

9- Qur'anic Approaches to Jesus in the Perspective of Comparative Theology. Word and Spirit of God as Categories of Mediation between God and Man

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Introduction

In Christian theology, there are two main truth claims: the first is that God is one God in three divine persons or hypostases, namely the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The second truth claim is that Jesus is the Son of God, that he is at the same time truly God and truly Man and thus the redeemer of our sins. Exactly these truth claims seem to separate Christian from Muslim belief and seem to prevent every successful dialogue between the two religions. But is it really like this: Do you have to stop the interreligious dialogue right in the moment when the question about Jesus Christ arises? Is it possible to consider Jesus as a kind of bridge between the two religious traditions instead of considering him as the stumbling block?

In this article I don't want to discuss the question why Christians say that Jesus is the Son of God – I want to argue how it is generally conceivable that Jesus is supposed to be divine and human at the same time and what the categories *word* and *spirit* contribute to that topic. In a second step I want to find out, using the methods of Comparative Theology, if it can be fruitful to involve the Muslim perspective on Jesus of Nazareth in the discussion. As a form of interreligious dialogue Comparative Theology tries to pose the theological question of truth within a certain religious tradition and, at the same time, tries to appreciate the otherness of the other religious tradition, even if it differs from my own truth claim.⁴² Thus, it could be possible to recognize the

⁴² See Klaus von Stosch, Comparative Theology as an Alternative to the Theology of Religions. A Critical Response to Perry Schmidt-Leukel, in Norbert Hintersteiner (ed.), *Naming and Thinking God in Europe Today. Theology in Global Dialogue*, Amsterdam-New York 2007 (Currents of Encounter; 32), 507-512; Klaus von Stosch, Comparative Theology as Challenge for the Theology of the 21st Century in *Journal of the Religious Inquiries* 2 (2012) 5-26; Klaus von Stosch, Comparative Theology as Liberal and Confessional Theology, *In Religions* 3 (2012) 983-992. Reprinted in Francis X. Clooney/John Berthrong (ed.),

Qur'anic appreciations of Jesus of Nazareth as an approach that enriches my own Christian belief and that is able to rediscover aspects in my Christian identity and tradition that tend to be neglected.⁴³

I. Christian Perspective

1. *Logoschristology – From the Biblical Tradition to the Theology of Late Antiquity*

The Christian question how the mystery of the person Jesus Christ is to be explained opens up Pandora's Box. First of all, there is the diversity of the Gospels in the New Testament. They all agree on the statement that Jesus is the Son of God. But they all explain and justify this heavenly son ship by giving different *origins* or *starting points* of Jesus. Mark begins his Gospel with the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist and the Holy Spirit descending on him (Mark 1,9-11), whereas Luke and Matthew connect the Spirit with Jesus' conception – here the Holy Spirit comes upon Mary (Matthew 1,18-25; Luke 1,26-38). So, whereas the Synoptic Gospels represent a so-called *Christology from below* or *ascending Christology* – focussing on Jesus' God-inspired life –, John proposes a so-called *Christology from above* or *descending Christology*. The idea of the pre-existent Logos or Word, the second person of the Trinity, who comes down from God and incarnates itself in the human being Jesus of Nazareth, is based on the theological concept of the Prologue to John's Gospel (John 1,1.14).

European Perspectives on the New Comparative Theology, Basel 2014, 31-41; Klaus von Stosch / Sandra Lenke, The Method of Comparative Theology. Goals and Challenges, in Nayla Tabbara (ed.), *What about the Other? A Question for Cross-Cultural Education in the 21st Century*, Notre Dame University/Lebanon 2012, 119-129; Klaus von Stosch, Comparative Theology and Comparative Religion. In: Perry Schmidt-Leukel/Andreas Nehring (ed.), *Interreligious Comparisons in Religious Studies and Theology. Comparison revisited*, London-New York 2016, 163-177.

⁴³ This article is influenced in a great deal by the work of the DFG-project Qur'anic approaches to Jesus Christ in the Perspective of Comparative Theology⁴⁴ in which I work together with Klaus von Stosch, Mouhanad Khorchide and Zishan Ghaffar. To learn more about our work see Klaus von Stosch / Mouhanad Khorchide (ed.), *Streit um Jesus. Muslimische und christliche Annäherungen*, Paderborn 2016 (Beiträge zur Komparativen Theologie; 21).

Whereas nowadays the term and the idea of the logos in non-theological and non-philosophic contexts does not evoke a lot of connotations, the concept of the logos, was a much more common category in the world of the Late Antiquity.⁴⁴ Biblical theologians are able to name an amount of different places in the historiography of religion in which the category of the logos plays a significant role. With regard to the background of the Prologue to John is it likely that one of the most important sources is the theology of Wisdom in the Hellenistic-Jewish tradition. What distinguishes Logoschristology from the theology of Wisdom is the idea of the strong personification of the Logos that exceeds the signs of a personification of the Wisdom in the Old Testament, and, of course, the idea of the Logos becoming flesh in the person Jesus Christ.

It is the christological approach of John that has gained acceptance over the years and is finally consolidated at the Council of Nicaea in 325, whereas the elements of a Messianic or Inspiration-Christology that you can find in the Synoptic Gospels become more and more unnoticed. So the history of dogma seems to be the pure triumphal march of Logoschristology from 325 until the Third Council of Constantinople (680/681).⁴⁵ In this theological

⁴⁴ For the biblical discussion about the Christology of John and the category of the Logos in the Prologue to John see Martin Hengel, *Der Sohn Gottes. Die Entstehung der Christologie und die jüdisch-hellenistische Religionsgeschichte*, Tübingen 1975; Michael Theobald, *Im Anfang war das Wort. Textlinguistische Studie zum Johannesprolog*, Stuttgart 1983; Michael Theobald, *Die Fleischwerdung des Logos. Studien zum Verhältnis des Johannesprologs zum Corpus des 4. Evangeliums und zum 1. Johannesbrief*, Regensburg 1985; Hans Weder, *Ursprung im Unvordenklichen. Eine theologische Auslegung des Johannesprologs*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 2008 (*Biblisches-Theologische Studien*; 70).

⁴⁵ For the role of the Spirit and of spiritchristological ideas in history of dogma see José Pablo Martín, *El espíritu santo en los orígenes del cristianismo, Estudio sobre I Clemente, Ignacio, II Clemente y Justino Martir*, Zürich 1971 (*Biblioteca di scienze religiose*; 2); Henning Ziebritzki, *Heiliger Geist und Weltseele. Das Problem der dritten Hypostase bei Origenes, Plotin und ihren Vorläufern*, Tübingen 1994 (*Beiträge zur Historischen Theologie*; 84); Franz Dünzl, *Pneuma. Funktionen des theologischen Begriffs frühchristlicher Literatur*, Münster 2000 (*Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum Ergänzungsband*; 30); Gunter Wenz, *Geist. Zum pneumatischen Prozess altkirchlicher Lehrentwicklung*, Göttingen 2011.

process the Incarnation-Christology or Logoschristology becomes the predominant Christology.⁴⁶

After the definitive consolidation of the Logoschristology at the Council of Nicaea, the most important question from the fourth to the seventh century is to solve the problem how the divine and the human nature of Jesus are connected in the second person of the Trinity. I will skip the struggles around the logoschristological approach from 325 to 681 and just mention that the hegemony of the Logos in the person Jesus Christ evokes an overemphasis on the divinity of Jesus. Monophysitism and Monotheletism are two heretical developments that arise from this overemphasis on the Logos. Although both Monophysitism and Monotheletism are rejected by the christological decisions of the councils, the question remains how Christology is able to secure the true humanity of Christ. Even if the Council of Constantinople speaks of the equality of the two wills of Jesus, the human and the divine one, it is not imaginable, according to the fathers of the Council, that Jesus is able to decide against the divine will. In this case Jesus would have the possibility and freedom to refuse to fulfil his father's will and to reject his mission. Also the dyophysite theologian Maximus Confessor lays stress on the human will and freedom of Jesus and claims at the same time that the human will of Jesus automatically joins in the will of the divine Logos.⁴⁷ On the one hand Maximus is able to secure in this way the personal unity of Jesus Christ. On the other hand he risks the autonomy of Jesus and, in the final analysis, is not able to show convincingly

⁴⁶ For the historical discussion about the development of Christology see Alois Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche*. Band 1-2,4, Freiburg-Basel-Wien 1979-2002; Christoph Marksches, *Alta Trinità Beata. Gesammelte Studien zur altkirchlichen Trinitätstheologie*, Tübingen 2000; Karl-Heinz Menke, *Jesus ist Gott der Sohn. Denkformen und Brennpunkte der Christologie*, Regensburg 2008, 204-281.

⁴⁷ For the theology of Maximus Confessor see Felix Heinzer, *Gottes Sohn als Mensch. Die Struktur des Menschseins Christi bei Maximus Confessor*, Fribourg 1980; Guido Bausenhart, *In allem uns gleich außer der Sünde*. Studien zum Beitrag Maximus' des Bekenner zur altkirchlichen Christologie, Tübingen 1990 (Tübinger Studien zur Theologie und Philosophie; 5); Jean-Miguel Garrigues, *L'instrumentalité rédemptrice du libre arbitre du Christ chez saint Maxime le Confesseur*. In: *Revue Thomiste* 104 (2004) 531-550; Karl-Heinz Uthemann, *Christus, Kosmos, Diatribe. Themen der frühen Kirche als Beiträge zu einer historischen Theologie*, Berlin-New York 2005 (Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte; 93).

how the human nature of Christ is secured in the process of the hypostatic union. So we can summarize that the history of dogma in Late Antiquity cannot really overcome the overemphasis on the divinity of Jesus.

2. *Modern Spiritchristology as a Countermovement to Logoschristology*

In our times, there are attempts to stick to the decisions of the christological councils and the so-called hypostatic union of the two natures and, at the same time, to avoid the overemphasis on the divinity of Jesus. One of these attempts is the logoschristological concept of the Catholic theologian Georg Essen.⁴⁸ In his habilitation “The freedom of Jesus” he tries to develop a Christology based on the one hand on the christological dogma of the Council of Chalcedon and on the other hand on the analysis of freedom from the perspective of transcendental philosophy represented by the Catholic theologian Thomas Pröpper. But Essen's christological concept cannot avoid the persisting problems of the theory of the hypostatic union and of the logoschristological concept, which shows again that it is – even in the framework of modern philosophical thought – difficult to combine logoschristological ideas with the emphasis on Jesus true human nature.⁴⁹

Spiritchristology now understands itself as an answer to traditional and modern logoschristological concepts.⁵⁰ They can be divided into two different kinds: Some still want to respect logoschristological and Trinitarian ideas. They confirm the “Spirit’s

⁴⁸ See Georg Essen, *Die Freiheit Jesu. Der neuchalkedonische Enhypostasiebegriff im Horizont neuzeitlicher Subjekt- und Personphilosophie*, Regensburg 2001 (ratio fidei; 5).

⁴⁹ See Magnus Lerch, *Selbstmitteilung Gottes. Herausforderungen einer freiheitstheoretischen Offenbarungstheologie*, Regensburg 2015 (ratio fidei; 56), 239-318; Aaron Langenfeld, *Das Schweigen brechen. Christliche Soteriologie im Kontext islamischer Theologie*, Paderborn 2016 (Beiträge zur Komparativen Theologie; 22), 255-293.

⁵⁰ For a general overview of modern spiritchristological concepts and the following thoughts see Piet Schoonenberg, *Spirit christology and Logos christology*. In: *Bijdragen* 38 (1977) 350-375; Michael Preß, *Jesus und der Geist. Grundlagen einer Geist-Christologie*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 2001; Karl-Heinz Menke, *Das heterogene Problem der Geist-Christologien*. In: Georg Augustin/Klaus Krämer/Markus Schulze (ed.), *Mein Herr und mein Gott. Christus bekennen und verkünden. FS für Walter Kardinal Kasper*, Freiburg-Basel-Wien 2013, 220-257.

influence on Jesus only posterior to that of the Logos”⁵¹ and so they try “to give more room to a Spirit christology *within* the prevailing Logos christology of the Church”⁵².

Others want to discard the ideas of Trinity and Incarnation completely. They qualify the hypostasis of *Logos and Pneuma* into two different modes of the one mono-personal God and in this sense represent a non-Trinitarian, more modalistic image of God. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are identified with each other and they are considered as being only one person acting in three roles. The majority of these concepts have their origin in the Anglican Church at the end of the 19th century and can be seen as a countermovement to Christologies that identify the pre-existent Logos with the human being Jesus of Nazareth.⁵³ This christological concept, of course, isn’t within the limits of *orthodox theology*, because it no longer differentiates adequately between Jesus Christ and God at all. Spiritchristology wants to respect the true human nature of Jesus Christ. The reason why it rejects the priority of the logoschristological approach is “that in such a conception the subject of Christ’s thoughts, feelings and actions is the divine Logos – and not the man Jesus.”⁵⁴ According to Spiritchristology every human being is inspired by the Holy Spirit (seen as a divine mode) and every human being is a manifestation of the divine Logos (seen as a divine mode). Jesus is so filled with the Holy Spirit that the Logos becomes manifest in him in a more intensive way than in every other human being. So Jesus can be called the perfect realization of personhood.

The moment of the inspiration of Jesus can be seen in his baptism (Mark 1,9) and also in the resurrection of Christ, as it is described in Romans 1,3f. In any case, there doesn’t seem to be any allusion to a pre-existence of Jesus Christ. As the Dutch theologian Piet Schoonenberg says regarding the testimonies of the New Testament: “Indeed, we are justified in saying that the Spirit characterizes Jesus in his sonship with regard to God and to us,

⁵¹ Schoonenberg, *Spirit christology and Logos christology*, 358.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 360. It is remarkable that in these spiritchristological concepts, the Spirit still has first and foremost a soteriological function and doesn’t define Jesus in an ontological way.

⁵³ See Menke, *Das heterogene Problem der Geist-Christologien*, 221-225.

⁵⁴ Schoonenberg, *Spirit christology and Logos christology*, 359. Schoonenberg refers here to the christological ideas of Geoffrey Lampe.

even in his person, which, in Scripture, is never separated from his functions and relations.”⁵⁵ The theology of the Synoptic Gospels is supposed to rise from the grave into which the Prologue to John and the dogmatics allegedly have thrown it.⁵⁶

Of course, the logoschristological theologians know about the spirit-filled life of Jesus. But in their understanding, Jesus as the one who is anointed with the Holy Spirit “is already interpreted as the Johanne Logos incarnate”⁵⁷. So they are convinced that they can find proof of Jesus’ pre-existence in every Synoptic Gospel and that even Paul presupposes the idea of the Incarnation in his christological comments.

If one wants to discard the idea of the Incarnation, one always puts oneself at risk of Adoptionism as Jesus is acknowledged “as divine functionally rather than ontologically”⁵⁸. If you follow a spiritchristological approach *instead* of a logoschristological one, is it still possible to draw distinction between Jesus and the other prophets or rather between Jesus and people in general, apart from the fact that Jesus represents human nature in a more perfect way?

In short, you are stuck between a rock and a hard place: On the one hand, if you reject an essential difference between the humanity of Jesus and the humanity of normal human beings, as the Spiritchristology does, you have difficulties in explaining why it is really God whom we encounter in Jesus. On the other hand, if you say that the difference between Jesus’ humanity and the humanity of normal human beings is essential, like the Logoschristology does, you don’t respect either Jesus’ own human dignity and freedom or the dignity and freedom of the people believing in God. Is there any way to speak of Jesus as being the highest manifestation of divine Revelation without being trapped in the pitfalls of Spirit- and/or Logoschristology?

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 353.

⁵⁶ For the importance of spiritchristological ideas in the New Testament see the concepts of Heribert Mühlen, Hendrik Berkhof or Hans-Joachim Kraus and the following works: Alfons Nossol, *Der Geist als Gegenwart Jesu Christi*. In: Walter Kasper (ed.), *Gegenwart des Geistes. Aspekte der Pneumatologie*, Freiburg-Basel-Wien 1979, 132-154; Jörg Weber, *Geistchristologien im Neuen Testament? Erwägungen zu einer exegetischen These über das Verhältnis von Jesus und dem Heiligen Geist*, Tübingen 1999.

⁵⁷ Schoonenberg, *Spirit christology and Logos christology*, 355.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 361.

II. Muslim Perspective

1. *Jesus as a Word of God in the Qur'an*

And this is the moment when the Qur'an comes into play. Is there a way that the Qur'anic statements about Jesus can help me rethink my understanding of Jesus without just saying that Jesus is no more than a prophet and messenger of God? I don't want to claim that Christians and Muslims have the same understanding of Jesus Christ and just haven't realized that so far. But the fact that the Qur'an also knows the concepts of *Spirit* and *Word of God* with regard to Jesus should not go unnoticed.

It is remarkable that in Q 4:171 the two categories *Spirit* and *Word of God* appear together. In some translations of the Qur'an the translators decided to give an interpretation of the terms *Word* and *Spirit of God* adding the note: "Be! – and he was" (*Kun fayakūn*; Q 3:47). This is a very typical interpretation of Jesus being a Word of God in Islamic theology.⁵⁹ Jesus is a Word of God, because he came into existence just through the demand of God, saying: Be! This however draws no distinction between Jesus and every other creature. Everything comes into existence by the powerful creation of God, the Almighty (Q 36:82f.).

Comparing Jesus with Adam can also show the qualification of Jesus being a Word of God. So in Q 3:59 the Qur'an relates Adam with Jesus referring to their creation just because of the powerful demand of God.⁶⁰

The Shi'ite theologian Muhammad Legenhausen refers to Q 31:27 to express the Qur'anic idea that the words of God are inexhaustible and that there cannot be – as the Christians would say – just *one* word of God, namely Jesus.⁶¹ But still Legenhausen

⁵⁹ See Hajj Muhammad Legenhausen, *Jesus as Kalimat Allah, the Word of God*. In: Mohammad Ali Shomali (Ed.), *Word of God*, London 2009, 129-156; Hüseyin Ilker Çınar, *Maria und Jesus im Islam. Darstellung anhand des Korans und der islamischen kanonischen Tradition unter Berücksichtigung der islamischen Exegeten*, Wiesbaden 2007 (*Arabisch-Islamische Welt in Tradition und Moderne*; 6), 80f.

⁶⁰ See Çınar, *Maria und Jesus im Islam*, 89-91, who refers to the tafsīr of aṭ-Ṭabarī, ar-Rāzī and az-Zamaḥṣarī.

⁶¹ See Legenhausen, *Appreciating Muslim and Christian Christologies*. In: Klaus von Stosch/Mouhanad Khorchide (ed.), *Streit um Jesus. Muslimische und*

stresses that he doesn't want to deny "that Christ is the word of God in a special unique way, for reason suffices to demonstrate that each living instantiation of a divine message will manifest the message in a unique way."⁶² So I want to pose the question if I cannot say that Jesus is a Word of God, because he has a very close connection to God? Jesus is the one who speaks as a newborn child (Q 19:30-33) and in this way shows that his whole existence from the very beginning is influenced by his understanding of being the servant and prophet of God. Furthermore the characterization of Jesus as a prophet who has this closeness to God in Q 3:45 shows a certain agreement with the logoschristological concept of Georg Essen saying that Jesus has the same close and immediate relationship to the Father as the Logos has to the Father. Of course, I don't want to claim at all that this is what the Qur'an wants to say – that Jesus is the incarnation of the divine Word. But maybe the Qur'an points out that we have to talk about Jesus in this way: that he is a Word of God, because his whole existence is shaped by the presence and love of God. In verses like Q 19:35 or Q 9:30 the Qur'an warns about worshipping Jesus as the Son of God. Regardless of the question which Christian group or which religious tradition really are the recipients of these verses, it is clear that the Qur'an wants to reject any divinisation of Jesus and therefore stresses this point concerning Jesus. It is important that everything Jesus does is a result of the powerful acting of God with whom he has a very intimate connection. In accordance, it would be important for Logoschristology neither to play the Father off against the Son, as the Son is nothing without the Father, nor to identify both with each other.

2. *Jesus as a Spirit of God in the Qur'an*

I want to focus now on Jesus being the *Spirit of God* to find out if the Qur'an can somehow enrich my Christian understanding of the working of the Spirit regarding to Jesus.

christliche Annäherungen, Paderborn 2016 (Beiträge zur Komparativen Theologie; 21), 59-79, here 67.

⁶² Ibid., 68. See also Legenhausen, Jesus as Kalimat Allah, 129-156, where he explains Jesus being a Word of God, because he actually realizes in word and deed what God sent as a revelation to him (*injiil*).

There is a lot to say about the way the Qur'an and the Islamic tradition interpret Jesus being a Spirit of God. So in Q 2:87 the Qur'an accentuates that Jesus is filled with the Holy Spirit and that this is the source of his beneficial acting. And this inspiration affects Jesus' whole life as even the conception of Jesus is caused by the work of the Spirit (Q 66:12).

But this time I want to focus more on another category of inspiration that is closely linked to the category of the Spirit. The American theologian Paul Heck argues that "it is possible to notice affinity between the ways in which Muslims have conceived the *sakīna* and the way in which Christians speak of the Holy Spirit."⁶³ Originally coming from Jewish theology (*šekinah*), the *sakīna* is a category also mentioned in the Qur'an:

"According to the Qur'an, the *sakīna* is described as something sent down by God upon Muhammad and the believers to strengthen their resolve to struggle in the way of God. But it is also closely linked to angels to signal that what Muhammad and the believers are doing has the favor of God and, to be more precise, that they have apocalyptic-like access to God."⁶⁴

Heck shows very convincingly that what the *sakīna* means to Muslims is very akin to what Christians say about the working of the Holy Spirit. It is interesting that he refers first and foremost to the working of the Holy Spirit with regard to the influence of the Holy Spirit on the Christian believers. So the functions of the Holy Spirit are mainly connected not to the nature of Jesus Christ, but to the faithful and to the soteriological meaning that the Holy Spirit has for the Christians who lived after the death of Christ. Along the same lines, the *sakīna* is – according to the ideas of the Muslim scholar al-Hakīm al-Tirmidhī –⁶⁵ first of all the inspiration and divine communication between God and the saints in the post-prophetic age.

I want to pose the question if the category of the *sakīna* can't help us to understand the role of Jesus Christ a little bit better, even if

⁶³ Paul Heck, *God's Gift of Prayer to the Children of Abraham. Christians and Muslims in Sacrificial Solidarity*. In: *Islamochristiana* 41 (2015) 57-73, here 60.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁶⁵ See al-Hakīm al-Tirmidhī, *The Book of the Way of the Friends of God (Kitāb Sirat al-Awliyā')*, quoted here from Heck, *God's Gift of Prayer to the Children of Abraham*, 70.

the *sakīna* is never mentioned in the Qur'an in connection with Jesus.⁶⁶ Heck quotes the ideas of the Muslim scholar Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya who understands the *sakīna* "primarily as a gift from God that descends upon believers in troubling times to help them preserve their integrity as servants of God."⁶⁷ And at this point I want to establish a relationship between the working of the *sakīna* regarding the righteous and the working of the *sakīna* regarding Jesus, who is understood to be a prophet (*nabī*) and messenger of God (*rasūl*) in the Qur'an. We could deduce that Jesus is able to adhere to his heavenly mission because of the influence of the *sakīna* inside of him, coming from God as a gift in times of challenges, for example when we think of the temptation of Christ in the Judean Desert. The *sakīna* is to be understood as something that calms down people and help them preserve their integrity. And that could be exactly the working of God in Jesus.

Conclusion

Because of this I wonder how the Spirit and the *sakīna* are linked to each other in the Qur'an. Is it possible to speak of the working of the *sakīna* in Jesus? And my other question is how the *sakīna* is linked to the category of *Wisdom* in Jewish understanding? As we have seen at the beginning of my article, the theology of Wisdom had a great influence on the theology of John and on his logoschristological concept. So it could be very interesting to find out whether the concept of the *sakīna* is not just enriching the Christian understanding of the Holy Spirit, but also the Christian understanding of the Logos.

There is still a lot to say about the connections between the categories of Word and Spirit (or *sakīna*) in the Qur'an and the concepts of Logos- and Spiritchristology. What I wanted to point out is that the Qur'an reminds us not to forget that it is important to speak of Jesus as the/a Word of God *and* to speak of him as the/a Spirit of God. Logoschristology tends to neglect the need of integrating pneumatological ideas into its concept, whereas it is not always discernible why a Spiritchristology should still follow the idea of Jesus as the incarnation of the Logos. Isn't it sufficient – in

⁶⁶ See for example Q 2:248; 9:26; 9:40; 48:4; 48:18; 48:26.

⁶⁷ Heck, *God's Gift of Prayer to the Children of Abraham*, 68.

the spiritchristological perspective – to perceive Jesus as inspired by the Holy Spirit, without any reference to the divine Word?

Even if Jesus is no more than a prophet in Qur'anic and Islamic understanding, I would still say that the Qur'an characterizes Jesus in a unique way that forbids to reduce him either to being a Word *or* to being a Spirit of God. He is both, and Christian theology still has to think about the consequences in its christological concepts.