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THE CORANIC VERSES ON THE SANCTITY OF GOD

ABOVE ALL ASCRIPTIONS

Emel Esin

Institute for Research for Turkish Culture, Istanbul, Turkey

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DR. EMEL ESİN
KÜTÜPHANESİ

Dr.Emel Esin KÜTÜPHANESİ	
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ON THE SANCTITY OF GOD ABOVE ALL ASCRIPTIONS

"Such is (revealed), unto ye, God, your True Lord"
(Coran, X/32)

This and other Coranic verses express the fundamental principles of the unicity and the transcendence of God, beyond all ascriptions. Verse XX/14 is on unicity:

"Verily, I am God. There is no god but I. So do ye render worship unto Me"

The beliefs on theocracy (multiplication of the deity, or of deities);¹ on theogony² (affiliation); on theophany³ (manifestation in human form); on dualism between the powers of good and evil;⁴ on saintly, or priestly intercession⁵ and angelolatry⁶ are refuted in Coranic verses, with either the sanctification, or the glorification, or the exaltation of God,⁷ above these ascriptions and associations:

"Say, He is the Unique God"

"And God is Transcendent Perfection"

"He begets not, nor is He begotten"

"And none is His resemblant"
(Coran, CXII)

"And do ye not propose parables on God!" (XVI/74)

"There doth not exist any, comparable to Him"
(XLII/13)

The absolute ineffability of the concept of God is affirmed in verse VI/104:

"The comprehensions comprehend Him not. But He comprehends (all) comprehensions"

Prayer is therefore, in Islam, an attempt to reach the threshold of abstraction, in the words of the Prophet of Islam,⁸ a likeness of death, through the eradication of the world, with its images and imaginative visions. Hence the interdiction of icons, in Islamic temples.⁹

Although the Unique Deity is defined as unattainably Transcendent,

"Wherever they (mankind) turn, thither is the confrontation with God" (II/115)

"God intervenes between the human being and his heart" (VIII/24)

10

Thence, the Prophet's statement: "Verily, anyone of you, when he rises to prayer, he indeed invokes his Lord." "His Lord is between him and his direction of prayer".

Like the sacrament of prayer, that of pilgrimage is, in the Coranic verses, an evocation, the "remembrance" of the encounter with God, in pre-existence (VII/172), as in resurrection (VIII/24):

"Rise to prayer, for My remembrance!" (XX/4)

"And remember God, at the perception of the (boundary of) the Holy Sanctuary" (II/198).

The remembrance of God,¹¹ the gift of which is the peace of the heart,¹² is cited in the Coran, not only in prayer and in pilgrimage, but equally ^{through} the strive towards purification, in the avoidance of sin; in the evocation of God's covenant; in the study of the scriptures, by their followers and of the Coran, called "A Reminder to the universes" and a "Way of progress, towards God". The remembrance of God is also done, in sequel to the prayer, by a silent meditation, or a recitation of God's Holy Attributes, revealed in the Coran.¹³

The term "remembrance" implies the mystery of the Divine Spirit's (Rūh) manifestation, in the purpose of mankind's creation and that of revelation. The Spirit is, in verse XVII/85 beyond the limits of the human mind:

"And they question thee on the Spirit. Say, the Spirit is of the ordainment of my Lord. And ye are not given aught of knowledge thereon, but little"

In multiple orders of creation, the Creator infused of His Spirit, Adam and all his issue (XV/20, XXXVIII/173, XXXII/9);

each as a single individual self (mafs: XXI/28).

Two of the ways of creation are recalled, in verses XXII/6-9:

"Such is the Cognizant of the apparent and intrinsic universes, the Almighty, the Merciful"
 "Who bestowed excellence on all His creatures. And He originated the creation of mankind from the earth."
 "And He brought forth the issue from a humble liquid extract"
 "He then completed it and inspired it with His Spirit".

The inspiration of the Divine Spirit signifies, in verse VII/172, the awareness of God, in the human conscience:

"And when thy Lord raised the children of Adam, from their backs, (all the) descendants and made them witnesses against themselves: Am I not your Lord? They said: Yea, we bear witness"

The individual conscience had thus been given and accepted the "Trust" (al-amānah: XXXIII/72) of distinction between good and evil (furqān: XXV/1), a heavy trust from the weight of which, the rest of the universe had trembled, in dread. The freedom of choice of the individual conscience is again the theme of verses XCI/7-8:

"(...) And the creation of the individual and the completion thereof"
 "He inspired to it its deviations and its guard (against temptation)"

The choice could lead, either to the dignity of God's representative on earth (II/30), or to the degradation of the "lowest of the low", metaphorically likened to apes and swine (XCV/4-6, V/60).

The "Covenant" (V/7) was reconfirmed, throughout the generations, whenever "the Exalter of the degrees (of progress) destined" the Spirit to encounter those of His worshippers whom He chose, as warners of the (final) encounter" (XI/15). For,

"Verily, the return is unto thy Lord" (XCVI/8)

NOTES

- 1) See the word *shirk* , in the Coranic indexes, such as A. f.
C Abd'ul-Bāqī's Al-Mu^cjam'ul-Mufahris li Alfāz'il Qur'an'il-Karīm (Cairo, H. 1378) and the Coranic verse V/73.
- 2) Coran, verses II/210; VII/143.
- 3) Verse VI/101.
- 4) Verses IX/31; XXXIX/43; XLII/6.
- 6) Verse XLIII/16.
- 7) Verses II/16; VI/101; VII/190 and others.
- 8) M. ^cĀrif, Binbir Hadīth-i Sharīf sharhi (Cairo, H. 1319), entry 131.
- 9) Ibn Sa^cd, At-Tabaqāt'ul-Kubrā (Beirut, H. 1380), vol. II, p. 240.
- 10) Bukhārī, As-Ṣaḥīḥ, Kitāb'us-Ṣalāt, entries 33 and 39.
- 11) See a Coranic index, entry Adh-Dhikr.
- 12) Coran, VIII/24.
- 13) See a Coranic index, entry Asmā'.

Tek-Esin Vakfı

