



Christians and Greek Philosophy

The Clear Message in Refutation of the Words of the Leader of the Christians

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Released by www.marifah.net 1428 H

The Pope said:

“As far as the understanding of God, and thus, the concrete practice of religion is concerned, we find ourselves faced with a dilemma which nowadays challenges us directly. Is the conviction that acting unreasonably contradicts God’s nature merely a Greek idea, or, is it always and intrinsically true? I believe that here we can see the profound harmony between what is Greek in the best sense of the word and the Biblical understanding of faith in God. Modifying the first verse of the Book of Genesis, John began the prologue of his Gospel with the words: In the beginning was the logos. This is the very word used by the emperor: God acts with logos.”

What the Pope means is that the true representative of the logos or intellect is Greek philosophy! And it is believed (by him) that Christian thought is identical to the Greek thought, thus the Christian faith is identical to that of the intellect. This was confirmed by him saying:

“I believe that here we can see the profound harmony between what is Greek in the best sense of the word and the Biblical understanding of faith in God.”

Here we find objection inevitable. Who is able to prove (to us) that Greek thought corresponds to the conclusions of the intellect? This premise cannot be proven in any form. Indeed the Islamic *mutakallimin*, particularly those of Ahl al-Sunnah, have outlined the (correct) criticism of Greek thought and proven that there are many violations (within it) of the conclusions of intellect and logic. Anyone who has any knowledge of this and their criticism of Greek philosophy knows this. I do not believe that the Pope is ignorant of this, yet there is no doubt that he rushed to the belittling of Islām to keep up with the onslaught of American political interest upon the Muslims in accusing them of violence. Yet, he was ignoring necessary knowledge in the studies of theology and philosophy.

Those who read the words of the Pope will find that it is understood that the Pope believes that Greek thought is one, philosophy is one, and that there is no disagreement or conflict at all amongst the Greek philosophers. It is clear that the Pope says that the Christian religion is in conformity with the Greek thought. But, it is well known that there exists much divergence between the Greek philosophers, as well as the difference between philosophers generally. It is clear that this was a rush of words which came out of the mouth of this Pope.

Does Christian thought conform to the philosophies of Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, Archimedes, or the dozens of other Greek philosophers? The number of their philosophies and theories are known to the world.

Islamic thought as expressed by the *mutakallimīn* from the Sunnis showed the error of many of the sayings of the Greek philosophers, clearly proving that many of their philosophies contravene conclusions of sound reason, and that many of the conclusions of the Greeks are merely based on the conclusions of illusions which the intellect arrived at. Islamic civilization has produced ideas and visions from the intellect which are high and exalted, and they discovered many concepts which the Greeks had not spoken of. The numbers of philosophical and theological issues were increased through intellectuals and scientists under the support of Islām in numbers exponential of those of the philosophers of Ancient Greece. We are very surprised with the Pope if he did not know this, yet if he knew this but covered what he knew then this surprise from him is a clear sign. What the Pope later said was,

“A profound encounter of faith and reason is taking place here, an encounter between genuine enlightenment and religion. From the very heart of Christian faith and, at the same time, the heart of Greek thought now joined to faith, Manuel II was able to say: Not to act ‘with logos’ is contrary to God’s nature.”

Apart from making Greek thought the measure for the mind, which we do not recognize, and ignoring the fact that Greek thought contains many views contrary to reason, we say regardless of this: I am ready for rational, responsible and serious dialogue, investigating the depth of the contentious issues between us and you, and that the criterion will be to acknowledge sound intellect, and good governance.

The Pope then spoke of the Jews, and used them to show that they were the first ones to prove that Greek philosophy conformed to Christian theology claiming that the first instance of this matter occurred with Moses ﷺ and his saying:

“In point of fact, this rapprochement had been going on for some time. The mysterious name of God, revealed from the burning bush, a name which separates this God from all other divinities with their many names and declares simply that He is, is a challenge to the notion of myth, to which Socrates’ attempt to vanquish and transcend myth stands in close analogy. Within the Old Testament, the process which started at the burning bush came to new maturity at the time of the Exile, when the God of Israel, an Israel now deprived of its land and worship, was proclaimed as the God of heaven and earth and described in a simple formula which echoes the words uttered at the burning bush: ‘I am’ ”

So look how decided that saying of his God is, which he believes is the God the heavens and the earth, that he gave this new understanding and new type of illumination and enlightenment which first emerged to the Jews. It is as if he is ignorant of the fact that all of the religions which were revealed to the world believed that God was One, Independent and All-Powerful, that there is nothing like unto Him, and that he forgot that this belief was present before Moses ﷺ and that Moses came from God with new Divine legislation to complete the previous Divine legislation, and called the Children of Israel to the Belief in God, the Powerful, the One, the Knowing which the children of Israel had rejected (*kafaru bihi*) and did not know of.

It is thus very strange how this belief which was revealed in mass transmission from all of the Prophets and Messengers, who received it from God, the first of them being Adam ﷺ somehow came to Moses ﷺ in a “new understanding” which appeared at his hands, or that it first was revealed to the Jews only.

The root of this new illumination, in the view of the Pope, became apparent to the Jews, so he found how to use religion and politics!! I know the Pope’s statement is comparing these ideas with the statements of the American politicians when they said about a month ago that Islām is fascist, spreading by the sword. If you join between both of them you find that they consist of an alliance.

The Pope then continued,

“In all honesty, one must observe that in the late Middle Ages we find trends in theology which would sunder this synthesis between the Greek spirit and the Christian spirit. In contrast with the so-called intellectualism of Augustine and Thomas, there arose with Duns Scotus a voluntarism which ultimately led to the claim that we can only know God’s *voluntas ordinata*. Beyond this is the realm of God’s freedom, in virtue of which he could have done the opposite of everything he has actually done. This gives rise to positions which clearly approach those of Ibn Hazm and might even lead to the image of a capricious God, who is not even bound to truth and goodness. God’s transcendence and otherness are so exalted that our reason, our sense of the true and good, are no longer an authentic mirror of God, whose deepest possibilities remain eternally unattainable and hidden behind his actual decisions.”

Here the Pope returns to Ibn Hazm and draws conclusions from him, and the argument he relies on returns to the question of the nature of the intellect’s ability to discern good and evil which we have mentioned previously. Please see my previous works entitled *‘Is the intellect able to find with knowledge what Allah will send from the heavens, without knowledge of revelation?’*, *‘Is it possible for Allah to commit evil?’* and *‘Is the evil which is created by Allah committed by his creation [?], is this rationally plausible?’*

We have said that in these matters the *mutakallimīn* have become satisfied through researching and scrutiny. They have clarified that although some of the logicians were of the conclusion that reason may be able to find what is good and evil in some cases, this does not mean that Allah Most High is obliged to do that which is good, and we have shown regarding this the existence of the world after is inexistence, and there is no doubt that existence is good and inexistence is bad, and our meaning here is that existence is the perfection of inexistence which is imperfect, yet this does not mean that the existence of the universe in any way obliges Allah to create the universe, and it is not obliged of Allah that he make the universe in this form and not another form. There is no obligation on Allah.

And this is what Ahl al-Sunnah mean when they say that nothing is obliged of Allah. In the question of Allah's Will, the proofs have established the necessity that Allah's Will connects with all things, and this issue has a part which is founded on the previous issue concerning that Allah is not obliged to do anything, for indeed Allah Most High is *fa`l limā yurīd* or, the doer of what He wills! And he is not *fa`ila limā yajib `alayhi* or, the doer of that which is obliged upon him. This is what we mean by the Will of Allah being unaffected by any other will and there is no way that Allah is one with choice and will except through His being unaffected by any other will...

As for saying that: God ordered evil and that it is possible for him to commit injustice. It was clarified by the scholars that we do not imagine injustice in the right of Allah, and this is founded upon the fact that there is no good nor evil found through rational thought, and there is no obligations upon Allah Most High, nay Allah Most High is the doer of what he Wills and nothing can prevent him from doing anything and none can be safe from what he Wills.

If it was the Will of Allah Almighty to not create this universe in this form then he could have done so, and there is no restriction upon Allah Almighty.

And if he Willed that he did not reward anyone after he created them, he would have done so, and from where can we say that it is obliged on Allah to reward or punish? When he created everything before which they were nothing.

As for the words of Thomas Aquinas, and Augustine, and other than them from the quoted words, we do not follow what they said nor to what they called for, indeed we are followers of what was revealed by our Lord in his Book which contains no falsehood, and our scholars of *kalām* of Ahl al-Sunnah have made clear the absurdity of the argument above (that Allah is obliged to do good).

The 'dialogue' which the Pope calls people for with others will not happen except by listening to the opinions of others and their thoughts and proofs regarding what they say. It is not correct that this occurs without the inclusion of the scholars of Islām - only quoting a word issued here and there, but with that which the scholars of this religion have replied with. This approach is completely consistent with the 'dialogue' offered by the Pope, but is that the picture the Pope wants of a dialogue of civilizations?

Does Islām Contradict Reason?

The Pope then said,

“As opposed to this, the faith of the Church has always insisted that between God and us, between his eternal Creator Spirit and our created reason there exists a real analogy, in which unlikeness remains infinitely greater than likeness, yet not to the point of abolishing analogy and its language (cf. Lateran IV).”

These words mean that there exists a similarity between Allah, Most High, and His creation, and this is without doubt what is understood from their leader - that Allah created human beings in His image. They take these words literally and believe in them likewise. The Pope wants to say that the view of the Church in regards to Allah is in conformity with reason but the view of Muslims with regards to this is contrary to reason! These are words which cause in us shock, laughter and bewilderment.

Such are the times that they dare say their (incorrect) view is (in keeping with) reason, and then claim that the Muslims contradict reason. By Allah, this shows the degree that the Muslims have deteriorated. This is a man of highest position in their (Catholic) group and he has dared utter something like this. If the people of Islām were grounded in the foundations of their knowledge, as were the previous scholars of Islām from the *mutakallimīn* and *usūliyyīn*, they would never have dared say such about Islām.

