

Episode 27

The Concept of Revelation in Christianity and Islam

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The revelation in Christianity

The Holy Bible said:” For prophecy was not borne at any time by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke being borne along by the Holy Spirit”(2Peter 1:21)

In Christianity God delivers the intended godly meaning when a spiritual contact occurs between the prophet or messenger and God

The Holy spirit, that’s the spirit of God gives the meanings , thoughts and the essence of the issue to man’s spirit , then man contemplates it, unites with it and lives by it, then he expresses that , but those expressions are protected from mistakes as the spirit of God is dominant over man’s life to ensure perfection of conveying the message of God

So the revelation in Christianity is God’s words revealed by the Holy Spirit to the person or the prophet assigned by God who unites with God spiritually and exists in the presence of God, with his mind entirely surrendered to God, and his spirit united with God, therefore he grasps the Godly thoughts

Is there an intermediary in the revelation?

In Christianity there is no intermediary in man’s relation with God, as this relation is not an obligation or routine or commandments and forbiddances. It is a union between the Soul of man and God to convey the mind of God to man to be revealed in the Holy Bible

The Holy Bible includes two testaments; the Old Testament and the New Testament

The Old Testament: in which the ancient Jewish prophets before the coming of the Christ. Therein prophecies and symbols about the personage of the Christ who came and fulfilled them all in the New Testament

The Old Testament includes also the psalms of Prophet David which are praises, prayers, invocations and hymns

The concept of the whole Holy Bible is one from the first page to the last one all are centered on one target which is the annunciation of God’s love for mankind through the Christ who loved the mankind and redeemed them, expiating for their sins opening his bosoms to accept the worst sinners to give the mankind a better life , and eternal life

That is the concept of the revelation, God reveals the sublimate basics and instructions to that one selected by Him as a prophet or messenger to convey his message to mankind

The revelation in Islam

In Al-Azhar site over the internet, under the subject: Islamic concepts: Dr. Abdul latif Muhammad Al-Abed wrote complete and concise article about the revelation in Islam saying:” the revelation is the book and its assembly,

To reveal to someone means to convey words to that man, that is pertained to him only and no one else

Religiously it is God’s revelation to his prophet either directly or through intermediary, so it is the transfer of what is within the Godly knowledge to the prophet through intermediary which is the angel

In Christianity there is no intermediary but God reveals directly to man, while in Islam there is an intermediary

Dr. Abdul latif continues saying: Knowing that God’s knowledge is in the conserved tablet

The quran in one verse pointed to the three ways of revelation saying:” It is not fitting for a man that God should speak to him except by inspiration, or from behind a veil, or by the sending of a messenger to reveal, with God’s permission, what God wills: for He is Most High, Most Wise{ Consultation Chapter(Surat Ash-Shura) 51}

First: the direct revelation

(This is close to the Christian concept)

It is the insertion of a meaning into the heart of the prophet, so God inserts into the prophet something that he knows for sure that’s from Almighty God

- Narrated Ibn Masoud from Ibn Hayan: the prophet, said: the Holy Spirit inserted into me a converse:” No soul will die until it fulfils its sustenance”

Second: behind a veil

As God spoke to Moses when he heard God speaking to him from behind a veil saying
"O Moses! Verily I am God, the Lord of all that exists”

Third: the descend of revelation through the angel assigned for the revelation which is Gabriel peace upon him who revealed to the prophet Muhammad and the prophets before him

-Narrated Al-Bokhary from Aeisha that Al-Hares Ibn Hashim asked the prophet Muhammad: How does the revelation come to you, he said: sometimes he speaks to me and I recognize him, another time the angel comes to me in a human form speaking to me and I recognize what he says

So there are there forms of revelation:

1) Direct

2) From behind a veil

3) Through the angel Gabriel

- So the difference in the revelation between Christianity and Islam is great

In Christianity ;The Christ who is the incarnated God gave his thoughts to his disciples to write them ” For prophecy was not borne at any time by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke being borne along by the Holy Spirit”(2 Peter 1:21)

So to understand the Holy Bible, man has to ask help from the Holy Spirit to teach him as He is the teacher who wrote the Holy Bible

Man should say: O spirit of God teach me your words

The phenomena accompanying the revelation of the angel to humans In Christianity and Islam

In Christianity:

When the angel revealed to Saint Mary in Luke 1, he said:” Hail, one receiving grace, the Lord is with you. Then when she was worried he comforted her saying:” Do not fear”

In Christianity the revelation of the angel was giving peace, comfort and quietness

But strangely in Islam that matter was very different as mentioned in the Islamic books

-In Meshkat Al-Masabih:” the mission and beginning of the revelation chapter” it was mentioned that” when Gabriel came to Muhammad in Hera’ Cave , he hurried up to Khadija shivering and saying cover me, cover me, and it seemed that he became unconscious as they put water onto him to let him regain consciousness , Khadija was skeptical about that thing revealed to Muhammad she wanted to test him as she thought that it might be Satan

- It was said that when the revelation comes to him he had such horrible signs that all the attending people were waiting for a quran verse coming to him

- Narrated Aisha: the messenger of God was asked how the revelation comes to you, he replied : sometimes it comes to me similar to the bell ringing in a loud voice , so I loose my consciousness , sometimes the angel comes to me in a human form

- Narrated Aisha also that sometimes the revelation comes to him in a very cool day, and then he looses his consciousness and starts to perspire heavily

- Narrated Muslim: when the revelation comes on the prophet, he becomes in a horrible state and his face turns black

- Narrated Ibn Ishak that they were exorcising Muhammad from the evil eye in Makkah before the descent of quran onto him, and when the quran descended onto him, he had attacks similar to those he had before

- Narrated Al-Halaby in” the man of eye” book that Amnah exorcised him from the evil eye

- The prophet said to Khadija :when I am alone I hear someone calling me: O Muhammad O Muhammad , and in another narration: I see a light and hear a voice , in a third narration : I fear that it was one of the Jinn and in a fourth narration: I am afraid that I have got madness

-It was mentioned that at that time, he was losing his consciousness, turning black and snoring like a camel

- Narrated Abu Hurairah: they were putting over his head the henna (traditional Arabic hair dye) as he had terrible headache

- Narrated Zaid ibn Thabet in “the mirror of talking”: the prophet was getting heavier at that time, one time he put his thigh over mine, I swear by God that I had never seen something heavier than the thigh of the messenger of God, and when he was over a camel, the camel was moaning and kneeling down from his heaviness, and when the revelation comes to him he was losing his consciousness and became as a drunk man

- He mentioned also that those phenomena started with him when he was young , with his foster mother Halima in the desert , Gabriel came to him while he was playing with the boys and he attacked him laying him down on the ground , he opened his chest and extracted a piece of flesh from it , and said that’s Satan’s part into you ,I had extracted it from you , then he washed his chest with zamzam water and sealed the stabbing site ,the boys came and saw him on that condition , they thought that Muhammad was killed
Anas said that I have seen the sutures over his chest

- in Meshkat Al-Masabih it mentioned that that stabbing happened to him several times while he was with Halima when he was 10 years old , in Hera’ cave and also in the night journey (Isra’)

- Narrated Ibn Hesham in the prophetic life history that the husband of Halima told his wife I am afraid that this boy had been touched by Satan , return him back to his mother , then when his mother came back she said did you fear that there is demon on him , she said yes

- Those are the phenomena accompanying the revelation to Muhammad

- In Christianity , we saw the angel coming in peace and saying Hail, one receiving grace, the Lord is with you, and he appeared to Zachariah in the temple and gave him the glad tiding of the birth of John

- why then the angel appears like that in Christianity , while he appears in such terrifying way in Islam , that they were skeptical on him if he was an angel or Satan

- it is the responsibility of each Muslim to use his mind and think about those things and he will be responsible for his choice as God will tell him where is your mind why you didn’t ask for guidance from me