

You Say Periklute, I Say Paraclete: Towards a Reconciliation Between the Bible and the Quran

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Abstract

The Quranic statement that Jesus predicted Muhammad by name is examined in light of the expectation of what the "kingdom of God" was. The concept of the kingdom of God as being the light or fire of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is contrasted with the Sufi concept of the "Light of Muhammad." Pentecost could be the Light of Muhammad coming upon the apostles of Christ; the Light is the same, but known under a different name. However, on the other hand, it is shown that some Jewish Christians could have been looking for an earthly "kingdom of Israel" to be restored. In this case, they would be expecting a human person to bring this about. The name "Muhammad" is then wordplay on the term "Paraclete" via the related Greek word "periklute," having the same approximate meaning as the name "Muhammad." In this way, the term "Paraclete" remains unchanged in the Bible, referring to Pentecost, while enabling Jewish Christians to give it a double meaning, because these two Greek words appeared identical when written in Semitic languages before the invention of vowel points. Finally, non-biblical references to Jesus talking about the Paraclete are examined and shown to have some relevance.

Keywords: Periklutos, Ahmad, Light of Muhammad, kingdom of God, Manichean.

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Introduction

And remember Jesus the son of Mary said: "O Children of Israel! I am the apostle of Allah (sent) to you confirming the Law (which came) before me and giving glad Tidings of an Apostle to come after me whose name shall be Ahmad." But when he came to them with Clear Signs they said: "This is evident sorcery!" (Quran 61:6)

The above quotation of the Quran has produced much bitterness in Christian-Muslim relations. With the Quran saying that Muhammad was mentioned "in their own (Scriptures); in the law and the Gospel" (Quran 7:157), and yet there being no such biblical statement like "an Apostle to come after me whose name shall be Ahmad," then either Muhammad is accused of being ignorant or the Bible is accused of being corrupted.

Yet the only place where Jesus mentions sending someone is when he says, "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter [Paraclete], that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth" (John 14:17). The word translated here as "Comforter" is the Greek word "paraklētos," which is nothing like the Arabic "Ahmad," meaning most praised. The charge of misunderstanding or of corruption runs deep.

A summary of the main Islamic viewpoints can be seen by quoting from Abdallah (n.d.) available on the website Answering Christianity:

"... in the famous the Codex Syriacus, written around the fifth century C.E., and discovered in 1812 on Mount Sinai by Mrs. Agnes S. Lewis (and Mrs. Bensley), the text of [John] 14:26 reads: 'Paraclete, the Spirit,' and not 'Paraclete, the Holy Spirit.'
 ... A 'Spirit' in the New Testament is a human Prophet. Therefore, Jesus had predicted the comming [sic] of a human Prophet (spirit) after him and not the Holy Spirit. ... 'Beloved,

believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world,' (1 John 4:1-3) ... the word 'spirit' in the Bible is synonymous with the word 'Prophet.'"

- 2. "In the Christian's own 'Gospel of Barnabas' Muhammad is mentioned by name here." (Muhammad is mentioned numerous times in the Gospel of Barnabas, in particular in chapter 97: "'How shall the Messiah [here used as a title for Muhammad] be called, and what sign shall reveal his coming?' Jesus answered: 'The name of the Messiah is admirable, for God himself gave him the name when he had created his soul, and placed it in a celestial splendour ... Muhammad is his blessed name.') "The Trinitarian church, however, has done its utmost to obliterate all existing copies of 'The Gospel of Barnabas,' and to hide it from the masses or to label it a forgery ... For this reason, it becomes necessary to show that even the Gospels adopted by Paul's church also originally spoke of Muhammad (peace be upon him)."
- 3. "The Greek word translated as 'hear' in the Biblical verses ('whatsoever he [the Paraclete] shall hear, that shall he speak') is the Greek word 'akouo' {ak-oo'-o} meaning to perceive sounds. It has, for instance, given us the word 'acoustics,' the science of sounds. Similarly the verb 'to speak' is the Greek verb 'laleo' {lal-eh'-o} which has the general meaning 'to emit sounds' and the specific meaning 'to speak.' This verb occurs very frequently in the Greek text of the Gospels. It designates a solemn declaration by Jesus (peace be upon him) during his preachings (For example Matthew 9:18). Obviously these verbs require hearing and speech organs in

order to facilitate them. There is a distinct difference between someone 'inspiring' something and him 'speaking' something. So the Paraclete will 'hear' and 'speak,' not 'inspire.'" (The implication is that the Paraclete is physical.)¹

- 4. "In the above verses we read 'if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you' [John 16:7]. The comforter can not be the Holy Ghost because the Holy Ghost (according to the Bible) was 'with' them already (and even quite active) long before the coming of Jesus (peace be upon him) himself and then throughout his ministry. Read for example. Genesis 1:2 'And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness [was] upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.' ... 'Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.' (John 20:21-22)"
- 5. "Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad used to say 'you' to their followers but really it was a general expression for those who follow their teachings. For example, Jesus told his followers that they would see him coming back to the earth and all of them have since died. Couldn't Jesus have meant the disciples in general, specifically the future ones, when speaking about the Comforter?"²
- 6. "Some scholars believe that what Jesus (peace be upon him) said in his own Aramaic tongue in these verses represents more

^{1.} This paragraph is an (unacknowledged) paraphrase from Bucaille (1978, 105).

^{2.} his point is mentioned in an article on the opposing website www.answering-islam.org (Silas, n.d.)

closely the Greek word 'Periklytos' which means the admirable or glorified one. This word corresponds exactly to the Arabic word 'Muhammad' which also means the 'admired one' or 'glorified one.' In other words, 'Periklytos' is 'Muhammad' in Greek. There are several similar documented cases of similar word substitution in the Bible. It is also quite possible that both words were contained in the original text but were dropped by a copyist because of the ancient custom of writing words closely packed, with no spaces in-between them. In such a case the original reading would have been: 'and He will give you another comforter (Parakletos), the admirable one(Periklytos)' [based on John 14:16]."

Corresponding refutations of the above can be obtained by quoting from the website Answering Islam:

1. Regarding whether we should read only "spirit" in place of "Holy Spirit": "There are hundreds of Greek manuscripts that pre-date Islam, and all of the earliest, most important Greek texts with this passage have 'Holy' in them" (Silas, n.d.). Regarding whether "spirit" means "prophet": "However, this arguments fails miserably because there are more verses that call God a spirit (John 4:24, Acts 5:9, 2 Corinthians 3:17), and even a passage where Jesus says that spirits do not have flesh and bones (Luke 24:39), which clearly refutes the claim that 'spirit' means 'prophet'" (Perez, n.d.).

^{1.} I would like to add that the link between "spirit" and "false prophet" in 1 John 4:1-3 could be better understood in light of the statement "a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets" (1 Kings 22:22). In other words, prophets

2. "The Gospel of Barnabas is not an authentic Gospel of Jesus. The author does not understand the language, history or geography of the 1st century A.D., and there is no ancient evidence for the book. The internal evidence of the book suggests it was written in the 14th century, and there are Muslim scholars who agree with this dating. The book is a rewrite of the Biblical Gospel most likely by a Muslim who wanted to portray Jesus as a Muslim who taught Islam and predicted the coming of Muhammad. This type of rewriting has been done elsewhere by Muslims in the Gospel According to Islam [written by Ahmad Shafaat]. It is disgraceful for Islamic leaders to continue to publish, promote and distribute this false Scripture. It is disgraceful for them to create this deliberate confusion and make mischief" (Green 2004).

have a spirit within them, either the Spirit of God or a false spirit. Additionally, there are numerous places in the New Testament where the term "the Spirit" is merely shorthand for the "Holy Spirit" or the "Spirit of God," such as "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4) and "When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him ... Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil" (Matt 3:16-4:1).

1. I would like to point out that the Quran mentions that Jesus said the name Ahmad, not Muhammad. However, the Gospel of Barnabas does not mention Ahmad but only Muhammad. Yet there were two mediaeval translations of the Quran into Latin, one by Robert of Ketton (1143 CE) and the other by Mark of Toledo (1210 CE). In Quran 61:6, the word "Ahamd" is transliterated as "Ahametthus" by Robert but translated as "gloriosus" (glorious) by Mark. However, one of Robert's manuscripts has the full name Machumetus as an interlinear gloss above "Ahamettus," and the printed book of 1543 CE actually has only "Machumetus" in the text. Therefore, the Gospel of Barnabas referencing the Ahmad prophecy with both "admirable" and "Muhammad" would seem to be related to the Latin translations. (Incidentally, the reference to "Paul's church" in the quotation could only

- 3. The idea that the Greek words for "speak" and "hear" can only refer to physical speaking and hearing, rather than anything symbolic, seem to have come from certain dictionaries of ancient Greek where it is stated that "Akouo (from Homer in the 10th century BC on) means to hear and refers primarily to the perception of sounds by the sense of hearing". However, soon afterwards it is stated that "[h]earing, however, covers not only sense perception but also the apprehension and acceptance by the mind of the content of what is heard," in other words, symbolically hearing. The same words for "speak" and "hear" are also applied to God in the Greek text of the New Testament (e.g., John 9:29, 31), who is non-physical. Also, modern Greek translations of the Quran also apply the same Greek word for hearing to Allah. In other words, a dictionary entry was misunderstood (Jesus and Muhammad, Two Prophets for a Lost World, n.d.).¹
- 4. It has been argued that "the Holy Spirit could not have been the paraclete because He had already been poured out on all flesh. However, when one keeps in mind two things, this problem vanishes. First, one can see that in the Old Testament, instances of the Holy Spirit coming on people were, for the most part, temporary (except in cases like Moses or David). However, God promised in Joel 2:28 that He would pour out His spirit on all

refer to the church in the Roman Empire, excluding the churches in Persia and India.)

^{1.} Note that a similar dictionary entry for 'hear' can be found on page 62 of the document

 $https://www.wenstrom.org/downloads/written/exposition/2jn/2jn_4-6.pdf (accessed November 9, 2019). \\$

flesh. Clearly the advent of the Holy Spirit fulfills this prophecy. Second, one must keep in mind the context of Jesus' comment. He was promising to give His disciples, those in that room, the Holy Spirit. They had not received Him to abide with them forever" (Perez, n.d.). "The receiving of the Comforter by the disciples eclipsed the previous 'filling' or 'moving' others before them had experienced. The ministry of the Holy Spirit, i.e. the Comforter, within and without these disciples would be taking on a deeper, more intimate function, and the disciples would continue to know their Lord Jesus through the Holy Spirit. The disciples were going to have the Holy Spirit bond with them: He was going to 'dwell' with them, be 'in' them, 'live' in them. This was more than what previous people had experienced. Their experience would be a greater revealing to man of the Holy Spirit's role, and they would continue to know and experience Jesus. The Expositor's Bible Commentary states: The Spirit's function is to represent God to the believer as Jesus did in his incarnate state. ... In his discussion of the new birth, Jesus had already spoken to Nicodemus of the work of the Holy Spirit (John 3:5). The ministry of the Spirit, however, would be directed primarily to the disciples. He would direct their decisions, counsel them continually, and remain with them forever. ... His presence was already with the disciples insofar as they were under his influence. Later, he would indwell them, when Jesus himself had departed. This distinction marks the difference between the Old Testament experience of the Holy Spirit and the post-Pentecostal experience of the church. The individual indwelling of the Spirit is the specific privilege of the Christian believer (see John 7:39)" (Silas, n.d.).

- 5. Regarding whether the recipients of the Paraclete were the disciples or their later followers: "Examine John chapters 13 through 17. This was the time when Christ was alone with His disciples. His actions and dialog with them were very personal. He washed their feet, predicted His betrayal, comforted them, foretold the coming of the 'Comforter', taught them about 'abiding' in Him, foretold tribulation for them, and said a most intimate prayer (chapter 17) for them and Himself. If you review all of this, you will see that Jesus was not speaking in a general term of 'you', to the possible exclusion of these men, but at the very least He was speaking to those with Him His disciples. And later on they experienced what Jesus foretold they 'received' the Comforter' (Silas, n.d.).
- 6. Regarding the Greek word "Periklytos" being used in place of Paraclete: "This is a baseless assertion. There is no evidence at all supporting this claim. There are thousands of N.T. manuscripts pre-dating Islam and not one of these contains the word 'periklutos', anywhere. Muslims like to charge Christians with changing their Bible—'tahrif' (corruption) of their Scriptures, but it is Muslims who are guilty of 'tahrif' when they claim that the original word was 'periklutos' ... Remember, the Muslim claim is based on a desperate attempt to find Biblical support for Muhammad's statement that the Bible foretold him.

^{1.} In particular, in John 17:6, 20, Jesus says, "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given me out of the world ... I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in me through their word". This implies that his previous words, including those about the Paraclete, were spoken for the disciples present with him. These words are applicable to "those who will believe in me through their word" in as much as the later believers will receive what they had already received.

The Bible never forefold Muhammad so Muslims have thrashed about, twisting the Scriptures, trying to find some way to make Muhammad's words true" (Silas, n.d.). A "counter-attack" on the corruption of the Bible is to claim that the Ouran has been corrupted: "However, the Our'anic verse in question has variants found in other codices that were also in circulation before the Uthmanic codex became standard. According to Ubayy b. Ka'b. one of the secretaries of Muhammad, the verse reads: 'O children of Israel, I am God's messenger to you, and I announce to you a prophet whose community will be the last community and by which God will put the seal on the prophets and messengers' where 'Ahmad' is not mentioned" (Ahmad, n.d.). Additionally, the fact that Ibn Ishaq (d. 151/767) did not mention the Ahmad passage (61:6) when discussing the Paraclete passage in the Gospel of John has also been commented on. It has been taken to imply that the name Ahmad is an interpolation in the Quran (Guthrie and Bishop 1951, 255), or that the name Ahmad should be read as an adjective only, making the text be interpreted as "whose name is more worthy of praise" (Watt 1953, 113). It has actually been suggested that the adjectival interpretation could be applied to the Holy Spirit promised in the Gospel of John instead of to Muhammad (Parrinder 2003, 99-100).²

^{1.} The ultimate source for the textual Quranic variant is Arthur Jeffery's book *Materials for The History Of The Text Of The Qur'ân: The Old Codices*. However, in this book the chains of narration (*isnads*) are omitted, and according to Muslims the actual isnads are weak, see Islamic Awareness (1999).

^{2.} If the Ahmad passage is to be understood in an adjectival sense then it would appear to be a deliberate play on words due to the similarity between "Ahmad" and "Muhammad." It could easily be that Jewish Christians knew

As can be seen, polemics is the art of making the vaguely plausible seem highly probable, and of turning the misunderstood into absolute fact. In a well written article, it has been concluded that the only position thus far which keeps the text of the Gospel of John intact and the Quran's claim of the Ahmad prophecy valid is that "the Qur'anic reference to Jesus' prophecy about a prophet with the name Ahmad cannot refer to the prophecy of Jesus about the coming Paraclete as reported in the Gospel of John" (Montazery and Karimpur 2018, 121).

However, in eastern Christianity, the Holy Spirit is identified as the "inexpressible light itself" (Meyendorff 1974, 157)—in other words, the divine Light.¹ This does then present the possibility of connecting

the wordplay between the Greek words "parakletos" and "periklytos" when written in Semitic languages during Muhammad's lifetime (which will be discussed later in this article), but that they never told the Arabs, hence Ibn Ishaq not referencing the Ahmad passage. In this case, presumably, the main force of the Ahmad passage is that it does reference such wordplay: the Jewish Christians would not be looking for anyone named Ahmad or Muhammad, but this wordplay reference in the Ahmad passage brings to their notice the similarity in writing "paraclete" and "periklute," and so thereby informing them about Muhammad through whom the Ahmad passage was revealed. It has also been stated that "it is impossible to prove that any Muslim child was called Ahmad after the Prophet before about the year 125 [747 CE]" (Watt 1953, 110). However, if the Paraclete passage first came to prominence in polemics during the exchange between the Eastern Roman Emperor Leo III (d. 741 CE) and the Muslim caliph 'Umar II (d. 720 CE) (see Montazery and Karimpur 2018, 115), then this could explain the "delay" in naming people Ahmad (the link between "periklytos" and "Ahamd" would not need to have been known, only that the Ahmad passage was somehow linked to the only Gospel passage where Jesus "predicts" another).

^{1.} Similarly, in the Talmud, the Shekinah glory of God "is identical with the Holy Spirit" (*The Jewish Encyclopedia* 1906, entry "Shekinah–Those on Whom the Shekinah Rested"). Eastern Christians have expressed the

the Light of the Paraclete-Spirit with the "Light of Muhammad" of mystical Islam, which would avoid the pitfalls outlined above. (While the Light of Muhammad is considered a later innovation by some Muslims, yet those who accept it believe their teaching is original. Therefore, examining the Paraclete passages with reference to the Light of Muhammad will have relevance for them.) Additionally, eastern Christianity identifies the "kingdom of God" with this same divine Light, which opens the possibility that the earthly kingdom brought via Muhammad (actually the Rashidun Caliphate) makes Muhammad into a "substitute Paraclete." These ideas will be examined, and then we shall see if an actual phrase like "an Apostle to come after me whose name shall be Ahmad" could be ascribed to Jesus in sources outside of

opinion that the Old Testament prophets had the same experience of the divine Light as the Apostles at Pentecost, the uniqueness of Pentecost being that the divine Light now comes to us via the human nature of Christ, "the biblical and patristic writers were aware that they themselves shared in the same experience as Moses and the prophets, which is Pentecost. The only difference is that [with] the Old Testament saints ... their glorification did not have the human nature of Christ as its source" (Kelley 2016, 54).

^{1.} That eastern Christianity could be considered closer to mystical Islam in certain respects than to later western Christianity can be seen in art. For in eastern Christian art, "The icon conveys this phenomenon of [divine] light by a halo ... Since it is obviously impossible to represent this light as such, the only way to convey it in painting is to depict a disk, like a pattern, so to speak, of this luminous sphere. It is not a matter of placing a crown above the head of the saint, as is sometimes done in Western images, where this crown somehow remains external; rather, it is a matter of portraying the radiance of the face" (Clendenin 2003, 52). The eastern icon's attempt to portray the divine glory surrounding the saint—as opposed to the halo hovering above the head in western art—is similar in idea to Islamic art. For in Islamic art, the fact that God's presence "will burn" a person due to his "brilliance and luminosity" implies that "the illuminated halo and Shamsa [star or sun motif] have been changed to the flames of fire around the head of saints of God and prophets in the culture of Islamic – Iranian miniature" (Ramezanmahi and Ghehi, 2012, 18). Whether the divine glory is represented as light or fire, the key similarity is that it embraces the human.

the Gospel of John. This will lead us to discuss the Manicheans and their scriptures.

Therefore, let us first examine how the term "paraclete" has been understood in various Christian groups, especially eastern Christianity.

The Holy Spirit in "Mainstream" Christianity

The term "paraclete" is totally connected with the term "Holy Spirit" in "mainstream" Christianity: "the Comforter, the Holy Spirit" (John 14:26). And overwhelmingly, when the term "Holy Spirit" is mentioned, it will be understood as being the Third Person of the Trinity. Additionally, the term is linked with various emotional or "spiritual" feelings. However, for our discussion, it is important to note that the Holy Spirit can be linked with the divine Light and the kingdom of God:

And he [Jesus] said to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.' Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and he was transfigured before them. His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them ... And a cloud came and overshadowed them. (Mark 9:1-3, 7)

First, the light shining from Jesus has been interpreted as being the kingdom of God itself: the "Kingdom ... is the Light of his [Jesus'] own forthcoming Transfiguration." Secondly, this divine light is the Holy Spirit, "the Holy Spirit shining forth ... in the radiant cloud" (St Gregory Palamas 2011).

Significantly, the Holy Spirit descending as a flame of fire (equivalent to light) at Pentecost can be seen as fulfilling the "Messianic kingdom":

Therefore, when they had come together, they asked him [Jesus], saying, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And he said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." ...

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 1:6-8; 2:1-4)

"[W]ill you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? ... you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you." And soon after these words, we hear the apostles saying that God raised Christ to sit on the throne of king David (Acts 2:29-30); in other words, the kingdom of Israel has been realized. Yet the fact that Jesus also said, "It is not for you to know times or seasons," does produce a certain ambiguity, and the "restoration of all things" is soon afterwards spoken of as being a future event (Acts 3:20-21).

However, for now, it is important to note that the Holy Spirit, light/fire/glory, and the kingdom (of God/Israel) are linked to the Eucharist. Commenting on the Passover lamb, which the Israelites had to cook "roasted in fire" (Exodus 12:9), the Eucharist is described as follows in the pre-Scholastic West: "But we are to know, that all the mysteries of Christ's humanity were ordained through the might of the Holy Spirit, then eat we his body roasted at the fire, because the Holy Spirit came in form of fire to the apostles, in various tongues" (Thorpe 1846, 2:281).

^{1. &}quot;Ghost" has been replaced by the more modern term "Spirit."

Observe the link between the Holy Spirit descending at Pentecost and the Eucharist. This is clarified again in the texts used in the Greek Church:

O Lord, Who sent down Your most Holy Spirit upon Your apostles at the third hour: do not take Him from us, O Good One, but renew Him in us who pray to You. Furthermore we offer to You this reasonable and bloodless worship, and ask You, and implore You, and supplicate You: send down Your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts [the bread and wine] here offered. (Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, section Anaphora)

The reference to the "third hour" is a link to Pentecost (Acts 2:15), and at the end of the service a hymn is sung which goes, "We have seen the true Light! We have received the heavenly Spirit" (Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, section Communion). Significantly, the "Second and glorious Coming" of Christ is spoken of as being amongst "all those things which have come to pass for us" (Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, section Anaphora) – in other words, the Second Coming has already happened at the "glorious" Eucharist; the kingdom has come.

And the Second Coming is linked to healing the creation: "[T]he great and glorious Second Coming of our Lord and the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God [is] when all of creation will be transfigured and filled with light" (*Transfiguration of Our Lord*, n.d.). That is why the Eucharist is offered "on behalf of all and for all" (Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, section Anaphora). So removing the Paraclete from Pentecost is, for some Christians at least, to remove him from the "glorious kingdom" which manifests the "restoration of all things" (Acts 3:20-21).

^{1.} The webpage has "spirit" with a small "s," but this must be a typographical mistake; other copies always have a capital "s."

The Holy Spirit in "Heretical" Christianity

Despite what is written above—that the Paraclete is "Spirit" (and "a spirit does not have flesh and bones" [Luke 24:39]), numerous people before Muhammad claimed to be the Paraclete:¹

- Simon Magus (1st cent. CE), who was rebuked by the apostles (Acts 8:9–24). He is reported to have claimed that "I am the Word of God; I am the glorious one, I the Paraclete, the Almighty, I the whole of God" (Mead and Tice 2003, 28).
- Curiously enough, it seems that St Paul the Apostle, who would have avoided any claims of divinity (e.g., Romans 11:1), was believed to be the Paraclete mentioned in the Gospel of John by some, who were apparently related to Marcion (d. 180 CE). This is despite the fact that while Marcion himself rejected this same Gospel of John, some of his disciples did accept it and ascribed the Paraclete passage to St Paul (Swete 1912, 65-66).
- Montanus (150s CE), who said of himself, "I am the Father, the Word, and the Paraclete" (Chapman 1911).
- The Manicheans claimed that Mani (216 c. 277 CE) was the Paraclete, and that the "Father of Light, Jesus the Splendour and Mani the Paraclete were seen as a form of Trinity" (Lieu 1999, 164). More clearly, it was the Paraclete who came to Mani "to inaugurate his apostolate of light." Therefore, "Once the companion (Paraclete) has visited the incarnate Mani to awaken him to his apostolate, then he (Mani) can also be said to be the Paraclete ... [Mani] is visited by (and so becomes) the Paraclete" (Stang 2016, 161-2). Observe that the Spirit-Paraclete is still without "flesh and bones," even while being

^{1.} Based on the list in Lambden (1997).

united with Mani in a special way such that Mani can be called the same Paraclete.

How Muhammad Can Be the Paraclete of John's Gospel

The existence of these claimants to be the Paraclete does raise the following question: could it be that the original teaching of Jesus was to expect a "Paraclete-person," and that this expectation was corrupted by "mainstream" Christianity? The fact that the above claimants could all have been delusional (their movements no longer existing confirming their delusion?) does not lessen the possibility that the original teaching of Jesus was to expect a person called the Paraclete.

In usual Christian polemics against Islam, it is assumed that Muhammad was only a human being. While those following Marcion did call the human St Paul "the Paraclete," yet the surrounding passages in the Gospel of John¹ do seem to indicate a divine being, for the Paraclete.

- a) will "abide with you forever";
- b) is "the Spirit of truth" and "Holy Spirit";
- c) cannot be seen by the world;
- d) dwells within people;
- e) is the presence of Christ himself ("I will come to you") and will be sent by Christ. (John 14:16-18, 26; 15:26)

^{1.} As Marcion rejected the Gospel of John, perhaps his followers did not feel obliged to accept the descriptions of the Paraclete contained therein?

Note that these descriptions cannot apply to a normal human being such as Muhammad¹:

- a) Muhammad did not abide forever, because his body is dead and buried (although it could be said that he lives on symbolically in his teaching).
- b) The Quran states that "Muhammad is no more than an Apostle" (Quran 3:144).
 - c) People clearly saw Muhammad.
 - d) Muhammad was confined to his own body.
- e) Muhammad did not actually manifest the presence of Christ and never claimed to have been sent by him.

However, if we consider what Sufi and other Muslims have said about the "Light of Muhammad," then things become much easier. This Light has been described according to Sunni sources as being created from God's own Light: "[W]hen God willed to create Muhammad He brought forth light out of His own light," and, "Then [God] took a handful (qabḍa) of His light and said to it, 'Be My beloved, Muhammad' - and it was" (Katz 2007, 14, 27). It should also be noted that the concept of Light from Light exists in Christianity, where Jesus is called "the brightness of [God's] glory" (Hebrews 1:3) and the Nicene Creed explicitly calls Jesus "Light of Light" (Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, section Nicene Creed). Additionally, mystical Judaism can also talk about "the primordial light [which] was made of God's

^{1.} Muslims counter this by referencing certain descriptions which do seem fitted to Muhammad: "For he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, [that] shall he speak' [John 16:13] ... It is also interesting to read the words of the Qur'an: 'Nor does he (Muhammad) speak of his own desire. It is but an Inspiration that is inspired [unto him]' (The noble Qur'an, Al-Najm (53):3-4)" (Abdallah n.d.).

splendor, in Hebrew 'light from light'" (Ginzberg 2003, 8, notes 18, 19). Therefore, when we consider that the Paraclete is identified in Christianity as the Holy Spirit, who is both the divine fire (Acts 2:3-4) and the "Spirit of glory" (1 Peter 4:14), then the possible relevance of the "Light of Muhammad" to the Paraclete passages should not be dismissed.¹

The descriptions of the Paraclete in the Gospel of John can then be referred to Muhammad as follows:

- a) Trivially, light does not die.
- b) Muhammad has a dual nature: "For the esoteric schools of Islam such as Sufism and Isma'ilism, the person of the Prophet or the *Imam* possesses two distinct natures or layers of being. The first is his human nature called the *nasut* and the second is his celestial or divine nature called the *lahut*. The divine nature (*lahut*) is the Universal Intellect (*al-'aql al-kull*) which is also called the Light of Muhammad (*nur Muhammad*)" (Andani 2011, 7). The Holy Spirit has been identified with the divine Light above.
- c) The divine Light cannot be seen with the eyes; hence the world cannot see it. As the Byzantine Christian "mystic" Gregory Palamas says, "No one, neither man nor Angel, has seen God (John 1:18), nor will ever see him ... because we only see by our senses and by our mind, and this is true of Angels as of men; but he who has become Spirit ... sees in Spirit," and this Spirit is the

However, I am aware that the concept of the Light of Muhammad is very divisive in Islam. For those who reject this concept, additional non-biblical passages will be examined later, which do not need a non-human or morethan-human Paraclete.

Spiritual Light which "is not only the object of vision; it is also the faculty enabling us to see; this is neither sensation nor intellection, but a spiritual power distinct, in its transcendence, from all created cognitive faculties" (Meyendorff 1974, 172).¹

d) "[T]here is no place and there is no time in which the Messenger of Allah is not present" (Hussain 2018, 50), and Muhammad "has been arriving in the physical world from the world of light before this from the time of his noble birth and is present with the one who says [this] with a shadow presence (hudūr zillī) which is closer than his physical presence" (Katz 2007, 136); hence Muhammad can be within us.

If we are to accept the text of the gospel regarding the Paraclete, then we will still need to see how Muhammad can be the presence of Christ and will be sent by Christ (note 'e' above). Following on from the *nasut* and *lahut*, the two natures of Muhammad, which are also possessed by the Imams according to some Shia sources, it can be said that Christ also has these two natures: "The *nasut* and the *lahut* remain as two distinct natures or layers of being; they do not intermix or mingle but exist in a union without confusion. Jesus, being one of the great Prophets of Islam, also possesses the same two natures" (Andani 2011, 8).

Therefore, with this understanding, Christians before Muhammad could have described the divine nature and Light as belonging to Christ. However, with the advent of Muhammad, the Light can more perfectly

^{1.} The book adds as a clarification (page 174): "[T]his vision and this deification is never a way of 'possessing' God, of containing him, and submitting him to the laws of creatures: while manifesting himself, he yet dwells in mystery." Note that when seeing God is spoken about in a Christian context (e.g., "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" [Matthew 5:8]), it is the Light of God which is meant.

be described as belonging to Muhammad. As such, the presence of Christ is the presence of the Light of Muhammad; the Light is the same, but before Muhammad it was described as belonging to Christ. Similarly, as the Light of Muhammad came into the womb of Muhammad's mother, the Light therefore can be said to have sent Muhammad into the world; again, this same Light before Muhammad would have been called the Light of Christ, and so Christ would send the Paraclete.

This does mean that the text of the Gospel of John in this place can be accepted "as is" by certain Muslims. Interestingly, this would not deny the Paraclete coming as fire on the day of Pentecost on the apostles of Christ, or even on the Eucharist. It is merely understood that a more perfect description of this divine fire is actually the Light of Muhammad.

While this possibility has no basis in any ancient writing, yet it should be remembered that the ancient Jewish Christians are not represented. Moreover, there were some Christians of the "Church of the East" who spoke very highly of Muhammad himself, even though they thought that the minds of the Arabs "were as yet too immature" for the fullness of the Christian faith (Hoyland 1997, 537-38). John bar Penkaye (writing in 687 CE) wrote that God "had prepared them [the Arabs] beforehand to hold Christians in honour; thus they also had a special commandment from God concerning our monastic station, that they should hold it in honour" (Hoyland 1997, 196). While clearly being selective about what the Arabs had been told about Christianity (e.g., Quran 9:31), yet it does seem as though part of the Quran could be seen as being of divine origin ("a special commandment from God concerning our monastic station," referring to Quran 5:82).

Additionally, a late Umayyad (fictional) debate has the Christian saying to the Muslim that Muhammad was a "wise and God-fearing man who freed you from idolatry and brought you to know the one true God" (Hoyland 1997, 468, 538). This is far from John of Damascus, writing in the 730s CE, calling Muhammad a "false prophet" (Hoyland 1997, 486)¹.

As such then, it is perfectly possible that Jewish Christians could have accepted Muhammad as a true prophet, especially as Islam continues circumcision. So the question then arises as to the plausibility of any connection between Christ and Muhammad both being called the "Light from Light." It should be noted that, at least according to the later Byzantine writer Gregory Palamas, the human soul united with God "becomes itself nothing but light, and grows like that which it sees; it unites with it without mixture, being light. ... [It] is only conscious of being light, and of seeing a light distinct from any created thing." Hence St Paul himself "was Light and Spirit" (Meyendorff 1974, 174). As such, it could technically be possible to talk about the Light being the "Light of St Paul," and so therefore also the Light of Muhammad. Therefore, from the Christian point of view, it could be that the Jewish Christians described the Light of Christ as the Light of Muhammad to preserve the knowledge of the Light in the face of the strong Quranic statements against Jesus being equated with God (e.g., Quran 5:17, 72, 116). On the other hand, from the Muslim point of view, Christians

^{1.} It does seem curious that the Byzantine-Arab Chronicle of 741 describes Muhammad as "Born of a most noble tribe of that people, he was a very prudent man and a foreseer of a good many future events" (Hoyland 1997, 616).

^{2.} If the Paraclete is the (Holy) Spirit, then could it have been said that St Paul was the Paraclete because here he has been called "Spirit"? However, it is also stated that union with the Light (and hence Spirit) is "without mixture," so St Paul is called "Spirit" without actually being the Spirit.

before Muhammad could have talked about the Light of Christ, but when Muhammad came the "rightly-guided" Christians then started to talk about the Light of Muhammad as being the greater description of the Light.

"Paraclete" and "Ahmad"

As mentioned in the Introduction, the word "Ahmad" used by Jesus in the Quran does not actually appear in the text of the gospel; the word used is the Greek "paraklētos." However, since the nineteenth century, it has been observed that there is a related Greek word "periklutos" which has a very similar meaning to the Arabic "Ahmad," meaning most praised (Montazery and Karimpur 2018, 119). While it has been said that therefore the text of the gospels must have been corrupted, there is no evidence for this: all ancient manuscripts or translations have either Paraclete or its transcription, or its translation like "comforter" (Montazery and Karimpur 2018, 122-23)

Yet things get more interesting when we consider that these two Greek words only differ in their vowels, their consonants being the same. This implies that when transliterating either word into Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac, or Arabic, they would appear to be the same word when written before vowel points were invented. It has therefore been suggested that Muhammad heard some ignorant translators render "Paraclete" as "Ahmad" and so got the idea that his name was mentioned in the gospel, which he then placed into the Quran (St. Clair Tisdall 1905, 190-91).

However, the link between "paraclete" and "periklute" can be turned on its head. What if Jesus had originally said the word "periklute," so the disciples would have heard that word with its vowels, and not "paraclete"? When writing their notes, "periklute" would have been

written with the same consonants as "paraclete." Supposing that the Gospel of John was then translated from such a written source, we have that it would have been the translator who would have made the mistake of reading the wrong Greek word from the same Aramaic consonants. (Of course, I do not think this would have happened, but propose it so that the idea of mistranslating could work either way.)

The major problem with this is that the Greek word "periklute" had not really been used since the ancient Greek poets (700 years before Jesus) (Liddel and Scott 1940). Therefore, only scholars would have known of its existence, let alone Jews who only knew Greek as a second language or had not been properly educated. Yet the Greek word "Paraclete" is found in the Aramaic translations of the "Old Testament" (*The Jewish Encyclopedia* 1906, entry "Paraclete") and so "is almost certain to have had wide currency in Greek Judaism as well as in Palestinian Judaism during the first century A.D. and later" (Johnston 2005, 99). Therefore, the word meant by Jesus could only have been "paraclete." And why would Jesus have not have said the actual name "Muhammad" instead of "periklute"? (see also Montazery and Karimpur 2018, 121) I will suggest in the next section that there is a deliberate wordplay.

How Christians Can Accept Muhammad as Being a Substitute Paraclete

I think it goes without saying that no Christian on face of this planet would accept the Paraclete as being the Light of Muhammad! However, due to the heat of polemics, one very simple fact has been overlooked: the Quranic narrative does not have Jesus calling Muhammad the Paraclete. If it did, then the actual letters of the word "Paraclete" (FRQLT or BRQLT in Arabic) or its translation (e.g., "Comforter") would need to be used in the text of the Quran. As mentioned above, all

ancient manuscripts or translations of John's Gospel have either Paraclete or its transcription, or its translation like "comforter." In other words, Muhammad is not the Paraclete; Muslims can still believe that he was, but Christians will not.

The key to understanding the expectation about the Paraclete could be linked to the understanding of the term "the kingdom of God" (or "heaven") used by Jesus. We have seen how some Christians have understood this to be about the divine Light. Further, Jesus himself says that "the kingdom of God is within you," and, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now my kingdom is not from here" (Luke 17:21; John 18:36). Observe how the kingdom is not about earthly fighting.

However, there were others who had a different expectation of what Jesus should do, and specifically that he should fight: "Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, 'This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.' Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he departed again to the mountain by himself alone" (John 6:14-15). Here we have Jews who accepted Jesus as the Messiah and who wanted an earthly kingdom. In other words, these people would later identify as Jewish Christians, but would still be wanting the restoration of a physical "kingdom of Israel." And such Christians would be expecting a person and not a "spirit" to bring this about.

Therefore, "mainstream" Christians can still consider the Paraclete to be only the divine Light and Fire at Pentecost. However, certain Jewish Christian groups could have been expecting an earthly kingdom rather than (or in addition to) a spiritual "kingdom of Light." As such,

for them the term Paraclete would indeed have been a human being. So Jesus used the word Paraclete (and in other places than those recorded in the Gospel of John) to indicate only the Holy Spirit, the divine Light, which these Jewish Christians could have misunderstood. However, due to the identical way of writing both "paraklētos" and "periklutos" in Semitic languages, Muhammad can legitimately claim to be the Periklute, the Praised One or Ahmad. Muhammad does not start the kingdom of Light (which already existed with Pentecost), but he does start an earthly kingdom. Muhammad is therefore not the Paraclete, but instead is an earthly "substitute Paraclete" for some Jewish Christians who wanted an earthly kingdom.

And historically, we know that Muhammad's followers did conquer the land of Israel and Palestine. And Jews in the Roman empire at the time of the Islamic conquests did acknowledge Muhammad as "the Prophet": writing in 634 CE, "[W]e Jews were overjoyed. And they were saying that the prophet had appeared, coming with the Saracens, and that he was proclaiming the advent of the anointed one, the Christ who was to come" (Hoyland 1997, 57).³

^{1.} If Muslims feel that this puts Muhammad's mission beneath Jesus' mission, then it could be argued that Christianity had become corrupted and that Muhammad, especially with the Light of Muhammad, was restoring the kingdom of Light as well.

^{2.} Even though the quotation that follows is about non-Christian Jews, presumably Jewish Christians could acknowledge both Jesus and Muhammad to be "the Prophet" (Deuteronomy 18:15; referenced in John 1:45; Acts 3:22; Quran 7:157) due to a "dual fulfillment of prophecy"; see (Jeremiah 1972). I suppose the Paraclete passages in the Gospel of John could also be applied to Muhammad in a similar way.

^{3.} While Jews have rejected the Islamic empire as being the restoration of the kingdom of Israel, Jewish Christians could easily have been more accepting. Additionally, as the Quran proclaims Jesus as being the Christ/anointed one,

A possible Source for the "Ahmad" Quotation in the Quran

However, even if some of the preceding is acceptable to some Muslims, yet the exact words put into the mouth of Jesus in the Quran are not to be found in the Gospel of John: "an Apostle to come after me whose name shall be Ahmad." Some have therefore suggested that the Gospel of John should not be considered the source of these words:

In the Qur'anic verse, Jesus addresses his audience by the following words: "O Children of Israel!" This indicates that the Jews (and not the Apostles) were his audience. However, in the prophecy of the Gospel, Jesus is speaking only to his nearest disciples in a private meeting (John 13:1-2). ... Therefore, the Qur'anic reference to Jesus' prophecy about a prophet with the name "Ahmad" cannot refer to the prophecy of Jesus about the coming Paraclete as reported in the Gospel of John. (Montazery and Karimpur 2018, 121)

However, others have suggested that the Gospel of John originally contained this exact phrase, and not merely the word "Periklute":

I shall go to the Father, and he shall *send* you another *apostle whose name shall be* Periqlytos [=Periklute], that he may remain with you forever. (see Montazery and Karimpur 2018, 122, italics in the original)

This can be compared with current text in John 14:16: "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever." One point to be made is that, for a prophecy to be valid, conceivably it has to be preserved to enable the future readers to be able to validate the claimant.

On the other hand, it could also be argued that these words of Jesus in the Quran are merely a summary of certain aspects of his teaching

presumably the "advent of the anointed one" mentioned here could refer to a misunderstanding of Jesus' Second Coming.

over a period of time. As such, so long as we have a link to something spoken by Jesus, then the exact phraseology does not matter. Yet we do know that there were other gospels, some of which have not survived except only in quotations. Could we find a phrase in these for "whose name shall be Paraclete/Periklute"?

A comprehensive search is beyond my abilities. However, searching online copies of books on the New Testament Apocrypha for "Paraclete" and "Comforter" does not reveal anything helpful. ¹ However, one place to look for additional references to the Paraclete would be the Diatessaron, a collation ("harmony") of the four Gospels, even though it would seem logical that this collation would have no new references to the Paraclete because it is taken from only the four Gospels. However, being a new and translated text, and therefore no longer scripture, certain changes can be made without thinking that scripture is being corrupted²:

[T]he Latin Diatessaron was submitted to a thorough revision. Clarifying additions were made, exegetical notes were written in the margin, sometimes the text was changed here and there to express the theological views of the redactor. (Quispel 1975, 50)

^{1.} Searching James (1953) and Schneemelcher and Wilson (2005) in Google Books, one finds references to the "Paraclete" and "Comforter," but nothing relevant to Muhammad.

^{2.} Muslims also do this with translations of the Quran. In the English translation of the Quran by Muhsin Khan and Muhammad al-Hilali, we read the following: "The Way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your Anger (such as the Jews), nor of those who went astray (such as the Christians)." (Quran 1:7). Now imagine this appearing in, say, a five-hundred-year-old manuscript, without brackets being used. Please also similarly observe that no book of the Bible originated in the Arabic language.

For this reason, the author maintains that this text was apparently never used in the liturgy of the church. This may be true for the Western Latin churches, but the Syriac speaking churches did use the Diatessaron for readings of "the Gospel" in their church services. And the Manicheans, who believed that Mani was the Paraclete, used the Diatessaron (Quispel 1993, 376).

However, the existing copies of the Diatessaron have all passed through "mainstream" Christian scribes, and so the text has been altered to make it conform to the later accepted translations of the four Gospels. As such, the existing manuscripts for the Diatessaron do not appear to have any special readings for the Paraclete, but that was not always the case. When disputing with Mani in Mesopotamia, and so using the Diatessaron, the bishop Archelaus said, "The Saviour Christ said to his disciples: 'Remain in Jerusalem, and do not depart, nor preach the gospel, until you are clothed with the power from on high, which is the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit" (Evetts, 1904, 102). This is clearly a form of Luke 24:49: "[R]emain in the city of Jerusalem until you are clothed with power from on high."

It is interesting that this new reference to the Paraclete is related to a reference found in a Saxon poem based on the Latin Diatessaron: "I

^{1.} Again, replacing the archaic term "Ghost" with "Spirit."

^{2.} It is interesting that this quotation does not appear in the existing text of this disputation. However, a form of Acts 2:6 does have the word Paraclete inserted into it: "That every man heard the apostles speak in his own language through the Spirit, the Paraclete" (Archelaus 1886).

^{3.} From the Amplified Bible, chosen for its choice of English words to match the quotation, available at https://www.bible.com/bible/compare/LUK.24.49 (accessed March 22, 2019).

will go to [lit. seek] our Father and I shall send you from the Kingdom of heaven the Holy Spirit¹: he will comfort you again and help [you]" (Quispel 1975, 66-67). The phrase "he will comfort you" is clearly a paraphrase of the Paraclete/Comforter being mentioned. And here the "kingdom of heaven" is mentioned; could it be understood that the Paraclete establishes this kingdom on earth in some form? The Paraclete as Light bringing the kingdom of Light, and the Periklute as Muhammad bringing an earthly kingdom?

Yet we still have not got a formula like "whose name shall be Paraclete." Of course, there could have been additional references present in the text (as modified by the Manicheans?), which no longer survive. However, there is one gospel text where no one would think of looking because it is assumed to be non-Christian, and that is in the Living Gospel used by the Manicheans. However, the Manicheans could be considered to be a Christian sect:

When dealing with Manichaeism, one is inclined to see it as a kind of imitation, and its origins even linked with counterfeit and fraud. There are several historical reasons, however, to challenge this view. In opposition to the 'orthodox' Christians, Mani and his followers did indeed consider themselves to be the *veri Christiani* [true Christians] and, accordingly, their Church was the *vera ecclesia* [the true church]. ... [Mani] was the new Prophet; the new Apostle of Jesus Christ. (van Oort 2004, 139)

Mani is shown basing his authority in the Christian scriptures. Despite being the founder of a new religion that is characterized as complementary to non-Christian traditions as well as Christian ones, Mani himself is consistently 'the apostle of Jesus Christ' and cites New Testament texts not only in addressing the Christian west, but in texts aimed at and preserved in the mission into the heart of non-Christian Asia. ... [T]he evidence is now clear that Mani emerged from a religious environment in which

^{1. &}quot;Ghost" replaced by "Spirit."

'Christianity' in some form was the primary starting point. (BeDuhn and Mirecki 2007, 94)

Manichaeism, therefore, or more properly the Manichaean Church, is not a 'Persian' religion in Christian guise, as was once imagined, but an indigenous form of Persian Christianity. ... Even much later Islamic observers, such as 'Abd al-Jabbar, recorded the Manichaeans' insistence that they are the followers of Christ who possess the true gospel. Still, in spite of all this mounting evidence, there is still a strong resistance to giving Manichaeans their due. (Pettipiece 2015, 302-3)

Additionally, it is thought that the Manicheans were active in Arabia from early times:

Other missions must have been dispatched at this time [Mani's life time], accounts of which have not come down to us: into northeast Arabia (Hatta) but also to the caravan settlements of the Southwest as far as the end of the Arabian Peninsula. (Tardieu 2008, 23-24)

Indeed, we should not be surprised to find Manichaeans in pre-Islamic Arabia. They are attested by Titus of Bostra's lengthy fourth-century refutation and, in fact, according to the Persian geographer Ibn Rusta, Manichaeans reportedly came from al-Hira to Mecca, possibly via Palmyra, where they had been received by Queen Zenobia. (Pettipiece 2015, 306)

Further, "According to Ibn 'Abbās, quoted by Ibn al-kalbí, Manicheism (*zandaqa*) was brought to Mecca by Qurayshites" (Gilliot 2009, 33, note 9). As such, it should be considered possible that the Christians mentioned in the Quran could at times refer to the Manicheans.

And there are references to the Paraclete in Mani's Living Gospel which are unlike those in the Bible:

Jesus said, "After me it shall come to pass that the Paraclete will be sent. You should command your children that they become his followers." (Shokri-Foumeshi and Farhoudi, 2014, 58)

Importantly, for those Muslims who do not accept the Light of Muhammad, in this quotation the Paraclete need not be a divine figure. In fact, could the mention of "his followers" imply a human being?¹ However, the text of this "gospel" is lost, so whether it contained a phrase like "whose name shall be Paraclete" or not cannot be known.

However, there might be an indication that it did. In some Syriac translations of the Paraclete sections of the Gospel of John, the word Paraclete has not been transcribed, but rather translated as the word for comforter, *menahhemana*. Some Muslim writers thought that this was a form of the name Muhammad (Montazery and Karimpur 2018, 116-17). It is, however, far closer to an alternative Greek form of Mani's name Mannichaion (Lieu 1999, 256; the "ch" sound being a transliteration of the Syriac Ḥēṭ, which is equivalent to the Arabic Ḥā').² Could it have been thought that *menahhemana* was the name of the Paraclete³ precisely because the Manicheans were saying that it was?

Moreover, given our previous discussion on a possible Jewish Christian interpretation of the kingdom of God, it is significant that Mani grew up in a Jewish Christian community. Further, "A striking feature of all these early missionary accounts is that nearly

^{1.} Christians would, of course, prefer all authentic references to the Paraclete to be about the Holy Spirit.

^{2.} The name Mani has previously been linked to *Menahem* in Robertson (1911, 268). Note that "mainstream" Christian polemics claimed that "Mani" was not his given-name, but an adopted name (Lieu 1999, 135).

^{3.} While "Paraclete" is not a name, it became treated as a name for the Holy Spirit: "[T]he Holy Spirit, whom our Lord and Saviour in the Gospel according to John has named the Paraclete" (Origen 1885).

everywhere—even in India—the new prophet and apostle of Jesus Christ [i.e., Mani] could start his work in congregations of Jewish-Christian Baptists and, in all probability, even in other Jewish synagogues" (van Oort 2004, 144-45).

Yet when commenting on the Bible verse which says, "For these things I weep; my eye, my eye overflows with water; because the comforter [menachem], who should restore my life, is far from me" (Lamentations 1:16), some Jewish sources say that the mention of "comforter" is the name of the Messiah (Santala 2002, 54-55). The key is that the word "name" does not need to be in the text for a name to be implied. Therefore, the words "whose name is Paraclete/Periklute" could be said without needing a direct reference to providing a name in the source, whether in the Gospel of John or elsewhere.

However, looking in Manichean scriptures for authentic sayings of Jesus could have a downside. Arguably, most people today think that Mani was not a prophet from God. So if the Quran is referencing the Manichean scriptures, then does this mean that the Quran is false as well? Based on Mani's claim to be the Paraclete and also, significantly, the "Seal of the Prophets," it has been said that "A plausible hypothesis

^{1.} The Hebrew word used here was taken from the website www.blueletterbible.org and transcribed into English via www.alittlehebrew.com/transliterate.

^{2.} The source of Mani's claim to be the "Seal of the Prophets" comes from Muslim writers. While the term has been found in Manichean writings, yet there it applies to Wisdom, and not to a person. Additionally, it would appear that the "prophets" mentioned are followers, not predecessors, of Mani. Also, it has been mentioned that Mani would have thought that the term "apostle" is greater than that of "prophet." Nevertheless, he did claim to be the final apostle, so perhaps the Islamic term "Seal of the Prophets" had been

is that Islam's first appearance was a non-conformist off-shoot of Manicheism" (Gilliot 2009, 33).¹

Muhammad's form of Manichaeism would indeed be very "non-conformist," because while Mani was indeed from a Jewish Christian community, yet "Mani identified the Biblical creator god with the arch-demon Ašaqlūn of his myth, the procreator of the first human couple" (Sundermann 2009a). Yet this type of polemical argument can be turned around again. It could be that the interpretation of the Paraclete's mission came from Mani's Jewish-Christian background, which he then wrote into his "gospel." The Quran referencing such information would then actually be referencing a tradition amongst Jewish Christians.

Conclusion

The Paraclete being the Holy Spirit is central to "mainstream" Christianity, and so the Islamic claim that it was Muhammad who was prophesized instead of the Holy Spirit cuts to the heart of the Christian faith. One way to reconcile the two claims is to consider the Holy Spirit as the divine Light and then link this to the Light of Muhammad believed by some Muslims. This could be considered to be plausible when we consider that, according to mystical Christianity, those united with the divine Light (e.g., St Paul) are described as being "Light and Spirit." Hence, if we consider Muhammad to have been inspired by God (as Jewish Christians could easily have believed), then the Paraclete as the divine Light is simultaneously the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and also

applied to him for this reason? (Stroumsa 1986, 68-71)

^{1.} This could explain why Sundermann (2009b) mentions, "That Manicheism went further on to the Arabian peninsula, up to the Hejaz and Mecca, where it could have possibly contributed to the formation of the doctrine of Islam, cannot be proven." So Manichaeism could spread to Spain and China—but not to Mecca?

the Light of Muhammad with Muhammad having both this divine nature and also a human nature.

However, while this could technically be accepted by some, yet many Muslims and all Christians would reject it. It is then noted that the Quran never actually refers to the Paraclete: the word "Ahmad" is not directly related to the Greek word "Paraclete" in either sound or meaning. It was postulated that this was a deliberate wordplay based on a related Greek word "periklutos," which is similar in meaning to "Ahmad but which also would be written identically in Semitic languages without vowel points. As such, given that some Jews who accepted Jesus were looking for an earthly kingdom, then Muhammad would be a "substitute Paraclete" by bringing such an earthly kingdom which conquered Palestine and the Persian empire shortly after his death.

Finally, we tried to find a possible source for a quotation like "an Apostle to come after me whose name shall be Ahmad." Some other references to Jesus talking about the Paraclete were shown to have some possible relevance, but significantly Manichean references proved most enlightening. In particular, the similarity between the word "comforter" in Syriac (menahhemana) and one form of Mani's name in Greek (Mannichaion) could have led the Manicheans to have considered menahhemana to have been a name. In particular, some Jewish sources say that menachem is the name of the Messiah by interpretation. As such, the word Paraclete could have been taken to be a name linked to Ahmad via the word "periklutos."

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