

Uncreated

(Quotations from Titus Burckhardt)

Muhyi-d-Din ibn 'Arabi in his *Epistle on Unity*, the *Risalat al Ahadiyah*:

... None grasps Him save He Himself. None knows Him but He Himself... He knows Himself by Himself... Other-than-He cannot grasp Him. His impenetrable veil is His own Oneness. Other-than-He does not cloak Him. His veil is His very existence. He is veiled by His Oneness in a manner that cannot be explained. Other-than-He does not see Him; whether prophet, envoy, or perfected saint or angel near unto Him. His prophet is He Himself. His envoy is He. His message is He. His word is He. He has sent word of His [ipseity](#) by Himself, from Himself to Himself, without intermediary or causality other than Himself...Other-than-He has no existence and so cannot bring itself to naught...

(pp. 28-29)

(Paraphrased: According to the fundamental formula of Islam, the 'testimony' known in Arabic as the *shahadah*.)

There is no divinity if it be not The Divinity

(*la ilaha ill-Allah*)

which, so to say, 'defines' the Divine Unity. This formula should be translated as here indicated and not, as usually the case, 'there is no god but Allah', for it is proper to retain in it the appearance of ... paradox.

Its first part, 'the negation'..., denies in a general manner the same idea of divinity which the second part, the 'affirmation'... affirms by isolation; in other words the formula as a whole postulates an idea -- that of divinity -- which at the same time it denies as a [genus](#). This is the exact opposite of a 'definition', for to define something means first to determine its 'specific difference' and then to bring it to the 'nearest genus,' i.e. to general concepts. Now as the *shahadah* indicates, Divinity is 'defined' precisely by the fact that Its reality eludes ever category...

According to this 'testimony'; God is distinct from all things and nothing can be compared to Him... Now perfect incomparability requires that nothing can be set face to face with the incomparable and have any relationship whatever with it; this amounts to saying that nothing exists in face of the Divine Reality so that, in It, all things are annihilated. 'God was and nothing with Him and He is now such as He was' ([hadith qudsi](#)).

Thus extreme 'remoteness' must imply its opposite. Since nothing can be opposed to God -- for it would then be another 'divinity' -- every reality can only be a reflection of the Divine Reality. Moreover, every positive meaning one might give to the expression *ilah* (divinity) will be transposed *in divinis*: 'there is

no reality if it be not The Reality', 'there is no force if it be not The Force', 'there is no truth if it is not The Truth.' We must not seek to conceive of God by bringing Him down to the level of things; on the contrary, things are reabsorbed into God so soon as one recognizes the essential qualities of which they are constituted.

(pp. 53-54)

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