

A SCRUTINY OF THE KORAN (*Cribratio Alkorani*)

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BOOK TWO

CHAPTER ONE

On mystical theology, according to which God is ineffable.¹

Let me now turn to a clarification of [the doctrine of] the Trinity that we revere in the divinity. And let me show that on a devout interpretation the Koran does not contradict [the doctrine of] the Trinity in the sense in which we who adhere to the Gospel speak of trinity.

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An Arab might say:

We who revere the Koran as the word of God cannot deny the things that have been said in praise of the Gospel. Nevertheless, because sound faith is [faith] in only one, single God who is the Creator of all things and who is without any participant, without associates, without plurality, without son or sons, and without any equality whatsoever, and because Christians say that a plurality consisting of God the Father as Creator, God His Son, and God the Holy Spirit of both [the Father and the Son] does not contradict the Gospel, Muslims prefer the Koran to the Gospel. Moreover, the califs in Baghdad, where the school of this sect is located, forbid that the Gospel and philosophy be publicly read. For prior to the prohibition they found that those who studied the Gospel became Christians, that a certain calif always carried a Christian cross concealed in his breast, and that philosophers derided the Koran. And so, in Chapter 11 of the Koran it is said of Christ: "Jesus the son of Mary is the messenger of God and is God's spirit and is the Word sent from Heaven to Mary. Thus, you who believe in God and believe Jesus to be God's envoy should not state that there are three Gods. For there is only one God, who is without a son; and to the Almighty God all things in Heaven and on earth are subject. Indeed, neither Christ Himself nor the angels near to God can at all deny that they are subject to God's power."

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To the foregoing I reply that the Gospel not only condemns any [belief in a] plurality of Gods but also affirms a plurality of Gods to be impossible. For no one doubts that God is the Beginning and is that from which all things originate. [But] how would a plurality be the Beginning? For before plurality there is Oneness, or Singularity. And Oneness is, necessarily, eternal. For it is the unqualified Beginning, which must be eternal because it is the Beginning and is not anything originated. Now, this Beginning can be considered without respect to