

Abstract

This study presents the first part of the intention to elucidate and determine the relation of religion and art in the Islamic tradition. This relation in the first instance must be determined for the Koran itself. Since almost no systematic theological study of the Koran exists, the "Prolegomena" proposed here undertakes such a study and highlights its main outlines.

The first chapter raises which shaped the composition of the Koran up to its early stabilized canonic form. It ventures the hypothesis that this formation has been chosen according not only to didactic and literary purposes, but mainly by to a deliberate theological program: namely that the unity as well as the multiplicity of reality as, in essence, a divine creation is to be reflected and, as it were, even co-revealed in the very text of the holy scripture.

It must also be mentioned that the method of inquiry adopted here, i.e. the chronological reading and exegesis of the text, represents one of its most innovative features.

Through a structural analysis of Muhammad's first revelation, the second chapter provides a better understanding of the basic assumption in the foundations of this new way of worship and religion: the God proclaimed by prophetic monotheism is lord of history. In this regard, both the historical facts and the history of God's saving grace, are supposed neither to be identical nor to be completely different, but to complement each other; and further on it becomes expected, that it opens the possibility to transcend the narrow horizon of any tribal organisation of life and thought towards a social order wide enough to embrace finally all mankind.

The third chapter demonstrates the crucial relationship between revelation and politics determined by means of the corresponding metaphors of "*light*" and "*darknesses*". It turns out that the traditional hypothesis underlying the marked contrast between the Meccan and the Medinan Surahs is not valid. The eschatological dimension of the former is by no means given up in the later ones; on the contrary, its message becomes translated and transformed in a continued social order, which is supposed to conform to divine providence in history and even to make efficient God's grace.

By considering the findings in the first three chapters, the fourth chapter integrates them to outline the concept of God and of the relation between revelation and ethics as given by the Koran. Hence, it may now be possible to reconstruct the real meaning of the interrelation between ethics and interdiction of images (in all prophetic religions).