

When in Athens, Paul first challenged the worship of images, which demeaned God's glory and blinded their worshippers. But he also confronted the doctrine, now known as Tawhid, the barren kernel of Islamic worship, that God is wholly other, so alien and so far above us, that any human conception of Him must be false. This error considers God's creation of man in His own image a heresy. Paul twice corrected the Athenians by saying, 'we are the offspring of God'. We are of His kind, of His family by nature, we are mere creatures, but endowed with His unique likeness. He is never to be made in our image, *but* we are made in His. He is not our analogy, but we are *His*.

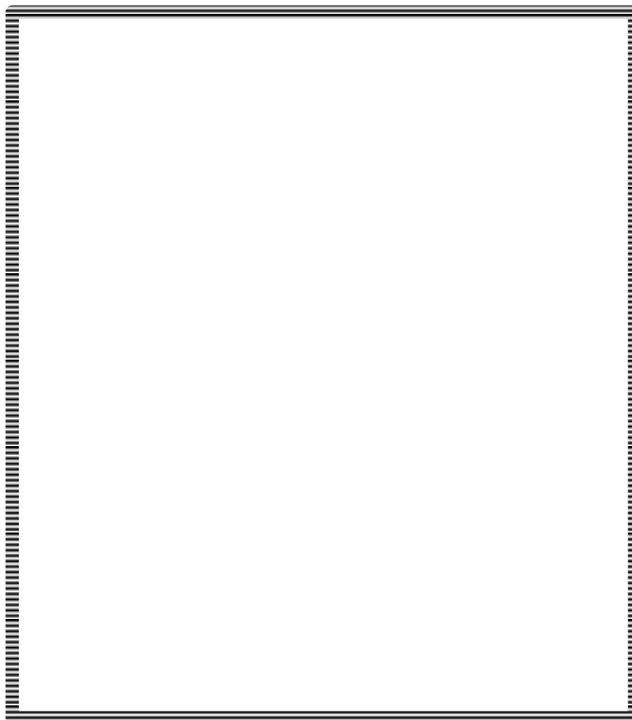
God's unique begetting of His own Son is a matter of deep mystery. It does not describe His later entry into human flesh. Yet it is the most profound demonstration of the rigour of this Divine analogy, the likeness in which we are created like God, after His image.¹ He, the Son, is the perfect Image of His Father, of the Invisible God, the exact likeness of His Person. No man has seen the Father, save He which is of God, He *has* seen and known the Father. In and by Him only we may see and know His Father.

The Qur'an often profoundly misreads Christian theology, 'Didst thou [Christ] say

unto men, worship me and my mother as two gods in derogation of Allah?' (5,116) Here it caricatures the Divine begetting as being both fleshly by Mary and identical with Christ's entry into human flesh. Christians reject such fairy tales.

God *has* begotten His only Son before time began. He *is* the uncreated Word of God, as the Qur'an acknowledges, the Son upon Whose death our living depends - the knowledge of Whom is life, the ignorance of Whom is death, and wrath for unforgiven sin.

'This is the record that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life.'
1 John 5.11-12



BEGOTTEN OR CREATED?

مولود او مخلوق؟ لم يلد ولم يولد؟
 יהוה אמר אלי בני אתה אני היום ילדתיך

A skilful artist painted a fine portrait of his only son. It was deeply admired and he was offered a costly price for the work, but vigorously refused to part with it. Then the son became fatally ill with leukaemia, and to pay for his costs the artist quickly sold off the precious picture.

What vast difference there is between a work of the hands and father's own son!



The Messiah is described in Bible as God's unique Son, begotten by the Sacred Name.

Is He then a mere work of God's hands?

¹ Genesis 5.1-3

The image of God

Genesis the first Bible book teaches us that men and women are created in the image of God. We bear His distinctive likeness and image, in a way that animals do not. This image is not found in outward form, but in the capacity for deep relationship, in our spiritual, rational and emotional faculties. It also lies in our power to create, discern and admire works of beauty and splendour.

The Qur'an however rejects this ancient Jewish and Christian doctrine. In the Sunna it is taught that God is as different from man as can possibly be imagined. The very idea of the image of God is regarded by Muslims as blasphemous. However the origin of this rejection is not holy or prophetic but comes from an altogether more profane source.

When the Apostle Paul visited Athens, he was appalled and disgusted by the idols of the Greeks. He showed them how insulting they were to God and how harmful they were to their own spirits.

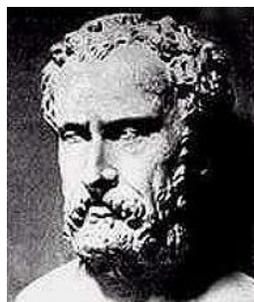
He disputed and reasoned with their wise men in the markets. When brought before the philosopher's assembly he warned, 'we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.' No, the Eternal One 'dwells not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing...'



Greek Idols from the Parthenon in Athens

So has Islam fallen to the baseness of Greek idolatry? That would be a surprising charge, given Islam's fierce opposition to all pictures and images, even of the prophets. No, it has fallen into an opposite but equally dangerous error, also shared with the Greeks.

Philosophers, like Xenophanes of Colophon², in contesting the hideous idols of the pagan nations, taught that God is so utterly unlike us, that He cannot be understood or known at all. He wrote God is 'not at all like mortals'.



Like many prominent Muslim teachers, some Salafi, he denies God's omnipresence. He expresses odd notions about God's thought. Most significantly of all,

he rejects all notions of Divine generation and then confuses them with incarnation, 'mortals suppose that the gods are born... and that they wear man's clothing and have a human voice and body'.

Greek philosophy like an undetected poison, penetrated deep into the theology of erring Jewish rabbis - the Sadducees for example denied both the resurrection and the being of spirits. The Greek denial of Divine Sonship too is now commonplace among rabbinic Jews and from there has inspired even greater Islamic rigour.

However the Bible both in its Jewish older half and in the New Testament, plainly teach us that God indeed has a Son.

In **Proverbs 30.4**, 'Who has ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in his fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His Son's name, if thou canst tell?'

In **Psalms 2**, the Hebrew text being in the title of this work, God declares Himself to have begotten His own Son, the King, against Whom the whole world will war.

So how then have the rabbis and their heirs, the imams, received this tainted heritage – not from the holy prophets - but sterile philosophy, the idolatry of blinded reason?³

² www.strateias.org/xeno.htm

³ www.strateias.org/rambam.htm