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IS THERE A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
*AL-MUĞĀDALAH* AND *ĜĀMI' WUĞŪH AL-ĪMĀN*?

BY  
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## INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I will briefly describe a group of manuscripts that I have recently studied and edited. Then, I will focus on the possible relationship between their content and those in another important manuscript, namely *Ġāmi' wuġūh al-īmān (ĠWĪ)*. Finally, I will point out the importance of the relationship between the two documents.

## A. AL-MUĠĀDALAH

While producing the Critical Edition of *al-Muġādalāh*<sup>1</sup> it became apparent that a quick glance at the manuscripts recording the debate would cause difficulty for scholars to accept the accounts as authentic. Nevertheless, it was also vividly clear that a careful study of the text of the Melkite family<sup>2</sup> of *al-Muġādalāh* renders one hesitant to judge the account unauthentic, especially if one is familiar with the language of the time, the condition of most manuscripts written around the same period and, most especially, the writings of Abū Qurrah.

Initially, the content of the manuscripts of the debate appear as if a *bavard*, circular, with issues coming in, going out and coming back in again with an unknown purpose. Deciphering the internal logic of the debate, which in turn was translated into a proper table of contents for the debate, originally seemed an impossible endeavor. Once the discovery of the internal logic was made, the value of the texts became obvious, in spite of the clear evidence that additions and omissions have been made by every scribe who transcribed the text. These scribal additions and/or exaggerations, at times, present difficulties. However, their presence provides us with valuable information, namely what was important to the dialogue with Islam in various regions.

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1) In this work, the word *al-Muġādalāh* and/or *Muġādalāh* refers to the debate between Abū Qurrah and *al-Ma'mūn* in 829. There exists a publication by Fr. Ignace Dick. Ignace DICK, *La discussion d'Abū Qurrah avec les ulémas musulmans devant le calife al-Ma'mūn* (N.C: N.P., 1999). Our forthcoming Critical Edition is to be published by CEDRAC (*Centre de documentation et de recherches arabes chrétiennes*), Université Saint-Joseph. And for the English translation and a study of the debate, see Wafik NASRY, *The Caliph and the Bishop, a 9<sup>th</sup> Century Muslim-Christian debate: Al-Ma'mūn and Abū Qurrah* (CEDRAC, Université St. Joseph, Beirut, Lebanon, 2008), 351 pages.

2) There are two traditions recording the debate: one Melkite and the other Jacobite. For a complete listing, see Samir Khalil SAMIR, *Abū Qurrah, Al-sīrah wa-l-marāġi*, coll. "Mawsū'at al-ma'rifah al-masḥiyyah" 1 (Dār al-Mašriq, Beirut, 2000), pp. 9-32; see also, Samir Khalil SAMIR, "Al-ġadīd fi-sīrat Abū Qurrah wa-āṭārihi", in *Al-Mašriq* 73 (1999), pp. 417-449.

The manuscripts of *al-Muğādalāh* were widespread which testifies to the influence of Abū Qurrah as well as the dialogical milieu that allowed both Muslims and Christians an intense exchange of ideas, contributing to the environment that permitted the flourishing of Arab thought in general. Abū Qurrah's importance lies also in the fact that he was one of the first contributors to that specific environment. In fact, as attested by the widespread presence of the manuscripts, Abū Qurrah's influence was not limited to his own denomination, the Melkite, but spread to other Christian denominations as well, as the Jacobite tradition of the manuscripts attests. And again, Abū Qurrah is important not only in his time and place but for the Christian-Muslim dialogue for many centuries thereafter, even today.

A careful study of *al-Muğādalāh* makes it obvious that the manuscripts examined for the Critical Edition were not written by Abū Qurrah nor do the scribes claim to have copied them from an original, written or dictated by Abū Qurrah.

When research into the manuscripts began, Graf, who asserted that the records of the debate belong to Abū Qurrah's "False Writings"<sup>3</sup>, seemed the more credible critic with regard to this particular *Muğādalāh*. However, once the internal logic of the text became clear and the internal evidences were weighed, one is more inclined to consider that the person portrayed debating Muslim opponents is in fact Abū Qurrah.

Most of the internal evidence<sup>4</sup> shows clearly that the vocabulary is not that of Abū Qurrah but that the issues discussed and the ideas explored have much in common with those found in Abū Qurrah's authenticated writings. Taken individually, the positive elements are not by any means conclusive. Considered as a whole, however, these elements render plausible a conclusion that the work is authentically Abū Qurrah's.

Consequently, although it is our opinion that Abū Qurrah did not write this text, we nevertheless conclude that this debate is an authentic account of Abū Qurrah's actual *Muğādalāh* with the Muslims of his time.

Our theory is the following: Abū Qurrah told the tale. He perhaps recounted, wrote or dictated the original account of *al-Muğādalāh*. In any

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3) Georg GRAF, *GCAL*, t. II, coll. ST (Città del Vaticano, 1947), p. 21.

4) For more details, see the "Arguments in Favor of Authenticity" section of Chapter Four in Wafik NASRY, *The Caliph and the Bishop, a 9<sup>th</sup> Century Muslim-Christian debate: Al-Ma'mūn and Abū Qurrah* (CEDRAC, Université St-Joseph, Beirut, Lebanon, 2008), pp. 103-123.

case, he definitely told the tale in some form, written or oral. He or others of his time recorded it in a separate manuscript, namely the famous special manuscript mentioned by the unnamed historian from Edessa<sup>5</sup>; with the passing of time, the tale was retold, with additions of certain parts here and there, whether from Abū Qurrah's own works and/or from what was needed by and/or suited the setting of a specific scribe. Others heard the story of *al-Muḡādalāh* or read it; in turn, they wrote it down, adding a bit in one place and forgetting or omitting a detail in another, and dramatizing the setting on many occasions to suit the scribes' particular needs.

It is also possible that knowing that the encounter took place and not possessing the original text, some disciples of Abū Qurrah have put the account together while depending upon Abū Qurrah's own teachings/writings. This procedure is not unusual either. In the Old Testament, for example, many of the Psalms attributed to David are in fact written by others; the book of Isaiah has been written by many authors, although the entire book is attributed to Isaiah. In the New Testament, some of Paul's letters are written by his disciples and attributed to him. In these and other cases, one of the reasons for attributing a work to someone else is the fact that it contains that person's thoughts and teachings. This might well be the case here.

Certainly, there are many dramatizations added by the scribes. Graf's understanding of this dialogue is that it is a mere assemblage of copy and paste materials. A closer look, however, reveals clearly a coherent whole, with its own internal logic and reasonable progression. Furthermore, *al-Muḡādalāh* is indeed based on an oral debate that is by its very nature spontaneous; hence, it is reasonable to expect topics emerging, left for a while and brought up again, especially if we are to believe that the duration of the debate was for more than one day with new interlocutors continually introduced.

A definitive "Yes!" to the authenticity of the content of the manuscripts studied cannot be given at this time. The remaining extant manuscripts concerning the debate, whether written in *garšūnī* or Syriac, need to be studied and critically compared before a definitive affirmation, or an unlikely denial, about authenticity can be given to the content documented as the Abū Qurrah debate.

5) The anonymous historian from Edessa writes: "وَصَلَّ الْمَأْمُونُ إِلَى حِرَّانَ. وَإِنَّ نَارْدُورُسَ أَسْقَفَ حِرَّانَ، الْمَكِّيَّ أَبَا قُرَّةَ، تَفَاوَضَ مَعَ الْمَأْمُونِ. وَحَرَّتْ بَيْنَهُمَا مُجَادَلَةٌ طَوِيلَةٌ حَوْلَ إِيمَانِ النَّصَارَى. وَمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَقْرَأَ هَذِهِ الْمُجَادَلَةَ، فَهِيَ مُدَوَّنَةٌ فِي كِتَابٍ خَاصٍ" SAMIR, *Abū Qurrah, Al-sīrah wa-l-marāḡi* (2000), pp. 40-41.

## B. ĠĀMI' WUĠŪH AL-ĪMĀN

An assessment of *ĠWĪ*, allows us yet another occasion to glance at a possible source for the reconstruction of *al-Muġādalāh*. This is clearly the case when one examines section 18 of the document<sup>6</sup>. There one finds many similarities with *al-Muġādalāh*, provoking the question: did *al-Muġādalāh* draw from it? As will be demonstrated shortly, there are strong connections between the two. It is our opinion that "section 18" of *ĠWĪ* is closer to Abū Qurrah<sup>7</sup>, and it may have been among the sources used to reconstruct the debate with al-Ma'mūn. The document, as a whole, remains in need for further investigation.

For the purpose of this paper, we examined chapter 18 of *ĠWĪ*<sup>8</sup>. In our view, it clearly bears an affinity to Abū Qurrah's style. Future exploration of this document may prove to be very rich due to the critical importance of the text. It is an original text material. After examining the chapter, we compared its content to that of *al-Muġādalāh*. The results include the following:

### C. FIRST SIMILARITY: THE ISSUES DISCUSSED

In section 18 of *ĠWĪ*, as typical of Abū Qurrah, one finds a series of propositions, a pattern of questions beginning with "If they say, '....'", and answers starting with "say, '....'".

Some of the issues common to both *ĠWĪ* and *al-Muġādalāh* are the Blessed Trinity; the likeness of Jesus to Adam, according to the Muslim's view; whether Christ is Creator or created; God permitting the suffering of the believer; the Muslim objection that if Christ is God, then Mary limited God to the earth while pregnant with the Word; and God residing in the belly of a woman, exposing Him to impurity; the co-eternality of the Father and the Son; the crucifixion of Jesus; the veneration of the cross; kissing the cross; and the Muslim objection that if Christ is God, then Christ is a god who kills his mother.

#### 1. *The Blessed Trinity*

With regard to the Blessed Trinity, in *ĠWĪ*, one reads,

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6) The manuscript includes 25 chapters/sections.

7) While some parts do not in fact belong to Abū Qurrah, for they have very different characteristics than that of Abū Qurrah's style of writing and arguing, others do bear an affinity as is the case with chapter 18.

8) The Critical Edition of the chapter will be published by the CEDRAC (*Centre de documentation et de recherches arabes chrétiennes*), Université Saint-Joseph.

They ask about the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; say that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are the Spirituality of God, through which we deduced that God lives. (cf. 124 <sup>f</sup> )	يَسْأَلُونَ عَنِ الْآبِ وَالْإِبْنِ وَرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ، فَقُلْ إِنَّ الْآبَ وَالْإِبْنَ وَرُوحَ الْقُدُسِ رُوحَانِيَّةُ اللَّهِ الَّتِي بِهَا اسْتَدَلَّلْنَا عَلَى أَنَّ اللَّهَ حَيٌّ.
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Therein, one finds Abū Qurrah arguing that it is the “Son and Holy Spirit” who allow us to know God. First of all, they allow us to know that God lives:

For the living possess a spirit, a word and a mind, and what possess no spirit or word or mind is not living. (cf. 124 <sup>f</sup> )	وَذَلِكَ أَنَّ الْحَيَّ ذُو رُوحٍ وَكَلِمَةٍ وَعَقْلٍ، وَمَا لَا رُوحَ لَهُ، وَلَا كَلِمَةَ، وَلَا عَقْلًا، فَلَيْسَ بِحَيٍّ.
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According to Abū Qurrah, the Spirit and the Word indicate life, and

That which has no spirit and no word, how can they describe as alive? (cf. 116 <sup>f</sup> )	فَمَا لَا رُوحَ لَهُ وَلَا كَلِمَةَ، كَيْفَ يَصِفُونَهُ حَيًّا؟
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In the prologue to the discourse on the unity of the Blessed Trinity in *al-Muḡādalāh*, one finds Abū Qurrah using the same line of thought, namely that one is alive, and is known to be alive, by one’s spirit and word.

Abū Qurrah said, “Do you not know that the soul, the spirit, and the word are in the body, and they are not manifested to one’s eyes, and that eyesight is not capable of describing the mind and the soul and the spirit? Nothing of them is seen, as long as they are in the body, and the body is alive by them”. (cf. 460-464 <i>WN</i> )	قَالَ أَبُو قُرَّةَ: «أَلَا تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ النَّفْسَ وَالرُّوحَ وَالْكَلِمَةَ فِي الْجَسَدِ لَا يَظْهَرُونَ لِلْعَيْنَانِ، وَلَا يُطَبِّقُ النَّظْرُ وَصَفَ الْعَقْلِ وَالنَّفْسِ وَالرُّوحِ، وَلَا يُرَى شَيْءٌ مِنْهُمْ، مَا دَامُوا فِي الْجَسَدِ، وَالْجَسَدُ بِهَا حَيًّا».
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## 2. The likeness of Jesus to Adam

Another issue found in *ĠWĪ*, is “the likeness of Jesus to Adam”, from the Muslims point of view; one reads,

the similitude of ‘Īsā, son of Mary, as that of Adam He said unto him: Be!	إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَى بْنِ مَرْيَمَ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ، قَالَ اللَّهُ لَهُ
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and he came to be <sup>9</sup> . (cf. 116')	كُنْ فَكَانَ.
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The same issue is discussed in *al-Muğādah*; the Muslim interlocutor says,

“Woe to you, O Abū Qurrah! The Christ is the word <sup>10</sup> of God and His [God’s] spirit <sup>11</sup> whom He sent to Mary, and his [Jesus’] ‘similitude before God is as that of Adam. He created him from dust and breathed into him from His spirit’”. (cf. 51-52 <i>WN</i> )	«وَيَحْك، يَا أَبَا قُرَّةَ! إِنَّ الْمَسِيحَ كَلِمَةُ اللَّهِ وَرُوحُهُ، بَعَثَهَا إِلَى مَرْيَمَ، وَمَثَلُهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ، خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِهِ»
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And again, one reads,

And he said, “O Abū Qurrah, the spirit of ‘Īsā, the Christ, is ‘as the spirit which was in Adam’ <sup>12</sup> ; He [God] said to her, ‘Be’ <sup>13</sup> , and she came to be”. (cf. 648 <i>WN</i> )	وَقَالَ: «يَا أَبَا قُرَّةَ، إِنَّ رُوحَ عِيسَى الْمَسِيحِ مِثْلُ الرُّوحِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ فِي آدَمَ، قَالَ لَهَا كُونِي فَكَانَتْ.»
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Abū Qurrah’s argument is the same in both documents, namely that adding “the Word of God” to “Christ” to describe Jesus is an admission that Christ is the “Creator”. In *ĠWĪ*, one reads,

Ask them about that by whom God created the Word; is he Creator or created. (cf. 117')	فَسَلُّهُمْ عَنِ ذَلِكَ الَّذِي بِهِ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ الْكَلِمَةَ: أَخَالِقٌ هُوَ، أَمْ مَخْلُوقٌ؟
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Abū Qurrah tells us that

They ask about the Christ, “Creator	وَيَسْأَلُونَ عَنِ الْمَسِيحِ: «أَخَالِقٌ هُوَ، أَمْ مَخْلُوقٌ؟»
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9) Reference to Q. 3:59.

10) The term “Word” here is not capitalized due to the fact that when used by a Muslim (who is the speaker here) does not carry within it the same meaning as it does in Christianity; that is to say, the Muslim is not speaking of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity.

11) The word “Spirit” here is not capitalized for a Muslim (who is the speaker here) does not mean by it the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity but an angel, namely the angel Gabriel. Cf. Abū Ġa’far Muḥammad b. Ġarīr ṬABARĪ (AL-), *Ġāmi’ al-bayān ‘an ta’wīl āy al-Qur’ān*, vol. 9 (Dār al-Ma’ārif, Beirut, 2001), p. 68.

12) Another reference to Q. 3:59.

13) Yet another reference to Q. 3:59.



is he or created?" (cf. 117<sup>v</sup>)

The same line of reasoning, more succinct, namely that God's Word is Creator is found in *al-Muğādalah*:

Abū Qurrah said, "Tell me about the Word of God, is It Creator or created<sup>14</sup>?" (cf. 69 *WN*)

قَالَ أَبُو قُرَّةَ: «أَخْبِرْنِي عَنْ كَلِمَةِ اللَّهِ، خَالِقَةُ هِيَ أَمْ مَخْلُوقَةٌ؟»

### 3. Mary's pregnancy limiting God?

Another common issue between the two documents is the inquiry from the Muslims as to Mary limiting God to the earth while pregnant. One reads,

If they were to say, "The virgin had gathered the Word of God and limited Him and made the heaven void of Him". (cf. 117<sup>v</sup>)

فَإِنْ قَالُوا: «فَقَدْ جَمَعَتِ الْعَذْرَاءُ كَلِمَةَ اللَّهِ وَحَدَّتْهُ وَخَلَّتْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ.»

The same inquiry is found in *al-Muğādalah*:

He said, "Then, tell me, when the Christ was in Mary's belly, who managed the heavens and the earth<sup>15</sup>? And since He sent His Spirit and His Word to Mary, did He not remain without Word or Spirit?

And if Mary had died while she was pregnant with the Christ, who would have been the judge on the Day of Judgment or who would have held creation accountable in the day of extreme crowdedness<sup>16</sup>?"

قَالَ: «فَأَخْبِرْنِي، عِنْدَمَا كَانَ الْمَسِيحُ فِي بَطْنِ مَرْيَمَ، مَنْ كَانَ يُدَبِّرُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ؟ وَحَيْثُ بَعَثَ رُوحَهُ وَكَلِمَتَهُ إِلَى مَرْيَمَ، أَلَيْسَ أَنَّهُ بَقِيَ بِلاَ كَلِمَةٍ وَلَا رُوحٍ؟ وَلَوْ كَانَتْ مَرْيَمُ مَاتَتْ وَهِيَ حُبْلَى بِالْمَسِيحِ، مَنْ كَانَ يَكُونُ دَيَّانًا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ أَوْ مَنْ كَانَ يُحَاسِبُ الْخَلَائِقَ فِي يَوْمِ الْحَشْرِ.»

14) During the time of al-Ma'mūn, there was a great debate among Muslim theologians with regard to the *Qur'ān*, namely whether it was eternal or created.

15) Reference to Q. 10:3, ﴿إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُدَبِّرُ الْأُمْرَ مَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا مِنْ عِنْدِ إِذْنِهِ ذَلِكَمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ﴾ "Lo! your Lord is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days, then He established Himself upon the Throne, directing all things. There is no intercessor (with Him) save after His permission. That is Allah, your Lord, so worship Him. Oh, will ye not remember?"

16) The word "الحشر" literally means "extreme crowdedness". It refers to the "extreme crowdedness on the "last day" where all are present for judgment. Hence, it could be trans-

(cf. 436-438 *WN*)

The reply to the Muslim objection is the same in both documents, namely that God cannot be limited. In *ĠWI*, one reads,

Then, say, “Nothing congregates God, nor constricts Him, as his being is not congregated in heaven. (cf. 117<sup>v</sup>)

فَقُلْ: لَنْ يَجْمَعَ اللَّهُ شَيْئًا وَلَنْ يَضِيقَ بِهِ، كَمَا لَمْ تَجْمَعُهُ كَيْفُونْتُهُ فِي السَّمَاءِ.

In *al-Muġādalah*, Abū Qurrah’s response<sup>7</sup> includes

... and you know that God is in all places, and no place is void of Him; ... nothing surrounds Him, and nothing contains Him, ... (cf. 440-441 *WN*)

... وَأَنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ فِي كُلِّ مَكَانٍ، وَلَا يَخْلُو مِنْهُ مَكَانٌ، ... وَلَا يُحِيطُ بِهِ شَيْءٌ، وَلَا يَحْوِيهِ شَيْءٌ... .

#### 4. God allows suffering for the discipline of the believer

With regard to suffering, *ĠWI* gives discipline as a reason:

As for that which is from God is good, God brought about for discipline and example. (cf. 126<sup>t</sup>)

فَأَمَّا الَّذِي هُوَ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَخَيْرٌ جَبَلَهُ اللَّهُ أَدَبًا وَمَوْعِظَةً.

This is found in *al-Muġādalah* as well:

And we, the people of the religion of the Nazarene: [God] has sanctioned over us a whip of torment for our discipline, and this is good for us, according to the saying of Solomon, the son of David, ‘For whom the Lord loves, He reproves, and He chastises the humans whom He favors’<sup>17</sup>. (cf. 829-831 *WN*)

وَنَحْنُ، أَهْلُ دِينِ النَّصْرَانِيَّةِ، سَلَطَ عَلَيْنَا سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ لِأَدَبِنَا، وَذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَنَا عَلَى حَسَبِ قَوْلِ سُلَيْمَانَ بْنِ دَاوُودَ: «مَنْ يُحِبُّهُ الرَّبُّ يَتَلَبَّاهُ، وَيُؤَدِّبُ الْبَشَرَ الَّذِي يَرْتَضِي لَهُمْ».

lated as “the day of judgment”, but the unique image would be lost in that translation.

17) Proverbs 3:12, “For whom the LORD loves he reproves, and he chastises the son he favors”.

## D. SECOND SIMILARITY: THE ISSUES ARGUED AND THE ANALOGIES USED

The similarity between the two documents is not limited to the debate issues raised but goes to the analogies used to show credibility of the Christian belief.

1. *The issue of Mary's pregnancy and the Analogy of the Sun*

Another issue is that of God residing in the belly of a woman, exposing Him to impurity. In *ĠWĪ*, one reads the Muslim's objection,

<p>You claim that God was in the belly [of a woman], and the belly has what it has of impurity. Do you not exalt God far from that status? (cf. 119<sup>v</sup>)</p>	<p>تَزَعْمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ فِي الْبَطْنِ، وَالْبَطْنُ فِيهِ مَا فِيهِ مِنَ الدَّنَسِ. أَفَلَا تُنْزَهُونَ اللَّهَ عَنْ هَذَا الْحَالِ؟</p>
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One finds the same objection in *al-Muġādalāh*. The Muslim protests,

<p>“Woe to you, O Abū Qurrah! You saw the Spirit of God residing in the belly of a woman and afflicted by the afflictions of women?” (cf. 326-327 <i>WN</i>)</p>	<p>«وَيْحَكَ، يَا أَبَا قُرَّةَ! رَأَيْتَ رُوحَ اللَّهِ سَكَنَ فِي بَطْنِ امْرَأَةٍ وَيَلْحِقُهَا مَلَأَجِقَ النِّسَاءِ؟»</p>
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And in *ĠWĪ*, Abū Qurrah responds,

<p>Say, “the Sun is a creature from God's creation and it covers all that is dirty and passes all that is corrupt, and no harm or defect sticks to it. The Creator of the sun is loftier and purer, and wherever He is becomes good and pure”. (cf. 119<sup>v</sup>-120<sup>f</sup>)</p>	<p>قُلْ: إِنَّ الشَّمْسَ خَلَقَ مِنْ خَلْقِ اللَّهِ، تَعَشَى كُلَّ قَدْرٍ وَتَمُرُّ بِكُلِّ نَتْنٍ، لَا يَلْزِمُهَا مِنْهُ نَقْصٌ وَلَا بَأْسٌ. فَخَالِقُ الشَّمْسِ أَعَزُّ وَأَطْهَرُ، وَحَيْثُ مَا كَانَ، طَابَ وَطَهَّرَ.</p>
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The same response is found in *al-Muġādalāh*:

<p>And behold the sun falling on every entire thing, both good and rotten, the pure and unclean, and nothing defiles her from that which she fell upon. If, then, the Word and the Spirit is the Creator of all that. (cf. 444-445 <i>WN</i>)</p>	<p>وَهُوَذَا الشَّمْسُ تَقَعُ عَلَى كُلِّ الْأَشْيَاءِ بِأَسْرِهَا، الطَّيِّبَةِ وَالْمُنْتَنِةِ، وَالنَّقِيَّةِ وَالْوَسِخَةِ، وَلَا يُدْنَسُهَا شَيْءٌ مِمَّا وَقَعَتْ عَلَيْهِ. فَإِذَا كَانَتِ الْكَلِمَةُ وَالرُّوحُ الْخَالِقَةُ لِذَلِكَ بِأَسْرِهِ،</p>
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## 2. The co-eternality of the Father and the Son and the analogy of the sun

Still another issue is that of the coexistence/co-eternality of the Father and the Son. In *ĠWĪ*, Abū Qurrah makes use of the analogy of the sun, its light and rays. One reads,

<p>And in the status of the eye of the sun, which if emerged, there is no separation or prior to its rising and the egress of its light and ray. (cf. 115<sup>r</sup>)</p>	<p>وَبِمَنْزِلَةِ عَيْنِ الشَّمْسِ الَّتِي، إِذَا بَرَّغَتْ، لَمْ يَكُنْ بَيْنَ طُلُوعِهَا وَبَيْنَ خُرُوجِ ضَوْئِهَا وَشُعَاعِهَا مِنْ فَضْلِ وَلَا سَبْقٍ.</p>
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## 3. The co-eternality and the analogy of fire

Abū Qurrah also makes use of the fire to illustrate the same point; in *ĠWĪ*, one reads,

<p>The status of the fire, if it flames, her flame, light and ray are equal. The light is begotten, and the flame father [of the light], and there is neither pause nor duration between the flame and its light. (cf. 115<sup>r</sup>)</p>	<p>بِمَنْزِلَةِ النَّارِ، إِذَا مَا تَهَيَّبَتْ، كَانَ لَهَيْبِهَا وَضَوْئُهَا وَشُعَاعُهَا بِالسَّوِيَّةِ. فَالضَّوْءُ مَوْلُودٌ، وَاللَّهَيْبُ وَالِدٌ، وَلَيْسَ بَيْنَ اللَّهَيْبِ وَضَوْئِهِ مِنْ سَبْقٍ وَلَا فِتْرَةٍ.</p>
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In *al-Muğādalah*, while responding to one of his interlocutors, Abū Qurrah speaks of the unity of the Trinity using the same logic and analogies, combining both images, saying,

<p>And know, O Muslim, that God (May He be praised and lofty is His majesty!) begot His Word, as the sun begets the ray, and as the fire begets the heat... (cf. 529 <i>WN</i>)</p>	<p>وَاعْلَمْ، أَيُّهَا الْمُسْلِمُ، أَنَّ اللَّهَ (سُبْحَانَهُ وَجَلَّ جَلَالُهُ!) وُلِّدَ كَلِمَتَهُ، كَمَا تَلِدُ الشَّمْسُ الشُّعَاعَ، وَكََمَا تَلِدُ النَّارُ الشُّخُونَةَ...</p>
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And again combining both analogies, one reads

<p>As you may know, the sun and the moon and the fire are creatures, and the might of their glow is born from them without separation<sup>18</sup> [from them], and their heat is manifested</p>	<p>فَقَدْ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنَّارَ مَخْلُوقَاتٌ، وَقُوَّةَ ضَوْئِهَا يَتَوَلَّدُ مِنْهَا بِلا انفصالٍ، وَخَرَارَتِهَا ظَاهِرَةٌ مِنْهَا مِنْ غَيْرِ انْقِطَاعٍ. فَلَا الْحَوْهَرُ أَقْدَمُ مِنْ ضَوْئِهَا وَخَرَارَتِهَا، وَلَا الضَّوْءُ وَالْحَرَارَةُ</p>
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18) The expression "بلا انفصالٍ" we have rendered here "without separation" to make clear parallel in Arabic, "بغير انفصالٍ منه", cf. 569 *WN*.

from them without cessation. [Moreover,] neither is the essence older than their glow and heat, nor is the glow and heat newer than that essence, nor is the essence knowable except by the glow and the heat, nor are the glow and the heat knowable except by the essence. In the same way, God (Who is powerful and lofty His praise!), He and His Word and His Spirit<sup>19</sup> are without separation between [sic] them. He is not older than His Word and His Spirit, nor is [sic] His Word and His Spirit older than He. God (May He be praised!) is not knowable except by His Word and His Spirit, and His Word and His Spirit is [sic] not knowable except by Him.

(cf. 572-577 WN)

أَحَدْتُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ الْجَوْهَرِ، وَلَا الْجَوْهَرُ يُعْرَفُ،  
إِلَّا بِالضُّوْءِ وَالْحَرَارَةِ، وَلَا الضُّوْءُ وَالْحَرَارَةُ تُعْرَفُ  
إِلَّا بِالْجَوْهَرِ. كَذَلِكَ اللَّهُ (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ تَنَاهُ!) هُوَ  
وَكَلِمَتُهُ وَرُوحُهُ، مِنْ غَيْرِ افْتِرَاقٍ بَيْنَهُمَا. فَلَا هُوَ  
أَقْدَمُ مِنْ كَلِمَتِهِ وَرُوحِهِ، وَلَا كَلِمَتُهُ وَرُوحُهُ أَقْدَمُ  
مِنَهُ. وَلَا يُعْرَفُ اللَّهُ (سُبْحَانَهُ!) إِلَّا بِكَلِمَتِهِ  
وَرُوحِهِ. وَلَا تُعْرَفُ كَلِمَتُهُ وَرُوحُهُ، إِلَّا بِهِ.

#### 4. The use of ice as superlative of coldness

Another analogy used by Abū Qurrah in *ĠWĪ* is that of likening something or someone to “ice”. One reads,

The human, if he wishes to depict something exceeding; if it resembles something exceeding in coldness, he says, as if ice in coldness. (cf. 115')

وَالْإِنْسَانُ، إِذَا مَا أَرَادَ نَعَتَ شَيْءٍ فَائِقٍ، فَإِنْ كَانَ  
يُشْبِهُ شَيْئًا فَائِقًا بِبَرْدِهِ، قَالَ كَأَنَّهُ التَّلْجُ بَرْدًا.

In *al-Muġādalāh*, again addressing his interlocutor, one hears him using the same analogy

Then, Abū Qurrah said, “Your heart, O Muslim, is as the granite stone which flouts the fire while it remains as cold as ice”. (cf. 504 WN)

فَقَالَ أَبُو قُرَّةَ: «إِنَّ قَلْبَكَ، أَيُّهَا الْمُسْلِمُ، كَالْحَجَرِ  
الصَّوَانِ الَّذِي يَقْدَحُ النَّارَ وَهُوَ بَارِدٌ كَالْتَّلْجِ».

19) The term “His Word and His Spirit” refers to Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ.

### 5. The crucifixion and the analogy used to show the importance of intent

On the subject of the crucifixion, one finds obvious similarities as well. In *ĠWĪ*, one reads,

Also from their saying to us, "If the Christ was content that the Jews crucify him, then the Jews ought to be rewarded benevolently". (cf. 119')	وَمِنْ قَوْلِهِمْ أَيْضًا لَنَا: «إِنْ كَانَ الْمَسِيحُ رَضِيَ بِصَلْبِ الْيَهُودِ إِلَيْهِ، فَقَدْ يَبْنِي أَنْ يُتَابَ الْيَهُودُ خَيْرًا».
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And in *al-Muġādalah*, one finds the same reasoning

if the Jews indeed crucified him according to his wish, then there is no guilt upon them with him... (cf. 723 <i>WN</i> )	فَإِنْ كَانَ الْيَهُودُ قَدْ صَلَبُوهُ بِهِوَاهُ، فَلَا ذَنْبَ عَلَيْهِمْ عِنْدَهُ...
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And again in *al-Muġādalah* one finds that

Al-Ma'mūn's scribe said, "I see that the Jews have a better opinion than you, O Abū Qurrah, for they crucified your god and enabled him to attain the fulfillment of his intention". (cf. 774-775 <i>WN</i> )	قَالَ كَاتِبُ الْمَأْمُونِ: «أَرَى الْيَهُودَ أَصَوَّبَ رَأْيًا مِنْكَ، يَا أَبَا قُرَّةَ، لِأَنَّهُمْ صَلَبُوا إِلَهَكَ، وَبَلَّغُوهُ غَايَةَ مُرَادِهِ».
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Furthermore, the analogy used to respond to this question is strikingly similar; in *ĠWĪ* it is the following:

Say, "tell us, if one of you were to invade the lands of the Byzantines, would his intention not be to be martyred, for the sake of God? Because this (he claims) would [secure] his arrival to paradise <sup>20</sup> ? Assume that	فَقُلْ: «أَخْبِرُونَا، إِذَا غَزَا أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ أَرْضَ الرُّومِ، أَلَيْسَ إِنَّمَا مُنْتَهَى أَنْ يُسْتَشْهَدَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ؟ لِأَنَّ ذَلِكَ (بِرِغْمِهِ) يُؤَدِّيهِ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ. ثُمَّ عُدَّ أَنَّكَ غَزَوْتَ أَنْتَ وَأَخُ لَكَ، وَلَكِنَّمَا هَذِهِ النَّيَّةُ، وَأَنَّ
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20) According to Muslim belief, a person killed in a religious war is considered a martyr and alive with God. Cf. Q. 2:154, ﴿وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتٌ بَلْ أَمْوَاتٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ﴾ "And call not those who are slain in the way of Allah 'dead'. Nay, they are living, only ye perceive not".

See also Q. 3:169, ﴿وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَمْوَاتًا﴾ "Think not of those who are slain in the way of Allah, as dead. Nay, they are living. With their Lord they have provisions".

In fact, "A large body of traditions describes the bliss awaiting the martyr. All his sins will be forgiven; he will be protected from the torments of the grave; a crown of glory will be

you went to invade, you and your brother, with the same intention, and a Byzantine killed your brother, what would you do with that Byzantine, if you were put in power over him? Would you not kill him? If you were to do so, you are the worst of men! For you would kill the person who gave your brother his best wish, and enabled him to reach paradise? Or perhaps you would say that Byzantine did not seek this to agree with him, but to destroy him. And you would reward him, according to his will, for He did not want to do your brother a favor, although it did agree with him". (cf. 119')

رُومِيًّا قَتَلَ أَحَاكَ، مَاذَا كُنْتَ صَانِعًا بِذَلِكَ  
الرُّومِيِّ، لَوْ سَلَطْتَ عَلَيْهِ؟ أَلَا تَقْتُلُهُ؟ فَإِنْ فَعَلْتَ،  
فَيَسِّرَ الرَّجُلُ أَنْتَ! حَيْثُ تَقْتُلُ إِنْسَانًا فَعَلَّ  
بِأَخِيكَ أَفْضَلَ مِنْنِي، وَقَدْ أَوْصَلَهُ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ. أَوْ  
لَعَلَّكَ تَقُولُ إِنَّ الرُّومِيَّ لَمْ يَلْتَمِسْ ذَلِكَ مُوَافَقَةً  
لَهُ، بَلْ إِنَّمَا أَرَادَ هَلَاكَهُ. فَتَكَافِئُهُ بِقَدْرِ إِرَادَتِهِ.  
لَأَنَّهُ لَمْ يُرِدِ الصَّنِيعَ لِأَخِيكَ، وَإِنْ كَانَ وَقَعَ مِنْ  
أَخِيكَ مُوَافَقَتِهِ.

The same analogy is found in *al-Muḡādalah*:

Tell me, then, O Muslim, if you were to invade the lands of the Byzantines, would you not in a holy war, for the sake of God, and you assume that this would [secure] your arrival in paradise?" Al-Hāšimī said, "(By my life!) It is thus". Abū Qurrah said, "Hence, if you went to invade, you and your brother, the son of your mother and your father, and your cousin, and then an infidel encountered you, and he came close to you and struck your brother a blow that wounded him and brought him close to death, tell me, would you, if you were able to overcome that infidel, would you not revenge [your

فَأَخْبِرْنِي، يَا مُسْلِمًا، إِذَا عَزَوْتَ بِلَادِ الرُّومِ، أَلَيْسَ  
أَنْتَ فِي الْجِهَادِ، فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ، وَتَظُنُّ أَنْ ذَلِكَ  
يُوصِلُكَ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ؟ قَالَ الْهَاشِمِيُّ:  
«لَعَمْرِي!»، إِنَّهُ كَذَلِكَ». قَالَ أَبُو قُرَّةَ: «فَإِذَا  
عَزَوْتَ، أَنْتَ وَأَخُوكَ، ابْنُ أُمِّكَ وَأَبِيكَ، وَابْنُ  
عَمِّكَ، فَلَقِيكَ عِلْجٌ، اقْتَرَبَ مِنْكُمْ، فَضَرَبَ أَحَاكَ  
ضَرْبَةً، آذَنَهُ وَجَعَلْتَهُ قَرِيبًا لِلْمَوْتِ. أَخْبِرْنِي، هَلْ  
أَنْتَ، إِذَا قَدَّرْتَ عَلَى ذَلِكَ الْعِلْجِ، أَلَيْسَ أَنْتَ تَنْتَقِمُ  
مِنْهُ؟»

قَالَ الْهَاشِمِيُّ: «كُنْتُ أَقْتُلُهُ عَوْضَ أَخِي». قَالَ أَبُو  
قُرَّةَ: «أَلَيْسَ أَنَّهُ يَوَاجِبُ، لِأَنَّهُ أَعْطَى أَحَاكَ مَنَاهُ،  
لِأَنَّهُ أَبْقَى أَنَّهُ إِذَا قَتِلَ دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ؟ فَلِمَاذَا تَقْتُلُ مَنْ  
قَدْ بَلَّغَكَ مَنَّاكَ وَأَوْصَلَكَ إِلَى مَقْصُودِكَ؟ لِأَنَّ ذَلِكَ

placed on his head; he will be married to seventy-two hours and his intercession will be accepted for up to seventy of his relations". See Etan KOHLBERG, "*Shahīd*", in *EI*, CD-Rom edition (Brill Academic Publishers, Leiden, 2003).

<p>brother] against him?"          Al-Hāšimī said, "I would kill him as ransom for my brother". Abū Qurrah said, "Is it not a duty<sup>21</sup>, for he [the infidel] had given your brother his wish, for he [your brother] was certain that if he were to be killed, he would enter the paradise? Why do you, then, kill him who had enabled you to attain your wish and lead you to your intention? For this infidel is the reason for your brother's entrance into paradise! His [the infidel's] murder, then, is not a duty". (cf. 739-746 <i>WN</i>)</p>	<p>الْعَلِجِ، سَبَبُ دُحُولِ أَحَبِّكَ الْجَنَّةِ! فَقَتْلُهُ مَا هُوَ وَاجِبٌ.</p>
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The consequence of the analogy in *ĠWĪ* reads as follows :

<p>Similarly the Jews, wherein they crucified the Christ, they did not wish to agree with Him. Rather, they wished his destruction, even if their action agreed with his intention. Hence, they are to be rewarded according to their bad will, and the Christ achieved His will in what they did to Him". (cf. 119<sup>6</sup>)</p>	<p>وَكَذَلِكَ الْيَهُودُ، حَيْثُ صَلَبُوا الْمَسِيحَ، لَمْ يُرِيدُوا مُوَافَقَتَهُ، بَلْ أَرَادُوا هَلَاكَهُ؛ وَإِنْ كَانَ فِعْلُهُمْ بِهِ قَدْ وَافَقَ هَوَاهُ. فَهُمْ يُكَافَأُونَ نَحْوَ سُوءِ إِرَادَتِهِمْ، وَالْمَسِيحُ قَدْ مَضَى هَوَاهُ فِيمَا صَنَعُوا بِهِ.</p>
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In *al-Muġādalāh*, the conclusion is:

<p>When the Jews crucified the Lord, the Christ, they did not wish to agree with Him and fulfill what was prophesied by the prophets. On the contrary, their certain [intention] was His destruction, and the eradica-</p>	<p>إِنَّ الْيَهُودَ لَمَّا صَلَبُوا السَّيِّدَ الْمَسِيحَ، لَمْ يُرِيدُوا مُوَافَقَتَهُ، وَإِثْمَامَ مَا نَبَّأَتْ بِهِ الْأَنْبِيَاءُ. وَإِنَّمَا كَانَ يَقِينُهُمْ هَلَاكَهُ، وَإِطْمَاسَ اسْمِهِ، وَمَحْوَ ذِكْرِهِ مِنَ الْعَالَمِ. فَهُمْ يَدِينُهُمْ وَيُكَافئُهُمْ».</p>
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21) At first glance, this might seem a bit confused. In Arabic, it reads, "أَلَيْسَ أَنَّهُ بِوَاجِبٍ" and to some, it might not make sense and the temptation is to change it into "إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ بِوَاجِبٍ". That would be a mistake. Abū Qurrah here is being sarcastic; the entire verse is written with *tongue in cheek*, and it is indented to demonstrate the folly of the intervention.



tion of His name, and the obliteration of His memory from the world. Hence, He [the Christ] judges and rewards them [according to their intentions]”. (cf. 751-753 *WN*)

### 6. *The crucifixion and another analogy used to show the importance of intent*

Another analogy used in *ĠWĪ* regards an ulcer:

And say to them also, “See, if you had an ulcer in your eye, and its great pain reached your heart so that you wished death, and I was your enemy. And the king placed me over you, and said to me, “hit him in wherever you wish”. And I hit you on that ulcer of yours seeking to kill you, and that ulcer burst, and from it leaked that which was in it and its pain hurt you, and you were cured. If you had authority over me, would you not kill me as a reward although I wished of your murder, even though the cure was done on my hands?” (cf. 119<sup>v</sup>)

وَقُلْ لَهُمْ أَيْضًا: رَأَيْتَ، لَوْ أَنَّ فِي عَيْنِكَ قَرْحَةً، قَدْ بَلَغَ أَذَاهَا صَمِيمَ قَلْبِكَ وَتَمَيَّيْتُ الْمَوْتَ. وَكُنْتُ أَنَا عَدُوًّا لَكَ. فَأَمَكَّنَنِي الْمَلِكُ مِنْكَ وَقَالَ لِي «أَضْرِبْهُ حَيْثُ شِئْتَ»، فَضَرَبْتُكَ عَلَى الْقَرْحَةِ، التَّمَّاسَ قَتْلِكَ، فَكَانَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ أَنَّ الْقَرْحَةَ انْفَقَّتْ، وَسَالَ مَا كَانَ فِيهَا يُؤْذِيكَ وَجَعُهُ، وَبَرَأْتُ. فَلَوْ سَلَّطْتَ عَلَيَّ، أَلَمْ تَكُنْ تَقْتُلُنِي، مُكَافَأَةً لِي بِمَا أَرَدْتُ مِنْ قَتْلِكَ، وَإِنْ كَانَ الْبِرُّ قَدْ جَرَى لَكَ عَلَى يَدَيَّ؟

In *al-Muġādalah*, the same analogy is used:

Abū Qurrah said, “Tell me, if you had a severe ulcer in your eye, and because of its great pain you wished death as an amiable friend, and [if] I were your enemy and brought you to the *Sultān*, and he ordered me to hit you in whatever place I fancied, then, I hit you on that ulcer of yours seeking an increase in your pain, and from that ulcer seeped much blood and a great amount of substance, and

قَالَ أَبُو قُرَّةَ: «أَخْبِرْنِي، إِذَا كَانَتْ فِي عَيْنِكَ قَرْحَةً شَدِيدَةً، وَأَنْتَ لِأَجْلِ كَثْرَةِ وَجَعِهَا تَتَرَجَّى الْمَوْتَ كَصَدِيقٍ وَدُودٍ. وَكُنْتُ أَنَا عَدُوُّكَ، وَأَتَيْتُ بِكَ إِلَى السُّلْطَانِ، فَأَمَرَنِي أَنْ أَضْرِبَكَ مَوْضِعَ مَا خَطَرَ لِي. فَضَرَبْتُكَ عَلَى قَرْحَتِكَ تِلْكَ، مُلْتَمِسًا الزِّيَادَةَ عَلَيْهَا فِي وَجَعِكَ، فَسَالَتْ تِلْكَ الْقَرْحَةُ دَمًا كَثِيرًا وَمَادَّةً جَزِيلَةً. فَعُوفِيَتْ بِتِلْكَ الضَّرْبَةِ مِنْ وَجَعِكَ. فَلَعَلَّكَ كُنْتَ تَقْتُلُنِي؟» قَالَ الْمُسْلِمُ: «نَعَمْ، قَتَلْتُكَ

<p>you had recuperated from your pain as a consequence of that hit, would you perhaps kill me?” The Muslim said, “Yes, I would kill you as a duty”. Abū Qurrah said to him, “Why? I have indeed given you rest and released you from your anguish!” The Muslim said to him, “Because you did not hit me wishing my healing and good health. Rather, you wished an increase in my pain, and you indeed hit me on my ulcer and your intent was to murder me”. (cf. 776-785)</p>	<p>وَاجِبًا». قَالَ لَهُ أَبُو قُرَّةَ: «وَلِمَ؟ أَنَا قَدْ أَرَحْتُكَ، وَأَفْرَجْتُ عَنْكَ كَرْبُكَ!» ! قَالَ لَهُ الْمُسْلِمُ: «لَأَجْلِ أَنَّكَ لَمْ تَضْرِبْنِي لِتُرِيدَ شِفَائِي وَلَا عَافِيَتِي. بَلْ تُرِيدُ الزِّيَادَةَ فِي وَجْعِي. وَأَنْتَ قَدْ ضَرَبْتَنِي عَلَى فُرْحَتِي، وَبَيْتِكَ قَتْلِي».</p>
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**7. The Christian veneration of the cross and the Muslim’s veneration of the black stone**

With regard to the veneration of the cross, in *ĠWĪ*, one reads,

<p>And from their saying to us also, “Why do you kiss the cross and genuflect toward it?” (cf. 120f)</p>	<p>وَمِنْ قَوْلِهِمْ لَنَا أَيْضًا: «لِمَ تُقَبِّلُونَ الصَّلِيبَ وَتَسْجُدُونَ نَحْوَهُ؟»</p>
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The issue is raised in *al-Muġādalah* as well:

<p>He said, “Certainly, you strayed [from the right way], O Abū Qurrah! And why do you crucify your God and worship the wood that he was crucified on?”<sup>22</sup> (cf. 373 <i>WN</i>)</p>	<p>قَالَ: «لَقَدْ ضَلَلْتَ، يَا أَبَا قُرَّةَ! وَلِمَ تَصَلِّبُونَ إِلَهَكُمْ، وَتَعْبُدُونَ الْعُودَ الَّذِي صَلِبَ عَلَيْهِ؟»</p>
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22) This accusation is not something only of the past. Even in our modern era, some Muslims still believe that Christians worship the Cross. For example, a speaker for *al-Qā'idah* in the broadcasted tape aired by *al-Ġazīrah* on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January 2006, referred to the Christians as “the worshippers of the Cross”.

In reality, the Muslim does not believe that Jesus was crucified or died on a cross. ﴿وَقَوْلِهِمْ إِنَّا قَتَلْنَا الْمَسِيحَ عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ وَمَا صَلَبُوهُ وَلَكِنْ شُبِّهَ لَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ اٰخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِمَّنْهُ مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِلَّا اتِّبَاعَ الظَّنِّ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ يَقِينًا بَلْ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا﴾ “And because of their saying: We slew the Messiah Jesus son of Mary, Allah’s messenger - They slew him not nor crucified, but it appeared so unto them; and lo! Those who disagree concerning it are in doubt thereof; they have no knowledge thereof save pursuit of a conjec-

Among other arguments, Abū Qurrah likens the Christian kissing the cross to the Muslim's kissing the black stone: In *ĠWĪ*, one reads,

Our kissing of the cross and kneeling towards it is not unlike your kissing the stone upon which treaded Abraham as you claim. (cf. 120 <sup>f</sup> )	وَلَيْسَ تَقْبِيلُنَا الصَّلِيبَ وَسُجُودُنَا نَحْوَهُ بِأَنْكَرٍ مِنْ تَقْبِيلِكُمُ الْحَجَرَ الَّذِي وَطِئَ عَلَيْهِ إِبْرَاهِيمُ بِرِغْمِكُمْ.
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In *al-Muġādalah*, one finds the same argument:

He [Abū Qurrah] said, "As you exalt the stones, kiss them, and caress <sup>23</sup> yourselves with them without a sign manifested from them" <sup>24</sup> . (cf. 375 <i>WN</i> )	قَالَ: « كَمَا تُعْظَمُونَ أَنْتُمْ الْحِجَارَةَ، وَتُقْبَلُونَهَا، وَتَتَمَسَّحُونَ بِهَا، مِنْ غَيْرِ آيَةٍ ظَهَرَتْ مِنْهَا.
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### 8. The Muslim's objection that Jesus killed his mother and the analogy of Abraham

With regard to he who kills his mother, in *ĠWĪ*, one finds the following statements:

From their sayings to us as well, "What is the retribution to he who kills his mother?" They mean the death of the pure Mary, the mother of the Christ, our Lord. Say, "... what is your opinion with regard to him who killed his intimate friend?... if God were to kill all and spare His beloved	ومن قولهم لنا أَيُّضًا: « ما جزاء من قتل أمه؟ » يعنون بذلك موت مريم الطاهرة أم المسيح ربنا. فقل: ... فَمَا رَأَيْكُمْ فِيمَنْ قَتَلَ خَلِيلَهُ ...؟ فلو ذهب الله يُمِيتُ الجميع ويعفي من الموت أَحِبَّاهُ، إِذْ لَبِطَلْ مَا قَدْ مَضَى مِنْ قَضِيَّةِ عَدْلِهِ وَحَاشَا لَهُ أَنْ يَنَاقِضَ نَفْسَهُ....
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ture; they slew him not for certain. But Allah took him up unto Himself. Allah was ever Mighty, Wise".

Abū 'Alī begins his intervention by pointing out that Abū Qurrah has strayed precisely because of Abū Qurrah's assertion that Christ has been crucified.

23) The word used in the Arabic here "تَمَسَّحُونَ" rendered "caress" carries, in the context, the connotation of "anointing yourselves". It can be rendered "rub yourselves". We opted for "caress" as that it connotes a gentle touch and/or fondness.

24) Reference to part of the practice performed in *al-Haġġ* in Mecca where a Muslim is to kiss the black stone in silence if he can. Cf. Sābiq AL-SAYYID, *Fiqh al-Sunnah*, vol.1 (Maktabat al-Ḥadamāt al-Ḥadīthah, Ġaddah, N. D.), p. 819. As for the origin of the *black stone*, Islamic tradition asserts that it was sent to Adam from heaven. See J. PEDERSON, "Adam", in *EL*, WebCD edition (Brill Academic Publishers, Leiden, 2003).

<p>from death, then null what concerns His justice, and far from God to contradict Himself...". (cf. 123<sup>v</sup>-124')</p>	
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The same issue is raised in *al-Muġādalah* as well and with the same response Abū Qurrah replies:

<p>“What do you say, O Abū Qurrah, about him who killed his mother?” Abū Qurrah said, “And what do you say about Him who killed his intimate friend?”... He [God] caused the death of His mother because He decreed death upon all His creatures of the sons of Adam. However, if He had caused the death of some people and raised up some people, He would have contradicted His saying. (cf. 757-758; 768-769 <i>WN</i>)</p>	<p>«مَا تَقُولُ، يَا أَبَا قُرَّةَ، فِي مَنْ قَتَلَ أُمَّهُ؟ قَالَ أَبُو قُرَّةَ: «وَمَا قَوْلُكَ فِي مَنْ قَتَلَ خَلِيلَهُ؟» ... أَمَاتَ أُمَّهُ، لِأَنَّهُ حَكَّمَ بِالْمَوْتِ عَلَى جَمِيعِ خَلَائِقِهِ، مِنْ أَوْلَادِ آدَمَ. غَيْرَ أَنَّهُ لَوْ أَمَاتَ قَوْمًا وَأَحْيَا قَوْمًا، كَانَ قَدْ خَالَفَ قَوْلَهُ.</p>
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CONCLUSION

As can be seen from the above comparisons, the similarities between the two documents are strikingly clear. The relationship between the two accounts is of great importance for several reasons: First, it clearly shows how Abū Qurrah attracted and shaped the thought of many followers, forming what we might call “Abū Qurrah’s school of thought”, not only in his own time and place but also for subsequent generations and can be useful today. Second, the similarities between the two accounts illustrate the significance of *ĠWĪ*. Third, this may allow us to come closer to the authentic sources of the content of *al-Muġādalah* between Bishop Theodors Abū Qurrah of *Harrān* and a group of Muslim theologians in the presence and participation of the Caliph ‘Abd Allāh al-Ma'mūn.

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