufr* (rejection of *tawhid*) and breaking the Divine law, which are part of the Divine scheme of Creation.” It is the Muslims’ belief that “man is not born evil. He is vulnerable to evil stimuli or external sources of misguidance.” and “This is referred to as the psyche or self (*nafs*)”. Therefore, it is necessary to transform the *nafs* into the highest level of spiritual achievement¹⁰¹ by the divinely prescribed laws. Besides this, “*Nafs* has a negative character in the Qu’ran through being called ‘the self commanding evil’¹⁰²”; however, “*ruh* is viewed as the Divine Spirit breathed into man.” Mohamed also describes *ruh* in this way “It is the inner guide that directs man to the truth, and stands, mid-way between the negative tendency of *an-nafs al-mutma’innah* and positive tendencies of *ruh* and *aql*¹⁰³.” In the next section, we will discover more about whether *ruh* is relevant for the Islamic doctrine of *tawhid*. In addition, how Muslims perceive the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

5.2 The doctrine of *Tahwid* in Islam, and the Muslim perception of Trinity?

5.2.1 What is *Tahwid* (Oneness of Allah) in Islam?

According to Mohamed (1996:34), “*Tahwid* implies that Allah is one, and that He is one and unique in His essence, His attributes, and in His works.” Because of this, *Tahwid* becomes the fundamental Islamic belief, which was taught by all the prophets (Sura 112). The Arabs deviated from *tahwid* but it was restored to its original purity with the advent of Muhammad.” In addition, this monotheistic concept of Allah liberates man from subservience to everything and everyone and that is the basis for the unity of humankind. One factor that could corrupt *tawhid* in Islam is *shirk*, which is one of the greatest sins in Islam. Mohamed defines *shirk* in the following description: “The antithesis of *tawhid* is *shirk*, which is considered to be the only unforgivable wrong action (Sura 4:48)”, and “signifies the association of partners with Allah.” Besides this, “Blind submission to one's own desires is also described as

¹⁰¹ That is *an-nafs al-mutma’innah*.

¹⁰² *Al-ammarah bi s-su*.

¹⁰³ In Mohamed 1996:92, “To facilitate the understanding of three levels of human perception, and relationship, *aql* is capable of both spiritual and intellectual perception; the mind is capable of reasoning which is a projection of the *aql* on the mental plane. A distinction is made between reason, which is an expression of the mind, and intellection, which is an expression of *aql*.” *Aql* in Mohamed 1996:196 is reason, intellect, and faculty of rational and intuitive perception.

shirk (Sura 25:43).”

Zwemer (1987: 82) describes *shirk* in several ways: (1) “*Shirk-ul-Ilm* is to ascribe knowledge to others than God.” (2) “*Shirk-ut-Tassaruf* is to ascribe power-to-act-independently, to anyone else than to God.” (3) “*Shirk-ul-Abada* is to ascribe a partner to God who can be worshipped, or worshipping the created instead of the Creator.” (4) “*Shirk-ul-‘Adat* is to perform ceremonies or follow superstitions.” Among the above mentioned, is that Muslims believe that when Christians worship Christ or adore Mary, this is *Shirk-ul-Abada*; and when Christians say Christ intercedes by his power or merit, it is *Shirk-ut-Tassaruf*, and polytheism.

In fact, according to Mohamed (1996:23) “All the children of Adam possessed *fitrah* including those who deviated from the path of *tawhid*”. However, it is believed that civilisations have been condemned and destroyed by Allah, because of the practice of polytheism (*shirk*) and unbelief (*kufir*). Owing to this (47), the role of the prophets is to remind people of *tawhid* so that they might come to know their inner nature, their *fitrah*. Therefore, one may realize how significant the doctrine of *tawhid* is in Islam as it restores *fitrah* in Muslims. Obviously, *tawhid* (199) is unification; the science of knowing Allah’s unity (oneness), that is the opposite of *shirk*. Eventually (50), “every newborn child is born in a state of *fitrah*. *Fitrata 'llah*, the nature of Allah, which is His *tawhid* or Oneness, is the state out of which man’s *fitrah* was created.” In other words, one is born with this “innate knowledge and faith in the oneness of Allah”. After being born with *tawhid*, it can be destroyed by turning away from God.

After all, how is *tawhid* practiced and performed in the religion of Islam? Actually (Mohamed 1996:88), “man's return to his original state of *fitrah* can be done by accepting and affirming the *shahadah* (the witnessing – *la ilaha illa 'llah*, Muhammadur *rasul* Allah – There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah). Without question (145), “The unitary perspective of Islam is rooted in the metaphysical principle of *tawhid* in which all aspects of life are within the power of Allah”.

How does *tawhid* compare with the oneness of God in Christianity? Evidently, there is only one triune God in Christianity as shown in the verses below: “This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God” (Jn 17:3); “O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one Lord.” (Deut 6:4, 5; Mk12: 28, 30); “there is one God, and

there is none other but He.” (Mk 12:32). That is to say Jesus testified to the oneness of God.

Overall, *Tawhid* (Chittick & Murata 2000:345) is literally, ‘asserting unity.’ To affirm God’s oneness is the first principle of faith and the ruling idea in Islam. “It is given its most succinct verbal expression in the first formula of the *Shahadah*.” In addition to this, “perfect *tawhid* involves simultaneous affirmation of both *tanzih*¹⁰⁴ and *tashbih*¹⁰⁵.” *Tanzih* (345) is God’s incomparability with his creatures, and his transcendence, and *tashbih* is the similarity of God with his creatures, his immanence within creation. These two complement one another. The distance and closeness between Allah and human beings will be discussed in the next section.

5.2.2 The concept of Transcendence and Immanence in Islam and Christianity

Both Islam and Christianity agree that God is transcendent. God acts through men and his creatures as well as in the natural universe and in human history. Watt (1983:96) reveals an extremely interesting point i.e. that God is a ‘direct agent’. God is spoken of as doing something both in the Bible and in the Qur’an, although “the immediate agent is obviously some other being.” “He is the ultimate agent of all that happens, so He may be said to do everything.” Although God is only the ultimate agent acting indirectly, God is also apparently acting directly as a ‘direct agent’.

5.2.2.1 The concept of Transcendence and Immanence in Islam

The God portrayed in the Qur’an has both a transcendent and an immanent aspect. According to Chittick & Murata (2000:250-251) “*Tawhid* demands two complementary perspectives on reality, known as *tanzih* and the declaration of incomparability and *tashbih*, the declaration of similarity. Ideally, these two should be kept in balance”. “*Tanzih* establishes the greatness of God and smallness of the human”, by alerting us to “the difference between the human and the divine”. The understanding of *tanzih* is to grasp “God’s distance, otherness, transcendence, and inaccessibility”. One can also apply these ideas to the relationship between the spirit and the body (Chittick & Murata 2000:96); “the Spirit is dominated by the characteristics related to *tashbih*. Hence, it is closely connected with nearness, mercy,

¹⁰⁴ In Chittick & Murata 2000:71, “*tanzih* means literally ‘to declare something pure and free of something else’. It is to assert that God is pure and free of all the defects and imperfections of the creatures.”

¹⁰⁵ In Chittick & Murata 2000:71, “*tashbih*, means ‘to declare something similar to something else’. It is to assert that God must have some sort of similarity with his creatures.”

gentleness, beauty, and bounty. In contrast, the body is dominated by the attributes of *tanzih*. Hence, it is connected with distance, wrath, severity, majesty, and justice.” The understanding of *tashbih* is to grasp God’s nearness, sameness, immanence, and accessibility”. (Please refer to Table 5.1 about (a) *Tanzih*, (b) *Tashbih* and (c) *Tawhid* at appendix 9).

In Islam, we have the idea of God being transcendent; according to Montgomery Watt (1983:51), Allah is the sovereign Lord (*rabb*) and this is the reason why God is different from men (*mukhalafa*). On the other hand, Allah is also a God of immanence; to be more precise, “God is also said to be nearer to man ‘than his jugular vein.’” (Sura 50:16) According to Watt (1983:51), these two attributes are contradictory to one another, “To transcend is to climb across or beyond something, and immanent is to remain in something.” The ‘Immanence of God’ refers to God’s active presence within the creation and in human history.

It seems that the difference between Islam and Christianity with regard to immanence is only on the doctrine of incarnation; however, Zwemer (1987:49) points out that the attribute of holiness is absent in the Qur’an. Although there are thirty-six names (48) to describe Prophet Muhammad’s idea of Allah’s power and pride and absolute sovereignty, only two verses (49) mention Allah as holy and truthful. One may assume that that is because “Muhammad had no true idea of the nature of sin and its consequences.” “Some say there are seven great sins that are recognized in Islam, which are idolatry, murder, false charge of adultery, wasting the substance of orphans, usury, desertion from Jihad, and disobedience to parents.” The most common word used for sin in the Qur’an *thanib* “is used for Muhammad’s and those of other prophets”¹⁰⁶, however nearly all Muslims believe that all the Prophets, including Muhammad, are sinless. Nevertheless, Zwemer (30) points out “according to the Qur’an, fortified by Tradition, all sin is, after all, a matter of minor importance.” Consequently, as long as one declares *Shahadah*, all these considerations are less important. Islam leaves out the idea of moral purity and replaces it with ceremonially clean, and circumcised.

5.2.2.2 The concept of Transcendence and Immanence in Christianity

In general, the Biblical God is both transcendent and immanent. According to Ron

¹⁰⁶ As cited in the footnote 1 in Zwemer 1987:51.

Rhodes (2000:109-110) the transcendence of God refers to “God’s otherness or separateness from the created universe and from humanity.”, for instance, Solomon says, “Will God really dwell on earth?” (I Kings 8:27) likewise, “Who is like the Lord our God who sits enthroned on high?” (Ps 113:5-6) The immanence of God refers to “God’s active presence within the creation and in human history.” For example, “I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God.” (Ex 29:45-46) or “the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to him” (Deut 4:7). The God of the Bible is portrayed as both transcendent and immanent, which means God is above us, but at the same time he is involved and among us. Sometimes scripture includes both concepts like “Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other.” (Is 57: 15). “Am I only a God nearby, declares the Lord, and not a God far away?” (Jer 23:23) To sum up, God is above and beyond the creation and yet active in the midst of the Creation. It is believed that the true reunion of the transcendent and the immanent can only be fulfilled based on the triune God in Christianity. On the contrary, “Allah is portrayed as radically transcendent, having no interaction with his creatures in Islam.”

In Christianity, the triune God is believed to be the God of both transcendence and immanence, in which he fulfils a united ministry as a Trinity. God so much want to communicate with his creatures, but since Adam’s fall, sinful human beings cannot approach the God of holiness. The loving God is the God of righteousness and justice, and in order to justify God’s holiness and righteousness, He sent his son to achieve redemption on the cross for the whole of humankind, in this way embracing anyone who receives forgiveness through his son Jesus Christ. Parrinder (1965:139) quotes “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto him.” (2 Cor. 5:19) Furthermore, Jesus asked the Father to send the Holy Spirit to dwell in every believer before his crucifixion and his returning to the Father (Jn 14:16) to teach the truth (Jn 16:12) and to testify for Jesus (Jn 15:26). Here the transcendent God is joined with the God of immanence. The triune God has not only revealed himself in Scripture, but also came to dwell in us through the Holy Spirit.

5.2.3 How Muslims perceive the doctrine of the Trinity and Christian retrieval

5.2.3.1 Muslim’s misunderstanding and rejection of the Trinity

The doctrine of Trinity in Christianity is often attacked in the Qur'an and by Muslims

(Sura 4:117; 5:73). Nevertheless, most of the time, it is due to misunderstandings and misconceptions. Schirmacher (2001:79) points out that there are some reasons why the Qur'an rejects the Trinity: Firstly, it is probably because Muhammad was confused concerning the Christian faith as "he seems to have had contact with several Christian heresies"; secondly, no complete Arabic Bible was available at Muhammad's time, and there was no New Testament church in the surrounding area. Similarly, Parrinder (1965:133) has drawn attention to the fact that the Qur'an denies the Trinity because of the misconception concerning God the Father and the Son Jesus as a Unity of three persons. It is more likely that Muslims actually reject the heretical doctrines (Sura 5:17-19; 5:72-76). Actually, there were a number of heresies among the early Christians, for instance: Patripassianism claims the false belief that "God the Father had suffered on the cross." What is more, in A.D. 200 Noetus asserts, "Christ was God the Father himself" who was born and suffered and died. These examples clearly show the confusion of the persons of Father and Son. Besides this, there were also confusions about the divinity and humanity of the Son Jesus Christ. Poyneer¹⁰⁷ indicates that there were some movements in the Christian history, which were popular at the time of the Prophet and are now considered heretical, such as the Nestorians¹⁰⁸ "who believed that Jesus only became divine as an adult" as well as the Monophysites "who believed that Jesus was only divine and not human". Furthermore, thirdly, Schirmacher (2001:79) also points out one of the main factors (Schirmacher 2001:66): Muhammad's primary concern with the polytheism ('*shirk*') of the Arabs is the reason for the monotheism in his preaching, because "Jesus' Divine Sonship violates the Muslim concept of Allah's unique nature and His oneness (*tawhid*)". In fact, the Qur'an condemns the Trinity perceived as three deities (Sura 4:171; 5:75): The Father, Jesus as the physical son of God and Mary as mother of Jesus and consequently the idea that Allah had a begotten son by having a biological relationship with Mary, although that is never mentioned in the Bible. Jesus clearly declares the uniqueness of God (Jn. 20:17) and rejects the false idea of two additional

¹⁰⁷ Taken from 'Regarding the Christian Concept of Gabriel' – the Holy Spirit <<http://www.understanding-islam.com/column/col-006.htm>> (10 Dec. 2004).

¹⁰⁸ In Mcdowell & Zaka 199:289 footnote 16, "Nestorius was a theologian of Persian origin who became the patriarch of Constantinople". He split Jesus Christ into two persons, one human and one divine. He believed that there was no more than a sympathetic and moral union between the two persons. He was anathematized as a heretic at the Council of Ephesus in 431. His followers took his views further, seeing Jesus as having a double personality: not the God-bearing man. Nestorian missionaries established a church in Arabia, which had contacts with Muhammad.

gods. The declaration “I believe in one God” in the Nicene Creed, confirms the doctrine of Trinity.¹⁰⁹

5.2.3.2 Muslim' perception of the Trinity and Christian retrieval

Muhammad teaches ‘a God above us’. Moses teaches ‘a God above us, and yet with us. Jesus Christ teaches God above us, God with us and God in us. - Zwemer (1987:76)

Parrinder (1965:137) points out that despite the fact that “The Qur’an denies Christian heresies of Adoption, Patripassianism, and Mariolatry, but it affirms the Unity, which is at the basis of Trinitarian doctrine.” In other words, the Qur’an does not reject any Christian doctrine except for “Christ as the son of God”. Because God is a pure Spirit, it would be unthinkable if sonship implies physical procreation. However, the idea being ‘Son of God’ actually, as Cragg argues (as cited in Parrinder 1965:140), means “God in the act of revelation”. Actually Jesus is God in human form who has stepped into his world; Jesus is God in action and makes his dwelling among us (Jn 1:14). Besides this, Cragg (1956:300-301) points out that it was necessary for Christ to die on the Cross. Cragg says that the “Cross is to be seen as the act of men and act of Christ”. The mystery of incarnation is that “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself” (II Cor. 5:19) through the atonement of Jesus Christ (Rom 3:25), for “the Cross has to do with sins”.

Indeed, Parrinder (1965:139) describes this diversity in unity: God as creator and provider is seen in the Father who cares for humankind. The essential nature of the God of love is seen in the ‘Son’, in the humanity of Christ, his loving actions and words, his suffering and death. The ever-present nature of God is seen in the Spirit, who spoke through the prophets, in the light of other faiths, in the church, and in his power. He is still with us. Yet these three are one, the threefold revelation of God to men. Cragg (1956:307) describes Muslims’ misunderstanding about the trinity in this way: For the Muslim, faith in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is violating the Divine Unity. Actually, Cragg (1956:308) explains, “Trinity is a form of its expression”. For Christians, “it expresses and illuminates the Unity.” However, a “Muslim sees the doctrine of the Trinity as incompatible with belief in the Unity.”

Zwemer (1987:76) illustrates how the result of the different doctrines on the oneness

¹⁰⁹ In Parrinder 1965:134, The Articles of the Church of England start with the affirmation: “There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom and goodness; the Maker and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible.”

of God shows the differences among the three monotheists: “Muhammad teaches a God above us. Moses teaches a God above us, and yet with us; Jesus Christ teaches God above us, God with us and God in us.” Zwemer argues further that the mystery of Immanuel, God with us, is in His incarnation, through the Spirit, and yet this is an obstacle to Muslims.

After all, it is Christians’ intention to use pneumatology as a potential approach to explore the triune God. Cragg (1956:313) describes the triune God in this way: “God was evidently not only over men in creative sovereignty and for them in redeeming love”. He was also in them and with them as an abiding Presence. “The Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son”, shows that “the Qur’an recognizes in measure the Divine relationship to men through the Holy Spirit”. “The Lord is one.” So when Christians speak about the trinity they are not talking about “theism or tritheism¹¹⁰” (Cragg 1956:308), but how to “define and understand the Divine Unity”, and the “idea of God as being in relationship with man” (Cragg 314). For this reason, Cragg argues (1956:316) “The Christian faith in the Holy Trinity only carries further the truth implicit in the Muslim faith in revelation and judgement.”

5.3 Is the spirit created or eternal?

“Whoever says that al-Ruh is created (makluq) is a heretic:

Whoever says that it is eternal (qadim) is an infidel”¹¹¹ -- Ibn Hanbal

So far, the central idea of *tawhid* is explained as the key concept to keep the unity or oneness of God. The deity of *ruh* should be questioned now. “Is the *ruh* created or uncreated?” This has been a long debated issue both in the history of Islam and of Christianity. The result of interviewing two scholars also shows their opinions that *ruh* is soul and *ruh* is created. Macdonald in his study “The development of the idea of spirit in Islam” (1932:39) comments about Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, who had doubts about the non-eternity of the *ruh* according to his famous statement: “Whoever says that the *ruh* is created is a heretic; whoever says that it is eternal is an unbeliever (infidel).” Ibn Hanbal (Cragg 1997:61) also supports the doctrine that the Qur’an is created. Cragg suggests that Ibn Hanbal could have thought of *ruh* as an attribute of God. Nevertheless, one cannot deny that every creature still has a deep longing for reunion with God.

¹¹⁰ In Zwemer 1987:79-80, refer tritheism consisting of God, Mary and Jesus Christ (Sura 5:116; 5:77; 4:167-170).

¹¹¹ Ibn Hanbal’s saying recorded in “*The call to retrieval*” in Cragg 1997:61.

5.3.1 Whoever knows al-*ruh* knows his self and knows his Lord

**“For he who does not know the *ruh* is as he who does not know his own self (*nafs*)
And he who does not know his own self how can he know his Lord?”-- al-Ghazzali**

Macdonald (1932:29) discovered that later theological and philosophical developments of the doctrine of “spirit” in Islam refer to certain verses underlying the wide differences of opinion among scholars. One of the explanations is that “the *ruh* is one of Allah’s immediate creations, either coming into existence by a creative word *kun* or proceeding from the *ruh* of Allah in a unique way”. In other words (30), “it exists by his command and originates by his bringing it into being”; the assumption of this is that it is and not eternal. In Sura 40:15, Al-Ghazzali (30) suggests, “*ruh* belongs to the world of the divine Command (*‘amr*)”¹¹². Baidawi (30) explains that spiritualities are controlled by the *amr of Allah*, which is inspiration (*wahy*). Zamakshari’s (30) suggests that *ruh* is a metaphorical expression for inspiration. Both experiential theologians and speculative theologians were faced with the metaphysical nature and origin of the human soul”. They were not encouraged to explore further despite of experiential theologians really considering “the nature of the human heart, the human *nafs* and spirit (*ruh*) and their relationship with one another and with the divine.” Macdonald (31) points out the five classes of theological mysteries divided by al-Ghazzali, in which the first level is *ruh* that was uncovered to the prophet. “For he who does not know the *ruh* is as he who does not know his own self (*nafs*) and he who does not know his own self how can he know his Lord?” (Cf. Colossians 3:9, 10, 12)¹¹³ This shows the great desire of the ordinary Muslims of learning to know about *ruh*, although it is only Allah’s affair (Sura 17:87). However, Allah inspired prophets and believers differently; only prophets obtain the knowledge of nature of ‘spirit’ through greater inspiration (*wahy*), whereas the saints receive the minor inspiration (*‘ilham*). One way of illustrating this is that “*ruh* is the locus of the *mahabba* of Allah, the *kalb* (heart) that of the contemplation (*mushahada*) of Allah.”¹¹⁴

5.3.2 How does *Ruh* as soul in Islam differ from *nafs* in Islam and Christianity?

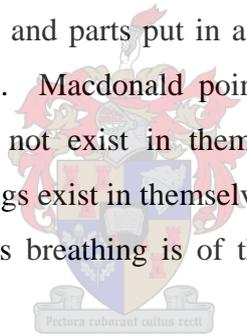
Macdonald (1932:32) has shown that *ruh* means simply the soul as opposed to the body, and that is the general idea among ordinary and non-philosophical orthodox

¹¹² Sura 40:15.

¹¹³ “Put off your old self, and put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator.” Col 3:9-10. “Clothe yourself with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. (Col 3:12).

¹¹⁴ In Macdonald 1932:32, in the Saiyid Murtada’s commentary on the Book of Ihya on Love.

Muslims. The only difference is that the soul is fine and subtle, but the body is coarse. Nevertheless, one notices (34) “the *nafs* of Muslim theology is entirely different from the spirituality of Greek philosophy.” In contrast, the ‘*nafs*’ of the Pauline theology is derived from the Hebrew *nephesh*, which is an expression for the carnal appetites of the personality. How are the *nafs* (soul) and *ruh* (spirit) connected with each other? *Nafs* (37) has several meanings: the *ruh*; the blood; the body and the eye. However, *ruh* is not used for the body either separately or along with the *nafs*. Ibn Kaiyim (39) noticed that *ruh* is never used as human soul in the Qur’an; for him, “there is nothing eternal and uncreated except Allah himself.” *Ruh* is Allah’s command, and *amr* in the sense of “command” is one of the species of speech; on this basis, it may therefore be inferred that his ‘*ruh*’ puts ‘*ruh*’ into a relationship with the eternal Allah, so they must also be eternal. According to the four Qur’anic usages of *ruh*, it can mean inspiration, strength, Gabriel, angelic being; but it is never used as human soul. Macdonald (40) argues that as Allah blew into Adam some of his *ruh*, it is necessary to distinguish between ‘qualities and parts put in a relationship to Allah and things, which are separate from Allah’. Macdonald points out that “the qualities (e. g., knowledge, power, speech) do not exist in them, nor do the parts. These are uncreated.” But the separate things exist in themselves and their relation to Allah “the spirit of Allah poured out in his breathing is of this second kind; so this spirit is created”.



Cragg (as cited in Lamb 1997:61) indicates, “Most Muslims understand the Spirit in the Qur’an as to have “prophetic function”, “associated with expression of God’s revelation”. Although the usage of *ruh* even developed in the post-Qur’anic period, nevertheless Muslims are regarding the Spirit of God as ‘contingent upon God, but not as deity itself’, or in Christian terminology ‘consubstantial’ with God.” Why is *Ruh al kudas* another name of Gabriel? Ghazali strongly oppose the idea of identifying this Messenger with Gabriel as he wrote (Lamb 1997:62), a “being who is the highest of all possible beings next to Allah, related to Allah”. On one hand, his idea is very close to the Christian doctrine of Trinity; on the other hand, it seems to contradict monotheism in Islam. Cragg (as cited in Lamb 1997:62) assumes that Ibn ‘Arabi believes that “the Spirit was God and the utterly Transcendent One” in his writing¹¹⁵. Cragg (as cited in Lamb 1997:64) points out “in the absence of an

¹¹⁵ In Lamb 1997:62 Ibn ‘Arabi wrote “the Reality is manifest in every created being and in every

indwelling divine helper, prompting love and wisdom in the community, Islam has had two recourses, once the days of prophetic inspiration were past. One is the provision of the *Shari'ah* and the other the accumulated wisdom of the way to live, modelled on the example of the Prophet.” Apparently, the question of whether the *ruh* is uncreated or is neither created nor uncreated or eternal is still a mystery in Islam.

5.3.3 The Sufi perspective of Spirit in Islam

After all, it is evident, that ‘God is not spirit’ in Islam, at least not in Sunni orthodoxy. It led to the denial of God as spirit, and yet Cragg notices (as cited in Lamb 1997:65) “there is ‘suggestive obscurity’ about the Spirit in Islam which is exploited by the Sufis”, and this might lead to Cragg’s notion of ‘the Spirit proceeding’”. The Spirit often has the same meaning as ‘*aql* or ‘intellect’ in the Sufi schools. Lamb (1997:64) reveals, “The first thing God created was *al-‘aql*¹¹⁶. “This was the language of ontology, but it carried the corollary that the mark of the spiritual person is ‘*aql*’ or ‘intellect’.” According to the Sufi doctrine (Burckhardt & Matheson 1959:70-73), the universal Spirit (*Al-Ruh*) is also called the ‘first Intellect’ (*al-‘Aql al-awwal*); sometimes it is described as created, and sometimes as uncreated. The first thing God created is the Spirit (*Al-Ruh*) and the ‘spirit’ Allah breathed into Adam, is uncreated for it is united with Divine Nature. To the question “The Spirit (proceeds) from the Command (*al-Amr*) of my Lord in Sura 17:87, Sufi sects suggest that it can be interpreted in either sense; either “the Spirit is of the same nature as Divine Command or Order”, which is uncreated or “that the Spirit proceeds from the Order as ontological level below that Order”, which is created. The fact is that “it is a mediator between the Divine Being and conditioned universe. Uncreated in its immutable essence it is yet created inasmuch as it is the first cosmic entity.” There are some illustrations about these two aspects: for instance, God’s Pen, Face (Sura 55:27), hands (Sura 38:75); and Eyes (Sura 52:48) can be cited here are examples:

“For the Prophet said that the ‘first thing God created is the Pen; He created the (guarded) Tablet and said to the Pen: Write. And the Pen replied: and what shall I write? (God) said to it: Write My Knowledge of My creation till the day of resurrection, the Pen traced what had been ordained’. So the Spirit includes all the Divine Knowledge concerning created beings, and this means that it is the Truth of truths or the Reality of realities” (Burckhardt & Matheson 1959:71).

concept, while He is hidden from all understanding, except for one who holds that the Cosmos is His form and His identity. This Name, the Manifest, while He is also unmanifested Spirit ... in relation to the manifested forms of the Cosmos, the Spirit that determines those from.”

¹¹⁶ In Lamb 1997:64 (Macdonald 1909:230).

This is called “the direct and immediate manifestation of this Reality of realizes.” Some Sufi writers imply Holy Spirit (*Ruh al-Qudus*) to be the uncreated essence of the Spirit and compare it to the Face of God (*Wajh Allah*), which is the divine Intellect. “The universal substance in Sufi terms is *al-Haba*, which symbolises the double nature of the Spirit because it is the Spirit that illumines *al-Haba* and corresponds to the ray of light refracted by fine dust.” In addition, “undifferentiated light symbolizes the uncreated Spirit while the light determined as a ray on the other hand symbolizes the created Spirit”. *Al-Haba* is to the uncreated Intellect as the universal Soul¹¹⁷ is to the created Intellect.¹¹⁸

It is implicit in Sufism that the “Spirit of Intellect is uncreated, for it is only the created Spirit which represents a reality distinct from God.” In addition, the most ‘central’ image of the Spirit on earth is Man, and less ‘central’ aspects of it are in other terrestrial forms, for instance: A tree whose trunk symbolizes the axis of the Spirit. It is said, “God created the Spirit in the form of a peacock and showed it in the mirror of the Divine Essence its own image.” In a Sufi legend, another symbol of the Spirit is to be seen in the eagle, which soars above the creatures of the earth. “The white dove is also an image of the Spirit by reason of its colour, its innocence and the softness of its flight” (Burckhardt & Matheson 1959:73).

Figure 5.1 Sufi terminologies and comparisons on *Ruh* (Spirit)

The Divine Command (<i>al-Amr</i>)	Universal Nature (<i>at-Tabi’ah</i>) or The Divine Exhalation (<i>Nafas ar-Rahmani</i>)
The Divine Intellect or The Holy Spirit (<i>Ruh al- Qudus</i>)	The Supreme Element (<i>al-‘Unsur al-a’zam</i>) or Principal Substance (<i>al-Haba</i>)
The First Intellect (<i>al-‘Aql al awwal</i>) or the Spirit (<i>ar-Ruh</i>) or the Supreme Pen (<i>al-Qalam al-a’la</i>)	Universal Soul (<i>an-Nafs al-kulliyah</i>) or The Guarded Tablet (<i>al-Lawh al Mahfuz</i>)
The First Intellect or the Spirit	Materia Prima or cosmic substance (<i>Al-Haba or al-Hayula</i>)

This information is taken from “Introduction to Sufi doctrine” (Burckhardt & Matheson 1959:72)

5.4 The Creator Spirit (*Ruh Allah*) and the Created Spirit

In the study by Hiskam Kamel (1994:14-15), he points out that *Ruh Allah* (Spirit of

¹¹⁷ Soul (*An-Nafs al-kulliyah*) is the *Psyche* in Plotinus in Burckhardt & Matheson 1959:72.

¹¹⁸ The created Intellect is the *Nous* in Plotinus in Burckhardt & Matheson 1959:72.

God) does not mean the divinity of Jesus to a Muslim, but rather that Jesus is a spirit proceeding from God, which refers to a created spirit. John of Damascus (as cited in Kamel 1994:15) argues, if Christians are accused by the Muslims to have committed *shirk*; then, according to the Qur'an, Muslims should "be accused of mutilating God by separating him from His word and His spirit." John knew that if "God is eternal, His Spirit is also eternal"; then logically the Qur'an implies that the Spirit of God, Jesus, is eternal. On this basis, it may be inferred that "The Qur'an implies that Jesus is God." Similarly, Al Sayyid 'Abdul Karim al Djabali points out that "the Holy Spirit is not created, and what is not created is eternal and the eternal is God, alone." In the same way, Shaikh Muhammad al Harira al Bayyumi argues, "The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and the Spirit of God is not created."

5.4.1 Is the Holy Spirit a created spirit like an angel or Gabriel?

5.4.1.1 Is the Holy Spirit the same as angels?

According to Ozkardes, Mehmet Ali (1967:107-111) one may discover how God constructed first His divine existence (with outer and finer existence), and then He constructed the existence of the cosmos (with His inner and denser existence), which included Allah (who is the essence and the reality of existence). The godly spirit whose world is divine who is created and arranged by God and this spirit has no share in the Godhood; (*Please refer to Table 5.2 God's spirit (kalem), the spirits of all creatures and Gabriel at appendix 10*).

The "An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Qur'an¹¹⁹" (1997:110) classified four important meanings of 'the Spirit' (1) The Spirit is a creature other than the angels and greater than all of them. (2) The Spirit is the angel Gabriel who is the greatest angel. (3) The Spirit may be the souls of men, collectively, that rise with the angels. (4) The Spirit is an angel of the highest standard, higher than all angels are, and greater than Gabriel. According to Chittick & Murata (2000:93), "Angels are made of light, bodies of clay. This means that angels are luminous, invisible beings who share in the qualities of divine light, such as knowledge, and power." In contrast, "bodies are dead, ignorant, and weak." Nevertheless, Poyneer¹²⁰ argues that the Holy Spirit is part of God in the Trinity and can never be the same as an angel. Moreover,

¹¹⁹ A group of Muslim scholars wrote this: By Sar al-Ameli, Abbas, Berrigan, Somaiyah. Translated by Saiyed Abbas Sadr- 'ameli; and edited by Somaiyah; published Esfahan, Iran 1997.

¹²⁰ In *Regarding the Christian Concept of Gabriel – the Holy Spirit*. <<http://www.understanding-islam.com/column/col-006.htm>> (10 Dec. 2004).

according to the biblical concept of the *Ruh Allah*, Christ, is superior to the angels (Heb 1:4-14), higher and above all the angels. “For to which of the angels did God ever say, ‘you are my Son; today I have become your Father’?” (Heb 1:5) and even “let all God’s angels worship him”, the firstborn (Heb 1:6). He created the universe (Heb 1:2), although Jesus was made a little lower than the angels, in bringing many sons to glory through his suffering death (Heb 2:9, 10), “now crowned with glory and honour” (Heb 2:9b). Jesus Christ “who sat at the right hand of the majesty in heaven” now is indeed higher and above all the angels for “to which of the angels did God ever say, ‘sit at my right hand’” (Heb 1:3).

It can be seen discovered that Islam identified the Holy Spirit, as a created spirit, the same as an angel (Sura 19:17; 16:102). “Spirits are akin to angels” (Chittick & Murate 2000:94), although the Qur’an is sometimes referring to Gabriel as the “Holy Spirit”. Commentators refer to the “the Spirit” as the greatest of the angels. According to Rhodes (2002:109) Muslims assert, “The suggestion that God is a spirit implies He is a created being, like an angel.” Undeniably, Islam says that God is not a spirit; otherwise, one would imply he is part of the created realm, like the angels. On the contrary, the Bible says that God is Spirit (Jn 4:24; Is 31:3). Besides this, God is “the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God (I Tim 1:17; Col 1:15). Because God is invisible, “No one has ever seen God, only Jesus who is at the Father’s side, has made him known.” (Jn 1:18) Thus, Jesus “became a visible revelation of the invisible God”. According to Rhodes (2003:19) “Scripture indicates that while God is Spirit, He is also eternal. God is an eternal Spirit as an eternal being.” He lives forever (Ps 41:13; Is 57:15), “from everlasting to everlasting” (Ps 90:2).

5.4.1.2 Is the Holy Spirit the angel Gabriel?

The study of *The Muslim & Christian at Table* by McDowell & Zaka (1999:94) shows that “the Qur’an uses the word *ruh* twenty times, but each time the word is understood to refer to a created being that has a subtle body.” Similarly, “Angels and *jinn* have such a subtle body capable of penetrating a coarse body.” The indications are therefore that “to say that God is a spirit is understood to mean that he is a created being.” Even though the “holy spirit” is mentioned several times in the Qur’an (Sura 16:102; 2:87; 2:253), McDowell & Zaka feel that all the Muslim commentators maintained that these passages refer to the Angel Gabriel, except for Sura 2:97, although Gabriel is only mentioned a few times (Sura 66:4).

The study by Marcus Chua (1) shows that *ruh* for the ‘spirit’ is used twenty-one times in the Qur’an, and it refers to the angel Gabriel seventeen times in the sixteen verses¹²¹, to God himself three times¹²² and to Jesus (as *Ruhun minhu*) one time¹²³ only. It is noticed that in sixteen verses where *ruh* is associated with Gabriel the name Gabriel does not actually appear. Most Muslims assert that with no hesitation the Holy Spirit is the angel Gabriel. The *ruh* (Chua n.d.a: 2) is required to perform four main roles as the agent of God, which is God’s servant, an agent of revelation, an agent in strengthening and an agent of creation; and yet in these sixteen verses, “*ruh* appears in isolation and it is not associated with Gabriel”. Chua (n.d.a:11) states further, no angels including Gabriel, had been given the power of creation (Sura 22:73); and how can Gabriel be blown into Adam? Chua (n.d.a:18) argues that *ruh* is neither an attribute nor an act of God.

The study by Zwemer (1987:36) shows that one of the attributes, ‘faithful’ although it refers to the angel Gabriel nine times¹²⁴, and to Jesus three times¹²⁵, does not mean holy. None of these passages applies to the deity of the Holy Spirit. To have a closer look, according to Zwemer (1987:88) Sura 16:104 refers *ruh* to the inspiring agent of the Qur’an and Sura 2:81 and 254 says that “We strengthened him (i.e. Jesus) with the Holy Spirit,” and yet all Muslim commentators agree that the Holy Spirit means angel Gabriel. The reason why Muhammad confused Gabriel with the Holy Spirit is unknown. The only assumption is that “Gabriel was the Channel of Muhammad’s revelation”. Supposedly, according to Zwemer (1987:91-91), because “Muhammad’s first wife introduced him to her Christian cousin, and one of his later wives had embraced Christianity in Abyssinia; and the most favoured of his concubines was a Christian damsel from the Copts of Egypt.” “He had become acquainted with ascetic monks and had dealings with learned Bishops of the Orthodox Church.” Abd al-Masih (1997:11) indicates that it is likely Muhammad claimed Gabriel as the one who brought the revelation to him only when he heard from the Jews in Medina about the angel of revelation in the Old Testament. Al-Masih (1997:12) argues that “Muhammad’s understanding of angels, their names and functions only crystallised

¹²¹ Sura 17:85; 58:22;16:102; 26:193; 40:15; 42:52; 16:2; 78:38; 97:4; 19:17; 70:4; 16:12; 21:91; 2:87; 2:253; 5:113.

¹²² Sura 15:29; 38:72; 32:9.

¹²³ Sura 4:171.

¹²⁴ These nine verses are Sura 2:81, 254; 5:109; 16:2; 16:104; 26:193; 70:4; 97:4; 19:17 in Zwemer 1987:36.

¹²⁵ These three verses are Sura 4:169; 21:91; 66:12 in Zwemer 1987:36.

through his conversation with Jews in Medina.”

Furthermore, according to Poyneer¹²⁶ most Jews understood the Holy Spirit to be somebody sent by God that was responsible for prophecy and revelation since the Talmudic period (c. 50-400 CE). Christians also understood it in the same way even till 360 CE. “If Gabriel was accepted as the angel of revelation, then none of the Christian theologians would have been surprised that the Qur’an referred to Gabriel as the ‘Holy Spirit’. In fact, it is possible that many Arabian Jews and perhaps some Christians continued to believe that the Holy Spirit was the spirit of revelation even after this period; hence, the Jews and Christians of Arabia may not have been surprised by the Qur’an’s identification of the Holy Spirit as Gabriel.

5.4.2 The development of the understanding of the Deity of the Holy Spirit in early Christianity

Poyneer¹²⁷ describes the understanding about the Holy Spirit in the third Century as being confused: Some said “it was simply a synonym for God”; “some have conceived the Spirit as an activity”, and “some as a creature”. For this reason, “the Cappadocians were anxious to develop the notion of the Holy Spirit, which they felt had been dealt with very perfunctorily at Nicene ‘I believe in the Holy Spirit’”. Armstrong¹²⁸ (as cited in Poyneer),¹²⁹ says that it was Gregory Nazianzus of Cappadocia, Turkey, who decided that the Holy Spirit must be divine and from this worked out the doctrine of the Trinity. Since then the profound doctrine of the Holy Spirit as being part of the Trinity was developed. The study by Karkkainen (2002:44-45) also shows that he developed an understanding of the deity of the Holy Spirit. Undoubtedly, Gregory Nazianzus (c.329-c.389) is known as the ‘theologian’ of the East, who called the Holy Spirit ‘God’. Gregory Nyssa (c.330-c.395) further developed the doctrine of the divinity of the Spirit. Consequently, it opened the gateway for the understanding of the Spirit as part of the Trinity. Later on, Karkkainen (2002:45) indicates, “The first decisive step in the doctrinal understanding of the church concerning the Spirit was reached at the Council of Constantinople, which drafted the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed in 381”. Hence, it confirmed the belief that “the Spirit is neither ‘God’ nor ‘consubstantial’ with the Father and the Son but is rather the ‘Lord and life-giver, proceeding from the Father,

¹²⁶ In <<http://www.understanding-islam.com/column/col-006.htm:10>> (Dec. 2004).

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Armstrong, Karen. *A History of God*. Copyright 1993, Ballantine Books, New York.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

object of the same worship and the same glory with the Father and the Son.” In other words, that is “one substance, the recreated Trinity, consubstantial and eternal.” Since then, the deity of the Holy Spirit is confirmed in the doctrine of early Christianity.

In a study of the Holy Spirit as Creator, Karl Barth (1993:3) found that even a profound Catholic theologian like Augustine “had attempted to find the uncreated Spirit in continuity with man’s created spirit.” Nevertheless, evidently in his teaching, he argues that “God is not the ‘soul’ (*anima*): he is above the ‘spirit’ (of man); Augustine (c.354-c.430) admitted (Barth 1993:4) that “he is primarily in the soul, its proper origin, but now forgotten”, he cried out “Where I found the truth, there I found my God, Truth itself!” After his searching, Augustine finally found that “he, the uncreated Spirit, can be revealed to the created spirit”; moreover, “this continuity cannot belong to the creature itself but only to the Creator *in his relation* to the creature.” In other words, “If creature is to be strictly understood as a reality willed and placed by God in distinction from God’s own reality, that is to say, as the wonder of a reality, which by the power of God’s love, has a place and persistence alongside God’s own reality, then there is continuity between God and it.” Augustine (354-430), who called the Spirit the ‘Bond of Love’, spent lifetime learning about the Holy Spirit. Augustine discovered (Karkkainen 2002:46) the fundamental truth in John 16:13 that “Father is the only Father of the Son and the Son is only the Son of the Father, but the Spirit is the Spirit of both.” and “It is love that creates abiding, constancy, and unity.” The Holy Spirit (Karkkainen 2002:48) is the essence of the gift of God (Jn. 4:4-7; 7:37, 39). Augustine is also one of the scholars to have introduced the idea of *filioque*, which divided the Eastern and Western churches in the pneumatology debate.

5.4.3 Jesus as the Spirit of God (*Ruh Allah*)

According to Beidhawi (as cited in Zwemer 1987:81), in Sura 4:169 “Jesus is called the Spirit of God, because He makes the dead to live or quickens hearts.” On the other hand, *Jilalain* (Zwemer 1987:81) proved that “Jesus cannot be God, ‘because he has a spirit and everything possessed of a spirit is compounded (*murakkib*) in the misconception of trinity as tritheism.” A study by Parrinder (1965: 40) shows that at least twenty-eight prophets are named in the Qur’an. In the Gospel, especially in the Gospel of John, Parrinder notes that those who first heard his teaching called Jesus a prophet. “He is a prophet like one of the old prophets” some said, “He is John the Baptist risen again, others, Elijah, others, one of the prophets.” (Mk 6:15, 8:28) It is

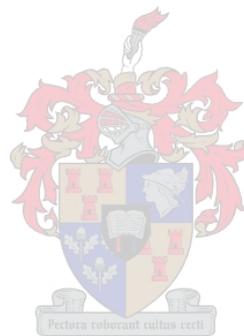
clear that Jesus is a prophet sent by God, carries on God's message, and is given the Gospel (*Injil*).

Nicodemus recognized him as Rabbi, a teacher who has come from God (Jn 3:2), because of the miraculous signs he performed. The Samaritan woman knew that he was a prophet when Jesus revealed that she had five husbands (Jn 4:19). Nevertheless, Jesus clearly did not think of himself as merely a prophet. To Nicodemus, Jesus pointed to his sacrificial death on the cross by referring to the incident when Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, and saying that the son of man must be lifted up (Jn 3:14-16, Num 21:4-9). To the Samaritan woman, in answer to her new belief that salvation is from the Jews, Jesus said, "God is Spirit, and his worshippers must worship in Spirit and in truth." (Jn 4:23) It opened up her progressive recognition of Jesus from a prophet to his real identity as Messiah (Jn 4:25). He declared that he is the saviour of the world (Jn 4:42). After the man born blind, testified that Jesus was a godly man (Jn 7: 31), "a man from God" (Jn 7:33), Jesus opened his spiritual eyes to understand that he is the son of man (Jn 9:35-37).

Another unique title of Jesus is 'Son of man', 'Son of Man' appears 81 times in the Gospels and it is never used by anyone else but Jesus. In Mk 8:31-10:52 Jesus defines the true meaning of "Christ" as the title applies to him. In the Old Testament, Daniel 7:13-14, the son of man is pictured as a heavenly figure that in the end times is entrusted by God with authority, glory and sovereign power. It is also emphasised that Christ must suffer as predicted in the suffering servant in Isaiah 52:13-53:12 (Mk 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 34; 14:21, 41). Jesus' description as 'a prophet' changes to 'the prophet' signifying Messiah (Christ). In the Gospel, there seems to be an attempt to show Jesus as 'the' prophet, which fulfilled Moses' prediction: God would rise up a prophet like him (Deu 18:18). "The son is the radiance of God's glory and exact representation of his being" (Heb 1:3), "through whom he made the universe" (Heb 1:2), "after he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven (Heb 1:3).

How does the Holy Spirit then function in rebellious human beings? Abd Al-Masih (1996:20-21) has drawn attention to the fact that "no one can call Jesus 'Lord' except by the Holy Spirit. (I Cor 12:3)" and "You have received the Spirit of sonship and by him we cry: Abba, Father! The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children" (Rom 8:15-16). "The Holy Spirit will help human beings to recognize

their sinful nature, and bestow on them perfect righteousness in the crucified”; besides this, the Holy Spirit causes sinful human beings to be born again (John 3:3; I Peter 1:28). “The Holy Spirit can only dwell in a believer as the consequence of reconciliation by Jesus on the cross” (John 16:5-17). Therefore, without the redemption work on the cross, the Holy Spirit could not come into us; without the incarnation and atonement of the Son, there would be no eternal life in us. Hence, it is believed that “The Spirit of Jesus is the force that will guide a Muslim to become a Christian (Roman 8:14) and bear fruit (Roman 8:9; I Corinthians 2:10-12, 14)”.



CHAPTER SIX

A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO ISLAMIC UNDERSTANDING OF *AL-RUH*

–A MISSIOLOGICAL APPROACH

Muslims generally deny the Christian doctrine of Trinity as well as Jesus' crucifixion and his divinity; nevertheless, the Qur'an speaks about the Holy Spirit very positively. Muslims, especially Sufis, also devoted themselves to pursue an intimate relationship with God. However, is there a Trinitarian experience in Islam? How does a Christian use the Holy Spirit as a bridge to testify about Jesus as Messiah and Son of God based on the Islamic understanding of *al-Ruh*? Finally, it is our intention to attempt to use both biblical and pneumatological approaches as a way of unveiling the real face of the triune God.

The purpose why Jesus came in to the world was to testify about the Father; and the Holy Spirit testifies about Jesus. For "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you will send to you from the father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me" (Jn 15:26). As a matter of fact, Jesus commanded that the disciples must also testify for him for they had been with him from the beginning (Jn 15:27). That is the "great commandment" given to his disciples "to make disciples", "and surely I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Mt 28:20). Jesus did not come to testify for himself (Jn 5:31), but when Jesus argues with the Pharisees, he knows his real identity; therefore, he says, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going" (Jn 8:14). Furthermore, Jesus says that "I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me" (Jn 8:18). In the Old Testament, God said to Moses, "I am who I am, this is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" (Ex 3:3). In this way, God the Father introduced himself to his people. Similarly, Jesus testified about his own identity with seven 'I AM' statements in the book of John. That is: I am the living water (Jn 4:14); I am the bread of life (Jn 6:35); I am the light of the world (Jn 8:12); I am the way, the truth and the life (Jn 14:6); I am the good shepherd (Jn 10:11); I am the resurrection and life (Jn 11:25), I am the true vine (Jn 15:1). In addition, from the human perspective, even the conscience bears witness, since the requirements of the law are written on their hearts (Rom 2:15).

In the first section, we will discuss how the spiritual human differs from the natural human, and how conscience restores or affects Spirituality. In 6.2, we will discuss Jesus in terms of his humanity, which will be the comparison of Jesus with Adam as well as with Angels. In 6.3, we are attempting to discuss Jesus' divinity: Jesus as the Son of God and *Al-Masih*; in 6.4, we will try to use a pneumatological approach in testifying for the triune God. Finally, how does God's indwelling spirit empower his worshipers to bear fruit?

6.1 Biblical approach -- the natural and spiritual

6.1.1 The natural human being and the spiritual human (being sons of God)

The natural human¹³⁰ is common to all religions, whether Buddhism, Hinduism or Islam. A human being is generally seen as dualistic or a dichotomy¹³¹: That is spirit and soul. The apostle Paul mentions humans as both spiritual and natural. However, some of them are more natural and some of them are more spiritual. In 1 Cor 2:14, 15 he points out that "The man (the natural man) without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment." Because "the Spirit searches all things" (1 Cor 2:16), "No one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God" (1 Cor 2:11, 12).

Since Adam's fall, all human beings are falling into a state of spiritual death, because sin separates humans' relationship with God. Human beings with their sinful nature can neither communicate with God nor reach God's standard of righteousness. One may describe the natural human being as the Bible says, "They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their heart." (Eph 4:18) The behaviour of the natural human sometimes is not different from 'brute beasts' (II Peter 2:12), because they do not have 'the Spirit of Christ' (Rom 8:9) and are under the 'power of Satan' (Acts 26:18) and are slaves of the flesh and of their sinful nature. The natural human being therefore cannot understand spiritual things, until one's spirit is alive again (Rom 8:10) through the acceptance of Jesus Christ into the believer's heart; in this way, one's

¹³⁰ Natural human in Greek, it is *psuchikos* (I Cor 2:14).

¹³¹ Dichotomy in Grudem 1999:193: "This view teaches that Spirit is not a separate part of man, but simply another term for 'soul' and that both terms are used interchangeable in Scripture".

sense of spirituality can be restored. This point will be discussed further in the next section.

The function of the human conscience is to tell what is right and what is wrong; what is good and what is evil. The apostle Paul describes this inner struggle between evil (sinful nature) and good (Rom 7:18-20), for in “my inner being I delight in ‘God’s law’, but ‘another law’ is at work in the members of my body ... making me a prisoner of the law of sin” (Rom 7:22-23). Nevertheless “through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life sets me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom 8:2). “He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, so that “by faith we may receive the promise of the Spirit” (Gal 3:14).

The Bible distinguishes the natural human from the spiritual human in terms of and as a consequence of ‘the inner voice’ which these two kinds of people follow: “Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace (Rom 8:5-6). “For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live (Rom 8:13).

Furthermore, the Bible teaches that the natural human being has to be born again (Jn 3:3,5,7) in the Spirit; therefore they ‘have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God’ (I Cor 2:12). Moreover, a Spiritual human being is led by the Spirit; and owns sonship from God: Because Spiritual men¹³², “however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. If Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness” (Rom 8:9; 10), “Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God” (Rom 8:14); Jn 1:12). Apart from this, a spiritual human being is living by the Spirit (Rom 4:4-17; Gal 5:16-26). The Spiritual human beings transformed by the renewing of his/her mind through God’s Spirit (Rom 12:1-2), as a son one may share the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires: (II Peter 1:4) and become a new creature (2 Cor 5:17). Such people may have “the

¹³² Spiritual human in Greek is *pneumatikos* (I Cor 2:15; 3:1).

righteousness that comes from God and is by faith” (Phil 3:8). Grudem (1999:193) indicates, “The Spirit of a person then would be the part that most directly worships and prays to God” (Jn 4:24; Phil 3:3).

Figure 6. 1 Comparison of natural man and spiritual man

	Natural man	Spiritual man
Rom 8:5	Live according to the sinful nature	Live in accordance with the Spirit
Rom 8:6	The result is death	The result is life and peace
Rom 8:10	Body is dead because of sin	Spirit is alive because of righteousness
Rom 8:15	Spirit of fear as slave	Sons of God, heirs (Rom 8:14,17; Gal 4; 7)

'Abdullah' is a common name among the Muslims, which means slave. It is also a common belief among Muslims that human beings are slaves of Allah. Muslims should therefore totally submit to Allah's will in all circumstances. However, Christianity teaches “for you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship; and by him we cry, ‘Abba’, Father. The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children” (Rom 8: 15-16). Similarly, there is another parallel passage, which describes these two kinds of man's position. "You are all sons of God through faith in Jesus" (Gal 3:26). However, "When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of Sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out 'Abba, Father', so you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir" (Gal 4: 4-7). In this way, spiritual men become God's adopted children who are able to communicate with God in the Spirit.

In brief, the spiritual human has a new mindset (Rom 8:5-8), and there is a new person in control (Rom 8:9-11) who is the Spirit, the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ (Rom 8:9); that is also a clear picture of the trinity. “You are of Christ and Christ is of God” (1 Cor 3:23). What is more, the spiritual human has a new obligation to stop sinning (Rom 8:12-13), because he is adopted into a new spiritual family (Rom 8:14-15), having a new intimate relationship with Abba Father (Rom 8:15). By the testifying of the Holy Spirit with our Spirit there is a new certainty that we are children of God (Rom 8:10), and therefore share a new inheritance (Rom 8:17,

Eph 1:4) as ‘co-heirs with Christ’ (Rom 8:17). Spiritual human beings, therefore, are all sons of God (Rom 8:14).

Jesus told the Jews “the truth will set you free” (Jn 8:32); Jesus is the word of God (Jn 1:1). And Paul said: “the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Cor 3:17). And “everyone who sins is a slave to sin” (Rom 8:34), no matter what religion one may practice. A consequence of that clearly that “a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever” (Jn 8:35); which means he has eternal life. The word of God also warns us “he who rejects the instruction of God rejects God who gives you his Holy Spirit (1 Thes 4:8). The Qur’an also has the concept of the Spirit, but the spirit in Islam is created, whereas in Christianity, the Spirit is the Creator. Whoever believes in Jesus is a child of God. In Islam, however, all Muslims are destined to submit to Allah as slaves and fulfil all the religious duties as slaves (Cf. Lk 15: 11-32 the parable of the lost son). Humans who are spiritually dead can only function to a certain extent, which will be discussed in the next section.

6.1.2 Conscience and a sense of the spiritual

Having dealt with the natural and the spiritual man, we are now going to discuss how conscience functions in a natural human being and in a spiritual human being. A Study by Kathryn Johnson (in Bowley 1999:104-105)¹³³ points out that Islam confirms a strong connection to the monotheistic faith, “Muslims are required to affirm God’s unity (*tawhid*) and God is absolutely transcendent”. It is to say that each human being has a *fitrah* that is Muslim, “a nature that instinctively knows God”. “The natural state of humans is to live in submission to God.” McDowell & Zaka (1999:125) also indicate, that “The Qur’an teaches that the human race was given an innately pure nature called *fitrah*.” Similarly, the Bible emphasises the function of conscience: “Indeed, things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.” (Rom 2:14; 15)

The Bible describes the significant role of the conscience as an influence with or by the Spirit in different ways. “The goal of this command is love, which comes from ...

¹³³ The Lessons of the Garden: An Examination of the Scriptural legacy of Islam in Bowley, James (ed). 1999. *Living Traditions of the Bible: Scripture in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Practice*.

a good conscience” (1 Tim 1:5); “Holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith” (I Tim 1:19); some are “hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.” (I Tim 4:2).

One of the differences between Islam and Christianity is their views concerning the human’s nature; Christians admit that humans have a sinful nature, whereas Muslims believe that humans often have a pure nature. On the other hand the Bible shows clearly that humans often ignore God's general revelation (Rom 1:20), “For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened” (Rom 1:21). Similarly, the Qur'an also speaks about some human beings ignoring God's grace, as a natural man seldom responds to God: “He gave you hearing and sight and feeling: Little thanks do ye give!” (Sura 32:9).

Apart from the inward perspective as mentioned above, outwardly, the Bible says that the conscience also changes the behaviour of the old self as if changing clothes. “Put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds, and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (Eph 4: 22-24). Similarly, another passage expresses the same idea, “since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator (Col 3:9-10). At Jesus’ second coming. He “who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that, they will be like his glorious body” (Phil 3:21). How then, is the Spirit significant for human nature? Both Islam and Christianity believe the Spirit can awaken the conscience and recover the relationship with the Almighty Creator.

Therefore, good conscience may produce good deeds, but only spirituality can lead sinners to God. Apart from the general revelation, one needs a special revelation in Christianity, which is Jesus Christ who dwelt among us (Jn 1:14) to make “God the one and only” known (Jn 1:18), and to show us the way to God; this will explain why Jesus had to come as discussed in the next section.

6.2 Christological approach--Jesus in Humanity

6.2.1 Jesus as the last Adam and Adam as the first man

Adam and Eve were cast out from the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:23) after an act of disobedience (Gen 3). As a result of this, the relationship between God and humankind was changed and broken, and original sin came in among humankind (Gen 3:9). Jesus is called the second Adam, as ‘a new beginning of a new creation’. Because of his incarnation and redemptive work, human beings’ relationships with God can be restored. At the creation of Adam, the first human being, “the Lord God formed the man¹³⁴ from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being” (Gen 2:7). Because of the original sin which Adam committed, all human beings inherited the sinful nature. The result of that is spiritual death. It also leads to physical death (Heb 9:27). Jesus came, as the last Adam, a life-giving spirit (1 Cor 5:45). Because Christ has been raised from the dead, all human beings will be raised from death to face the day of judgment, and whoever believes in him will have eternal life (Jn 3:16). “The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven” (1 Cor 15:46, 47). “For since death came through a man”, which refers to Adam; “the resurrection of the dead also comes through a man”, which refers to Jesus (1 Cor 15:21). “For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive” (1 Cor 15: 22).

Figure 6. 2 The Comparison of Adam and Jesus concerning death and life

	Adam (the first man)	Jesus (last Adam)
I Cor 15:45	A living being	A life-giving spirit
1 Cor 15:46	Natural man	Spiritual man
1 Cor 15:47	Adam was of dust of the earth	Jesus from heaven
1 Cor 15:21	Death came through one man	Resurrection of the death came through him
1 Cor 15:22	In Adam all die	In Christ all will be made alive
Rom 5:12	Sin entered through one man	God’s Grace and gift came by on man (v.15)

According to Johnson (1999:110), the Qur’an claims “Adam and Eve’s actions are personal acts of disobedience. Their foolish choices do not carry over to future

¹³⁴ The Hebrew for man (Adam) in NIV Bible 1990:2.

generations.” “Adam is given the title of *khalifah*, vicegerent”¹³⁵. Is this a one-person event in the human history, or is Adam’s fall just a seed which symbolizes the sin of the whole world? It is clearly said in the Bible, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23). “For the wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23), “And all our righteous acts are like filthy rags” (Is 64:6), since “death came through Adam, and life through Christ” (Rom 5:12-20). “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way death came to all men, because all sinned” (Rom 5:12).

However, why does all humankind inherit ancestor Adam’s sin and why should every innocent person be responsible for ‘his own fault’? To be more precise, “Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.” (Rom 5:14) “Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous” (Rom 5:18, 19 compare Eph 2:6-11). According to Bowley (1999:110), Muslims also believe that at the end of the creation story, “humans have also been made the vicegerents of the earth, with the freedom to choose to obey or reject God.” In addition, humans “have been given the ability to seek God’s forgiveness, knowing that God may accept our sincere repentance.” Therefore Jesus, who is at the Father’s side, (Jn 1:18) had to come in human form, and in this position before God was temporarily a little lower than angels (or lower than angels for a little while), and after a while, God raised Jesus from the dead ‘through the Spirit of holiness’ (Rom 1:4) so that at the end Jesus is superior to the angels.

6.2.2 Jesus is superior to angels

Some Qur’anic verses about *al-ruh* in Muslim belief are understood as the angelic beings. On the other hand, in Christianity, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and Spirit of Christ as well as the third person of the Godhead, who then is equal with God

¹³⁵ Vicegerent in Oxford Dictionary means that “A person appointed by a king or other ruler to act in his place or exercise certain of his administrative functions”. In general, sense “One who takes the place of another in the discharge of some office or duties”. (August 2005, <http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50277224?single=1&query_type=word&queryword=vicegerent&first=1&max_to_show=10>).

the Father, and God the son, Jesus. Therefore, it is significant to compare Jesus with angels in the Bible. Jesus is unique in the way that ‘the Son of God’ is superior to angels “For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father””? Again, “I will be his Father, and he will be my Son””? (Heb1: 5). Jesus, who came from heaven as the Son of man in human form, had flesh and blood and was temporarily lower than angels, in order to share our humanity and identify with human beings’ weaknesses. Actually, “the son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word (Heb 1:3a). Most important of all is that by suffering death he destroyed the devil who holds the power of death (Heb 2: 14, 15): “after he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven” (Heb 1:3b). In this way, he may “free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death” (Heb 2:15); and who were slaves of sin, for whoever sins is a slave to sin (Jn 8:34). The implication of that is that “a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever” (Jn 8:35).

Also, “we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that ... he may bring many sons to glory” (Heb 2:9, 10). Similarly, when looking at a human being’s position as compared with angels, it says in the Bible “you made him a little¹³⁶ lower than the angels¹³⁷, and crowned him with glory and honour and put everything under his feet” (Heb 2:7,8). However, this reality will become true only, if one is born again of the Spirit, as “flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.” (Jn 3:6), and “born of God” (Jn 1:12), so that believers can become God’s adopted sons and daughters. However, Jesus is the first-born among many brothers (Rom 8:29); Jesus is God’s one and only Son (Jn 3:16), because he was from the Spirit. Talking about the supremacy of Christ: “He is the image of the invisible God, the first born over all creation, by him all things were created: Things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible (Col 1:15, 16a). “He is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Col 1:17). “He is the first born from among the dead” (Col 1:18). “He reconciled us by Christ’s physical body through death” (Col 1:22). Jesus’ trip coming to the earth in human form is indeed a mystery of God, just as the Apostle Paul describes Jesus’

¹³⁶ In NIV 1990:1489 footnote: Or him for a little while.

¹³⁷ ‘Angels’ in Ps 8:5 is ‘heavenly beings’ in NIV 1990:682 footnote: Or than God.

incarnation and ascension both in the earthly world and unseen world. “He appeared in the body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory” (I Tim 3:5).

6.3 Christological approach—The Divinity of Jesus

6.3.1 Jesus as the Son of God

In general, Muslims deny Jesus’ deity because of some misunderstandings. Therefore, Schirmacher (2001:65-68) points out six reasons why Muslims deny his divine Sonship. Firstly, the sonship of Jesus contradicts Muslim ethics (Sura 6:110-101; 42:81; 19:88-92); secondly, since Jesus is not the Son, God is not the Father, whereas the Bible insists that human has no other way to approach God except through his son Jesus (Jn 14:6; Acts 4:12). Thirdly, Jesus’ sonship contradicts the concept of the Oneness of God; fourthly, God does not reveal himself as a mortal; fifthly, God remains a mystery separated from creation (Sura 2:2); sixthly, arguments of Muslim theologians against Jesus’ divine Sonship (see Ps 2:2). However, there are a number of incidents that the term “Son of God” is used of people, for instance: Adam, Ephraim; or of a nation like Israel (Hosea 11:1)¹³⁸; or of a king (Ps 2:7)¹³⁹, and even believers are called Sons of God; Parrinder (1965:129) argues that the idea of son of God is never used as “a physically begotten son”. Although son of God is implied on several occasions, Chua (Titles of Jesus: 4) indicates that only Jesus is the unique Son of God, particularly among many sons as follows: (a) Adam the Son of God (Lk 3:38). (b) ‘Son of God’ before the flood (Gen 6:2). (c) ‘Israel is my Son, my firstborn’ (Ex 4:22). (d) ‘Ephraim is my firstborn’ (Jer 31:9). (e) Believers, ‘sons of god’ (Rom 8:14).

Jesus is the first-born, in the sense that he conquered death and was resurrected from death, among many believers and over all of creation, and he will lead many sons into God’s kingdom (Rom 8:29; Col 1:15). Evidently, Jesus is recognized as son of God not only in his teachings but also in terms of the miracles he performed: for instance, Jesus healed the sick (Mk 1:29:31); Jesus’ power over nature (Mk 4:39); Jesus’ authority over evil spirits (Mk 5:13); Jesus has the authority to forgive sins (Mk 2:5); and Jesus’ calling of his disciples (Mk 1:16-20). Chua (Titles of Jesus: 4) indicates

¹³⁸ “I have called my son out of Egypt”.

¹³⁹ “I will proclaim the decree of the Lord: He said to me, ‘You are my Son; today I have become your Father.’”

that Jesus was called ‘the son of God’ by different people: (a) Demons (Mt 8:29; Lk 4:41; Mk 5:7). (b) An Angel (Lk 1:35) (c) His executioner (Mt 27:54) (d) Martha, a friend (Jn 11:27) (e) the Apostles (Mt 14:33) Peter (Mt 16:16); Nathaniel (Jn 1:49); John (Jn 20:31) (f) John the Baptist (Jn 1:34), Saul or Paul (Acts 9:20, 2 Cor 1:19) (g) God (Mt 3:17, Mk 1:11; Lk 3:22 & Jn 1:34). Since there were numerous people who viewed Jesus from different perspectives and recognize him as the Son of God; that is therefore to be regarded strong evidence from eyewitnesses.

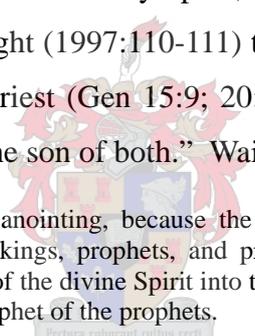
According to Els (notes 2004:4), apart from other witnesses, Jesus even testified himself that he is the Christ. (a) He is the Christ, the Son of God (Cf. Mt 26:63-6; Mk 14:61-64; Lk 22:70-71). (b) His pre-incarnate existence (John 8:58); he is the Messiah (Jn 4:26). (c) Jesus’ word is God’s word (Cf. M 5:17-18; Lk 7:36-50). (d) Jesus has authority to forgive sins (Cf. Mk 2:5-6; Lk 7:36-50). (e) Jesus’ authority is above God’s law (Mk 2:23-24, 27-28). (f) The risen Christ is God’s new temple (Jn 2:18-19, 21). (g) Jesus is the judge on the Day of Judgment (Mt 25:31-34; Mt 7:21-23). (h) Jesus is the resurrection and the life (Jn 11:25, Jn 6:40, 46, 47). He is one with God the Father (Jn 12:44-45). (i) Jesus is the Good Shepherd who lies down his life to give eternal life (Jn 10:28; Cf. Ezek 34). Above all, (j) Jesus is the way, the truth and the life and the only route to God as Father (Jn 14:6). Cragg (as cited in Parrinder 1965:140) indicates that ‘God the Son’ means “God in the act of revelation” So “God was revealed in his essential nature of love in Christ”

6.3.2 Jesus as *Al-Masih* (Messiah)

According to the Anchor Bible Dictionary (Vol.4:778), “the Messiah” is normally translated in Greek as the Christ. “The Hebrew verb *masah* is used to indicate the applying of oil to an object or person by pouring, rubbing, or smearing.” Anointing in the Bible is a sign of consecration into the Lord’s service. “When the word is employed with persons, it denotes the conferring of a specific status. Mostly kings are anointed (Saul, David, Solomon ... etc); in some instances priests were anointed”, for instance, the priests Aaron and his sons were anointed with oil (Ex 28:41; 29:77), as were prophets like Elisa.

The historical Jesus is called Christ in Christianity, but Jewish prophecy does not recognize Jesus as the coming Messiah. In the Qur’an, Christ Jesus is called *al-Masih* eleven times. Susuf Ali explains that in his commentary (1946:134 footnote no. 385)

that means “the anointed one”: “Christ: Greek, *Christos* = anointed: King and priests were anointed to symbolize consecration to their office. The Hebrew and Arabic form is *Masih*, although *al-Masih* (Sura 3:45)¹⁴⁰ was mentioned as the anointed one. However, at his second coming, according to Muslim’ belief, he will destroy all the crosses and pigs, and he will be married and have many children; after which he will die, he will then be buried next to the tomb of Muhammad. Nevertheless, the concept of Messiah is not coincidentally found in Qur’an. The term anointed one is *Christos* in Greek, and *Messiah* in Hebrew. *Messiah* means “the anointed one”. Chua (Titles of Jesus: 4) points out “there is some anointed ones in the Bible. But there is only one unique anointed one prophesied in the Old Testament (Dan 9:25, 26) and fulfilled in the New Testament (Mk 8:29, Jn 6:25, Mk 14:61-64, Acts 2:36, Rom 1:4)”. In the Biblical context, *Messiah*, the anointed one, is given a threefold office: prophet (Ps 105:15), priest (Lev 4:3, 9, 10), and king (I Sam 2:10, 35; II Sam 1:14, Ps 2:2, 18:50; Heb 3:13). Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit, and was announced by God as *al-Masih*. In the study by Wainwright (1997:110-111) this threefold office in retrospect: Abraham was a prophet and a priest (Gen 15:9; 20:7); and David was a king and a prophet; and yet Jesus is called the son of both.” Wainwright (1997:111) writes:



 He was called Christ by anointing, because the unction, which in former times had been given to kings, prophets, and priests as a type, was now poured out as the fullness of the divine Spirit into this one person, the King of kings, Priest of priests, Prophet of the prophets.

Besides this, Wainwright (1997:116) describes in further detail:

Christ exercised his prophetic office in teaching, and in foretelling the future – in his sermon on the mount, in his parables, in his prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem. He performed the priest’s service when he died on the cross, as sacrifice, and when he consecrated the bread and the cup to be a feast upon that sacrifice; and now that he intercedes for us at the right hand of God. And he showed himself as a conqueror, and a king, in rising from the dead, in ascending into heaven, in sending down the Spirit of grace, in converting the nations, and in forming his Church to receive and to rule them.

“The words ‘Christ’ in Greek, and ‘Messiah’ in Hebrew signify ‘Anointed’ and imply the prophetic, priestly, and royal characters, which were to meet in the Messiah. Among the Jews, anointing was the ceremony whereby prophets, priests, and kings were initiated into those offices”. Jesus as the anointed one was prophesied in Is 61:1-3 “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good

¹⁴⁰ Sura 3:45 “Behold! The angels said, ‘O Mary! God giveth thee Glad tidings of a Word from him: his name will be Christ Jesus.” In Susuf Ali’s 1946:134 footnote 385: “Christ: Greek, *Christos*=anointed: King and priests were anointed to symbolize consecration to their office. The Hebrew and Arabic form is *Masih*.”

news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour", and it was fulfilled in Lk 4:18, 19.

While Jesus as the son of man was on the earth, the Holy Spirit was always with him. The Gospel of John is a good resource concerning Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The sign for John the Baptist to recognize Jesus as the Son of God is that "The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit" (Jn 1:33, 34). The Holy Spirit descends on Jesus like a dove in Jesus' baptism in the river of Jordan (Mk 1:9, 10)

The Qur'an also calls Jesus 'a word of Allah (Sura 4:171). The Bible says the name Jesus is the word of God (Jn 1:1). For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit." (Jn 3:34) Furthermore, Jesus also taught the Samaritan woman "God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." (Jn 4:24) Jesus not only promised the giving of the Holy Spirit, "whoever believes me, as the Scripture has said streams of living water will flow from within him." (Jn 7:37), but also asked the Father to give "another Counsellor" to be with the believers (Jn 14:16). For the Holy Spirit is the "the Spirit of the truth" and will guide believers into all the truth (Jn 14:17; 16:13) and "convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment" (Jn 16:8-11). After Jesus appeared to the disciples, "he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" (Jn 20:22), before ascending into heaven. What a familiar picture, as in creation, God breathed into Adam the "breath of life" (Gen 2:7). Augustine (2002:46) discovers the foundational truth in John 16:13. "The Father is the only Father of the Son, and the Son is the only son of the Father, but the Spirit is the Spirit of both!"¹⁴¹ Therefore, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Jesus. Jesus is indeed the '*Ruh Allah*' and 'a Spirit from him.'

The difference between Adam and Jesus was mentioned earlier on in 6.2.1, in contradistinction to the fact that Muslims believe that Jesus is similar with Adam without an earthly father; however, Adam became a living being, and yet Jesus is a life-giving spirit (1 Cor 15:45). "Because God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does

¹⁴¹ In Augustine 2002:46 footnoted 37: "Augustine also alludes to several passages that talk about the Spirit as the Spirit of the Father (Mt 10:20; Rom 8:11) and others that speak about the Spirit as the Spirit of the Son" (Rom 8:9; Gal 4:6).

not have life” (1 Jn 5:11, 12). Jesus is truly a life-giving Spirit.

6.4 Pneumatological approach

6.4.1 Human religious experience – a creative dialectical dialogue

One must ask how it is possible for humans to have religious experiences outside of Christianity. Can religious people other than Christians experience the Christian Triune God? Meiring has a series of interesting discussions about the theology of religion in his study: Meiring (1996:224) points out that “The spiritual is a fundamental dimension of humanness, which relates to relationship to that transcendental reality which is named God”. Talking about the origin of religion, Meiring (1996:225) indicates, “The human being is the crown of creation, having received an awareness of a transcendent, spiritual dimension which distinguished the human being from animals and which is definitive of humanness.” Moreover, Meiring (1996:228) argues: human beings would not pursue God without a transcendental experience of emptiness and loneliness. Regarding the restoration of religion, Meiring makes a point that the image of God can be restored only through the work of the Holy Spirit, who enables faith, conversion and new birth. Therefore, in the biblical perspective, “True religion is obedient service to the triune God” and “religious faith is made possible only through a creative act of God, in Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, which opens the way to the experience of true communion with God.” (1996:229).

Another question Meiring discusses is “Whether God has revealed himself in other religions and if legitimate values and truths are to be found in them” (1996:223). Because the experience of revelation received is different one from another in all religions, one may ask this question again as to whether the revelation in the Scriptures and if the incarnation of Christ is absolutely unique. For instance, why does the story of the birth of Jesus exist in the Qur’an, and the word of God and the Spirit of God are mentioned regardless of the definition and meaning of these terminologies and questions of authenticity and chronological order. It would be very interesting to discover why those signs are there. Furthermore, can these be potential material in preparing people’s hearts for the truth?

Besides this, Meiring (1996:236) also discusses the question “Is there a point of connection between Christianity and other religions?” in his study. On the contrary,

in the early Church Father Tertullian's opinion "Christianity had nothing to learn from other religions." Clement of Alexandria describes Christ's work as a seed in other religions. When the debate has been carried on and scrutinized a connection can be made with positive elements in other religions; later Karl Barth (Meiring 1996:236-237) claimed however that "missionary proclamation can in no way be connected to other religions" after the fall; "God makes connection only with the faith which he himself creates". Nevertheless, Calvin (1996:237) argued that, "fallen humanity has not completely lost their sense of transcendent reality." Above all, "Religious awareness and a sense of transcendence which are present in all religions, serve as a point of connection in proclamation." Hendrik Kraemer (Meiring 1996:237) agrees with the point Calvin made. Besides this he shows that "even after the fall the light of God breaks, providing a point of connection with people's religious awareness". Lastly, Meiring declares that Trinitarian theology of religions depends on a creative dialectical tension among inclusivist, pluralist and exclusivist positions.

Meiring (1996:239) firstly looks at exclusivism: Exclusivism believes "Salvation took place only through Christ and then only through conscious surrender and conversion"; a representative such as Hendrik Kraemer (1996:239) "sees other religions as attempts at human Self-redemption". Exclusivism was traditionally the dominant standpoint within Protestantism. Secondly, Pluralism or relativism: They believe "Other religions are valid ways of salvation because they all ultimately lead to one God; people are saved within their own religion, independently of Christ". Paul Knitter (Meiring 1996:240) is a well-known exponent of such a position of pluralism. In his book, *No other names*, Knitter uses the term 'unctive Pluralism' by means of which he indicates that "all religions are equally valid and that there could be other saviours besides Jesus". In order to move away from 'christocentric' to 'theocentric', unfortunately, Knitter does not insist on the uniqueness of the Christ. Pluralism wishes to preserve the belief in the universal salvation in Christ, but regards "the incarnation of Christ as the only revelation of God; and the cross as the only redemptive act of God." Thirdly, Inclusivism (Meiring 1996:240) believes "God's saving grace is operative in other religions but cannot be separated from Christ as Saviour and as absolute revelation of God", representatives of this view are Roman Catholic theologians, such as Karl Rahner as well as Protestant theologians like Wolfhart Pannenberg.

As “the Spirit blows wherever he wills”(Jn 3:8), no one can deny the fact that the triune God is at work in non-Christian religions. One cannot agree more with what Bosch (as cited in Meiring 1996:242) says: “We cannot point to any other way of salvation than Jesus Christ; at the same time we cannot set limits to the saving power of God”. Although there is tension, there is always room for mission and dialogue. The result of discussion has broadened their understanding and acceptance of one another as well as deepened the impact of missions in communicating and confronting people with the redemptive work of Christ. As far as mission is concerned, Meiring (1996:243) argues, “The heart of the gospel is the coming of God’s kingdom through the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ.” In addition, “the way to God’s kingdom is through conversion and faith in the crucified and resurrected Lord.”

Mark Heim¹⁴² (2001) who is an inclusivist also expresses his viewpoint based on these three typologies: exclusive, pluralist, and inclusive. In dealing with other religions, Heim indicates two challenges Christians and other religions are facing today: Firstly, the challenge “to be faithful to the ‘one and only dimension of their faith’”. Secondly, the challenge “to honour truth, virtue, and integrity in believers of other religions but still being faithful to Jesus Christ (Jn 14:6; Acts 4:12) and pursue witness to the world (Jn 3:16; Acts 1:8); the latter makes this an issue of faith to accommodate other religions among those who have not confessed Jesus as Christ. Dupuis (Karkkainen 2003:213) used two terms to describe how he conceives salvation as a kingdom-centred model: “The uniqueness of Jesus Christ is neither absolute nor relative but ‘constitutive’ and ‘relational’”. “‘Relational,’ refers to the universal significance of the Christ-event in the overall plan of God for humankind and to the manner in which it unfolds in salvation history”; this viewpoint is different from Mark Heim’s ‘Orientational pluralism’ (Karkkainen 2003:213); “according to which genuine pluralism must account for the possibility of various ‘religious endings’ in different religions”. On the contrary, Dupuis feels “there are divergent paths to one common destiny”; to be more precise, Dupuis champions a kingdom-centred model: “through sharing in the mystery of salvation, the followers of other religious traditions are thus members of the kingdom of God already present as a historic reality”.

¹⁴² The author of two profound books: *Salvations -- Truth and Difference in Religion*, and *Depth of the Riches – A Trinitarian Theology of religious Ends*.

6.4.2 Trinitarian experience in Islam -- The divinity of the Holy Spirit and crucifixion of Christ Jesus in Islam

Having dealt with various attitudes towards inter-religious dialogue in the last section, a closer discussion and evaluation of the Islam-Christian dialogue will take place in this section. How does a Muslim experience the Islamic concept of *al-ruh*? Besides this, is there a Trinitarian experience in Islam? Furthermore, how is it possible for Muslims to experience the Christian concept of the Holy Spirit? None of these are easy questions and therefore there are no quick answers. Nevertheless, there are certain factors of which we can be certain that they will affect these results, including the understanding of *al-ruh* in their own religion and their desire to know God the Creator.

6.4.2.1 The freedom of the Holy Spirit

The Spirit blows where he wills--Bedcock

Taylor (1972:172-176) indicates three factors in his study about the freedom of the Spirit and search for a new ethic: First, freedom is grounded in forgiveness. Second, freedom is grounded in truth. Third, freedom is grounded in direct access to God. Dupuis (Karkkainen 2003:211) notices the role of the Spirit that “the Spirit knows no limits and is free to operate everywhere”. Kritzeck (1975:107) indicates Al-Ghazali's understanding of *ruh* in his study: It is indeed “a breakthrough in the history of Islam. Al-Ghazali believes that “the *ruh* of the man is held to be immaterial, purely spiritual. And most important of all, *al-ruh* is of the same nature as the Holy Spirit”; “Allah's own *ruh*, with which it can enter into direct communication.” If the essence of *ruh* is the same as God, it means the Holy Spirit is God himself; then the ‘self-transcendence’ of human beings would be a means to approach God of ‘self-communication’.

Moreover, if God is a self-revealing God, then he can reveal himself in any form he likes and human form is not excluded in terms of the person called the Son of God in Christianity. If this presumption is accepted, then no human knowledge can limit the transcendent God to act as an immanent God through his Spirit and manifest as his Son. Cragg (1956:290-291) argues, “If God is a person, knowledge of Him must be a personal revelation”, and “God in revelation is God in Christ” and ‘Son of God excludes all paternity in the physical sense’. After all, it is impossible for someone to

firmly believe that God is almighty; and that he can do anything to reach his creations on one hand, and on the other hand still say that he is limited in the way of self-revelation in human form and in providing salvation on the cross. It is however, strictly found contradictory in the doctrine of *Tawhid* in Islam.

In spite of this fact, evidently, there are still many Muslims in Sufism, who are pursuing a reunion with God, although it is forbidden in Islam. Eventually it is considered as the one major sin, *shirk*, in Islam; “the Sufi life centres around *dhikr*¹⁴³, ‘recollection’” is an beautiful expression of pursuing God, after all, there is nothing that can stop human’s desire to know God the Creator and the thirst to be with God in any religion. For instance, Kritzeck (1975:110-111) points to people like Rabi’a al-‘Adawiyya who is the most beloved woman Sufi in Islam, and Husayn ibn Mansur Al-Hallaj, who was full of the Holy Spirit to an extent that he even said ‘he could no longer distinguish himself from God’. The result of that was unbelievable; he was finally “crucified, beheaded, and dismembered in Baghdad in 922”. It is believed that “His life more than that of any other Sufi illustrates the intensity of the spiritual experience in Islam”.

Kritzeck (1975:111) comments on Sufism that much authentic Sufism has survived, here and there. It is also playing a role in the age-old frontiers of Islam, notably in Africa, Kritzeck argues further “in the honest and serious search for and with the ‘Holy Spirit’ lies one of Islam’s most appealing and endearing aspects” (sic). No wonder Bedcock (1997) would argue “the Spirit ‘blows where he wills’” as the scripture says, “The wind blows where ever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit” (Jn 3:8). This describes the amazing work and freedom of the Holy Spirit who is still active around the world; and Muslims are not excluded. In the same way, Dupuis (Karkkainen 2003:211) argues in his Trinitarian vision of the theology of pluralism, where he examines the role of the Spirit and where he notes the reasons why many have recently proposed a pneumatological approach to other religions: because “the Spirit knows no limits and is free to operate everywhere”. In brief, Karkkainen (2003:120) indicates that “God as spirit encompasses both immanence and transcendence. The Spirit transcends the world but at the same time is the

¹⁴³ In Kritzeck 1975:110 *dhikr* is “a spiritual exercise designed to render God’s presence throughout one’s being, and in which usually there is rhythmical repetitive invocation of God’s names, that is His attributes or merely *Allah*”.

immanent source, the life-principle “.

6.4.2.2 Martyrdom as an imitation of Christ on the cross

Apart from the testimonies of the free will of the Holy Spirit still at work, there is also evidence of imitation of Jesus' sacrificial death in Islam. Poupin (Vanhoozer 1997:72) points out “God is near in many cultures, including Islam”. ‘Christ on the Cross’ however, is not a welcome figure to either the Jews or to the Muslims. Moreover, it seems that “Christ, in his crucifixion, is the contradiction of all our attitudes of piety, even Christian ones” (Vanhoozer 1997:72). The apostle Paul argues, “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor 1:18). And: “Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man’s wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man’s strength” (1 Cor 1:22-24). Poupin argues it is “God who breaks in at the heart of our failures, religious failures among them”, furthermore, Poupin (Vanhoozer 1997:74) points out that the significance of ‘intercessory approach’ in Sufism is still able to “astonish the theologian of the cross, of the transfiguration failure”. No doubt, there is another way of understanding the crucifixion of Christ, martyrdom in Sufism, as well as a way of creating dialogue through mediation.

Louis Massignon (as cited in Poupin 1997:74) introduced the Sufi al Hallaj (857-922 C. E.) who was “the originator of an important tradition of imitators of Jesus.” Hallaj desired martyrdom, “the desire of the passion, in imitation of Jesus’ passion” as shown in one of his poems, where Hallaj proclaims to God: (as cited in Poupin 1997:74)

I want you, I want you not for the reward, but I want you for the punishment,
because I obtained all that I desired, except the delights of my passion in
suffering.

Poupin (Vanhoozer 1997:75) argues further, it is because “Hallaj believed in the crucifixion of Jesus”, that he imitated him, especially in his martyrdom. “The cross, the place *par excellence* of the hallajian imitation of Jesus”. This imitation includes damnation and is “experienced as the encounter of God by his mystical lover”, and this scandalous encounter becomes the full accomplishment of the supreme duty of

the Muslim: “the *Tawhid*, or ‘unification of God,’ that is the practice of the proclamation of divine unicity¹⁴⁴: ‘There is no God but God.’” In this way, a Muslim could take the example of Jesus’ submission to Allah and embrace martyrdom like Christ on the cross. However Sura 4:157 says, “That they said ‘We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Apostle of God’; -- but they killed him not, nor crucified him”, it shows the traditional Muslim belief that the Qur’an denies Jesus’ crucifixion.

Poupin (in Vanhoozer 1997:77-78) states that the Nestorians believe that “Jesus was crucified in his humanity and not in his divinity”. Nevertheless, Ghazali, a Sunni, admits Jesus’ bodily crucifixion. Poupin (1997:79) points out that Ahmad Ghazali realized that the sin of Iblis is “the love of the devil for the beauty of God” and “the devil’s wish to be united to him who caused his curse”, and that this is “Origen’s conception of an angelic fall, that of Lucifer, after an allegorical reading of Ezekiel 28”. Based on this idea, one may understand why *Tawhid* is so significant in Islam. Ibn Dawud Ispahani (Vanhoozer 1997:79) who contrary reveals the sin that Hallaj committed, which is actually: “the *tashbih*, the assimilation of God to man, a sin against the *Tawhid*, the proclamation of the unicity of God”; as a result of this, his desire for union with God should be condemned. The ‘assimilation’ of man with God is radically blasphemous in Islam. Poupin (1977:80) argues further, “if assimilation – the *tashbih* (with its risks of pantheism, and even idolatrous tendencies) – is avoided, it is but for a purely abstract profession of the divine unicity – *ta’til* which was rejected by Ahmad Ghazali”. Poupin’s (1997:81) view on Hallaj’s death is that “concerning the revealing relationship of the human lover and human beloved, for an unveiling of God that culminates in martyrdom, Hallaj experienced in his own flesh”. “Hallaj obtains at the heart of his curse, of his punishment, the ‘desired delights of his passion in suffering.’ just as the Scripture says “having become a curse” and “cursed is the one who is hanged to the wood” (sic), (Gal 3:13; Deu 21:23) and abandoned by God himself (Mk 15:34). “The martyrdom of Hallaj, an imitation of Jesus’, and a symbol of the essential experience of the Sufis, would prove to be definitive of the triune God”.

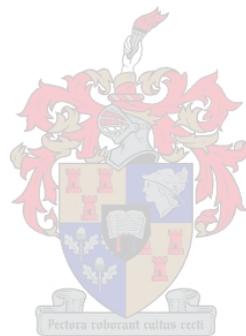
Poupin (1997:84) also indicates that the difference between Christian and Sufi

¹⁴⁴ Unicity in Oxford Dictionary means that “the fact of being or consisting of one in number or kind; oneness”, or “the fact or quality of being unique; unique nature or character” (August 2005, http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50267376?single=1&query_type=word&queryword=unicity&first=1&max_to_show=10).

perspectives is that “Christianity stands for a distinction between the inner Trinitarian lives of God”, which is “the immanent or the ontological Trinity”. However, “Trinity in relationship to the world, which is the economical Trinity” is considered by “Sufism as the immanent presence of the transcendent God to the world”, which unfortunately was denied by the rest of Islam. In conclusion, Poupin argues about the necessity to keep the distinction between the ‘the economic Trinity’ and ‘the ontological Trinity’ with its relative Christology that Henry Corbin insists on. We might have to consider the suggestion by Henry Corbin (Poupin 1997:85) concerning “the point of contact between the ‘ontological transcendental Trinity’ of Christianity and the ‘experiential tri-unity of the *Tawhid*’ of Sufism. Apart from this, Karl Rahner (Bedcock 1997) developed the concept of Spirit anthropology and established his interesting theory of “anonymous Christianity”. Bedcock (1997:124-126) feels that Grace is a pneumatological category of Rahner, whether a Hindu, a Muslim or an atheist are a recipient of the grace of God.

Finally, the answer to the question, “is there a Trinitarian experience in Islam” is definitely positive. Asin Palacios (Poupin 1997:85) in his famous study of Ibn 'Arabi, comments that Sufism is “an heir of Christian monasticism”. Palacios argues Mohammad is simply a “seal of the prophets”, but “Jesus the seal of ‘holiness,’ of ‘friendship with God.’” “For Palacios, Hallaj’s experience is that of the Pauline formula: “it is Christ who lives in me” (Gal 2:20). It is an example of “a thirst for God that leads to a tri-unitarian experience”. Eventually, this desire to experience the Holy Spirit can be fulfilled by the dead and resurrected Christ. By the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, one can taste an intimate relationship with God the Creator. The Holy Spirit, the ‘go-between God’, is indeed the wonderful connection between the transcendent God (Father) of holiness, righteousness and faithfulness and the immanent God (Son) of sinlessness, suffering, and humanity. Evidently, *al-Ruh* is active in all of creation. In other words, not all the prophets are inspired by the *al-Ruh* in Islam; although even Muhammad himself claimed that he was inspired (*wahy*) by the *al-Ruh*. Eventually all the believers in the mighty Creator and in the *Ruh Allah* can also be inspired by *al-Ruh* and have this Trinitarian experience in Islam. Is it too much to expect that the Spirit of Pentecost, who somehow exalted both the diversity of tongues and the testimony of the wondrous works of God, can yet enable both the integrity of other faiths and their being vehicles for the goodness of the kingdom of God? As we move our missionary theology from the level of

“witness to communion” (Heim 2005:192), this pneumatological approach begins to show us a viable option in the study of theology of religions. A pneumatological theology is hopefully providing an affirmative answer to this question (Yong 2005:184).



GENERAL CONCLUSION

This study can be seen as a journey of discovery into the meaning of *al-ruh* in the Qur'an from Classical Commentators, contemporary South African Muslims and scholars as well as from a Christian perspective as discussed in the six chapters of this study. 'Who is the *al-ruh* in Islam?' and 'Is *al-ruh* the same as the Holy Spirit that Christians understand and are talking about?' are the two questions that we have been discussing and arguing about throughout the entire thesis. Apart from addressing the questions in the beginning of each chapter, it is also important to recall all the findings as the argument is being developed at the end of this research.

As has been already pointed out the problem that although *al-ruh* plays an important role in Islam, but it strangely does not seem to be known, is seen in Chapter 1. Muslims generally believe that *al-ruh* has brought down the revelation from Allah to Muhammad; besides this, *al-ruh* is also active in God's creation, and in bringing inspiration to all the prophets and to believers, but surprisingly Muhammad admitted that he did not know much about the *al-ruh*. It became clear that *al-ruh* has been one of the neglected areas in acknowledging God even among Muslims themselves. Therefore this work has been done to emphasise the significant role of *al-ruh* as a test of the hypothesis as to 'that a proper understanding of the Qur'anic teaching on the Holy Spirit can eventually open a new way for Christian witness to Muslims'.

'Who is *al-ruh* according to Muhammad's understanding in the Qur'an?' This research has propagated the idea of *al-ruh* being more than the 'Spirit' or 'Soul', which are used interchangeably in the Qur'an, as can be seen in Chapter 2. This argument is also affected by Commentators' opinions, as modern Muslim scholars are heading the leadership in Islam by their teaching. But it also depends on how ordinary Muslims follow and respond to the teaching of the Qur'an accompanied by learning from their daily religious and life experiences. There is obviously no agreement on the nature of *al-ruh*; and not surprisingly, there is no uniform perception concerning *al-ruh* by commentators; the concept of *al-ruh* as discussed in Chapter 3 is hardly consistent. Even though Christian commentators like Mylrea (1910) and O'Shaughnessy (1953) had been trying to find out about *al-ruh* and tried to order the relevant passages in a chronological manner, the divergence among various translators and commentators and the misunderstandings on the *al-ruh* between Muhammad and

Muslim commentators still exist throughout history. Because of time, space and energy limitations, the writer of this master's thesis could not do a thorough comparison on the study of "Who is the Spirit from Allah in Islam" by *Abd Al- Masih* (1997). However, the writer touched briefly on the religious evolution of Muhammad and his understanding of the Spirit.

Moreover, the significance of the contribution of this research does not lie in the literature review only; eventually, the empirical fieldwork through interviews bring in a new chapter towards finding out the understanding of *al-ruh* as evidenced in Chapter 4. In addition, the result is a great contribution as we come to the assessment and response in the final two chapters 5 and 6. One of the ultimate purposes of this study, from the very beginning, is to set it up as a model, a genuine practitioner and sincere scholar, which should be from the people, of the people and for the people. That is to say, it is never a waste when you invest your time in the people around you rather than spending your entire time with piles of books in the library only. This is a suggestion for Christians to ponder.

Having answered the questions asked in the very beginning, for the first time many people are beginning to realize and recognize that Christians and evangelists can actually use the Qur'anic conception of *al-ruh* as a bridge in sharing the authentic meaning of the Holy Spirit with Muslims. Although there are still so many misunderstandings and obstacles to be overcome, as said in chapter 5, Christians are called to retrieve and to explain when the message of the Gospel is being misunderstood. What is more, is to go a step further by putting your feet into the shoes of Muslims, in order to understand them from their perspective. In order to open others' eyes, we need to take off our own veil first. For instance, issues like the Trinity that result in Christians are being taught 'polytheistic and worshipping three gods'; and other issues like 'if even human beings do not have original sin in their root, then their conscience can function properly, just as perfectly as when God blew His own Spirit into Adam. Thus, human beings do not necessarily need a saviour and need not even be taught about salvation on the cross as such. However, Jesus is different from Adam not only in the nature of creation, but also in God's redemptive work for the whole of the human race; and most importantly of all; the purpose in terms of God's coming kingdom, and the emphasis on the humanity of Jesus. These are the main issues discussed in Chapter 6. Furthermore, Jesus as *Ruh* Allah (Spirit of

God) and *Al-Masih* (Messiah) can be wonderful bridges in sharing the Gospel with Muslims from a Qur'anic perspective, which emphasises Jesus' Divinity. If we put the idea of *al-ruh* the test as a practice and exercise, then, may be, we can see how the Holy Spirit still works and is alive in transforming Islam into God's image.

In short, traditionally *al-ruh* is mainly recognized as the angel Gabriel, other angelic beings or just a created spirit from Allah. However, throughout the research it was discovered that *al-ruh*, on the other hand, could be not merely the Spirit from God, moreover *al-ruh* can also be acknowledged and experienced as the Spirit of God Himself.

It may be time for us to pause for a moment and to ask ourselves a few questions: 'Was Muhammad's ignorance about the meaning of *al-ruh* the reason for the misunderstandings among Muslims'? 'Did Allah not reveal *al-ruh* to Muhammad, to Arabic speaking people and to Muslims worldwide in general'? It could be dangerous to confront Muslims with the next question, i.e. 'Was the idea of *al-ruh* eventually manipulated by Muhammad from Judaism through the vehicle of Christianity to establish the kingdom of Islam'?

What can be done next? My suggestion in terms of wider implications is to make use of every opportunity to discover about other people's religious experiences and to observe how the Holy Spirit works among all religions. We should continually to humble ourselves in order to accommodate others. We should also tolerate ambiguity in order to live with others. Besides this, let us prepare ourselves in every way, in words in work and in spirit in order to participate in the unpredictable and transforming work of the Holy Spirit. The twenty-first century is indeed the generation of the Holy Spirit, the life-giver, and the indwelling spirit, this *Ruh* Allah who is to come and is coming and already came and made his dwelling among us.

Appendix 4--Table 3.4 Spirit Impersonal *ruh*: as various manifestations of Allah's power, revelation or personal *ruh* (O'Shaughnessy 1953:52)

**Table IV. — SPIRIT (SENSE-GROUP D)
IN THE MOSLEM COMMENTARIES**

Personal <i>rūh</i>	Impersonal <i>rūh</i>					TABARĪ ON	ZAMAKHSHARĪ ON	RĀZĪ ON	BAIDAWĪ ON
	Reve- lation	Various manifestations of Allah's power							
{ Gabriel { The (personal) spirit attributed exclusively to Jesus		The most great name of Allah by whose men- tion the dead are enlivened	The name by which Jesus enlivened the dead	The word by which religion was revived	The word by which the soul is enlivened with eternal life	16,104			
		The spirit which was breathed into Jesus	The spirit of enlivening faith	Favor from Allah	Light from Allah	2,81			
		Proof, light, and guidance from Allah	Victory over the enemy	The Gospel	The Koran	2,254			
						58,22			
						5,109			
					16,104				
					2,81				
					2,254				
					58,22				
					5,109				
					16,104				
					2,81				
					2,254				
					58,22				
					5,109				
					16,104				
					2,81				
					2,254				
					58,22				
					5,109				

Appendix 5--Table 3.5 Jesus is a spirit from Allah (O'Shaughnessy 1953:65)

Jesus is a spirit from Allah

Table V. — SPIRIT (A DEVELOPMENT OF SENSE-GROUP B) IN THE MOSLEM COMMENTARIES	Koran 4, 169 as interpreted by		
COMMENTARIES	TABARĪ	ZAMAKH-SHARĪ	RĀZĪ BAIDĀWĪ
because he came into being by Allah's command, <i>kun</i> , he	*		
because he became into being by a special intervention of Allah, without seed or material generation		*	
because he is exceedingly pure — being generated, not by human seed, but by a breath breathed by Gabriel, at Allah's command, into Mary's garment	*		
i. e. a spirit created by Allah and sent by him to Mary; this spirit addressed Mary and entered her mouth	*		
i. e. a noble, holy, lofty spirit from Allah		*	
i. e. the cause of the life of religion in men		*	
i. e. a mercy from Allah	*		
i. e. the "word" (of Kor. 4, 169) came from Allah through Gabriel	*		

Appendix 6-- Table 4.1 Questionnaire for interviews

The Holy Spirit (*Al-ruh*) in the Qur'an

Date: ___/___/2005

Nationality: _____ Gender: M / F Age: 20/ 30/ 40/ 50/ 60/ 70
Language: English / Arabic / Others _____

1. How often do you read the Qur'an and how much do you understand it?
2. How do you describe your religion experiences as a Muslim?
3. Can you recall any Qur'anic teaching about the spirit (al-ruh) that you have ever learned from home, Madresa, Imam or any Islamic books?
4. What is your general understanding about the Spirit (al-ruh) in the Qur'an?
5. What is your understanding of *ruh* in the following verses?
 - a) In the **creation** of Adam (Sura15: 29; 38:72; 32:8/9)
 - b) breathed into Mary for the **conception** of Jesus (Sura 21:91; 66:12; 19:17)
 - c) *Ruh* is linked with **amr** four times. (Sura 17:87; 16:2; 40:15; 42: 52)
Ruhan min'amrina
 - d) **Ruh al-qudus** that **Jesus** was assisted with the Spirit (Sura 2:87; 2:253; 5:109/110)
 - e) What does it mean "a spirit from Allah" (Sura 4:169/171) and Allah strengthens his believer (Sura 58:22; 16:102/104 4:169/171)?
 - f) brings down the revelation to Muhammad (Sura 26:193) *al-Ruh al-Amin*
6. Twenty-eight prophets are named in the Qur'an, six were dignified with special titles: Jesus is the Spirit of God (Ruh Allah), what does it mean when call down blessing on the prophets "and on the Spirit of God 'Isa the faithful'"?

Twenty-eight prophets are named in the Qur'an, six were dignified with special titles: Adam the Chosen of God (*Safiy Allah*); Noah the Prophet of God (*Nabi Allah*); Abraham the friend of Allah (*Khalil Allah*); Moses the Converser with God (*Kalim Allah*); Jesus the Spirit of God (*Ruh Allah*); Muhammad the Apostle of (*Rasul Allah*). (Parrinder 1965:40)
7. "They do blaspheme who say: God is one of three in a Trinity: for there is No god except One God" (Sura 5:76) "Christ Jesus the son of Mary ..., and a Spirit proceeding from him: so believe in God and His apostles. Say no Trinity, for God is One God (Sura 4:171) why is the Qur'an speaking about *ruh* so positively and yet rejects Trinity so strongly?"

Appendix 7-- Table 4.2 Questionnaire for interviews

The Holy Spirit (*Al-ruh*) in the Qur'an

Date: ___/___/2005

Nationality: _____ Gender: M / F Age: 20/ 30/ 40/ 50/ 60/ 70

Language: English / Arabic / Others _____

1. How often do you read the Qur'an and how much do you understand it?
2. How do you describe your religion experiences as a Muslim?
3. Can you recall any Qur'anic teaching about the spirit (*al-ruh*) that you have ever learned from home, Madresa, Imam or any Islamic books? (17:85)
4. What is your general understanding about the Spirit (*al-ruh*) in the Qur'an?
5. What is your understanding of *ruh* in the following verses?
 - a) In the **creation** of Adam (Sura15: 29; 38:72; 32:8/9)
 - b) breathed into Mary for the **conception** of Jesus (Sura 21:91; 66:12)
 - c) Allah sends the angels with the "Spirit of His command" unto whom He wills to inspire and to act as warners of mankind (Sura 16:2; 40:15) *Ruhan min'amrina*.
 - d) ***Ruh al-qudus*** that **Jesus** was assisted with the Spirit
Sura 2:87
Sura 2:253
Sura 5:103
 - e) What is the meaning of: Jesus is "a spirit from Allah" (Sura 4:171) and Allah strengthens his believer with his spirit (Sura 58:22; 16:102)?
 - f) brings down the revelation to Muhammad (Sura 26:192-5; 42:52) *al-Ruh al-Amin*
6. Twenty-eight prophets are named in the Qur'an, six were dignified with special titles: Jesus is the Spirit of God (*Ruh Allah*), what does it mean when "call down blessing on the prophets "and on the Spirit of God 'Isa the faithful'"?

Twenty-eight prophets are named in the Qur'an, six were dignified with special titles: Adam the Chosen of God (*Safiy Allah*); Noah the Prophet of God (*Nabi Allah*); Abraham the friend of Allah (*Khalil Allah*); Moses the Converser with God (*Kalim Allah*); Jesus the Spirit of God (*Ruh Allah*); Muhammad the Apostle of (*Rasul Allah*). (Parrinder 1965:40)

7. "They do blaspheme who say: God is one of three in a Trinity: for there is No god except One God" (Sura 5:76) "Christ Jesus the son of Mary ..., and a Spirit proceeding from him: so believe in God and His apostles. Say no Trinity, for God is One God (Sura 4:171) why is the Qur'an speaking about *ruh* so positively and yet rejects Trinity so strongly?

Appendix 8--Table 4.3 *Al-Ruh* in the Qur'anic Usage

Information for Interview's of Muslim scholars

The Arabic word *ruh* is used about twenty times in the Qur'an, the Islamic holy book. In a Study of the meaning of the word "Spirit" as used in the Koran, Shellabear categories the koranic usage of the *ruh* chronologically in six ways (1932:355):

At **Meccan** period, *ruh* was used in liked with angels, particularly with angel Gabriel. (Sura 78:38; 97:4; 70:4)

Later, was used in the **creation** of Adam, (Sura15: 29; 38:72; 32:8/9), as well as breathed into Mary for the **conception** of Jesus (Sura 21:91; 66:12; 19:17).

Near the event of **Hijrah**, *ruh* is linked with **amr** four times. (Sura 17:87; 16:2; 40:15; 42: 52)

At **Medina** period, it was used three times as **Spirit** (*ruh al-qudus*) that **Jesus** was assisted with the Spirit (Sura 2:81/87; 2:253/254; 5:109)

and Jesus was a **spirit from Allah** (Sura 4:169) and **believers** had been assisted with a spirit from Allah. (Sura 16:104, 58:22).

Muhammad: brings down the revelation to Muhammad (Sura 26:193) Mohammad was noticed the connection between the **Spirit and Messiah** (Sura 3:45) Mylrea's (1910) references and the chronologically order

Meaning of the Spirit	Suras referred to (Rodwell's order)
Angels (especially Gabriel)	97:4; 78:38; 70:4; 26:193; 16:104
Creation (especially man)	15:29; 32:8; 38:72
Inspiration	16:2; 17:87; 40:15; 42:52; 58:22
Jesus	2:81,254; 4:168; 5:109; 19:18; 21:91; 66:12

O'Shaughnessy's' (1953) revised references and the chronological order

	Meaning of the Spirit	Sura referred (Noldeke and Blachere)
First Meccan	The Angels and Spirit	78:38; 97:4; 70:4
Second Meccan	A share of Allah's Spirit	15:29; 38:72; 21:91; 32:8; 66:12 (19:17; 4:169)
Third Meccan	Spirit from the <i>arm</i>	17:87;16:2;40:15; 42:52
Medina Period	The Spirit of Holiness	16:104;26:193;2:81;2:254;58:22;5:109

Appendix 9-- Table 5.1 -- Figure 1: *Tanzih*, Figure 2: *Tashbih* and Figure 3: *Tawhid*
(Adopt from “The Vision of Islam” by Chittick & Monata 200:72, 73)

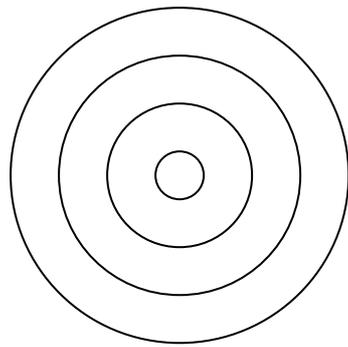


Figure 1: *Tanzih*

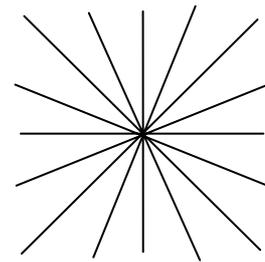
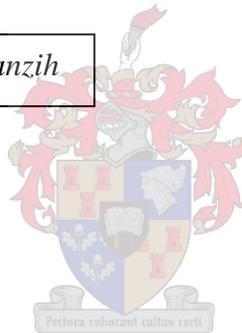


Figure 2: *Tashbih*

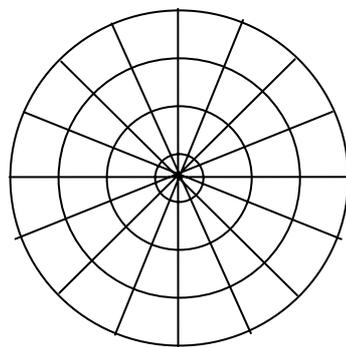
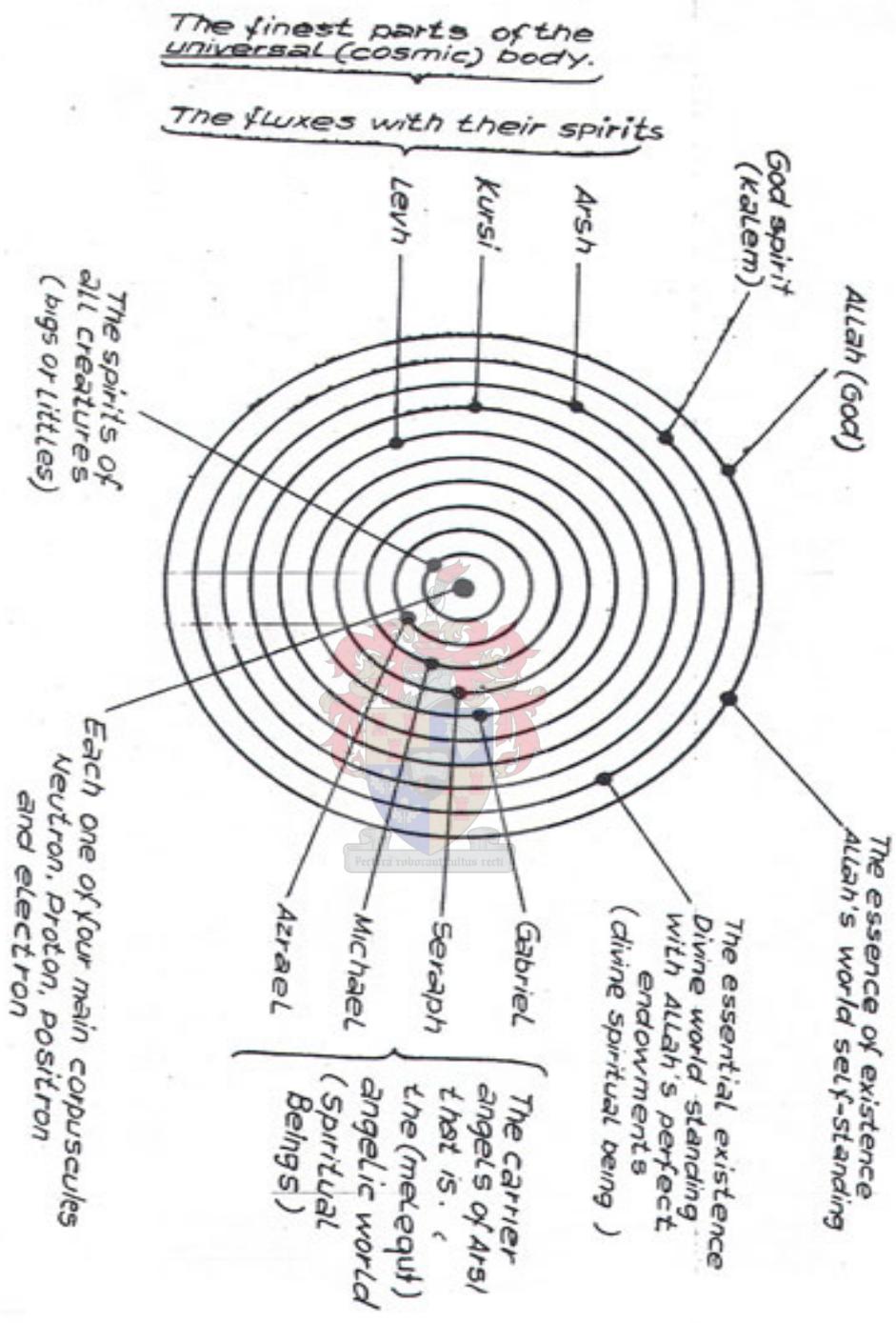


Figure 3: *Tawhid*

Appendix 10-- Table 5.2 God's spirit (*kalem*), the spirits of all creatures and Gabriel

(Adopt from Ozkardes, Mehmet Ali 1967:107-111)



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