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Faculty of Islamic Studies (Usūluddīn)  
Department of Comparative Religion

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Miracles of Jesus in the Holy Qur'ān and the  
Non-Canonical Gospels: A Comparative Study

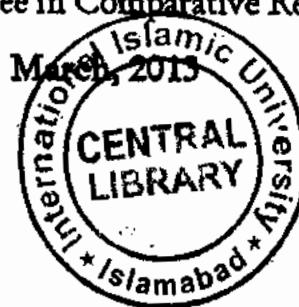
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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

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## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my beloved parents who always remained my constant source of inspiration and encouragement. Whenever I was in need of an energetic boost they always responded in positive.

وَقَالَ رَبُّ الْجَمِيعِ  
كَمَا ذَبَّبَنِي صَفِيرًا

مُوَرَّةُ الدُّرُّ

## Acknowledgements

All praise is for the lord of the entire world, the most Beneficent and most Merciful. I admit His uncountable favors on me. I am ever thankful to Him for His blessings and the successes that He granted to me in whole of my life.

There are indeed many people who helped me to make this work a success. To all of them I express my thanks. First of all I wish to express my sincere thanks and profound gratitude to my supervisor, Ms. Drakshan Azam for her tireless advices valuable guidance, assistance and encouragement throughout the writing of this research paper.

I also want to say thanks to my parents for standing by me and offering me continuous unconditional support during my whole life especially during this thesis. I do not find suitable words to express my deepest gratitude for them. I have no hesitation in saying that without cooperation of my parents it was even useless to think about completing this work.

I am also thankful to my uncle Mr. Basir Ahmed Abbasi for providing me resources which made this research possible. May Allah Almighty always bless him and give him reward for this special help. I also owe words of thanks to my family members for their help in different regards.

There are indeed many of my friends who helped me in one way or the other to make this work a success. To all of them I express thanks.

I am particularly obliged to the administration of Christian Study Center Rawalpindi and the library staff of Islamic Research Institute Islamabad for the kind service they have done for me.

## Abbreviations

Following Abbreviations are used in study.

- AraIn Arabic Infancy gospel
- BirMary Gospel of birth of Mary
- BCE Before Common Era
- CE Common Era
- InThom Infancy gospel of Thomas
- InJam Infancy gospel of James
- Matt Gospel of Mathew
- NT New Testament
- PsMatt Gospel of pseudo Mathew

## \* TRANSLITERATION TABLE

ا	a	ڏ	d	ڻ	Gh	ڳ	Bh	ڳ	Long Vowels
ٻ	b	ڏ	dh	ڻ	F	ڳ	Ph	ڳ	ا
ٻ	p	ڏ	R	ڻ	Q	ڳ	Th	ڳ	ا
ٻ	t	ڏ	r	ڻ	K	ڳ	Th	ڳ	ا
ٻ	t	ڏ	z	ڻ	G	ڳ	Jh	ڳ	ا
ٻ	th	ڏ	ڙ	ڻ	L	ڳ	Ch	ڳ	(Urdu) ٻ
ڙ	J	ڙ	s	ڙ	M	ڳ	Dh	ڳ	(Urdu) ٻ
ڙ	ch	ڙ	ش	ڙ	N	ڳ	Dh	ڳ	ٻ
ڙ	h	ڙ	ڙ	ڙ	n	ڳ	Rh	ڳ	A
ڙ	kh	ڙ	ڙ	ڙ	H	ڳ	Kh	ڳ	ا
ڙ	d	ڙ	ڙ	ڙ	Y	ڳ	Gh	ڳ	U

ا (ء), when it appears at the middle or end of a word, is transliterated as elevated comma (‘) followed by the letter representing the vowel it carries. However, when ا appears at the beginning of a word it will be represented only by the letter representing the vowel it carries.

ڻ is transliterated as elevated inverted comma (‘).

ڙ as an Arabic letter is transliterated as (d), and as a Persian/Turkish/Urdu letter as (ڏ).

ڙ as an Arabic letter is transliterated as (w), and as a Persian/Turkish/Urdu letter is transliterated as (v).

ڙ is transliterated as (ah) in pause form and as (at) in construct form.

Article ڦ is transliterated as (al-) whether followed by a moon or a sun letter, however, in construct form it will be transliterated as ('l).

### Diphthongs

(Arabic)	aw
(Persian/Urdu) au	
(Turkish)	eu
(Arabic)	ay
(Persian/Urdu) ai	
(Turkish)	ey

### Doubled

(Arabic)	uww
(Persian)	uvv
(Urdu)	uvv

و as a Persian/Urdu conjunction is transliterated as (-o) whereas as an Arabic conjunction و is transliterated as (wa).

Short vowel ( / ) in Persian/Urdu possessive or adjectival form is transliterated as (-i).

\* Above Transliteration table is taken from the scholarly journal of *Islamic Studies* which is published by Islamic Research Institute, International Islamic University Islamabad.

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### نبذة مختصرة عن الموضوع

فإن يسوع هو عنصر مشترك بين المسلمين والمسيحيين، والرؤى الإسلامية ليسوع تقع بين الطرفين: مفترط وبين مفترط. أعني بالأول اليهود الذين يرفضون يسوع بوصفه رسولاً لله و زعموا أنه ابن زنا . و بالتالي النصارى الزاعمين أنه إله فالإسلام وسط بين الطرفين و هدايه بين المسلمين.

القرآن ينسب كثير من المعجزات إلى عيسى عليه السلام إذ معجزات المسيح في القرآن كما هي:

الكلام في المهد (19:29)

خلق الطير من الطين (3:40)

احياء الموتى (3:49)

شفاء الامم والأبرص (آل عمران 3:49)

التبورء بما يأكله الناس (3:49)

الماندة النازلة من السماء (5:112)

إذا إنطلق نفع الموضوع إلى العهد الجديد نجد أن سيرة المسيح في الانجليل المقدمة تتمييز بقصص المعجزات التي فعلها في سبيل هداية الناس و يمكن لذا نقسم معجزات المسيح الواردة في الانجليل الأربعة إلى قسمين رئيسيين معجزات الشفاء والمعجزات الطبيعية أقسام معجزات الشفاء هي شفاء الأمراض ، إحياء الموتى و طرد الأرواح الشريرة. فمن العجيب أن بعض المعجزات المذكورة في القرآن الكريم لم تكن مذكورة في الانجليل المقدمة و لكنها موجودة في الانجليل المنحولة.

معجزة الكلام في المهد و خلق الطير من الطين لم يرد في الانجليل المقدمة بل ورد في الانجليل المنحولة ولهذا السبب بعض المستشرقين يقولون أن القرآن يقتبس ذكر هذه المعجزات من الانجليل المنحولة واستقى منها أفكاره . في هذه الرسالة قد اختارت هاتين المعجزتين مشتركة بين القرآن الكريم و الانجليل المنحولة أو غير المقدمة و هما كلام في المهد و خلق الطير من الطين .

ربما هذا اختيار يبدو غريباً لكن في الأصل هاتين المعجزتين تطرح أسئلة كثيرة بهذه الأسئلة هدفي و غلبي لكتابية الرسالة.

أريдан أبحث رأي العلماء الكلاسيكيين في الإسلام والمسيحية عن هاتين المعجزتين و هل القرآن يأخذ أي شيء من الانجليل المنحولة كما النصارى يظنون؟ هل معجزات المسيح تدل بها على الوهية كما زعم المسيحيون. الجزء الأكبر من بحثي يقوم على اسلوب البحوث المكتبة و سوف يستخدم المنهج التحليلي و المقارن أيضاً. وإنى بهذه العمل أرجو أن لن يفيدني هذا البحث.

## PREFACE

Jesus is common link between Islām and Christianity. Islāmic view of Jesus lies between two extremes. The Jews, who reject Jesus as a Prophet of God and called him an imposter, and the Christians on the other hand considered him to be the son of God and worship him as such. Islām considers Jesus to be one of the great prophets of God and respects him as much as Ibrāhim, Moses and Muhammad (p.b.u.h).

Jesus in the Qur'ān holds one of the highest status among the prophets. Unlike other prophets who performed miracles, Jesus himself was miracle as his birth was not natural. Jesus is described in the Qur'ān as having many miracles not given to any other prophet.

God Says:

"And we gave unto Jesus, son of Mary clear miracles". (al-Qur'ān 2:87)

Here are names of miracles mentioned in the Qur'ān

- Healing the blind & the leper. (Qur'ān 3:49)
- Resurrection of the dead. (Qur'ān 3:49)
- The table laden with food. (Qur'ān 5:112-114).
- The Provisions of Today and Tomorrow. (Qur'ān 3:49).
- Spoke while he was only a baby (Qur'ān 19:29-30)
- Creating the birds from clay. (Qur'ān 3:49) and(5:110)

If we look same topic in canonical Gospels of the Bible, we will find that Jesus Christ worked many miracles. These can be divided into two main categories: healing and Control over nature.

If we compare miracle of Jesus in Qur'ān with gospels, we will know that there are some links with the canonical gospels, though perhaps more with the non-canonical ones. The fact that Jesus spoke out to protect his mother Mary from any accusations (Qur'ān 19:29-30) people may have placed on her due to having a child without a father, is not attested by the canonical Christian Bible. There is a non-canonical gospel called Arabic Gospel of Infancy

(AraIn.1:2-3) which mentions the same event. Another miracle of Jesus mentioned by Qur'ān is creating bird from clay (3:49). The closest pre-Islāmic parallel to this is found in another non-canonical writings known as the infancy gospel of Thomas (InThom.III), the gospel of pseudo Mathew (PsMatt.27) and Arabic gospel of Infancy (AraIn.36, 46).

The present study is based upon two common miracles between Qur'ān and non-canonical gospels and these are 'speaking in the cradle' and 'creating the bird from clay'.

### **Statement of problem**

The reason behind the selection of this topic is that one senior student from IJU has written thesis named:

معجزات المسبح في القرآن و الأنجيل الاربعة

This thesis has covered this topic generally. When I read it, some questions arose in my mind. That thesis did not answer those questions. I want to cover those areas which have not been done previously. I selected two miracles; these are creation of bird from clay and other is speaking of Jesus when he was still a baby.

This might seem an odd choice because, unlike other miracles, these two are not mentioned in the canonical gospels. The choice can be justified however, on the ground that these two Qur'ānic miracles raise important theological & Christological issues, which will be discussed in this thesis.

### **Review of literature**

According to my limited study so far, no writing is available on this topic. There are at least dozens of books by Christian Scholars that are entirely dedicated to miracles of Jesus in New Testament as NT is full of miracle accounts. But I did not find any writing explaining miracles of Jesus in non-canonical gospels. On Muslim side, miracles of Jesus in Qur'ān are discussed usually as a part of broader study of Jesus in Islām. These Muslim scholars, while discussing miracles of Jesus in Qur'ān, mostly describe verses related to miracles of Jesus.

These works hardly present complete pictures of this topic. However I want to draw the attention toward some contemporary scholars who have written something about this topic. Neal Robinson has written a book "*Christ in Islām and Christianity*". This book was first published in 1991. Neal Robinson in this book comprehensively discussed the whole concept of Jesus in Islām and Christianity. He did not deal separately with the topic of the miracles of Jesus. What he did is that he took just one miracle 'creating the bird from clay' and discussed it in classical Muslim commentaries. Another important thing about this book is that Neal Robinson connects miracles of Jesus in the Qur'ān (speaking in cradle and creating the bird from clay) to ancient Christian writings without giving any solid proof.

Another contemporary book is "*Jesus in the Qur'ān*" by Geoffery Parrinder first published in 1977. In his book, he gives a title named 'works of Jesus'. After mentioning the *āya* numbers where miracles of Jesus have been mentioned, he takes a position similar to that of Neal Robinson and connects both miracles to non-canonical writings.

One contemporary Muslim scholar Muhammad 'Ata ur-Rahmān has written a book named "*Jesus a prophet of Islām*". In this book he gives just *āya* numbers where Jesus's miracles are mentioned without having even a short discussion.

Now it is clear that what we find regarding this subject is usually part of a broader study. Hence, I think my study of common miracles between the Qur'ān and non-canonical gospels is justified.

### Methodology

In this thesis comparative, analytical and critical methods of research have primarily been employed. I have done my best to study, understand and objectively present the major aspects of the Christian and Muslim understanding of this issue.

I have divided this thesis into two chapters. As I am focusing on two common miracles between Qur'ān and non-canonical gospels so, my first chapter is 'speaking in the cradle'. In this chapter I have endeavored to study the non-canonical account of this miracle along with Christian response to Jesus's speaking in the cradle. Here I quote the Christian sources

extensively to present the Christian viewpoint objectively. To know the Muslim perspective, I have chiefly relied on the classical commentators of the Qur'ān. By analyzing their views I have attempted to come up with the clear understanding of the Jesus's speaking in the cradle. After this, there is a comparison between the Qur'ānic and non-canonical accounts.

In the second chapter, also my method is similar to the method used in the previous one. This chapter is related to 'Jesus's creating the bird from clay'. Here also first I have seen how non-canonical gospels mention this miracle. I trace down Christian responses to this miracle in the Qur'ān and for explanation of Qur'ānic account I go to classical commentators. At the end, there is a comparison between both accounts. Some minor issues related to these miracles are also mentioned inside these chapters. For translation of Qur'ānic verses I have selected Abdullah Yusuf Ali's *Commentary on the Qur'ān*, published from Lebanon in 1969. As far as selection of versions of Bible is concerned I have chosen "New International Version of Holy Bible".

In conclusion, important findings of the thesis have been stated.

Main problem that I faced while writing this thesis was that absence of references on non-canonical gospels. As mentioned earlier, Christians have written many books on miracles of Jesus in canonical gospels but I did not find any book regarding miracles of Jesus in non-canonical gospels. All books regarding non-canonical gospels are just giving us texts of these early Christianity without discussing any issue related to our present topic.

## INTRODUCTION

One word that often creeps into the active vocabulary of religions is "miracle." A famous writer Goethe Faust also says "the dearest child of faith is miracle."<sup>1</sup> Despite this fact that belief in miracle is universal, we find part of controversy is going on about what miracle actually is? This controversy is not only between religions but, even within one religion there is often more than one usages of this term. Before studying anyone's point of view on miracle, it is necessary for us to see how that person defines miracle.

As a rough beginning, we may observe that the term miracle is derived from Latin *miraculum* which literally means "a thing to be wondered at,"<sup>2</sup> "something wonderful"<sup>3</sup> "a departure from the usual course of nature."<sup>4</sup> Thus, the most general characterization of miracle is an event that provokes wonder and it is deviating from the common behavior of nature. Here one clarification should be kept in mind that everything that arouses wonder is not a miracle. Miracles are concerned with an event that is supernatural and transcend. Following is a brief description of how people have given substantially different definitions of the word "miracle."

---

<sup>1</sup> Hans Kung, *My Struggle for Freedom*, (London: MPG books Ltd, 2003), p. 156.

<sup>2</sup> See R.J.Z.W, 'Miracle' (art) *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, (London: Helen Hemingway Benton, 1973-1914), Vol.12, p.269 and singer, Isidoreced, 'miracle' (art) *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, (USA: KTAV publishing house, 1920), Vol.VIII, p.606.

<sup>3</sup> Morton Smith, 'miracle' (art) *The Encyclopedia Americana*, (Danbury: Grolier Incorporated, 1829), Vol. 19, p. 217

<sup>4</sup> James Hastings (ed), *Dictionary of the Bible*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900), Vol. 3, p. 280 see also : <http://www.dictionary.reference.com>, (last accessed 6.03.2011).

## Aspects of the struggle to define and explain miracle

As we have mentioned above, definition of miracle is different from one religion to another. Here we will briefly discuss how miracle is defined in Islām and Christianity.

### a. Definition of miracles by Muslims

The original word in Islāmic literature translated as miracle is *mu'jiza*. It is derived from 'ajz which literally means, according to Rāghib Isfhāni (d.1108/1109) "To retain a thing or to receive a thing at a time when its proper time has passed away but generally the word is considered to mean to be unable."<sup>1</sup> So the primary significance of 'ajz is being behindhand with respect to a thing or its happening at the end of an affair.

Muslim Theologians define *mu'jiza* in detail. According to them the term *mu'jiza* is specific for prophets only. It is distinguished from *karāma* which signifies one performed by a saint or righteous man, not claiming to be a prophet. Only prophets can perform them by Allah's permission. The Qur'ān has not used the word *mu'jiza* for the miracles with which Allah equipped His messengers. The Qur'ān has used the term *āyat* (signs, portents) for miracles. The word *āyat* has a wider sense than of *mu'jiza*. It has been used in the Holy Qur'ān in four different meanings.<sup>2</sup> It means verse or piece of Holy Qur'ān(al-Qur'ān 2:41,5:54, 3:163), injunction or order (al-Qur'ān 6:131), a sign or natural phenomenon(al-Qur'ān,21:32) and a miracle. (al-Qur'ān 7:106-107, 2:145, 2:118)

So due to wider sense of the word *āyat*, it is frequently used to denote miracle.

There are other words 'surqān' (al-Qur'ān 2:53) (distinction between good and evil) 'burbān' (al-Qur'ān 28:32) (proof), 'bayyināt' (al-Qur'ān 5:110) (clear evidences) used in the Holy Qur'ān to indicate miracles.

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<sup>1</sup> Rāghib Isfhāni, *Mufridāt fi gharib-ul- Qur'ān*, (Egypt: Dār al-sālam,1961), p. 325. For detail see: Abdur Rahmān bin Ahmad Iji, *Kitāb al-Mawāqif*, (Beirut: al-Maktab al Islāmi, 1907), Vol. VIII, p. 222

<sup>2</sup>Dr Bashir Ahmed Siddiqi, "The Qur'ānic Concept of Miracle", *Al-Adwa*, Vol.3(1999), p.4

*Mu'jiza* poses a challenge to everyone and proves truthfulness of prophets. Its purpose is to warn the rejecters.<sup>1</sup> The holy Qur'ān itself illuminates this motive:

"And we do not send sings but to make men fear." (al-Qur'ān 17: 59)

Another purpose of *mu'jiza* is to strengthen the belief of the believers. The Holy Qur'ān says also:

"Allah did not make it but as good news for you, and that your hearts might be at ease thereby." (al-Qur'ān 8: 10)

A Famous Muslim writer Taftāzāni (1322-1390) defines *mu'jiza* as "a thing deviating from the usual course of thing, appearing at the hand of him who claims to be a prophet, as a challenge to those who deny this, of such a nature that it makes it impossible for them to produce the like of it."<sup>2</sup> The essence of Taftāzāni's views may thus be summarized as follows:

- (a) *Mu'jiza* is an extraordinary event which cannot be comprehended by reason.
- (b) It is an event done by prophets and purpose of it is to challenge the one who denies it.

Abul Barkat al-Nasafi (d.710) defines *mu'jiza* in a more comprehensive and technical manner. According to him *mu'jiza* is a manifestation of God's power at the hands of prophets for evidence of truthfulness of his claim. His words are as under:

"*Mu'jiza* is manifestation of the order of God surpassing the order of nature in this world, to prove the truthfulness of the claim of prophet hood."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Abdur Rahmān bin Ahmad Iji, *Kitāb al-Mawāqif*, op.cit. p. 222

<sup>2</sup> Earl Edgar Elder, (Tr.) *A Commentary on the Creed of Islām*, [Taftāzāni], (New York: Benzinger Bross, 1950), p. 129

<sup>3</sup> Abul Barkat al-Nasafi, *A 'mda a'qeda abal sunnah wal Jama'ah*, (Egypt: Dār al-sālam, 1920), p. 16.

A very complete and systematic description of miracles occurs in al-Idji's (756/1355) "Mawāqif". He gives the following definition of *mu'jiza*: it is meant to approve the sincerity of him who pretends to be an apostle of God.<sup>1</sup> Further, he enumerates the following conditions.

1. It must be an act of God
2. It must be contrary to the usual course of things
3. Confronting to it must be impossible.
4. It must happen by man who claims to be an apostle so that it appears as a confirmation of his truthfulness.
5. It must confirm his announcement, and the miracle itself must not be a disavowal of his claim (*da'wā*).
6. It must follow on his *da'wā*.

From all above mentioned definitions, al-Idji's definition of *mu'jiza* is more systematic and comprehensive. He gives us guiding principles in defining concept of "*mu'jiza*" in Islām.<sup>2</sup>

### b. Definition of miracle by Christians

To know how Christians define "miracle" we better consult Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), who in his "Summa Totius Theologiae" subjected miracle to a comprehensive and systematic study. A number of conclusions can be drawn from his work. The first conclusion relates to the distinction which he made between *miraculum* (miracle) and *mirabile* (wonderful). He says that something may be wonderful to one person and not wonderful to others (An eclipse of the sun for example is not miraculous because although most men are ignorant of its cause, an astronomer is not). A miracle that is wonderful to all and it also has a hidden cause for all.<sup>3</sup> In

<sup>1</sup> Abdur Rahmān bin Ahmad al-Idji, *Kitāb al-Mawāqif*, op.cit. p. 222

<sup>2</sup> For more detailed meaning of *mu'jiza* see Dr Bashir Ahmad Siddiq, "The Qur'ānic Concept of Miracle", op.cit. p.23

<sup>3</sup> Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, (London: Hayes Barton, 1925), p. 953.

another passage Aquinas clearly says what he understands by miracle "I answer that something is called a miracle in a true sense when it happens outside the order of nature..... but only God can do this."<sup>1</sup> He argues that we cannot compare between miracles on the basis of divine power because divine power is infinite but we can compare them on basis of power of nature.<sup>2</sup>

The main idea of Aquinas can be summarized as follows. (a) Only God can work miracles. (b) The point of comparison for miracles is not divine power but the power of nature. (c) There is a difference between *miraculum* and *mirabile*. (d) Miracles are works that happen outside the known laws of created nature. (e) God cooperates as a highest cause in the mediate cause of normal natural events. If God intervenes directly we have absolute miracles.

David Smith Cairns (1862-1946) makes a striking remark about miracles as salvation of God, as an expression of His power and love. "The malady of our time lies in it's contracted of thoughts of God. We think too narrowly and meanly of His power, His love and His freedom to help man. That is what "miracles" of Jesus and his teaching about faith mean. The God is more near, more real and mighty, full of love, and more ready to help every one of us than any one of us realizes, that is there undying message."<sup>3</sup>

K. Barth (1886-1968) has said noteworthy things about miracles as revelation. In argument with the Schoolmen about the omnipotence of God, he rejects the distinction between the ordinary power and the extraordinary power of God. "A miracle is not the proof of special, but merely the special proof of one divine omnipotence"<sup>4</sup> He says also: "A miracle is an event

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> David Smith Cairns, *The Faith that Rebels*, (New York: Student Christian Movement, 1928), p.246.

<sup>4</sup> Loos Der Van H, *The Miracle of Jesus*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968), p. 42.

comprehensible only as an exponent of the special new direct act of God in time and history.”<sup>1</sup>

It is clear from the above discussion that both Christians and Muslims agree that miracles are form of divine revelation. We can only speak of miracle when an event occurs outside and against the known order of nature and cannot be explained in natural way. Every miracle that happens has a meaning of freedom, power and love not for the person concerned but also for the whole mankind.

Beside all above similarities there are some points where Christian and Muslim theologians differ. In Christian theology there is no distinction between a miracle of prophet and that of saint, the term miracle is applied generally. But in Islāmic theology there are separate words to denote and differentiate the wonderful events. The technical term to signify the miracles of prophets is “*mu’jiza*” and that of saint is “*karāmat*,” while gradual spiritual achievement for a non-Muslim is “*istidrāj*”. Miracle is not the part of prophethood in Islām as is considered in Christianity.

The Holy Qur’ān says:

“Nor was it possible for a messenger to bring a sign except with Allah’s permission.”<sup>2</sup>

(al- Qur’ān 40: 78)

Āya shows that the prophet, by performing miracles does not become divine as believed in Christianity naming Jesus “God the son.” But he remains a man of esteemed character and servant of God. Without God’s permission, he cannot perform miracle.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

## **Miracles of Jesus in Christianity**

In Christianity miracles plays a fundamental role. According to the gospels, Jesus attracted attention mainly by miracles of curing or healing sick people who were thought to be possessed by demons. The exact number of miracles worked by Christ is unknown.<sup>1</sup> The Evangelists make it clear that he performed many miracles that are not mentioned individually in the four canonical Gospels (MK 6:56, LK 4: 40, MT 4: 23, 9: 23, Jn 20: 30). There are great numbers of miracles which are mentioned in the non-canonical gospels but not in the four canonical gospels.

So to know the miracles of Jesus in Christianity, we have to see both type of their literatures, one is called canonical which we find in NT and the other non-canonical gospel which is not considered as canonical.

Here we will first see that how many miracles are attributed to Jesus in the four canonical gospels; then we will move to the non-canonical gospels.

### **Miracles of Jesus in canonical gospels**

By canonical gospels we mean four gospels of Mark, Mathew, Luke and John. Outside these Gospels, there are no reports in the New Testament of specific miracles that Jesus performed during his life, although there are general references to his miracles. (Acts 2:22)

The numbers of physical miracles that are related individually in the canonical gospel are about 35.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See T.G. Pate (art) "Miracles of Christ" *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, (Washington Dc: The Catholic University of America, 1967), Vol. IX, p. 889.

<sup>2</sup> See T.G. Pate (art) "Miracles of Christ" *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, op. cit., p. 889.

## Types of miracles in the canonical gospels

In *The Miracles of Jesus*, H. Van der Loos divide miracles by Jesus in two main categories, the healing miracles and natural miracles.<sup>1</sup>

### 1. The Healing miracles:

These miracles mean those which affected people, e.g., the blind Man of Bethsaida. The three types of healings are:

- Healing the diseases.
- Exorcisms where demons are cast away.
- Resurrection of the dead.

Following are detailed number of healing miracles in NT (canonical gospels), along with their references.<sup>2</sup>

#### (a) Healing of diseases

Table 1.1: Jesus's miracles of healing diseases in the Gospels

NO	Type of Healing	MARK	MATHEW	LUKE	JOHN
1.	Blind man at Capernaum		9:27-31		
2.	Blind man of Bethsaida	8:22-26			
3.	Blind man or men at Jericho	10:46-	20:29-34	18:35-	

<sup>1</sup> The structure and separation of miracles in this section mostly follows Robert Maguire's *The Miracles of Christ*, (London: Paternoster, 1863), John Claws, *The Miracles of Jesus Christ*, (London: J. Gleave Publishers, 1817) and H. Van der Loos' *The Miracles of Jesus*, (London: E.J. Publishers, 1965)

<sup>2</sup> For more detail of these miracles see: see Kidder D.P, *The Miracles of Jesus with Explanatory Observation and Illustration*, ( New York: G.Lane and B Tippet, 1847), p.81 And Howick, Keith's, *The Miracles of Jesus the Messiah*, (United State; Wind River, 2003), p.94 . John claws, *The Miracles of Jesus Christ*, (London : J.Gleave, 1817) , p.22

Maguire Robert, *Miracles of Christ Exposition, Critical, Doctrinal, Experimental*, (London: weeks and co., 1863), p. 205

		52		43	
4.	Man born blind				9:1-12
5.	Paralytic at Capernaum	2:1-12	9:1-8	5:17-26	
6.	Paralytic at Bethesda				5:1-18
7.	Man with withered hand	3:1-6	12:10-14	6:6-11	
8.	A leper	1:40-45	8:1-4	5:12-16	
9.	Ten leper			17:11-19	
10.	Man with dropsy			14:1-6	
11	Woman with issue of blood	5:21-43	9:18-26	8:40-56	
12	Woman bowed together			13:10-17	
13	Deafman with speech defect.	7:31-37		7:1-10	
14	Centurion servant at Capernaum	8:13-15		7:1-10	
15	Peter mother in law	1:38-39	8:14-15	4:38-39	
16	Malchus ear	14:47	26:51-52		
17	Nobel man's son				4:46-54

### (b). Exorcisms

Table 1.2. Jesus's miracles of exorcism in the gospels.

NO	MIRACLE NAME	MARK	MATHEW	LUKE	JOHN
1	In synagogue at Capernaum	1:21-28		4:31-37	
2	Daughter of woman at Canana	7:24-30	15:21-28		
3	Blind and dumb demoniac	3:20-30	12:22-32	11:14-23	
4	Lunatics boy	9:14-29	17:14-21	9:37:49	
5	Mary Magdalene	16:6		8:2	
6	Gadarene demoniac	5:1-20	8:28-34	8:26-39	
7	Dumb demoniac		9:32-34		

### (c). The Resurrection of the dead

Table 1.3: Jesus' raising of dead person in the Gospels.

NO	MIRACLE NAME	MARK	MATHEW	LUKE	JOHN
1	Resurrection of Jairus	5:21-43			
2	Resurrection of young man at Nian			7:11-17	
3	Resurrection of Lazarus				11:1-44

### 2. The natural miracle:

This is the second type of miracles mentioned in the canonical gospels. The Natural Miracles mean miracles related to "controlled nature," e.g., Walking on Water

In the following section, we will mention just names of Jesus's natural miracles in NT or canonical gospels along with their references.

Table 2: Jesus' nature miracles in the Gospels

NO	MIRACLE NAME	MARK	MATHEW	LUKE	JOHN
1	Wedding at Canaan				2:1-11
2	Miraculous Feeding	6:31-44	14:13-21	9:10-7	6:1-13
3	Stilling the storm	4:35-41	8:23-27	8:22-25	
4	Walk in the water	6:48-51	14:25		
5	Catch a fish			5:1-11	
6	Stater		17:24-27		
7	Fig Tree	11:12-14	17:24-27		
8	Transfiguration	9:2-9	17:1-3	9:28-36	

### Miracles of Jesus in non-canonical gospels:

As we have mentioned earlier, canonical gospels are not the only reference of Jesus's miracles in Christianity. We find many miracles of Jesus in 'non-canonical gospels' which are not included in NT or in 'canonical gospels'.

## What are non-canonical gospels?

Before going into details of miracles of Jesus in non-canonical gospels, it is important to know how non-canonical gospel did come into being? What circumstances led to the fixing of the list of canonical and non-canonical books?

After the crucifixion of Jesus there was demand for reading about Jesus's infancy, childhood, and early manhood. Thus several "gospels" or good news were produced to satisfy the pious curiosity of Christians regarding Jesus's early life.<sup>1</sup> Since there were many books, a decision had to be made as to which were actually divinely inspired and therefore qualified to be set up as the rule or standard for the faith and life of believers. In the fourth century, however, NT canon finds full and final declaration as twenty seven books were chosen as the New Testament canon. Among these 27 books, there were four gospels Mark, Mathew, Luke and John which are called canonical gospels and all other gospels those are not included in The New testament are called non-canonical gospels.<sup>2</sup>

At the close of fourth century, the council of Carthage (A.D. 397) declared that "aside from the canonical scriptures nothing is to be read in church under the Name of Divine Scriptures". Some other attempts were also made to eliminate these non-canonical gospels even demanding that they should be burned for example, at the Nicene Council of 787.<sup>3</sup>

Nobody knows the actual number of non-canonical gospels but here are names of some important non-canonical gospels<sup>4</sup>:

Arabic gospel of Infancy, James, Protevangelium of Thomas, Gospel of Pseudo Matthew, Gospel of Birth of Mary, Gospel of Armenian, Gospel of the Infancy, Bartholomew's Book of Resurrection of Christ, Bartholomew's Gospel of Ebionites, Gospel of the Hebrews,

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce, M. Metzger, *An Introduction to the Apocrypha*, ( New York: Oxford University Press,1963), p 250

<sup>2</sup> Joyce L. Vedral, *A literary Survey of the Bible*, ( USA: Logos International, 1973), p.15

<sup>3</sup> Philip Wesley Comfort, *The Origin of the Bible*, (USA: Tyndala Publishers, 1971), p91

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

Gospel according to the Joseph the carpenter, History of Marcion, Gospel of Matthias, Gospel of Nazarenes, Gospel of the Peter, Gospel of the Philip.<sup>1</sup>

### Types of miracles in Non-canonical gospels

The non-canonical gospels attribute a large number of miracles to Jesus which are not mentioned in canonical gospels. Most of these miracles are related to Jesus's childhood, a period completely ignored by canonical gospels. There is a long list of these miracles but here we will focus our attention on three non-canonical gospels which are related to our topic. These are The Arabic Gospel of Infancy (AraIn), Gospel of pseudo Matthew (PsMatt) and third source known as the Infancy gospel of Thomas (InThom).<sup>2</sup> These books give considerable details about Jesus' miracles along with two miracles similar to Qur'ān's attribution to Jesus.

We classified Jesus's miracles in the canonical gospels into two major categories healing and nature miracles, and subdivided the healing miracles into healing of diseases, exorcism and resurrection of dead people.<sup>3</sup> The non-canonical gospels contain some miracles that do not fit in any of these groups. One major difference between miracles in the canonical gospels and those of non-canonical writings is that the later include paranormal incidents in which Jesus causes harm to people and even kills them. In many times Jesus reacts extremely violently to children who annoy him. Fatoohi Louay named these miracles in his book as "harm miracles."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The standard edition for all these gospels is that of E. Henneck, *New Testament Apocrypha*, (Britain: The Westminster press Philadelphia, 1963)

<sup>2</sup> Text of these three Apocryphas can be found in E.Henneck, *New Testament Apocrypha* (Britain: The Westminster press Philadelphia, 1963), Vol. 1 also in <http://www.early Christian writings.com.pk.> (last accessed 12.6.2011).

<sup>3</sup> Same classification can be found in Fatoohi, Louay, *The Mystery of the Historical Jesus*, (Malaysia: Luna Plena Publishing, 2009)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 481.

Here is brief description of miracles in these non-canonical gospels (only three).

### **1. Healing Miracles**

Similar to miracles of Jesus in New Testament, we have divided healing miracles into three sub groups.

- a. Healing of diseases.
- b. Exorcism of demons.
- c. Resurrection of dead.

#### **(a) The Healing of diseases:**

Jesus is reported to have performed a number of healing miracles. He healed dumbness (AraIn.6:57), leprosy (AraIn6:16-17, 6:25-34, 12:5-6, 12:9-20) weakness (AraIn. 7; 2-3) poisonous snakes bites (AraIn.18; 14-17, 19; 2-3, InThom 16: Ps Matt. 41), badly injured foot (InThom. 10), loss of consciousness (InThom. 15) and other unspecified diseases (AraIn. 9: 2-5, 9: 8-10, 10: 3). In one occasion Jesus return a man who had been bewitched into a mule to his human shape (AraIn. 7: 13-26).

Objects that had touched Jesus body acquired healing powers. Two boys with diseases were healed when they were sprinkled upon with the water with which the infant Jesus was washed (AraIn.9; 2-5, 9:8-10).Another boy was cured after wearing a cot made of Jesus's swaddling clothes (AraIn.10; 3).some other healing is mention in AraIn.19:6-7, 10:9-10.

#### **(b) Exorcism**

In these non-canonical gospels there are some incidents of exorcism, where Jesus drives out demons from possessed people (AraIn.4:15-16, 6:11-14, 13:17-19). In two events the demons were expelled when the possessed person was covered by Jesus clothes (AraIn.4:15-16.13:17-19).And in another event, a possessed woman was healed immediately after carrying the infant Jesus (AraIn.6:11-14).

**(c) Resurrection of dead:**

Non-canonical gospels attribute to Jesus resurrection miracles also (AraIn. 19: 6-11, In Thom, 9, 17, 18, Ps Matt. 32, 40). Some of the resurrected individuals were people that had been caused to die by Jesus himself (PsMatt.26, 29). One child was brought back to life when he was covered with Jesus clothes (AraIn.11: 8).

**2. Harm miracles**

The opposite of healing miracles are a number of wonders in which the little child Jesus caused harm or death to people who displeased him. On a number of occasions children destroyed the water pools that Jesus had prepared, so he cursed them, causing them to drop dead immediately (AraIn. 19: 20-21, PsMatt. 26, 28).

Another running child who collided with Jesus and threw him down was cursed so he died on the spot (AraIn. 19: 22-24, In Thom. 3, 4). When the parents of one of them complain to Joseph that Jesus was killing children; Jesus cursed them too, making them blind (InThom. 5).

Jesus's teacher was not also safe. One teacher raised his hand to hit Jesus but his hand was withered, and he died (AraIn.20:15-16). In Another occasion his teacher fell on the ground on his face (InThom.14).

**3. Precociousness Miracles**

In school Jesus showed precociousness miracles. He knew more than the teacher (AraIn. 20: 12). When Rabbis examined him, he showed knowledge of the religious law, astronomy, mathematics, physic, natural philosophy, metaphysics and medicine (AraIn 21; 5-21).

**4. Prophecy**

In one prophecy, the three year old Jesus prophesied that the Jews would crucify him after 39 years, and he recognizes two thieves as those who would be with him on the cross (AraIn8:6-7)

## 5. Natural Miracle

Non-canonical gospel has many of natural miracles. We have already seen that Jesus clothes were protected from fire (AraIn.10: 6-7). Jesus was able to help Joseph in his carpentry work by paranormally making logs of woods longer or shorter (AraIn.16:2, 16: 16-14, InThom.13, PsMatt.37). He could change the colors of the clothes to any colors he wished (AraIn.15:13-14). A little wheat that Jesus sowed produced as much as 300 gallons (1.3 cubic meters)<sup>1</sup> (PsMatt.34). In another version Jesus sowed only one grain of wheat which yielded 100 large bushes (InThom.12).

When one day Jesus crossed the Jordan, the water of the river split on the right and left (PsMatt.36). In another event Jesus caused a well to spring forth for his mother to wash his coat (AraIn.8: 10). A palm tree obeyed Jesus's order and bent its top down so that Marry and Joseph could eat from it (PsMatt.20). Jesus performs a number of miracles involving animals. One day Jesus called a serpent, He then cursed it causing it to die (AraIn.18:14-17). Lions also obeyed him (PsMatt.19, 36). The Gospel of pseudo Matthew (14) states that an oxen and an ass worshiped Jesus.

Jesus's miracles included turning of boys into kids (AraIn.17: 10) shortening the way of a 30-days journey and making to one day only (PsMatt.22), and speaking while still an infant in the cradle (AraIn.1: 2-3). Another miracle of Jesus is making the bird from clay (AraIn.15:1-6, 19:16-19, In Thom: 2. PsMatt.27). Both these last given miracles are also mentioned in the Qur'ān. These will be discussed in detail latter on.

## Miracles of Jesus (in Qur'ān)

After discussing the miracles in Christian source we now move towards miracles of Jesus in the Qur'ān. In the Qur'ān, Jesus is described as one of the mightiest messengers of Allah

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<sup>1</sup> Fatoohi, Louay, *The mystery of the historical Jesus*, op.cit. p.483

(s.w.t). He did not just perform miracle but he himself was a miracle as was born miraculously without any male intervention. Allah (s.w.t) describes him and his mother Mary in these words.

“...and We made her (Mary) and her son (Jesus) a sign for the worlds.”

(al-Qur’ān 21:91)

Jesus's miracles are mentioned in three sets of verses in chapter 3, 5 and 19 with number of these miracles appearing in both of chapter 3 and 5.<sup>1</sup> Unlike the Gospels, the Qur’ān does not recount in detail the stories of most of those miracles. For instance, it states that Jesus healed blind people, but it does not tell us how and when Jesus did that or who those people were. The encounters between Jesus and subjects of his miracles are not related in the Qur’ān. The exceptions are Jesus' first miracles, which are mentioned in chapter 19, and the miracle of the feast from heaven which is described in some detail in chapter 5.

We will look what are miracles that the Qur’ān attributes to Jesus. According to the Qur’ān, Jesus performed the following miracles by Allah's leave:<sup>2</sup>

## I. Healing the Blind and the Leper

Just like the New Testament, the Qur’ān also mentions that Jesus had the power to heal the blind and the leper.

“I also heal the blind and the leper.” (al-Qur’ān 3:49)

In this verse, the Qur’ān has used the term *akmāh* and *abras*. *Akmāh* denotes the physically blind person and *abras* as someone with a skin disease that turns it white. Ibn Kathir states

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<sup>1</sup> Ahmed Deedat, *Christ in Islam*, (Lahore: Al-Huda Publishers, 1960), p.5.

<sup>2</sup> For detail of miracles of Jesus in Islam see: Ahmed Deedat, *Christ in Islam*, op.cit, p.43, D.B. Macdonald, “Isā”, *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, (London: E.J. Brill, 1979), Vol. 3, p. 16 also see: *Miracles of Jesus the Prophet*. <http://www.igrasence.com>. (Last accessed 12.09.11)

that during the time of Jesus, the Jews were quite advanced in the field of medicine. For this reason Allah (s.w.t) blessed Jesus with this nature of miracles so that Jews might understand that no natural force could perform their like.<sup>1</sup>

## **2. The Resurrection of the Dead**

The next miracle that Qur'ān mentions is Jesus's ability to raise the dead. The Holy Qur'ān says:

“...and I bring to life the dead, by the permission of God.” (al-Qur'ān 3:49)

There are two instances of raising a dead person in the canonical gospels. Luke (7:12-15) has a story about Jesus bringing back to life the son of a widow, and John (11:38-44) mentions the raising of Lazarus from the dead.

## **3. The Provisions of Today and Tomorrow**

Qur'ān also describes that Jesus was given the ability to know what people ate and stored in the privacy of their homes. God says:

“I inform you too of what things you eat, and what you store up in your houses. Surely in that is a sign for you, if you are believers.” (al-Qur'ān 3:49)

## **4. A Table Laden with Food:**

The fifth chapter of the Qur'ān has been named as surah Al-Mā'idah. In this surah Allah (s.w.t) narrates an incident where disciples of Jesus asked him to request Allah (s.w.t) for a table laden with food (al-Qur'ān 5:112-114).

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<sup>1</sup> See Ibn Kathir, Abū al-Fidā' Isma'il, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'zim*, (New York: Darussalam, 2000) vol.6, p.455

## **5. Spoke While Still in the Cradle**

The Qur'ān (3:46 and 19:30-33) tells us that Jesus started performing miracles when he was still in the cradle. Jesus spoke to justify the innocence of his mother Maryam. This miracle is not mentioned anywhere in the Bible but Apocryphal gospels does mention it.

## **6. Creating a bird from clay:**

The Qur'ān (3:49/5:110) also mentions that Allah (s.w.t) had empowered Jesus with the miraculous power to breathe life into birds made of clay. This miracle was one which none can disagree about its greatness. This miracle is also not found in the New Testament, but found in the non-canonical gospels.

It is notable that the Qur'ān does not attribute to Jesus one of the most common miracles in the gospels: exorcism. In fact no miracle of exorcism is mentioned anywhere in the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān confirms that Jesus worked impressive miracles, but it names a smaller number of miracles than those found in the canonical and non-canonical sources. It also reveals contextual differences in the Christian accounts.

After detailed discussion on miracles of Jesus in Christian and Muslim sources, we are able to conclude what we have said earlier.

There are two sources of Jesus's miracles in Christianity: canonical gospels and non-canonical gospels. Both these sources have some similarities in recounting the miracles of Jesus and also have some differences also. Another source of Jesus's miracle outside Christianity is the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān also attributes many miracles to Jesus which we have discussed earlier. Interesting thing is that there are two miracles in the Qur'ān which are not mentioned anywhere in canonical gospels but mentioned in non-canonical gospels. These miracles are 'speaking in the cradle' and 'creating the bird from clay'.

Our main topic of research here is these two miracles common between the Qur'ān and non-canonical gospels. In the following chapters, we will see how these miracles raise important theological and Christological issues.

# CHAPTER 1

## “SPEAKING IN A CRADLE”

### 1.1 BIRTH OF JESUS IN NON-CANONICAL GOSPELS AND QUR'ĀN.

- 1.1.1 DATE OF BIRTH
- 1.1.2 PLACE OF BIRTH
- 1.1.3 EVENTS BEFORE BIRTH (ANGEL'S VISITS)
- 1.1.4 EVENTS AT BIRTH

### 1.2 JESUS SPEAKING IN A CRADLE AND NON-CANONICAL GOSPEL.

- 1.2.1 VIRGINAL BIRTH.
- 1.2.2 JESUS A SON OF GOD.
- 1.2.3 SALVATIONAL FIGURE.
- 1.2.4 ARABIC GOSPEL OF INFANCY (INTRODUCTION)

### 1.3 JESUS SPEAKING IN A CRADLE AND QUR'ĀN.

- 1.3.1 VIRGINAL BIRTH.
- 1.3.2 PROPHET OF ALLAH.
- 1.3.3 HUMAN SERVANT OF ALLAH (S.W.T.).
- 1.3.4 SECOND COMING.

### 1.4. MUSLIM COMMENTATORS AND JESUS'S SPEAKING

- 1.4.1 JESUS'S PEAKING IN THE CRADLE.
- 1.4.2 JESUS'S SPEAKING IN MATURE AGE.

### 1.5 COMPARISON BETWEEN QUR'ĀN AND GOSPEL OF INFANCY ACCOUNT OF MIRACLE.

### 1.6 CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO QUR'ĀNIC MIRACLE OF JESUS'S SPEAKING IN THE CRADLE.

### 1.7 REFUTATION OF THESE CLAIMS.

# CHAPTER 1

## SPEAKING IN A CRADLE

Before going into details of Jesus's miracle of 'speaking just after the birth' it is very important to examine Jesus's birth in the context of the Qur'ān and non-canonical gospels.

### 1.1 Birth of Jesus in non-canonical gospels and Qur'ān

Birth of Jesus in the Qur'ān has been mentioned in two Suras; Al-i-'mrān (3:42-49) and Maryam (19:16-35). The Qur'ān agrees, adds, differs, corrects or criticizes Gospel's accounts. Although the Qur'ān does not present a detailed life-story of Jesus; it highlights the important aspects of his birth, his mission, and his ascension to heaven.<sup>1</sup>

Following is a brief description of the events as mentioned in non-canonical gospels and the Qur'ān.

#### 1.1.1 Date of birth

The Qur'ān does not give any information about the date of Jesus's birth, but non-canonical sources contain indirect references to Jesus's date of birth. However these references are contradictory because they give two distinct years of his birth. The first group of references links Jesus's birth to King Herod's <sup>2</sup> reign, who died in 4 B.C. This is found in Arabic Gospel of Infancy (7), and Pseudo Matthew (16). The second group of indirect references to Jesus's date of birth links it to a census by Caesar Augustus.<sup>3</sup> Emperor Augustus ruled from 27 BCE to 14 CE. This link is also found in Arabic Gospel of Infancy (1:4-5), the Infancy Gospel of James (12:1-5), and Pseudo Matthew (13).

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<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey Parrinder, *Jesus in the Qur'ān*, (London: Sheldon Press, 1965), p.75

<sup>2</sup> Herod also known as Herod I or Herod the Great. He was a king of Israel. To know more about him see <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07289c.htm> (Last accessed 11.04.2011)

<sup>3</sup> Census means official enumeration of population. The Gospel of Luke 2:1-2 also claims that Jesus was born during a census by Caesar Augustus.

Here we can find easily that every one of these gospels contradicted even itself due to giving two different accounts of Jesus date of birth.

There are different approaches for estimating the day of Jesus Christ's birth. In all over the world twenty fifth of December is celebrated as the birth day of Jesus, but there is no evidence for this date. Evidence of gospels or any other sound tradition is failed to determine the exact date of the birth of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

None of the canonical gospels show that when Jesus was born there were, in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night (PsMatt.13 and AraIn.4). As the Encyclopedia Britannia acknowledges, they (Shepherds) would not have been there in the cold, rainy season of winter. Accordingly, Jesus was not born in the winter season (December).<sup>2</sup> The festival was borrowed from Pagans.<sup>3</sup>

### 1.1.2 Place of Birth

Arabic Gospel of Infancy (AraIn 1:5-6) and Infancy Gospel of James (InJam.15:11) state that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea. Qur'an says that Jesus was born at a distant area from Jerusalem (19:22). Qur'an did not mention name of this 'distant area' but Muslim Scholars says that it could be Bethlehem. A modern Muslim commentator Yusuf Ali says "it was a remote place, not only with reference to the distance of 71 miles from Nazareth, but because in Bethlehem itself the birth was in an obscure corner under a palm tree."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cain, S. 'Jesus', (art) *Colliers Encyclopedia*, (New York: Macmillan Educational Corporation 1980) ,Vol. 6, p. 403

<sup>2</sup> W.L.P. 'Jesus the Christ', (art) *The Encyclopedia Britannia*, (London: Helen Hemingway Benton, 1973-74), Vol. V, p. 611

<sup>3</sup> It is commonly believed that the Catholic Church chose this date to celebrate Jesus's birthday because it was pagan celebration of the sun god, thus making it easier for pagans to embrace Christianity. See Fatoohi Louay, *The Mystery of the Historical Jesus*, op.cit. p. 277

<sup>4</sup> Yusuf Ali, *Commentary on the Qur'an*, (Lebanon: Dar al Arabia, 1969), p. 772

### **1.1.3 Events before birth (Angel's visit)**

The Gospel of Pseudo-Mathew (2,9) says that the Angel Gibrāiel was sent from God to a virgin Mary to give her news for son(PsMatt-9). The same is described in Qur'ān (3:42-45). According to Qur'ān (19:18-19) Mary had secluded herself into Eastern part of the temple for prayer and devotion to Allah. It was in this state of purity that angel Gibrāiel appeared before her in the form of a man and gave her news for baby.

### **1.1.4 Events at birth**

The Infancy Gospel of James (InJam) contains a rather long account of Jesus' birth. While Joseph and Marry were on their way to Bethlehem, in response to a taxation decree from Emperor Augustus, Mary felt the pangs of labor; Joseph took her to the cave, and went out for searching a midwife. While going, Joseph saw many miraculous signs in the sky and on earth. He found a mid wife and brought her to the cave but Jesus had been born till that time (InJam 15:1).

Arabic Gospel of the Infancy also contains a similar account of Jesus birth. Among other details, an account of the visit of wise man from the East is also mentioned in this gospel, who came to Jerusalem to pay homage to the new born and offer the gifts( AraIn1:5-11).

The Gospel of Pseudo Matthew also contains a detailed account of Jesus' birth. It tells us that while Joseph and Marry were on their way to Bethlehem for an enrolment, the time of birth of Jesus came, and Marry gave birth in a cavern (PsMatt 15).

Qur'ān says that when the pains of childbirth started, Mary went to a palm tree in a deserted area (19:23).<sup>1</sup> Marry was clearly alone and the Qur'ān does not acknowledge the existence of Joseph or any such male character in Mary's life. Marry was extremely in distressing situation and she wished a death that would leave no trace of her and make people forget about her. In

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Tabatābāi has suggested that verse 19:23 and 19:25 talks about trunk of the palm tree not simply palm tree because the tree was in fact dry, and that it became full of dates by miracle. see Fatochi Louay, p.240

these moments of grief and anguish an angel spoke to Mary and by a miracle fresh ripe dates fell close to her and water stream came out around her also.(19:24-25).

## **1.2 Jesus's speaking in a cradle and the non-canonical Gospels**

As mentioned earlier Jesus' speaking while still an infant is not mentioned in the Canonical Gospels. Interestingly, Matthew and Luke contain no alternative explanation why Jews did not punish Mary when she gave birth to Jesus while she was still unmarried. According to Law (Deut, 22:21, 24) punishment of adultery is stoning to death.

But the miracle is found in *the Arabic Infancy Gospel (AraIn)*.

Jesus spoke even when he was in a cradle, and said to his mother:

"Mary I am Jesus, the Son of God, the word, which you did bring forth according to the declaration of the Angel Gibrāiel to you, and my Father has sent me for the salvation of the world." (AraIn.1:2-3)

This is the first miracle of Jesus that is mentioned both by Arabic Infancy gospel (AraIn) and the Qur'ān. As the above quotation shows that Jesus while in a cradle speaks and tells his mother Mary about himself. Jesus talking to his mother is similar to that which Angel Gibrāiel who told Mary when she conceived Jesus.

Here we will discuss the important points declared by Jesus in Arabic Infancy gospel (AraIn).

### **1.2.1 Virginal birth**

The claim that Mary conceived Jesus without marital relation is attested by Arabic Infancy gospel (AraIn) because it says very clearly that Mary conceived a child through the Holy Spirit, without having a sexual relation.

Jesus says that He is:

".....the word, which you did bring forth according to the declaration of the Angel Gibrāiel to you"( AraIn.1:2-3)

This virginal conception is also confirmed in other non-canonical gospels as well as in canonical gospels also. The Gospel of the birth of Mary (BirMary) states that the angel addressed Mary as "Mary virgin of the lord most acceptable O virgin full of grace" (BirMary 7:3). The Infancy Gospel of James also stresses same concept (InJam. 9:13). The Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew (PsMatt) also mentions virginal conception. It says that when Joseph had doubts about Mary's pregnancy, the angle appeared to him in his dream, told him to take Mary as his wife, and revealed that the child in her womb was of the Holy Spirit (PsMatt). The virginal conception is described in Matthew and Luke also. Matthew makes it clear that Mary conceived a child through the Holy Spirit, without having a sexual relationship. Matthew says:

"When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit" (Matt.1:18). Luke's account of the annunciation is even keener on stressing the virginal conception. He first emphasized that when the angel visited Mary she was "virgin" (Luke 1:27). When the angle told Mary that she would conceive and give birth to a child (Luke 1:31) She was astonished and asked the angle how this could happen when she had not known a man. The angle replies her that:

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you" (Luke 1:35)

### **1.2.2 Jesus as son of God:**

While talking in cradle Jesus starts his speech by declaring his own nature as "son of God". This title occurs not only in non-canonical gospels only but is also frequently used in the canon. In both type of sources this term is applied in almost same sense. It is important for us to see what does that term mean in its historic and biblical context.

The Term "Son of God" occurs 47 times in the New Testament. In reference to Jesus, it is a title as the heavenly, eternal Son who is equal to God the Father (John 5:18-24). It is Jesus who fully reveals the Father (Matt.11:27). He is the exact representation of the Father

(Heb.1:13), He possesses all authority in heaven and earth (Matt.28:18) and Jesus had glory with the Father before the world was made (John 17:5).

So Araln states that when Jesus spoke in a cradle he announced his unique nature as a son of God. In the same gospel the phrase is used for at least two more times. In the first instance, he made the idols say the following about Jesus:

"The unknown God has come here who is truly God; nor is there any one besides him, who is worthy of divine worship; for he is truly the Son of God."

(Araln 4:14)

In the second, a priest, whose son was cured by Jesus, is made to declare that:

"Perhaps this boy is the son of the living God, who made the heavens and the earth." (Araln 4:21)

It is clear from here that performing miracles indicates that Jesus was son of God.

### **1.2.3 Salvation Figure:**

After declaring his own status as the son of God Jesus continue his debate and says that :

"..... and my Father has sent me for the salvation of the world." (Araln 1:2-3)

This saying makes clear that Jesus came to earth to save the people from the original sin. Synaptic gospels also show that the title "the Christ" was understood to be associated with salvation.

According to Luke, the angle told the shepherd: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a savior, who is Christ the Lord" ( Luke 2:12). Similarly John also tells that the Samaritans were convinced that Jesus was really "the savior of the world" (John 4:42)

To sum up, Jesus's speech in Arabic gospel of Infancy shows his status as the son of God who was born by declaration of Angel Gibrāiel to save the people from original sin.

Now, we will see the introduction of Arabic gospel of the infancy which states Jesus speaking in the cradle and declaring his status.

#### 1.2.4 Arabic gospel of the infancy (Introduction)

Arabic gospel of Infancy is attributed to "Joseph the high priest". Originally this gospel was written in Syriac language; later on it was translated into Arabic. In 1697 Mr. Henry Sike, Professor at Cambridge, first translated and published this Gospel. In the second century this gospel was received by Gnostics, a sect of Christians and several of its relations were credited in the following ages by other Christians, viz., Eusebius, Athanasius, Epiphanius, Chrysostom, and so on.<sup>1</sup> An important point regarding different titles of this gospels should be clear here. We find this gospel with different titles and reader can be confused at first glance. Originally the gospel named as The Arabic Infancy Gospel of the Savior was translated by Alexander Roberts, Sir James Donaldson and Arthur Cleveland Coxe<sup>2</sup> but at some other places we find title as The Arabic Gospel of the Infancy of the Saviour.<sup>3</sup> The difference between both titles is that the later one (The Arabic Gospel of the Infancy of the Saviour) is a longer one along with explanation of verses also. It has two parts, part one consists of chapter (1-10) and part two consists of chapter (11-22). The Arabic Infancy Gospel of the Savior is rather short translation with 55 chapters and no explanation.

E. Henneck in his famous book named this gospel as 'first gospel of the Infancy of Jesus Christ'<sup>4</sup> Its Arabic name is *Injilu't Tufiliyyah*.

While discussing issues we will consider the gospel titled The Arabic Gospel of the Infancy of the Saviour.

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<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah Jones, *The Apocryphal New Testament, Being all the Gospel, Epistles and Other Pieces, Now Extant*, (London: William Hone, 1820), p.38.

<sup>2</sup> Available online at <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0806.htm> also at [http://christianbookshelf.org/unknown/the\\_arabic\\_gospel\\_of\\_the\\_infancy\\_of\\_the\\_saviour/the\\_arabic\\_gospel\\_of\\_the.htm](http://christianbookshelf.org/unknown/the_arabic_gospel_of_the_infancy_of_the_saviour/the_arabic_gospel_of_the.htm) (last accessed 12.6.2011).

<sup>3</sup> See online translation at <http://www.orthodox.cn/patristics/apostolicfathers/infancy1.htm> (last accessed 12.6.2011).

<sup>4</sup> E. Henneck, *New Testament Apocrypha* vol.1 (London: SCM, 1973), p.404

Its earlier section is apparently derived from the protevangelium of James. Later part has show many similarities with Infancy of Thomas.<sup>1</sup> The author has shown a large collection of fantasies, the origin of which is likely to be Egyptian.<sup>2</sup>

This gospel starts with a report of Jesus speaking miraculously while still in a cradle and with a passing reference to Gibrāiel's earlier good news Marry, before it moves back to recount the birth of Jesus, with considerable similarities with the account in the Infancy Gospel of James. It mentions that Joseph and Marry had to go to Bethlehem to be taxed here in region of Augustus. When Marry feel that she was about to give birth, Joseph took her to the cave and went to search for midwife .When he came back with old lady Jesus had already born and cave was full of light. The newborn also visited by shepherds who came to praise him.

The author then recounts the visit of wise men from the East of Jerusalem, followed by Herod's attempt to kill Jesus. An angel appears to Jesus in dream and orders him to take the child and his mother to Egypt. This gospel also mentions many miracles of Jesus including healing possession, leprosy, impotence etc. Jesus met two thieves whome he identified as those who will be crucified with him, and he caused a well to spring forth. After death of Herod, the Jesus's family return to Judea and settled to Nazareth, where Jesus continued to perform a variety of miracles, e.g including healing ,creating live animals and birds from clay, raising the dead ,showing amazing knowledge of the alphabet.

This gospel also contains the story of Jesus in the temple when he was 12 years and how he amazed people there by his knowledge. It then tells us that from the age of 12 until 30 Jesus hid his miracle. This seems to be an attempt by the author to explain the absence of any account of that part of Jesus's life until he started his ministry.<sup>3</sup>

This gospel then ends with a mention of Jesus' baptism and the descent of the Holy Spirit on him, but there is no mention of John the Baptist.

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<sup>1</sup> Shailer Mathews, (art), *Dictionary of the Bible*, op.cit, p.310.

<sup>2</sup> James Keith, Elliot, *The Apocryphal New Testament, a Collection of Apocryphal Christian* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p.100.

<sup>3</sup> For summary of *First Infancy of Jesus Christ* see James, Keith Elliot, *The Apocryphal New Testament, a Collection of Apocryphal Christian*, op. cit p.102.

### 1.3 Speaking in the cradle and Qur'ān

The child speaking in a cradle is mentioned in three times in a Qur'ān. Following are these verses:

وَتَكَلَّمُ الْأَنْسَاءُ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا وَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

"He shall speak to the people in childhood and in maturity. And he shall be (of the company) of the righteous." (Al- Qur'ān 3:46)

إِنَّمَا أَنْهَا بِعُسْرٍ أَنْ مَرِئِكُمْ لَذُكْرُ نَفْسِكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَلَى النَّاسِ إِذَا لَمْ يَرْجِعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ تَكَلَّمُ الْأَنْسَاءُ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا

"Then will Allah 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 didst speak to the people in childhood and in maturity....." (Al- Qur'ān 5:110)

Surah Maryam shows in detail Jesus's speech in the cradle. See the following verses:

فَلَمَّا سَمِعَتْ إِنْجِيلَهُ قَالَ أَنْتَ مَنْ أَنْتَ فِي الْمَهْدِ صَبَرْتَ فِي قِبْلَةِ عَزِيزٍ كَذَّابٍ أَنْتَمْ أَنْتَمْ وَجَعَلْتَنِي نَبِيًّا

وَجَعَلْتَنِي مُتَكَبِّرًا لِنَزَّلْتَ مَا كُنْتَ وَأَوْصَلْتَنِي بِالْمُصْلَةِ وَلَزِكَاهَ مَا دَفَعْتَ حَتَّىٰ وَتَرَأَيْتَنِي وَكُنْتُ بَخْفَافًا حَتَّىٰ شَفَقْتَنِي

وَكَسَلَامٌ عَلَيْهِ نَوْمٌ وَكُنْتُ وَنَوْمٌ لَمُوتٌ وَتَوْمٌ أَنْفَثْتُ حَتَّىٰ

"But she pointed to the babe. They said: How can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle? He said: I am indeed a servant of God: He hath given me revelation and made me a prophet. And He hath made me blessed where so ever I be, and hath enjoined on me Prayer and Charity as long as I live; (He) hath made me kind to my mother, and not overbearing or miserable; So peace is on me the day I was born, the day that I die, and the day that I shall be raised up to life (again)" "(Al- Qur'ān 19:29-33)

These above mention verses of Surah Maryam shows in detail what Jesus said in his miraculous speech while he was in the cradle. Following are important points which he states:

### **1.3.1 Virginal birth**

Qur'ān says very clearly that Mary conceived Jesus miraculously without a sexual relationship with a man and strongly criticizes those who accused her of unchastity. It has been claimed by some that the Qur'ān does not confirm explicitly the virginal conception of Jesus. Geoffery Parrinder says in his book that while the Qur'ān make it clear that virginal conception involved divine intervention, but it does not says that it was natural or not.<sup>1</sup> This is of course one of the most misleading of Qur'ānic text. When Jesus spoke to crowd to defend his mother Mary, he did not say that his mother has done a sin or he is illegal child rather he declared his own status as a prophet of Allah (s.w.t). In S. Maryam (19.30-33) he is clearly telling people to believe in his miraculous origin on the basis of his miraculous nature. In above mention verse Jesus states that God make him kind to his mother, but do not mention his father, because he did not have one.

There are many other arguments that leave no room to doubt that the Qur'ān emphasizes that Mary was virgin when she conceived Jesus.<sup>2</sup>

### **1.3.2 Prophet of Allah (s.w.t)**

In his speech to the people while in cradle Jesus declared his own status as a future prophet hood. Allah created him and made him a messenger charged with telling people about monotheistic belief. Allah (s.w.t) gave him duty of commanding good and forbidding evil. Jesus was also commanded by his God to offer prayers, almsgiving and to be kind with parents. All these things shows that Jesus was not divine as considered in Christianity.

### **1.3.3 Human servant of Allah (s.w.t)**

Like all the prophets, Jesus was a human being. The Qur'ān tells that Jesus stressed his human nature in his teaching and that his deification was the result of changes made to his original message by some of his followers later on.

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<sup>1</sup> G.Parrinder, op.cit.pp70-74

<sup>2</sup> For these arguments see Fatoohi Louay, op.cit. pp155-159

The Qur'ānic term 'abd (servant) does not apply to Jesus only, but to all created beings. So, Jesus's unique miraculous conception did not mean that he was divine. He was created being like all others.<sup>1</sup> He will live, die and resurrected that is natural process of developing from one status of another. This would have been impossible if he had divine nature. So he was neither God nor his son as the belief of Nasarah today.

### 1.3.4 Second coming

According to the Qur'ān (43.66 and 4.159) hādīth and statements of great Islāmic scholars the coming of Jesus is imminent. Commentators explain Jesus speaking in mature age (*Kalam fil kahal*) as his second coming on earth. When the Prophet Jesus returns to Earth, there will not be a single person from the People of the Book (Christians and Jews) who does not believe in him (Surat an-Nisa', 159). At this time, the Prophet Jesus will explain that he is a holy, worthy and superior individual chosen by Allah, that he is not the son of Allah, and will call on the whole Christian world to adopt a monotheistic faith by stating that he believes in Almighty Allah, the One and Only.

In short we can say that Qur'ān absolutely rejects the suggestions that Jesus was son of God or there is anyone divine other than God. The nature of Jesus's or anyone else's alleged divinity is irrelevant, as the divinity of other than God is rejected without qualification.

It is mentioned by M.Ibn Ishāq (d.761/767 AD) that the first 83 verses of the chapter 3(Al. 'mrān) revealed to refute the claims of Christian delegation who came from Najrān. These Christians supported their claims of divinity of Christ by pointing to his miracles. They argue that Jesus spoke in the cradle, make bird from clay, heal the sick and brought the dead to life. Surah 3, Al 'mrān came down in answer to these assertions.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See S3:59, 7:3-2

<sup>2</sup> A Guillaume, (Tr.) *sirat Rasul-Allah*, [Ibn Ishaq], (New York: Oxford university Press, 1967), p.83

Narrated by Abu Hurairah (603-681 AD) that the Prophet said none spoke in a cradle but three the first was 'isa, the second child was a man from Bani Isrāel called Juraij, and the third was a lady from Bani Isrāel .....<sup>1</sup>

## 1.4 Muslim commentators and miracle of Jesus's speaking:

### 1.4.1 Jesus speaking in the cradle

Muslim commentators discussed this miracle in considerable length. To know the real meaning and purpose of this miracle we have to move towards these commentators.

All these above mention verses (3:46, 5:110 and 19:29) shows that infant Jesus spoke to defend her mother and explain his own unique nature. *Almahad* is bed or cot for infant, especially one on rocks. The traditions and older commentators took above verses literally. Mostly commentators define word *Almahad* as cot for new born baby.<sup>2</sup>

This miracle is not only about the infant Jesus having the ability to speak, but it is equally about the special nature of his speech. Allama sayyed Muhammad Husain Al.Tbatābi (d.310/923) said in his commentary *Al mizān fi Tafsīr-ul-Qur'ān*:

"It means that he would speak to the people, when in the cradle, a complete and thought provoking speech.....in other words he would talk to them in his cradle in the same manner as he would do in his mature age. Surely such a talk from an infant is extraordinary sign, a miracle".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmi' al-Sabih*, Vol. 4, p.451 Ḥadīth no. 645

<sup>2</sup> Al Tābārī, Abū Ja'far Muhammad b Jarir, *Jāmi' al Bayān fi Tafsīr al Qur'ān*, (Beruit:Al Darul shamalia, 1997)part 2, p.280 and Al Rāzī, Fakhr al Dīn, *al Tafsīr al Kabir*, (Beirut:Darul Ahya aturas Algharbi,1999)part 3,p224.

<sup>3</sup> Al Tabātabāi Sayyed Muhammad Husāyan, *Al Mizān*, (Iran: World Organization for Islāmic services, 1986), Vol. 6, p.18

Baydāwī (d. between 683/1284 and 716/1316) also said that both as an infant and as a grown man Jesus spoke in the language of the prophets without variation.<sup>1</sup>

Surah Maryam shows in detail that Jesus spoke with the kind of wisdom, knowledge, and logic that can only be expected from well educated adults.<sup>2</sup> When soon after the birth people chided on the bases of false accusation, Then Mary was silent and pointed to her child as if she would say to them, "He will answer you" pointed to him. They said 'How can we talk to one who is in the cradle? Al S'ādī (128/745) said, when she pointed to him they were very angry, and said, her mockery of us is worse than her adultery.<sup>3</sup>

Imam Qurtubī (d.1273) mention another story relates that 'isā was feeding at his mother's breast, and when he heard the complaint against Mary, he stopped feeding, turned his face to the people, and resting on his left hand, pointed with his finger and spoke to them. There is also another story, told by Al Rāzī (d.606/1210), which says Zachariah came to her during this debate among the Jews concerning her, and said to 'isā, "Speak for yourself if you have been commanded so to do".<sup>4</sup> And this new born infant ('isā) spoke up by saying:

فَلَمْ يَقُلْ عَنِّي عَنِّي

"He said: "I am indeed a servant of God"

What he said in a cradle at that time provided a negation of all wrong and evil ideas which were to be establishing about him in the future. Jesus initially declared that he was the servant of God i.e. he was neither God nor his son as is the belief of Nasārah today. As Imam Rāzī states in his long discussion on this verse (Sura Maryam 19:30-34): In this phrase 'slave of Allah' there are four points to note:<sup>5</sup>

I. First, it does away with the erroneous belief of the Christians that 'isā is God.

<sup>1</sup> Al.Baydāwī, 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar, *Anwār al-Tanzil wa Asrār al-Ta'wil*, (Beruit: Dār al-Jil,1329H), Vol.2, p.45

<sup>2</sup> Fatoohi, Louay said these are two miracles not one as he astonished people by both speaking in a cradle and what he had to say i.e his precociousness.

<sup>3</sup> Rāzī op.cit, Vol.3, p.224

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Rāzī op.cit, Vol.3, p.227

- II. Second, if Christ, when he confessed his servitude, was truthful in his statement, then truly he was Allah's slave. If he was lying, the power he used would not have been divine, but satanic, and both suppositions would render void his being a god.
- III. Third, that which was the pressing need for him at that time was to remove the accusation of adultery from his mother Mary. However 'Isā did not clearly deny that, but laid emphasis on the fact of his servitude, as if the removal of the accusation that he was equal with Allah were more important than removing the accusation from his mother.
- IV. Fourth, the removal of this accusation from Allah assists the removal of the accusation from his mother, because Allah would not choose an adulterous to bear a child for this great and high position.

Surah Maryam continue 'Isā's debate while in a cradle where he said:

أَنْذِنِي لِكِتَابِكَ وَجَعَلْنِي نَبِيًّا

"He hath given me revelation and made me a prophet;" (al. Qur'ān 19:30)

Mulāna Muftī Muhammād Shafī said that In these words sayyidna 'Isā even in his infancy announced his future prophet hood and the revelation to him of a sacred book from Allah (s.w.t). This verse does not shows that he receive revelation while he was in his mother womb but it means he would be bestowed prophet hood and the book at the proper time.<sup>1</sup>

وَجَعَلَنِي مُنَذِّرًا لِمَنْ يَكُونُ

"And He hath made me blessed wheresoever's"

Al Tabarī cites a number of traditions in explaining this verse. The first is traced back to Mujahid (d.103/721), Amr bin Qays and Ath-Thawri all said that this means "And He made me a teacher of goodness". In another narration from Mujahid he said "A person of great

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<sup>1</sup> Mulana Mufti Muhammad Shafi, *Ma'ariful-Qur'an*, (Karachi: Maktaba Darul-Uloom, 2007), VOL. 6, p.40

benefit". When Wuhab bin Al-Ward asked. What was his blessing? Wahab replied "commanding good and forbidding evil wherever he was."<sup>1</sup>

After declaring his status as a prophet 'isā goes on and said:

لَمْ يَنْهَا مُصَلَّةٌ وَلَمْ يَنْهَا مَا نَهَىٰ حَتَّىٰ

"I be, and hath enjoined on me Prayer and Charity as long as I live;"

(al- Qur'ān 19:31)

The word(*āwsani*) is derived from the word *wasyā* which normally means to bequeath but when used in the context of issuing an order it implies an emphatic command and here it is used to put emphasis' on a command of Allah. For this reason it is translated in text as enjoyed. Prayers and *Zākāt* are two form of worship which has been enjoyed as obligatory in the *Sharia* of all the Prophets from Adam till Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) how ever there details are different.<sup>2</sup>

Now 'isā said is telling the crowd about his duties in these words:

وَلَمْ يَنْهَا مُصَلَّةٌ وَلَمْ يَنْهَا شَفَاعَةٌ حَتَّىٰ شَفَاعَةٌ

"(He) hath made me kind to my mother, and not overbearing or miserable"

(al- Qur'ān 19:32)

According to Ibn Kathir (d.774/1373) Allah has commanded Jesus to treat his mother well. Jesus mention this after mentioning obedience to his Lord Allah(s.w.t) This is because Allah often combines the command to worship Him with obedience to parents(here only the mother is mentioned and not both the parents. Hence it is implied that his birth was a miracle without father).

<sup>1</sup> Al Tabārī, Jāmi' al Bayān fi Tafsīr al Qur'ān, op.cit.V 5 p 236

<sup>2</sup> Mulana Mufti Muhammad Shafi, Ma'ariful- Qur'ān, op.cit. p.41

لَمْ يَجْعَلْنِيْ جَهَنَّمَ شَفِيْا means he has not made me proud or arrogant to worship him and be dutiful to my mother.<sup>1</sup> He ends his debate by saying following words:

وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيْنِ يَوْمَ وِلَادَتِيْنِ وَيَوْمَ الْمَوْتِ وَيَوْمَ أُنْتَ حَتَّى

"So peace is on me the day I was born, the day that I die, and the day that I shall be raised up to life (again)" (al. Qur'ān 19:33)

Tafsir Ibn Kathir writes:

"And Salam (peace) be upon me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I shall be raised alive!) This is his affirmation that 'he is a worshipper of Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, and that he is a creature created by Allah. He ('Isa) will live, die and be resurrected, just like the other creatures that Allah has created. However, he will have peace in these situations, which are the most difficult situations for Allah's creatures.' May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him.<sup>2</sup>

Above all discussion shows that Jesus speech in front of accusers was full of knowledge and logic. This kind of speech cannot be expected from new born baby unless with command of divine power. By announcing his own status as a prophet, Jesus proves purity of his mother, because Allah would not choose an adulterous to bear a child for this great and high position.

#### 1.4.2 Jesus speaking in mature age

As it is clear from above discussed two verses (3:46, 5:110) that Jesus shall speak in the cradle and in mature age. It is worth noting here that the incidents of speaking in infancy was certainly a sign and a miracle but speaking to people during one's middle age is very normal, something everyone does no matter whether he is Muslim or a non Muslim, learned or illiterate. Why has this been mentioned here as something special? What could it mean? For answering to this question we will go to classical and modern commentators to see how this matter has taken by them.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn kathir, Abū al-Fidā' Isma'īl, *Tafsir al-Qur'ān al-'zim*, (New York: Darussalam, 2000) vol.6, p.255.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

The word *Al Kabalan* is translated by Yusuf Ali 'mature age' and pickthall translated it as 'manhood'. This word occurs in the Qur'an only in two ayāt (3:46 and 5:110) and the classical commentators discuss its meaning at considerable length.

Imam Tibri says in his Tafseer that *Alkabal* means when fully mature or experienced, no longer a youth but not yet aged.<sup>1</sup>

He explains that Jesus spoke to mankind in his infancy in defence of his mother and as a proof of his prophet hood and that he spoke to them as an adult when he received revelation. He goes on to say that the double reference was meant to show that he was like other human beings as he developed from one state to another, which would have been impossible if he had been divine. Imām Tibri also mention number of traditions to support what he said.eg Qatāda (d.118/736), Rabi (d.139/765) 'and Ibn Jurayj (d.182/789) said he would speak when small and when grownup. Mujahid said that *Alkabal* meant 'having arrived at the age of 'reason'. According to Tibri there were others who said that Jesus would speak to mankind when he reappeared. In particular he cites Ibn Zayd (d.673) who said: Jesus has spoken to them in the cradle and he will speak to them when he kills the Antichrist (*al Masīh al Dajjāl* or *al Dajjāl*).<sup>2</sup> When he does that he will be mature.

Imam Zamakhshari (d.537/1144) said that the meaning of *Al mahad* and *Alkabal* is that: He will speak to mankind in these two states in the speech of the prophets without variation between the state of childhood and the state of maturity. Age of maturity is the state in which the reason is well established and in which prophets prophecy.<sup>3</sup>

Imam Rāzi discussed this matter in detail. For him the passage poses three problems:<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Al Tābārī, op.cit.Vol.2, p. 270-271.

<sup>2</sup> The antichrist (*al Dajjāl*) is a well known figure who Muslims expect to arrive at the End of times. In many *hadith* collections including *Muslim* 41:7023 *al Dajjāl* is variously described as performing miracles, attracting many whose faith is weak. The Antichrist will be slain by Jesus. For detail see: Ibn Kathir, *Al Masīh al Dajjāl* (Cairo: Maktabat al sunnah, 1996) also Zeki Saritoprak, 'The legends of *al Dajjāl*(Antichrist): The personification of evil in the Islamic traditions' *Muslim World* , 93(2003): 291-308

<sup>3</sup> Al Zamakhshari, Abū al- Qāsim Jār Allah Muhmūd b. 'mar, *al-Kashshāf 'an Haqā'iq al-Tanzīl wa-'Uyūn al- Aqāwil fi Wujūh al-Ta'wīl*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr,1333 H), Vol.4, p.452

<sup>4</sup> Al Rāzi, *Fakhr al Dīn*, (Beirut:Darul Ahya aturas Algharbi,1999)part 3.p224

First, what is meant by *kahal*? The answer to this is that it is combination of strength and the completion of youth. This definition is derived from the expression used by the desert Arabs *Iktahala l.nabat* (كثهل النبات) to indicate that the plant has become strong and full grown.

Second, what is the point of mentioning his speaking in a cradle when mature since unlike his speaking this was not miraculous? Razi gives four possible answers.

- I. It is made clear that he changed from one state to another and was therefore not divine as the assembly from *Najrān* alleged.
- II. What is intended by it is that he will speak on a single occasion when he is in the cradle in order to vindicate his mother's purity. Then when he is in a state of maturity he will speak by a revelation as a prophet.
- III. Abu Muslim (d.332/934) said that it means that he will speak in the cradle and in maturity in the one manner and one capacity that there is no doubt that this is a surprising miracle.
- IV. *Al Asamn* (d.200 or 201/815-17) said that it means he will reach the age of maturity.

Third, Jesus's age was reputedly 33 years and six months when he was raised up into God's presence. On this reckoning he had not reached maturity. Razi gives two possible solution of this problem:

- I. The root meaning of the word is full-grown and accomplished, i.e. in the case of human beings between 30 and 40. This fits Jesus.
- II. The saying of Husayn b.al-Fadal al Bajlī that he will be mature after he comes down from heaven at the close of the age and speak to mankind and kills the Antichrist.

Baidawī adds nothing to our knowledge. His brief comment includes a reference to the interpretation which Tabarī attributed to Ibn-Zaid and which Razi attribute to al-Bijlī:

"It is said that he was raised into heaven while still a youth and that 'when of mature age' means after his descent."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Baidawī op.cit, p.74

Ibn Kathir makes no reference to Jesus' return. Commenting on 3:46 he paraphrases *kahalan* as in his mature state when God reveals to him.<sup>1</sup> Commenting on 5:110 he says:

That is 'you summoned mankind to God when he will small and when you were grown up'. For his speaking included summoning because his speaking to mankind when mature was not in any way miraculous.<sup>2</sup>

It is clear from above explanation that commentators refer this passage (speaking in mature age/middle age) to Jesus' return. Christians estimate Jesus's age to be 31-33 years of age at ascension. Muslim scholars also agree this idea. Hasan Basri (d.110/728) said, "Jesus was 34, while Sa'eed bin Mussayyib (d.715) said, "He was 33," when he was lifted up to heaven.<sup>3</sup> Islamic scholars agree that *kahlan* denotes the age of 35 or above. They base their views on a *hādīth* reported by Ibn 'Abbas (d.68/678) that Jesus was raised up to God's presence in his early 30s, and that he will live for 40 years when he comes again. Therefore, they suggest that this verse is evidence for Jesus' return.<sup>4</sup>

There are number of *hādīths* which mention that Jesus will return to this earth again e.g

Abu Huraira reported that the Messenger of Allah (May peace be upon him) said: "By Him in Whose hand is my life, the son of Mary (may peace be upon him) will soon descend among you as a just judge. He will break crosses kill swine and abolish *Jizya*, and the wealth will pour forth to such an extent that no one will accept it."<sup>5</sup>

The return of Jesus will be close to the end of time. In fact, his descent will be one of the major signs the final hour is due. The Qur'ān discloses that:

"He (the son of Mary) shall be a known sign of the Hour; so have no doubt concerning it and follow Me." (Al. Qur'ān 43:61)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathīr op.cit, vol.2, p.40

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.p.678

<sup>3</sup> L. Gassick, (Tr.) *Stories of the Prophets*, [ Ibn Kathīr], (London: SPCK,1988), p. 541

<sup>4</sup> Muhammad Khalil Herras, *Fasl al-Maqal fi raf'i 'Isā hayyan wa nuzulibi wa qatlībi ad-Dajjal*, (Cairo: Maktabat as-Sunnah, 1990), p.20

<sup>5</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, Vol. 1, p. 92

Another verse which shows Jesus return is as follow.

There is not one of the People of the Book who will not believe in him before he dies; and on the Day of Resurrection he [Jesus] will be a witness against them. (al. Qur'ān 4:159)

## 1.5 Comparison between Qur'ān and Gospel of infancy account of miracle:

### a). Context

The context of speaking in the cradle in Qur'ān and gospel of Infancy is totally different. In Qur'ān we will find that Jesus spoke just after his birth to make clear the purity of his mother. So in Qur'ān miracle is placed in understandable and logical context. In the Arabic Gospel of Infancy Jesus is shown telling his mother things she was already aware of and without any reason for him to say them. This miracle is one of the examples that the non-canonical gospel writer, or his source, was aware of but did not know correctly its context so the report is poorly integrated into the story.

### b). Words

Another very significant difference between Jesus's words in the two account is that in Qur'ān Jesus says "servant of God" and in non-canonical gospel it appears as "son of God". The Qur'ān emphasizes that Jesus was a human being who was blessed by God, giving him the power to perform miracles, Whereas the Arabic Gospel of Infancy stresses that those miracles were indicative of Jesus's divine nature, expressed in his son ship of God. So Jesus's unique son ship of God has become an expression of his divinity.

The Qur'ān rejects this concept and says very clearly that Only Allah is divine.

The Qur'ān tells us that baby Jesus went on to say to his mother's people: "And He hath made me blessed wheresoever's I is be, and hath enjoined on me Prayer and Charity as long as I live" ( al-Qur'ān 19:31)

Jesus said that God made him to be source of blessing to people and miracles wherever he went. Like everyone else, he was commanded to worship God and give Zakat. The word "so long as I remain alive" clearly indicates that he was mortal.

Jesus went on to mention other noble attributes that God conferred on him. He made his kind to his mother, and did not make him arrogant or wretched.

"(He) hath made me kind to my mother, and not overbearing or miserable"

(al- Qur'ān 19:32)

All these above mention verses shows that Jesus was human being, selected by Allah as His messenger. He was Allah's servant and prophet and that he also had to worship God like he was calling people to do.

Another difference between words of both accounts (Qur'ānic and Arain) is that in Arain Jesus told to his mother that his mission of coming in this world is to save the people from original sin. In Qur'ān Jesus does not say any thing like this. According to Qur'ān every prophet comes in this world to guide the people to right path but there is no concept of original sin.

One common thing in both the narrations is virgin birth of Jesus. In both saying Jesus declared that he was born without father. So virgin birth of Jesus is a great miracle also.

## 1.6 Christian's response to the Qur'ānic miracle of Speaking in the cradle

Regarding the sources of Qur'ān there are some claims of orientalists e.g. Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) himself was the author of the Qur'ān or Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) copied or adopted from previous.<sup>1</sup> In this section we will discuss only one claim of these orientalist's that is related to our topic. This approach states that Muhammad (p.b.u.h) simply

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<sup>1</sup> According to catholic encyclopedia there are six sources of Qur'ān visit <http://www.newadvent.com>. (last accessed 12.6.2011).

copied the non-canonical Christian sources. And to 'prove' their assumptions they often come up with similarities between Qur'ān and non-canonical gospel accounts.<sup>1</sup> Among these parallel accounts an important account is of parallelism between the non-canonical gospel texts and the narratives in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> chapters of the Qur'ān related to Jesus early life. Christian missionaries quote these narrations to prove that Qur'ān is no more than an inaccurate and distorted reproduction of stories and passage from non-canonical gospels. Tisdall says:

"There seems to be no satisfactory proof that an Arabic version of the New Testament existed in Muhammad's time. ....(but) many of the mythical stories which are contained in the non-canonical gospel Gospels and other similar works, together with certain heretical views on various subjects, must have reached Muhammad (p.b.u.h) and have been accepted by him as true."<sup>2</sup>

Neal Robinson in his book also says similar to Tisdall. According to him it is unlikely that the canonical Christian scriptures or other Christian writings were translated into Arabic before the rise of Islām. Thus we should probably think in term of an indirect knowledge of Christian sources based on hearsay or *ad hoc* translation rather than on literary borrowing. These sources were Syriac Christian sources. Syriac translation of protoevangelium of James and the Infancy story of Thomas existed in pre-Islāmic times. The Arabic Infancy Gospel and the Gospel of pseudo-Matthew are later work but both probably drew on pre-Islāmic Syriac sources.<sup>3</sup> Neal Robinson goes on and says that Qur'ānic representations of Jesus point Nestorian and Monophysite influence.<sup>4</sup> Nestorius call Marry by the title *Theotokos* (mother of God). Their real concern seems to have been to safeguard the distinctness of human and divine natures of Christ. The Monophysites went to other extreme and says that after the

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<sup>1</sup> For detail of these similar accounts between Qur'ān and non canonical see Tisdall, *Original sources of the Qur'ān*, (London: Society for promoting Christian knowledge, 1905), p.135.

<sup>2</sup> Tisdall, op.cit, pp 140-141

<sup>3</sup> Neal Robinson, *Christ in Islām and Christianity*, op.cit. p.19

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p.20

incarnation he had only a single divine nature and the 'Trinity was one Divinity', one nature, one essence'. In the light of all this it is arguable that in agreement with Monophysites the Qur'ān emphasizes that God is one. In agreement with Nestorian it stresses the full humanity of Christ. In opposition to both it rejects all Trinitarian language and all talk of divine sonship.<sup>1</sup>

Christian scholars gives some proves (so called) that shows that Muhammad (p.b.u.h) was influenced by Christian sources when he composed the Qur'ān. The sources of arguments they are using for 'proves' are the Qur'ān, Hādīth, and Siārt. According to them Muhammad (p.b.u.h) had many opportunities of learning the Christian doctrines.<sup>2</sup> Because Christian's were in contact with Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) from childhood onward and that they lived in area near Macca. While Muhammad was in the care of his uncle, he went on his first trip with the merchants to Bosrā. Even at the age of twelve, he was hailed there as God's messenger by a Nestorian Christian monk named Bahirā. This Bahirā introduced to Muhammad Christian teachings for the first time. Muhammad would later encounter another Christian, Kuss ibn Saidā, bishop of Nijrān, at the fair at 'Okaz which was held close to Mecca. But perhaps the most important Christian that Muhammad knew was Warqāh.<sup>3</sup> Warqāh, was the cousin to Khādijah, Muhammad's wife. Warqāh had become a Christian before Muhammad's calling and had even translated part of the Gospel into the Arabic language.<sup>4</sup>

Tisdall wants to show, while talking about the non-canonical gospel *Injīlūt Tufūliyyah*, better known as Arabic Infancy Gospel, that Mary-the Copt taught the Prophet that Jesus speak in the cradle. Tisdall says:

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p.20

<sup>2</sup> Goldsack, *The origin of the Qur'ān*, (London: The Christian literature society, 1907), p. 25

<sup>3</sup> A Guillaume, (Tr.) *sīrat Rāsūl-Allāh*, [Ibn Ishaq], op.cit.p.83

<sup>4</sup> Muhammad Khalifa, The authorship of Qur'ān (art)The Koran; critical concepts in Islāmic studies(London: Routledge Curzon ,2004) Vol 1,p126.also see also <http://david.a.wilson.jr.kyndra.smithenglishcompositionII.8 February 2011>

".....the Christian governor of Egypt sent prophet (p.b.u.h) a present of two girls. One of whom was "Mary the Copt". This girl, though not having good knowledge of Gospel, must doubtless have known so popular a legend as that contained in the "Gospel of the Infancy" at that time was. Muhammad probably learnt the tale from her....."<sup>1</sup>

Above all saying can show very well how Christian Apologetic connect Qur'anic version with non-canonical gospels to show that Qur'an is not word of God. Now we are giving some objections those are particularly related to Qur'anic account of Jesus speaking in a cradle.

James M. Arlandson says that Muhammad did not receive this information about infant Jesus from God as revelation but he took from non-canonical gospels.<sup>2</sup> It is not necessary that Muhammad would have any of the non-canonical gospels in front of him, poring over them. Instead, he picks up ideas here and there in a hodge-podge way, along the trade routes, as the stories circulated by poets or simple storytellers or curious seekers over the centuries. Context of "speaking in a cradle" indicates an "Islamic miracle". In these verses, Muhammad turns Jesus into a Muslim. The baby Muslim Jesus uses the word *salāt* or obligatory prayers, the second of Five Pillars in Islām. Jesus the infant uses the word *zakāt* or the charity tax that all Muslims must pay, the third pillar of Islām. By the changing of words I am Jesus, the Son of God into I am the servant of Allah Muhammad altered the story to fit his denial of the Sonship of Christ.

Jochen Katz also says similar to Arlandson.<sup>3</sup> According to him in this miracle Muslim Theology comes from the Jesus's lips and it shows very clearly that Muhammad took the

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<sup>1</sup> W. St. Clair Tisdall, *The Original Sources Of The Qur'an*, op.cit. pp.170-171

<sup>2</sup> James M. Arlandson Apocryphal gospels in the Qur'an Fictional revelations must yield to the truth. <http://www.answering-Islam.org> (last accessed 12.6.2011).

<sup>3</sup> I am all the Prophets Jochen Katz <http://www.answering-Islam.org/Qur'an/Sources/allprophets.html>. (last accessed 12.6.2011).

story of speaking in the cradle from non-canonical sources but put in different words in to Jesus's mouth and made him preach "Muhammad message".<sup>1</sup>

### 1.7 Refutation of these Christian claims

From ancient times to the present day, the aim of the evangelical Christian missionaries is to show that the Qur'ān was plagiarized from the Bible and Muhammad being an imposter. Scholars of Islām refute all these assumptions. Here we are summarizing all answer.

Firstly Muhammad (p.b.u.h) was illiterate and could not copy what he could not read. Allah (s.w.t) testifies Himself in the Qur'ān 29:48.

Secondly even if one were to assume, for argument's sake, that Muhammad (p.b.u.h) take help from his scribes, then there is no evidence that any of the non-canonical gospel was existed during his life even the first Arabic translation of the "New Testament" did not appear until one thousand years after Prophet Muhammad's death.

According to Sidney Griffith the gospel was first translated into Arabic for in the ninth century in Palestine.<sup>2</sup>

Thirdly There is a wealth of historical evidence to show similar evidence that there was no Christian influence in the Hijāz where Muhammad (p.b.u.h) lived, so we must ask ourselves who then would have taught him the Bible or the non-canonical gospel (which were not even in Arabic)?.

The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* states concerning the time of the Muhammad (p.b.u.h) that: "The Hijāz [Arabian Peninsula] had not been touched by Christian preaching. Hence organization of the Christian church was neither to be expected nor found."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For more criticism visit: Masud Masihiyyen, Surah Maryam the Curse of Apocrypha: <http://www.answering-Islam.org> (last accessed 12.6.2011).

A.F. Findly,(art), 'Gospel Apocryphal', *A dictionary of Christ and Gospels*, (New York: Charles Scribner's sons, 1911) Vol 1, p683.

<http://www.answeringIslam.net/Qur'an/Sources/allprophets.htm> (last accessed 12.6.2011).

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Richard David, p.153

Fourthly it is also assumed that Prophet (p.b.u.h) learnt the Qur'ān from Warqā the relative of khadījā. History tells us that The Prophet (p.b.u.h) met him only twice, first when Warqā was worshipping at the Ka'aba, (before the prophetic Mission) and he kissed the Prophet's forehead affectionately. The second was when the Prophet (p.b.u.h) went to meet Warqā after receiving the first revelation.<sup>2</sup> Warqā died 3 years later and the revelation continued for about 23 years.

Fifthly there is however, couple of problems with teaching of Mary-the Copt to the Prophet about the Jesus speaking in the cradle. The verse concerning Jesus speaking in the cradle is a verse that revealed in Makkāh. Mary-the Copt was sent to the Prophet (p.b.u.h) in the seventh year of Hijrāh so at that time this verse was already revealed.

Sixthly The objection regarding Prophet's meetings with Christian's leaders is also do not have any base. Dr Zakir Naik says is in refuting this concept:<sup>3</sup>

All historical records available show that Muhammad (p.b.u.h) had made only three trips outside Makkāh before his Prophet hood.

- i) At the age of 6 he accompanied his mother to Madināh.
- ii) Between the age of nine & twelve, he went to Syria with his uncle Abu Tālib for business.
- iii) At the age of 25, he led Khadija's (R.A) caravan to Syria.

It is highly imaginary to assume that the Qur'ān resulted from just few occasional chats and meetings with the Christians or Jews from any of the above three trips.

Lastly, we do agree that there are some similarities between the Christian sources and the Qur'ān. That does not indicate that the latter had been copied from the former. It means that

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<sup>1</sup> *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, op.cit, Vol. 1, pp. 721-722.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Bukhārī, *al-Jami' al-Sabib*, Vol. 4, p.451, number 605

<sup>3</sup> Is Qur'ān God's words. [http://www.irf.net/irf/dtp/dawah\\_tech/ques20e.htm](http://www.irf.net/irf/dtp/dawah_tech/ques20e.htm) (3 of 3) (Last accessed 7.7.2006)

they both have a common third source. All the revelations of Allah (s.w.t) have the common message of 'monotheism'. They have the common message.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **"CREATING THE BIRD FROM CLAY"**

**2.1 CREATING THE BIRD FROM CLAY AND NON-CANONICAL GOSPELS.**

**2.1.1 INTRODUCTION OF THESE NON-CANONICAL GOSPELS.**

**2.1.1.1 INFANCY GOSPEL OF THOMAS (INTHOM)**

**2.1.1.2 GOSPEL OF PSEUDO MATTHEW.(PSMATT)**

**2.2 JESUS CREATING THE BIRD FROM CLAY AND QUR'ĀN.**

**2.2.1 CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO QUR'ĀNIC MIRACLE OF  
CREATING THE BIRD FROM CLAY.**

**2.2.2 MUSLIM COMMENTATORS AND MIRACLE OF CREATING  
THE BIRD FROM CLAY.**

**2.3 COMPARISION BETWEEN QUR'ĀNIC AND NON-CANONICAL  
ACCOUNTS OF MIRACLE.**

**2.4 QUR'ĀNIC PROVISO.**

**2.5 MIRACLES OF JESUS AND HIS DIVINITY.**

**2.6 QUR'ĀN AND DIVINITY OF JESUS.**

## CHAPTER 2

### CREATING THE BIRD FROM CLAY

Qur'ān attribute to Jesus another very important miracle that he can create bird from clay. Interestingly none of canonical gospel has similar passage. But there are three non-canonical gospels which have a number of different and more detail version of this miracle. In this section we will study how Qur'ān and non-canonical gospels both describes this miracle.

#### 2.1 Creating the bird from clay and non-canonical gospels

There are three non-canonical gospels which mentioned Jesus miracle to create the birds from clay. These non-canonical gospels are named as 'The Arabic Gospel of Infancy' (AraIn), 'Infancy Gospel of Thomas' (InThom) and Gospel of pseudo- Mathew (PsMatt).

The Arabic Gospel of Infancy talks that at age of seven, one day Jesus was playing with boys of his own age. Boys were making images of oxen, bird and other animals with clay. Everyone was praising his own work. Jesus said to the boys the images that I will make, I will order them to walk and they will walk. The boys asked him are you son of creator? And Jesus really made birds from clay and they began to jump. When Jesus gave them permission they again stood still. In same gospel it is also states that Jesus made figures of birds and sparrows which flew when he ordered them to fly similarly drank and eat. Boys told this incident to their parents at home. Their parents forbade them to play with Jesus because he is wizard (AraIn 36).

In another place this gospel (AraIn) recorded same incident with different detail. It states that on day of Sabbath Jesus was playing with boys on stream of water. Jesus made 12 sparrows and arranged them on each side of pond. During this moment a Jew (son of Hanan) came and get angry when he saw boys making figures on day of Sabbath. He destroyed their fish ponds but Jesus clapped his hands over sparrow and these sparrows flew away chirping.

Then the son of Hanan came up to the fish-pond of Jesus also, and kicked it with his shoes, and the water of it vanished away. And Jesus said to him: "As that water has vanished away, so thy life shall likewise vanish away" ( AraIn 46). And immediately that boy dried up.

Another non-canonical gospel which mentions this miracle is Infancy Gospel of Thomas (not to be confused with the very different "Gospel of Thomas"). Infancy Gospel of Thomas shows that Jesus at five years old on Sabbath day, playing by a stream, making pools. Jesus then take soft clay and fashions twelve sparrows, but a neighbor complains to Jesus father 'Joseph' that your child is violating the Sabbath day prohibition against work on that day. Joseph chastises his son but Jesus clap his hands, ordered them to 'be gone' and the clay sparrow came to life and fly away ( InThom III).

Gospel of pseudo- Mathew report miracle in same manner as Infancy gospel of Thomas does. It says:

"And it came to pass, after these things that in the sight of all Jesus took clay from the pools which He had made, and of it made twelve sparrows. And it was the Sabbath when Jesus did this..... When, therefore, one of the Jews had seen Him doing this, he said to Joseph: Joseph, do you not see the child Jesus working on the Sabbath at what it is not lawful for him to do..... And when Joseph heard this, he reproved him, ..... And when Jesus heard Joseph, He struck His hands together, and said to His sparrows: Fly! And at the voice of His command they began to fly....., they were filled with great astonishment. And some praised and admired Him, but others reviled Him. And certain of them went away to the chief priests and the heads of the Pharisees, and reported to them that Jesus the son of Joseph had done great signs and miracles in the sight of all the people of Israel." (PsMatt 27)

Here we can see that these three gospels have some similarities as well as differences among each other. According to Arabic Gospel of Infancy at age of seven Jesus perform this miracle but Infancy gospel of Thomas states that at that time Jesus was five years old. In Arabic

Gospel of Infancy Jesus made different shapes but other two gospels mention Jesus making sparrows.

Due to these differences some writers count them two separate incidents.<sup>1</sup>

After mentioning account of 'creating bird from clay' in three non-canonical gospels we will now see introduction of these non-canonical gospels briefly. First account was of 'Arabic gospel of savior'. Its introduction we have discussed in first chapter, here we will see introduction of remaining two gospels, gospel of Thomas and pseudo Mathew.

### **2.1.1 Introduction of these non-canonical gospels**

#### **2.1.1.1 Infancy Gospel of Thomas (InThom)**

The infancy gospel of Thomas (InThom) is a collection of miracle stories performed by Jesus prior to his twelfth birthday. The original language in which gospel was written is not yet clear: either Greek or Syriac is possible.<sup>2</sup> This gospel attributes itself to an unknown Thomas. All that can be said about the author of this book with any certainty is that he must have been a gentile Christians, since this book betrays no knowledge of Judaism.<sup>3</sup> This document may have provided source material for the later Arabic Infancy Gospel. It was supposedly popular with the Nestorian Christians.<sup>4</sup>

The text of infancy gospel of Thomas (InThom) requires further clarification. There are many translations from different manuscripts of InThom.<sup>5</sup> In 1853 Constantin Von Tischendorf published his book which has become the standard scholarly edition of the text.<sup>6</sup> He actually published two versions of text (InThom). These are based primarily on two 15<sup>th</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Fatoohi, Louay, *The mystery of the historical Jesus*, op.cit.p.491

<sup>2</sup> Ron Cameron, *The other gospels: non canonical gospels texts*, (London; Lutterworth Press, 1983), p. 122

<sup>3</sup> E. Henneck, *New Testament Apocrypha* op.cit. p.388

<sup>4</sup> Read more at Suite101: [Analysis of the Gnostic Infancy Gospel of Thomas | Suite101.com](http://amy-sillup.suite101.com/analysis-of-the-gnostic-infancy-gospel-of-thomas-a231795#ixzz1pP2Kdzpp) <http://amy-sillup.suite101.com/analysis-of-the-gnostic-infancy-gospel-of-thomas-a231795#ixzz1pP2Kdzpp> (last accessed 12.6.2011).

<sup>5</sup> For these different translations of InThom visit <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/infancythomas.html> (last accessed 12.6.2011).

<sup>6</sup> Constantin von Tischendorf, *When were our Gospels written? an argument*, (London: The religious tract society, 1853)

century manuscripts. First text is known as Greek A. It has 19 chapter of the text. Along this he published a second text known as Greek B, based on manuscript he found during his visit to St. Catherine's monastery in the Sinai. He also drew attention to several Latin witnesses to the text.<sup>1</sup>

In this research we will use the translation known as Greek text B. It is short but comprehended text taken by most of today's Scholar.<sup>2</sup> It has also been suggested that Greek B is a closer to the original form of text.<sup>3</sup>

In Thom Greek B text has 11 chapters.<sup>4</sup> In its first chapter, the prologue to the text opens with a self attribution of authorship to the "Thomas the Israelite". After this brief description of author the discussion moves on to the different miracles of Jesus. Interesting thing is that this gospel (In Thom) gives us two different pictures of Jesus Christ 'life taken' and 'life restorer'. In chapter one a young boy named as the 'son of Annas the scholar' drains the pools of water that were made by Jesus. In response to this act Jesus curse the boy and said you too will dry up like a tree and you will never produce leave or root (II.1). In response to this saying the boy withers up and dies. In another place, while Jesus is going through his village another boy running along bumps him on the shoulder. The petulant Jesus is angered and shouts on him that you will not continue your journey and child drops dead. The people of the village and parents of child were amazed and said that whence is this child, that every word which he speaks becomes a perfect work? But they also departed and accused Joseph by saying that teaches your child lesson not to curse (In Thom.IV:1). Beside this life insolent, uncontrolled and murderous character of Jesus, the Infancy Gospel of Thomas portrays Jesus also as blessed for people. In chapter 9 Jesus miraculously heals a

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Foster, *The Apocryphal Gospels: a very short introduction*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.220

<sup>2</sup> See: By Ron Cameron, *The Other gospels: non-canonical gospel texts*, (USA: The Westminster press, 1982), p. 124. Also E. Henneck, *New Testament Apocrypha*, op.cit

<sup>3</sup> Paul Foster, *The Apocryphal Gospels: a very short introduction*, op.cit. p.224

<sup>4</sup> For online translation M.R. James-Translation and Notes, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924) available online at <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/infancythomas-b-mrjames.html>(last accessed 12.6.2011).

young man who was near to die due to blood loss after cutting his foot with an axe. In another place Jesus resurrects a friend who is killed when he falls from a roof.<sup>1</sup>

Infancy gospel of Thomas also presented Jesus as a somewhat arrogant school boy.<sup>2</sup> A certain teacher, Zacchaeus by name, try to teach the lesson to Jesus but Jesus laughed at him and said: "I have knowledge more than you, for I am before the worlds. And I know when the fathers of your fathers were begotten, and I know how many the years of your life are."

(InThom VI:1)

In next chapter when his teacher try to teach him alphabet in Hebrew but Jesus knows all alphabets. This make teacher astonished.<sup>3</sup>

Infancy Gospel of Thomas also attribute Jesus making clay birds, which he then proceeds to bring to life, an act also attributed to Jesus in Qur'ān 5:110

#### 2.1.1.2 Gospel of pseudo Matthew (PsMatt):<sup>4</sup>

This gospel is written by Mathew the Evangelist in Hebrew language and later was translated by Jerome in Latin.<sup>5</sup> This gospel has also been known as The Infancy Gospel of Matthew, but apparently its original title was "The Book about the Origin of the Blessed Mary and the Childhood of the Savior." Now it is called 'the Pseudo Gospel' because scholars are in agreement that its original author was not the evangelist known as Matthew.<sup>6</sup> Professor Elliot and others date to the 6<sup>th</sup> century C.E.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> InThom. VIII

<sup>2</sup> F. F. Bruce , *Jesus and Christian Origins Outside the New Testament*, (UK: Ederdmans Publishing Co, 2000), p. 87

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.VII

<sup>4</sup> English translation available online at: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0848.htm>  
(last accessed12.6.2011).

<sup>5</sup> Fatoohi Louay, op.cit, p 748

<sup>6</sup> Paul Foster, *The Apocryphal Gospels: a very short introduction*, op.cit. p.78

<sup>7</sup> Daniel L. Smith, Christopher, Spigneser, *Lost books of the bible*, (oxford: Forgotten Books, 1902) pg.85.

Gospel of pseudo Mathew has 42 chapters. Its text primarily repeats the earlier stories contained in the Infancy Gospel of James (also known as Protoevangelium of James) and it ends with repetition from the Infancy Gospel of Thomas with some changes and expansion. The story begins with information about Mary's parents. Here we are mentioning some important topics of this gospel.

- Introduction of Mary's family and her birth.
- Emphasis on Mary's piety.
- Jesus's birth and after this examination of Mary's.
- The Holy family journey to Egypt.
- Miraculous of Jesus.

As this is a long gospel and all issues mention above are not related to our topic so we will briefly see the last issue that is miracles of Jesus in Gospel of pseudo Mathew.

During the journey to Egypt, Holy family stopped at a certain cave where they intended to rest. Three boys and a girl accompanied them. Suddenly, many dragons came out of the cave, obviously scaring the children to death. Jesus stood on his feet before the dragons, and they also adored him. Then they left peacefully (PsMatt-18). Likewise, all other animals adored Jesus, including lions, panthers, and wolves. Soon, they had a whole contingency of wild animals accompanying them into Egypt. They walked together with the lions and lambs in peace (PsMatt-19). On the third day of their journey, Mary asked to rest under the shade of a tree. She sat under a palm tree, and wished to eat of its fruit. Jesus asked the palm tree to bend down so they could gather the fruit. It stayed down until they had filled themselves, and then Jesus gave it permission to stand back up. It also supplied them with water from its root (PsMatt-20-21).

A similar mention of Mary sitting under a palm and appearance of rivulet beneath her and dates on the palm tree is also mention in Qur'an but in a very different context. Qur'an states that when pains of child birth started Mary came to the trunk of the palm-tree. Mary experienced such birth pains that she cried (Would that I had died and been forgotten before

this). Then he (Gibrāiel) called her from below her that do not worry your God is with you and shake the trunk of the palm-tree towards you which had withered there will drop fresh and ripe dates. So eat, of the dates, and drink, from the rivule (al- Qur'ān 19:22-26).

These two accounts represent another contextual difference between the Qur'ān and non-canonical gospels.

The gospel of Pseudo Mathew goes on and says that during their journey to Egypt Jesus was able to shorten the distance so that they traveled in one day what should have taken 30 (PsMatt. 22).

As we have said earlier that this gospel has some similarities with Protoevangelium of James and infancy Gospel of Thomas. So in the end of this gospel Jesus portray as harmful to people as Gospel of Thomas does (PsMatt- 29). Jesus's going to school and behaving rudely with teachers is also mentioned here (PsMatt.30-31). Along with these harmful miracles there are also some miracles where Jesus acts as blessed and controlled over nature too (PsMatt-32-33-34).

The most interesting and important miracle which is attributed to Jesus Christ in this gospel is that he creates twelve sparrows with clay on Sabbath day (PsMatt-27). Canonical gospels did not have any reference resemble to this miracle but Qur'ān did so. In following section we will see how Qur'ān mention Jesus creating the bird from clay.

## 2.2 Jesus creating the bird from clay and Qur'ān

There are two places where Qur'ān states that Jesus creates birds from clay. These are as follows:

وَنَسْوَلُ إِلَيْنَا بَنِي إِلَيَّا إِنَّمَا مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ أَنْ لَفَقَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَطْرَافِ كَنْزًا مُلِيقًا فَلَمَّا فَتَحْتُمْ فِيهِ فَلَمْ يَكُنْ مُطْهَرًا  
يَلْفَتُ أَنْفَهُ

"And (appoint him) an apostle to the Children of Israel, (with this message): " I have come to you, with a Sign from your Lord, in that I make for you out of clay, as it

were, the figure of a bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by God's leave....." (al- Qur'ān 3:49)

"Then will Allah 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 didst speak to the people in childhood and in maturity. Behold! I taught thee the Book and Wisdom, the Law and the Gospel and behold! Thou makest out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, by My leave, and thou breathest into it and it becometh a bird by My leave ....." (al- Qur'ān 5:110)

Here we can see that Qur'ān did not mention further detail about this miracle. It just describe that Jesus creates birds from clay by Allah's leave.

### 2.2.1 Christian response to Qur'anic miracle of creating the bird from clay.

Most Christian theologians developed a polemical approach to the study of Jesus in the Qur'ān. Here we will study their response to Jesus's miracle of creating the bird from clay. After mentioning their response we will study classical *Tafsir*'s and try to search answers in light of those polemic response.

## 1. Jesus as creator

Christian polemicists have frequently suggested that by attributing this miracle to Jesus the Qur'an implies that he was allowed to exercise divine power. They did so already in Prophet Muhammad's time. Ibn-e-Ishäq, the biographer of the prophet said that the Christian of

Najrān argued the divinity of Christ, for he made 'clay bird and then breathed into them so that they flew away'.<sup>1</sup>

They are giving several arguments in favour of their claim.<sup>2</sup>

- First the verb used of Jesus creating the bird is *khalaqa* (خَلَقَ), a verb which Qur'ān used almost exclusively for God's creating.
- Second the substance from which Jesus used according to Qur'ān is *clay* (*tin*), the same substance which used by God to create man.<sup>3</sup>
- The verb *nafakha* shows how Jesus blows in to the birds; same verb is used for God's blowing his spirit into man at the creation<sup>4</sup> also into Mary when she conceived.
- There are number of passages in the Qur'ān which presents criteria to distinguish the true God from false gods. Qur'ān also stress that it is only God who gives life and causes death. See following verses.

"He, the Creator of all things: then worship ye Him" (al-Qur'ān 6:102)

"He created all things, and He hath full knowledge of all things." (al-Qur'ān 6:101)

The Qur'ān also criticize the unbelievers for worshiping or calling on objects which cannot create.

"He created all things, and He hath full knowledge of all things." (al-Qur'ān 16:20)

Again Allah (s.w.t) says in Qur'ān:

".....Or do they assign to God partners who have created (anything) as He has created, so that the creation seemed to them similar? Say: "God is the Creator of all things: He is the One, the Supreme and Irresistible." (al-Qur'ān 13:16)

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<sup>1</sup> A Guillaume, (Tr.) *sirat Rasul-Allah*, [Ibn Ishaq], op.cit, pp.270-271

<sup>2</sup> See: Neal Robinson, *Christ in Islam and Christianity*, op.cit, p.143 .see also Qur'ān. Contradiction Is Jesus God or Not? <<http://www.answeringIslam.com..>> (last accessed 12.6.2011).

<sup>3</sup> Al-Qur'ān 6:2,7:12,17:61,23:12,28:38,32:7,37:11,38:71 etc.

<sup>4</sup> Al Qur'ān 15:29,32:9 and 38:72

The implication of the above texts according to Christian polemicists is that those things or persons that are worshiped besides Allah are not worthy of such honor since they cannot create as He does. Christians also says that we can infer from this that if there were a person who could create in a similar fashion to the way Allah creates, then that individual would be worthy of the same praise and worship.<sup>1</sup>

Christians also claim that thus Jesus, unlike the other objects of worship, creates exactly the same way that Allah does! Christ also has the very same breath of life; the same ability to grant life, Christ created a living bird from clay just as God created man from clay. Therefore these passages teach that Jesus had the same life-giving Spirit of God.

We can also understand how Christians try to prove Jesus divinity from Qur'an by applying miracle of creating birds from clay in following manner.

1. Allah alone can create. (He is a *khaliq*).
2. *Khalqa* is applied to Jesus.
3. Therefore, Jesus must be God according to Islām.

Qadianies have refuted Jesus making figures from clay.<sup>2</sup> Their objection is also similar to Christians. According to them if the Jesus Christ is believed to create birds by breathing into them, one will have to believe in his divinity. Then what difference would remain between the polytheists and Muslims.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Qur'an take this miracle from non-canonical gospels<sup>4</sup>

This miracle of creating figures from clay and then breathing life into them is missing from the canonical Gospels but non-canonical gospels have some similar passages. According to Christian historian this miracle is an example that how Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) take

<sup>1</sup> For orientalists claim visit, Sam Shamoun, How Sura 3:7 suddenly makes sense <<http://www.AnsweringIslam.com>>. (last accessed 12.6.2011).

<sup>2</sup> For their objections on other miracles of Jesus see *The Qur'anic Encyclopedia*, op.cit, Vol.6, p.1688.

<sup>3</sup> See also M.Ali, *Biyan-ul-Qur'an*, *translation and commentary* (in Urdu) (Lahore: Ahmadiya Anjuman-e- 'Isāhat-e-Islām, 1969), commentary on S3:49 also visit <http://aaill.org>

<sup>4</sup> Tisdall, op.cit, p175-176

this miracle from non-canonical gospel.<sup>1</sup> Neal Robinson while taking on this issue says in his book 'Christ in Islām and Christianity' that miracle of creating the bird from clay is found in the Infancy gospel of Thomas which existed in pre Islāmic times. Neal Robinson says very clearly that Muhammad (p.b.u.h) must take influence from this gospel.<sup>2</sup> Similar to this many other Christians also said that Qur'ānic material is borrowed from non-canonical gospels. We have given these claims with answers from Muslims in chapter one. Here we are leaving this issue but focus on first objection of Christian polemic scholars that Qur'ānic material about Jesus proves his divinity.

For critical analyses of these Christian's polemic objections we have to study classical *Tafsīr*'s. We will take issue one by one and study it into detail.

### The Qur'ānic Vocabulary

Before considering other detail we must know how Qur'ān use this word. In the Qur'ān, the finite word *khalaqa* occurs 176 times in the active voice. Among them 162 instances Allah is the subject. 11 incidents are exceptions since in them it is used for the pagan deities or man whose creative power is denied. In 1 incident where the finite verb is used of human being creating a falsehood, it implies that they cannot create any thing substantial? In only two incidents 'Isā is the subject.<sup>3</sup>

Although there are many places where word *khalaqa* is used for Allah(as we have shown some places above)but first verse occur in S. Baqara(2:21).

تَبَّأْنَ أَنْسَاسٌ أَعْتَدْنَا لَكُمْ أَنْدِيَّةً تَنَاهِيَّةً وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ فِيَّكُمْ لَعْنَكُمْ تَنَاهِيَّةً

"O ye people! Adore your Guardian-Lord, who created you and those who came before you, that ye may have the chance to learn righteousness"

<sup>1</sup> Kate Zebiri, "contemporary Muslim understanding of the miracle of Jesus" *The Muslim world*, Vol. 90 (spring, 2000)

<sup>2</sup> Neal Robinson, op.cit, p.19

<sup>3</sup> Neal Robinson, "creating the bird from clay: a miracle of Jesus in the Qur'ān and classical Muslim Exegesis", *Muslim World*, LXXIX/I(1989),p12

To understand the difference between *khalaqa* as used for Allah (s.w.t) and as used for Jesus we have to look into S 2:21 (where Allah is the agent) and in S 3:49 and S 5:110 (where 'Isā is the agent).

## 2.2.2 Muslim commentators and miracle of creating the bird from clay

### The meaning of the word Khalaqa : (خلاق)

First of all it is important for us to search what is meaning of the word 'khalaqa'. *Lisān ul Arāb* defines 'Khalaq' in these words:<sup>1</sup>

*Khalaqa* signifies the act of measuring; or determine the measure, or the like, of a thing; and making a thing by measure; or according to the measure of another thing; or proportioning a thing to another thing; this is the primary meaning. You say *khalaqa 'l-na ala* (خلاق النعل) He determined the measured the sandal or proportioned it (*qaddara*). [Hence] it signifies also the bringing of thing into existence from a state of non-existence. This meaning applied only to God.<sup>2</sup>

Tābārī in both places (2:21 and 3:49) leave the word *khalaqa* without commenting. Zamakhshari while commenting on 3:49 (where Jesus is agent) defines *khalaqa* as *qaddara* which generally means 'determine' or 'make in proportion.'<sup>3</sup> While commenting on S 2:21 where of course God is the agent, he defines "khalaqa" as the bringing of the things into being by proportioning it and making it regular.<sup>4</sup> In support of this he cites the expression also by common use of Arabs 'to fashion a sandal' (*khalaqa 'l-na ala*).

Rāzī's treatment of the verb *khalaqa* is much longer. Commenting on S 2:21 he begins his discussion by referring to the philologist Ibn al-Anbārī (d. 328/940) whose work he knows from *Tahdhib* of al-Azhari (d.371/982). According to Rāzī Ibn al-Anbārī showed that

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<sup>1</sup>Allama Ibn Manzoor, *L'Isān-ul-Arab*, (Berut: Rar-ul-Ahya Turas Al-Arabi, 1988) Part 4, pp. 192-193

<sup>2</sup> See also: Edward William Lane, *Arabic English Lexicon* (Lahore: Islāmic Book Centre, 1978), Vol. 2, P.799.

<sup>3</sup> Zamakhshari, op.cit, V.1,p.51, on 3:49

<sup>4</sup> Ibid,p.91 ,on 2:21

*khalaq* had the meaning of *taqdîr* (determining, measuring), *taswiya* (arranging, making-regular) and *tasvir* (fashioning, representing).<sup>1</sup>

In support of this Rāzī mentions several evidences from Qur'ān, from poetry and from other non Qur'ānic expressions. The most important evidence is, that of Qur'ān itself. (So here we will focus on Qur'ānic evidences only)

Rāzī draws attention to four different groups of *āya*s:

I. أَنْعَنْ أَنْخَلَقَنَ "So blessed be God, the best of creators" (al-Qur'ān 23:14)

Since human beings cannot be creators in the sense of "causing to be" (*takwīn*) and "originating" (*ibdā'*) the word creator (*khaliq*) should here be interpreted in term of "determining and arranging" (بالنَّكْدِيرِ وَالنَّسْوِيَّةِ).

II. إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا خَلْقُ الْأَوَّلِينَ "This is no other than a customary device of the ancients" (al-Qur'ān 26:137)

إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا تَخْبَلَى "This is nothing but a made-up tale!" (al-Qur'ān 38:7)

وَكَتَلُونَ إِنْكَانِ "And ye invent falsehood" (al-Qur'ān 29:17)

In these *āya*s *khalqa* and its derivatives and applied to lying because the liar determines and fashion as falsehood in the imagination.

III. أَنِّي لَخَلَقْتُكُمْ مِّنْ كَلْمَنِ كَهْيَنَةِ الْطَّيْرِ "in that I make for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird" (al-Qur'ān 3:49)

وَإِذْ تَخْلُقُ مِنْ كَلْمَنِ كَهْيَنَةِ الْطَّيْرِ "hou makest out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird" (al-Qur'ān 5:110)

In these two *āya*s, which are of course related to our topic, Rāzī follows Ibn-Anbārī's explanation for the sense of "determining and fashioning"

IV. هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَسِيبًا ثُمَّ لَمَسَوْهُ فَسَوَّهُ فَنَمْتَعْ سَنَوْنَ وَهُوَ يَكُلُّ شَيْءًا عَلَيْهِ

<sup>1</sup> Rāzī, op.cit, V.1, p.331, on 2:21, see also, V.3,p 227, on 3:45.

"It is He who hath created for you all things that are on earth." (al-Qur'ān 2:29)

He argues that the perfect tense of *khalaqa* indicates God's activity in the past. Yet it is nonsense to suppose that everything that is on the earth at present and already been "created" by God if what is meant by this is that He had already brought it into being and originated it. The meaning must be rather that He "determined" or "predetermined" (*qaddara*) in the past.<sup>1</sup> Having reviewed all of this Qur'ānic evidence Rāzī concludes that Ibn-Anbari's explanation of the verb was correct. Now if this is the case it calls into questions that how can we call Allah (s.w.t) *khaliq* because in this way we will attribute human qualities to God. Rāzī while commenting 2:21 mention two conflicting opinions of two Mu'tazilite scholars before stating the orthodox view and his own hesitation about it.<sup>2</sup>

First Mu'tazilite scholar which he mentioned is Qdādi 'Abd al-Jabbār (d.416/1025). He said *Khaliq* is an action with the same meaning as *taqdir*, classical Arabs does not require that action should stem only from God. On the contrary, Scripture also speaks against such a view (eg 23:14 5:110) But (difference between action of God and action of others is that) when God perform actions He certainly had knowledge of the consequences and the particulars of the enterprise. So this name (*khaliq*) should be conferred on Him in a special sense. Second scholar which is quoted by Rāzī is Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Basri (d. 369/970). He said name of *khaliq* cannot be applied to God because *taqdir* and *taswiya* amount to *fikr* (thought), *zann* (supposition) and *husbān* (reckoning). And it is impossible to God.<sup>3</sup>

In S3:49 Rāzī repeats the quotation from Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Basri but omits Abdul-al-Jabbar's quotation. Then he continuous:

Our fellows said that God alone is *khaliq*. In support of this they quote God's saying that 'God is the *khaliq* of all things' (S. 13:16 and S.39:62 also S.35:3). This is a weak argument. Because what He actually said was "Is there any *khaliq* other then God who provideth for you from the sky ...?" The meaning of this is, is there any *khaliq* other then God who may

<sup>1</sup> Rāzī, op.cit, V.3, p.228 on 3:49.

<sup>2</sup> Rāzī op.cit, V.1, p.332 on 2:21

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

be described as providing from the sky? It is unnecessary for the person who believes that there is no khaliq who fits this description other then God to believe that there is no khaliq other then God. They answer Abu Abdullah's statement by saying that *taqdir* and *taswiya* are equivalent to knowledge (*lm*) and supposition (*zann*). But that although later is impossible in God's essence the former is established.<sup>1</sup>

Baydāwī reproduce almost word for word the comments of Zamakhshari.

Ibn kathir while commenting on S3:49 says that the meaning of the verb *khalqa* is *sawād*<sup>2</sup> but at S 2:21 where the God is the agent he says that God brought them out "from non existence to existence".<sup>3</sup>

After discussing this learned theological debate we find that verb *khalqa* has two senses: the root sense established by Ibn al Anbārī and the special sense which was only applicable to God .Jesus Christ formed the figure of the bird and Allah gave life to it. This was a miracle not independently of Jesus Christ, but was the divine bestowal upon him.

### Commentators and other Issues of miracle

#### What is a bird?

The term (*ta'ir*) in Arabic means "a wing creature moved in the air by means of his wings"<sup>4</sup>

M. Ali<sup>5</sup> in his commentary deny miracle of "creating the birds from clay". He interprets the word (*ta'ir*) as meaning a brave or spiritual man. By giving this meaning to the word *ta'ir* he interpret the *āya* as 'Jesus by breathing the spirit into mortals, will make them rise above those who are low upon the earth'.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rāzī op.cit, ,V.3 p.228 on 3:45

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, op.cit, V.1 p.240 on 3:41

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, op.cit, V.1 p.47 on 2:21

<sup>4</sup> Ibn-e-Manzoor, *L'Isān ul Arab*,(Beirut: Dar-ul-Sadar, 1954), Vol.8 ,p.237 See also Edward William Lane, *Arabic English Lexicon* (New York: Macmillan, 1985), Vol.5, p.1903.

<sup>5</sup> See M.Ali, *Biyan-ul-Qur'ān, translation and commentary*, op.cit, p.218.

All classical Muslim commentator's have traditionally accepted the word *ta'ir* in its real sense. Here we are mentioning how these commentators' explanation is against the M.Alia's understanding.

Tābārī mentions two traditions which says that the Jesus create one bird or flaying creature. The first tradition is traced back to Ibn Ishāq (d. 151/768) via Ibn Humayd and salama. It is as follows: Hazrat 'Isā was sitting one day with the boys from the elementary school. He took clay and said: "shall I make a bird for you from this clay"? They said, "Can you do that"? He replied "yes, by leave of my lord". Then he prepared it and when he had made it in the form of bird he blew into it. Then he said "becomes a bird by leave of my Lord". So it flew out between the palms of his hands. The boys went off and mention this incident to their teacher and spread this news among people. Jesus grew and the children of Israel had in mind to do away with him. So when his mother feared for him she bore him on a little donkey and went away running with him.<sup>1</sup>

The second tradition reported by Tābārī is traced back to Ibn Jurayj (d.150/767 or 151/768) via al -Qāsim, al-Hussayn, and Hajjāj. According to this tradition Jesus asked which bird would be hardest to create. They said to Jesus that bat is hardest to create because it has nothing but flesh. So Jesus made a bat.<sup>2</sup>

Zamakhshari's discussion on this issue is very short. He said only that according to traditions Jesus create was a bat.<sup>3</sup>

Rāzī said that it is reported that when 'Isā claim of prophet hood and produce miracles people began to ask him to create a bat. So he took clay and formed it and blew into it. It flew between heaven and earth.<sup>4</sup> Wahb (d.110/729) said that while it was flaying people kept their eyes on it but when it had disappeared from view it dropped down.

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<sup>1</sup> Tābārī: op.cit, on 3:49

<sup>2</sup> ibid

<sup>3</sup> Zamakhshari, op.cit,V.1,p.364 on 3:49

<sup>4</sup> Rāzī op.cit, V.1,p.228 on 3:49

Imam Rāzī also says that some people said 'Isā only created a bat but according to some other people he created different sort of birds. Nafi's reading (he was chief of madian school and he read singular) support the former view whereas the majority reading support the latter.<sup>1</sup>

Qurtubi also mention Wahab saying, which Rāzī has also mention in his commentary which says that when Jesus create birds ,they flew and go away from people's sight then dropped down so that there would be differentiation between Allah's creation and Jesus's creation.<sup>2</sup>

Neither Baydawī nor Ibn Kathīr writes any thing regarding this matter.

#### **Jesus creates a bird or birds?**

Tabārī while commenting on S 3:49 says that reader from the Hejaz read the singular *ta'ir* whears the rest of the readers read the plural *tayr*. Tābārī favors the latter because it implies a greater miracle also it complies with the written consonantal text of the Qur'ān and because it is the most widely attested reading.<sup>3</sup>

Rāzī in S 3:49 attributes the singular reading to Nafi and plural to other readers.<sup>4</sup> Then he said that it is a collective noun which sometimes denotes the plural and sometimes the singular. In S 5:110 he says that *tayr* is plural of *ta'ir* and that in this it resembles *da'n* the plural of *dain* and *rakb* is plural of *rakib*.<sup>5</sup>

#### **What did Jesus blow into?**

According to S 3:49 Jesus construction is regarding masculine 'blows *fibi*' whereas in S 5:110 his construction is regarding feminine 'blows *fiba*'. So, in both places we find different object created by Jesus. See following discussion shows how commentators are explaining this difference.

<sup>1</sup> Rāzī op.cit, ,V.1,p.228 on 3:49

<sup>2</sup> Qurtubi op.cit, V.2, p. 89 on 3:49

<sup>3</sup> Tābārī op.cit, V.2,p 274 on 3:49

<sup>4</sup> Rāzī op.cit, V.3,p 228 on 3:49

<sup>5</sup> Rāzī op.cit, V.4,p 459 on 5:110

Tābārī explains that both are grammatically correct.<sup>1</sup>

Zamakhshari's explanation is more clear .In both cases Jesus blows "into it" i.e. into "something resembling the form of bird"<sup>2</sup> but in 3:49 the construction is regarding as masculine because of "birds" whereas in S 5:110 it is regarded as feminine because of "form" which is famine.

Rāzī and Baydāwī give same explanation as Zamakhshari.

Ibn-Kathir does not draw attention to this difference between S 3:49 and 5:110.In S 3:49 he has just blow into the shape which is "represents".<sup>3</sup>

And in S 5:110 he has him blow into the "representation" which he "shapes"

#### Meaning of the word *Nafakah* (نفحة):

We have discuss how classical commentators explain miracle of Jesus creating the bird from clay and all other issues but we find that none of these commentators links Jesus 's blowing into the birds with God's blowing His sprit into man. Rāzī mention that Jesus breath was special but it cannot cause life or death by itself.<sup>4</sup> While commenting on S 3:49 he said that some theologians claim that this *āya* indicates that the spirit is a fine substance like the wind and is thus presented as breath. He continue by saying that there is a debate about whether it is permissible to say that Allah (s.w.t) endowed Jesus's breath with particular efficiency so that when he blew into things it caused them to come to life. Imam Rāzī prefer alternative view namely that Allah (s.w.t) created life by His own power at the moment when Jesus blew. In support of this he adds two *āya*'s from the Qur'ān:

"He Who created Death and Life," (al- Qur'ān 67:2) *الذى خلق الموت والحياة*

When Abraham was involved in a dispute he said;

"My Lord is He Who Giveth life and death." (al- Qur'ān 2:258) *ربك الذى يحيى ويميت*

<sup>1</sup> Tābārī op.cit,

<sup>2</sup> See Zamakhshari, op.cit, P.364 on S3:49 and S:5:110 p. 691

<sup>3</sup> See Ibn Kathir op.cit,p240 On 3:49 also p461 On 5:110

<sup>4</sup> Rāzī op.cit,V.3,p 228 on 3:45

Abraham's argument would have been worthless if were true of anyone else. Till here Rāzi's position is clear but he does not stop at this point .He adds that according to the Qur'ān Jesus is created by Gibrial's blowing into Marry and that therefore since Gibrial is a pure spirit and a pure spirit being it of course follows that Jesus breath was life and spirit.

## 2.3 Comparison between Qur'ānic and non-canonical account of miracle

Although same incident is reported by Qur'ān and non-canonical gospels but the parallel is not exact, In Qur'ān Jesus creates birds but exact number is not mention but in non-canonical sources Jesus creates twelve sparrows. In the Qur'ān he blows into them, here he claps his hands and issues an oral command. Qur'ān does not mention Jesus (peace be upon him) asking the sparrows to remember him and the sparrows noisily flying. In fact, the entire framework of the story of the Sabbath day is absent in the Qur'ān.

The Qur'ān only states that Jesus made a bird from clay and it transformed into an actual bird when he breathed into it. It (Qur'ān) does not gives us any information regarding age of Jesus means he was child or an adult when he perform this miracle. Non-canonical gospels have contradictory statements regarding age of Jesus in which this miracle happened. Arabic Gospel of Infancy states that Jesus was 5 years old but Infancy gospel of Thomas (InThom III) tells us that Jesus was 7 years old when he creates the bird from clay.

Another imported point should be noted here that these three non-canonical sources different among each other while reporting same incident. For instance, Arabic Gospel of Infancy (15:2-5) talks about Jesus making clay into different shapes but both other gospels we find only sparrows are mention.

One thing similar in both narrations (Qur'ān and non-canonical) is that two distinct stages are mention: Jesus's fashioning the bird from clay and its brining them to life. But the Qur'ān

then emphasizes that this was God's miracle done through Jesus (peace be upon him). In non-canonical sources we are not finding any reference like this. Qur'an does not deny that Jesus performed the miracles which the Christians attributed to Jesus but main and important difference is that Qur'an puts them in perspective by stressing that they were performed by God's leave, that is to say that they are not proof of his divinity.

## 2.4 Qur'anic proviso

It is worth noting that in one verse (5:110) Allah (s.w.t) stresses four times that Jesus performed miracles by His permission. This means that although Jesus was chosen by Allah (s.w.t), but he was no more than human being who could not have done anything without Allah's permission. It was God who granted Jesus, and his mother, support him with Gibrail, teach him book, wisdom and torah also give him power to perform miracle. The Qur'an stress many times that no prophet can show a sign or miracle without Allah's permission. Allah (s.w.t) says:

وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِآيَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ

"And it was not given to any messenger that he should bring a portent save by Allah's leave"  
(Al Qur'an-40:78)

He repeats same thing in S13:38. And S14:11.

Qur'an use the word 'bi idhni' by my leave and 'bi idhni 'llahi' by Allah's leave

In S 3:49 where proviso is repeated four times Tâbârî says that Jesus always pray to Allah (s.w.t) before performing miracles.<sup>1</sup>

Zamakhshari in 3:49 says that 'bi idhni 'llahi' was spoken to refuse the assumptions of people who attribute divinity to him because of his miracles. At 5:110 where Allah says *bi idhni* he defines it as "by my facilitation" or "by my supplying".<sup>2</sup>

Râzî goes into greater detail on S 3:49 he says that that expression means "by Allah's causing to be and determining".<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tâbârî op.cit, V.2,p 274 on 3:49

<sup>2</sup> See Zamakhshari S:5:110 p. 691

In support of this interpretation he cites Qur'anic verses (e.g 3:145). Rāzī adds that Jesus mentioned this proviso to abolish all doubt by making it clear that although he made a representations of the birds from clay it was Allah who created the life. In commenting on S 5:110 however, he noted that in this version of the birds the proviso is mention twice in connection with initial making a figure as well as in connection with the coming of life. Rāzī simply says that is to emphasize that what Jesus has done is not because of his own creative power but due to Allah's determining power.<sup>2</sup>

Baydāwī on S3:49 says that Jesus saying indicates that it is Allah (s.w.t) who make the bird alive not he himself done it.<sup>3</sup> In commenting on S 3:49 Ibn Kathir says that bird flew visibly by Allah's leave. Allah (s.w.t) made this a miracle for 'Isā to testify that He had sent him. In his comments on S 5:110 where expression repeat in connection with the raising the dead, he says that they rose from their tombs "by God's leave". Then he said similar to Tābārī's discussion.<sup>4</sup> Ibn-Kathir reports a tradition which says that when 'Isā wants to raise a person from dead he pray two rakats. Also recite some names of Allah (s.w.t). When 'Isā done resurrection he praises to Allah (s.w.t) for his help.

His own words are as following.

"So this narration shows that Jesus never claim to do miracle with his own power but he has habit of petitioning God before performing miracle."<sup>5</sup>

## 2.5 Miracles of Jesus and His divinity

Traditionally in a Christian faith, a belief in the occurrence of miracles has been considered an important element. The miracles of Jesus have been taken as proof of the authority of his teachings and signs of his divine nature.

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<sup>1</sup> Rāzī op.cit, V.3,p 228 on 3:49

<sup>2</sup> Rāzī op.cit, V.4,p 459 on 5:110

<sup>3</sup> Baydāwī op.cit, p.74 on 3:49

<sup>4</sup> Ibid p.166 on 5:110

<sup>5</sup> See Ibn Kathir op.cit,p240 On 3:49

To know the emphasis which Christianity has traditionally placed on belief in miracles, it is necessary for us to understand Christian's conception of God. Christians agreed with all theistic religions that God is transcendence, i.e He is supernatural and exists beyond or above the physical world. But it differs from Islām and Judaism due to placing a much greater emphasis on immanence of God. Christianity has stressed that God by becoming a human being has entered in the realm of space and time and he is living in this earth. According to them God became incarnate in Jesus Christ and that he has worked many miracles during his time on earth. The two central elements of gospels are that Jesus performed miracles and he was resurrected from the grave. Each of these elements implies divine intervention into the natural universe.

In short Christians are taking Jesus Christ as divine being. One of the ways through which Biblical scholars are proving Christ divinity is that he performed many miracles during his life on earth. Christians are admitting that other prophets do performed miracles but Jesus's miracles are unique due to reason that he seems to perform these miracles by his own authority. Jesus does not need any prior permission to perform miracles but he worked them without the need for him to wait for God or ask for it. The ability of performing miracles was inherited in Jesus Christ. It can be seen in different occasions when someone healed by just touching Jesus's cloak even when he was not attending to him (e.g. Mk. 5:25-34; 6:56). Synoptic gospels states that Jesus Christ not himself only worked miracles but he also gave the authority to his disciples for this purpose (Mt.10, Lk. 9, Mk. 6).

Miracles of Jesus in Christianity have traditionally been divided into two main types 'healing' and 'natural' miracles. For Christians healing miracles are one of the most significant way in which Jesus Christ showed his character as a God due to expression of compassion.<sup>1</sup> There seems also to be a link between physical and spiritual healing, particularly in the case of

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<sup>1</sup> Zebiri Kate, "Contemporary Muslim Understanding of Miracles of Jesus", *The Muslim World*, Vol. 90, (Spring 2000), p. 73.

the healing of the paralytic, where Jesus simultaneously forgives the man's sins and links the cure with the forgiveness (Mk. 29:11).

## 2.6 Qur'ān and divinity of Jesus

Qur'ānic form of Jesus name is 'Isā. It is attested 25 times often in form of 'Isā bin Maryam son of Marry etc.<sup>1</sup> As a result believers in the Qur'ān love Jesus honor him & believe in him. In fact no Muslim can be Muslim unless he or she believes in Jesus.<sup>2</sup>

Allah (s.w.t) says in Qur'ān:

"and we made her (marry) and her son (Jesus) a sign for the world". Al Qur'ān 21:91

Qur'ān attributes many miracles to Jesus as Allah (s.w.t) says

"And we gave unto Jesus, son of Marry clear miracles."<sup>3</sup>

These miracles are reported in the Qur'ān are simply god give sign of authenticity of his prophet hood mission. This is supported by other Qur'ānic verses (2: 87; 2: 253), which state that Jesus was given "clear proofs" (*bayinat*). So Islām denies the deity of Jesus

"O followers of the Gospel! Do not overstep the bounds [of truth] in your religious beliefs, and do not say of God anything but the truth. The Christ Jesus son of Mary, was not but God's Apostle."<sup>4</sup>

An important element of Qur'ānic account of Jesus is that Qur'ān repeats again and again God's permission in working of his miracles. All Muslim commentators also discussed this issue in detail in order to minimize the role of Jesus in initiating and carrying out the

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<sup>1</sup> See Neal Roberson, Jesus (art) *Encyclopedia of the Qur'ān* (Washington: William B. Erdmans publishing Co, 2003), Vol. 3, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Ahmed Deeded, *Christ in Islām*, op.cit

<sup>3</sup> Ibid 2:87

<sup>4</sup> Ibid 4: 171

miracles. This Qur'anic account contrasts with the Gospel accounts which usually portray Christ as performing miracle with his own authority and initiative.

Ishaq Hussaini says

"The Qur'an enumerated the miracle of Christ which were signs of his prophecy such as creating the bird from clay, healing the blind and the leper.....All these miracles Christ produced by the will of god is order to convince those who doubted his mission."<sup>1</sup>

Every prophet of Allah sent with some miracles to assert his prophet hood. Those miracles are not his own but are the bestowal upon him from Allah. It is God who is supreme over Jesus as much as over the messenger of god. The dominating theme is of God from who precedes the power to perform the miracles. Qur'an very clearly says that all signs and wonders which Jesus worked were by leave of Allah (s.w.t) or by his permission. As Allah (s.w.t) says:

"I design for you from clay [that which is] like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird by permission of Allah. And I cure the blind and the leper, and I give life to the dead - by permission of Allah." (al Qur'an-3:49)

In the Qur'an, the miracles of Jesus do not appear to be central either to an understanding of prophets or to an understanding of Jesus.<sup>2</sup> Other verses in the Qur'an could be understood as distinguishing Jesus from other prophets; foremost among these are references to him as the "Word of God and a "spirit from Him" (4: 171; 3: 45). Yet these are offset by the oft-repeated denial that Jesus shares in the divinity through son ship or otherwise.

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<sup>1</sup> Ishaq Musa Al-Husayni, "Christ in Qur'an and modern Arabic Literature", *Muslim World*, Vol. 4 (1960), p. 298.

<sup>2</sup> Zebiri Kate, "Contemporary Muslim Understanding o Miracles of Jesus", *The Muslim World*, Vol. 90, Spring (2000), p. 73.

## Conclusion

As I have reached at the end of this research paper, the following points can be concluded.

In Christianity miracles of Jesus play a fundamental role in attracting people to him and making them accept that he was a Messiah. The four canonical gospels (Mark, Mathew, Luke, John) attribute to Jesus healing, exorcism, resurrection of dead people, and other miracles including natural miracle. However, there are number of other miracles which are found in non-canonical gospels. The Qur'an confirms that Jesus performed impressive miracles. Some of these miracles, such as curing blindness are similar to the ones found in the canonical gospels. But the Qur'an attribute to Jesus two important miracles which are found in non-canonical but not in the canonical gospels. These are 'speaking in the cradle' and 'creating the bird from clay.'

The Qur'an states that at the birth of Jesus, Mary was afraid to face the people. An angle appeared to her and told to vow a fast. Commentators explain that the fast means that she was to decline human conversation for the time being on the plea of having vow to God not to do so. So when Mary returned home with a baby she was accused of immorality. Having vowed silence, she pointed to Jesus. At this point the infant Jesus starts speaking miraculously to defend his mother. In his speech, Jesus announced his own status as servant of God and His prophet (3:41-46, 5:110 and 19, 29-33). Another important thing is that the Qur'an mentions speaking of Jesus in two different ages. First when he was born to defend his mother (*kalam fil mahad*) as we have discussed above and second kind of speech is when he was mature (*kalam fil kabah*). Commentators linked Jesus speaking "in mature age" with his future return to this world.

Jesus's speaking while still an infant is not mentioned in the canonical gospels. The only reference similar to that of the Qur'anic passage is found in the Arabic Gospel of the Infancy (AraIn.1:2-3). Here Jesus spoke in the cradle and tells his mother Mary about his nature. The context and the words of the Qur'an and the non-canonical gospel are different from each other. In the Qur'an Jesus spoke immediately after his birth to defend his mother against

accusation of people. But in Arabic gospel of Infancy Jesus is shown telling his mother things she was already aware of through angel Gibriel. In the Qur'ān Jesus uses the word "servant of Allah" to explain his status but in non-canonical gospel he uses the word "son of God". The second miracle which the Qur'ān attributed to Jesus is 'creating the bird from clay'. Similar to the previous one, the miracle does not have any reference in canonical gospels. The Qur'ān says that Jesus had the ability to create the bird from clay with Allah's permission (3:49, 5:110). There are three non-canonical gospels which have a number of different and more detailed versions of this miracle. These gospels are 'Arabic Gospel of Infancy' (AraIn.36), 'Infancy Gospel of Thomas' (InThom.III) and Gospel of pseudo- Mathew (PsMatt.27). Ibn Ishaq said that The Christians of Najran argued the divinity of Christ from his miracles, for he made 'clay birds and then breathed into them so that they flew away.<sup>1</sup> In recent times also this idea is taken by many Christians.

These Christians has drawn parallels between the Qur'anic description of God's creation of humankind, through breathing His spirit into clay and the miracle of the clay birds. According to Christian polemics, the Qur'ān also attests the divinity of Jesus by attributing miracle of creating the bird from clay to him. Because three key words for God's creation are to breathe (*nafakha*), clay (*tin*) and creation (*khalaq*). Same words are used for Jesus's creation of bird. The Qur'ān very clearly says that Allah is the creator (*khaliq*) of everything. All other beings that are worshiped besides Allah are not worthy of such honor since they cannot create as He does (13:16). Christians also claim that thus the Qur'ān uses the word *khaliq* for Jesus as well, so these passages therefore teach that Christ is a divine.

When we come to the Qur'ān to see how this matter is handled by it then we find that in the Qur'ān the verb *khalaq* is attributed to God as well as to humans (S. 23:14). As the classical commentators shows many synonyms for the verb *khalaq* such as fashioning or measuring (*taqdir*) and arranging (*tartib*). So its meaning depends upon the context whether the subject is divine or human activities. In those places where God is agent (e.g S 2:21) meaning of *khalaq*

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<sup>1</sup> Life of Muhammad, p.271

should be the bringing of the things into being by proportioning it and making it regular. But when it is attributed to humans like Jesus (e.g S 3:49, 5:110) *khalaqa* can simply mean putting together the components of something.

It seems that the Qur'ānic revelations about Jesus's miracles are corrective to Christian teachings. The Qur'ān does not deny that Jesus performed miracles which the Christians attributed to him but it puts them in a specific perspective by stressing that they were performed 'by God's permission', that is to say that they were not proof of his divinity.

According to the Qur'ān, miracles of Jesus are "signs" from God to prove the authenticity of his prophethood and mission. This is supported by those Qur'ānic verses, which state that Jesus was given "clear proofs" (*bayinat*) (2:87; 2:253).

Here we can see the difference between Qur'ānic approach to miracle of Jesus and the Christian approach. One of the most important aspects of Christianity is the belief that Jesus Christ was divine. One of the ways in which his divinity is proved by Biblical Scholars is to point out that Jesus was recorded performing many miracles during his life on earth. Christians admit that similar miracles were performed by some other prophets and apostles but they claim that there is an essential difference that the other dispensed the goal of God as his minister, whereas Jesus exerted his own inherent might.<sup>1</sup> He gave the power to the apostles to cast out devils; cures the lepers, and raised the dead.

"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth" says peter "raise up and walk"

(Acts 3:6)

As we have mentioned above that the Qur'ān attributes to Jesus two miracles 'speaking in a cradle' and 'creating the bird from clay' which are not found in the canonical gospels but non-canonical gospels do have references similar to these miracles. In response to this situation Christian polemical scholars claim that Muhammad (p.b.u.h) took these passages from non-canonical gospels, which were available to him at that time. However, Muslims are

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.reasonablechristians.com>

highly sensitive to any suggestion of the Qur'anic "borrowing" from, or dependence on, the Bible, since such suggestions have been used in the past to discredit the prophet Muhammad and therefore Islām.

There is no satisfactory proof that any of non-canonical gospels existed in Arabian society during the lifetime of Muhammad (Peace and Blessing be upon him) even the first Arabic translation of the New Testament did not appear until one thousand years after the Prophet Muhammad's death. We do agree that there are some similarities between the Christian sources and the Qur'ān. However, this fact does not mean that the latter had been copied from the former. It only means that they both have a common source. According to the Muslim belief, all the revelations of Allah (s.w.t) have the common message of 'monotheism'. So there is no surprise if the narratives of the Qur'ān and non-canonical gospels are similar about certain issues.

At the end, I want to point out that it is true that the non-canonical gospels mention some miracles which are different from those found in the canonical gospels. But it does not mean that the accounts in canonical gospels including the miracle stories, are more factual or accurate than the ones found in non-canonical gospels. Both types of writings are as likely to have true and false accounts. All of these books were written by people who had little knowledge about Jesus, who lived long after him, and who used their books to convey to their readers their own image of Jesus and their own version of his life and teachings.

At the end, I would like to suggest few areas about miracles of Jesus in which good research needs to be conducted:

- \* Miracles of Jesus in canonical gospels a textual criticism.
- \* Comparison between miracles of Jesus in canonical and non-canonical gospels.
- \* Jesus in the Qur'ān, canonical and non-canonical gospels.
- \* A second coming of Jesus (in Qur'ān, canonical and non-canonical gospels).
- \* History of New Testament canon.

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