

Episode 3

Trinity in Christianity

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+ Announcer : My dear viewers, we warmly welcome you again to our program, “Questions about faith.” It’s an honor to have our guest with us today, Father Zakaria Botros. Welcome to you.

+ Father : Thank you.

+ Announcer : In the pervious 2 episodes we spoke about the word trinity and how Christianity believes in one God. And that the trinity is not associating others with God or believing in 3 Gods. We will continue our discussion with reverent Zakaria. Our question for today is why doesn’t the doctrine of trinity which Christians believe in exist in any other religion. What do you think about that?

+ Father : It is a good question. It’s complementary to the pervious question. I have already explained it, but perhaps there are some viewers was not been following the pervious episodes. So I think it’s ok to explain it again. What’s important to me is man’s happiness wherever he is, as long as he knows the truth, because the Bible says, “You know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” This is my concern: that man will know the truth and that he may have a personal faith in something that he is convinced of. Not a faith that imposed by a remote control. We say that the trinity has already been there in false pagan religions. There was for example the Egyptian trinity made up of Isis, Osiris and Horus. But it’s false trinity; and it is not our trinity.

+ Announcer : Is that the one mentioned in the Quran, or is this different?

+ Father : No, no, I think it is different. We do not believe in such a trinity at all, and I think also in the Quran, our Muslim brothers refer to also a false trinity, as the Quran says that such trinity involves God in a relationship with a wife, so it must be something of that type. It’s a false kind of trinity. We have already spoken about the Mariamite heresy, which used to believe in the Goddess of heaven, and they said that God married the goddess of heaven and gave birth to a child. And this is a false doctrine. So then the idea of trinity has already been there since ancient times; men knew it intuitively. But it could have been handed down from the time of Adam, because Adam could preserve the trinity, perhaps spiritually,

and when he fell into sin and was driven out of the garden the idea became confused. And when he handed it down to his offspring, the confusion increased even more, and instead of describing or expressing the true trinity, they started to describe a false one

+ Announcer : They started to describe a false materialistic physical one that has nothing to do with God.

+ Father : And such false trinities started to take on a procreative and physical nature. But Christianity does not believe in that at all. Christianity says that God is one; he is self-existent, omniscient, and he lives through the spirit. And these are the personal attributes we spoke about last time. This is our trinity and these are the personal attributes of the trinity which must inherently be in the Godhead. Now, are there any other religious that believe in the trinity? As a matter of fact, Islam believes in the trinity. The Quran itself speaks about the trinity, in the same sense spoken about by Christians.

+ Announcer : But, father, it's not clear, is it?

+ Father : It is not clear because nobody wants to understand it.

+ Announcer : The doctrine is there, we can't deny it, but they didn't reach this truth.

+ Father : It's there but Muslims just skip the verse

+ Announcer : Exactly.

+ Father : That speak about trinity and they concentrate on the verses.

+ Announcer : That reinforce their own belief.

+ Father : For example Sura 4, verse 171, which we mentioned in the pervious episode, mentions that Jesus Christ is the messenger of God and a Word from him, whom he cast to Mary, and a spirit from him. So they concentrate on only one part of it and say, "You see, Christ is a messenger of God."

+ Announcer : But they leave out the more important part.

+ Father : They pick and choose. The Quran spoke about our trinity in this verse. Christ is the word of God, his word and his spirit. We have spoken about Al Shakanqeery and about Ahmed Hegazy. What I want to talk about now is how Christ is the word of God? And does the Quran testified the fact that he is the word of God more clearly? And in what manner does the Quran give such testimony? Besides the verse from Sura 4,

+ Announcer : This is 171

+ Father : Verse 171, there is also another verse in Sura 3, verse 39, which it says, “God gives you news of John – this John is the John Baptist,

+ Announcer : This is the angel’s message to Zakaria

+ Father : Gives you news of John – who will confirm word from God (or a word from God).” So John the Baptist was meant to confirm or believe in a word from God. What does that mean?

+ Announcer : This requires a lot of explanation.

+ Father : As you know, we are not allowed to explain or interpret the Quran; we respect the Quran and we respect the ancient exegetes and interpreters, and we have no right to interpret it ourselves. But there are approved exegetes, Islamic exegetes, who have the right. And we quote those people, for example, Imam Abu Al- Sa`ud الامام ابو السعود. What did he say? He said, ““Confirming or to confirm word from God’ means: This word means Jesus, may peace be upon him.”

+ Announcer : Would you please tell us the reference again, Father, so that our beloved Muslims would refer to these books and check it out themselves.

+ Father : We want people to read and understand.

+ Announcer : we want to make it easier to them to refer for the commentaries.

+ Father : This is in the commentary of Abu A-Sa`ud Mohamed ben Mohamed Al-Ammady ابو السعود محمد بن محمد العمادى, page 233. Again he says: “Who will confirm a word from God,” means Jesus, may peace be upon him, because John the Baptist was set to be the first one to believe in him and to confirm that he is a Word from God.

The same commentator quotes an older commentator named Al-Siddi السّدى - this is all in the same reference book. Al-Siddi says that the mother of John met the mother of Jesus. This is also known from the Bible. The mother of John said, “O Mary, have you felt my pregnancy.” Mary said, “I am also pregnant.” – normal talk – Then the mother of John said to the mother of Jesus -and this is the serious part- the mother of John said to the mother of Jesus, “I have found the embryo in my belly worshiping the one in yours.” This is the interpretation or the meaning Who will confirm word from God. Who was in the belly of the mother of John?

+ Announcer : John or yehia يحيى

+ Father : Whom did he worship?

+ Announcer : Jesus the son of Mary who was in her belly. Please, Father, would you repeat this part again the reference and the name?

+ Father : It is the commentary of Abu Al-Sa`ud. His name is Mohamed ben Mohamed Al-Ammady, ابو السعود محمد بن محمد العمادى, page 233. The commentator is quoting here an older commentator named Al-Siddi السّدى, and Al-Siddi says that the mother of John met the mother of Jesus and said, “O Mary, have you felt (or perhaps it means have you heard about) my pregnancy?” Then Mary answered, “I am pregnant as well.” The mother of John said, “I have found the one in my belly worshiping the one in yours.”
Worshipping is a divine prerogative, isn't it so?

+ Announcer: It's confirmed in the Quran

+ **Father** : We are supposed to worship God only, and we kneel down to God only.

+ **Announcer**: In the Quran the same thing.

+ **Father** : “I found the one in my belly worshipping the one in yours,” This part of the Quran verse, which says, “Who will confirm a word from God.” the word you were told that you will be pregnant.

+ **Announcer**: I do not think it can be any clear.

+ **Father** : Clear.

+ **Announcer**: Yes, very clear.

+ **Father** : Again in Sura 3, verse 45, this verse comes to explain really who the word from God is. It says, “Thus the angles said Mary, ‘God announces to you a word from him, his name is Christ the son of Mary.’” Of course, there can not be a grammatical mistake in the Quran here.

+ **Announcer** : Muslims take the Quran to be the standard in Arabic grammar.

+ **Father** : Ok, let’s take a closer look at the Arabic. It says, “God announces to you a word from him.” A word **كلمه**, Is it masculine or feminine in Arabic? It is feminine. So in Arabic it should be **ismuha اسمها** (her name) instead of **ismuhu اسمه** (his name). So the verse should read in Arabic, “Thus the angle said Mary God announces to you a word from him; her name isor in Arabic **ismuha اسمها**. The Christ **Essa Ebn Mariam عيسى ابن مريم** to keep the language in correct But this is not the case here in the Quran. It says in Arabic: **bikalimatin بكلمة** feminine **ismhuhu اسمه** masculine. “His name is Jesus the son of Mary.” Some may argue that the masculine pronoun in **ismuhu اسمه** refers to Christ but everybody knows that pronouns refer to the noun that comes before it, not the noun that comes after it. So what do we conclude from that? That this word from God is not an ordinary human word; it is a masculine word; it must be the word of God- a person, the intellect of God that we spoke about.

Let's go back to the original language. In Greek, the Greek word is "logos" and logos from which the Arabic word kalima has been translated, it means: the intellect of God. which expresses itself in the form of a word. Therefore it has been written here in the masculine, because the word intellect or the intellect of God, the mind of God must be masculine. Therefore it did not say, "bikalimatin ismuha بكلمة اسمها – a word; her name is ... but a word; his name is" It is the mind of God manifested in Jesus Christ. Again in the book entitled (fusus al- hikam) فصوص الحكم by sheikh Mohyi Addin Al-Araby الشيخ محي الدين العربي, in section 2 or volume 2, page 35, says about the word, the word, "The word- amazing comment- is God transfigured." It's all there waiting for someone to read and understand. The Bible encourages us to search the Scriptures, search the books, because the books will testify to Jesus. But the problem is that very few Muslims who read. They neither read nor want to understand, and they take it as it is. We would like a new 21st century mentality, a thinking person to assess things for himself. This has been already written in the 7th or maybe the 8th century AD, and they wrote such things. Are they better than us, who are living in the 21st century? His name again is sheikh Mohyi Addin Al-Araby محي الدين العربي in his book fusus al- hikam فصوص الحكم volume 2, page 35, and says that the word is God transfigured and it is the same as Godhead and nothing else. It is the same as the Godhead or the very Godhead and nothing else. Sheikh Mohyi Addin Al-Araby is a well-known author. In the same book on page 13, we find something else,

+ Announcer : And we are still talking about the word and trying to explain who the word of God is.

+ Father : As a person of the trinity. The word of God, the intellect of God. Mohyi Addin Al-Araby in his book says, "The word is the Godhead."

+ Announcer : He put it in a nutshell.

+ Father : If the word is the Godhead, this means the word is God. Isn't this exactly

+ Announcer : Exactly.

+ Father : What we Christians say? That “In the beginning

+ Announcer : Yes.

+ Father : Was the word, and the word was with God and the Word is God.” it is the same. And even in Arabic we say, “The Word was - we use in the masculine not the feminine. So we are not talking about an ordinary human word; we are talking about a Person here, or God’s logos.

So now, we have God; we have the word of God who is the logos, the mind of God; and now we have only the Holy Spirit to deal with. Is the Holy Spirit God? Let us check this question. We read in Sura 2, verse 87 and the same verses repeated also in verse 253. It says here, “We gave Jesus the son of Mary evidence (or miracles) and assisted him with the Holy Spirit.” Again in Sura 5, verse 110 it says, “So God will say, ‘Jesus, son of Mary, remember my favor toward you and toward your mother, when I assisted you with the Holy Spirit. You spoke to people from the cradle and as an adult.’”

+ Announcer : I have a bit of an objection here, Father. Our Muslim brothers say that the Holy Spirit here is the same as the Holy Spirit who assisted Mohamed by giving him the Quran, we want to clarify the difference here the assistance here is that he is a messenger of God and he sent down the Quran to him, there’s a big difference.

+ Father : It is a matter of fact that in the Quran the angel Gabriel

+ Announcer : Is referred to as a holy spirit.

+ Father : Is referred to as a holy spirit coming from God. But in the Quran also the Holy Spirit is referred to as the Spirit of God himself.

As a testimony I quote Sheikh Mohamed Al Hariry Al Bayyummy شيخ محمد الحريري البيومي in the book entitled the spirit and its identity, page 53. Page 53 he says, “The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God.”

+ Announcer : Would you please mention the name again, Father?

+ Father : It's called in Arabic Arruhu wa mahiyyatuha الروح وماهييتها, page 53, by Sheikh Mohamed Al Hariry Al Bayyummy. The Quran also admonishes people neither to lie to God nor to his Spirit. So here the spirit must be the Spirit of God so the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God because we can't conceive God without a spirit. And if we claimed the Holy Spirit is Gabriel, what about God- does he have a spirit or not? Does he have life or not?

+ Announcer : Also this angel has been created by God. How can we call a creature of God the Spirit of God? It doesn't fit somehow.

+ Father : But no no, Muslims look at it in a different way. They say that the Holy Spirit (literally the spirit of holiness) means it's the spirit coming from the holiness, which is God; namely a spirit sent by the holy God. But this does not negate the fact that God has a spirit. It can't be that Gabriel is the Spirit of God; God must have a spirit because having a life is an inherent personal attribute of God's, because he lives through his Spirit.

+ Announcer : What does it mean when the Quran says in sura of Miriam , "We sent her our Spirit."? then it's the spirit of God he didn't say the spirit I created he says Our spirit then there's a difference between the two.

+ Father : We want to look at the thing from the Muslims point of view. So that I don't say we interpret thing the way we like." Right? They view the verse "We sent her our spirit as a spirit from us" and they interpreted the rest of the verse that the angle appeared to her in the form of a man. That is their interpretation I don't argue with them about this. But my discussion in order to be fair and speaking logic I ask: does God have a spirit or not? lay Gabriel aside now. Is God without spirit?

+ Announcer : Of course not.

+ Father : Of course not. Ok, this spirit; is it holy or not? Isn't he the holy?

+ Announcer : Sure, yes, God is holy.

+ Father : And “holy” is one of the names of God, then his spirit is holy also, the Holy Spirit, so this the trinity we believe (the Father, who is the source of existence, the Word, who is God intellect manifested in human form, and God can’t be separated from his intellect and the Spirit of God who is living & life-giving). They are all well connected, we can not separated from one another, the same way that you can not separate the mind of a person from his body or his spirit he is one unit.

+ Announcer : This leads us to the 2nd question, Father: They say isn’t the naming of the trinity really strange? What does it really mean? Let’s start it first with this, what’s the meaning of the Father?

+ Father : The meaning of the Father. You mean, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

+ Announcer : Yes. The meaning of Father

+ Father : Well let’s start with the Father. The word Father has many meanings to be honest. Lingually it has many meanings. One of the meanings a Father is a figurative one, a metaphorical meaning a father does not have to marry and give birth to be called a father a metaphorical meaning. For example, if we say the father of creatures, the father of all creation, so here “father” is a symbol of the source of all creation; it can not mean that God married and gave birth to creations. Here it’s being used metaphorically. That’s why Paul the apostle says in the Bible, “We have but one God, the Father, from whom all things are, and we are his.” So he is the Father in the sense of being our Creator. Also figuratively one may say the father of goodness, the father of blessings. This does not mean that someone got married and gave birth to a child and named him blessing. It’s a figure of speech. It means the source of goodness or the source of blessing. So this is one meaning.

Another meaning is the legal meaning: legally, for example, if some one adopts a child. Mohammed has adopted Zayd, right?

+ Announcer : Right.

+ Father : Zayd historically was adopted by Mohammed and was called by his name.

+ Announcer : He was called Zayd the son of Mohammed instead of Zayd the son of Haritha.

+ Father : Instead of Zayd the Ben of Haritha. He was called Zayd Ebn Mohammed that was by adoption. Later he nullified adoption. But this is not our issue today. But it was adoption, was he his natural son. He was not. But he adopted him. So he became his father legally, before adoption was abolished in Islam. Right? That's why we say in the Bible. "You have received the spirit of adoption whereby you cry

+ Announcer : "Abba, Father."

+ Father : "Abba, Father." Oh God our Father- the spirit of adoption. This is the legal meaning. There is also an intrinsic meaning of the word father. In that sense we say: light is birthed by fire. light is birthed by fire, how? Did the fire marry fire-wood and gave birth to light? Impossible! We can't take every thing literally. There is a figurative style. This is something called simile. But there's a true meaning behind it. Fire is the same as light in this instance. But they are different in the speed. The speed of a flame of fire is slow, but the light that comes out of it is a much faster. So that the light for everybody. So here we have the intrinsic meaning of the word father. If I say that fire is the father of light, it does not mean marriage and natural birthing. Fire gave birth to light, here means produced it. Right?

+ Announcer : Here fatherhood is completely different from the natural, physical way that is humanly natural.

+ Father : There're other meanings, we have spoken about the figurative meaning, the legal meaning and the intrinsic meaning, there is also the spiritual meaning.

+ Announcer : And this is the most important one.

+ Father : This is the most important. Christ is the Son of God in the spiritual divine sense, not through physical procreation. The Bible says in the gospel of John, verse 13 that "Those who were

born of God.” This must be spiritual birth, born of God . “Christ has been born of God before all ages.” This is a very personal birthing, the same way that light is birthed of fire.

The divinity dwelt in the body of Christ and gave light. He dwelled in the body of Christ. So this is the meaning of father. With no procreation, no sex and nothing else. Right?

+ Announcer : Now, we come to the second meaning that we would like you to explain, the meaning of Son.

+ Father : The meaning of the word Son.

+ Announcer : The Son.

+ Father : Right. This is the problem for Muslims.

+ Announcer : Exactly, the Sonship

+ Father : How come a son and how he was born and so for it. Let me say that the concept of the word son in a language is known. We use the word son in different ways. We say the son of the country,

+ Announcer : The son of the Nile.

+ Father : The son of the Nile, the son of the desert, the son of Egypt. Do we mean that Egypt got married to the nation and gave birth to a son, or that the Nile got married to the land and gave birth to a son? Of course not, can the desert marry the wilderness, for example, and give birth to a son! It can't be. So this is the first meaning for son.

Even in the Quran the word son has been used in a way that it doesn't imply a physical procreation.

+ Announcer : Where is that?

+ Father : This occurs in Sura 2 Albakara , verse 215.

+ Announcer : Again Sura 2, verse 215 so our friends can refer to it.

+ Father : It says, “Say, ‘Any money contribute should be first spent on both your parents, close relatives, orphans the needy and

+ Announcer : the wayfarer.”

+ Father : The wayfarer in Arabic son of the road. This son of the road, where did he come from? Has the road got married to the street and given birth to a son and we ought to contribute money to him and give him alms? No. The Quran itself

+ Announcer : Testifies to the other Sonship then physical.

+ Father : Sonship that isn’t physical or procreative. Why then are we blamed if we use the same word figuratively. Also Imam Al Nassafi النسفي commented on this expression. He says, “A wayfarer is called the son of the road because he is related to the road; because he lives on the road, therefore he was called the son of the road.” This is in the commentary of Al Nassafi, volume 1, page 86. There is a divine tradition, as well, that talks about sonship. It says, “The rich are my stewards and the poor are my dependants (or children).” The word can be translated: dependants, household, or children. Has God given birth to them? Right?

+ Announcer : Yes, right.

+ Father : It’s not a very narrow, physical interpretation. There are several other meanings.

+ Announcer : The final part, Father, about the Holy Spirit.

+ Father : The Holy spirit.

+ Announcer : Like we explain the Father and the Son, now we come to the holy spirit.

+ Father : In sura 12 youssif , verse 87. Sura 12, verse 87 “Don’t despair of God’s comfort - in Arabic it’s God’s spirit, only disbelieving folks despair of God’s comfort or spirit.” So don’t despair of God’s spirit. This isn’t Gabriel then.

+ Announcer : It's the spirit of God . It's very clear.

+ Father : Don't despair of God's spirit only disbelieving folk despair of God's Spirit. that is to not despair from God. Also, in Sura 2 Al-Bakara, verse 87 and 253 where it says, "We gave Jesus the son of Mary the evidence (or the miracles) and We assisted him with the Holy Spirit." Also in Sura 6 Al-Ma'eda "We have assisted you with the Holy Spirit." Sheikh Abul Karim Al-Jabaly شيخ عبد الكريم الجبلى said the following about the Holy Spirit, that the Holy Spirit is not created and that which is not created must be eternal, and the eternal is God and none else. This has been written in the magazine of the Faculty of Arts in Cairo in 1934.

+ Announcer : We hope that the meaning is now understood by our beloved Muslims. And we thank you very much for all you do. May God bless you and bless your ministry, and use the ministry for the glory of his name. Amen.

+ Father : Amen.

+ Announcer : My dear friends in Islam everywhere, send us your questions. Be sure that we will fully attend to them. Our address will show on the screen at the end of the program. Please send us your questions and inquires. Whoever would like to read the Bible email us your request and will send to you for free or any other Christian books. Thank you, till we meet again.