**The Islamic Doctrine of God**

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Introduction

1. Place of these lectures in the QEP.
2. Their role in ST1.
3. Islam: simple or complex?
	1. Simplicity
4. Creed: No God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet.
5. Prayer, 5 times daily.
6. Alms, charity.
7. Ramadan
8. Pilgrimage
9. Other laws:
	1. Abstain from alcohol, gambling, pork
	2. Modesty in dress
	3. Jihad (greater and lesser)
	4. Complexity
		1. Influences
			1. Judaism
			2. Christianity
				1. Nestorian
				2. Monophysite
				3. Ebionite (Khadija)
				4. Gospel of Barnabas (Gnostic)
			3. Arab polytheism
			4. Political developments
		2. Theological
			1. Gnostic oneness, but multiplicity (99 names)
			2. Unknowable, but revealed
			3. Utterly transcendent, but immanent
			4. Aloof, but compassionate
			5. Antithesis with Christianity, but common themes
			6. Personal, impersonal
		3. What kind of complexity?
			1. Complexity of the being of God
			2. Logical complexity
				1. Apparent contradiction
				2. Real contradiction
10. The God of Abraham?
	1. Claim in 29:46ff.
	2. Volf vs. Zaca
	3. What is the difference between worshiping the same God with theological disagreements, and worshiping different gods?
		1. We can make this judgment in extreme cases, but not always.
		2. In one sense, everyone worships the true God, but often wrongly.
		3. In another sense, the peoples worship different gods. (“Gods of silver”)
		4. I tend to think it best to bypass this question.
			1. Much common language used of Allah and Yahweh.
			2. But differences very great, even invalidating the language agreed to.
11. God’s Knowability and Unknowability
	1. 99 Names
	2. Via Negativa
	3. Unknowable essence vs. knowable revelation
	4. So 99 names relativized:
		1. describe what God has been, not what he is.
		2. Holiness: not moral purity, but absence of anything that makes God less than he is.
		3. Emphasis on power, sovereignty.
	5. Revelation
		1. Of will, not self.
		2. About God (propositions), not of God’s nature
12. Nominalism, Voluntarism
	1. Sovereignty, omnipotence: God can do, or be, anything he chooses.
	2. Attributes describe his will, not his nature. How he has willed to act in the past. (This view generally rejected in Christian theology.)
	3. His will could have been other than it is.
	4. Examples: justice, mercy, compassion, love.
	5. So all attributes should be understood as forms of his sovereignty. Justice is what he sovereignly declares it to be in each situation.
	6. But we cannot be sure what he will be in the future.
13. Transcendence and Immanence
	1. Transcendence in Frame square;
	2. But immanence problematic.
		1. Watches to judge our actions.
		2. “Closer than your jugular vein” 6:12, 59.
		3. Pantheistic language in Sufi literature.
		4. Enters the world, but not as a distinct being.
			1. Reveals his word, not himself.
			2. With us by his knowledge, not himself.
			3. Immanent pole on the Frame square.
14. God’s Oneness and the Christian Trinity
	1. Sura 112: In the name of God, the Lord of mercy, the Giver of Mercy. Say ‘He is God the One,’ God the eternal. He begot no one nor was he begotten. No one is comparable to Him.
	2. Wahid, numerical oneness
	3. Ahad, solitary
		1. Excludes Trinity
			1. Vs. Three, 4:171, 5:73
		2. No “partner”: to say otherwise is *shirk*.
		3. No begetting (above)
	4. Similar to Gnostic oneness?
	5. Miroslav Volf cites Nicholas of Cusa, however, who finds room for plurality in the Muslim doctrine of God. He compares to Augustine, Aquinas, Dionysius the Areopagite. (JF: Dionysius was neoplatonist/Gnostic.)
		1. God is beyond number, so “one” and “three” should not be taken literally. Transcendence as above. God is beyond number.
		2. God is simple, so pre-eminently one.
		3. The Trinity is not three gods.
		4. Nor is God one of the three in the Trinity.
		5. Christ never taught us to worship him in the place of God.
		6. The “Son” is not another God.
		7. God does not beget in a literal sense.
		8. The generation of the Son is eternal, so it never results “in a self-standing entity next to God.”
		9. If God creates through word (2:117), that word is eternal.
		10. God *is* everything that he has; so the word is God and God is the word.
		11. Jesus identified with the word in 4:171. Holy Spirit too!
		12. Love requires an object of love.
15. Attributes of God (The 99 names)
	* 1. relativized by transcendence (essence/revelation)
		2. relativized by nominalistic sovereignty
			1. Holiness, love, etc are what he has chosen to be.
			2. Volf: though he could have been different, these are what he is.
		3. Often treated as Christians understand them.
		4. Love
			1. Not personal, though Muslims claim he is a personal being.
			2. Not redemptive, incarnational
			3. Often defined as love for those who love him, not of his enemies.
16. Creation
	1. Not emanation, but deliberate
	2. Six days
	3. Man
		1. supreme accomplishment 16:3
		2. vicegerent, dominion, 2:30, 22:36
		3. not said to be image, likeness of God.
		4. But God’s Spirit breathed into him 15:26
		5. Two natures: soul and body.
		6. We are weak and need limits, hence the law.
		7. Human responsibility emphasized, 4:111, 10:103. (Despite some fatalistic themes in Islam.)
	4. Sin
		1. Adam disobeyed God, did evil with good intent.
		2. But he repented and God forgave.
		3. Left the Garden, not as punishment, but to subdue the earth.
		4. No impact of Adam’s sin on his descendants.
			1. We are not born sinners.
			2. Sin not an ineradicable part of human nature.
			3. All born true Muslims, 30:30.
		5. Sin from ignorance, bad companions, error, bad habits, laziness…
		6. So no doctrine of salvation in Koran.
		7. Heaven and Hell
		8. Trust God’s compassion, but you never know.