The Dilemma of a Triune God: Muslim Polemics of Christian Theology in the Colonial Malabar and Abul Kamal Kaderi's Critique of Trinity

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Abstract: This article examines the nature and motive of religious polemics in the British Malabar taking Maulawi Abul Kamal Kaderi's works as an example. Two polemical works of Kaderi, traditional Sunni scholar affiliated to Samastha Kerala Jamiyyathul Ulema, are dicussed with regard to his views on Christian theology. The works, *Naqd al-Anājīl* and *al-Ḥusām al-Mashḥūdh*, deal with a wide range of topics and this article specially focus on the trinitarian belief. Kaderi's works are constituted by three predominant themes as follow: (i) He concomitantly acknowledges Christian consensus over trinitarian doctrine, and that they are insurmountably dichotomous in its explanations. (ii) He dismisses the medieval trend of conceiving Godhead as a Substance in philosophical sense. (iii) He questions the illogicity of hypostatic union and hypostatization of divine attributes itself. In a methodological sense, Kaderi throughout his analysis heavily draws upon medieval Muslim apologetics ranging from Ibn Ḥazm to Ibn Taymiyyah while his works also carry an anti-colonial thread. It is, therefore, self-evident that anti colonial discourses have internalised serious religious polemics among the colonised Muslim bodies of Malabar apart from mere political reactions.

Keywords: *Trinity, Reason and Religion, Abul Kamal Kaderi, Malabar, Anti-British polemics*

Intellectual background of Kaderi

In the first half of the 19th century, the Church Missionary Society camped at Travancore in southern Kerala and the Basel Evangelical Lutheran Mission started missionary activities in northern Kerala in their headquarters at Talasseri under the leadership of Hermann Gundert **(**Thameem, 2015**).**

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The polemical writings of Abul Kamal Kaderi against Christianity was caused by his suspect towards the missionaries. Two essential characteristics of the Protestant mission seem to have triggered the suspect and contempt of Kaderi towards missionaries: Firstly, the missionaries unscrupulously engaged in spreading denigrative literatures about Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h). (Gangadharan, 2006). A defamatory biography of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) namely *Muhammad Charithram* was published in Malayalam language under the auspices of Hermann Gundert, which was arguably inspired by Orientalist denigrative literature of the century (Thameem, 2015). Secondly, the missionaries acted at times in favour of the British colonial pursuits like they had been in any part of the world (Goddard, 2000).

Kaderi also held that the missionaries were at the service of colonisation as they did in many other parts of the world (Kaderi, 1937). The intellectual and political background of Kaderi who lived in *Melmuri* of colonial Malabar was mainly constituted by this suspect and contempt. He published two notable works on Christianity: *Naqd al-Anājīl fī Radd al-Naṣārā* and *al-Ḥusām al-Masḥūdh aˤlā ahl al-ṣalīb wa al-Hunūd[1]*. A major part of the second work was comprised of a long critique on Vendanta philosophy and Aryasamajam also.

In his notable work '*Muslim Perception of Christianity*', Hugh Goddard (Goddard, Muslim Perception of Christianity, 1996) has analytically briefed the Muslim views of Christianity ranging from the classical period of Islam to the modern Egyptian polemical works. He strikingly observes that in the period after 1800, there were mainly three types of Muslims responses all over the world towards Christianity. The first was a call for a politicized Islam against Christianity by the radical scholars like Jamaluddin Afghani and then he was followed by Rashid Rida. The second was a liberal modernist approach towards Islam as it was upheld by the likes of Muhammad Abdu and Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan of Indian sub continent. The third

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[1] *Naqd al-Anājīl* was published only once in 1937, and *al-Ḥusām al-Mashhūdh* shows no publisher or publication date.

was a polemicized approach towards the Christianity as a faith and religion as it was taken by the scholars like Rahmatullah al-Kairanawi and Rashid Rida (Goddard, Muslim Perception of Christianity, 1996).

Taking the categorization of Goddard into account, Kaderi obviously falls in the third category: 'religious polemical approach with less politicized attitude'. This article examines to what extend Kaderi is emphatic in his argument, locates his position among other Muslim apologists and polemicists and checks the originality of his contributions into the field of Christian-Muslim polemics.

Kaderi's view of trinity

Kaderi's perception of trinity is constituted by two substantial points. Firtly, he states that all Christians have unanimously agreed up on both associating Jesus to, and worshipping him along with Allah. This consensus has been characterized by him to be based on 'weak principles' (*al-uṣūl al-wāhiyah*) which, according to him, never can be cognizised by those who have strong and true intellects, but instead, only by distracted minds (ʿ*uqūl lāhiyah*). Secondly, He observes that although there has been a consensus that consequently leads to the trinity, the Christians have kept strong dichotomy with reference to the interpretations of the Trinitarian doctrine, causing several contradictory arguments that must be neglected by anyone with true intellect.

Among the 'weak principles', he puts the Christian interpretations of existence of the Godhead in three hypostases at the first place. He refutes the doctrine of perceiving God as a Substance (jawhar).[1] He further dismisses the idea that Substance[2] is the basic entity that is complete only with three hypostases; al-wujūd (divine

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[1] Substance is a concept that has been used by Muslim philosophers to signify the essence of a thing that differentiates it from others. Muslim theologians, the *Mutakallimūn*, used the term to denote the smallest part of a body (atom). See Ian Richard Netton (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Islamic Civilization and Religion* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

[2] The Greek cognate of the Substance is *Ousia*. See John Hoover, "Islamic Monotheism and Trinity" (*The Conrad Grebel Review* vol. 27, no. 2 (Winter 2009): 57- 82.

soul), ʿilm or nuṭq (divine wisdom) and al-ḥayāt (divine life), that is theologically interpreted to have been represented by Father, Son and Holy Spirit respectively. Coming down on the doctrine, he narrtes two lines of a poetry without referring to the author and the meaning goes:

> It is wicked and treacherous to say that "the Christians really know   mathematics"!. How it is possible for them to be aware of math while they, out of utter ignorance, have counted the Exalted One as three. (Kaderi A. K.)

Another doctrinal subscription of Christians counted by Kaderi among *al-`uṣūl al-wāhiyah* is that of Union of the Word of God with the body of Jesus, a phenomenon that subsequently led to name him 'Messiah' which consequently developed towards attributing the sonhood with Jesus and later perceiving him as God. He acknowledges the Christians to have remarked the word of God as divine person, *lāhūt* and the body of Jesus as human person, *nāsūt* (Kaderi A. K.).

Trinity in Early Discourses

Hence, it is clear that Kaderi's standpoint with regard to trinity reflects three major principles. The first is remarking of the basic hypostasis (father) as substance (*jawhar*), the second, is variances among Christians while interpreting the trinity, and third is the Union (*ittiḥād*) of God with Jesus. This standpoint of Kaderi that remarked the principles of Christian doctrines as *al-uṣūl al-wāhiyah* arguably represent a large portion of early medieval Muslim theological discourses. Therefore, it seems to be inevitable to draw an outline of such discourses.

The early discussions of Muslim scholars on the Trinitarian doctrines can be categorized into two: the first is in terms of 'nature' of the hypostases, and the second is in terms of their 'functions'. The first category deals with how the *nature* of hypostases is explained by Christians, whereas the second denotes how their *function* is explained by them.

Nature of Hypostases

One of common trends in the Christian interpretations of nature of hypostases is to make them identical to the *ṣifāt* [1] (divine attributes), which are necessary attributes for God according to ʿ*ilm al kalām*, the Islamic theology. Al-Qadi abdul Jabbar of eleventh century has questioned this interpretation. Since *ṣifāt* are not self-existing and valid only while necessarily attached to a person, it cannot be likened to the hypostases. For they are distinct, separate and self-existing personalities, according to Christian interpretation (Yilmaz, 2013). Al-Q adds that even though the hypostases are considered to be the *ṣifāt*, the coalescence of *ṣifāt* does not mean anything until they co-exist with person (*dhāt*) since they cannot exist independently. However, the coalescence of hypostases, as for Christians, means three equal sepetrate identities, which are altogether tantamount to be a single God, and that is impossible (Yilmaz, 2013).

The scriptural legitimacy of interpreting hypostases as identical to *ṣifāt* has been questioned by Ibn Taymiyyah too. One of his main arguments of focusses on a verse in the gospel of Mathew that is: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (gospel of Matthew 28: 19). The Christians, according to Ibn Taymiyyah, have employed this verse to establish that the trinity is all about confirmation of the three essential divine attributes of existence (*wujūd*), speech (*nuṭq*) and life *(ḥayāt)*. However, this interpretation of trinity has been dismissed by him. He states that if they were genuinely trying to establish those attributes to the Godhead, they would not have restricted the number of hypostases into three (Taymiyyah, 1999). Again, it is clearly well known to all Muslims and Christians that those three attributes have already been possessed by God and it is wrong, he argues, to confine them into three in number.

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[1] The terms *dhāt* and *ṣifāt* often have been master vocabularies in the theological discussions of medieval Muslim theologians while they interpreted their perception of god, universe and creatures.

The medieval Muslim polymath Ibn Hazm, in his treatise on Christianity, deals with the similar issue as he asks why don't you associate the mightiness (*qudrah*) as a fourth hypostasis? If you perceive the hypostases of trinity identical to the *ṣifāt*, then why would not you associate hearing, sight, intellect, magnanimity and all such *ṣifāt* into the scope of trinity? He challenges the reasonability of selectively associating certain attributes of God to him as hypostases and avoiding certain others at the same time (al-Andulusī, 1966).

The discussion of nature of hypostases does not seem to be limited into the area of interpreting them as *ṣifāt*. It also has expanded to the terminological perspectives. In other words, the legitimacy of terming existence, speech and life as Father, Son and Holy Spirit respectively, has also been challenged by early Muslim polemics. In his *kitāb al-faṣl*, Ibn Hazm accuses Christians to have failed to produce any verse from the bible which categorically meant that existence, speech and life unequivocally stand for Father, Son and Holy Spirit respectively. He acknowledges that some Christians have claimed that such an interpretation is valid when it is taken to the Latin. Nevertheless, he repudiates this claim saying that none will deny that the original scriptural language was Hebrew, and what is proved invalid in the original language cannot be augmented using the secondary language to which the scriptures were translated, whether it is Syrian or Latin (al-Andulusī, 1966). Ibn Taymiyyah observes that none of the previous nations have named those three attributes of God with those three unprecedented names; father, Son and Holy Spirit (Taymiyyah, 1999). No earlier prophets, he continues, has claimed that the terms Father, Son and Holy Spirit have ever signified the meaning of the divine attributes of existence, speech and life (Taymiyyah, 1999).

Qadi Abdul Jabbar, a tenth century theologian stresses on certain numerical discrepancies while describing trinity. Once it is accepted that each hypostasis is an eternal and necessary being, it is also necessary that it should not have relations whatsoever with other hypostases, he argues. Once each of the three hypostases is defined as equally divine, it unequivocally necessitates the emergence of the

concept of a dependent God. As for him, if it is accepted that the hypostases are totally independent, then anyone would reach the conclusion that there are three Gods, not one (Yilmaz, 2013). Moreover, Christians have, according to him, failed to rationally explain why Father needs a son, and why the Son and the Holy Spirit do not, although they claim eternity for all of the three hypostases. A seemingly accurate illustration of Abdul Jabbar of a numerical configuration of trinity consequently proves that trinity is long away from monotheism. He acknowledges that Christians described the Father as: "the Begetting, Living, Eternal, Omnipotent, Omniscient, Creating and Sustaining God. The Son, is not Begetting but the Begotten Word, the Eternal, Creating and Sustaining God, and is different from father. The Holy Spirit is the Living, Eternal, Omniscient, Creating and Sustaining God and is different from the Father and the Son". Hence, all of them are common in their divinity. Hence, Abdul Jabbar imaginatively concludes that this is not different from saying that "The Arab Abdullah is a male, human, body and person; the Persian Khalid is a male, human, body and person; the Roman Zayd is a male, human, body and person," and that the Christian claim is equivalent to arguing that there are three Gods (Jabbar, 1966).

The Functions of Hypostases

The second category of discussions regarding the Trinitarian doctrine is in terms of the function of hypostases. Since *ittiḥād* (hypostatic union) and *ḥulūl* (indwelling of God) are the main functions of hypostheses and *ittiḥād* is one of the main concerns of Kaderi as well, this category discusses different approaches received by the Muslim polemics towards *ittiḥād* and *ḥulūl*

Metaphorical Approach

What is meant by metaphorical approach here is to refute the Christians' attempt to explain the hypostatic union by certain metaphors. In Ibn Taymiyyah's *al-jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ,* Likening of the

God's *ittiḥād* with Jesus to the union of fire in the molten iron[1] or like soul in the body are simply refuted with a corollary analogy. The analogy is that if the water can make impact in the heated iron when it is exposed to the water, and if the bodily reflexes like thirst and hunger can make impact in the soul when they are experienced by the body, the very impact necessarily applies in the case of Jesus too. This necessitates that the God must have experienced thirst, hunger and even agony when the *nāsūt* of Jesus was crucified and the *lahūt* was still inside (Taymiyyah, al-jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ liman Baddala Dīn al-Masīiḥ, 1999)

Ibn Hazm denies the metaphor of heated iron in a fairly different manner. He uses an analogy of Substance (*jawhar*) and The Accident (*araḍ*) in this regard. As for him, the heated iron and hot fire are Substance and Accident respectively. This analogy assures that God, being likened to the fire, is an Accident, which is neither possible nor suitable to the most exalted entity of God (al-Andulusī, 1966)

The way al-ghazali conceptualizes *ittiḥād* is comparatively more philosophical given that the very source of derivation of the doctrine is, according to him, from Aristotle. He deals with the metaphor of union of mind with body, and asserts that it was derived from Aristotle's theory of union of mind with body, and was attributed to the doctrine of hypostatic union in order to justify it (Aziz, 1973). He expresses his concern over the wrong analogical reasoning assumed by Christians between the hypostatic union and Aristotliean union. According to the perspective of Aristotle, he argues, mind owns a supervisional relation (*nisbah tadbīriyyah*) over the body. Moreover, both the suffering of pain and enjoyment of pleasure is equally shared by mind and body. This type of relation, which requires a shared effectiveness is not possible between God as a creator and man as a creature (Aziz, 1973). Furthermore, according to the theory of Aristotle, the supervisional relation of mind over body is invalid whenever the correspondent body is non-existant. This is also

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[1] This is apparently a blacksmith's malleable molten iron used for making of tools and weapons.

impossible in case of God since God always posseses total supervisional control over each and every created beings. Therefore, the legitimization of hypostatic union using analogy of union of mind with body is, according to him, a complete fallacy and *al-aqyisath al-mahjūrah:* 'among those analogical reasonings that must be rejected' (Aziz, 1973).

Hermeneutical Approach

Another major approach towards discussing the function of hypostases is hermeneutical. Contradistinction between rūḥ al-quds and lāhūt has been discussed by Ibn Taymiyyah against the background of Christian interpretation of certain Quranic verses characterising Jesus 'to have been strengthened by rūḥ al-quds, thus meaning that rūḥ al-quds happens to be lahūt and the verse legitimizes the hypostatic union. Juxtaposing three verses from Surah al-Baqarah (verse no. 87, 97, 253) and other three verses from al-Mai'dah (110), al-Naḥl (101, 102) and al-Shuʿarāʾ (193, 194) each, Ibn Taymiyyah avers that none of the verses were meant for legitimizing union of lahūt with nāsūt.

Firstly, to produce the exact meanings of the terms rūḥ al-quds and rūḥ al-amīn, he primarily relies upon the Quran itself,[1] where the term Jibrīl has interchably been used with rūḥ to signify the exact meaning of the term. Secondly, he relies upon a certain prophetic tradition reported by al-Bukhari, which narrates a conversation between Prophets Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) and Ḥassān Ibn al-Thābit regarding his pursuit of defending the prophet using his poems. The tradition is a prayer of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) for Ḥassān: "Oh Allah, strengthen him by the rūḥ al-quds" (Maja, 1987). He prayed it as an announcement of his support and solidarity with Ḥassān Ibn al-Thābit, while he defended prophet against his enemies using his skill of poetry. putting the verse and the tradition together, Ibn Taymiyyah, enunciates that the verses can never be considered legitimization of

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[1] The verse is: Say, "Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel - it is [none but] he who has brought the Qur'an down upon your heart, [O Muhammad], by permission of Allah, confirming that which was before it and as guidance and good tidings for the believers" (al-Baqarah: 97).

union of lahūt with nāsūt, and never applies to the case of indwelling of Godhead in Jesus owing to fact that Quran and Hadith themselves interpreted rūḥ in a different way. It was, he holds, not only the Jesus who was strengthened by rūḥ al-qudus but the phenomenon of the strengthening have applied to a plenty of righteous people including the both biblical and Quranic figures like Davūd1 and Ḥassān Ibn al-Thābit. Ibn Taymiyyah asserts that even the apostles of Jesus have been strengthened by the rūḥ al-qudus. According to him, it has been axiomatically predicated by the Christendom, Muslims and Jews as well that the strengthening by the rūḥ al-qudus has taken place not only in case of the Christ but also in case of many, even those who are not prophets (Taymiyyah, al-Jawāb al-Ṣaḥīḥ Liman Baddala dīn al-Maṣīḥ, 1999).

The example of Mūsa (p.b.u.h.) affords an excellent insight towards the approach of Ibn Taymiyyah towards the idea of hypostatic union and it enables us realize an evident double-standard of Christian view of the union as well. Christians, according to Ibn Taymiyyah, held that Jesus spoke to the people like God was speaking to Moses and Jesus himself projected human features as well. The first action was through his identity as nāsūt and the second was as lāhut. Two verses from the Pentateuch show the irrationality of this view and they are: "When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance. And said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die" (Exodus, 9, 20:19). Quoting these verses, Ibn Taymiyyah maintains that given the fact that the divine speech is quite different from that of human speech, Children of Israel were unable to hear God when he spoke to Moses, and this is why they requested to Moses to convey the message unto them and admittedly assure that they will die if they directly listen to God. Taken this difference between divine speech and human speech into consideration, it is clear that there was no lāhūt actively indwelling

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1 In case of Davūd (p.b.u.h.), a verse from the book of Psalms goes: "Do not drive me from before your face, nor take from me your holy spirit" (Psalms: 51:13).

in the body of Jesus while the speech of Jesus was vividly heard and listened to, by all types of people making no difference between them. Again, if human being, in case of Moses, is unable even to see God, it is not surprising to say that none of the human being can be a locus for indwelling of God or for a union with him (Taymiyyah, al-Jawāb al-Ṣaḥīḥ Liman Baddala dīn al-Maṣīḥ, 1999).

A telling example of this approach that essentially nullifies the legitimacy of ittiḥād is that of Imam al-Ghazali. In his al-radd al-jamīl, He argues that the terms 'Father' and 'Son' were supposed to be perceived in their metaphorical sense and not in the literal sense. According to him, what caused the aberration of Christians is the way they perceived the meaning of the terms without taking the particular context of their usage into consideration (Aziz, 1973). He quotes and explains five categories of verses from the New Testament maintaining that terms 'Father' and 'Son' have been used in the Bible to signify the metaphorical meaning and nothing else. Four categories of verses are quoted from the seventeenth chapter of the gospel of John and the fifth category is from the gospel of Mark.

The first category is: "I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one" (St. John 17 :11).

The second category is: "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me? (St. John, 17: 17-22).

The third category of verses is: "After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent". (St. John 17: 1-3)

The fourth category is from the Gospel of Mark which is: "After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. (Mark 13: 32).

In all of the previous verses, there are some remarks of Jesus about himself and God such as "we are one", "Father, just as you are in me and I am in you" and "Glorify your Son, that Your Son may glorify you". Al-Ghazali argues that all of these usages must not be taken in the literal meaning as Christians did. Because, once they are taken into the literal meaning, it consequently leads to utter polytheism, as result of considering Jesus as God. This is strongly rejected by al-Ghazali and he asserts that the gospel itself rejects this in the following verse, which is the fifth category as follows:

"Again his Jewish opponents picked up stones to stone him. But Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?" "We are not stoning you for any good work," they replied, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.""Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I have said you are "Gods"'? If he called them 'Gods,' to whom the word of God came and Scripture cannot be set aside what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am God's Son'? (St. John, 10: 30-36) Al-GhazÉlÊ comments on this verse that the Jews accused Jesus of blashphemy only because they perceived Jesus's statement: "I and the Father are one" in the literal sense, and thus implying that he is literally a God. But what Jesus meant was quite figurative, something which is obvious in his reply to Jews: "Is it not written in your Law, that you are Gods?" Al-Ghazali continues that this reply of Jesus he meant that the such remarks of Jesus must be taken in metaphorical meaning since such usage are also found in the law of Jews, as Jesus quoted to to defend himself against the blame of blasphemy (Aziz, 1973).

Numerical Approach

Other major refutations against *ittiḥād* are based on numerical considerations. One of the earliest example of this approach is abū ʿīsa al-warrāq's critique. He reagards the trinity to be incorporating four persons which is completely not suitable to God. He takes the hypostases as three countable things which, when added to the substance of Godhead, increase as four eternal entities (Hoover, 2009). Ibn Taymiyyah also explains the post-*ittiḥād* condition enunciating that after the process of hypostatic union the condition of *nāsūt* and *lāhūt* will be only two; either it will 'become' one object or will 'remain' as such separately. On one hand, 'Becoming' of the two objects altogether into a one single object necessitates the transformation of one thing to another, that is, either *nāsūt* must becomes *lāhūt* or *lāhūt* must becomes *nāsūt*. On the other hand, 'remaining' of the two objects as such without transforming one into another invalidates the doctrine of hypostatic union. (Taymiyyah, al-Jawāb al-Sahih liman Baddala Din al-Masih, 1999).

Simply put, Ibn Taymiyyah holds that the hypostatic union must lead either towards losing identity of any of the two objects or towards the invalidation of the idea of union. This is considering the Christians view that the hypostatic union can happen without losing the identity of any of the two objects, and with counting the objects as two even after the union is complete at the same time. The impossible idea of remaining of *nāsūt* and *lāhut* in their own separate identity even after the successful union is, therefore, questioned.

Another numerical consideration focusses on an example that has been produced by Christians, which asserts that 'the hypostatic union is like the union of water and milk or water and wine'. Ibn Taymiyyah considers this example capable of invalidating the idea of the union itself. Because, once the water and milk is mixed up, both of the water and milk lose their own pure and separate identities and the new mix becomes a third object, something which is not included nor identified in the hypostatic union according to Christians (Taymiyyah, al-Jawāb al-Ṣaḥīḥh Liman Baddala dīn al-Maṣīḥ, 1999).

In case of the Melkites[1] who subscribe the theory of 'two separate natures of Jesus', Ṣāliḥ Ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Jaʿfarī raises a numerical argument asking that if Jesus remains in two separate natures even after the successful union of hypostases, what is the point of arguing the union? It is because, he explains, "a union is unequivocally all about becoming of two or more things in to a single thing" (al-Jaʿfarī). Another notable numerical fallacy according to al-Jaʿfarī is based upon the speech (*ʿilm*) and life (*Ḥayāt*) which are essential features of God. If Christians believe that each hypostasis is individually a God and the united form of all hypostases is also a God altogether, it would be the highest form of incoherence and corruption. Since the attributes (hypostases) of both speech and life is essential to God, it necessitates, he describes, the possessing of those two attributes (hypostases) by each of the three hypostases. This multiplication of hypostases consequently transforms the trinity (*tathlīth*) into the *tatsīʿ* (a term that refers to nine hypostases). According to the Christian theory of conceiving hypostases as Gods, each of the nine hypostases again needs to their own hypostases once they turn to God. This action incessantly continues to make the number of Gods infinite which is clearly antithetical to the idea of triune God of Christians. As it is clear, the substratum of al-Jaʿfarī's theory of multiplication is that the hypostasis can never be conceived as God, as it was done by Christians. It is important to notice that in this discussion, al-Jaʿfarī has used the term hypostasis (*uqnūm*) to signify the meaning of attribute (*ṣifāt*) (al-Jafari).

Christological Approach

Al-Bāqillānī, has handled the issue of *ittiḥād* in a comparatively fair manner. In his *Tamhīd al-awāiʾl wa Talkhīṣ al-dalāiʾl*, he puts forward some simple logical issues. He asks, how did marry gave birth for the

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[1] Melkites are a medieval Christian sect who were often the followers of Roman Kings. They were Dyophysites who believed in two natures of Jesus, both divine and human at the same time. (In contrast, Monophysites believed in one nature of god). Today, most of the Christian sects belong to this common category.

son only without father and holy spirit while the father, son and holy spirit are a triad to form a single God altogether? (Al-Baqillani, 1987).

His second challenge is 'were the two natures of *lāhūt* and *nāsūt* killed altogether at the time of crucifixion? If the Christians answer in the affirmative then it would, he argues, necessitate the murder of God which does not suit to the divinity. On the contrary, if the Christians answer that the *lāhūt* separated at the time of crucifixion and the murder befell only to the *nāsūt*, then it necessitates that the murdered individual was not Jesus. Because, the identity of Jesus is valid only as long as he remains in the union (Al-Baqillani, 1987).

Ontological Approach

al-Jaʿfarī confirms that there is a consensus among all Christians in case of the trinity although they are severely dichotomous seeking to interpret it (al-Jafari). He categorizes Jacobites[1] as Monophysites, who hold the view that Jesus, after the union was complete, possessed only one nature which is divine, on contrary to the Melkites who hold that Jesus still maintained divine nature and human nature at the same time. One of the key questions raised by al-Jaʿfarī to the Monophysites is of the variability of Jesus's *nāsūt* and primordial eternity of God. Since Godhead must be primordially eternal (*qadīm*) as he is the creator, he loses this identity while uniting with a human who is accidentally and variably mortal *(ḥadīth* or *muḥdath)* as he is a created one. Such a union of totally contradictory essences is, as al-Jaʿfarī remarks, like saying: "motion is stillness" or "black is white", which are obviously impossible. Therefore, the hypostatic union is impossible (al-Jafari). It must be noted that the primordial eternity of God (*qidam*), and the variability and mortality (*ḥudūth*) of the created (whether it is human or not) were among the master vocabularies of medieval centuries not

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[1] Jacobites, who mostly lived in Egypt, believed that Jesus Christ is of one nature, which is only divine. This belief was strongly professed and preached by Yʿaqūb al-Barādaʿī, who lived in 5th century C.E., Egypt. According to Jacobites, Jesus became of one divine nature after his union with God was complete. This belief was later condemned by the ecumenical council that was held in Chalcedonia in 451 C.E. Both of the Nestorites and Jacobites are known as Monophysites, since they believed in one nature of Jesus

least in the wake of Greek philosophy's terminological influence in *ʿilm al-kalām*, the philosophy of Islamic theology (Netton, 2008).

Though it is equally flawed and irrational like *ittiḥād*, the early discourses in terms of function of the hypostases has addressed the doctrine of divine indwelling in Christ *ḥulūl* too. Ibn Taymiyyah addresses the Christian argument that the indwelling of *lāḥūt* in the *nāsūt* is like that of some of God's attributes in the created human beings as it is assumed by some Muslims. He acknowledges that this assumption was made by some extreme Sufi proponents who belonged all prevailing schools of thought of his time. And then he concludes that such kind of indwelling had already been defined and interpreted by those Muslims in a different way and it is also assumed to have taken place in case of all righteous people and prophets. But, in case of Christians, he avers, their particular kind of *ḥulūl* has been inexplicably revered in as much to associate Jesus with Godhead in contrast to what the Muslims did (Taymiyyah, al-Jawāb al-Ṣaḥīḥh Liman Baddala dīn al-Masīḥ, 1999).

The metaphors suggested by Christian to explain the indwelling of God in Jesus are, Ibn Taymiyyah holds, galore. All have been rationally disputed by him. The metaphor of 'a man's face in a mirror' is dismissed by proving that any onlooker cannot deny the fact that what appeared in the mirror is not the face itself, but its demonstration. Another metaphor is that *ḥulūl* of God in Jesus is like 'speech of a man in his intellect that turned out to be letters and sentences on the pages'. This has been challenged by Ibn Taymiyyah as he maintains that what is possessed by human intellect is some complex ideas which cannot be found on the pages. On the contrary, what found in the pages are the ink of writing. Again, the entity of some ideas in the human intellect is a set of meanings whereas the entity of what is written on the pages are mere inks, something which makes the both totally different. Hence, all metaphors are proved fault by Ibn Taymiyyah since the *ḥulūl* is, as Christians hold, all about indwelling of God in Jesus 'without making any changes' (*istiḥālah*) in any of the two hypostases while the metaphors are all about making changes

within themselves (Taymiyyah, al-Jawāb al-Ṣaḥīḥh Liman Baddala dīn al-Maṣīḥ, 1999).

Trinity Between Reason and Religion

That the logical fallacy and inexplicability of the triune God has been justified by Christians to be 'beyond the reason due to its divine nature', is also noteworthy due to its subsequent refutations. Kaderi's stand on this Christian argument seems to be an affirmation of Ibn Taymiyyah's view. Ibn Taymiyya averred that the Christians tend to evade the question of the rational explanation of trinity claiming that the Trinitarian doctrine was received directly from the scriptures 'by religion' and as a result, it cannot be approached by 'reason'.

Questioning this approach of conceiving religiosity as something 'essentially irrational', he categorizes the human perceptions in to two. Firstly, that which cannot be fathomed by human intellect and still evidently proved possible by the intellect itself. Secondly, that which is against the intellect, and therefore, proved not possible by the intellect itself. The first category has been termed by him as *muḥālāt al-ʿuqūl* and the second *muḥārāt al-ʿuqūl*, while only the former has been claimed and endorsed by the previous prophets whereas the latter has been be negated even by them (Taymiyyah, al-Jawab al-Sahih LIman Baddala din al-Masih, 1999). Kaderi also uses this categorization but uses a different wording. He argues that Christains must try to discern the considerable difference between what is 'against' the human intellect (*ḍidd al-ʿaql*) what is 'beyond' the human intellect (*fawq al-ʿaql*) (Kaderi A. K.).

Conclusion

To conclude, Kaderi is apparently a respresentive of and imbibes heavily from the medieval Muslim apologetic and polemical authors with regard to the question of trinity. It is because his major arguments are constituted significantly by the reigning idioms of medieval theological debates such as Substance, Accident *ḥulūl*, *ittiĺād* and etc. Intereesetingly, he hardly endorses himself by referring to the scriptural sources but instead, focusses mainly on certain logical fallacies of

Trinitarian theology, with which he is quite at home. What Kaderi enunciates is that Christians failed to perceive and present their religion as a phenomenon which collaboratively appreciates human intellect and reasoning, and therefore failed to harmonize between them. According to him, it was this failure that aggravated the illogical nature of dogmas like trinity and crucifixion.

Moreover, the Christians, according to him, have allegedly misunderstood the real meaning of the phrase 'religion is beyond the intellect'. In other words, the fallacy of Trinitarian theology is justified by them at expense of the phrase 'religion is beyond the intellect'. Eventhough Muslims also recognize this phrase they do it only in a sense that 'the religious doctrines sometimes transcend the human logic and still they are proved possible by 'human logic'. On the contrary, the Christian doctrines definitely 'go against the human logic' and are proven impossible by the human logic. Therefore, something which transcends the human comprehension (*fawq al-ʿaql*) is substantially different from something which goes against it (*ḍidd al-ʿaql*).

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