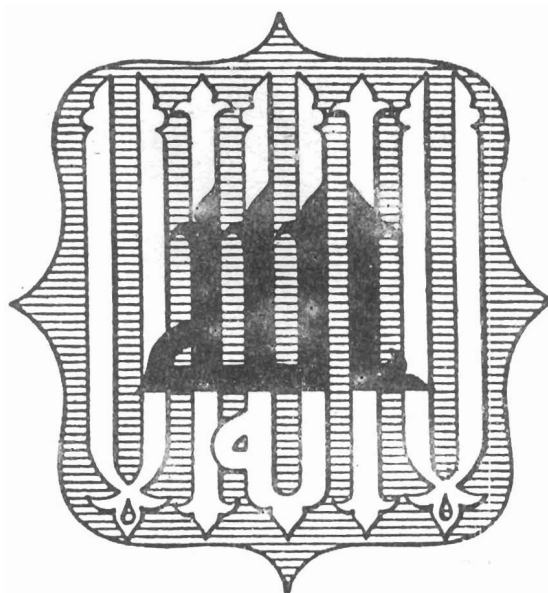


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# THE NATURE OF GOD'S EXISTENCE AS UNDERSTOOD BY THE BIBLE AND THE QUR'ĀN

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## **Introduction**

The Biblical teachings on the nature of God appear somewhat equivocal as the Old Testament's and the New Testament's views on this subject are diametrically opposed. While the former tends to affirm God's corporal existence as evident in the instances where Biblical figures are reported to have seen God, and passages ascribing parts of human body or human emotions to Him, the latter on the other hand asserts that God is spirit and consequently cannot be seen. This seeming irreconcilable positions led to theological argumentation about the nature of God between the Christian anthropomorphists and the spiritualists.

It is not surprising that in Islam similar arguments gave rise to the two schools of thought: the Mujassimites and their related groups on the one hand and the Mu'tazilites on the other, in view of the fact that the Qur'ān also associates with God anthropomorphic and anthropopathic traits. The aim of this paper therefore is to examine the extent to which the Biblical and the Qur'ānic passages on this subject are corroboratory to justify similar reactions from the Muslim and Christian theologians. The subject will be examined under three sub-headings viz: Man and the vision of God; God and the ascribed anthropomorphic traits, and the theological interpretations.

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### **Man and the Vision of God**

The postulation that man is able to see God pre-supposes that God has a corporeal existence. This is the impression given in many of the Biblical passages containing records of God's appearance to man. It must however be made clear right from the onset that the kind of divine appearance intended in this study is not the type experienced by Abraham as recorded in Genesis Chapter 18 or by Gideon as recorded in Judges 6:11<sup>f</sup> where appearances of the angel is understood to be synonymous with divine appearance.<sup>2</sup> Neither is it the type experienced by Isaiah, Ezekiel or Daniel, for these are visionary experiences.<sup>3</sup>

The encounters we consider relevant to this study are those of Jacob recorded in Genesis 32:22<sup>f</sup> and Moses in Chapters 24 and 33 of Exodus. Genesis 32:22-32 relates Jacob's struggle with God at Peniel. God in this account took on the human form and wrestled with Jacob until daybreak. When Jacob could not be prevailed upon, the "man" touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh and it became dislocated. He was then prepared to depart but Jacob refused, insisting that he should bless him. The man changed Jacob's name to Israel for having striven with God and with man triumphantly. There and then he was blessed. Consequently Jacob called the name of the place Peniel saying: "for I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved".

This is a problematic statement for it contradicts other Biblical passages making death the penalty of seeing God.<sup>4</sup> Gerhard Von Rad appears uncertain of the import of the passage in view of his two interpretations.

According to him, after Jacob had received the blessing of his assailant, he gave the place of this encounter a name which was the greatest marvel of all that God was face to face with him and the encounter had not meant his death.<sup>5</sup> This is to suggest that the narrative is aetiological for it is meant to explain the name of the city of Peniel which later acquired historical significance.

In his second interpretation, Von Rad opines that there is agreement that the narrative goes back to a pre-Israelite period. This was based on the assumption that Israel or the pre-Mosaic people of Jacob found in Peniel such a narrative about the nocturnal attack of a god on a man and then related it to the story to Jacob.<sup>6</sup> These, in our view, are mere conjectures; they create more problems than they solve as they undermine the divine origin of the scripture. The possibility that Yahweh himself (in the form of His angel) was most directly at work with Jacob could not be ruled out, as that could be compared with Gideon's or Abraham's experience in which an angel of the Lord is understood to be synonymous with God.

With regard to Moses, two passages of the Bible are pertinent for our discussion viz: Exodus 24:1-11 and Exodus 33:17-23. The former contains accounts of the ratification of the covenant between God and the Israelites'

deputation. Though it is not certain whether the covenant was made on the mountain or at the foot of the mountain.<sup>7</sup> We are informed that Moses and the 70 elders saw the God of Israel. Martin Noth<sup>8</sup> would not want us to see this passage as contradicting passages asserting the impossibility of seeing God and he therefore opines that the appearance "under His feet" is described as the deputation did not dare to raise their eyes to the God of Israel Himself. Ronald E. Clement expresses a similar view.<sup>9</sup>

It should be noted however that this argument is only a defence against any human claim to have seen the face of God, it does not disapprove Israelites' belief in His corporal existence as the description is still about what is under 'the feet of God'.

Exodus 33:17-23 on the other hand gives an account of Moses' request to see the glory of God. He is instantly told that it is an impossible demand, for man cannot see God's face and live.<sup>10</sup> It is thus evident in the passage that Moses was not granted the privilege of seeing God's face, but he was rather permitted to see the back of God which according to Clement was to serve Israel as an assurance of the "reality of God's presence." This again corroborates the Old Testament's conception of God's corporal existence.

The Jacob's encounter at Peniel discussed above has no Qur'anic parallel, however the Moses account is contained in Surah 7:143 which reads:

"When Moses came to the place appointed by Us and His Lord addressed him, he said: O my Lord, show thyself to me that I may look upon thee. "By no means can thou see Me (direct) but look upon the mount if it abide in its place, then shall thou see Me. When his Lord manifested His glory on the mount, He made it as dust and Moses fell down in a swoon. When he recovered his senses he said "glory be to thee I turn in repentance and I am the first to believe".

The incident described here, as in the Biblical narrative, took place at Sinai where God summoned Moses for 40 nights and days on the occasion of the ratification of the covenant. As in the Biblical narrative, Moses' request to see God was turned down. However the striking dissimilarity in the two accounts is that Moses was able to see the back of God as recorded in Exodus while in the Qur'an he was only able to see the manifestation of God's glory in consequence of which he fell unconscious and the mountain was turned into dust. Thus the Qur'anic account shows the total impossibility of an attempt to see God.

Another Qur'anic passage to be considered is Surah 17:1 which discusses the Prophet Muhammad's nocturnal journey into heaven (*mi'rāj*). According to the hadith literature, one night Angel Gabriel transported the Prophet

Muhammad on his horse *al-Buraq* from *al-Masjid al-Haram* in Makkah to *al-Masjid al-Aqsa* in Jerusalem. Then he was taken towards the higher spheres. At last he reached the highest heaven where he was received in audience by God. It is believed that the five daily prayers were prescribed on this occasion. We are informed that during the journey, the Prophet was shown Paradise and Hell. He later returned to the Temple and subsequently to Makkah.<sup>12</sup> This incident is traditionally dated 27th of Rajab in the year before the *Hijrah*. The object of the journey as stated in the passage is not to see God but to see some of His signs.

The journey has been interpreted differently by commentators. Some are of the view that it happened in a dream, to some it was a mystic vision, while others believe it was physical.<sup>13</sup> We are inclined to align with Maududi's opinion that the journey was physical in view of the plausibility of his argument. He argued that the opening words of this verse: "Glory be to Him who transported His Servant ..." clearly shows that it was a supernatural event which was brought about by the unlimited power of God. If the event had been merely a mystic vision it would not have been introduced by the words "*Subhana Ladhi...*".<sup>14</sup>

It is strange that some people believe that this journey could not be possible. They should know that, if man in the present day with his limited powers has been able to reach the moon, it should be easier for God with His unlimited power to make it possible for his prophets to make the journey in this miraculous way.

The criticism which can be made against this view is that it conceives God as a Being who is confined to a place. If God were not confined to a place there would be no need of transporting the Prophet to that particular place. To defend his position, Maududi<sup>15</sup> explains that though God is infinite, in dealing with His creation, He employs those means which suit His creation, not because of any limitation of His, but because of the limitations of His creation. Hence when He speaks to any of His creatures, He adopts the same limited mode of conversation as the addressee can understand, though He has limitless modes of speech. In the same vein, when He wishes to show some of the wonderful signs of His Kingdom to a servant, He transports him to the place where the signs are to be shown. This is because the servant cannot at the same time see the entire Universe as God does. Consequently, God has no need to go to any place at all for this purpose but the servant does. According to Maududi, the same applies to the appearance of the servant before the Creator. Though God is not confined to any locality, it is necessary for the servant to go to the place where His manifestations have been concentrated for his observation. The Qur'an is explicit in its assertion that God is omnipresent, for Surah 6:3 says "He is God in the heavens and on earth. He knows ...". Similarly Surah 2:255 says "His throne doth extend over the heavens and the earth".

While the Qur'an nowhere indicates that man is able to see God, instances

are preponderant in the scripture in which Man and God engage in communication as evident in the experience of the Prophet Ibrahim who, in Surah 2:260, requested God to show him how life is given to the dead. This God did by teaching him the experiment contained in the passage. There are many of such passages also in the Bible. This privilege is given by God to the chosen ones among His servants; it does not imply God's corporeal existence.

### **The Ascribed Anthropomorphic Traits**

The ascription of parts of human body and human emotions to God as evident in several passages of the Old Testament depicts a corporeal conception of God. The former is anthropomorphism while the latter is anthropopathism. The anthropomorphic conception of God is clearly brought to light in the account of how Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the garden. We are informed in Genesis Verse 3 that after eating the fruit of the forbidden tree, their eyes were made to open and they became aware of their nakedness. Consequently, they sewed fig leaves to cover themselves. We are further informed that they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord in the trees of the garden.

It is of interest to note in the passage that God is presented as a being capable of walking. The passage also recognises the possibility of hiding from God.

In the Exodus account of Moses' encounter with God discussed above parts of human body are ascribed to God. In Exodus 24 Verse 9-10 we are informed that Moses and the elders of Israel saw the God of Israel and there was under His feet as it were a pavement of Sapphire stone. And He did not lay His hand on the chief men of Israel, and reference is made in this passage to the hands and the feet of God.

Similarly in Exodus 33:20-23, reference is made to the hand, face and back of God while addressing Moses:

... and while My glory passes-by, I will put in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with My hand until I have passed by, then I will take away My hand you shall see My back, but my face shall not be seen.

Apart from hand, face, fingers, feet and back, other parts of human body ascribed to God are eyes and ears.<sup>16</sup>

Anthropopatically God is conceived of as capable of exhibiting human emotions such as anger,<sup>17</sup> hatred,<sup>18</sup> vengeance,<sup>19</sup> love<sup>20</sup> and joy<sup>21</sup>. Some of the qualities ascribed to God do not befit His status.

For instance it is believed that God could walk,<sup>22</sup> smell,<sup>23</sup> laugh<sup>24</sup> and

regret.<sup>25</sup> The most unacceptable of these is the ascription of emotion of regret to God. Genesis 6: 5-7 declares in this regard:

The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thought of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth and it grieved Him to His heart. So the Lord said I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the ground, man, and beast ... for I am sorry that I have made them.

The impression created in this passage is that God was ignorant of what man would do after creating him. This calls into question the attribute of divine fore-knowledge which makes God superior to man <sup>26</sup>. The Qur'ānic account corrects the impression that God wiped out the entire universe on account of the sin of Noah's people. According to the Qur'ān only the people of Noah were made to perish in the flood as a punishment of their sin and God showed no regret for this.<sup>27</sup>

A similar impression of God showing regret is created in I Samuel 15:11 where God is said to have regretted making Saul King. Realising the implication of this, the impression is quickly corrected by Samuel in verse 29 when he asserts: "... the Glory of Israel will not lie or repent (regret) for He is not a man that he should repent" Samuel does demonstrate a higher conception of God than the people of his time.

With regard to the Qur'ān, it is equally pertinent to examine the context of ascription of parts of human body to God to determine whether the Qur'ānic conception of God is corporeal. Reference is made to the hand of God in the following passages of the Qur'an:

- (i) Surah 3:73 "All bounties are in the hand of God and He grants them to whom He pleases".
- (ii) Surah 5:67 "The Jews say: God's hand is tied up", Be their hands tied up and be they accursed for their blasphemy.
- (iii) Surah 48:10 "Lo! those who swear allegiance unto thee (Muhammad) swear allegiance unto God. The hand of God is above their hand, so whoever breaks his oath does so to the harm of his own soul.
- (iv) Surah 57:29 Grace is entirely in the hand of God to bestow on whomever He pleases.

Surah 55:26-27 mentions the face of God when it asserts: "All that is in earth will perish but only the face of God will abide forever. Reference is made to God's eyes in Surah 11:37 when God addresses Noah:

“But construct an ark under Our eyes and Our inspiration and address me no more on behalf of the sinners ...<sup>28</sup>. Above all, the passages of the Qur’ān which assert that God sees, hears, knows etc are innumerable. Anthropopathically many passages of the Qur’ān talk of God’s anger <sup>29</sup> and pleasure .<sup>30</sup>

An unprejudiced evaluation of the context of the foregoing Qur’ānic references would reveal that a wide gulf exists between the Biblical and the Qur’ānic use of anthropomorphic and anthropopathic traits about God. The Qur’ān unlike the Bible would not use them to project God as a corporeal Being. This is why the Qur’ānic account of Adam’s disobedience in the garden is lacking in such details as ‘God walking’ or Adam and his wife ‘hiding from God’<sup>31</sup>. It is for the same reason that the Qur’ānic account of Moses’ desire to see God contains no information such as “God passing by” and allowing Moses to see His back, having prevented him from seeing his face.<sup>32</sup> Above all, no Qur’ānic passage ascribes to God human behaviour such as regret, repentance, laughter or smell .

### **The New Testament’s Understanding of God as Spirit**

According to John 4:24, God is spirit (spirit is without the indefinite article ‘a’). What is stressed here according to Hunter <sup>33</sup> is the essential being of God. When God is thought of as Spirit, we should not think of an infinite spiritual essence in repose but infinite spiritual power in action. The passage further asserts, “and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit”. The basic reason why true worship must be spiritual is found in the nature of God, for He is ready to seek as worshippers only these who accord with His nature. Guthrie opines that the spirituality of God was not an alien idea to the Jews but they had not recognised the need for correspondence between the worshipper and the one worshipped.<sup>34</sup> The New Testament’s assertion that God cannot be seen as contained in John 1:18 is a corollary of the belief that God is Spirit.

The spirituality of God is corroborated by Paul’s statement that Jesus is life-giving spirit.<sup>35</sup> This is to say that God is spirit because He gives the spirit.<sup>36</sup> It is just as we say God is light and love.<sup>37</sup> The spirituality of God is only an aspect of divine manifestation because of the Christian doctrine of trinity. The doctrine emphasises the dual nature of God and the divine and the human. This goes to show that Christianity too accommodates the concept of the corporeal existence of God.

### **Theological Interpretation**

The theological interpretation of the passages examined above led to the emergence of two schools of thought, viz: scholars who hold onto a literal interpretation and consequently believe that God is corporeal, and scholars who insist on a metaphorical interpretation and consequently believe that God is incorporeal. H. C. Thiessen belongs to the latter school. To him the



ascription of parts of human body and human emotion to God should be interpreted as anthropomorphic and symbolic representations to bring the infinite within the apprehension of the finite. They serve to make God real and to express his interest, powers and activities.<sup>38</sup>

Thiessen must have been influenced by the New Testament's assertion that God is spirit. This same line of thought is evident in Terrey's interpretation of the passages in which God was seen by men. He opines that what men saw was not the form or essence of God but the reflection of the glory of God: it can be compared with a man who sees his face in a mirror. It would be true for him to say, "I saw my face", whereas he did not see his real face.<sup>39</sup>

Terrey's view can neither be a correct interpretation of Exodus 24: 9-10 nor Exodus 33:23. Similarly Thiessen's view that the anthropomorphic traits are deliberately used is not absolutely correct. Admittedly there are instances where Old Testament's anthropomorphisms may have metaphorical connotations, as in the use of "thy hands" in Psalm 8:6, but several other instances cannot be so interpreted. For example, metaphorical interpretation would not be applicable to Genesis 3:8 where God is said to be walking and Adam and Eve hiding from Him or Exodus 31:18 where the Laws are said to have been written on stone by the finger of God.

To the former school belongs W. Eichrodt<sup>40</sup> who opines that it is not the spiritual nature of God which is the foundation of the Old Testament's faith, it is in his personhood, a personhood which is fully alive and a life which is fully personal and which is involuntarily thought of in terms of the human personality. A doctrine of God as spirit according to him would be sought in vain in the passages of the Old Testament. This to my mind is the only reasonable way to interpret anthropomorphism in the Old Testament. They serve to accentuate the bodily conception of God. It should be realised that, for the Old Testament, God is nothing if not actively physical.

This is why there is no hesitation in presenting God as a Being who can move from place to place as we see in Genesis 11:5-6 where it is recorded that God came down to earth to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had constructed. And in Genesis 6:1-4 we see how the sons of God were attracted to marry the daughter of men on account of their beauty.

To scholars like R. Davidson, these stories and their like are mythological. It must be said that this view creates more problems than it solves. It calls to question the Christian belief that the scripture is God-breathed,<sup>41</sup> while it underscores the Qur'ānic allegation that the scripture is interpolated.<sup>42</sup>

Muslim theologians similarly upheld two extreme views about the nature of God before the emergence of the Ash'arites.<sup>43</sup> The orthodox Muslims in their different groups, including the anthropomorphists (*Mujassinites*) the

*Zahirites* (followers of Dawud b. Ali), the attributists (*Sifatis*), and the comparers (*Mushabbihin*) adhere strictly to tradition and a literal interpretation of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.<sup>44</sup> The anthropomorphic verses of the Qur'ān were consequently interpreted literally. They maintained that God possesses all the attributes mentioned in the Qur'ān and insisted that all such attributes such as God knows, sees, hears, or rests firmly on His Throne must be interpreted in their literal sense.<sup>45</sup> Such a view of the divine attributes has the implication of God's bodily existence.

At the other extreme were the *Mu'tazilites*<sup>46</sup> who held that God is one, eternal; unique, absolute Being, having no touch of dualism in Him; His essence is self-contained; He does not possess any attributes apart from His essence; His essence is knowing, powerful, seeing, willing etc.<sup>47</sup> They have an idea of an abstract, impersonal, absolute, God which does not appeal, to the orthodox Muslim. Imam Hanbal's attachment to traditionalism was so strong that he and his Zahirite followers would not have anything to do with the *Mu'tazilites*.

The emergence of Ash'arism was to reconcile the two opposing camps. In agreement with the orthodox and in opposition to the *Mu'tazilites*, the Ash'arites held that God possesses attributes which they classify into two, viz: *sifāt salbiyyah* (negative attributes) and *sifāt wujudiyyah* (existential or passive attributes) which they also call *sifāt 'aqliyyah* (rational power, will, life, hearing, seeing, and speech). In opposition to the *Sifatis* who believe that the attributes imply bodily existence, the Ash'arites maintained that God possesses the apparently anthropomorphic attributes but this should not be understood in their literal sense. They are to be believed in *bilā kaif* (without how) and *bilā tashbīh* (without drawing comparison).<sup>48</sup> This principle is applied in Imam Malik's comment on the Qur'ānic assertion "God settles Himself firmly on His Throne".<sup>49</sup> The Imam is reported to have remarked "God's settling upon His Throne is known, the how of it is unknown, belief in it is obligation and the questioning about it is innovation."<sup>50</sup>

On the question of the vision, of God, the *Zahirites* and the other groups of the orthodox Muslims believe that it is possible to see God and the righteous persons would actually have His vision as a reward of their good deeds. They further believe that God is settled firmly on His Throne; He exists in different directions and is capable of being pointed out. The *Mu'tazilites* on the other hand, denied the possibility of seeing God with eyes as that would imply His bodily existence, which is absurd.

The Ash'arites again maintain their midway position saying that it is possible to see God, but they disagreed with the view that He is extended or that He can be shown by being pointed to. To the possibility of the vision, they still apply their principle of "without asking how and without making comparison".<sup>51</sup>

A close examination of some reliable commentaries on Qur'ān, both classical and modern, reveals that the Qur'ānic interpretation of the anthropomorphic verses is in most cases shaped by Ash'arite theological thought. This is reflected in the commentators' avoidance of their literal and philosophical interpretations. Commenting on the expression "*'alāl 'arshi istawā*" (God settling on the throne) as it occurs in several passages of the Qur'ān, Sayyid Qutb,<sup>52</sup> al-Qurtubi,<sup>53</sup> al-Maraghi,<sup>54</sup> and ash-Shawkani<sup>55</sup> among others prefer to adopt al-Ash'ari's position of "not asking how or making comparison", rather than give a literal or philosophic interpretation.

Similarly, while commenting on the expression "*yadullah fawqa aīdihim*" (God's hand is on their hand), rather than resorting to literal interpretation of the divine hand. At-Tabari,<sup>56</sup> Baidawi,<sup>57</sup> al-Qurtubi<sup>58</sup> and al-Maraghi<sup>59</sup> interpret it as divine power, help and guidance in the conduct of the allegiance oath during the treaty of Hudaibiyyah. Maududi's explanation of the Prophet Muhammad's journey into the heavens discussed above is also applicable in explaining why the Qur'ān sometimes uses anthropomorphic expressions. To him, God deals with His creatures using the method that can be apprehended by them. This is similar to Theissen's view already examined. However, while Maududi's view may be a correct interpretation of the Qur'ānic use of anthropomorphic expressions, Thiessen's view is not absolutely true of that of the Bible in view of the foregoing illustrations.

### CONCLUSION

The nature of God's existence in the understanding of the Bible and the Qur'ān should be seen as reflecting levels of development of human mind. The Jews considered God as a corporal Being, a conception arising from the Jewish tradition; transmitted for centuries. The concept developed in the New Testament into divine spirituality. These two diametrically opposed concepts appear to have influenced the views of orthodox Muslims and those of the Mu'tazilites, even when there is hardly justification in the Qur'ān to uphold such views.

Ash'arism developed as an attempt to reconcile the two views by introducing one slogan '*bilā kaif wa bilā tashbīh*' in recognition of the mystery surrounding the nature of God, a mystery acknowledged in the verse of the Throne, *surah* 2:255 which sheds light on the Islamic understanding of God's nature. The passage declares:

Allah, there is no God but He, the Living the Eternal. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. Whatsoever is in the heavens and in the earth is His. Who is there that can intercede with Him except by his own permission. He knows what is before the people and also what is hidden from them. And they cannot comprehend anything of His knowledge save whatever He Himself pleases to reveal. His kingdom spreads over the heaven

and the earth and the guarding of these does not weary Him. He alone is the Supreme and the Exalted.

A proper understanding of the import of this verse leaves no room for unnecessary questioning concerning the nature of God as discouraged by the Qur'ān.<sup>60</sup> Abu Hasan al-Ash'ari's position thus re-establishes the primacy of belief over and above rationalization in religious matters.

### Notes and References

1. Jn. 4:2 and 1:18
2. cf Jdgs. 13:8<sup>f</sup>
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4. Ex. 33:20, Jdgs. 6:22; 13:22.
5. Gerhard Von Rad: *Genesis: A Commentary*, Translated by John H. Marks, SCM Press Ltd., London, 1963, p.318
6. *ibid*, p.319
7. Compare Ex. 24:1, 9, 11, with Ex 24:3-11.
8. Martin Noth: *Exodus: A Commentary*, SCM Press, London, 1962, p.195.
9. Ronald E. Clement: *op. cit*, p.159
10. Ex. 33:10
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12. Muhammad Husayn Haykal: *The Life of Muhammad*, Translated by Isma'il R. A. al-Faruqi, North American Trust Publications np, 1976, p.139<sup>ff</sup>.
13. Yusuf Ali's commentary uphold mystic interpretation (p.691) while Abul A'la al-Maududi's commentary supports bodily ascension, vol.3, p.320.
14. Sayyed Abul A'la al-Maududi: *The Meaning of the Qur'ān*, vol. II, Board of Islamic Publications, Delhi 6, nd. p.321.
15. *ibid*, p.322
16. 1 Kgs. 8:29 and Neh . 1: 6
17. Ex. 22:24
18. Dt. 16:22

19. DT. 32:35
  20. Is. 61:8
  21. Is. 62:5
  22. Gen. 3:8
  23. Gen. 8:21
  24. Ps. 2:4; 37:13
  25. Gen. 6:6
  26. Rm. 8:29-30
  27. Surah 71:21 cf Surahs 11:37, 23:29 and 52:48
  28. cf. Surahs 23:27, 52:48, 54:14
  29. Surahs 4:93, 5:60, 48:6, 58:14, 60:13
  30. Surahs 5:119, 9:100, 48:18, 58:22, 98:8
  31. See Surahs 2:30-39, 7:19-25, 20:119-123
  32. Compare Exodus 33:17<sup>f</sup> with Surah 7:143<sup>f</sup>
  33. A. M. Hunter: *The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible: The Gospel According to St. John*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1982, p49<sup>f</sup>.
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  35. 1 Cor. 15:45
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  37. 1 Jn. 1:5
  38. H. C. Thiessen. *Introduction to Lectures in Systematic Theology*, Eerdmans, Michigan, 1975, p.120.
  39. R. Terrey: *What the Bible Teaches*, Fleming H. Revell Co. 1898, p.15
  40. W. Eichrodt: *Theology of the Old Testament*, vol.I, SCM Press, London, 1961, pp. 211-212
  41. 1 Tim. 3:16.
  42. Surah 2:79.
  43. Ashi'aism is a philosophico-Religious School of thought in Islam that developed between 4th-5th Century A. H. The founder was Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Ismail al-Ashi'ari a descendant of Abu Musa al-Ashi'ari a companion of prophet Muhammad
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44. M. M. Sharif (ed.) *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, vol. I, Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 1963, p. 221
  45. *ibid*, p. 226
  46. They were the philosophers of Islam who employed rationalist *Kalam* to assert their view points. To them reason takes precedence over revelation.
  47. M. M. Sharif: *op. cit.*, p. 226
  48. *Ibid*, p. 227
  49. See Surahs 7:54 and 20: 5
  50. *Hashiyatu as-Sawi 'ala Tafsir al-Jalalain*, vol. 4, Dar al-Fikr, np, 1988, p.97
  51. M. M. Sharif: *op. cit.*, p. 234
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  56. Muhammad b. Jarir al-Tabari: *Tafsir al-Tabari*, vol.9 Part 4, Dar-al-Fikr, Beirut, 1978, p. 48.
  57. Nasirudin al-Baidawi: *Anwar at-Tanzil wa asrar at-Ta'wil*, Matba'at Mustapha, Cairo nd, p.378
  58. al-Qurtubi, *op. cit.*, vol. 16, p. 268.
  59. al-Maraghi, *ep. cit.*, vol. 9, part 26, p.91.
  60. Surahs 2:108 and 5:101
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