

Selected Writings by Yusuf Sham‘ūn As-Sim‘ānī

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(Chronological Order)

Book II of *Al-‘Ilāhiyyāt*: On the Holy Trinity

First Treatise: A Discourse on the Holy Trinity

Chapter One: In the Name of the Trinity

This is the belief of the faithful that the meaning behind the Holy Trinity is three divine hypostases (persons) in one nature (physis): the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The physis is not distinct from the hypostases, while the hypostases are distinguished from one another in a real way, God the Father (begetter), and the begotten Son, and the Holy Spirit emanates or proceeds from: the Father who begat the Son and the Son who was begotten from the Father, and the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son as from one principle (principum) and one spiration, and the nature (physis) is one, un-begetting and unbegotten and unproceeding. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, and their divinity is one.

For the divinity of the Father is the same as that of the Son and the divinity of the Father and the Son is the same as that of the Holy Spirit. The eternal Father, the eternal Son and the eternal Holy Spirit, and the eternity is one. The living Father, the living Son and the living Holy Spirit, and the life is one.

The wise Father, the wise Son and the wise Holy Spirit, and the wisdom is one. The willing Father, the willing Son, the willing Holy Spirit, and the will is one. The omnipotent Father, the omnipotent Son and the omnipotent Holy Spirit, and the omnipotence is one. The good Father, the good Son and the good Holy Spirit, and the goodness is one. The infinite Father, the infinite

Son and the infinite Holy Spirit, and the infinity is one. The perfect Father, the perfect Son and the perfect Holy Spirit, and the perfection is one. The simple Father,

the simple Son and the simple Holy Spirit, and the simplicity is one. The happy Father, the happy Son and the happy Holy Spirit, and the happiness is one. The just Father, the just Son and the just Holy Spirit, and the justice is one. The merciful Father, the merciful Son and the merciful Holy Spirit, and the mercy is one. The omniscient Father, the omniscient Son and the omniscient Holy Spirit, and the omniscience is one. The creator Father, the creator Son and the creator Holy Spirit, and the creator is one.

The provident Father, the provident Son and the provident Holy Spirit, and the providence is one. The impeccable Father, the impeccable Son and the impeccable Holy Spirit, and the impeccability is one. The wrathful Father, the wrathful Son and the wrathful Holy Spirit, and the wrath is one. The Holy Father, the holy Son and the holy Holy Spirit, and the holiness is one. The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Father, and the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son. The Father is consubstantial with the Son, the Son is consubstantial with the Father, and the Holy Spirit is consubstantial with the Father and Son. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one God, for whom praise, honor, glory, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

And it is said: God is Yahweh (YHWH) in Hebrew, Elaha in Syriac, Allah in Arabic, Theos in Greek, and Deus in Latin. It is four letters, one of which denotes the oneness of divine nature, and three letters denoting the triune of the most holy hypostases.

Yusuf Sham'ūn As-Sim'ānī,

Excerpt from **Al-'Ilāhiyyat**, manuscript dating to 1708, Books II and III, Edited and Preface by Prof. Ameen Albert ar-Rihani, Volume 3, Lebanon, Notre Dame University Press, First edition, 2003, pp. 893-895.

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Book 1: Part 2

Article 15: On the Science of God

Chapter 1: On Science

Science is knowledge. Knowledge is either true or false. False knowledge is that which presumes something to be contrary to what it is, for example the presumption that Man is an animal that neighs. Falsity is of two kinds; the **first** takes away from something, for example to deny Man's ability to speak and instead to claim that Man is an animal incapable of speech; the **second** combines together two irreconcilable elements, for example the claim that Man is a speaking animal that neighs. As for truthful knowledge, it defines something the way it actually is, such as saying that Man is a speaking animal. Truth is of two kinds: **one** is based on denying what must be denied and adding what must be added, like saying that Man is a speaking animal that does not neigh. The **second** is by detaching a quality from something, such as detaching the power of speech from the animal in favor of Man.

Detachment is therefore the act of observing one characteristic without the other and thus forming an idea in our minds independent of this other, such as saying that the power of speech in animal is an attribute specific to Man; for since speech is not a characteristic of animal, this very fact can be discerned without animal. Moreover, detachment is distinguished from falsity by the fact that falsity attributes to something what is not attributable to it and withdraws from it what should not be withdrawn. On the other hand, detachment simply does not attribute nor withdraw.

True science is of two kinds: the specific and the non-specific. Specific science is a true, certain and clear knowledge, by which something is known for its characteristics, as mentioned in our Introduction to Science. However, non-specific science refers to any type of science and is divided into two categories: certain and uncertain.

Certain science is the belief that something is such, and that it can only be such. Uncertain science is a belief based on the testimonies of scientists who are susceptible to deception and lies. This has already been discussed in parts 2 and 3 of the fifth article on Logic.

Science, in general, is the act of reason and acts of reason are three: perception or the act of reasoning without withdrawing from or attributing to something; judgement or the act of reasoning by withdrawing from or attributing to something; estimation or inference of one thing from another, as already mentioned in The Introduction to Logic. Furthermore, it is possible for the notions of science, knowledge, perception and reason to be used interchangeably. The most common terms are knowledge, reason and perception since they are used in reference to all acts of reason. Here we have used the term “perception” to refer to the first of these acts.

Yusuf Sham‘ūn As-Sim‘ānī,

Excerpt from *Al-Ilahiyyat*, manuscript dating to 1708, Books II and III, Edited and Preface by Prof. Ameen Albert ar-Rihani, Volume 2, Lebanon, Notre Dame University Press, First edition, 2003, pp. 405-407.

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Virtue is divided into two: moral virtue and intellectual virtue. Moral virtue is that which guides Man towards his final goal, that is to say, his heavenly bliss, which could be simply called virtue; whereas intellectual virtue is that which guides man towards specific goals such as morphology, rhetoric, logic, the natural sciences, theology and other sciences and skills; and it could be conditionally called virtue. Moral virtue involves the acts of will, whereas intellectual virtue involves the acts of reason.

There are five kinds of virtue: reason, science, wisdom, intellect, skill. [...]

Reason is that which involves first truths, and these are used by the mind to judge something through perception; such as saying that 1 is the half of 2 and that the whole is greater than the part and the two contraries cannot meet or exclude one another.

Reason is so named because its purpose is concerned with the first truths, just as the purpose of will is concerned with the eschatological end.

Science is concerned with secondary truths, which reason cannot realize just through perception, but also requires first truths to do so, like saying that a stone is composed of matter and form. It is argued that science is a clear and certain knowledge. Certainty is defined as what reason conceives as being such, and cannot be other than such. This science is divided into two categories: first certainties (as already demonstrated) and second certainties, which are three: the first is what is observed or felt; therefore, conceived by reason from sensible experience, such as saying that fire burns; the second is empirical, or what is conceived by reason based on repeated observations, such as saying that fever induces thirst; the third is transmitted, therefore conceived by reason based on the testimony of others, such as saying that the Lord Jesus performed miracles. And what is obvious is the certainty obtained from the first and second [...].

Wisdom is knowledge based on both science and reason; for the one who knows first and second truths would be considered wise. Intellect is what guides the acts of will and is called moral science, for it establishes the rules of what one must do or ignore.

Skill is two faceted. The first is an absolute skill, which establishes the rules that enable it to attain its goal, and by that, it is hardly distinguishable from both moral and intellectual virtue. The second, not absolute, is divided into two categories: the first is intellectual skill, which involves that which is related to reason such as logic, morphology, poetry and rhetoric. The second is a non-intellectual skill, and rather involves manual work and is divided into two categories: the first is that whose final product is preserved such as painting and sculpture, and so what is left after the application of its rules is the image and the person, which is the goal of painting and sculpture; the second is that whose final product is lost after the application of its rules, such as music, of which nothing remains beyond the musical notes.

Non-intellectual skill is also of two types: the first is noble, believed to be worthy of nobles, which would require more of an intellectual rather than physical effort such as writing or the like; and the second is common, believed by others to be unworthy of noble people, as it would require physical rather than intellectual effort, such as carpentry, weaving, and the like. These skills could be useful for one another, such as the production of paper being useful for the skill of writing.

Yusuf Sham‘ūn As-Sim‘ānī,

Excerpt from *Madkhal al-‘ulūm, madkhal al-manṭiq, al-jadal*, manuscript dating to 1710, First edition, Books II and III, Chosen by the Center for Digitization and Preservation, Zouk Mosbeh, Notre Dame University Press, 2014, pp. 19, 21, 23, 25.