

Volume 11. December 2010
Transcendent Philosophy
An International Journal for
Comparative Philosophy
and Mysticism

Editor

Seyed G. Safavi
SOAS, University of London, UK

Book Review Editor

Sajjad H. Rizvi
Exeter University, UK

Editorial Board

G. A'awani, Iranian Institute of Philosophy, Iran
A. Acikgenc, Fatih University, Turkey
M. Araki, Islamic Centre England, UK
S. Chan, SOAS University of London, UK
W. Chittick, State University of New York, USA
R. Davari, Tehran University, Iran
G. Dinani, Tehran University, Iran
P.S. Fosl, Transylvania University, USA
M. Khamenei, SIPRI, Iran
B. Kuspinar, McGill University, Canada
H. Landolt, McGill University, Canada
O. Leaman, University of Kentucky, USA
Y. Michot, Hartford Seminary, Macdonald Center, USA
M. Mohaghegh-Damad, Beheshti University, Iran
J. Morris, Boston College, USA
S.H. Nasr, The George Washington University, USA
S. Pazouki, Iranian Institute of Philosophy, Iran
C. Turner, University of Durham, UK
H. Ziai, UCLA, USA

Assistant Editor:

Shahideh Safavi, University of London

Coordinator:

Seyed Sadreddin Safavi, University of London

Layout & Design

Mohamad A. Alavi, www.mediatics.net

Transcendent Philosophy Journal is an academic peer-reviewed journal published by the London Academy of Iranian Studies (LAIS) and aims to create a dialogue between Eastern, Western and Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism. It is published in December. Contributions to *Transcendent Philosophy* do not necessarily reflect the views of the editorial board or the London Academy of Iranian Studies.

Contributors are invited to submit papers on the following topics: Comparative studies on Islamic, Eastern and Western schools of Philosophy, Philosophical issues in history of Philosophy, Issues in contemporary Philosophy, Epistemology, Philosophy of mind and cognitive science, Philosophy of science (physics, mathematics, biology, psychology, etc), Logic and philosophical logic, Philosophy of language, Ethics and moral philosophy, Theology and philosophy of religion, Sufism and mysticism, Eschatology, Political Philosophy, Philosophy of Art and Metaphysics.

The mailing address of the *Transcendent Philosophy* is:

Dr S.G. Safavi
Journal of Transcendent Philosophy
121 Royal Langford
2 Greville Road
London NW6 5HT
UK
Tel: (+44) 020 7692 2491
Fax: (+44) 020 7209 4727
Email: philosophy@iranainstudies.org

Submissions should be sent to the Editor. Books for review and completed reviews should be sent to the Book Review Editor. All other communication should be directed to the coordinator.

Transcendent Philosophy is published in December. Annual subscription rates are: Institutions, £60.00; individuals, £30.00. Please add £6.00 for addresses outside the UK. The Journal is also accessible online at: www.iranianstudies.org.

© London Academy of Iranian Studies
ISSN 1471-3217

Volume 11. December 2010
Transcendent Philosophy
An International Journal for
Comparative Philosophy
and Mysticism

Articles

[Philosophical comparison between the perspective of Mulla Sadra and Descartes on Soul,](#)

Seyed G Safavi [5-20]

[Mulla Sadra on The Human Soul and its Becoming,](#)

Zailan Moris [21-36]

[Rereading Fromm's Conditions of the Human Situation,](#)

Seyed Javad Miri [37-50]

[Meister Eckhart: How Christian Mysticism Appropriates Absurdist Challenge,](#)

Mohammad Maroof Shah [51-74]

[Axiology of Mathnavi Maulana Rumi: The Art of Human Relationship and the Science of Peace,](#)

Seema Arif [75-92]

[Impact of the Controversy between al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd on the Development of Islamic Thought,](#)

Munawar Haque [93-132]

[Doris Lessing's The Golden Notebook and its Relationship to Sufism,](#)

Shahram Kiaei [133-154]

[Religious Response to Metaphysical Rebellion,](#)

Bilal Ahmad Dar [155-176]

[Theology of Islam in Western Framework and Mawdudi's Politico-Stylistic Pragmatics,](#)

Abdul Rahim Afaki [177-208]

[Ihbāt and Takfir: two theological concepts in Islamic literature,](#)

Maryam Kianifarid [209-218]

Philosophical comparison between the perspective of Mulla Sadra and Descartes on Soul

Seyed G Safavi
SOAS, University of London

Abstract

This paper examines the philosophical views of Mulla Sadra and Descartes on 'Soul', in five main axis. The Five axis include the following: 1. Exposition of Mulla Sadra's philosophical view concerning the soul; 2. Exposition of Descartes view on the soul; 3. Examining points of similarity and difference between the opinions of Mulla Sadra and Descartes; 4. The distinct strength of Mulla Sadra's theory; 5. The Criticism of Descartes' theory.

The foundation of Mulla Sadra's theory is 'the corporeality of contingency and the spirituality of subsistence in relation to the soul' and the foundation of Descartes' theory is 'the real distinction between the substance of the soul and body'. The new theory of Mulla Sadra in regards to the soul led to the presentation of a philosophical proof for proving physical resurrection, and the dualism of Descartes led to the collapse of his philosophical system.

Introduction

The topic of 'knowledge of the soul' has been amongst the most complex philosophical topics throughout the history of philosophy and human thought, such that Averroes (1126-1198) considered the proposition of a definition and limit for soul to be impossible. Mulla Sadra (1596-1650) the Muslim Iranian philosopher who is the founder of *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah* (transcendent philosophy) and René Descartes (1596-1650) the French philosopher who is the founder of

modern western philosophy, by establishing new philosophical systems in the Islamic and western world in regards to the soul, offered new theories which have had significant consequences. Thus, a comparative analysis of the opinions of these two philosophers in regards to the important topic of soul is of importance.

The analytical structure of this article is as follows: 1. Exposition of Mulla Sadra's philosophical view concerning the soul; 2. Exposition of Descartes' view on the soul; 3. Examining points of similarity and difference between the opinions of Mulla Sadra and Descartes; 4. The distinct strength of Mulla Sadra's theory; 5. The Criticism of Descartes' theory.

'Soul' from Mulla Sadra's philosophical perspective

Besides his philosophical views on soul Mulla Sadra has also examined topics related to the soul from the perspective of the Holy Qur'an, theology and prophetic narrations, thus, using the term 'philosophical' in the subheading of this section is to clarify that this article only deals with the philosophical arguments of Mulla Sadra which are related to the themes that are also covered by Descartes.

In the view of philosophers, soul is a substance which is essentially independent, which in action requires matter, is attached to bodies and has a governing connection with the body. In the opinion of Aristotle, 'the soul is the first of a natural, organized body potentially possessing life'¹. In contrast to other philosophers who consider the human soul to be static, Mulla Sadra considers it to be gradational.

The importance and innovation of Mulla Sadra's theory on the soul, is in how the soul appears. His famous sentence in this regards is 'the soul is corporeal in its origination but spiritual in its subsistence'², because the human soul for origination and manifestation requires matter and uses the potentialities of the body. The soul is considered to be an organ of the body and this is a reason for the argument that an existence separate to that of the body is not required for the soul. Mulla Sadra by using his "principle of transubstantial motion" which is amongst his

important philosophical innovations, has proven that it is possible for a material phenomena which has the potential to become abstract, to slowly gain an immaterial form with the help of transubstantial motion, and finally he concluded that the matter of the soul, is the same as the matter of the body, and that the soul is a physical reality which desires to ascend to the spiritual world (*malakut*).

The soul passes the following stages in its journey of perfection: the soul in the foetal period is in the stage of the vegetative soul. In the beginning of birth it is animal by actuality and human by potentiality, and with the condition of living a life of thinking and contemplation, at around the age of forty s/he becomes a human in actuality. The soul concurrently with being a unified essence, has both the faculty of audition and that of vision, and besides being capable of thought it has a sensual faculty. Mulla Sadra considers the evolutionary journey of the soul to be harmonious with and alongside the process of the general universal motion, a motion which begins from matter, but reaches a stage which is transcendent from matter and ends at the abstract.

Mulla Sadra in his following books deals with different topics related to the soul: *'Arshiyah, Masha'ir, Mabda' wa Ma'ad, Shawahid al-Robubiyah, Asfar* and *Hashiyeh bar Hikmat al-Ishraq-e Suhrewardi*. These topics include the following: how the soul is made, the relation between the soul and the body, the substance of the soul, the degrees of the soul, the evolutionary journey of the soul, the immateriality of the soul and the subsistence of the soul amongst others.

First Principle: The soul being Gradational

The human soul, from the beginning of its creation to its telos has various ranks, and in this path passes different existential stages. As such, the soul is not static, rather it is dynamic, alive and gradational. The soul in its initial attachment to the body is referred to as 'corporeal substance'; after that it gains power from stage to stage and is transformed into the different forms of its creation until it no longer needs the body and can subsist on its own. The soul after leaving the body, by separation from the material world and journeying towards the

eternal world, returns to its Lord. On the basis of this journey and principle, 'the soul is corporeal in its origination but spiritual in its subsistence'³. On this basis when it is first manifested in the material world it is a physical power, after that it transforms into the sensual soul, and by passing the different degrees of sensuality it reaches a stage where it is capable of creating different forms within its essence, and in this stage it is referred to as '*Mofakkirah*' i.e. it has the ability to think. After this the soul retains what it discovers within itself, and this ability is referred to as '*dhakirah*' i.e. ability to remember. By ascending from this rank, the soul reaches the rank of intellection and comprehending the universalities of the world, after this it reaches the rank of the 'practical intellect' ('*aql al-'amali*) and 'speculative intellect' ('*aql al-nadhari*). The ranks of the speculative intellect are: 'the intellect of potentiality' ('*aql bi al-quwwah*), 'intellect of actuality' ('*aql bi al-fi'l*) and the 'active intellect' ('*aql fa'al*). The body and the soul constantly transform until they reach the top of their rank and reach the supreme origin⁴.

Second principle: the actualization of the active intellect in the human soul

The active intellect has two existences: 'non-relational existence' and 'relational existence'. The relational existence of the active intellect is the existence of the active intellect within the human essence and for the human being. Thus, the perfection and completion of the human being is the existence of the active intellect for her/him and her/his connection and union with the active intellect. The theory of predicating existence of the active intellect for the soul, and considering the active intellect to be the last stage of perfection for the soul; further, it is that the soul in the beginning of creation and the initial periods of its origination is moving towards the perfection of the natural physical body and the origin of some of the vegetative and animal acts, and is a potential thing. Afterwards, by moving in the direction of acquiring power over realities and acquiring knowledge and wisdom and categorizing and organizing issues and ordering the policies related to the laws of life, it becomes an intellectual being and possesses the rank and stage of the 'intellect of actuality'. The soul on the path of reaching

actuality from potentiality, is in need of the aid and attention of a being superior to itself, and as it itself does not possess an innate intellect or intellectual perfection, it is in need of another being which possesses both. There is an end to this chain of need; it ends at a divine light which is connected to a being named 'the active intellect' that is perfect, actual, active and governing of souls and is devoid of imperfection and lack, and which leads the soul from the boundary of potentiality to actuality. As such the soul by uniting with this actual perfect being attains 'actual intellect', and understands everything by its intellect in their actuality.⁵

Third Principle: the external and internal faculties of the soul

Other than the five external faculties, the soul has five internal faculties which are the principles of the external faculties. The external faculties become inactive as a result of unconsciousness and death, however the internal faculties do not become inactive, for the soul of the human being has collective unity which is the ray of the light of 'the true unity of reality'.

Fourth Principle: the soul and the body are not two things

The philosophers before Mulla Sadra were of the opinion that the soul being the soul is due to it being an addition to the body and this theory is supplementary to the theory that the body and the soul are two things, and one is added to the other. In their opinion the relationship between the soul and the body, is like that of an entity controlling another entity. However, in Mulla Sadra's opinion the soul and the body are not two separate things initially, the soul is referred to as the soul for it is exactly like the essence of its substance and is not attributed to anything (i.e. it is not separate from the body to be later on added to it), but rather initially it is considered as a stage amongst the stages of the body. Once the soul becomes transformed and gains perfection by intellect and knowledge it becomes separated from the body. Thus, it is only when the soul becomes pure intellect, independent in its own essence it leaves the body and becomes self-subsistent, no longer in need of the body.⁶

Fifth Principle: human beings initially fall under a single definition of species, but in the second stage have different essences

Human beings are united in terms of their species in this world and under a single definition of the species composed of the proximate genus (*Jins qarib*) and the proximate difference (*Fasl-e qarib*), where by this genus and difference are taken from the bodily matter and the form of the soul. However, human souls in the initial stage after a unity in species, move towards a change of essence and become different species falling under four genera. The souls in the beginning of existence and the initial stage of actuality, are forms of perfection for the sensible material body, and at the same time are also spiritual matter, which either becomes accompanied by an intellective form and by its aid moves from the stage of potentiality to that of actuality or accompanies delusional satanic, animal, brutal and bestial forms, and on the day of resurrection is resurrected in that form. However, this resurrection occurs in the other world otherwise it would be transmigration and not resurrection. This is while transmigration is an impossible matter whereas bodily resurrection is a real matter which cannot be escaped or avoided. In the end the human being will be transformed in the form of an angel, Satan, or a four legged or brutal animal. If knowledge and God-consciousness (*taqwa*) dominate the human soul, it appears as an angel, while if deceit, trickery and compounded ignorance overcome his soul, it becomes Satan, and by the dominance of the effects of lust on it, turns into a four-legged animal and if it is dominated by anger it will become a brutal beast.

As such the actuality of each thing is based on its form and not its matter. In that world the matter of the human being (regardless of colour or race) is of no importance, rather the foundation of resurrection is the form and actuality of the human being. As such the human being is resurrected in Resurrection based on the moralities and positive counterparts which dominates its soul.⁷

Sixth principle: the transformation of the soul based on transubstantial motion

The transformation of the stages of the soul according to transubstantial motion is of the important innovations of Mulla Sadra. By criticising the opinions of past philosophers concerning the static nature of the soul, in the book *'Arshiyah* he clarifies the problems of past philosophers and answers them. He says, that if they say that it is of the certainties of philosophy that one object cannot at the same time be the form of one object and the substance for the form of another, unless the form is removed, and afterwards the substance becomes something else, and based on this hypothesis it cannot be said that the essence of human soul becomes manifest in the form an internal soul, in answer to them it is said: the correctness of this statement is based on the presupposition that in a world one state of being occurs, or the object under discussion is an absolute abstract object which is unchangeable. However, the soul by its dependence upon the body is capable of becoming powerful and at the same time as being the material form of this world, it is a substance for the form of the other world, or that this very soul is capable of becoming like the lowest form of animals in this material world through bad deeds, and yet be a substance prepared for accepting the form of the other world. Thus, although the corporeal form is in actuality the form of the body, it can potentially be substance for the intellectual form.

Mulla Sadra through his proofs proves that the universal natures all undergo transubstantial motion and in this world transform from one form to another. Thus, in this regards it is not necessary to accept the opinion of past philosophers who due to considering bodies and essences to be static did not discover transubstantial motion.

The human soul undergoes a revolution sooner than other beings. In general the body, soul and intellect become varied in different natural stages. In the beginning of creation the soul occupies the greatest degree of the sensual world and the beginning of the spiritual world. The soul is 'the great gate of Allah', for with its aid one can reach the world of angels and also every characteristic of hell can be seen in it. The soul is a barrier between this world and the other world, for it is

both the form of the forces of this world and also the material of all the forms of the other world. The soul 'is the meeting place of corporeality and spirituality'. The soul as the ultimate of spiritualities and bodies is testament that the soul in the first stage is of the bodily and spiritual realities, and not solely bodily⁸.

Seventh principle combining the contingency and the subsistence of the soul

A criticism put forward by Khawjah Nisar al-DinTusi is that how is possible to combine the contingency of the soul and its subsistence, for whatever proof is presented for contingency, will also act as a proof for the transiency of the soul and whichever proof is set forth for the subsistence of the soul is also a proof for its eternity and as such a negation of its contingency.

Mulla Sadra argues that the soul in contrast to pure abstracts and also to bodies, is not limited to one world, but rather is possessing of different modalities of being. On the one hand it possesses an abstract and intellectual modality and on the other it exists in the natural world on the basis of which it is contingent, and the contingency of the this specific modality of the modalities of the world, is based on the condition of the body. The soul enters the abstract world in its evolutionary journey; by entering the abstract world, and through this transformation, it dies in the natural world and is resurrected in the abstract world. It is evident that in this stage of the soul's being, there is no need for the body and material conditions. Thus, the annihilation of the body, does not in anyway harm the intellectual, but rather results in the destruction on the state of attachment and the natural being of the soul, and this state is transient and after the annihilation of the body is destroyed. However besides this state, the soul acquires an abstract being and because of that state is subsistent⁹.

Descartes theory

Descartes' theory in regards to the soul has come to be known as Cartesian dualism, for he believed in the substantial distinction between

the soul and the body. In this section Descartes' theory in regards to the 'distinction of soul and body', 'spiritual substance' and the eternity of the soul will be analysed.

The distinction of the soul and the body

According to Descartes' theory the soul is not material for its substance is thought; further, it does not possess the material characteristics which the body is comprised of. In the introduction to *Meditations* Descartes says: the distinction between the body and the soul is based on the reducibility of the body and the irreducibility of the soul. For the body can only be considered in a reducible form whereas the soul cannot be considered other than as irreducible, in the sense that one cannot imagine half of the soul. The soul and the body are two distinct entities which have actual distinction, which is the highest form of distinction between entities. By His power god has created substance of the soul and the body distinct from each other.¹⁰

Descartes considers 'thought' to be the essential characteristic of the soul and considers extension to be the essential characteristic of the body.¹¹ He says that the presence of the soul in the body is not like that of the ship captain in the ship, rather the soul is united with the whole of the body. The soul at the same time as having essential distinction from the body, in action, is united with it.¹² My body, as I clearly see it, is a substance, however it is a material substance just as my spirit is a thinking substance. Thus that which is referred to as "I" has two distinct parts: the "body" or the machine that works and the "soul" or engineer that thinks.¹³

In principle 8 of the principles of philosophy Descartes writes:

In this way we discover the distinction between soul and body, or between a thinking thing and physical thing.

This is the best way to discover the nature of the mind and its distinction from the body. Since we are supposing that everything

which is distinct from us is non-existent, if we examine what we are we see that no extension shape or local motion, or anything similar which should be attributed to the body pertains or our nature apart from thought alone. Therefore, thought is known prior to and more certainly than anything physical because we have already perceived our thought while we are still doubting other things.

The substance of the soul and its existential independence from the body

The foundation of Descartes' argument for the abstractness of the soul is 'cogito ergo sum'. In the 'second meditation' Descartes aims to acquire truth through methodical doubt, and comes to reason that in the process of doubt he can come to doubt everything except himself. He says that his "I" cannot be doubted, for it is that which is doubting in the first place, and that even the doubt of the deceitful Satan cannot make his "I" seem doubtful. For if he has been deceived he must be, and as such he is. With this reasoning Descartes aims to prove the existence of the thinking self. In the second meditation Descartes argues that actions such as eating and movement belong to the body and not the "I", whereas thinking belongs to the 'I' and cannot be removed from the "I". He further argues that the perception of the wax (body) not by the senses or imagination but by the intellect alone, is reason for the existence of the soul as an independent substance from the body. For the wax has been perceived without the aid of the physical senses.¹⁴

The immortality and subsistence of the soul

Descartes is of the opinion that the soul is immortal and subsistent. However like Plato he does not consider the eternity of the soul to be because of the simplicity of the soul, rather he considers that the soul is subsistent because it is a substance. He is of the opinion that all substances, be they physical or spiritual, are subsistent.

Commonalities and differences between Mulla Sadra and Descartes

In this section the commonalities and differences between the two philosophers will be discussed.

The commonalities between Descartes and Mulla Sadra

Mulla Sadra and Descartes have a common opinion in regards to a number of important philosophical principles in regards to the soul, although they have used different principles and arguments in order to prove these principles. These principles are: 1. The soul being substance; 2. The soul being abstract and spiritual; 3. Eternality of the soul; 4. The soul at the same time as being connected and united with the body, is a distinct reality from it.

The differences between Descartes' and Mulla Sadra

The difference of Descartes and Mulla Sadra in relation to the soul are: 1. Descartes considers the soul to be 'spirituality of contingency and spirituality of subsistence'; whereas Mulla Sadra considers it to be 'corporeality of contingency and spirituality of subsistence'; 2. Descartes considers the soul to be static, whereas Mulla Sadra considers it to be dynamic. 3. Descartes considers the soul to have only one stage, whereas Mulla Sadra considers it to be gradational: 'the soul before nature', 'the soul in nature' and 'the soul after leaving matter'. 4. The foundations of proving the eternity of the soul, differs in the opinion of Descartes and Mulla Sadra. Descartes considers the eternity of the soul to be due to it being a substance, and as such even material substances are eternal in his philosophy. However, Mulla Sadra considers the eternity of the soul to be due to abstractness of the soul and its relation to the world of intellects, which is the absolute abstract of the contingent being which is dependent on the absolute simple abstract existence 5. According to Descartes the soul and the body are two discreet entities where one is added to the other. Whereas in Mulla Sadra's opinion it is not so, but rather soul is referred to as soul because it is exactly like the essence of its substance and is not an addition to anything; in the beginning it is considered as one of the

stages of the body and afterwards it gains perfection and acquires wisdom and knowledge and becomes abstract. 6. Descartes considers the relation between the body and the soul through epiphysis which is of the major weaknesses of his philosophical system. However, Mulla Sadra explains the relation between the body and the soul through ‘the gradational nature of existence’, the gradation of the soul’ and ‘the transubstantial motion’.

The distinct strength of Mulla Sadra theory of the soul

Based on the theory of ‘the corporeality of contingency and the spirituality of subsistence’ of the soul, Mulla Sadra has proven bodily resurrection by a philosophical instead of a theological method. In Mulla Sadra’s philosophical system, the soul arises from the material foundation and through transubstantial motion passes the stages of abstractness one after the other and becomes more complete, and the time of natural death, is the time of the perfection of the soul and its complete lack of need for the body. After the separation of the soul from the body, the faculty of imagination (which is abstract) is strengthened and creates the metaphorical body, however, this does not hinder the reality of the material or after-life body, because for the human being the body is matter, and matter here is considered in terms of genus and not simply in terms of the physical but also comprises for example bodies of light, as such the term body can also be applied to the metaphorical body. The philosophical principles of Mulla Sadra’s proof for bodily resurrection are: ‘the supreme reality of existence’, ‘reality of particularity and existence’, ‘the gradation of being’, ‘transubstantial motion’, abstractness of imagination’. However, Descartes’ philosophy is incapable of rationally proving bodily resurrection.

Descartes’ mechanical philosophy

The problem in explaining the relation between the body and the soul in Descartes’ philosophy is a result of his Mechanical and plurality oriented philosophy which on the one hand does not see the dynamism present in the natural world on the basis of transubstantial motion, and

on the other hand is not capable of seeing that the existential unity of being, including in terms of the human being, is not above its multiplicity and as such explains the relations between substances and being with the direct mechanic role of God. In general, Descartes' philosophy is amongst 'static philosophies' whereas that of Mulla Sadra, Leibniz and Hegel are of the 'dynamic systems of philosophy'.

The relation of the body and the soul

The statement that the relation of the body and the soul is accidental and that there is no necessary relation between the two is false. Like Aristotle, Descartes has described the soul as the "first perfection" for the instrumental natural body, and it is impossible for such a composition to arise from two things which have no causal relation. The relation between soul and body is a necessary relation. This relation is not like the relation of the coincidence of opposites, and is not like the relation of two effects of one cause which have no direct relation with each other. Also the relation of the body and the soul, is not the relation of the absolute cause with its effect, rather it is the relation of two entities which are necessary for each other, whereby each from a distinct aspect require the other, and they are dependent on each other in being. The body requires a connection to the soul in order to be actualised. And although the soul in terms of reality and intellectual being does not require the body, however for generation it needs a capable body, so that it comes to exist in it and belongs to it.¹⁵ Hence, Mulla Sadra considers the soul to be material and not abstract in the beginning of its manifestation in the body (the corporeality of contingency and the spirituality of subsistence), as such no problem occurs in the relation between a material and an abstract entity.

Cartesian Dualism

Descartes' philosophy of machine (body) and engineer (soul) is a dualistic philosophical instrument which separates the world into two separate beings, namely the body and soul. In modern western philosophy Cartesian dualism has had contradictory outcomes, which are a result of the problems within Descartes philosophical system.

Three modern philosophical currents in the west have opposed Descartes views: 1. Materialists who have rejected the spiritual substance of Descartes philosophy by relying on his opinions on animals (whose life he had considered to be mechanic), and have also explained the human being in mechanical terms; 2. The Idealist current which by relying on the independent spiritual substance of Descartes, have considered matter as a form of soul and have denied material substance; 3. The phenomenological current which by denying both the material spiritual substance of Descartes have stressed on phenomenon, which has none of the characteristics of Descartes' substances.

Conclusion

Both Descartes and Mulla Sadra began a new theory; however their theories led to two contradictory conclusions in the history of philosophy. The strivings of Malebranche, Spinoza and Leibniz, who are associated with Cartesianism, in order to solve the contradictions in Descartes' philosophical system including the issue of the soul, resulted in the collapse of the Cartesian system and the appearance of the schools of Materialism, Idealism and phenomenology in the west. Whereas the strength of the philosophical system of Mulla Sadra, which withstood the criticisms of theologians, not only did not collapse after him, but rather was enriched and expanded by philosophers after him such as, Mulla Hadi Sabzawari, Mulla Ali Nuri, Mulla Abdullah Zonuzi and Mirza Mehdi Ashtiyani, and in the twentieth century the New Sadrean philosophy appeared. New Sadrean philosophy is a dynamic and current philosophical system which has been formed in the current era and is engaged in answering new philosophical issues and is forming a new arrangement and organisation of Islamic philosophy. The most distinguished characters of this school are Allamah Muhammad Hussain Tabatabai, Ayatullah Muhammad Baqir Al-Sader, Ayatullah Murtadha Muttahari, Ayatullah Seyyed Muhammad Hussain Beheshi, Imam Mussa Sader, Allamah Muhammad Taqi Ja'fari, Dr. Mehdi Ha'ri Yazdi, Ayatullah Jawadi Amuli, Dr Mehdi Mohaqeq, Ayatullah Seyed Mohammad Khamenei and Professor Seyyed Hossein Nasr.

Bibliography

- Aristotle, *The Complete works of Aristotle*, The Revised Oxford Translation, ed. Barnes, Jonathan, Princeton, 1995.
- Descartes, Rene, *Mediations and other Metaphysical Writings*, Penguin, London, 2003.
- Mulla Sadra, *Asfar*, Qum, 1379.
- *Shawahed al- Rububiyah*, ed. Ashtyani, Seyed Jala al-Din, Tehran, 1360.
- *Arshiyah*, ed. Ahani, Gholamhussein, Tehran, 1361.

Endnotes

- ¹ Aristotle, *De Anime* II , 1. 412 a 27; 4/2 b. line 5
- ² Mulla Sadra, *Asfar*, vol IV, 1., p 4lines 3ff, p. 35, last line ff;
- ³ Mulla Sadra, *Asfar*, vol IV, 1., p 4lines 3ff, p. 35, last line ff;
- ⁴ Mulla Sadra, 'Arshiyah,al-Mashriq al-Thani, Ishraq al-Awwal, Qawa'id 1 and 2.
- ⁵ Mulla Sadra, *Shawahid al-Rububiyah*, third mashhad, third Ishraq.
- ⁶ Mulla Sadra, 'Arshiyah, p 50 , 238.
- ⁷ *Ibid*, p 59-60, 241
- ⁸ see *Arshiyah*, pp61-62, 242.
- ⁹ Mulla Sadra, *Asfar*, vol 8, p 392
- ¹⁰ See Descartes, Principles of philosophy, principle60.
- ¹¹ *Ibid*, principle 63.
- ¹² See Descartes, Discourse on the Method, chapter 5.
- ¹³ The greats of philosophy, p 179
- ¹⁴ See Descartes, meditations on first philosophy.
- ¹⁵ *Asfar*, vol 8, p 382

Mulla Sadra on The Human Soul and its Becoming

Zailan Moris

School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia

Abstract

The focus of this article is on Mulla Sadra's view of the nature of the human soul and its becoming, a subject that has received extensive and detailed treatments in Mulla Sadra's various writings such as the *al-Asfar al-'arba'ah*, *al-Shawahid al-rububiyah*, *Kitab al-mabda' wa al-ma'ad* and *al-Hikmah al-'arshiyah*. The following treatment of Mulla Sadra's view of the soul and its becoming involves both a discussion of his fundamental principles and ideas on the subject, as well as his masterly adoption and incorporation of principles and doctrines drawn from the sources of revelation, i.e. the Qur'an and Hadith, the intellectual illuminations and mystical 'unveilings' of the Sufis and gnostics (*hukama'*), and the rational and logical conclusions of the philosophers or *falasifah*.

Introduction

Sadr al-Din Shirazi (979-1050 A.H./1571-1640 A.D.) who is better known by the name of Mulla Sadra is regarded as one of the most illustrious figures of later Islamic Philosophy and the founder of a major school in the Islamic philosophical tradition, *al-hikmah al-muta'aliyah* or transcendent philosophy or wisdom.¹ He is generally regarded by Islamic philosophers and scholars to have achieved a successful synthesis of the three important sources of human

knowledge, that of revelation (wahy), intellectual illumination or mystical ‘unveiling’ (kashf) and discursive thought (fikir) in his philosophical writings.² In Mulla Sadra’s philosophy, revealed principles, rational arguments and intellectual intuitions or illuminations can be reconciled and unified to create a coherent and cohesive philosophical perspective that is capable of shedding light on such fundamental issues such as the nature and structure of reality, the nature of God, the nature of the human soul, the purpose of creation, etc. The focus of this article is on Mulla Sadra’s view of the nature of the human soul and its becoming, a subject that has received extensive and detailed treatments in Mulla Sadra’s various writings such as the *al-Asfar al-‘arba‘ah*, *al-Shawahid al-rububiyah*, *Kitab al-mabda’ wa al-ma‘ad* and *al-Hikmah al-‘arshiyah*. The following treatment of Mulla Sadra’s view of the soul and its becoming involves both a discussion of his fundamental principles and ideas on the subject, as well as his masterly adoption and incorporation of principles and doctrines drawn from the sources of revelation, i.e. the Qur’an and Hadith, the intellectual illuminations and mystical ‘unveilings’ of the Sufis and gnostics (hukama’), and the rational and logical conclusions of the philosophers or *falasifah*.³

The Nature of the Human Soul and its Becoming

In Mulla Sadra's philosophy, the soul (*al-nafs*) is a single reality with various faculties and functions. Through the process of transubstantial motion (*al-harakah al-jawhariyah*)⁴ the soul which first appears as the body (*al-jism*) becomes the vegetative soul (*al-nafs al-nabatiyah*), then the animal soul (*al-nafs al-hayawaniyah*) and finally, the human soul (*al-nafs al-insaniyyah*).⁵ These various degrees or stages of development are considered to occur from within the substance of the original ‘body’.

In Mulla Sadra’s view, the human sperm is a mineral object but potentially a plant. When it develops in the womb, the sperm becomes actually a plant and potentially an animal. At birth the human infant is actually an animal and potentially a human being. As the infant matures

and becomes an adult, he is actually a human being and potentially either an angel or a follower of the devil.⁶

According to Mulla Sadra, all the various stages of the development of the soul are latent or potential within the original substance of the human sperm. Through the process of transubstantial motion, the soul traverses through the various levels or degrees of being until it finally attains complete independence of all matter and potentiality and is capable of enjoying immortal life. Thus, for Mulla Sadra although, the human soul is brought into being with the body, it possesses the spiritual subsistence which through the process of transubstantial motion enables it to attain a level of being which is completely independent of the body.⁷

At each stage of its journey of becoming or ascent from a lower and less intense mode of being to a higher and more intense mode of being, the soul acquires a new set of faculties commensurable to its particular level or mode of being.⁸ To illustrate, as a mineral, it has the faculty of preserving its form and as a plant, it possesses the faculties of breeding, growth and the transformation of foreign substances into its own form. Then, as an animal, it develops the faculties of motion and various forms of desire and the external senses. As a higher animal, the inner faculties of memory and imagination are added to its present set of faculties. Finally, as a human being, the five inner faculties are developed. These are the faculties of the perception of forms (*hiss al-mushtarik*), the apprehension (*wahm*) which perceives meanings, fantasy (*khayal*) which preserves forms, memory (*dha>kirah*) which preserves meanings and the faculties of imagination (*mutakhayilah*) and thought (*mutafakkirah*).⁹ Mulla Sadra asserts that throughout these various stages of development, it is the one single soul which is involved. The faculties are not things added to the soul, rather they are the potential aspects of the soul becoming actualised.

If the human body is the crowning achievement of material creation since it synthesizes the three kingdoms - the mineral, vegetative and animal - then, the human soul occupies an extraordinary or special position in the whole of the created order.¹⁰ Although the human soul is of a lowly birth contaminated with matter and potentiality, it is capable of entering into all levels of cosmic existence without losing its individuality. Created with

the body, the soul however is immortal with a transcendental orientation. In the *al-Shawahid al-rububiyah*, Mulla Sadra states that although the human soul is of a humble beginning, it is pregnant with unlimited possibilities. It is a divine mystery, a rare mixture of divinity and dust, a meeting point where the creature and creator converge and a link between the finite and Infinite.¹¹

Death means a disintegration of the body but for the immaterial and immortal human soul, it implies an entry into eternal life and a freedom from the bondages of matter and potentiality.¹² If the Muslim Peripatetics such as Ibn Rushd consider only the intellectual part of the human soul to be immortal, Mulla Sadra in agreement with certain Sufis, considers the faculty of imagination (*mutakhaliyah*) to be immortal too and capable of being independent of the body.¹³ Upon the death of the body, the imaginative faculty, like the intellectual part of the soul, will enjoy an independent form of life of its own.

Mulla Sadra likens the situation or condition of man in this world to that of an embryo in a womb.¹⁴ While the child is in the mother's womb, he is actually in this world but he is separated from it by the walls of the womb and does not know of its real existence in the world. Similarly, while man is in this world, he is actually in the next world but the 'walls' of this world or the limited consciousness of the true condition of his own being confines him to this world only.

According to Mulla Sadra, on leaving this world or at the moment of death, the soul carries with it its imaginal or subtle body (*jism mithali*). The imaginal body is that which the individual has acquired or created from all its modes of being, thinking and acting in this world.¹⁵ It is the imaginal body that must grow to maturity in the posthumous state. The resurrection of the subtle or acquired body by the soul constitutes the lesser resurrection (*al-qiyama al-sughra*). The greater resurrection (*al-qiyama al-kubra*) involves the passage of the subtle body (upon its eventual growth to maturity) from the imaginal world (*'alam al-mithal*) to the spiritual world.¹⁶

For Mulla Sadra, bodily resurrection or *al-ma'ad al-jasmani* mentioned in the Quran and *Hadith* does not mean the resurrection of the physical body which is of gross matter, rather it is the resurrection of the body acquired (*jism muktasab*) by the soul through all its modes of thinking, acting and being while on earth. The acquired body is the imaginal body (*jism mithali*) which possesses the form of the human body but is of a subtle substance or matter. The principle of human identity and individuality is the soul and not the body.¹⁷ It is the soul which individualizes the body and not the reverse. Mulla Sadra makes use of the fact that man's physical body changes in the course of his earthly life, from infancy to adulthood and finally to old age, without these changes in any way destroying the unity or identity of the individual man, to support his view that it is the soul which is the principle of human identity and individuality and not the body.

Death is the passage of the soul from the sensible world to the imaginal world (*'alam al-mithal*). The imaginal world is an isthmus (*barzakh*) between the sensible world and the spiritual world. A *barzakh* is defined as a separation between two neighbouring objects in which neither object predominates over the other and in which the virtualities of both objects are present and which enables it to link the two objects while at the same time separating them.¹⁸ The example that is often given to illustrate the idea of a *barzakh* is the line that divides shadow from sunlight. This line which is neither shadow nor sunlight is intermediate between the two and exists by virtue of the two realities that it separates.

The imaginal world is a world which is intermediate between the World of the Spirits (*'alam al-arwah*) and the World of Bodies (*'alam al-ajsam*). Unlike the World of the Spirits which is constituted of simple and luminous beings which are separate from matter and the World of Bodies which is constituted of compound and tenebrous beings which are immersed in matter; the imaginal world is constituted of 'suspended' forms or images (*al-amthal al-mu'allaqah*).¹⁹ The forms or images of the imaginal world are often compared to the image reflected in a mirror.²⁰ Like the image reflected in a mirror, the imaginal forms are viewed as both real and unreal, existent and non-existent. The ambiguous nature of the imaginal forms is due to its intermediate position between the pure

spirits and the material bodies. In Mulla Sadra's view, although the imaginal forms are suspended between the World of Spirits and the World of Bodies, it is a grade or level of being, existing both macrocosmically and microcosmically.²¹ Dreams testify to the existence of the imaginal world and it is in this world that the visions of prophets and saints occur and certain eschatological events take place. Since the imaginal world is intermediate between the World of the Spirits and the World of the Bodies, for anything to descend from the spiritual world to the material world or from the material world to ascend to the spiritual world, it must first traverse or pass through the imaginal world or be imaginalized or assume an imaginal form. For example, before prophetic revelation is given a sensory form, it is first given an imaginal form.

By making use of the principle of 'the possibility of that which is superior' (*imkan al-ashraf*), Mulla Sadra asserts that nothing can exist at the lowest level of being unless it has passed through the upper levels or grades of being and likewise, nothing moves to a higher grade of being without passing through the intermediate levels of being. In other words, that which exists at a lower level of being, necessarily exists at a higher grade of being and the existence of a being at a lower level of cosmic reality is evidence of the existence of that being at a higher level. For example, the being of man in this corporeal world, necessitates the being of man in the intermediary world of souls and the latter, necessitates the being of man in the spiritual world.²² Thus, every existent in this world or every quiddity that is given existence in the corporeal world also has an existence or is given a form or manifestation in the imaginal world and in the spiritual world respectively. Every existent quiddity has a triple existence or manifestation or form: a corporeal existence or form, an imaginal and a spiritual or intelligible form or existence.

The three cosmic levels of being: the spiritual (*jabarut*), imaginal (*malakut*) and corporeal (*mulk*), exist in man in a unitive and synthetic manner. Man is constituted of a spirit (*ruh*), a soul (*nafs*) and a body (*jism*). Since nothing can exist at the lowest level of being unless it has passed through the higher levels of being and conversely, nothing moves to a higher level of being without having passed through the intermediary level; all processes of descent and ascent of being, necessarily involves

traversing the imaginal world. Thus, in man's return journey (*al-ma'ad*) to God, he has to traverse the imaginal world before he can be born into or enter the spiritual world. The human soul experiences three births: the birth into the sensible world, the imaginal world and the spiritual world respectively.²³ In each world, his soul will project a 'body' for itself, commensurable with its own condition of being and the world to which it belongs. The relation between the soul and the 'body' which it projects, is similar to the relation between an object and its shadow or between an antecedent and its consequent.²⁴ Neither the shadow nor the consequent possesses an independent existence of its own; the existence of the shadow is dependent on the object and the consequent, on the antecedent. Likewise, the body is dependent on the soul for its existence. At every stage, the individuality or unity of the subject is preserved since it is the soul which is the principle of human identity and individuality and not the body.²⁵

According to Mulla Sadra, man possesses the appropriate faculties which are capable of perceiving and experiencing the three different levels of being. His external senses enable him to experience the corporeal world, his imaginative faculty, the imaginal world and his intellect, the spiritual world. The imaginative faculty (*al-mutakhayilah*) enables man to perceive the forms or images of the imaginal world while still living in this sensible world, provided that it is relatively independent of the influences of the body and the senses such as the case for example with prophets and saints. However, in the posthumous state when souls are in the *barzakh* of the imaginal world, every soul will possess the power to create external forms consistent with their natures and states of being. Each soul can create the pleasures it receives from within itself or its being without the need of the external organs or material instruments. The experiences of paradise and hell are the results of the soul creating the forms that are within its power.²⁶ For example, the pure souls have the creative power to bring into being all the beautiful and pleasant forms and the impure souls, the power to bring into being, ugly and unpleasant forms. And these souls either experience felicity or pain as a result of the forms which they create. However, paradise and hell must not be regarded as merely the subjective experiences of the individual soul. Paradise and hell exist objectively in the imaginal world.²⁷

If in the sensible world, the imaginative faculty requires a material instrument or receptacle to create or produce forms or images; in the imaginal world, the imaginative faculty has no need for a material instrument or receptacle to produce forms and images. The imaginal forms and images can be produced on the power or strength of the imaginative faculty alone since they do not require a material substratum in order to exist.²⁸ In the sensible world, the perceived or imagined form is qualitatively different from the existent thing that is perceived or created. In the imaginal world however, there does not exist a disparity between the objective existence of an imaginal form and the form that is perceived or imagined. The objective existence of an imaginal form is identical to its represented or perceived form by the soul.²⁹ Thus, the experiences of pleasant imaginal forms are more delightful than that of the experience of sensible forms and equally the experience of unpleasant imaginal forms more painful than their sensible counterparts. The difference in degree of joy and suffering is due to the more intense and simple level of being of the imaginal world relative to the less intense and more dispersed level of being of the sensible world.

In Mulla Sadra's perspective, knowledge and being are closely related. The close inter-relation between knowledge and being has profound implications for man's becoming and destiny. If in this sensible world, man requires a material instrument and substratum to create the forms or images that he conceives; in the posthumous state when souls are in the intermediate world of Image-Exemplars (*'alam al-mithal*), he does not require material instruments and substratum to create forms. Imaginal forms can be objectively existent without a material substratum. Whatever forms the human soul creates whether they be beautiful or ugly, can be immediately objectified. There no longer exists an ontological disparity between that which is perceived or imagined and the existent thing itself. The nature and quality of the forms created by the soul are determined by the nature or knowledge of the individual soul. The good and pure souls will create beautiful forms consistent with the nature of their souls and the bad and wicked souls will create the ugly forms in agreement with the knowledge possessed by their souls. The condition of being of the individual soul in the posthumous state is the cumulative result of the acts of being of the individual soul in this world. At the

moment of death when the immortal and immaterial soul is disintegrated from the corporeal body; the soul will project an imaginal body for itself. The imaginal body is the body which is acquired by the individual soul on the basis of all its modes of being in this world. The principle of human identity and individuality is determined by the soul and not the body. Thus, in Mulla Sadra's view, the body that is resurrected in the posthumous state is the subtle or imaginal body. It is the imaginal body that must grow to maturity in the posthumous state and eventually experience another death which is also a birth. It is the death to the intermediate imaginal world and a birth into the spiritual or intelligible world. The creation of the imaginal body by the soul constitutes the lesser resurrection (*al-qiyama al-sughra*) and the creation of the spiritual body, the greater resurrection (*al-qiyama al-kubra*). Therefore, the human soul experiences three births and three modes of existences.

The goal of creation is to return to its source or God. Every created being manifests the attributes of God relative to the degree of intensity of Being present in it. The immutable archetypes which are the self-manifesting forms of the divine attributes are also the models of perfection of the individual species. The return of creation or of an existent to God is the return of the particular individual to its archetype or 'lord of the specie' (*rabb al-naw'*)

In the case of man, the return to God is by means of his conscious knowledge of the attributes of God and the deliberate cultivation and loving assimilation of the character traits of God's attributes (*al-takhalluq bi'l-sifat al-ilahiyah*) in his being. When the individual human being identifies himself with God's attributes through realized knowledge, he becomes the self-conscious form or image or theophany which reflects God's attributes. Since man is an ontologically unitive and synthetic being, his manifestation of God's attributes is also unitive and synthetic in nature. However, it is only the Universal Man (*al-insan al-kamil*) who actualises the potentiality of being a total theophany of God's attributes since it is only in him that all of God's attributes are manifested fully and in a unitive or ontologically comprehensive (*jam'*) manner. Consequently, for Mulla Sadra, every Universal Man is a specie or an archetype by himself.³⁰ With the actualisation of the Universal Man, the goal of

creation which arises from God's love and knowledge of Himself is fulfilled. The Universal Man is a self-conscious and self-reflective, and ontologically comprehensive theophany of God. Every individual Universal Man represents a definite and unique possibility of the infinite ontological possibilities of God's manifestation.

Mulla Sadra's Synthesis of Principles and Ideas Drawn from Revelation, Intellectual Illuminations and Philosophical Reasoning.

In his treatment of the human soul and its process of becoming and return to God, Mulla Sadra has drawn numerous principles and doctrines from the Quran and Hadith, the *Mashsha'i* and *Ishraqi* schools of philosophy and Sufism. In Mulla Sadra's perspective, through the process of transubstantial motion, the soul which first appears as the body, becomes the vegetative soul, the animal soul and finally, the human soul. The soul continues to undergo transubstantial motion in its journey of ascent of the various levels of being which is also an increase in the intensity of its being until it is able to disengage itself completely from all matter, both gross and subtle, and return to Pure Being as an archetype or unique specie unto itself, reflecting all the attributes of Being in full intensity and clarity.

Although Mulla Sadra's description of the journey and the process involved is peculiar to his perspective and philosophical views, he has drawn many ideas, principles and doctrines from diverse sources to substantiate his doctrines of psychology and eschatology. For example, Mulla Sadra's discussions of the vegetative, animal and human soul and their various faculties and stages of development, are drawn from the Aristotelian and *Mashsha'i* views of the subject. Like the Peripatetic philosophers, Mulla Sadra considers the vegetative soul to constitute the nutritive, growth and reproductive faculties; the animal soul, the motive and perceptive faculties and the human soul, the practical and theoretical faculties.

However, Mulla Sadra differs from the Peripatetic view on the question of the relation of the soul and the body. The *Mashsha'i* philosophers consider the immaterial and immortal soul as the entelechy or form of the

natural body and the immanent principle which organizes the latter. The relation between the soul and the body is likened to that between a pilot and his ship.³¹ In Mulla Sadra's perspective, the soul first appears with the body and through the process of transubstantial motion attains catharsis (*tajrid*) and independence from the body. It is the soul which individualises the body and the relation between the body and the soul is analogous to the relation between an object and the shadow it projects. Although Mulla Sadra agrees with the Peripatetic view that the soul is the entelechy of the body, since body in Mulla Sadra's philosophy is not limited to the corporeal or natural realm only but extends to the imaginal and spiritual, the soul is not the entelechy or form of the natural body only but of all subsequent bodies which it projects. In this respect, the soul is independent and transcendent of the natural body.

Another major difference between the Peripatetic view of the soul and Mulla Sadra's view concerns the imaginative faculty. If the Peripatetics consider only the intellectual aspect of the human soul to be immortal and to survive physical death, Mulla Sadra regards the imaginative faculty also to be independent of the body and to have its own form of life upon its separation from the body. The doctrine of the independence of the imaginative faculty from the body is central to Mulla Sadra's eschatological views. This doctrine is not original with Mulla Sadra. The Sufis, notably Ibn al-'Arabi have expounded at length the doctrine of the independence of the imaginative faculty from the body and its essential role in the posthumous state, specifically in the intermediate world of Image-Exemplars (*'alam al-mithal*).

According to Ibn al-'Arabi, in the imaginal world, the imaginative faculty takes the place of sense perception and it is through the imaginative faculty that the individual experiences the eschatological events described in the Quran and *Hadith*.³² The imaginative faculty has the creative power (*himm*) to existentially form both pleasant and unpleasant, and experiences happiness or misery relative to the forms it existentially forms. As already mentioned, the experience of Paradise and Hell are partly due to the creative power of the imaginative faculty to existentially form its own imaginal forms. However, Paradise and Hell are not merely subjective since they exist objectively and independently of the individual souls.

This situation is similar to our experience in the sensible, empirical world. We live in an objective world of external realities and at the same time in a private world of our own creation or determination which is the outcome of our individual subjectivities.

Following Suhrawardi, Mulla Sadra views the imaginal forms to be of two types: one, the imaginal forms existentiated by the individual soul and two, the objective imaginal forms existing in the imaginal world. The former constitutes the lesser imaginal world and the latter the greater imaginal world. It should be noted here, that Suhrawardi is the first to postulate explicitly the existence of the imaginal realm which is intermediate between the spiritual world and the sensible world.³³ In Suhrawardi's perspective it is in the imaginal realm that the resurrection of the body takes place and the various eschatological events described in the Quran and *Hadith*. However, it is Ibn al-'Arabi who expounded in an elaborate and definitive manner, the independence and creative power of the imaginative faculty and its consequent role in the imaginal world.³⁴

Mulla Sadra accepted both Suhrawardi's doctrine of the intermediate world and Ibn al-'Arabi's doctrine of the imaginative faculty and incorporated them into his psychological and eschatological views. In addition, Mulla Sadra developed further the logical implications of their respective doctrines to work out a more comprehensive perspective. For example, if for Suhrawardi, 'the principle of higher possibility' (*imkan al-ashraf*) means that the multiplicity which exists in the lower sensible world must first exist in the higher spiritual world, in Mulla Sadra this principle is further refined and made to denote that nothing can exist at the lowest level unless it has passed through the upper levels of being and conversely, nothing moves to a higher grade of being without passing through the intermediate level.³⁵ With this, Mulla Sadra is not only able to establish a clear and definite inter-relation between the three levels of being but also to postulate the doctrine that every quiddity has a triple existence.

Conclusion

By integrating the Peripatetic view of the various kinds of souls and their faculties with Suhrawardi's doctrine of the existence of an intermediate imaginal world and Ibn al-'Arabi's gnostic teachings of the creative power of the imaginative faculty to existentially imagnate forms in the posthumous state, Mulla Sadra is able to expound a comprehensive theory of the human soul and its stages of developments and actualisation in its return journey to God. The synthesis of these various views of the human soul both philosophical and gnostic is made by Mulla Sadra within the parameters of the teachings of the Quran and *Hadith*. Infact, it is in order to fully comprehend certain statements in the Quran and *Hadith* about the human soul which has descended from the World of the Divine Command (*amr*) and of which very little knowledge is divulged to man,³⁶ and the certainty and inevitability of its return to God³⁷ that Mulla Sadra has drawn ideas from diverse sources. For example, it is in order to explain the Quranic descriptions of Paradise and Hell which are expressed often-times in the language of sensible experiences that Mulla Sadra accepted and synthesized Suhrawardi's and Ibn al-'Arabi's doctrines of the intermediate imaginal world and the creative power and role of the imaginative faculty in the posthumous state.

Mulla Sadra's synthesis of various teachings is not merely speculative but is also the outcome of his own intellectual insights and illuminations of the matter.³⁸ Like Suhrawardi and Ibn al-'Arabi, Mulla Sadra claims personal experiences of the imaginal realm. Therefore, their respective views and Mulla Sadra's synthesis are fundamentally based on experiences of the imaginal realm and illuminative insights of the nature of the human soul. Furthermore, Mulla Sadra constantly verifies his view of the human soul and eschatology with the Quranic statements of them. Therefore, the Quran and *Hadith* provide both the premisses of his doctrines on the soul and eschatology, as well as the verification and confirmation of the legitimacy of his interpretations or understanding of the subject. Hence, Mulla Sadra is able to expound his own original view of the soul and its becoming and return to God within the teachings of the Quran and *Hadith*, as well as the diverse and rich legacy of Islamic philosophical schools and Sufism.

References

- ‘Ali, ‘Abdullah Yusuf. *The Meaning of the Holy Qur’an*. New Edition with Revised Translation and Commentary. Maryland: Amana Coporation, 1994.
- Chittick, William. ‘Death and the World of Imagination: Ibn al-‘Arabi’s Eschatology,’ *Muslim World* (Jan. 1988): 51-82.
- Corbin, Henry. *En Islam Iranien*, IV. Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1972.
- *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth*. Princeton: The University Press, 1977.
- Moris, Zailan. *Revelation, Intellectual Intuition and Reason in the Philosophy of Mulla Sadra: An Analysis of the al-Hikmah al- ‘Arshiyyah*. London & New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003.
- Morris, James W. *Wisdom of the Throne*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981.
- Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. *Sadr al-Din Shirazi and His Transcendent Theosophy*. Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1978.
- Rahman, Fazlur. *The Philosophy of Mulla Sadra*. Albany: State University of New York, 1975.
- ‘Dream, Imagination and ‘*Alam al-Mithal*,’ *Islamic Studies*, Vol.3, No.2, (June 1964).
- Shirazi, Sadr al-Din. *Shawahid al-rububiyah*, (ed.) Ashtiyani, S.J. Meshed: The University Press, 1967.
- *Al-Hikmah al- ‘Arshiyyah*. Isfahan: Shahriyar Books, 1962.

Endnotes

- ¹ For more information on Mulla Sadra’s life, works and thought, See for example Nasr, S.H., *Sadr al-Din Shirazi and His Transcendent Theosophy* (Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy), 1978.
- ² For a detailed treatment on this subject, see Moris, Z., *Revelation, Intellectual Intuition and Reason in the Philosophy of Mulla Sadra: An Analysis of the al-Hikmah al- ‘Arshiyyah* (London & New York: RoutledgeCurzon), 2003.
- ³ The material of these discussions are drawn from *ibid.*, 105-111, 114-115 and 128-131.
- ⁴ For more information on this principle, see for example, *Ibid.*, 95-99.
- ⁵ Shirazi, Sadr al-Din, *Shawahid al-rububiyah*, (ed.) Ashtiyani, S.J. (Meshed: The University Press, 1967), 229. Also Morris, J. W. *Wisdom of the Throne* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981), 132.
- ⁶ Morris, *Wisdom of the Throne*, 146.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, 137, 139.
- ⁸ *Shawahid al-rububiyah*, 193.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, 193-94.
- ¹⁰ Morris, *Wisdom of the Throne*, 148.

- ¹¹ *Shawahid al-rububiyah*, 196.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, 213.
- ¹³ Morris, *Wisdom of the Throne*, 158-59.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 187.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 146, 160.
- ¹⁶ Corbin, H. *En Islam Iranien*, IV (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1972), 110.
- ¹⁷ Morris, *Wisdom of the Throne*, 161.
- ¹⁸ See Corbin, H. *En Islam Iranien*, IV, 108.
- ¹⁹ Corbin, H. *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth* (Princeton: The University Press, 1977), 127.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 164-65.
- ²² Morris, *Wisdom of the Throne*, 142-43.
- ²³ See Corbin, *En Islam Iranien*, IV, 118.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*
- ²⁵ Morris, *Wisdom of the Throne*, 171.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 164.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 150.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 138.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 163.
- ³⁰ See Rahman, F. *The Philosophy of Mulla Sadra* (Albany: State University of New York, 1975), 249.
- ³¹ Rahman, F. *Avicenna's Psychology* (Westport: Hyperion Press, 1981), 6-7.
- ³² See Chittick, W., 'Death and the World of Imagination: Ibn al- 'Arabi's Eschatology,' *Muslim World* (Jan. 1988): 51-82.
- ³³ Corbin, *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth*, 78-80.
- ³⁴ Rahman, F. 'Dream, Imagination and 'Alam al-Mithal,' *Islamic Studies*, Vol.3, No.2, (June 1964): 171.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 175.
- ³⁶ Q.17:85.
- ³⁷ Q.21:117.
- ³⁸ In the *al-Hikmah al-'Arshiyah*, Mulla Sadra states explicitly that "knowledge of the soul can only be acquired through illumination from the Lamp-niche of Prophecy (*mishkat al-nubuwwah*) and through following the lights of Revelation and Prophecy...". Morris, *Wisdom of the Throne*, 131.

Rereading Fromm's Conditions of the Human Situation

Seyed Javad Miri
Sharif University of Technology, Tehran

Abstract

Within sociological debates the subject of worldviews has occupied a very significant position as the very nature of sociological reasoning is to debunk very dear held values which often are represented as ultimate realities. Although it should be mentioned that during early phases of disciplinary sociology the discussions on worldviews and grand narratives were more popular than they are today but this does not mean that the question of worldview and its relationship to anthropology has lost its substantive appeal for social theorists as such. On the contrary, the olden axiom of social philosophy which views the depth of a worldview in relation to the position it has assigned to man qua human being is as valid today as it has ever been. In this context we look at Fromm's approach to *Menschenleben* based on what he terms as the essence of man which seems to constitute the very parameters of his worldview in relation to human paradoxicality.

Keywords: Anthropology, Worldview, Essence, Human Nature, Science of Man

Weltanschauung and Anthro-Logy

We need to dwell upon the ontological semantics of *situation de l'homme* as employed by Fromm due to the anthropological significance which Fromm attaches on within his overall weltanschauung. Fromm (1955: 22-3) argues that

Man, in respect to his body and his physiological functions belongs to the animal kingdom. [In other words, the] animal <<is lived>> through biological laws of nature, it is part of nature and never

transcends it. It has no conscience of a moral nature, and no awareness of itself and of its existence; it has no reason, [i.e.] the ability to understand the essence behind ... [the sensual] surface; therefore the animal has no concept of the truth, even though it may have an idea of what is useful.

To put it differently; Fromm's anthropology is based on a distinction between the carnal and the human which is different from disciplinary sociological theories on human personality that disregard the essential dichotomy which characterizes the *locus classicus* of being a human individual. In addition, it is noteworthy to bear in mind that Fromm's theory of reality is different from the current theories in the contexts of philosophy of sciences and social sciences as he distinguishes between the sensual realm and essential realm in a categorical fashion. This distinction is not of a philological significance but of ontological significance as it indicates the realm of veracity where it is and how reason is the best vehicle for surpassing behind the back of the sensual domain that is devoid of authenticity. This categorical distinction between the sensual and the essential and the very admittance that reality belongs to the realm of essence rather than focusing on the sensual domain as the alpha and omega of veracity compels us to believe that Fromm's worldview is not similar to the mechanistic *weltanschauung* of linear modernism or incoherent *weltbild* of postmodernism that does not provide any essential saga for thrownness of human existence. In other words, Fromm looked at the emancipation of humanity as a real option that could have essential significance and significant essence.

Fromm's anthropology, on the other hand, needs to be seriously taken into consideration due to its great potentials. Fromm seems to argue that people who are under the spell of animal dimensions of their existence cease to have a life in the <<human realm>> by reducing the complexity of their reasonability and instead like animals striving for utility, as it seems even animals have an idea of what is useful without knowing the significance of truthfulness.

By characterizing capitalism as an offshoot of modernism and also by realizing the epistemological distinction between usefulness and truthfulness, it seems Fromm is heading towards an interesting hermeneutic theory that could have far-reaching consequences for our understandings on self, reality, worldview and anthropology. Let me explain what I have in mind here in some details.

If we agree that the nature of man is dichotomous and we also realize that the scope of reality is not confined to the sensual realm but is of dual nature then it seems we could discern between usefulness of a thing without thinking about its truthfulness as our social system of capitalism is moving more and more towards expansion of instrumentality and contraction of the human realm. Once this distinction is realized to its full capacity, then we can turn to Fromm's anthropological distinction between higher self and lower self or carnality and spirituality of human personality that seems to be connected to the distinction between usefulness and truthfulness. This distinction is not only of semantical significance but of socioeconomic importance within the system of capitalism today. Yet, the question is why and how could this happen? In other words, why and how could the realm of necessity surpass the domain of freedom? Is this an external force or an internal lack of discipline which has driven us to this state of affairs?

By looking at Fromm's anthropology we can see that modernity, or to be more accurate the advancement of instrumentality and at the same time the retreating of *lebenswelt*, are interrelated to the correlation between the animal versus the human within the matrix of human self. In other words, when the animal or the sensual takes the upper hand the human self tends to be more focused on the usefulness of a thing without knowing or bothering to know the significance of that particular thing in terms of its truthfulness.

This *lack* is not only confined to the animal kingdom *qua* animals but it is emblematic of animality which is the common denominator between man and animal that is unable to go beyond the surface and penetrate to

the realm of essence- which is the sole domain of truth, freedom, and *lebenwelt*.

Fromm (1955: 23), as mentioned above, believes that in the study of man we need to think of the realm of the human situation which is based on

... self-awareness, reason and imagination.

Their emergence is tantamount to what Fromm (1955: 23-24) terms as the <<Birth of Man>> which could be, in turn, characterized as the emergence of

... man into an anomaly, into the freak of the universe. [In other words, he] is part of nature, subject to her physical laws and unable to change them, yet he transcends the rest of nature. He is set apart while being a part; he is homeless, yet chained to the home he shares with all creatures. Man is the only animal that can be bored, that can feel evicted from paradise.

Fromm's anthropology has a central key which is phrased as 'human situation'. In his view a condition is qualified to be considered as 'human' if it fulfills three indices of self-awareness, reason and imagination. In other words, a situation could solely exist in a biological sense but that could not necessarily be equal to a human situation. If that is the case, then a community is closer to the ideal human order where man is more aware of his self, his actions are more reasonable and his imagination is richer or the scope of his life is more imaginative rather than dictated by exigencies of the realm of necessity. One may hasten to speak of a Frommesque style in sociology which contains its own peculiar anthropological lingua as well as an ontological grammar. In other words,

...man's birth ontogenetically as well as phylogenetically is essentially a negative event. He lacks the instinctive adaptations to nature, he lacks physical strength, he is the most helpless of all animals at birth, and in need of protection ... (Fromm, 1955: 24).

Menschenleben as an événement particulier

As societies are prone to move towards progression or regression, human life is not exempted from these movements either. Thus, Fromm believes that there are essential cravings within the bosom of the human soul which are determined by the <<inherent polarity>> that makes up the very contours of the <<human condition>>. In other words,

... Man has to solve a problem, he can never rest in the given situation of a passive adaptation to nature. Even the most complete satisfaction of all his instinctive needs does not solve his human problem; his most intensive passions and needs are not those rooted in his body, but those rooted in the very peculiarity of his existence (Fromm, 1955: 28).

What is the peculiarity of human existence in the Frommesque paradigm? He believes that human life is motivated by immense psychic energies which inspire human passions and desires and unlike mainstream psychologists who attempted to reduce the source of this psychic makeup into the Libido, Fromm (1955: 28) instead argues that the

... most powerful forces motivating man's behaviour stem from the condition of his existence, the <<human situation>>.

The *morphology of human situation* within the Frommian perspective should be deconstructed into two separated but interrelated realms of animal needs and human needs. While

... his body tells him what to eat and what to avoid ... his conscience ought to tell him which needs to cultivate and satisfy, and which needs to let wither and starve out (Fromm, 1955: 28).

It is interesting to note that Fromm believes that while the <<human needs>> are of innate nature, their growth is socio-culturally determined. To put it in a Frommesque style, while

... hunger and appetite are functions of body with which man is born ... conscience, while potentially present, required the guidance of men and principles which develop only during the growth of culture (Fromm, 1955: 28).

Conditions of the Human Situation

The <<conditions of the human situation>> in the Frommian paradigm is not a neutral phrase but the decisive clue into the background assumptions which make up the very basis of his anthropology in the generic sense of the term. These specific conditions which build the very frame of human existence are

... the need for relatedness, transcendence, rootedness, the need for a sense of identity and the need for a frame of orientation and devotion (Fromm, 1955: 67).

In other words, the

... great passions of man, his lust for power, his vanity, his search for truth, his passions for love and brotherliness, his destructiveness as well as his creativeness, every powerful desire which motivates man's actions, is rooted in this specific human source [which is not reducible to the physiological realm of dichotomous human reality] ... (Fromm, 1955: 67-8).

Nature of human nature

Under the spell of postmodernist magic we have come to believe that there is no such a thing as <<Human Nature>> but <<fragmentalized sparks>> which could in a patchy fashion make up aspects of distinct human identities across various cultures and societies. In other words, to think of a universal nature of human existence is doomed to failure in the context of relativistic sociological reasoning. However, Fromm is approaching the question of nature of humanness through the paradigm of <<Normative Humanism>> and asserts vehemently the presence of universal features within the matrix of human existence regardless of

temporal or spatial indices. What is the nature of human existence? In his view, a person

... who is alive and sensitive cannot fail to be sad, and to feel sorrow many times in his life. This is so, not only because of the amount of unnecessary suffering produced by the imperfection of our social arrangements, but because of the nature of human existence, which makes it impossible not to react to life with a good deal of pain and sorrow. Since we are living beings, we must be sadly aware of the necessary gap between our aspirations and what can be achieved in our short and troubled life. Since death confronts us with the inevitable fact that either we shall die before our loved ones or they before us—since we see suffering, the unavoidable as well as the unnecessary and wasteful, around us every day, how can we avoid the experience of pain and sorrow? The effort to avoid it is only possible if we reduce our sensitivity, responsiveness and love, if we harden our hearts and withdraw our attention and our feeling from others, as well as from ourselves (Fromm, 1955: 201).

This totality is what Fromm considers as the <<conditions of human existence>> and as such could be conceived as a universal data and of great epistemological importance as well as ontological significance in any pursuit within the paradigm of existential sociology or a social theory that does not reduce human life into the ideals of reified entities.

Essence of Man

Within the modern paradigm to speak of essence is to think in an anachronistic fashion. However, being out of date here it does not refer to be out of step chronologically with constant changes that envelop the gamut of human life and the world at large. On the contrary, it means to be archaic and conceive the world of being in terms of archetypes or *esse*. [1] This archaic outlook has something to do with being in terms of beginning or *arkhe* or the world of command where things acquire what they are in the phenomenal world.

In other words, the distinction between the essential approach and non-essential approach is not one of chronology. On the contrary, the

difference lies in modality of being in the world in relation to being in the archetypal world. However, the modern modality in contrast to archaic modalitas does not recognize any such correlation between the world of *arkhe* and the phenomenal reality.

To put it otherwise, the distinction between the adjectives modern and archaic is not one of temporal position in the straight line where one could divide the line into past and present as well as future. On the contrary, the distinction is based on two conflicting paradigms of essentialism and accidentalism. Of course, these "isms" as such don't reveal any significant points if we leave them in a vague fashion at this stage without explicating them in accurate manner. In philosophy, essence is the attribute or set of attributes that make an object or substance what it fundamentally is, and which it has by necessity, and without which it loses its identity. Essence is contrasted with accident: a property that the object or substance has contingently, without which the substance can still retain its identity. This view is contrasted with non-essentialism, which states that, for any given kind of entity, there are no specific traits which entities of that kind must possess. The debates within sociological contexts have come to be known under various guises such as the contrast between Essentialism and Constructivism.

In this debate, Fromm looks as if he belongs to the essentialist camp as for him an essence characterizes a substance or a form, in the sense of the Forms or Ideas in Platonic Idealism. It is permanent, unalterable, and eternal; and present in every possible world. Classical humanism, of which Fromm is an ardent supporter, has an essentialist conception of the human being, which means that it believes in an eternal and unchangeable human nature. By relying on this essentialist tradition, it seems Fromm is standing opposite to much of sociological trends that dominate contemporary social thought which heavily relies upon constructivist philosophies and theories. This is, of course, not difficult to fathom if we recall that sociology has been attempting to be a science of society as physics has been a science of nature. If this assumption is soundly valid then we should be reminded that knowledge in the <<modern paradigm>> in contrast to knowledge in

the <<archaic model>> is not aimed at comprehending the essence of a thing but it is aimed at domination and change of a thing.

In *The Sane Society*, Fromm assumes a universal nature for human beings by arguing that the equilibrium of human personality is not confined to the physiological realm but extensible to the psychological domain too. This is another way to state that the human being has an essence and the essential makeup of human person is not of accidental structure. Fromm does not stop at the threshold of debates between constructivists and essentialists. On the contrary, he takes a strong position in the debate by formulating his own position in regard to the fundamental questions pertaining to constructivism and essentialism. What is an essence in Frommesque style of conceptualizing core sociological issues? He defines <<essence>> as

... that by the virtue of which a thing is what it is (Fromm, 1994: 66).

Thus, the essence of man which is of great instrumental significance in establishing the position of normative humanism in contrast to sociological relativism, refers to that

... by the virtue of which man is human. [In other words], ... many social scientists are prone to believe that while this is true biologically and anatomically, it is not really true psychologically (Fromm, 1994: 66).

In other words, there are many

... social scientists who believe that man is born as an empty piece of paper, on which culture or society writes its text (Fromm, 1994: 66).

Yet, Fromm (1994: 66) does not certainly believe that. On the contrary, he endorses the position that

... there is such a thing as human nature, a human constitution, more than in simply an anatomical or physiological sense.

Further Fromm (Fromm, 1994: 66-7) elucidates a difference

... between this "essence" of man, between human nature as we find it in general, and the specific form in which human nature is expressed in each society and each culture. In other words, we never see human nature as such, we never see man in general, but we can infer from the many manifestations of man in various cultures and in various individuals what that is which man has in common ... [i.e.] ... what that is which is specifically human.

In Fromm's view, the most significant question is not what the substance of man is. In other words, the question should not be whether man is good or bad. On the contrary, the point is to find out the permanent essence of man throughout history. The right question for the <<science of man>> to pose is

What is the essence of man? What is that that can objectively be described as human? (Fromm, 1994: 74).

In his book *On Being Human* Fromm (1994: 74-5) tries to discuss this question by arguing that

... the essence of man is not a substance, that it isn't that man is good or man is bad, but that there is an essence that remains the same throughout history. The essence of man is a constellation or ... configuration – a basic configuration. [T]his configuration is precisely one of an existential dichotomy or ... a contradiction between man as an animal who is within nature and between man as the only thing in nature that has awareness of itself. Hence, man can be aware of his separateness and lostness and weakness. Hence, man has to find new ways of union with nature and with his fellow man. Man was born, historically and individually, and, when he becomes aware of his separateness from the world, he would become insane unless he found a method to overcome his separateness and find union. This is ... the strongest passion in man [namely] ... to avoid and overcome the full experience of separateness and to find a new union.

The Onus of Being a Human Person

The human society has been dimly a vague possibility only due to the belief that man *qua* human being has a responsibility and should be accountable before his conscience. Of course, it is not certain that this accountability has ever been realized in a total fashion in the context of societal dimension but the lack of such a realization has not stopped humanity from trying to accomplish this task.

In other words, one may pause and reflect over the feasibility of such an assumption that a human being *qua* human entity has a task and the fulfillment of this duty is the criterion of the scope, depth, quality, character and breadth of his humanity. To put it in an interrogative fashion; does man *qua* human being have a task? What is his task? And what shall he achieve by fulfilling this assumed task?

If we agree that man has an essence then to assume that there are inherent inclinations within the bosom of the human self would not be considered very farfetched. Besides we have already mentioned Fromm's position vis-à-vis essential categories that demonstrated he is in favor of essentialism over against relativism in his sociological endeavors. In Fromm's view, there is no doubt that a human being *qua* human person has a task to undertake and if he fails to realize it in a constructive fashion that would not abolish the task as such. On the contrary, it would only alter the direction of actions from an <<ascending movement>> into a <<descending fall>>. The task of man is to develop his humanity within the existing socio-historical context. What would man achieve by developing his humanity? He would be able to find a more qualitatively different relationship with *leben* that is not in its totality distinct from the pre-Fall state of human life. In Fromm's (1994: 76) view, the spiritual birth of human being does not only alter the directions of existence but it transforms the very sets of questions that man should work on in order to fulfill the duty which by its fulfillment man could become a human person.

Human Paradoxicality

To be a human person is equal to be in a paradoxical state as the first dimension of this entity (i.e. the human aspect of being) is not given but instead an ideal that one should acquire. (Fromm, 1973) The second part of this dilemma (i.e. the personality dimension of this equation) is not totally the invention of one's own delight but made up of necessary compromises which may not always be pleasing and an act of freedom. Finally what we may fathom as a human being is not in existence at any given point of time in a fixed format but a historical becoming that may emerge at any future moment that is beyond our reach. In other words, the object of study is an indeterminable subject which needs, at best, to be understood as a paradoxical inconsistency fraught with variable diverging discrepancies of incongruent dimensions. This contrasting reality which may be termed as human existence seems to give rise to particular forms of living conditions which constitute the very foundations of critical social theory. In other words, it may not be an exaggeration to state that the entire discourse of Fromm is an attempt to interpret the <<Conditions of Human Existence>> that requires a search for solutions, which in their turn create new contradictions as well as paradoxes. To put it in Fromm's (1994: 100) own words, one could argue that the

... unity of man as opposed to other living things derives from the fact that man is the conscious life of himself. Man is conscious of himself, of his future, which is death, of his smallness, of his impotence; he is aware of others as others; man is in nature, subject to its laws even if he transcends it with his thought.

As in Frommesque perspective,

... man is the product of natural evolution that is born from the conflict of being a prisoner and separated from nature, and from the need to find unity and harmony with it (1994: 100).

In Fromm's (1994: 100) view the conditions of human existence which is a corollary of the nature of man is a

... contradiction rooted in the conditions of human existence that requires a search for solutions, which in their turn create new contradictions and now the need for answers.

In other words, Fromm (1994: 100) believes that

... every answer to these contradictions can really satisfy the condition of helping man to overcome the sense of separation and to achieve a sense of agreement, of unity and of belonging.

Further he argues that

... in every answer to these contradictions, man has the possibility of choosing only between going forward or going back; these choices, which are translated into specific actions, are means toward the regressing or toward the progressing of the humanity that is in us (Fromm, 1994: 100).

References

- Fromm, E. *The Sane Society*. New York: Rinehart and Winston, 1955.
Fromm, E. *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973.
Fromm, E. *On Being Human*. Foreword by Rainer Funk, New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 1994.

Endnote

1. To prevent any misunderstandings, I should add that the notion of archaic in Frommian paradigm should not be understood in a reactionary sense. In other words, Fromm is not advocating a reactionary return to a mythological past. This is to argue that his notion of the archaic needs to be dialectically explained. (I should thank Dr. Michael R. Ott for bringing this to my attention.)
2. Certainly my interpretation of Fromm in regard to *esse* needs to be reinterpreted in the light of critical theory. There are great many scholars within critical theory circles who may not be sure that my interpretation of Fromm in terms of Plato's idealistic and thus, reified notion of essence is correct. They could rightly argue that Fromm's critique of positivism and its destruction of meaning beyond the facts of "what is" is expressive of the dialectics of historical materialism, not Platonic or Hegelian idealism. This is a justified critique if we assume that Fromm's

materialism is devoid of transcendentalism. Here Fromm looks very similar to Ali Shariati who sees in materialism a deep transcendental spiritual yearning and vice versa. (I should thank Dr. Michael R. Ott for this invaluable comment.)

3. I think one needs to address the historical materialist notion of Fromm's "humanism" in order to clarify the essential question entertained by Fromm since his association with the Frankfurt School in Germany. I should thank Dr. Michael Ott for reminding me about the importance of materialist reading of historical humanism in the work of Erich Fromm. However I tend to think that Fromm's materialism is closer to Mosaic notion of worldliness rather than atheistic tendencies of 18th century Europe.

Meister Eckhart: How Christian Mysticism Appropriates Absurdist Challenge

Mohammad Maroof Shah
Rajbag Colony, Nagbal, Ganderbal, Kashmir

Abstract

Modern nihilism, pessimism, absurdism and various responses to the problem of finding meaning and values after the death of God may be better understood and appreciated and critically negotiated by comparing them with the theses of perennial philosophy. Eckhart, a spokesperson of *Sophia perennis*, presents the version of religion that appropriates absurdist challenge in a novel manner. His metaphysical/mystical reading of Christianity is largely immune to existentialist-absurdist critiques as he doesn't invoke problematic conceptions of divinity, hope, consolation and soul or self and he upholds the thesis of essential nondifference between man and God by virtue of uncreated Spirit.

Absurdism, in this paper, is conceived as any philosophical position that finds no (absolute) meaning in life, and declares man's search for traditional values of goodness, perfection, lasting peace, love etc. illusory. It is marked by despair, nausea, eternal alienation from God and an irresolvable tussle between being and becoming and head and heart. It declares life to be a "futile passion." God, the ground of meaning, purpose and other values that justify life and man's existence is declared dead or absent by skeptics. Absurdism is logical consequence of nihilism. The declaration of God's death is the manifesto of absurdism. Central to Camus' ideas of metaphysical revolt and the absurdist thesis shared by many influential twentieth century writers is what traditional philosophy and philosophy of religion treats under the heading of the problem of evil. The problem of evil has been

presented by most detractors of theism or religion as death knell of the latter and unsolvable problem for a believer. Most modern authors following Nietzsche such as Mann, Joyce, Gide, Nikos Kazantzakis, Joseph Conrad and Somerset Maugham see in the presence of so much evil and suffering the sufficient warrant for their disbelief in traditional theistic God and the associated belief in the meaning of life or universe. In our opinion, modern nihilism, pessimism, absurdism and various responses to the problem of finding meaning and values after the death of God may be better understood and appreciated and critically negotiated by comparing them with the theses of perennial philosophy. Some proposed solutions to the problem of nihilism could interestingly and profitably be compared with the classical attempts by mystics and mystical philosophers made for (dis)solving this problem. Certain Eastern philosophical and mystical traditions have long been familiar with the problem and have arrived at a definitive solution. One of the greatest exponents of perennial philosophy in Christianity who can well provide a corrective to certain modern approaches is Meister Eckhart though he has not been duly appreciated from this perspective. We see remarkable parallels between him and certain seminal modern thinkers and “seers.” These include, among others, dissolution or illusion of self and *amor fati*. His conception of God is not susceptible to usual critiques of theism and appropriates modern objections quite ingeniously. We can well imagine a friendly dialogue between Nietzsche and Eckhart. His conception of disinterest, detachment and resignation well appropriates the positive insights of modern arguments for transcendence of traditional ethics. His Godhead is beyond good and evil and his faith is in one’s own divinity and not some God out there whom Tillich announces as finally dead. Modern death of God theology and postmodern theology will greatly profit by turning to him for insight. He presents a version of Buddhist Christianity and is hardly distinguishable, like Simone Weil, as a saint of a particular tradition who could not be adequately appreciated and understood from other traditions as well. The quintessence of traditional metaphysics can be gleaned from his sermons. He can’t be accused of bad faith by Sartre and any fideism or dogmatism by rationalists. His response to the problem of suffering is one of the most penetrating in the history of religion and philosophy. His is arguably the best practical manual and

theoretical attempt at theodicy written in the history of Western thought. His personality has enough magnetism to attract men across traditions and cultures. Shorn of his theological language and expressed in metaphysical or philosophical terms he can be universally appreciated. Taking him seriously one may well look at modern thought with its orientation against God or transcendence as needlessly reactionary, deeply problematic and even naïve at times.

If we read Eckhart metaphysically we find great correctives to traditional theological understanding of transcendence which absurdists find difficult to accept. It is difficult to see him advocating any exclusivist dogmatic theses that we need to contest. It is difficult to distinguish his sermons from the sermons of any Buddhist or Sufi saint. Disinterest, self-denial, charity, love these form practically essential religion. Modernity and postmodernity have essentially no argument against these values and indeed acknowledge them. Nihilism has been overcome by a shift in perception emphasized by different traditions in their own ways.

Nietzsche argued for *amor fati* and this is *the* way to overcome nihilism for him as it is for all Eastern traditions centred on Absolute. Traditional metaphysical doctrines assert that everything is planned or under the care of providence and expression of Divine Infinitude. Nothing happens of which there is no account with God. Whatever happens is according to the inexorable law of karma/fate. Man is no judge of things heavenly. He must submit to the divine order of things. This is close to Spinoza's view also. Stoical approach is not different regarding what happens. One shouldn't want or desire anything. It is in Eckhart that we find the idea of *amor fati* advocated with great force. Coomaraswamy has brilliantly shown essential mystical orientation and thus orthodoxy of Nietzsche's thought. Nietzsche though many times succumbing to exaggerations and distortions does uphold the kernel of mystical doctrines, whether it is *amor fati*, transcendence of good and evil or superman. The best prayer, according to Eckhart, is "Lord, give me nothing but what thou wilt and dost – Lord, what and how thou wilt in every detail. There is no "I want this" in true obedience" (Eckhart, 1973: 4). Even to hell, if a saint is sent, he will not resent. This is the

prayer that even Nietzsche would envy. One who has renounced everything will not pray for anything, not even eternal life, not for virtue, not for God conceived as an object. He will not despair even if he goes to hell and receives from God nothing but suffering. Nietzsche couldn't conceive how the last lonely man will tolerate solitude. But the obedient soul who loves the order of things or Tao or God unconditionally can tolerate even hell. Nietzsche's cry to Eternal Everywhere, Eternal Nowhere ("Where is my home? I seek and have sought and have not found it. O eternal everywhere, O eternal nowhere, O eternal in vain") shows he is not at peace with fate, with things as they are. For the saint dissolves himself so that only things are. It needs pure heart to be at peace, to accept and affirm the impersonal order of things. Only a pure heart is capable of such a feat. As Eckhart says:

A pure heart is one who is unencumbered, unworried, uncommitted, and which doesn't want its own way about anything but which, rather, is submerged in the loving will of God, having denied self. Let a job be ever so inconsiderable, it will be raised in effectiveness and dimension by a pure heart" (Eckhart, 1973: 4).

The theme of *amor fati* is best illustrated by a story that Eckhart tells us and this is one of the most beautiful tales on the theme in the whole mystical literature of Christianity.

A great teacher once told a story in his preaching about a man who for eight years besought God to show him a man who would make known to him the way of truth. While he was in this state of anxiety there came a voice from God and spake to him: Go in front of the church, and there shalt thou find a man who will make known to thee the way of truth. He went, and found a poor man whose feet were chapped and full of dirt, and all his clothes were hardly worth two pence-halfpenny. He greeted this poor man and said to him, God give thee a good morning. The poor man answered, I never had a bad morning. The other said, God give thee happiness. How answerest thou that? The poor man answered, I was never unhappy. The first then said, God send thee blessedness. How answerest thou that? I was never unblessed, was the answer. Lastly the questioner said, God give thee health! Now enlighten me, for I cannot understand it. And the poor

man replied, When thou saidst to me, may God give thee a good morning, I said I never had a bad morning. If I am hungry, I praise God for it; if I am cold, I praise God for it; if I am distressful and despised, I praise God for it; and that is why I never had a bad morning. When thou askedst God to give me happiness, I answered that I had never been unhappy; for what God gives or ordains for me, whether it be His love or suffering, sour or sweet, I take it all from God as being the best, and that is why I was never unhappy. Thou saidst further, May God make thee blessed, and I said, I was never unblessed, for I have given up my will so entirely to God's will, that what God wills, that I also will, and that is why I was never unblessed, because I willed alone God's will. Ah! dear fellow, replied the man; but if God should will to throw thee into hell, what wouldst thou say then? He replied, Throw me into hell! Then I would resist Him. But even if He threw me into hell, I should still have two arms wherewith to embrace Him. One arm is true humility, which I should place under Him, and with the arm of love I should embrace Him. And he concluded, I would rather be in hell and possess God, than in the kingdom of heaven without Him.

One is reminded of Sufis when reading Eckhart on almost every point. See how a Sufi perceives with absolute indifference the manifestation of different *jalali*(majestic) and *jamali* (beautiful) attributes of God. For instance, Sarmad, a medieval Sufi poet, says in of his quatrains:

At times, He shows love and affection, at other times indifference and tyranny,
At every moment, He shows Himself in thousand ways
Widen the range of thy eyesight, so that He may come in thy lap;
When once he mixes with thee, shall never again desert thee ever for a single moment (tr. Sharib, 1940: 3).

Iqbal says in his *Persian Psalms* “Love, lovelessness, troth, treachery-
/All things alike are sprung of thee” (tr.Arberry, 1996: 27). And

Thine is the hawk upon the wing
And thine the thrush sweet-carolling,
Thine is the light and joy of life
And thine its fire and baneful strife (tr.Arberry1996: 26).

Eckhart asserts that "Saints ever waiting for God, ever finding Him in all things so nothing can make them lose heart." Beckett's tramps (modern man) wait for God but are unable to find him. This reflects their poverty rather than God's absence or failure to come. God's grace is always present though man may be absent to receive it as Frithjof Schuon has profoundly remarked. There is no time lag between man's readiness to receive God and God's coming. It is a great art to find God. Modern man is expert in playing games, in seducing women, in writing fiction, in the art of destruction but they have not mastered the art of submitting, the art of being still so that God makes it a dwelling place. Explicating the verse "Like people always on the watch, expecting their Lord" Eckhart says:

Expectant people are watchful, always looking for him they expect, always ready to find him in whatever comes along; however strange it may be, they always think he might be in it. This is what awareness of the Lord is to be like and it requires diligence that taxes a man's senses and powers to the utmost, if he is to achieve it and to take God evenly in all things – if he is to find God as much in one thing as in another (Eckhart, 1973: 11).

It is the mystical conception of prayer as distinguished from petition for this and that need or end that shows the religious way to endure the apparent absence of God in the world.

Then I ask: what is the prayer of the disinterested heart? I answer by saying that a disinterested man, pure in heart, has no prayer, for to pray is to want something from God, something added that one desires, or something that God is to take away. The disinterested person, however, wants nothing, and neither has he anything of which he would be rid (Eckhart, 1973: 88-89).

Gratitude to God for everything under the sun is the first fruit of faith in God. In fact faith is an attitude of gratitude towards the giver of life. Religion is trust, absolute trust, unconditional trust in Existence, in the creative energy that sustains life. Osho explicates the metaphysical-

mystical conception of God as Totality, as Reality, as Isness to show how a mystic encounters the world in the following words:

God is the guarantee of goodness. God means the good. The good is the substratum of existence, so evil is not possible. Evil is impossible. We must have misrepresented; we must have brought our own ideas, concepts, doctrines; we must have created our own stupid private notions of how things should be. Things simply *are*. There is no *should* in existence. The idea of should is brought by man – and once you bring the idea of should, existence is divided into two: good and bad... only that which is, is; nothing else. Reality is as it is; don't bring the should, otherwise the condemnation comes (Osho, 1981:10).

He further explains how a grateful heart necessarily implies justifying the Divine Order. We need not speculate on the character of divinity – in fact truly devout or religious mind is averse to theological or metaphysical speculation but only cultivate purity of heart or virtuous disposition. Any conception of a personal God whose character could be thus implicated is not needed here. He says:

Life is god's grace, and so is death. Love is god's grace, and so is all that ever happens, good and bad too. One who understands this is not only grateful for all that is good but is also grateful for all that appears bad; that is real gratefulness. To be grateful only for the happy moments is nothing of gratefulness, that is simple greed, cunningness, but it has nothing to do with gratefulness (Osho, 2001: 60).

Eckhart's statements can now be better understood in light of these quotes. To quote him: "Love is confidence itself in the good and therefore there is no need to speak of the Lover and the beloved... God himself is the confidence itself in the good by which one is sure of him, as sure as all who love him are" (Eckhart, 1973: 20). "All things are to the saint simply channels of the divine and spiritual" (Eckhart, 1973: 31).

The traditional metaphysics has no room for sentimentalism, for the clouding of judgment on account of emotions and affectations. It is also not moralistic. Sentimentalism and moralism are Western heresies as Guenon has noted in his *An Introduction to the Study of Hindu*

Doctrines and colour (and thus distort) Western understanding of evil. I will not elaborate this point here but only quote Eckhart's remarks on how to love God to illustrate the difference in perspectives.

Love God whether he is loving or not, and certainly not because he is loving, for he is nonloving, being above love and affection... true love is union. Your soul ought to be deghosted, void of ghosts, and be kept so. For if you love God as a god, a ghost, a person, or as if he were something with a form- you must get rid of all that.

How then, shall, I love him as he is, a not-god, a not-ghost, apersonal, formless. Love him as he is the One, pure, sheer and limpid, in whom there is no duality; for we have to sink eternally from negation to negation in the One (Eckhart, 1973: 248).

He who lives lovingly lives by what is good in his nature and within the love of God – a love that asks no questions. If I have a friend and love him so that he may benefit me and do what I wish, then I don't love my friend at all but rather myself. I am to love my friend for his own sake, for the goodness and virtue of him, for all that he himself is and then I shall truly love him, in the real sense of the word. This is how it is with the person who lives in God's love, who doesn't seek his own welfare, either in God or himself or any other, who loves God only for his goodness, for the sake of the goodness of his nature and all that He himself is. That is true love (Eckhart, 1973: 188).

In fact this explains the statement God is love. When one truly loves, all questions disappear, all judgments are gone. To love God truly implies one is lifted above the fret and fever of life. It means one no longer seeks his interests, no longer wills his will be done but the will of the Father in heaven, who "holds all goodness in his hands" and from whom only good flows, who measures out every thing, every good and evil, who is good and radiates goodness. One who has found love has triumphed over suffering. In the kingdom of love there is no time, no ego, no mind, no thought, no distinction and no duality and thus no alienation, no anguish, no nausea. Saints don't argue for the existence of God, but they live God by living lovingly. They see and experience for themselves the goodness of God by living lovingly. And

he who loves has reached the other shore. He has no need of argument. If we could truly love death will lose its sting and evil its dominion. Sufism answers the problem of evil not by rational argument but by the argument of heart, *ishq*, divine love cures all diseases. "It is Plato and Galen, the panacea for all ills" as Rumi says. By being true to their Beloved, they transcend the world in which otherwise one sees no help for pain, no joy, no peace. The secular man doesn't know what celestial love is. He pins all his hope in interpersonal love which is only a distant and poor reflection of celestial or divine love and no wonder he is disillusioned and despairs. This notion of love can't overcome the feeling of absurdity. If Camus knew the love that if revealed to kings would make them renounce their kingdoms for good as Rumi tells us, he would not have despaired. If Hemingway had an inkling of it Nada wouldn't have led him to suicide. The question of suicide doesn't arise for the true lovers. Far from being the only important philosophical question it is hardly an issue at all. Love lets one glimpse the founts of larger life, Life that knows no death. This is the report of the mystics and we have no warrant for disbelieving them, especially their experience of joy though there might be some warrant for debating their interpretations, the cognitive claims and metaphysical structures erected on the basis of their experience. Those who have not fallen in love are not good judges of what it really is all about. Nonmystics can't pass on judgment on the experience itself, which is, by universal agreement, the experience of joy unspeakable.

Another tragic note in religions is the fact that few are chosen. Most people are heedless and God in turn forgets them. Very few travel to the end of the road. The road to God is studded with thorns. However the fact remains that it is man who is responsible. The error of judgment occurs from his side on account of *avidya*, ignorance. The onus falls on man. God is always in control, always merciful, always present though it is man who is usually absent and therefore delays the operation of grace. It is not that God out of His capricious will withholds grace from the majority of people. Few are chosen but here onus falls on man. It is few who are prepared to part with everything, to deny themselves for the sake of love. Few choose to be nothing and thus don't qualify as true lovers. Love saves all and God is love but few

make themselves worthy of this love. Sin and pride block the rays of the sun of mercy and grace. God asks man to take the first step, to leave space empty for Him to take dwelling in his heart. Truth is One; it can't tolerate duality. Clouds of passion and pride must part to let the sun of the Spirit shine which is ever shining, ever burning in the secret recesses of our being. It is not every body's cup of tea to love truly though in the end, one day or the other day all have to pass through this narrow gate of love. "Perfection depends only on accepting poverty, misery, hardship, disappointment, and whatever comes in course, and accepting it willingly, gladly, freely, eagerly until death, as if one were prepared for it and therefore unmoved by it and not asking why" (Eckhart, 1973: 230).

This is the Sufistic station of *raza* (acceptance), and obviously not every one's cup of tea. However, despite man's stubborn refusal of grace, his proclivity to sin, his heedlessness, God arranges everyone's return to Him, the source of all goodness and perfection. Whatever happens to man, the sweet and sour of every experience does contribute to our return journey home. There is a providence that shapes our ends even if we are unconscious of its ways and forms, even if we do everything to avoid that fateful encounter with nothingness but beyond which and by virtue of which we are transported out of the order of time to the order of eternity, out of the visible world, the world of scent and colour to the formless world of Spirit, the eternal fount of joy and bliss. Stage by stage, slowly but surely and inexorably the world moves to meet that far off event, that Omega point where there is transcended all phenomenality, all accidentality, all sorrow and pain. The traditions ensure that everyone is saved in the end even though they envisages for some the ordeal of fire, the painful realization of the pangs of separation from God in hell. The ordeal of suffering on earth is substitutes or mimics eschatological fire and that is why God in His mercy has imposed it here. Suffering is indeed God's lasso. The doctrine of universal salvation, found in all traditions that exotericists may not recognize this, is based on the preponderance of Mercy that God has imposed on himself. God is the Merciful, as the Quran repeatedly affirms.

We find much hue and cry raised in various quarters regarding the great amount and intensity of pain and suffering. It is sometimes asserted that nothing can match the experience of intense suffering, that nothing can erase its memory, that it makes meaningless all arguments for justifying the wisdom and goodness of God. These wounds, it is claimed, are eternally green and can't be healed. Maugham asserts that an experience of innocent child's suffering is enough to make one deaf to all theodicy. It is argued that there is no cure for pain, no justification for it and no. There are also critics of theodicy who argue that the sum total of pain and sorrow exceeds that of happiness, that experience of joy is only an insignificant interruption in the general drama of pain. This is based on evaluating the things from the limited sensualist empiricist perspective. If there were a way of quantifying the joy that mystics experience and if it were taken into consideration our evaluation would drastically change. From the cosmic perspective evil is quite limited as Schuon has argued. Eckhart, on the basis of his own experience that he shares with the world fraternity of mystics, that there is an agent in the soul, untouched by time and flesh and the thorns of pain, which proceeds out of the Spirit and which remains forever in the Spirit. "In this agent, God is perpetually verdant and flowering with a joy and glory that is in him. Here is joy so hearty, such inconceivable great joy that no one can ever fully tell it" (Eckhart, 1973: 211).

Eckhart further elaborates:

For this reason, if a person had a whole kingdom or all this world's goods and left it solely for God's sake, to become the poorest man who ever lived on earth, and if then God gave him as much to suffer as he ever gave any man, and if this person suffered it out until he was dead, and if then, even for the space of a moment, God once let him see what he is in this agent of the soul, all his suffering and poverty would seem like a very little thing beside the joy of it, so great in that moment (Eckhart, 1973: 209).

Eckhart talks of another agent which though not incarnate but which proceeds out of the Spirit where

God glows and burns without ceasing, in all his fulness, sweetness and rapture. Truly, it holds joy so great and rapture so unmeasured

that no one can tell it or reveal it. Yet I say that if there were one person who could look into it for a moment and keep his right mind, all he had ever suffered or that God wished him to suffer would be a very little thing indeed, nothing at all. Nay- I go even further- suffering would be to him always a joy and pleasure (Eckhart, 1973: 210).

One is thereby transported out of this earthly plane. The puzzle of the suffering of good man, which appears even scandalous to certain men of feeble imagination, is easily understandable according to Eckhart. He criticizes those who are astonished to see good man suffer and attribute it to obscure sins. To quote him again: "...if it were pain and misery and only these that the man felt, he would not be good or without sin; but if a person is good, his suffering doesn't mean pain, unhappiness, or misery to him but rather a great delight and blessing. The Lord says: Blessed are they that suffer for God and righteousness" (Eckhart, 1973: 69).

From the perennialists perspective there can be no absolute evil and all evil is subservient to or integrated in or contributes to good even though it may not be possible for us to imagine how in every case. Though suffering is plainly something that expresses a lack, a sign of imperfection, misjudgment or ignorance, it in turn may function to take us to perfection. It is not mere punishment for the sake of punishment but can prove often a blessing in disguise. Semitic traditions have especially pointed out the purifying, ennobling, and other functions of suffering. In the divine economy suffering has its own place. There is no such thing as pure blank or mere waste in the world of God. The light of God shines everywhere, even in seemingly impenetrable darkness. Even hell is not totally opaque to it. Divine Mercy envelops everything. Here a brief note on positive value of suffering follows.

According to Eckhart, there is nothing nobler than suffering. Schuon comments: "This is the teaching of ascetics and martyrs because it is the teaching of Christ. 'And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.'" Schuon further says that for man suffering is like a crack in his existential illusion. Man draws nearer to God through suffering – that is to say, through sacrifice, renunciation,

poverty, extinction and loss of self. Many spiritual paths capitalize on the soul-lifting function of voluntary sacrifice and suffering. As Schuon notes, even simple mental concentration implies sacrifice. Suffering affirms the Principle by denying the manifestation. However one must distinguish, as Schuon cautions, between the cult of suffering from the spiritualizing of suffering. “Clearly, what matters is not that man should suffer, but that he should think of God. Suffering has no value except in so far as it provokes, makes deeper and perpetuates this thought.” There is a test to determine whether our suffering is ours or of God. Here all those who have no burning faith, who have not denied themselves, who are not thoroughly poor in spirit, who are humanists with a closely guarded sense of the self and don’t understand the night of Golgatha, the humiliation of the cross will not pass the test. In Eckhart’s words:

If you wish to know rightly whether your suffering is yours or of God, you can tell in the following way. If you are suffering because of yourself, whatever the manner, that suffering hurts and is hard to bear. If you suffer for God’s sake and for God alone, that suffering doesn’t hurt and is not hard to bear, for God takes the burden of it... what one suffers through God and for God alone is made sweet and easy (Eckhart, 1973: 210).

“Without sorrow no one is ennobled” records a German proverb. A quote from Tanhuma Shemoth runs:

Holy one, blessed be he,
Gave Israel three precious gifts,
Torah, the land of Israel and the world to come, but none of them
were given except through suffering.

For Eckhart the claim that one suffers is not a matter of reproach against God. It counts as an evidence against us. Absurdist’s claim that God fails to explain his position, to justify his ways to man is thus easily dismissed. We suffer because we have not turned to God – to God alone. As Eckhart remarked: “Surely suffering is due to our failure to aim at him and him alone; for if you are reborn and clothed in justice, then truly nothing could hurt you any more than God’s own justice

would” (Eckhart, 1973: 45). The stringent condition is that we love God and God alone and not any created thing, the loss of which may result in sorrow. “Whatever is not God bears in itself a native bitterness, discomfort, and sorrow and it can never make for good, the good which is only in God” (Eckhart, 1973: 46). “It is impossible to find true comfort when one looks to a creature for it, “but those who love only God in the creature and the creature only in God shall discover real, true, and apposite comfort on all sides” (Eckhart, 1973). Eckhart maintains that “sorrow comes from loving what I can’t have. If I am sad about my losses, that is a sure sign that I love external things and really enjoy my sorrow and dis-ease. If one is sad about any thing, the created entities that are not God, it means one is not pure in love, truly just and still has the devil, the self there” (Eckhart, 1973: 46). The Buddha’s argument is exactly similar that sorrow comes from desire, from affection for things earthly, things transitory. God or the Void is loved by only those who are not, who have sold their souls and realized the truth of *annata*. To love created things, things made or compounded, to long for pleasure and solace in outward things is to associate partners with God in the Quranic vocabulary. Absurdist and critics of theodicy presuppose a very naïve view of the nature of things, of the laws that fashion them and lead to their suffering. There is no warrant for disgruntling and complaint. To quote Eckhart: “A good man can never complain of his misfortunes and distresses; he may only complain of his complaining – that he should be aware of it at all” (Eckhart, 1973: 49). Those who trust everything to God are not eager for anything under the sun. To quote Eckhart again: “if I am sad for passing things, not loving God with all my heart nor even giving him the love he might justly expect to meet in me, what wonder if God ordained that I should still suffer loss and pain” (Eckhart, 1973: 48). Eckhart’s argument is simple and straight forward that if one is good and believes God to be good and in control there is absolutely no ground for getting sad and troubled. By definition there can be no good man who doesn’t want what God wants, “because it is not possible that God should not want anything but goodness, and just because of this, when God does want something, it must be not only for the good but for the best.” We have been taught to pray that God’s will be done. From this it follows that we have no ground for complaint for whatever happens by the will of God. Seneca when asked

what comfort might be best for those in misery has expressed this Christian-Islamic insight thus: "It is for man to take everything that comes as if he had asked for it, nay, as if he had prayed for it." Those who have truly surrendered or submitted to the will of Allah seek only to glorify, to please God. Their prayer is 'God! Grant us the will to will whatsoever You will.' This is a corollary of the station of *raza* that believers seek. Eckhart has quoted a prayer from a non-Christian authority in this connection: "Lord, supreme Father and only Master of high heaven, I am ready for anything you will; only give me the will to want what you will." One can quote dozens of Sufi sayings in this connection. Just one will suffice from Ba Yazid: "I only will not to will." Hell is nothing but self will procured by sin which is a form of self-love. William Law has expressed this point succinctly. "See here the whole truth in short. All sin, death, damnation, and hell is nothing else but this kingdom of self, or the various operations of self-love, self esteem, and self seeking which separate the soul from God, and end in eternal death and hell."

A man of God is not worried about finding reason to live. It is the self that needs consolation, that needs meaning, that wants to comprehend, that wants justice or reward, that questions and seeks explanations, that wants love or be loved or recognized, that wants any kind of nourishment, that demands props to move on, that wishes suffering to be lifted. Truth is horrifying according to Nietzsche and man can't live with naked truth. Saints like Eckhart prove him wrong. Saints don't invent the lie of art to conceal the horror of truth but love fate so completely and so selflessly that they never complain. The truth that both Nietzsche and mystics like Eckhart very well know is that the self is a fiction. Man must endure without resentment every accident that befalls him and live without appeal, without any need to be consoled, without prayers for change of fortune and resolutely, heroically face the nothingness at the heart of every existent. There is no respect for the individual, his wishes, sighs and dreams. No remedy for the pains that flesh is heir to is there. God is absent in the sense Weil understands it. Saints love God/world in all circumstances and find him equally present in everything, pleasant or painful. They are nonjudgmental as

Christ teaches. They have perfected the art of attention. They don't wish to be spared.

The friends of God have no fear and sorrow. This Quranic declaration states something that Nietzsche, Camus and Beckett don't understand. Fear is born of ignorance – all Beckett's characters have some sort of fear and consequent sorrow. Fear of silence, fear of nothingness, fear of others, fear. Fear is treated by knowledge and knowledge is not possessed by them. Fear is overcome when security seeking self is dislodged. In fact the friends of God know no sorrow – they never encounter it to be outraged, to contemplate of returning the ticket of life to God. Their inner repose born out of attention, awareness and detachment isn't disturbed by the sight of a child dying of meningitis or even if the whole population of the world were being consigned to the flames of hell. They are ever praising and not just enduring the spectacles that destiny brings or God chooses to display at a given moment.

Granted that truth is horrifying as Nietzsche reiterated nothing matters for the saint. Truth sets one free and it is not that truth is pleasing that man would be set free by it. The saint sees more perceptively than Nietzsche that truth is horrifying. The saint has no expectations, he is no slave of pleasure-pain principle. He renounces everything. He loves unconditionally. Even the most horrible hell. If the truth is tragic he affirms that too. He knows nothing is his or he is nothing so why should any thing be a matter of horror.

Religious vision is deeply tragic from the perspective of individualist humanist anthropocentric man. Self – the dearest possession of man –, has to be sacrificed. In fact this world and all its uses don't count even for a gnat. The saint plunges headlong and unhesitatingly into the deserts of divine darkness.

It is the spirit which is not *his* that the saint strives for – there is no motive, no reward, no heaven of pleasures for his own sake. Those who wish to sound grandly heroic and tough and great moralists – creators of values not built on comforting lies can't even think of such an ideal.

One wonders what is comforting in Christian vision. In fact it is all sacrifice – it is cross and the agony of Golgatha. It is silent heavens above and abandoned man below. It is man with his dearest self and all possessions renouncing everything and going naked, letting things be.

Given the existence of suffering, either we may reject the suffering with all the resentment or we may accept it with all our devotion and love. Beckett follows the former while as the mystic the latter. Our goal is determined by our choice. Beckett chooses despair and horror in suffering while as a mystic perceives heaven through suffering. Meister Eckhart is worth quoting in this connection:

...sorrow comes of affection and love, for these are the beginning and the end of sorrow. Thus, if I am sad for passing things, not loving God with all my heart nor even giving him the love that he might justly expect to meet in me, what wonder if God ordained that I should still suffer loss and pain?

St. Augustine says: “Lord, I did not want to lose you, but I did not want to own some creatures besides you. It was because of my greed that I lost you – for it did not please you that anyone should own creatures that are false and at the same time own you who are the truth...He who is not satisfied with God alone is much too greedy.” How could the creatures God gives satisfy a man who is not satisfied by God himself?

Things cannot comfort or satisfy a good man but, rather, anything other than God or alien to him will be painful. He will always say: Lord God, when you send me elsewhere than into your own presence, give me then another *you*; for you are my comfort and I want you only...(Eckhart, 1973: 48).

God can't be interrogated or put on trial if we understand what God is. God is not some interested being out there who observes things from outside and subjects them to this or that arbitrary fate. Fate is tied to one's neck at the time of birth and God has nothing to do with what evil befalls him as he attracts it himself. Eckhart argues that one can't complain of injustice or evil one suffers if one is truly just. Camus' rejection of God on the supposed charges of injustice against him only shows that Camus has little understanding of what a truly just person is.

One need not justify God, only perfect one's virtue of justice. A perfectly just person doesn't ask why he suffered because he doesn't deem himself to be innocent. There is no belief in compensation involved, no invoking of some hidden agenda, no resort to any hypothesis in Eckhart. He is perfectly logical in his thesis that no evil befalls a just person or is not perceived so. To quote him:

Now I say that when external harm befalls a good or just person, and he is not excited by it and the peace in his remains undisturbed, then what I have been saying is verified: the just are not troubled by anything that befalls them. If, however, a man is troubled by some external harm, then truly it is only fair and just of God to have ordained that the harm befall the man who could believe himself just and yet be upset by so little a thing. And if it is just of God, then truly the man need not mind but he ought far more to rejoice than he does at his own life...

The third truth one should and may know is this: the elemental fact is that the only stream, the only living artery of goodness, real truth, and perfect comfort is God, and that whatever is not God bears in itself a native bitterness, discomfort, and sorrow and it can never make for good, the good which is only of God. Rather, it diminishes, covers up and conceals the sweetness, the rapture and comfort of God.

I further maintain that sorrow comes of loving what I cannot have. If I am sad about my own losses that is a sure sign that I love external things and really enjoy my sorrow and disease. What wonder, then, that I grow sad, loving my affliction and sorrow, if my heart seeks what it has lost and my mind attributes to things what belongs to God alone? I turn toward the creature from which discomfort comes in course and turn away from him from whom joy and comfort naturally come. What wonder, then, that I am sad and grow sadder? Truly it is impossible either for God or the world that any person should ever find true comfort when he looks to a creature for it, but those who only love God in the creature and the creature only in God shall discover real, true, and opposite comfort on all sides (Eckhart, 1973: 47).

It is one's *avidya* (ignorance) according to Eckhart which makes him grieve and disgruntled. Nothing is accidental in the scheme of things. Nothing is unmerited. Nothing that would respect human vanity, desires, pleasures and all the creations and defences of ego. Nothing that should necessarily conform to human reason that is severed from Reality is reality. Truth is truth. Things are as they are. One feels fear and sorrow if one doesn't orient oneself towards truth. Freedom is brought by truth. And truth is the nature of things, the knowledge of essences. One sees things as they are – this was the Prophet of Islam's prayer in which he asks God to show him things as they are.

Religion overcomes nihilism by overcoming the seeking self which desires to overcome it. With the disappearance of desiring self nothing remains to be overcome. Nothing is to be saved from the wreckage of the self and the world. Even nihilism grants supraindividual principle of Life and its values, in whatever guise are associated because life is affirmed, the universe is affirmed by even nihilists. The doctrine regarding the Spirit, the uncreated part in us that is detached from everything and has nothing to possess in the world of manifestation remains unchallenged by any nihilistic rhetoric. Buddhist doctrine of *annata* is perhaps the most sophisticated and thoroughgoing critiques of the idea of self or soul but it too leaves the Spirit untouched as traditionalist interpreters of Buddhism have argued. All problems that nihilistic philosophies face could be avoided if one could indeed hold that there remains nothing to be worried about. Thoroughgoing nihilism reduces everything to nothing, all problems to pseudoproblems, all values to fictions and all needs to affirm anything, to deny anything, to be anything, to do anything, to worry about justifying or critiquing anything because nothing is really. There is no such nihilist in sight however as nihilism destroys itself. As long as one affirms anything one affirms with the associated value dimension. It may be noted that nihilism can deny what is, what exists, what one believes, what one could either affirm or deny. But the conception of nonbeing, of Nothing, of the Spirit that transcends existence, that ever remains unmanifest, undiminished, unchanged outside time and space resists nihilistic strictures. Nothing that pertains to the world of phenomena, birth or death is affecting the world of unmanifest Spirit. Everything is

destroyed save the Face of God, declares the Quran. It implies destruction of everything in the world with all its dreams, aspirations, values and what counts, what persists is the face of God, the supraformal Essence, Life as abstracted from all phenomenal concretizations. And one may further note that God is Destroyer, Shiva in traditional context who brings to nought every existent, who restores every thing to its original nothingness. The doctrine of apocalactastasis is too hard for even contemplation by a diehard nihilist. Religions, metaphysically viewed, have long gone farther than any nihilist could go in negating but there is Nothing that can't be negated without self contradiction. God is this Nothing, Shunyata, who can't be imagined away do what one may. Religion demands that man consent to be nothing, to be decreed. Nihilists are far from consenting to be nothing. Nihilism is too much a part of religion for modern nihilists to challenge it. Nihilists can't teach believers to destroy all earthly foundations. All creaturely good, all merely human values because all these things are already transcended when one negates every thing that is not Self, that is not Nothing, that belongs to the world.

If nihilism is consequence of Christian-moral interpretation as Nietzsche thinks then overcoming it should be possible by esoteric transmoral interpretation which does away with the God wholly transcendent, beyond out there and giver of law, curtailer of freedom of man. Esoterism gives divine freedom to divine man, to twice born man who is reborn in the kingdom of God. What Nietzsche does to exoteric Christianity mystics such as Eckhart have already done if we closely read them and translate their theological language in philosophical/metaphysical terms. There is no true world posited over and above, in complete opposition of this world. This world looked from the perspective of eternity is that world. Mystics discern God here and now and see every garden as the Garden of Eden. They know neither good nor evil having transcended both. They have no hope and no need of consolation. Every moment they breathe God. Every tree is the tree of paradise. They have renounced not only the other world but all the worlds. They have seen through the façade of ego and all its constructions to be disturbed by fate's eccentricities. They have perfected the art of loving fate. Gods salutes them every moment.

Mystics have no problem if everything recurred eternally. They have transcended every attachment and have no interest in wishing to alter the flow of events, to resent becoming. In fact they are great celebrators. They unconditionally accept everything, affirm everything, see God in everything and see nothing apart from God in anything. They are yes-sayers of everything, and have even hailed the Prince of Darkness (Rumi has called him *Khawaja ahli firaq*, the Prince of lovers of God. For Sufis he is amongst the greatest of *muwahids* (those who affirm God's unity). They have experienced God in their own selves and thus transcended choosing, judging self and good or consciousness/evil binary. They know no sin, no guilt. Joy, gaiety, self-abandon, music, unconditional affirmation (love), innocence, no condemnation or judgment - these are the attributes of the twice born man or Eckhart's "man of God." The man of God neither evaluates nor judges nor resists nor resents nor fears nor hopes nor despairs. This is the ideal character that Nietzschean Superman would wish to appropriate. Needing nothing, desiring nothing they are lords of everything. Truth has set them free – free from all desires, attachments, obsessions, pleasure-pain principle, hope and despair, this world and the other world, earth and heaven. They are *jivan-mukta*. Once free they are truly liberated from all bondage and can enjoy everything because they love God and see Him equally in all things. They are their own laws. The law is for them and they are not for the law. They live under the tutelage of the Holy Spirit.

Eastern traditions and mysticism counter as well as appropriate the nihilist and absurdist theses and it is in Eckhart that we find one of the most convincing formulations of perennialist thought. We may briefly sum up the Eastern perspective vis-à-vis nihilist and absurdist thought currents keeping in view Eckhart's formulation.

- The various corollaries of the thesis of nihilism such as futility and vanity of all human endeavors, fragility of individuality, suffering of being, absence of God in the world of necessity, evanescence of earthly good, the tragedy of unfulfilled intentions, no use of anything merely worldly, nothingness at the heart of being and futility of human dreams, aspirations and hopes that ego constructs, are part and parcel of

religious/mystical worldviews but don't warrant the despairing conclusions that absurdist writers draw. In Eckhart all these things are present but his conclusion is not despairing.

- The doctrines of traditional religions which include immortality of the spirit, the possibility of knowledge of essences/God provable or discoverable by meditation/prayer/contemplation and transcendence of suffering or *dukkha* are not refutable by any empirical investigation or rationalistic philosophy or logical argument. Ideally mysticism advocates no doctrines and is only an art of living that appeal to no outside authority or philosophical arguments. It is just an art of awareness individually practizable or verifiable by anybody.
- There is no possibility of overcoming nihilism through any route that denies transcendence and locates human essence in finitistic immanentist view. Mysticism and traditional metaphysics can rescue (post)modern man out of the abyss of nihilistic despair. And it is in Eckhart that we find articulated a version of perennial philosophy that modern man will find immensely relevant and valuable. Mystical traditions, as it will be argued, provide the elusive light that Ionesco prized above everything and which redeems existence from its absurdity. From the Eastern perspective that is the light of the Self. God is the "light of the heavens and the earth" in the Quranic phrase. Mysticism endeavours to bring that light that illumines everything, that makes everything look marvelous, an abiding miracle, and a manifestation of God. To recapture that wonder of existence or life and to live life in that awareness of the light is the purpose of religions, mysticism and traditional metaphysics. Higher literature too endeavours to reenchant the deserted wasteland of our hearts. Absurdist rightly point out the illusory nature of the idols modern Western man has constructed. But they don't see clearly the other world that lies deep within every one of us in which lies the source of the light that never was on earth but that illumines everything and that redeems all the suffering that our body and mind are heir to.

- The Eastern position is that the individual doesn't count, the soul (as distinguished from the transindividual faculty of Intellect/ Spirit) is mortal, the heaven is to be experienced here and now, seeking consolations is a weakness, there is no person in the heavens who looks after our individual welfare, who is concerned with fulfilling our wishes, aims and aspirations that have a reference to the self, there is the objective impersonal order of things (called necessity by Simone Weil) against which nothing could be done, personality is delusion, all is vanity and the world with all its beauties and dreams is going to be annihilated as nothing temporal or compounded has substance or is permanent. All these points are made by Eckhart and help to dissolve absurdist thesis.

- It is because religion sees the absurdity of our fallen condition or contradictions inherent in the life of this world, in the domain of time and becoming, in mere animal life, in life devoid of care and transcendence, a life forgetful of our ultimate concern, self centred life, life of ignorance, life caged in the categories of conceptual intellect or devoid of *Ishq* or love or heart, life of uncreative or mechanical action that it asks for transcendence, for eternity, for paradise, for God. This it achieves by appropriating the "given" and then asking us to transcend it. It shows us the way to achieve transcendence. It looks squarely at the face of the absurd without becoming absurdist and pessimist. It shows how one can transcend or fight absurdity without rebelling against God or heavens. It shows us how we could see meaning in the meaninglessness itself. By grounding itself in the Absolute and referring everything to it, every mundane activity becomes meaningful. By transcending ego by perfecting the art of detachment and disinterested view of things or seeing God equally in all things as Eckhart says life becomes creative, blissful, celebration and a benediction. By dropping the letter "I" i.e., negating the separative principle of ego in the word live it becomes love and what else is God if not love as Krishnamurti used to say. When we transcend thought and its sound and fury and becomes one with the whole by transcending or dissolving ego everything becomes beautiful and in a way meaningful. This is an empirical truth which all the mystics unanimously testify.

Despite sharing the same starting assumptions of fall, original sin, vanity of all things -- all endeavors, all ambitions, all science -- transience of beauty and our state as impossible anomaly in time and space and tragic predicament of our earthly existence, in this vale of tears, (all the ingredients of absurdist vision) traditional religious worldview differs radically in conclusions and in interpreting the significance of all these assumptions, rather facts. It is not led to despair and pessimistic absurdism. According to mysticism we have to accept the absurd. But we don't have to maintain it because we have the ability to transcend it. "This is not about expecting something 'better' or 'getting rid' of what it is we don't like about ourselves or about life, it's simply a shift in perception."

References

- Eckhart, Meister, 1973, *The Sermons of Meister Eckhart*, ed., R. B. Blakney, London: Harvard University Press.
- Osho, 1981, *The Perfect Master*, Vol.2, Rajnesh Foundation, Poona, 1981
- Osho, 2001, *Won't You Join the Dance*, Rajnesh Foundation, Poona
- Sarmad, 1940, *Rubaiyyats of Sarmad*, tr. Zahurul Hasan Sharib, Asmas, Agra.
- Iqbal, M., 1996, *Persian Psalms*, tr. Arthur. J. Arberry, Lahore..

Axiology of Mathnavi Maulana Rumi: The Art of Human Relationship and the Science of Peace

Seema Arif
University of Central Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan

Abstract

The philosophical study of axiology provides us means and ways to judge our value claims objectively and endow ourselves with a critical frame of reference to reflect upon one's own thought and actions, as well as, persons, objects and situations around us. It helps us frame ethics, rules governing individual and social conduct, as well as, aesthetics, concepts of beauty and harmony. Axiology gives us the necessary freedom to explore our inner worlds of thoughts and beliefs and the emotions generated by such mental activity. The purpose is to find right morality in our actions and conduct which is universally justifiable. The science of axiology had been shadowed by overruling logical positivism, but has seen revival in post modern culture of phenomenology, evolutionary psychology and systems theory. In the current essay, I have tried to reiterate values postulated by classic Muslim Sufism, well synthesized in Mathnavi Maulana Rumi.

1. Background

My paper is in response to a letter by Will Durant, the letter he wrote to his contemporary scholars after being disillusioned by outcomes of World War II *. He has questioned the validity of scientific knowledge produced by Scientific Revolution in creating peace and order in the world. Further, he has asked scholars about real meaning and worth of human life in relation to religion and spiritualism. Today we are standing at the same crossroads again. The world is at clash and

humanity is risking its survival as war of terror continues. Everyone is seeking peace and sustenance for future. We are confused, troubled, dejected and we have lost our joy in living. Miserably, we are looking for some guidance to deliver us from this pain, for some knowledge leader who has the right answers of human problems and who can restore smile on the face of earth. Many contemporary scholars label it as “failure of Enlightenment” such as Wilson, [1] the socio-biologist or the socio-economist Schumacher [2] who lament with Durant [3] the death of human wisdom in birth of human intelligence, leading to greater bigotry and breach of human faith than ever. Firstly, I would like to observe what is this “failure” and how it is “pronounced”. Then I will proceed towards the solution in our traditional wisdom quoted in Mathnavi Maulvi Ma’navi written by Maulana Jalal al Din Muhammad Rumi, where does he seek value of life and how does he enunciate art of living.

2. Philosophers profess failure of Enlightenment

Both Wilson and Schumacher seem to confirm the thesis of Durant [4] that we are but ‘a species of intellectual suicide’, which seems to have destroyed the value and significance of life bringing more disappointment and disillusionment to people rather than ‘happiness’. Schumacher has diagnosed the reason of failure of “Enlightenment”** rooted in a paradigm shift, the purpose of acquiring knowledge has shifted from seeking wisdom to quench power [5]. According to him (Schumacher), the axiology of 17th century Scientific Revolution, though confides in “knowledge as power”, the knowledge gained has been utilized not as source of enlightenment and liberation of the common man, but to raise a specific class of intellectuals, who would be able to get hold over world resources, and then exploit these resources to satisfy their selfish aims. Schumacher has further blamed science as becoming means of exhorting material power, mutating the “science for understanding” to “science for manipulation” [6]. Resultantly, we are left with no choice but to agree with Durant again that the ‘inexhaustible acquisitiveness of men’ has indeed led to more and more inventions, but at the same time “every invention strengthens the strong and weakens the weak; every new mechanism displaces men,

and multiplies the horrors of war.” [7] Hence, Robert S. Hartman, the father of modern value science has observed that we "have made our world a paradox: artificial satellites whirl around us, yet deep within us we are frozen with the fear of a cosmic explosion." [8]

We are now challenged to live in a world, with a distorted vision of home and family; by forsaking traditional morality love has lost its charm of eternal beauty being reduced to ‘physical congestion’. Freedom from responsibilities has abolished ‘care’ and ‘concern’ and tattering the very fabric of society, marriage is no more a ‘sacred responsibility’ but is borne as temporary physiological convenience slightly superior to promiscuity” [9]. But all these trivial reasons cannot surmount to “Clash of Civilization” [10] or originating into “New World Order”, [11] striking again and causing ‘democracy to disintegrate into such corruption as only Milo’s Rome knew’ [12]. Would it be wise to say that replacing divine principles by “artificial intelligence” has not worked or global state of peace and stability speak some other language incomprehensible for 21st century Tower of Babel?

Will Durant was able to blame Industrial Revolution for degeneration of the higher values of human beings; as humanity shifted their beliefs vested in divine powers to the notions of power of human intelligence, of man as god, there was no more compulsive need to seek divine compliance or moral obligation of divine accountability. Humanity was free to choose its own vision and write its own mission statement without any check and balance on its expansive desires. No one is ready to submit, therefore there is no peace. Schumacher reiterates, "Western civilization is based on the philosophical error that manipulative science is the truth, and natural sciences like biology and physics have caused and perpetuated this error...The progressive elimination of wisdom has turned the rapid accumulation of knowledge into a most serious threat" [13] limiting the autonomy, freedom and self respect of many in the living world.

3. Where post Enlightenment World is leading?

Every day we witness youthful dreams of a socialist utopia fading into gory darkness of social injustice and corruption. In short “Life has become, in that total perspective which is philosophy, a fitful pullulation of human insects on the earth, a planetary eczema that may soon be cured; nothing is certain in it except defeat and death — a sleep from which, it seems, there is no awakening [14].” While disillusioned miserably we repeat Durant’s quest, what could be the alternative remedy or the ultimate end? Whether the human beings will ever be able to treat each other with fairness and respect? Will massacre of humanity ever stop? Would there be no more holocausts of the weak and the vulnerable? Would jails like Abu Gharib be demolished for ever liberating the human soul from ‘prisoners’ dilemma’ [15]? Would there be no more witches like Witch of Bagram waiting for her crucifixion [16]? Would there be no more leaders like Bhuttos [17] sacrificed for their political ideals? Who will write such a charter and code of ethics for humanity that will transform homosapien into Insaan? I presume that ‘Life’ is in urgent need of restoring its sanity and peace.

The humanity has experienced in history stalwarts like Confucius and Socrates, Buddah and Moses, Christ and Muhammad (SAW), still the pain and suffering of humanity is endless. Those who celebrate humility, compassion and sacrifice of Christ, they are putting the weak and the vulnerable to greater test than they can afford to bear and those who celebrate the tolerance and forgiveness of Muhammad (SAW), they are blowing peace away with their bodies? Shall the life continue in the same manner or we should look for an alternative view of life, someone who can better synthesize the organizing principles of life giving it holistic shape and meaning, making purpose of life clearer to us and which is acceptable for all religions and races, awarding everyone the right to ‘unconditional positive regard’ [18].

Repeating in words of Durant, something which can surpass knowledge of astronomers who say that ‘human affairs constitute but a moment in the trajectory of a star’; geologists who have informed us that ‘civilization is a precarious interlude between ice ages’; biologists who regard ‘all life as war, a struggle for existence among individuals,

groups, nations, alliances, and species'; historians who perceive 'progress as a delusion, whose glory ends in inevitable decay', and above all the psychologists who deem us abject slaves, with our will and the self being 'helpless instruments of heredity and environment', telling us that the once held 'incorruptible', our soul is in fact 'only a transient incandescence of the brain' [19]. Humanity is in urgent need of some belief and faith, which can aspire higher like the ideals of humanity to conquer universe, something that binds all parts of knowledge into a harmonious whole – "Consilience" as Wilson calls it [20]. Of course humanism is a positive third force and Carl Rogers comes to our rescue. He gives us a new flash point to reflect on. He (Rogers) says that

Man's awesome scientific advances into the infinitude of space as well as infinitude of sub-atomic particles seems most likely to lead to the total destruction of our world unless we can make great advances in understanding and dealing with interpersonal and inter-group tensions....Roger's hope is resting assured in the day when there would be huge investment as there is in space technology and rocket science in getting "better understanding of human relationships." [21]

4. Seeking for alternative

We sincerely hope for that 'good day' to arrive soon. Being a social scientist, a psychologist, I approach this problem in alter ways and when I switch to Muslim social and cultural wisdom for setting

<p><i>Your remedy lies in burning yourself away in fire of Rumi's Ecstasy Get your reason freed from domineering European influence My vision is but enlightened by Rumi's spirit His spirit has transformed my small cup into a wild river [22]</i></p>	<p>علاج آتشِ رومی کے سوز میں ہے تیرا تیری خردِ پے ہے غالبِ فرنگیوں کا فسوں اسی کے فیض سے میری نگاہ ہے روشن اسی کے فیض سے میرے سبوں میں ہے جچوں</p>
--	--

dimensions of the purpose of knowledge and value of life, I am wakened up by the call of Iqbal.

Iqbal again commands in Javed Nama

<p><i>Go where ever Rumi leads you; follow him on the way. For a while disconnect yourself from everything else, except him.</i></p> <p>[23]</p>	<p>ہر کجا رومی برد آں جا برد یک دو دم از غیر او بیگانه شو</p>
--	---

Allama Iqbal advises Muslims to seek constant company of Mathnavi Ma'nvi [24]. He promises that it will act like sesame, opening for you the gateway of unbounded wisdom, bringing peace, harmony and freedom from all fears and sorrows. Allah has said in Qur'an: "the heart of believer is like a strong fort and no fear; no sorrow shall ever reach that heart" (Yunus: 62).

How to achieve such a spiritual status and how Rumi may help us? Is it possible in this world? Alas! When we look at the plight of Muslims today, we come to a painful realization that we are living in age of turmoil as rapid scientific advances in material knowledge have not only disturbed the fabric of society, it is questioning the very basic foundation of human existence whether it came into being through a certain creationist activity or was an accidental byproduct of an automated self generating system. All believing societies and their social norms and moral standards are at stake. We are not only to justify our existence but our beliefs as well. The knowledge world is done with the analysis job begun from the 'Age of Enlightenment' and is entering the phase of synthesis, where knowledge of existence of things is not enough but one has to make one's "existence" meaningful to oneself and to others. How to proceed towards that meaningfulness and reconnect ourselves with primal wisdom? Rumi warns us against falling into pit of blind following. He says:

<p><i>Millions of imitators and blind followers faith do abandon Caught in doubt and mistrust obsessive they duly become Their following and logic is but based on self assumptions Can't escape self-assumed boundaries their wingless imaginations</i></p>	<p>صد هزاران زاهلِ تقلید و نشان افگند شان نیم و همه در گمان که بظن تقلید و استدلالِ شان قائم ست و جمله پروبالِ شان</p>
--	--

Maulana Rumi advises us again and again to seek right sources of knowledge and must not fell into the trap of apparent eloquence of speech or charisma. He warns us:

<p><i>Rumi asks all of you who are caught in web of their personal assumptions Develop your perception beyond the limits of five ordinary senses.</i></p>	<p>گفت رومی اے گرفتارِ قیاس درگذر از اعتباراتِ حواس</p>
---	---

We are reminded of Nasim Taleb's "Black Swan" [25] and the caution that Schumacher gives us: Modern day science and "The whole notion of a mathematical model has to be questioned"; it leads to 'quantification, control, and manipulation' not only of nature and natural resources, it 'almost invariably leads to the manipulation of people as well' [26]. In order to save people and world from coercion it is vital to develop a cohesive system, supporting life process at larger scale than it is possible now. Maulana Rumi unfolds to us a basic understanding about use of knowledge:

<p><i>The men of heart burden of knowledge truly bear; Worldly skills and perception weighing down slowly tear. When the knowledge shapes heart, it is a friend; When knowledge nourishes body, it only saddens, Allah says, "Be not an ass bearing a load of books" (62:5) The knowledge which is not from Him, burden looks</i></p>	<p>علمهائے اهلِ دل حمالِ شان علمهائے اهلِ تن احمالِ شان علم چون بردل زند یارِ می شود علم چون برتن زند بارِ می بود گفت ایزد یحییٰ اَسْفارَه بار باشد علم کآن نبود ز هُو....</p>
---	--

How it would be possible when physicist like Capra, and biologists like Wilson and Maturana cannot change the perception of world?

5. Believer and non believer divide

There is a strong psychological principle that we lead and manage our personal and social lives according to the view we hold about 'human nature'. Humanity is unfortunately divided into two segments over it: the believers and non-believers. For believers the human nature is essentially good and strives to work out the divine plan and that may involve sacrifice of selfish interests while realizing the good for humanity, whereas for non-believers, e.g. evolutionary biologists, each behavior is biologically adaptive and is maintained with full force and might to ensure individual survival, whether that individual is a human being, a race, a community or a nation. For them the physical nature is in opposition to human nature and it always poses a challenge to it, which must be overcome by subduing the physical environment and certainly science tells us how to proceed with it. However, Iqbal reawakens the principle of survival in Muslim consciousness in totally different paradigm:

<p><i>Develop proper leadership skills Otherwise you will be killed like birds and insects</i></p>	<p>نکتہء اہل سلطان یاد گیرد ورنہ چوں مور و ملخ در گل بمیر</p>
--	---

Unlike non-believers this leadership believes in empowerment of the weak and not culling them. It does not establish the human right to rule coercively over life in its multiple forms. Similarly, the belief that Maulana Rumi inspires in us is to stop fighting against nature and seek its harmony. The wisdom lies in seeking 'congruence' and all efforts should be motivated to seek that balance, which has been reiterated in Mathnavi by quoting Surah Rahman's following Ayah several times.

مرج البحرین يلتقیان بینہما برزخ لا یتغیان

While explaining 19-21 Ayahs of Surah Rahman, Maulana Rumi has clearly extrapolated how in the same flow of life, various elements have certainly distinct and contradictory effects and these sharp opposites still ascertain a quality of unity and it is hard to identify the isolation point existing between them [27].

5. The value of Knowledge

The purpose of knowledge is to seek peace by achieving balance between natural and human intellectual forces. Maulana Rumi favors submission and advises humanity to seek peace with nature whether it is human and/or physical. Why because life is a dream of God, which is to be realized by ‘Insaan’ and what does it take to transform a human into ‘Insaan’ should be the objective of all knowledge [28]. However, the world is created through false human perception. Why human perception is faulty? According to psychologists the span of human attention is very brief, and when it misses details, it fills gaps through one’s own knowledge and believes it to be true. When rejected by others, ego is angered; similarly, when ego fails to find the right answers of the problems, it is shadowed by anguish, wrath, and fear of unknown. This basic insecurity of human beings provokes them to project their anger, hostility against persons, objects, communities and races, who are seen as “cause of that particular perception”. It creates egotism and narcissism dividing people through stereotypes, biases and prejudices. As Sartre says, “it is the anti-Semite who creates a Jew” [29], similarly it can be very safely observed: it is the Jew who creates an “anti-Semite”. How to remove this dualism, which perception of Zahir creates?

It becomes imperative, hence, that there should be a touchstone to test and validate all our perceptions, actions, thoughts and behaviors. Salvation is not there in creating a conflict, whether it is scientific, ethnic, religious, philosophical or even spiritual like Cartesian Dualism dividing mind and body, spirit and psyche, compartmentalizing the ideal and the practical lives. The salvation is in seeking harmony – perceptual unity. Naqshbandi explains that the process of initiating

spiritual transformation (Soz o saaz e Rumi [30]) comprises two essential steps:

(1) 'Sokhtan', i.e. to burn and by burning freeing oneself from all that is superfluous and artificial.

(2) Sakhtan, i.e. construction and reconstruction – shaping one's personality and behavior according to divine principles through inculcating in oneself "Saffat Allah" – the divine attributes.

<p>گر ز نامو حرف خواهی بگذری پاک گن خود را از خود هین یکسری همچو آهن ز آهنی بیرنگ شو در ریاضت آئینه بے رنگ شو خویش را صافی گن از اوصاف خود تابه بینی ذات پاک صاف خود</p>	<p><i>Desiring to reach beyond mere names and letters; Get rid of egotism; slay thy "Self"; it does not matter Thou must free thyself of "ironness" like the iron does Shine like mirror, scouring off rust with repentance Get free from attributes of self, purifying the foulness Your heart may witness thy pure bright essence!</i></p>
--	--

When Hazrat Abuzar Ghafari (ra) was asked, how does Muhammad (saw) transform you? He replied in just one word, meaning he empties us and then refills us. That is what we repeat in our daily prayers earnestly,

O Allah! Empty my home from all whims, misconceptions, anxieties and conjecture; all these things keep crowding and make it dark. Fill it with your Light the pure knowledge which none can surpass.

Burning is like engaging oneself into fission and fusion – the expansion and constriction – principle of nature for building and expanding and even ending stars and galaxies. Its mantra lies in the heart of a Sufi, who can create the whole vision of a world and then mirror its beauty in his/her own self in a way that all differences are spent and unity of perception is created. A new system emerges and a new galaxy takes birth. Iqbal says:

<p><i>The hand of the believer does the job for God! Domineering, practical, proactive and pragmatic.</i></p>	<p>ہاتھ ہے اللہ کا بندہ ءمومن کا ہاتھ غالب و کار آفریں کارگشا و کارساز</p>
---	--

Our personality is how others view us and our self is how do we view us, Zahir and the Batin. The self is the material expression of soul, which seeks expression of its potential in most natural of its ways and our personality is the libas, the dressing of the self, its tool and the cover for its protection. Soul is the energy to “be” – “kun” and “self” is “it” –fayakun. Human soul is the tool through which God realizes His dream of life, so all of its potential must be spent in service of the life and the living. In order to become God’s hand Maulana guides us to shut our physical eye and open our internal eye by getting into resonance with all universal spirits – the soul of life. And this way is the way of getting spiritual command over the process of life. Maulana says:

<p><i>You can break the boundaries of this four dimensional world by nurturing your spirit No body, but you yourself can break these shackles to set yourself free forever.</i></p>	<p>ہم بروں جستن بزا دن می تو اں بند با از خود کشادن می تو اں</p>
---	--

When reached this station, Iqbal exclaims in ecstasy:

<p><i>One plunge I took in Ishq, parting all distances Though my reason had estimated the distance among heavens infinite</i></p>	<p>عشق کی ایک جست نے طے کر دیا قصہ تمام اس زمین و آسماں کو بے کراں سمجھا تھا میں</p>
---	--

6. The value of Mathnavi

Maulana Rumi, for me is neither a religious theologian, nor a free thinker; for me he is a social scientist, who addresses the problem of human survival, peace and growth at both personal and social level, providing us the grounding principles at which we can reconstruct a society ridden with evil of materialism, corruption and abuse of power. He gives us an intrinsic sense of knowledge emphasizing the need of understanding human nature and mastering art of human relationships [31].

So when we talk about survival, Maulana Jalal-ud-Din Rumi not only guides us what needs to be preserved, he carefully explains its utility and then instructs how to preserve it carefully separating the complex intertwined realities of existence and making their meaning and purpose clear to the human consciousness. He has used here the stories from Qur'an, the stories of Prophets: of Adam and Eve, their desire for knowledge, and their quest for life, of courage and hope of Moses (pbuh) and the challenge he gave to one of the most powerful empires of the history. The compassion and care Issa (pbuh) bestowed upon humanity and finally Hazrat Muhammad (saw) balancing the art of his predecessors to deliver the humanity its ultimate goal – the knowledge of self – the skill of self to serve the life and the attitude of self to care for life [32].

Thus, following his master, Hazrat Muhammad (saw), Maulana Rumi tells us: It is not the existence which is worth challenging nor we are to question its utility? It is to develop a comprehensive system of knowledge that liberates human mind from the curse of persecuting the sanctity of human relationships and offense of exploitation of human and natural resources. Rumi's voice is listened by present day's humanists and systems thinkers, such as Peter Senge, Fritjov Capra [33], Maturana and Schumacher. E.g. Dr. Maturana, informs the 21st century knowledge leaders:

All systems exist only as long as there is conservation of that which defines them. Human history does not follow the path of resources or

opportunities; rather it follows the path of desires or, in more general terms, a path of emotions.” [34]

The most critical thing here is the ‘choice’ (again depending upon the attitude of believers and believers, the choices will be different, exclusive for each) and the evolution which is the crux of life, is indeed a constant strife among available choices in life. One of these choices is between continuity and stability. Stability is not the same as equilibrium; stability does not mean that the system remains unchanging. Rather, stability means that the dynamics involved conserve certain relations of coherence in such a way that the system can continue existing in a finite background. May be it calls for revising the practices of material culture in the light of ideal culture, in a way that shows balance and harmony with present day demands of life rather than conformance to past tradition. It is not easy to understand and even more difficult to practice: what we will let go...the divine principles or the everyday customs, rites, sacredly communicated by our past traditions.

To maintain stability in terms of a certain social order or emotional balance in a society, we have to examine carefully the practices it has indulged itself, and the values attached with such practices. Rumi defines the methodology for this process that ensures quality of life. The art of this methodology is that of Love and the tools used for this methodology is “Reflection” and “Prayer”, the aim is “Balance”, and the vehicle is “Friendship”, not to forget the workplace for this process it is human heart and not the human mind [35].

*Getting yourself fit in your eyes,
reaching self efficacy is life's
dream
There is no other way of doing
It better than self-reflection*

زندگی خود را بخوبی آراستن
بر وجود خود شهادت درخواستن

7. The value of human relationships

Maulana Rumi in Mathnavi speaks of human relationships, with other human beings, with nature, with knowledge, with universe and with the world beyond universe, the 'Ghayb'. It deals with the beginning of life, of growth in life, of end of life and of continuation of life – the hereafter. While doing so Rumi walks in and out of all spheres of life providing them with sense of unity through stability and continuity. The learning about life is adjusting to one's shortcomings and failures, to manage with one's success, adopting better means of coping with disease, death and disaster. But here it is not done in the usual way the straight forward method - following blindly the tradition; it is something unique and different; whether the prince searches for goldsmith the beloved of his beloved or the Chinese artists braze the walls that all colorful shadows may mirror unto them, it is something far special. One parrot can fake death and earn freedom and the other can spoil some good of his master and loose everything that was dear and beautiful in life.

It is extracting pure out of impure, and Rumi tells us in his discourses: when milk is diluted with water, it loses its purity, such is the case with social codes and societal rites of religion or culture when a blind carefree mixing occurs, but when butter is made out of milk; adding water to any limit shall not spoil its purity. That is why, Maulana Rumi has encoded the moral essence the spirit of Muslim culture its beliefs and values in the analogies of the Mathnavi as carefully constructed memes that shall keep replicating itself till eternity, never losing its meaning and context, as Maulana Rumi had intended at the time of its construction, enduring successfully the test of time and material boundaries posed on it, crowning him with the title "The Sage of All Ages".

Why? Because...

The knowledge is not what a society practices and regards valuable; the knowledge is what a society may value, i.e. what is worth practicing. It is not just thinking but rethinking various life situations humans are

being thrust in. It is also true that human experience cannot be erased from human memory; however, the meaning can be altered and modified. It is not denying the human emotion but reconstruction of human feeling –reappraisal of emotion in context of a better value modifies the feeling; it absorbs pain and affliction and brings happiness and ease in one’s life. Allah has promised the believers (No fear and no grief shall touch their heart; Yunus: 62). And here it is fulfilled by not constructing artificial boundaries through bias, prejudice and stereotypes but by learning of divine principles through knowledge of heart and through their acceptance and submission reaching the status of Wali Allah, i.e. friend of Allah.

Believing in Allah as the only supreme force of life, we come to understand that we cannot all the time get hold of life in our fist strictly. Life is letting go: freeing the spirit of life, which liberates the spirit from eternal misery it has caused to itself through erecting walls and building boundaries (phobias, delusions, anxiety fears and paranoia all leading to poor hold on reality and loosing one’s grip on truth, thus on Life).

What caution Maulana Rumi gives us to live a happy life?

He warns us that we often act blind to the finiteness of our attitude and ability and we limit the scope of our activity through declining to share, or failing at some vitally needed compromise. In an attempt to save the system we try to constrict it like we save water in a container for future use. But contained water loose its efficiency and quality, similarly the rigid rules implied by a dead tradition on a living system or society close them into a suffocating bubble. How colorful and light it may seem it has short life and bursts out to nothingness. The life should be open to challenge of choices. Some will desire one way and some the otherand this strife will give birth to evolution and that is Life.

8. Conclusion

I believe that all we learn from master Rumi is that our fundamental resource in life is to ‘Love’ the prime creative energy with which life

was constructed and the ultimate duty is that human beings enjoy beauty of love while reflecting on what they do. Both the aesthetics and ethics are vital for our well-being and must be cared for efficiently. Reaching this cognition not only we learn to become smarter, intelligent, understanding, sympathetic and enduring human beings, we learn to make right choices; not only we learn to live, but we learn to value 'LIFE' as well.

Endnotes

* Originally the letter was written to Earl Spencer; afterwards it was shared with many other eminent scholars as well. The letter and some of responses and discussion by Durant was published in the book: *On the Meaning of Life*.

** The concept "Enlightenment" is also interpreted differently in East and West. (1) Buddah's eightfold path and enlightenment that leads to internal peace by connecting to source of knowledge intrinsically and withdrawing' one's attention from external world. (2) Francis Bacon's way leading to scientific revolution, which commands the use of external senses to perceive knowledge; one can get salvation by expanding one's rational capacity only and using it for problem solving and effective decision making.

However, Islamic Intellectual Sufism advises to seek balance between the two, make best use of internal and external perceptions to reach high echelons of knowledge, but always remaining a humble seeker an "abd" before Allah and use the acquired knowledge in best possible of ways for the service of humanity.

*** All translations of couplets from Mathnavi are original translations of the author, Seema Arif and not reproduction from any source.

[1] Wilson, E. O. (1998). *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge*. New York: Knopf

[2] Schumacher, E. F. (1999). *Small Is Beautiful: Economics As If People Mattered: 25 Years Later...With Commentaries*. London: Hartley & Marks Publishers

[3] Durant, W. (1932). *On the Meaning of Life*. NY: Ray Long & Richard R. Smith.

[4] Durant, *ibid*.

[5] Schumacher, *op.cit*.

[6] Schumacher, *ibid*.

[7] Durant, *op.cit*.

[8] Hartman, R. S. (1967). *The Structure of Value*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

[9] Durant, *ibid*.

[10] Huntington, Samuel, P. (1997). *Clash of Civilization*. New York: Touchstone. Huntington has talked of eternal conflict of ideas between races of world, generally between the Orientals and the Occidentals; he divides the world into foes and friends creating a pre 9/11 scenario

[11] “New World Order” is the concept used by Conspiracy Theory, where the effort is to create Unipolar rule over the world and globalization is one of its agenda. According to this theory all counter ideas and movements must be met with the force.

[12] Durant, op.cit.

[13] Schumacher, op.cit.

[14] Durant, ibid.

[15] Stanford Prison experiment carried out by Philip Zimbardo in 1971 at Stanford University, which tells that physical surrounding and perception of one’s role affects human behavior and may overpower subjective feelings of morality.

[16] Refers to Dr. Afia Siddiqui a Pakistani American bio-technologist who was accused to assist Al-Qaeda terrorist activities. She was kept in anonymity in Bagram Jail, Afghanistan for several years. On being identified by some humanist journalists she was shifted to New York Jail. She has been convicted guilty and got punishment of life imprisonment of 82 years.

[17] Bhuttos, two ex-prime ministers of Pakistan, (1) Zulifqar Ali Bhutto politically victimized and hanged by US backed military dictator, Zia ul Haq and (2) Benazir Bhutto, daughter of ZA Bhutto, brutally assassinated on coming home after exile. Both were accused of supporting socialism and punished for not supporting fundamentalist extremist wings of religious sects in Pakistan.

[18] A term used by Carl Rogers to establish individual right to self esteem and self respect.

[19] Durant, op.cit. explaining the abuses of modern science

[20] Consilience refers to joining up of all knowledge, but again the socio-biologist Wilson unfortunately commands the social sciences to follow the pattern of natural sciences, especially Biology, which has been criticized by many contemporary scholars and humanists.

[21] Rogers, C. (1995). On becoming a person: A therapist's view of psychotherapy. NY: Mariner Books. p. xx

[22] Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal. (1935). Bal-i-Jibreel. Lahore: Sheikh Ghulam Ali & Sons. p.320

[23] Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal. (1932) Javed Nama. Urdu translation by Mian Abdul Rasheed (1992). Lahore: Sheikh Ghulam Ali & Sons.

[24] For further detail see “Mevlana Jalal ud Din Muhammad Rumi – A Beacon for Wayfarers”,_paper in proceedings of International Symposium on The Traces of Mevlana Jalal-ud-Din Rumi In The World at Seljuk University, Konya, Turkey, 12-15 December 2007

[25] Black Swan explores the impact of ‘the highly improbable’, i.e. data falling out of mathematical models, which is rejected like an out law. For Further detail, see Taleb, N. N. (2007). The Black Swan. New York: Random House

[26] Schumacher, op.cit

[27] Surah Rahman’s Ayahs 19-21 have been frequently quoted in Mathnavi; they have several mystical explanations. I believe it to be meaningful and significant in revealing the difference between the believers and non-believers, describing a subtle difference between people of heart (believing in intuitive source of knowledge) and

rational people seeking deductive knowledge. For further detail see *The Memetic Counseling of Masnavi: The Artless Art of Maulana in Rumi and His Sufi Path of Love*. M.F.Cutlak & Husseyin Bingul (Eds). NJ: The Light Publishing

[28] Ibn Arabi had advocated the idea of “Wahdatal Wujud” – the perceptual unity with the Divine. For further detail see Ibn al Arabi. *The Bezels of Wisdom*. Trans. Austin, R.W.J. (1980). New Jersey. Paulist Press

[29] Sartre, J. P. (1968). *Portrait of the Anti Semite*, trans. Erik de Mauny. London: Secker & Warburg. p.57

[30] Naqshbandi, A. L. (2008). *Soz o Saz i Rumi*. Lahore: Feroz Sons Pvt. Ltd.

[31] For detailed opinion of author about theory of knowledge, see “Following the Footsteps of Mevlana Jalal ud Din Muhammad Rumi in the Pursuit of Knowledge” in “Transcendental Philosophy” (Volume 8. December 2007)

[32] For detailed opinion of author about Rumi’s prophetealogy, see “Mathnavi Maulvi Ma’anvi: A Touchstone for Truth”, paper presented at International Conference on Maulana Jalal-ud-Din Rumi hosted by University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Pakistan. 24-26 March 2008.

[33] Capra is known for seeking parallels between modern physics and Eastern Mysticism. For detail see Capra, Fritjov (1991). *The Tao of Physics* (3rd ed.). London: Flamingo

[34] Maturana, H. R. & Bunnell, P. (1998). *Biosphere, Homosphere, and Robosphere: what has that to do with Business?* Adapted from presentation by Maturana at the Society for Organizational Learning Member’s Meeting, Amherst MA in June, 1998.

[Online] available at: <http://www.solonline.org/>

[35] For further detail see “The Memetic Counselling of Massnavi: An Artless Art of Mevlana Jalal ud Din Muhammad Rumi” Paper in proceedings of Rumi International Symposium, Osnekiz Mart University, Cannakale, Turkey. 23rd -29th May, 2006.

Impact of the Controversy between al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd on the Development of Islamic Thought

Munawar Haque

International Islamic University Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur

Abstract

This paper intends to explore the views of some orientalist and other scholars who hold al-Ghazali responsible for the general decadence of intellectualism in Islam and accuse Ibn Rushd of being pragmatic and utilitarian in his approach to religion. It is argued that al-Ghazali was a sincere intellectual who attempted to liberate the Islamic *ummah* from the bondage of Greek worldview, which is inherently opposed and irreconcilable to the Islamic worldview. It is also contended that the serious allegation hurled against Ibn Rushd who was the prime example of a meticulous jurist, theologian and philosopher within the Islamic intellectual tradition is the product of hasty conclusion, which should be discredited. The study concludes that both al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd have essentially contributed to the growth of intellectualism in Islam. The significant difference between the two is limited only to their approaches.

Introduction

The theological and philosophical aspects of the controversy¹ in the works of al-Ghazali² (d. 1111) and Ibn Rushd³ (d. 1198) have stirred the debates of scholars since medieval times until the present day. A very influential school of interpretation originating with the German-born, American political philosopher, Leo Strauss (d. 1973) is convinced that the basis of all philosophical work in Islam is the opposition between religion and reason, between faith and philosophy,

and between Islam and Greek thought. There is a different but not unrelated view that the whole of Islamic philosophy represents an attempt to accommodate Islam with rationality (Nasr and Leaman 1996, 1:2-3 and Shlomo Pines 1996, 3:69-70).

This study evaluates the different approaches of contemporary scholars and the multiple divergent judgments passed by them about the so-called negative impact of al-Ghazali's attack on philosophy, which according to some brought about the stagnation of free rational thinking in Islam and Ibn Rushd's attempt to recover the discipline of the philosophical trend in Islam, which to some others helped in breeding the Enlightenment in the West, whereas it failed to do the same thing in the East.

The question is whether al-Ghazali's virulent attack on philosophy calls for a termination of intellectual and rational activities in Islam? In other words, should it be considered a reactionary movement with subversive and negative impacts on intellectual life in Islam? On the other hand, was Ibn Rushd the fore-runner of European secularism? It shall be demonstrated that the controversy between these two giant Muslim theologians, philosophers and jurists was essentially a controversy between two mentalities each with its own intrinsic qualifications.

Each party in the dispute in reality argues from a set of premises different and contrary to the other. Al-Ghazali's onslaught on philosophy is an attack on a metaphysical system incompatible with the Qur'an.⁴ His opponents⁵ argue from the Aristotelian concept of God who acts by necessity, whose acts are determined by the intrinsic nature of things outside Him, and who actualizes in ways prescribed by the nature of things.

The scientific mind, whose attitudes are determined by the heritage of Greek thought, finds the controlling power in natural law,⁶ which is then equated by the religious intuition with the Law of God. According to Gibb, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), implicitly rejected any concept of natural law and envisaged the controlling power in the

personality of an all-powerful God, sole and unrestricted by any kind of association (Gibb 1982, pp. 189-190).

Al-Ghazali and the Muslim Intellectual Stagnancy

Al-Ghazali's influence within Islam has been both profound and most widespread. His works have been and still are being read and studied from east to west. It has been claimed and rightly so that "al-Ghazali's influence, taken singly, on the Muslim community has been perhaps greater than that of all the scholastic theologians" (Sheikh 2004, 1:637). But as usual, like any other original thinker in the world, al-Ghazali did not go without his share of criticism. Liberals have criticized him for his conservatism, and conservatives for his liberalism; philosophers for his orthodoxy and the orthodox for his philosophy (Sheikh 2004, 1:638). According to al-Attas, it is with the rise of oriental studies aligned to colonial ideology that we first find al-Ghazali being insinuated as the "efficient cause of Muslim intellectual stagnancy" that gradually set in over the centuries after he dealt a "fatal blow" to Greek philosophy" (al-Attas 2001, p. 2). This aversion towards al-Ghazali is understandable seeing that in Western cultural history, every chapter, be it of logic, of science, of art, of politics and even of theology begins with the Greeks. Greek philosophy, contends al-Attas, is the very peak of all thought, the "consummate personification of reason itself." Western religious and orientalist thought, their scholarship and even their science have always labored against the Christian background of the problem of God: the problem of the discord between revelation and reason, which is not a problem in Islam (al-Attas 2001, p. 2).

Was al-Ghazali trying to liberate Islamic intellectualism from blind submission to Greek worldview? Did he deliver a stunning blow to Greek philosophy per se or only its metaphysical aspect? Since Islamic worldview is based strictly on the *tawhidic* paradigm,⁷ it is essentially incompatible with the Greek worldview, which is inherently polytheistic.⁸ It ought to be clear, explains al-Attas, that al-Ghazali's attack on the philosophers, both the Greek and the Muslims, was not aimed at philosophy as such, that is as *hikmah*⁹, because *hikmah* as revealed in the Qur'an is God's gift; and *hikmah* is what he thought Ibn

Rushd meant when he referred to “something resembling revelation” in his *Fasl al-Maqal*. The application of reason with wisdom, not only in religion but in philosophy and the sciences is commendable. It is significant to note that in the Qur’an the major Prophets were not only given the Book, that is *al-kitab*, but also the Wisdom, that is *al-hikmah*, which explains the accord between revelation and reason. What al-Ghazali attacked were the metaphysical theories of the Greek philosophers, and their belief and the claim of the Muslim philosophers with regard to the primacy of the intellect as the sole guide to knowledge of the ultimate reality (al-Attas 2001, p. 3).

For al-Attas, the modernist Muslim thinkers and their followers and those of like mind became captive to the subtle deception of orientalist scholarship and echoed their insinuations, and they blamed al-Ghazali for the degeneration of Muslim thought and action even to this day. They include not only Arabs, Turks and Persians, but other thinkers from the Indian subcontinent notably Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1938), who was very much influenced by Western Christian problems of religion and philosophy and confused them with those of Islam and the Muslims. They set Ibn Taymiyyah¹⁰ (d. 1328) up as the relevant leader to emulate and reflected in their thought and action the same contentiousness and contradictions. They failed to see that if al-Ghazali had not existed it would have been impossible for Ibn Taymiyyah to engage the Greek philosophers and confront the Muslim Philosophers, for a great deal of what the Hanbalite knew of logic and effective methodology was derived from the lesson taught and demonstrated by al-Ghazali (al-Attas 2001, p. 3).

For Seyyed Hossein Nasr, al-Ghazali’s criticisms of peripatetic¹¹ philosophy especially that of Ibn Sina (d. 1037) as seen in such well-known works of al-Ghazali as *Tahafut al-falasifah*, are well known, but according to him, not so much study has been devoted to the philosophical dimensions of this “opponent of philosophy” (Rafiabadi 2001, p. 54). Further, in al-Ghazali’s writings, says Nasr, there is much concern for the question of knowledge and gnosis and his writings in this field have wielded much influence upon later Islamic philosophers and theologians, such as Mulla Sadra (d. 1640) of Shiraz and Shah

Wali Allah (d. 1762) of Delhi. Likewise al-Ghazali was concerned with the “classification of the sciences” (Rafiabadi 2001, p. 54). Further, “Ghazzali’s theology is also itself of a philosophical nature and he, more than his teacher al-Juwayni (d. 1085) was the founder of philosophical *kalam*¹² in *kalam*” (Rafiabadi 2001, p. 54).

Al-Ghazali’s critical examination of the methods and doctrines of the philosophers is one of the most exciting and important phase of his intellectually inquiry. He was not at all against philosophical investigation as such. His early interest in philosophy is evidenced by the treatises that he wrote on logic such as *Miyar al-Ilm fi Fann al-Mantiq* (“The Touchstone of Science in Logic”) and *Mihak al-Nazar fi al-Mantiq* (“The Touchstone of Speculation in Logic”). In the history of Muslim thought, his is the first instance of a theologian who was thoroughly schooled in the ways of the philosophers. The doctors of Islam before him either had a dread of philosophy, considering it a dangerous study, or dabbled in it just to qualify themselves for polemics against the philosophers. In all intellectual honesty he refrained from saying a word against the philosophers till he had completely mastered their systems (Sharif 2004, 1:592) “A man,” al-Ghazali tells us, “cannot grasp what is defective in any of the sciences unless he has so complete a grasp of the science in question that he equals its most learned exponents in the appreciation of its fundamental principles and even goes beyond and surpasses them...” (Watt 1953, p.54). In all intellectual honesty he refrained from saying a word against the philosophers till he had completely mastered their systems (Sharif 2004, 1:592).

Al-Ghazali applied himself so assiduously to the study of the entire sweep of Greek philosophy current in his time and attained such a firm grasp of its problems and methods that he produced one of the best compendia of it in Arabic entitled *Maqasid al-Falasifah* (“The Intentions of the Philosophers”). This compendium was such a faithful exposition of Aristotelianism that when it came to be known to the Christian scholastics through a Latin translation made as early as 1145 by the Spanish philosopher and translator Dominicus Gundisalvus, it was taken to be the work of a genuine peripatetic. Albert the Great (d.

1280), Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), and Roger Bacon (d. 1294) all repeatedly mentioned the name of this work along with Ibn Sina (d. 1037) and Ibn Rushd (d. 1198) as the true representatives of Arab Aristotelianism.¹³ He states in this work that his express purpose is to expound the doctrines of the philosophers, as a prelude to refuting them in a subsequent work (Fakhry 1983, p. 221).

Having mastered the philosophical sciences, al-Ghazali contended that philosophy cannot assure the truth because it does not produce certainty; and brought against philosophy the same charge Ibn Rushd brought against theology, namely of yielding to huge compromises about the logical coherence of its arguments (Campanini 1996, 1:258). In *al-Munqidh*, al-Ghazali wrote:

They [the philosophers who apply logic] draw up a list of the conditions to be fulfilled by demonstration which are known without fail to produce certainty. When, however, they come at length to treat of religious questions, not merely are they unable to satisfy these conditions, but they admit an extreme degree of relaxation (Watt 1953, p. 36).

Al-Ghazali brought two main charges against philosophy, both of which are interesting. The first is that philosophy offends against its own principles, since it cannot establish its conclusions on the basis of its premises. Second, philosophy is irreconcilable with religion, since the former leaves no room for the latter. That is, however, much the philosophers may talk about God; they treat Him as the name for an empty notion, since they give Him nothing to do (Leaman 1999, p. 7). It may be observed here that Ibn Sina (d. 1037) had developed the argument that the universe (apart from God) consists entirely of determined and necessitated events (Shams Inati 1996, 1:231-246). God is the exception; God is the only thing which is not brought about by something else; and He represents the starting-point of the series of causes and effects which make up the structure of reality. Now, this sounds compatible with religion; yet, when one looks a bit more closely, one sees that Ibn Sina does not leave God much of a role. God does not know about the world of generation and corruption—our world—since

transitory and material events cannot be apprehended by an eternal and perfect consciousness. God cannot change anything in existence, since whatever happens does so because of something else causing it to happen, and although God is the ultimate cause, He does not really seem to have the power to do anything to interfere with how things will turn out anyway. This attitude to the deity led to the fierce attack on philosophy by al-Ghazali (Campanini 1996, 1:258-276 and Leaman 1999, pp. 1-12).

It is interesting to note that al-Ghazali, who is supposed to have closed the door—though not directly—to innovative and original thinking, was very clear on two points: one was the need to observe and to analyze, and the other, the need to doubt. In *al-Munqidh* he writes:

Ever since I was under twenty (now I am over fifty)... I have not ceased to investigate every dogma or belief. No *Batinite* did I come across without desiring to investigate his esotericism: no *Zahirite*, without wishing to acquire the gist of his literalism; no philosopher, without wanting to learn the essence of his philosophy; no dialectical theologian, without striving to ascertain the object of his dialectics and theology; No *Sufi*, without coveting to probe the secret of his Sufism; no ascetic, without trying to delve into the origin of his asceticism. No atheistic *Zindiq*, without groping for the causes of his bold atheism and *Zindiqism*. Such was the unquenchable thirst of my soul for investigation from the early days of my youth, and instinct and a temperament in me by Allah through no choice of mine (Watt 1953 p. 20 and Qadir 1988, p. 125).

For his emphasis on methodical doubt, one has to refer to his *Mizan al-Amal*, where he writes:

If this discourse had consisted of only that kind of material which caused you to have doubts about the beliefs installed into you since childhood, so that you were stimulated towards study and research, then that would be a very satisfactory result, for doubts leads to truth. Whoever has no doubt of any kind does not reflect, and he who does not reflect cannot see clearly, and he who cannot see clearly remains in a state of blindness and in error.¹⁴

Al-Ghazali's motive in writing his *Tahafut* is stated explicitly to be religious. What prompted him to write this work, he tells us, was the way in which a small group of freethinkers had been led to repudiate Islamic beliefs and neglect the ritual basis of worship as unworthy of their intellectual attainments. They were confirmed in this by the widespread praise reserved for the ancient philosophers, from Socrates (d. 399 BCE) to Aristotle (d. 322 BCE). He thus has undertaken to write this book, he states, to show "the incoherence of [the philosophers'] beliefs and the contradiction of their metaphysical statements, relating at the same time their doctrine as it actually is, so as to make it clear to those who embrace unbelief in God through imitation that all significant thinkers, past and present, agree in believing in God and the last day; ...that no one has denied these two [beliefs]" (al-Ghazali 2000, p.3). Differences among them affect only incidentally the substance of their belief. In substantiating the latter claim, al-Ghazali draws a distinction between those philosophical sciences such as mathematics and logic; which are completely harmless from a religious point of view, and those, which like Physics and metaphysics, contain the bulk of the heresies or errors of the philosophers (Watt 1953, pp. 32-43)

Unlike most of the other *Ulama* (Islamic scholars) of his time, al-Ghazali had studied the exact sciences and was thus in a position to make an authoritative assessment of their relation to religion. His position on this issue was not one of blind opposition. None of the results of mathematics, he said, are connected with religion. Therefore, mathematics is not a forbidden subject. Also, in common with many other opponents of philosophy, he had a high regard for logic, which was regarded as a tool of philosophy rather than a part of it and insisted on the application of logic to organized thought about religion (Leaman 2002, p. 8). That he is a passionate advocate of logic is especially evident from his *al-Qistas al-Mustaqim* ("The Correct Balance") wherein he claims that Aristotelian syllogisms are already used and recommended in the Qur'an (al-Ghazali 1980b, pp. 287-332). However, he was forced to be somewhat equivocal on the subject as he feared being attacked as a follower of Aristotle. Thus he employed ambiguous

titles for his books on logic in order to avoid using the term *mantiq* (Hoodbhoy 1991, p.106).

So great was the impact of the *Tahafut* on the Muslim mind that it accomplished what Asharism¹⁵ had failed to accomplish in a century and a half. It was due to his writings and teachings that Asharism became firmly established in the Muslim world and that it continues to remain so even up to the present time.¹⁶ In criticizing the philosophies of his predecessors, al-Ghazali gave birth to a philosophy which strengthened the hands of Asharism and inspired many subsequent thinkers, such as Ibn Hazm (d. 1064), Ibn Taymiyyah (d.1328), Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1938) to name only a few, who led the revolt against Aristotelianism and freed Muslim philosophy from the clutches of the Greek philosophy (Qadir 1988, p.68).

It is said that as a result of the *Tahafut*, Muslims came to have an aversion for philosophy and, worse still, for philosophizing and that this became one of the causes of Muslim decline (Qadir 1988, p.68). This charge is incorrect because after al-Ghazali, many philosophers of great eminence and erudition were born in the Muslim world, though not in Arab lands. The intellectual centers have always been changing in the Islamic world, but philosophy and intellectual pursuits have never died. The centre may be the Arab lands, Persia, Spain, the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent or any other area—Philosophy can be found flourishing there in one garb or another (Nasr 1995).¹⁷

Several critics have accused al-Ghazali of being responsible for the decline of Muslim interest in philosophy and science. It is alleged that his emphasis on spiritualism initiated a movement in Muslim thought that killed all zest for philosophic inquiry and scientific reflection (Sharif, 2004, 1:622).¹⁸ Therefore, when the Muslims followed al-Ghazali and neglected little by little the study of philosophy and science, their once great civilization faded. On the other hand, Ibn Rushd defended philosophy and science and medieval Europe followed the way prescribed by him, which led to the rise of European science. The anti-intellectualism and anti-liberalism of the Muslim community is a highly complex sociological phenomenon and its causes must be

explored in a great many areas. It would be a simplification of facts to ascribe it to a single name, however great that may be (Sharif, 2004, 1:622).

Modern Muslim thinkers having leftist leanings regard Ghazalian philosophy incompatible of sustaining scientific temperament and hold it responsible for the degeneration of science in the medieval period. These critics themselves, however, accept the force of al-Ghazali's arguments, power of presentation and the depth of his understanding of Greek philosophy. It appears, therefore, that the real problem for the modern critics of al-Ghazali is not the alleged incompatibility of the philosophy he developed, but the basic frame work in which the whole edifice of Ghazalian philosophy has been raised (Kirmani 1985, p. 83). A reference to God in his philosophic and scientific discussions has, in fact, developed an apathetic attitude towards him and his philosophy. It is perhaps for this reason that the modern critics of al-Ghazali find Ibn Rushd more convincing and acceptable. Ibn Rushd appears to support, of course unconsciously, a secular attitude towards knowledge (Kirmani 1985, p. 83).

James L. Christian regrets that this "Persian theologian" [al-Ghazali] has to be included in the history of philosophy, for in this context, he views al-Ghazali as a "mean-spirited reactionary," who spent his life defending the status quo and attacking all who entertained ideas that differed from his. He was not a creative philosopher in his own right, says Christian, but a critic who spent his life explaining mysticism and defending religion against the *falasifah* (philosophers). Christian, however, acknowledges that there is another side of al-Ghazali, for he was, in his time, devoutly loved and admired as a man, a mystic, and a champion of Islamic faith, whose influence is still considerable in the Sunni branch of Islam (Christian 2002, 1:367).

Al-Ghazali's study of philosophy affected all what he afterwards did. His attitude was far from being purely negative. Indeed, on the one hand, while he was vocal against Neoplatonism¹⁹ and the inconsistency of the philosophers, on the other hand he admired Aristotelian syllogistic logic and wrote several books about it and thus introduced it

to other theologians and jurists for whom the books of philosophers were inaccessible or technically difficult. Speaking of the depth of al-Ghazali's influence on subsequent philosophy, Watt rightly points out: If it is thus impossible to say how much al-Ghazali's attacks contributed to the decline of philosophy, there is no doubt about the success of the positive aspects of his work, namely, the incorporation of parts of philosophy with Islamic theology. From this time onwards the theologians ... made use of syllogistic logic and various metaphysical conceptions. Some of the late Hanbalites even felt themselves constrained to study syllogistic logic in order to refute it (Watt 1963, pp. 173-174).

It was the result of al-Ghazali's concern with philosophy and logic that after him, theological treatises came to have large introductory sections on logic and metaphysics. More interesting books on logic came to be written by theologians and not philosophers. In Watt's view, al-Ghazali was not only the pioneer in all this, but that he alone made that combined study of philosophy and theology that was necessary if the tension was to be resolved (Watt 1963, pp. 173-174).

Collinson and Wilkinson say:

Al-Ghazzali was a philosopher of great originality and critical acumen. He was deeply religious, a mystic as well as a penetrating analytical thinker, a skeptic as well as a man of faith ... His skepticism has been likened to that of the eighteenth century Scottish philosopher David Hume, and of the logical positivists of twentieth century European philosophy (Collinson and Wilkinson 1994, p. 26).

Henry Corbin regards al-Ghazali as "one of the strongest spiritual personalities of Islam," but denies him the status of a philosopher, and prefers to brand him as the "most ardent critic of philosophy." He goes on to add that al-Ghazali "strove vehemently to destroy the demonstrative range that philosophers, Avicennians as well as others, accorded to their arguments regarding the eternity of the world, the procession of the Intelligences, the existence of purely spiritual substances, and the idea of spiritual resurrection" (Corbin 1967).

A. J. Arberry (d. 1969) while hailing al-Ghazali of possessing “a mind of extraordinary suppleness,” of having “a truly devastating gift for polemic,” of reflecting “a high degree of sincerity,” and exhibiting “an acute sensitivity to the changing temper of times,” also opines that “it fell to al-Ghazali ...to deal the fatal blow to philosophy in Islam,” and brands him as “executioner-in-chief” (Arberry 1957, p.61).

Pervez Hoodbhoy summarizes the views of Syed Ameer Ali (d. 1924) regarding the issue of scientific progress and Islam, expressed in the latter’s magnum opus *The Spirit of Islam* (Hoodbhoy 1991, pp. 57-58)²⁰, according to which, it was the fanatics and rigid dogmatists who caused Islamic science and culture to collapse (Hoodbhoy 1991, pp. 57-58). Syed Ameer Ali identifies those most responsible as al-Ashari (d. 935), Ibn Hanbal (d. 855), al-Ghazali (d.1111), and Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328). At the same time, he considers Aristotelian philosophy and rationalist thinking to be entirely in accordance with Islam. Further, he urges that the Mutazilite²¹ movement is to be sympathized with even if it went a bit too far sometimes, and goes on to add that the Muslim philosophers and scholars—al-Kindi (d. 873), al-Farabi (d. 950), Ibn Sina (d. 1037), Ibn al-Haytham (1039), Ibn Rushd (d. 1198),—are true heroes of Islam (Hoodbhoy 1991, pp. 57-58).

It may be pointed out, however, that Syed Ameer Ali and his mentor, Syed Ahmed Khan’s (d. 1898) passionate defense of science and philosophy was coupled with a general liberalism on issues of social importance. They rejected polygamy and *purdah* (veil) as unsuited to the modern age, interpreted *jihad* as actually meaning intellectual war, asserted that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) battled with his foes purely in self-defense, stated that amputation of the hand for theft or stoning to death for adultery were suitable only for tribal societies lacking prisons, and believed that the Qur’an was written in a language suitable for the common folk of the desert. As a consequence of his rationalist thinking, Syed Ahmed Khan especially, had to face the full fury of the orthodoxy. Numerous *fatwas* of *ilhad* (apostasy) and *kufir* (unbelief) were issued by the *Ulama*. The *mutawalli* (keeper) of the Holy Kaba declared him to be “an enemy of Islam” and *wajib al-qatl* (deserver of death) (Hoodbhoy 1991, pp. 58-59).

It is not proposed here to analyze the causes of decay and decline of the Muslim *ummah*, and the reasons for the intellectual stagnancy that set in it. It can be safely inferred, however, that the increasing cultural disparity among Islamic territories, political tangles leading to instability and to top all, the state of permanent conflict with the Christian crusaders were among the most potential degenerating forces. To put the blame on al-Ghazali is, in fact a great injustice to his genius. It is tantamount to discrediting him for the most scholarly work which he did and which clearly indicates his scientific approach. Notwithstanding his inference that all kinds of knowledge should be subjected to investigation, Ghazalian thoughts have been taken to have thwarted the progress of science (Kirmani 1985, p.83).

Realizing the importance of all sciences—what he identified as “rational sciences” and “religious sciences”—al-Ghazali established a firm foundation, from his epistemology, on which to build Islamic education. Knowledge of sciences dealing with things that God has made is regarded by al-Ghazali as a necessary prelude to the knowledge of God Himself. Al-Ghazali in his book, *Mizan al-Amal*, states:

If the soul has not been exercised in the sciences dealing with fact and demonstration, it will acquire mental phantasms, which will be mistaken by it to be truth descending upon it...Many *Sufis* remain stuck for years in such figments of imagination, but they certainly would have been saved from these, had they first followed the path of scientific study and acquired by laborious learning as much at the demonstrative sciences as human power could encompass.²²

What do the above thoughts of al-Ghazali indicate? Is he not exhorting even the sages to follow the path of scientific study? Is he not prodding them to exert themselves to the utmost in the learning of the demonstrative sciences?

Extolling al-Ghazali’s effective role as a great *mujaddid* (revivalist) of Islam, Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi (d. 1979) sums up the general conditions prevailing in the fifth century A.H. and succinctly shows the general trends of the times, which were nothing short of a catastrophe towards which the Muslim peoples were heading rapidly. Propagation

of Greek philosophy, writes Mawdudi, had upset the very foundations of the religious beliefs of the people. The scholars of *hadith* and the jurists, being unfamiliar with the rationalistic sciences, were at a loss to explain and interpret the Islamic system in terms of the contemporary trends of thought, and could do nothing except resort to suppression of the evils by curses and censure. On the contrary, points out Mawdudi, the people who were renowned in the rationalistic sciences neither possessed insight in the religious branches of knowledge, nor had acquired the creative mastery of the imported thought. They were merely the camp followers of the Greek philosophers. Not a single person among them had the ability to study and examine critically the imported Greek ideas and philosophy. Therefore they took the Greek thought for granted and, instead began distorting the Divine revelation with a view to mold it according to the dictates of the former. These circumstances, contends Mawdudi, not only caused the common people to view Islam as something irrational but also gave them the impression that its whole system was too tender to encounter and stand the test of reason. Even though Imam al-Ashari (d. 324/935) and his followers commanded the necessary scholastic skill and strove hard to check this growing trend, they could not meet with success as they were not fully aware of and trained in the rational sciences (Mawdudi 1986, pp. 54-64).

Such were the conditions when al-Ghazali was born. Mawdudi explains that al-Ghazali studied Greek thought with great intellectual acumen and subjected it to such a searching criticism that its grip on the Muslim mind was considerably loosened. Those who had taken Greek speculations to be based on reality and were endeavoring to defend revelation against their onslaught by showing that the two were identical were helped to understand the truth in the correct perspective. Speaking of al-Ghazali's critique of Greek thought and philosophy, Mawdudi reveals a very significant development that took place:

The impact of this criticism was too strong to remain confined to the Muslim territory only and soon crossed over into Europe and did much in that continent to blot out the deep-rooted impression of

Greek thought and help open the door to the age of modern research and Enlightenment (Mawdudi 1986, pp. 54-64).

What al-Ghazali did was to correct the mistakes of those people who in their enthusiasm to defend Islam were fighting the philosophers and the scholastics without the necessary weapons of rationalism. These people, clarifies Mawdudi, were in fact committing the same kind of absurdities as were committed by the priest-folk of Europe later on, that is, to start with the hypotheses that rational proofs of religious beliefs depend on some clearly irrational bases; then to regard such hypotheses as part of the creed and declare a person an un-believer if he does not believe in them, and to consider every argument, experiment or observation as dangerous to religion, if by its application these unreal hypotheses seem to be refuted. Mawdudi makes a keen observation and a cogent argument when he says:

This very thing had eventually pushed the whole of Europe into the lap of atheism and the same disease was now eating into the vitals of the Muslim community and causing it to become skeptical of religious beliefs. Imam Ghazali checked this trend in time and impressed upon the Muslims that the affirmation of their religious beliefs was in no way dependent on the necessity of those irrational hypotheses but had their own sound logical grounds (Mawdudi 1986, pp. 54-64).

From what has been so lucidly explained above by Mawdudi and others, we owe to al-Ghazali the methodology he provided for upsurge of knowledge and intellectual pursuit, rather than the stagnation thereof.

Ibn Rushd's Influence in the West

In many ways the modern picture of Ibn Rushd inside and outside the Arabic and Islamic world is still largely determined by Ernest Renan (d.1892). Renan is said to be the first scholar to introduce critical historicism and certain positivism into oriental studies. He was the loudest voice to proclaim that in Arabic philosophy as shown by Ibn Rushd, the Aristotelian tradition had eliminated Islam and put itself at its place (Wild 1996, p. 157).

There was almost unanimous agreement among scholars in nineteenth century Europe that at some time in the twelfth or thirteenth century something irreversible had happened in the Islamic world, an event which was to lead to universal decay and decline causing a general torpor of any but the most repetitive intellectual activities. The crucial date set by Ernest Renan to mark this change of eras was Averroes's death in 1198. Since then a general state of *inhibit* (decline) was to be deplored. It was only in the nineteenth century that this era of *inhibit* was overcome when the era of the *nahda* (Renaissance) dawned. And the *nahda* owed its existence to the influx of European ideas. So, in the eyes of many European scholars, the burning of Averroes's books, his exile, and his fall into oblivion are so many signals for what only later came to be termed decadence. The counter movement was the Arab Renaissance (*nahda*) of the 19th century, which has been declared a cornerstone of modern Arab intellectual history (Wild 1996, p. 158).

Renan's dating of Arab-Islamic intellectual history by making Averroes's death the beginning of a long era of universal decay was almost unbelievably fashionable and is still dominating East and West. In the words of von Kugelgen, "Averroes's death becomes the turning point for European as well as Islamic intellectual history. Averroes becomes the symbol of the rise of European culture; to neglect him stands for the downfall of Islamic culture. As an Arabic Muslim philosopher he guarantees modernity" (Wild 1996, p. 155-170). Renan presented a historical vision, which was shared by many if not most scholars.

Stephen Wild refers to Anke von Kugelgen, who in her monumental study *Averroes and Arab Modernity*, exhaustively demonstrated the role Ibn Rushd played in Arab intellectual life since the end of the nineteenth century (Wild 1996, p. 155). Wild especially refers to the variety of learned interpretations which have been offered since the famous public debate between Farah Antun and Muhammad Abduh in the years 1902-3. Muhammad Abduh sees in Ibn Rushd a brilliant historical example of a Muslim philosopher and scholar embodying the highest ideals of Islamic tolerance. Since then, Ibn Rushd has been seen variously as a neo-Mutazilite who was more or less plagiarized by

Thomas Aquinas (Mahmud Qasim, 1913-1973), as a representative of a specifically Maghribi brand of rationalism (Muhammad Abed al-Jabiri, born 1936), or as an early proponent of materialism (Tayyib Tizini, born 1938), to name but a few interpretations (Wild 1996, p. 155-156). For Majid Fakhry, and many others, as we shall try to clarify, Ibn Rushd, was the pivotal figure in the history of Andalusian philosophy. He was better known in European sources as Averroes. His philosophy marks the climactic point in the development of Arab-Islamic philosophy and conclusion of four centuries of Philosophical-theological warfare in Islam. In global cultural terms, his contribution to Aristotelian scholarship marks a critical point in the history of the transmission of Greek-Arabic philosophy to Western Europe, at a time when Greek philosophy in general and Aristotelianism in particular had been almost completely forgotten in the West. For with the exception of the translation of Aristotle's logical works by Boethius (d. 525) and parts of Plato's *Timaeus* by Chalcidus (fourth century), very little of Greek philosophy had survived in the West. Thus, when Averroes' commentaries on Aristotle were translated into Latin early in the thirteenth century, they caused a profound intellectual stir in philosophical and theological circles in Western Europe, and laid the groundwork for the rise of Latin Scholasticism, which prior to the rediscovery of Aristotle, thanks chiefly to Averroes' commentaries, would have been inconceivable. Even the rise of Renaissance rationalism and humanism is closely linked to Averroes' commitment to the primacy of reason in philosophical and theological discourse. Thus, as Etienne Gilson has written in his *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages*, (Gilson 1932, p. 37 and Fakhry 2001, pp. xv-xvi) "Rationalism was born in Spain in the mind of an Arabian philosopher, as a conscious reaction against the theologism of the Arabian divines," by whom he means the Asharite *Mutakallimun*. He then adds that when Averroes died in 1198, "he bequeathed to his successors the ideal of a purely rational philosophy, an ideal whose influence was to be such that, by it even the evolution of Christian philosophy was to be deeply modified" (Gilson 1932, p. 37 and Fakhry 2001, pp. xv-xvi). In this respect, it can be deduced that Averroes' "philosophical rationalism" is not only five centuries earlier, but even more comprehensive than the

“mathematical rationalism” of Rene Descartes (d. 1650), generally regarded as the father of modern philosophy (Fakhry 2001, pp. xv-xvi). Paul Kurtz, makes the case that Ibn Rushd was one of the key figures in the development of Enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; at the very least he was a precursor of the modern scientific outlook. It is well known, says Kurtz that classical Islamic philosophers (from the ninth to twelfth centuries) added immeasurably to our common philosophical heritage. Their most important role, however, he thinks, was to preserve and transmit an appreciation for ancient Greek philosophy, especially Aristotle, to the world at a time when it was in danger of being lost. Al-Farabi (d. 950) and Ibn Sina (d. 1037) pondered and commented on the works of Aristotle, but they provided a Neoplatonic interpretation. It was Ibn Rushd who constructed the most elegant, systematic interpretation of Aristotle. Ibn Rushd’s meticulous commentaries on Aristotle were a rich source of astute insights that later generations, particularly in Europe, found to be valuable (Kurtz 1996, pp. 29-30). Ibn Rushd presented Aristotle as a natural philosopher, interested in explaining the universe. *Falsafah* or Greek philosophy was conceived of as a demonstrative science, not a merely speculative activity per se, yielding objective knowledge of reality; for its conclusions were based on empirical observations and logical inferences. Aristotelian natural philosophy was thus advanced by Ibn Rushd as a rationally organized scientific study of the universe (Kurtz 1996, p. 30).

“What a pity,” laments Kurtz, that Ibn Rushd’s influence in the Muslim world waned after his death. Ibn Rushd had a profound influence among Jewish and especially Latin scholars between 1200 and 1650. As such, he helped to contribute to the modern philosophical and scientific revolution that was then brewing in Europe. This occurred in part because a great number of translations from Arabic and Hebrew into Latin of Aristotle’s writings, and especially the commentaries of Ibn Rushd were made available to scholars. The intellectual crisis provoked by the rediscovery of Aristotle challenged Christian theology on many fundamental issues. As a consequence, the works of Ibn Rushd were banned at the University of Paris in 1210 and 1215 and permitted only if corrected in 1231 (Kurtz 1996, p. 31). Aristotle and

Averroes stimulated theologians such as Albertus Magnus (d. 1280) and Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) to try to reconcile the demands of scriptural faith with the standards of reason. The influence of Averroism on the Italian universities, particularly those at Padua and Bologna, had a direct impact on the emergence of modern science.

One of the great intellectual tragedies of philosophy, according to Kurtz is the fact that Averroes's philosophy did not have any significant impact on the world of Muslim scholarship. Had it done so it might have led to a new Muslim Renaissance and Enlightenment, and perhaps to an outburst of scientific discoveries similar to that experienced by Western Europe and America (Kurtz 1996, p. 31). For Kurtz, Ibn Rushd was no revolutionary, and he did not criticize the Qur'an. All that he wished to defend was the importance of rational philosophical and scientific inquiry.²³ This inquiry he wished to restrict to a qualified group of philosophers and not the masses. What is significant in reading Averroes is his conviction that man is a rational animal and that freedom for rational investigation needs to be defended. It is this defense of rational objectivity and free inquiry that is of crucial significance, for it puts forth key values as the basis for any scientific and philosophical search for the truth; it is this principle that is later taken up and defended during the Enlightenment (Kurtz 1996, p. 32).

Oliver Leaman sketches and compares Ibn Rushd's status and standing, both in the West and the Islamic world when he says that that the career of Ibn Rushd in the West took a totally different form from that in the Islamic world. There are very few references to Ibn Rushd at all by any writers in the Islamic world until he was rediscovered in the relatively recent past, and even then there is a good deal of evidence that he was rediscovered through the translation into Arabic of a book on Ibn Rushd written by a Frenchman, Ernest Renan. He has played much more of a role in the Islamic world in the twentieth century in the *Nahda* movement, as a symbol of the possibility of reconciling modernity with Islam. It has to be said that some of the more contemporary interest in Ibn Rushd is in admiration of his role as an intellectual who was prepared to present his views in unreasonable circumstances. In these days where intellectuals are so often

constrained by the political apparatus of which they are a part, this has come in for much praise by many in the Islamic world who operate in conditions, which are not that dissimilar (Leaman 1996, p. 54).

In the West, Ibn Rushd came to have a rather different career. His works were rapidly translated into Hebrew and Latin, and there were a number of different editions of these translations, bearing witness to continuing interest which persisted right up to, and to a certain extent beyond the Renaissance (Leaman 1988, pp. 163-178). Much of this interest was due to his status as the chief commentator on Aristotle. Once Aristotle became important for the development of Western philosophy, the main thinker who had devoted himself to understanding him in the Islamic world became important himself. Although some of his views survived to form a remote part of the development of modern Western philosophy, it was not until his rediscovery in the 20th century by Renan and Munk that he came to play much part in the continuing philosophical debate. Munk was impressed by the importance of Ibn Rushd in lying at the basis of medieval Jewish and Christian philosophy, while Renan valued his role in defending a role for reason as against faith, thus identifying him with the contemporary struggles in France of the secularists against the influence of the church (Leaman 1996, p. 54).

What makes Ibn Rushd such a major figure in the history of philosophy is his participation in some of the most heated and controversial debates in philosophy and religion. These debates led to the creation of the so-called Averroist movement, and this movement called for a radical approach to the relationship between faith and reason. For one thing, it advocated an understanding of some of the key religious concepts in ways, which do not leave them making much religious sense. Secondly, it suggests that the sort of approach to issues followed by religion is to represent philosophical truths in ways, which accord with the limited intelligences and aspirations of the ordinary members of the community. Religion is there to preserve social harmony, very different from the rigorous and demanding versions of truth, which are attainable through the pursuit of philosophy (Leaman 1996, p. 54).

Some of the ideas, which came to be seen as threatening in the West, are primarily Aristotelian ideas, and once established religion is confronted with a *Weltanschauung*, which is so different, it reacts with surprise and shock. This certainly was the case in the thirteenth century in Paris, where the introduction of Averroes into the university curriculum led to great excitement and hostile reaction on the part of the authorities, but the nature of the propositions to which they were responding were essentially Aristotelian rather than anything else. It was Aristotle through the medium of Averroes which led to the form of philosophy in Western Europe known as "Averroism," a type of thinking which led to a strong and conclusive response in the Christian world (Leaman 1996, p. 57).

Vern L. Bullough shows that as Ibn Rushd's influence declined in the Islamic world, it rose in the Western Christian world, where he became recognized as the great authority on Aristotle's philosophy. Ibn Rushd's reputation was so great that he became known simply as "the Commentator." A school rose around Ibn Rushd's commentaries on Aristotle that came to be known as Averroism and this became a vital force in European philosophy. When Aristotle reached the West in the last part of the twelfth and first part of the thirteenth centuries via translations from Spain and interpreted through the words of Islamic commentators, Western thinkers were in a quandary. These Islamic commentators, particularly Averroes, were alleged to have interpreted Aristotle in such a way as to deny free will to man and even to God himself. According to Western versions of Averroes (and other Islamic commentators) the world had been created not directly by God but by a hierarchy of necessary causes starting with God and descending through various Intelligences which moved the celestial spheres until the Intelligence moving the moon's sphere caused the existence of a separate Active Intellect that was common to all men and the sole cause of their knowledge. The form of the human soul already existed in this Active Intellect before the creation of man and after death each human soul merged again into it. At the center of the universe within the sphere of the moon, that is, in the sublunary region, was generated a common fundamental matter, *materia prima*, and then the four elements. From the four elements were produced, under the influence

of the celestial spheres, plants, animals, and man himself (Leaman 1996, p. 45).²⁴

Many of these assumptions were unacceptable to the philosophers of Western Christendom in the thirteenth century. They held that Ibn Rushd denied the immortality of the individual human soul as well as human free will, and as such views allegedly gave scope for the interpretation of all human behavior in terms of astrology. They claimed that Ibn Rushd was rigidly deterministic, denying that God could have acted in any way except that indicated by Aristotle. Averroes was quoted as saying that, "Aristotle's doctrine is the sum of truth because his was the summit of all human intelligence. It is therefore well said that he was created and given us by Divine Providence, so that we should know what it is possible to know" (Leaman 1996, p. 45).

Since the commentaries of Ibn Rushd and the writings of Aristotle reached the West at about the same time, they were treated as one and the same. In 1210 they were both forbidden by a provincial council at Paris; in 1215 the prohibition was confirmed with special reference to the *Metaphysics*; in 1231 a papal injunction interdicted the reading of their works until their complete expurgation. Condemnation, however, did not make the writings of Ibn Rushd or Aristotle disappear, and in fact a whole series of ideas came to be associated with what was called Averroism. In 1217 the bishop of Paris specifically condemned 219 errors in these troublemakers (Leaman 1996, p. 45).

The most important doctrine of these "Latin" Averroists was the supremacy of reason over faith. This led them to argue among other things: (1) the eternal and necessary creation, both for the world of spirit and for the world of matter, (2) the human intellect as a separate substance, one throughout the human species, yet at the same time the substantial form of the individual to whom it is united (sometimes called the unicity of the human intellect), which implied a negation of belief in individual immortality, and in the transcendent destiny of man, and (3) psychological determinism (Leaman 1996, p. 48).

Interestingly, however, Ibn Rushd's ideas, abstracted from his own Islamic framework and belief, were interpreted as that of a skeptic oriented towards nominalism,²⁵ or empiricism²⁶, rather than that of the realist (or idealist) that he was. In Europe, Ibn Rushd was associated with the so called "two-truths," that there is one truth for philosophers and another for the masses, that is, religion. Averroes, however, always held that the higher truth lay in revelation and the lower in the formulations of theology, and so he was not the "freethinker," he was accused of being (Bullough 1996, p. 44).

Al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd: A Comparative and Critical Analysis

Van Den Bergh rightly concludes that it is sometimes more the formula than the essence of things, which divides al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd. Both believe that the Qur'an contains the highest truth. Both affirm that God creates or has created the earth. Both apply to God the theory that His will and knowledge differ from human will and knowledge in that they are creative principles and essentially beyond understanding. Both admit that Divine cannot be measured by the standards of man. Both believe in God's ultimate unity (Ibn Rushd 1978, p. xxxv).

If al-Ghazali's other works are considered, then the resemblance between the two becomes still greater. For instance, he too believes in the spirituality of the soul. Despite the arguments he gives against it in his *Tahafut*, he too sometimes teaches the fundamental theory of the philosophers, the theory that from the one Supreme Agent as the ultimate source, all things ultimately derive. He himself expresses this idea in his *Alchemy of Happiness* and slightly differently in his *Vivification of Theology* (Ibn Rushd 1978, p. xxxv).

While addressing the polemic between Ibn Rushd and al-Ghazali, it is also important to acknowledge areas of agreement between them. For example, in chapter three of the *Fasl*, which is clearly a conciliatory work, Ibn Rushd pays tribute to al-Ghazali for his contribution to the development of the "sciences of asceticism and of the future life" (Ibn Rushd 1976, p. 63). Moreover, we find Ibn Rushd in agreement with al-Ghazali on the need to avoid *kalam*. If Ibn Rushd's criticism lacks the

moral condemnation, which is characteristic of al-Ghazali's position, Ibn Rushd's polemic disqualifies *kalam* on methodological grounds (Montada 1992, p. 121). Both agree that *kalam* is not the way to truth. Though they do not agree upon where the way to is to be found, Ibn Rushd does not reject the intuitive knowledge of the *Sufi dhawq* (taste), nor al-Ghazali the rational knowledge of the philosophers. Yet the polemic does take place because both are moving on a rational level and because al-Ghazali, in spite of the critique, makes use of *kalam* (Montada 1992, p. 122).

Emotionally the differences between the two are very deep. Ibn Rushd is a philosopher and a proud believer in reason. There is much wavering and hesitation in his ideas; still his faith in reason remains unshaken. He reproaches the theologians for having made God as immortal man but God for him is a dehumanized principle (Ibn Rushd 1978, p. xxvi). Ibn Rushd accuses al-Ghazali of hypocrisy and insincerity by saying that his polemics against the philosophers are merely to win the favor of the orthodox. According to him, al-Ghazali's teachings are sometimes detrimental to religion and sometimes to philosophy and sometimes to both (Rehman 1979, p. 112 and Parveen 1999, p.88).

In the *Fasl*, Ibn Rushd complains that the *tawil* (allegorical interpretations) of al-Ghazali used "poetical, rhetorical and dialectical methods" with the praiseworthy purpose of "awakening spirits." This resulted in internal contradictions of methodology and effect, and in inconsistency, which undermined his good intentions. In a famous passage, Ibn Rushd gives vent to his criticism of al-Ghazali: "In his writings, he did not adhere to any doctrine, because he was an Asharite among the Asharites, a *Sufi* among the *Sufis*, and a philosopher among the philosophers (Ibn Rushd 1961, p. 61). It may well be argued that Ibn Rushd's criticism appears to be impressive, but somewhat unfair. No doubt al-Ghazali wished "the best" for his people in terms of strong faith and right moral behavior. Philosophers may affirm that rational knowledge leads to these goals in the best way, but one could object that the essence of the religious phenomenon itself lies beyond philosophy or rational theology (Montada 1992, p.130).

Ibn Rushd, on the pattern of al-Ghazali, also develops his arguments on the basis of the criterion fixed by the Qur'an. He does not deny the fact of miracles, rather holds their denial an act of *kufir* (disbelief). In fact, the two philosophers have more similarities than differences. However, whereas, al-Ghazali seems to be converging to Qur'an, Ibn Rushd deceptively appears to be diverging from it. Ibn Rushd strictly adheres to the principle of cause-effect system, which obviously validates the findings based on common observation. In clear contrast to al-Ghazali, he holds the view that even though the fire failed to burn Prophet Ibrahim, yet the intrinsic quality of fire to burn and reduce things to ashes cannot be denied on the basis of very rare and uncommon exceptions (Kirmani 1985, p. 84).

However, it is really unfortunate that Ibn Rushd's work has come down to us in the guise of Aristotelian philosophy and his true color as an Islamic philosopher is completely concealed. His approach has not been seen in the Islamic cultural milieu in its true perspective, though with the passage of time his influence has been increasing. Earlier, Muhammad Abduh, Ameer Ali and only a few others adopted his views on cause and effect relationship but today it has become a fact, which no Islamic scholar can possibly deny (Kirmani 1985, p. 85).

The dominant view in Science being positivistic, it is natural to wish to see it operative in all the spheres of life. But those who wish it find it difficult to agree with al-Ghazali on all the points. However, in view of the changing perspectives in science it may not be difficult, provided that prejudices do not intervene. One may safely infer that Ghazalian philosophy can provide basic frame for new science. And it is in this context that al-Ghazali assumes great significance. His philosophy can help us understand and develop the parameters of Islamic epistemology suitable for the healthier growth of science (Kirmani 1985, p. 85). Edward J. Jurji includes al-Ghazali among the "most original" people who were endowed with a great talent of native scientific aptitude. It is interesting that contrary to many apologists, Jurji has mentioned Al-Ghazali along with the scientific polymaths like Ibn Sina and al-Biruni (Jurji 1946, P. 233).

Also, Ibn Rushd and his views on cause and effect relationship possess a great potential for the growth of science. His adherence to the principle of cause and effect relationship becomes more meaningful in the context of the nature of scientific activity. Predictability of a result on the basis of a particular cause being the hall-mark of science, growth of knowledge on the basis of cause and effect relationship caters to science on the one hand and emancipate man from speculative, mystic, and mere intuitive means of knowledge on the other (Kirmani 1985, p. 85).

Thus both al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd have essentially contributed to the growth of science. The apparent difference between the two is limited only to the approaches, and cannot be termed as fundamental. The two approaches being the two sides of the same coin can help develop different disciplines in one frame work, one providing the methodological guidance and the other, the Ghazalian in fact, the epistemological frame. In so doing the growth of these disciplines will not only be in harmony with themselves and with each other but will also not violate their subtle relationship with man and nature (Kirmani 1985, p. 85).

Ibn Rushd's reply to al-Ghazali's attack made little impact on the Muslim world as a whole, but it completes the picture of the full range of contemporary thought with its extreme opposites of theology and philosophy (Burckhardt 1973, p. 143 and Parveen 1999, p. 89). This statement is corroborated by Majid Fakhry:

Ibn Rushd's defense of philosophers is as subtle and vigorous as is al-Ghazali's attack on them. He indeed handles the arguments with accomplished understanding and ingenious skill, yet in the considered opinion of those who are competent to judge, al-Ghazali's arguments are in the final analysis more telling than those of his adversary (Fakhry 1958, p. 103 and Parveen 1999, p. 89).

Conclusion

Our findings suggest that contrary to a great number of scholars who have dealt with the subject of conflict between these two giant theologians, jurists, and philosophers, al-Ghazali was not against philosophical reasoning per se; rather he attempted to form an Islamic worldview against the Greek worldview in order to liberate Islamic thought from the bondage of Greek worldview.²⁷

Our findings also suggest that al-Ghazali is the forerunner of some contemporary Muslim scholars who are of the opinion of irreconcilability between Islamic worldview and that of Western worldview. We have to be aware of the incongruity of Islam's worldview and Western worldview. This does not mean to take refuge in absolute exclusivism, which is contrary to the spirit of Islamic culture because one essential feature of Islamic cultural tradition is openness towards all.

Al-Ghazali, according to our investigation set an example for dealing with other philosophies with their own characteristic worldviews. He appears to be the first Muslim scholar to mold a methodology of mutual argumentation with the adversary. He insisted that one must not ignore or abandon certain knowledge because the opponent has advocated it. One must be able to discriminate the truth from the false and accept the truth even it comes from the opponent. Our Islamic evaluation tends to represent al-Ghazali as a sincere intellectual who attempted to liberate Islamic reason from the bondage of Greek hegemony.

Al-Ghazali is universally known as "the proof of Islam" (*hujjat al-Islam*). This qualification is meaningful only if we admit that his work is a conscious synthesis of three main aspects of the Islamic concept of rationality: theoretical and practical inquiry, juridical legislation and mystical practice. Perhaps this kind of rationality appears quite distant from Western rationality (Campanini 1996, 1:271). Yet, the depth and breadth of al-Ghazali's thought means that he can be viewed as the prototype of the Muslim intellectual (Watt 1963).

What may be deduced from al-Ghazali's approach is that there is no other way to distinguish oneself or one's position except that, which begins with an attentive inquiry into the nature and the characteristics of the others—a task, which Muslim scholars have tried to accomplish within the last two hundred years, when a degenerated Islamic world faced the challenge of Western thought., but unfortunately without success. Al-Ghazali's example became the standard norm of thinking for generations after him and explains the continuity of the impact of his thought up to the present time throughout the Muslim world.

In contemporary times, it is only through knowledge of Islam and its worldview, coupled with the knowledge of Western thought and civilization and the understanding of its evolutionary history of intellectual and religious development, that we can successfully engage ourselves in a meaningful dialogue with others, as al-Ghazali, under similar circumstances and in his own milieu, had demonstrated (al-Attas 2001, pp. 1-8).

It may be worth mentioning that al-Ghazali possessed the pre-requirements, which any philosopher or thinker who attempts to present a “new model of thought” should be aware of and possess. These are “continuity,” “adaptation,” and the “capability of re-construction of thought”—continuity in the sense that his new attempt of revivification or regeneration should be in continuity with the main precepts agreed upon and accepted by the community under which the common central ego of the *ummah* is preserved. It is one of the general rules governing religious thought and referred to by scholars of Comparative Religion that any attempt to revive and reconstruct it should not take a revolutionary break from it; rather it should be in agreement with the general spirit of the commonly received tradition. Adaptation implies possessing a thorough knowledge of his times and being aware at the same time of the others' general worldview. Finally he should have a vigorous capability of re-construction (Fattah 2004, pp. 165-171).

As for Ibn Rushd's impact on Western-European thought, the translation of the whole Averroist corpus of commentaries on Aristotle into Hebrew and Latin, starting early in the thirteenth century, had a

far-reaching effect on philosophical and theological developments. According to some Western orientalists and contemporary Arab scholars with nationalistic secularist tendencies, Ibn Rushd was responsible for the emergence of Western secularism and is accused of being somewhat pragmatic and materialistic in his approach to religion. Majid Fakhry indicates that Arab intellectuals such as M. Amarah, T. Tizyani and H. Muruwah, have gone so far in their interpretation of Ibn Rushd as to regard him as one of the early forerunners of (Marxist) dialectical materialism and secularism, not to speak of Farah Antun (d. 1922) who in his book entitled *Ibn Rushd and his Philosophy (Ibn Rushd wa Falsafatuh)* appears to link secularism, which he vehemently defends to Averroist rationalism, as Dante (d. 1321) had done centuries earlier (Fakhry 2001, pp. 168-169).

Such accusative statements need particular elaboration and investigation, and are out of scope of our present study. It is sufficient to say that such serious allegations hurled on a man who was the prime example of a thorough jurist within the Islamic intellectual tradition²⁸ could only be the product of hasty conclusion, which cannot be accepted and have to be discredited.

For Van Den Bergh, Ibn Rushd's approach to religion is "pragmatic" and "utilitarian" and his attitude stands "midway between the materialistic and utilitarian view of religion," which sees in it an astute human invention, aiming at enforcing moral conduct on the masses through the fear of an invisible and omnipresent supervisor...." (Ibn Rushd 1978, 2:203-204).

Our study has shown that no Muslim with a fair knowledge of Ibn Rushd can take such statement at its face value as what is stated therein is only a reflection of one of the most popular interpretations of religion perceived as "Projectionism," the main architects of which are Edward Tylor (d. 1917), Sigmund Freud (d. 1939), Karl Marx (d. 1883), Emile Durkheim (d. 1917), Max Weber (d. 1920) and others. They have conceived religion variously as "Primitive Error," "Psychological Construct," and "Social Construct."²⁹

At the conclusion of this study, it can only be said that not only the criticism leveled against al-Ghazali is unwarranted but equally unjustifiable is the twisted attitude towards Ibn Rushd. Ghazalian philosophy together with Rushdian philosophy develops an epistemology and philosophy of method. Interestingly enough these points have recently initiated debate. In fact, al-Ghazali needs revival and Ibn Rushd is required to be re-understood.

Both, al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd have essentially contributed to the growth of intellectualism in Islam. The significant difference between the two is limited only to their approaches. The essence of the religious phenomenon for al-Ghazali lies beyond philosophy and rational theology. Ibn Rushd's approach is of the philosopher who holds reason supreme. Both approaches can help develop different disciplines in one general Islamic framework

References

- Al-Attas, Syed Muhammad Naquib (2001). Welcoming Address. In *International conference on al-Ghazali's legacy: Its contemporary relevance (24-27 October 2001)*, organized by ISTAC, Kuala Lumpur.
- Al-Faruqi, Isma'il R. & Lois Lamya al-Faruqi (1986). *The cultural atlas of Islam*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.
- Al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid Muhammad bin Muhammad. (1963). *Mizan al-amal*. Cairo: Matbaat M. A. Sabeeh & Sons.
- Al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid Muhammad bin Muhammad. (1980 a). *al-Munqidh min al-dalal (Freedom and fulfillment: An annotated translation of al-Ghazali's al-Munqidh min al-dalal and other relevant works of al-Ghazali)*, trans. R.J. McCarthy, Boston: Twayne Publishers.
- Al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid Muhammad bin Muhammad. (1980 b). *Al-Qistas al-Mustaqim (The Correct Balance)*, trans. R.J. McCarthy, Appendix III in *Freedom and Fulfillment*, Boston: Twayne Publishers.
- Al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid Muhammad bin Muhammad. (2000). *Tahafut al-falasifah (The Incoherence of the Philosophers)*, translated, introduced, and annotated by Michael E. Marmura, Second Edition, Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press.
- Ali, Syed Ameer. (1976). *The spirit of Islam*. Karachi: Pakistan Publishing House.
- Al-Marzuqi, Abu Ya'rib (1978). *Ma'fhum al-sababiyyah 'ind al-Ghazali*. Tunisia: Dar Bu Salamah.
- Al-Zeera, Zahera. (2001). *Wholeness and holiness in education: An Islamic perspective*. Herndon: The International Institute of Islamic Thought.

- Arberry, A.J. (1957). *Revelation and reason in Islam*. New York: The Macmillan Company.
- Bullough, Vern L. (1996). Medieval scholasticism and Averroism: The implication of the writings of Ibn Rushd to Western science. In Mourad Wahba & Mona Abousenna, editors. *Averroes and the Enlightenment*. Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books.
- Burckhardt, Titus. (1970). *Moorish culture in Spain*. London: Allen and Unwin Ltd.
- Campanini, Massimo. (1996). Al-Ghazzali. In Seyyed Hossein Nasr & Oliver Leaman, editors. *History of Islamic philosophy*, 2 vols. London and New York: Routledge.
- Christian, James L. (2002). *The wisdom seekers: Great philosophers of the Western world*, 2 vols. Singapore: Thomson Learning.
- Collinson, D. and Wilkinson, R. (1994). *Thirty-five oriental philosophers*. Routledge: London.
- Corbin, Henry. (1967) Ghazali, Abu Hamid Muhammad. In *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co.
- Crombie, A. C. (1953). *Augustine to Galileo: The history of science A. D. 400-1650*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press
- Fakhry, Majid. (1958). *Islamic occasionalism and its critique by Averroes and Aquinas*. London: George. Allen & Unwin Ltd.
- Fakhry, Majid. (1983). *A history of Islamic philosophy*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Fakhry, Majid. (1998). Greek philosophy: Impact on Islamic philosophy. In Edward Craig (General editor) *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. London and New York: Routledge, vol. 4.
- Fakhry, Majid. (2001). *Averroes*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications.
- Fattah, Irfan A. H. (2004). *Dirasat Islamiyyah*. Kuala Lumpur: Kaci Trading Sdn. Bhd.
- Gibb, Hamilton A. R. (1982). *Studies on the civilization of Islam*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Gilson, E. (1932). *Reason and revelation in the middle ages*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Hoodbhoy, Pervez. (1991). *Islam and science: Religious orthodoxy and the battle for rationality*. London and New Jersey: Zed Books.
- Ibn Khaldun,. Abu Zayd Abd al-Rahman. (1967). *An introduction to history: The Muqaddimah*. Translated from the Arabic by Franz Rosenthal; abridged and edited by N.J. Dawood, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.
- Ibn Rushd. (1961). *Kitab fasl al-maqal (On the harmony of religion and philosophy)*. Translated by G. F. Hourani. Reprinted 1976, London: Luzac & Co.
- Ibn Rushd. (1978). *Tahafut al-tahafut, (The incoherence of the incoherence)*, translated from the Arabic with Introduction and Notes by Simon Van Den Bergh, London: E. J. W. Gibb Memorial.
- Inati, Shams. (1996). Ibn Sina. In Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman, eds. *History of Islamic philosophy* Routledge: London and New York. Vol. 1
- Jurji, Edward J. (1946). *The Arab heritage*, ed., Nabih Amin Faris. New Jersey: Princeton University.

- Kirman, Mohammad Zaki. (1985). Ghazali needs revival. In *Journal of Islamic Science*, vol. 1, no. 1, January 1985.
- Kurtz, Paul (1996). Intellectual freedom, rationality, and Enlightenment: The Contribution of Averroes. In Mourad Wahba & Mona Abousenna, editors. *Averroes and the Enlightenment*. Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books.
- Leaman, Oliver. (1988). *Averroes and his philosophy*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Leaman, Oliver. (1996). Averroes and the West. In Mourad Wahba & Mona Abousenna, editors. *Averroes and the Enlightenment*. Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books.
- Leaman, Oliver. (1998). Concept of philosophy in Islam. In Edward Craig (General editor) *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 5, London and New York: Routledge.
- Leaman, Oliver. (1999). *A brief introduction to Islamic philosophy*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Leaman, Oliver. (2002). *An introduction to classical Islamic philosophy*, Cambridge: University Press.
- Mawdudi, Sayyid Abul A'la (1986). *Tajdid -o-Ihya-i-din*, translated from Urdu into English by Al-Ashari under the title *A short history of the revivalist movement in Islam*. Lahore: Islamic Publications Limited, 6th edn.
- Montada, Josep Puig. (1992). Ibn Rushd versus al-Ghazali: Reconsideration of a polemic. In *The Muslim World*, vol. 82, no. 1-2.
- Mutahhari, Murtada. (2002). *Understanding Islamic sciences* London: ICAS Press.
- Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. & Oliver Leaman, (1996). Eds. *History of Islamic philosophy*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Nasr. Seyyed Hossein. (1995). "Islamic Philosophy," in John L. Esposito, ed., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Parveen, Kausar. (1999). Al-Ghazali's attack on the philosophers and Ibn-i-Rushd's response. In *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, vol., 20, no.1.
- Pines, Shlomo. (1996). *Studies in the history of Arabic philosophy*, Jerusalem: The Magnes Press.
- Qadir, C. A. (1988). *Philosophy and science in the Islamic world*, New York: Croom Helm Ltd.
- Rafiabadi, Hameed Naseem. (2001). Ghazzali's approach to natural sciences and philosophy. In *Hamdard Islamicus*, vol. 24, no. 4.
- Rahman, Fazlur. (1979). *Prophecy in Islam*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Sharif, M. M. (2004). Greek Thought. In *A history of Muslim philosophy*, edited by M. M. Sharif, vol. 1. Delhi: Low Price Publications.
- Sheikh, M. Saeed. (1974). *Studies in Muslim philosophy*. Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf.
- Thomson, Garrett and Marshall Missner, (2000). *On Aristotle*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

- Thrower, James. (1999). *Religion: The classical theories*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Urvoy, Dominique. (1996). Ibn Rushd. In Seyyed Hossein Nasr & Oliver Leaman, editors. *History of Islamic philosophy*, 2 vols. London and New York: Routledge.
- Watt, W. Montgomery. (1953). *The faith and practice of al-Ghazali*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.
- Watt, W. Montgomery. (1963). *Muslim Intellectuals: A study of al-Ghazzali*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Wild, Stephen. (1996). Between Ernest Renan and Ernst Bloch: Averroes remembered, discovered, and invented. The European reception since the nineteenth century. In Mourad Wahba & Mona Abousenna, editors. *Averroes and the Enlightenment*. Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books.

Endnotes

¹ The controversy is primarily associated with al-Ghazali (d. 1111) after he launched a devastating attack on philosophy in his magnum opus *Tahafut al-falasifah* ("The Incoherence of the Philosophers"). This work was refuted nearly a century later by Ibn Rushd (d. 1198) in his rejoinder *Tahafut al-Tahafut* ("The Incoherence of the Incoherence").

² Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali (d. 1111) was known in the medieval Western world under the name of Algazel. He is one of the most representative thinkers of Islam, as suggested by his honorific nickname of *Hujjat al-Islam* (The Proof of Islam). He was born in Tus, near the modern Meshhed in northeast Persia in 450/1058. His training as a youth was marked by his contacts with the great schools of thought of the time: philosophy, esotericism, theology etc. He was a disciple of al-Juwayni (d. 1085), the most prominent Asharite theologian of his time who was nicknamed *Imam al-Haramayn*. He was called to the court of Nizam al-Mulk, vizier to the Seljuk Sultans whose dynasty (of Turkish origin) had taken over the Abbasid caliphate under the cover of protecting it from the Fatimid expansion. Al-Ghazali was charged with instructing Asharite theology in a teaching institution founded by Nizam al-Mulk in Baghdad, the *Madrassa Nizamiyya*. As the head of the *madrassa* for four years (1091-1095), he lectured with great success, in jurisprudence and theology. Thus, he became one of the most prominent personalities in Baghdad at that time.

In his intellectual autobiography entitled *Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal* ("Deliverance from Error"), al-Ghazali tells us of the inner crisis caused by his "doubts" towards all the knowledge that he had acquired and which he was charged with teaching. "Deliverance" is said to have come to him from

Sufism, from the spiritual realization which he later tried to accommodate to the dogma of Sunni Islam in its Asharite formulation. This project became the topic of his masterpiece, *Ihya Ulum al-din* ("The Revivification of Religious Sciences"). The *Ihya* is an in-depth analysis of what Kenneth Cragg says, could be called "The Art of Being Islamic." Al-Ghazali's work marked the period as one of theological-mystical reaction against the reason of the Hellenicist philosophers, as seen in his *Tahafut al-falasifah* ("The Incoherence of the Philosophers"). In it he claims to have destroyed the Aristotelian-Neoplatonic doctrines that matter is eternal, that the heavenly bodies have souls, that soul is the cause of motion, and that causality exists in reality. Reason, therefore, as employed by philosophers, cannot be a source of certainty.

³ Abu al-Walid Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Rushd (d. 1198), the Averroes of the Latins was born in Cordoba, Spain, in 1126 in a descendant of a long line of prominent jurists in Muslim Spain. He received a complete training in theology, law, medicine, mathematics, astronomy and philosophy. None of Ibn Rushd's philosophy teachers are mentioned by name, but he appears to have been influenced by Ibn Bajjah or Avempace (d. 1138), who was responsible for introducing the study of Aristotle into al-Andalus, and for whom Ibn Rushd had the highest regard. He was, in addition a close friend of Ibn Ûufayl (d. 1185), who served as physician royal of the Almohad caliph, Abu Yaqub Yusuf, who appears to have been genuinely interested in philosophy. In 1169, at the initiative of the caliph, he started a series of commentaries on the work of Aristotle. In 1182, he became personal physician to the caliph and *qadi* (Judge) of Cordoba. He later enjoyed the same favours with the caliph's successor, Abu Yaqub Yusuf al-Mansur. But his philosophical opinion drew skepticism from the legal scholars. He fell in disgrace; his books were burned and had to suffer attacks from the theologians of the populace. He died in Morocco after being finally pardoned by the Almohad caliph.

The three major areas in Ibn Rushd's thought were (i) his commentaries and his interpretation of Aristotle; (ii) his criticism of al-Farabi and Ibn Sina which called for an Aristotelianism free of the misinterpretations that had been inflicted on it by the Eastern philosophical tradition; and (iii) his proof of the essential agreement between philosophy and revelation as two distinct expressions of one and the same truth. With the revival of Aristotle's thinking (Aristotelianism) in Western Europe at the end of the twelfth century, he was soon hailed as a major authority in Jewish and Christian thinking.

⁴ Al-Ghazali's quarrel is not with the philosophers' mathematics, astronomical sciences, or logic, but only with those of their theories that contravene the principles of religion.

⁵ These among others include Aristotle (d. 322 BCE), who organized and perfected the philosophical sciences, al-Farabi (d. 950), and Ibn Sina (d. 1037). The latter two are the two most authoritative expositors of Aristotelian philosophy in Islam. It was to show the falsity of the views of these two leading Muslim Neoplatonists directly, and Aristotle (their master), indirectly on twenty propositions that have an obvious religious reference and which the unguarded believer must be warned that he composed the *Tahafut*. In particular, he underscores that philosophers become infidels on three questions: the eternity of the world (a thesis peculiar to Aristotle); the impossibility of God's knowledge of particulars (a thesis strongly held by Ibn Sina), and the denial of bodily resurrection and mortality of the individual souls, a naturalistic theory which is not exclusively Aristotelian.

⁶ Natural law means a principle or body of laws considered as derived from nature, right reason or religion and as ethically binding in human society. Naturalism is the view of the world which takes account only of natural elements and forces, excluding the supernatural and spiritual.

⁷ *Tawhid* is the act of affirming that there is no god but God and to hold that He alone is the Creator who gave to everything its being, Who is the ultimate cause of every event, and the final event of all that is, that He is the first and the last. All that surrounds us, whether things or events, all that takes place in the natural, social, or social or psychic fields, is the action of God, the fulfillment of one or another of His purposes. For *tawhid*, as an essence of Islam, See (Ismail al-Faruqi and Lamy al-Faruqi 1986, pp. 73-91).

⁸ The thinking of the early Greeks, like that of all ancient peoples, Egyptians, Babylonians, Hittites, Phoenicians, and Indians, was more mythological and speculative than physical or metaphysical. It exhibited more the play of imagination than the working of reason. It is true that the basic effort of the Greeks, as of those other peoples, was to understand the origin and nature of things, but what they understood was a world of their own make believe rather than the real world around them. They personified all elements of nature into powerful and immortal divinities, having the same desires, passions, and relationships as themselves, and endowed them with powers more or less proportionate to their magnitude. It goes to the credit of the philosophers of Miletus, the metropolis of Ionia, a Greek colony in Asia Minor ruled by Persia, to have divested Greek thought of theogony and cosmogony and made the phenomena of nature and their origin their chief concern. Their thought was, however, more physical and cosmological than metaphysical. Each of them attempted to discover a single basic material from which everything sprang. See (Sharif 2004, 1:75).

⁹ Philosophy as *hikmah* has the advantage of referring to a wide range of

conceptual issues within Islam. Philosophy can then deal both with the exoteric aspects of the Qur'anic revelation and the esoteric dimensions which lie at the heart of religion. Both the Qur'an and the universe are often viewed as aspects of Divine revelation which require interpretation, and philosophy in its widest sense has a vital role here. An advantage of seeing Islamic philosophy as broadly *hikmah* rather than as the narrower *falsafah* is that it avoids the danger of regarding it as predominantly and unoriginal and transmitted form of thought. Although the central principles of *falsafah* have their origin in Greek philosophy, they were so radically transformed and developed within Islamic philosophy that there is no justification in thinking that the latter is merely a result of the transmission of ideas from outside Islam. See Leaman, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, "Concept of philosophy in Islam."

¹⁰ Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728/1327) gave a verdict declaring *kalam* and logic unlawful. He was a major figure of the Hanbalite traditional theology and therefore a most vehement opponent to the philosophers' position. He is the author of the *al-Radd Ala al-mantiqiyin* (Refutation of the Logicians), which spoke against the abuses of philosophy and theology and against the major theses of the great philosophers (al-Farabi and Ibn Sina), while advocating a return to the ancient scholars' (*salaf*) orthodox methods. He became famous for his virulent criticism of Shi'ism and Sufism. A few centuries later, he inspired what is called the modern Hanbalite renewal, namely the Wahhabite movement in the eighteenth century, then the Salafite fundamentalist reform in the nineteenth century.

¹¹ Peripatetic is derived from the word *peripatoi* which means "covered walk." Every morning Aristotle and his pupils would walk up and down the gardens discussing the more abstract areas of philosophy. It is because of this walking that Aristotelian philosophers are called the Peripatetics. See (Thomson and Missner 2000, p. 5).

¹² *Kalam* is variously referred to in English as Islamic or Muslim theology, systematic theology, rational theology, scholastic theology, dialectical theology, speculative theology, and philosophical theology. It emerged within a hundred years after the death of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in a milieu where Muslims were preoccupied with questions about their identity and thus engaged in a wide-ranging debate over beliefs, concepts, values, practices, and, in general, worldviews. The factors that gave rise to the realization among Muslims of the need to study the fundamentals of the Islamic faith and to undertake the task of defending them were: the embracing of Islam by various nations who brought with them a series of (alien) ideas and notions; the mixing and coexisting of the Muslims with peoples of various

religions, such as Jews, Christians, Magians (Zoroastrians), and Sabians, and the ensuing religious debates and disputes between the Muslims and those peoples; the emergence in the Islamic world of the *Zanadiqah* (heretics), and the birth of philosophy in the Muslim world, which itself gave birth to doubts and skepticism (Mutahhari 2002, p.51). Ibn Khaldun defines *kalam* as “a science that involves arguing with logical proofs in defense of the articles of faith and refuting innovators who deviate in their dogmas from the early Muslims and Muslim orthodoxy” (Ibn Khaldun 1967, p. 348).

¹³ Aristotle’s cosmic outlook and his theory of human nature were seen to be in contrast on several key points with the worldview that dominated Islamic, Christian, and Jewish theology in the medieval period. Aristotle seemed to maintain that the world is eternal; that there is no soul independent of the body, and that the idea of a corporeal afterlife is vacuous. Even the notion of an individual afterlife is disparaged, and Aristotle’s God is an uninterested and uninvolved being as far as the world of generation and corruption is concerned. For an age overwhelmed by faith, these views were heretical and radical.

¹⁴ See (Qadir 1988, p. 131).

¹⁵ Asharism is the name of a philosophic religious school of thought in Islam that developed during the tenth and eleventh centuries. This movement was an attempt not only to purge Islam of all non-Islamic elements which had quietly crept into it but also to harmonize the religious consciousness with the religious thought of Islam. It laid the foundation of an orthodox Islamic theology or orthodox *kalam*, as opposed to the rationalist *kalam* of the Mutazilites; and in opposition to the extreme orthodox class, it made use of the dialectical method for the defense of the authority of Divine revelation as applied to theological subjects.

¹⁶ One major result of the popularity of Asharism was that it checked the growth of free thought in Islam. Another was, and this was a wholesome one, that it led to a criticism of Greek philosophy and its rapid downfall in the Muslim world.

¹⁷ In his article, in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* entitled “Islamic Philosophy,” Nasr has given a brief account of the contributions of the galaxy of Muslim philosophers from al-Kindi to Ibn Rushd, followed by philosophers up to contemporary times.

¹⁸ See Sharif, Ed. *A history of Muslim philosophy*, 1: 622, wherein he refers to P.K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, (London: n.p., 1949), 432; Max Meyerhof, *The legacy of Islam*, ed. T. Arnold and Guillaume (Oxford: n.p., 1931), 337; and Will Durant, *The age of faith*, (New York: n.p., 1950) 256-257 and 332.

¹⁹ Neoplatonism has been described as the final summation or synthesis of the major currents in Greek philosophy, Pythagoreanism, Stoicism, Platonism and Aristotelianism, into which an oriental religious and mystical spirit was infused. Though Ammonium Saccas (d. 250 CE.) was the founder of Neoplatonism, yet credit must go to Plotinus (d. 270 CE.) who established

Neoplatonism as a school of thought. His “Enneads” are primary and classical document of Neoplatonism. It was the privilege of Prophyry (d. 303 CE.), the illustrious disciple and biographer of Plotinus who collected the writings of his teacher and arranged a series of 54 essays into 6 divisions of 9 each, each division being called an “Ennead.” Islamic Neoplatonism stressed one aspect of the Qur’anic God, the transcendent, and ignored another, the creative. For the Neoplatonists, all things emanated from the deity. Islamic philosophers were imbued to a greater or lesser degree with either Aristotelianism or Neoplatonism or, as was often the case, with both. See Majid Fakhry, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, “Greek philosophy: Impact on Islamic philosophy” and M. Noor Nabi, “Neoplatonism and its impact on Muslim thought,” in (Mohamed Taher (ed.) 1998, 12:56-57). See also “Neoplatonism,” in the *Dictionary of philosophy and religion*, (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1996), pp. 514-515.

²⁰ Syed Ameer Ali wrote *The Spirit of Islam* with a definite goal in mind—to prove that true Islam is revolutionary, rational, and progress oriented. For Western educated Muslim modernists of the early twentieth century, it was a definitive and comprehensive work which challenged the hostile representations of Islamic history, values, and theology put forward by most orientalist. But it was also a work for which its author was repeatedly dubbed an apologist who pandered to modern Western ideals at the expense of true Islamic ideas. See (Hoodbhoy 1991, pp. 57-58).

²¹ The Mutazilites advocated the application of analogy (*qiyas*) and allegorical interpretation (*tawil*) to the ambiguous texts of the Scripture. They allowed the use of Greek dialectical methods, without questioning in the least the validity of the sacred texts. Their task consisted partly in the elucidation of these texts, partly in the rebuttal of anti-religious arguments or the defense of Islam against its enemies, Manicheans, Jews, Christians, or atheists. By virtue of its rationalism, this group could undoubtedly be regarded as philosophical.

²² See (Zeera 2001, p. 80).

²³ According to Kurtz, Ernest Renan interpreted Ibn Rushd as a freethinker, though this interpretation has been criticized by others.

²⁴ This is essentially the argument of A. C. Crombie in his work *Augustine to Galileo: The history of science A. D. 400-1650*, pp. 39-40.

²⁵ The doctrine holding that abstract concepts, general terms, or universals have no independent existence but exist only as names.

²⁶ The philosophical theory which attributes the origin of all our knowledge to

experience.

²⁷ See (al-Marzuqi 1978, Introductory Chapter) for an exposition of this argument.

²⁸ Ibn Rushd is known to have written a number of treatises on jurisprudence, including the *Bidayat al-mujtahid wa nihayat al-muqta'lid* ("Beginning for Whoever Makes a Personal Effort and an End for Whoever is Contented"), a monument of logical explication of Muslim law. It is a treatise of *ikhtilaf* (the science of comparing different schools of legal interpretation) considering at each point solutions proposed by small schools or significant individuals and not only by the major schools of interpretation. This work is particularly valuable in introducing the reader to his concept of the nature and aims of the science of jurisprudence. See (Urvoy 1996, pp. 333-334).

²⁹ For a detailed explanation of these theories, see (James Thrower 1999, pp. 99-161). Generally, religion is conceived by these thinkers as a human made product and reflects certain socio-historical factors. That is to say it is not transcendental.

Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* and its Relationship to Sufism

Shahram Kiaei
Islamic Azad University of Qom, Iran.

Abstract

The present paper contains an examination of certain sufistic ideas elucidated in Doris Lessing most celebrated novel *The Golden Notebook*. It is my contention that this particular novel marked a profound shift in Lessing's ontology and subsequently led her to accept the validity of a "mystical" approach to existence. The purpose of this paper therefore is essentially twofold. On the one hand, it attempts to prove that Lessing's ideology has displayed an underlying consistency. This continuity manifests itself in her adherence to an affirmative vision. Conversely, I also seek to demonstrate that *The Golden Notebook* constitutes a fundamental transformation in Lessing's philosophical perspective. The aim of this study is to examine this apparent paradox. Moreover, this examination will discuss how ideas and themes which informed Lessing's early fiction ultimately laid a philosophical basis for her subsequent acceptance of Sufism.

Keywords: Sufism, Ontology, Mysticism, Philosophy

Introduction

The Golden Notebook is the story of writer Anna Wulf, the four notebooks in which she keeps the record of her life, and her attempt to tie them all together in a fifth, gold-colored notebook. After the opening realistic section, ironically called "Free Women", the book fragments into Anna's four notebooks, colored black, red, yellow, and

blue, respectively. Each notebook is returned to four times, creating non-chronological, overlapping sections.

The black notebook is for Anna's memories of her life in Central Africa, which inspired her own best-selling novel; the red one for her experiences with the British Communist Party; the yellow one for a fiction she writes that is based on the painful ending of her own love affair; and the blue one for recording her memories, dreams, and emotional life.

SUFI EQUILIBRIUM IN *THE GOLDEN NOTEBOOK*

The Golden Notebook certainly marks a turning point in formal structure in Lessing's canon and is selected as evidence of her interest in Sufism at that early stage. Critics frequently refer to *The Four-Gated City* (1969) as the starting point of Lessing's interest in Sufi methods of thought. I will content that such interest is evident since *The Golden Notebook* (1962) and that it is crucial in understanding the complexity of the inner action and sheds light upon the statement it makes through the form.

SUFI BALANCE OF ALL FACULTIES: THE SEARCH FOR EQUILIBRIUM IN *THE GOLDEN NOTEBOOK*

When Lessing published *The Golden Notebook* in 1962, she already had the experience of five novels, including *The Grass is Singing* (1950), *Martha Quest* (1952), *A Proper Marriage* (1954), *A Ripple from the Storm* (1958) and a number of short stories behind her. It is here that the major theme appears in its full complexity. As the inner dimensions of the self are shown to become more conscious and integrated into the personality, beginning with the character of Anna Wulf, the theme of equilibrium which is one of the basic tenets of Sufi thought assumes a more central position. The protagonist's perception oscillates between two modes of reality—an external socially orientated landscape impinging upon the individual's perception, and an internal landscape within the self. Ornstein's (1972: 12) definition of the mode of consciousness operating in each realm is helpful here. According to

Ornstein, 'The outward oriented' realm operates on 'the verbal-intellectual and sequential mode' of understanding. Its essence is analytic and is bound within a linear time-frame. In contrast, the inner of consciousness operates on a mode of cognition which is 'holistic' rather than sequential and is hard to capture verbally.

As the action of *The Golden Notebook* grows out of that dual perspective, the latter mode of consciousness is dramatized with further complexity. The inner action reverberates between two complementary and frequently overlapping modes of perception—psychological knowledge and intuitive illumination. While the basic tenet for the former is to retrieve the balance of the psyche or as I mentioned in chapter three Sufi Equilibrium, the latter based on the esoteric traditions' assumption that man's essence is spiritual, further postulates that there are modes of consciousness essentially 'intuitive' which could be cultivated and developed to counterbalance the empirical modes of perception. It is through that process that man can 'break' through the blindness which makes the ordinary man captive to life and being as it ordinarily seems to be (Shah *The Sufis* 1964: 295). According to the Sufis, that level of understanding could only be achieved through 'the balance of all the faculties' (ibid: 129).

It is precisely that balance in perception which Anna Wulf of *The Golden Notebook* relentlessly seeks to achieve. It is necessary to note here that though critics refer to Lessing's allegiance to Sufi philosophy, starting with the publication of *The Four-Gated City* in 1969, I contend that her interest in that philosophy predates that period. Evidence of that interest emerges in her article "What Really Matters" published in 1963, in which Doris Lessing criticizes current methods of education. Like Sufis, she argues against compartmentalization of thought and advocates a new method of education which would operate by exerting 'shocks' on a candidate as a means of initiating the individual into a new awareness: "education should ideally be a series of shocks. Every child should be dazzled, startled, shaken into realizing continuously his or her unique, extraordinary potentiality" (Lessing 'What Really Matters' 1963: 98)

Moreover, in *Learning How to Learn*, Shah explains how such methods are useful to “shock” and “jolt” people as a means of overcoming the difficulty of transcending limited one-dimensional thinking to new realms of understanding (Shah *Learning How to Learn: Psychology and Spirituality in the Sufi Way* 1978: 128). It is precisely that difficulty which is central to Anna’s block in *The Golden Notebook* whose “essence, the organization of it, everything in it, says implicitly and explicitly, that we must not divide things off, must not compartmentalize (Lessing Preface to *The Golden Notebook* 1971: 10).

Further evidence of the early influence of Sufism on Lessing appears in her ‘Testimony to Mysticism’ where for the first time she asserts that her interest in Sufism started “at the beginning of the 1960s” (Torrents ‘Testimony to Mysticism’, Doris Lessing Newsletter, Vol.4, No. 2, P. 12)

In *The Golden Notebook*, Anna is tormented by an inability to grasp ‘reality’ owing to her sojourn in a society which rigorously believes in rationality as the exclusive mode of cognition. Attempting to grasp ‘reality’ through that ‘kind of intelligence’—the ‘analytic Anna’, seriously distorts the truth she senses. Only after her reconciliation with the realm of the ‘unconscious’ as well as her recognition of a mode of ‘knowing as an “illumination”’ (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 609) that she can perceive reality in its true complexity. To her, the meaning of reality does not lie in any one of these poles, but in the equilibrium between them. Valid action must also take these levels of perception into account, and failure to do so results in a sense of fragmentation and alienation.

The form of the novel is of paramount importance in mediating its meaning. Anna’s fragmentation is represented by her keeping four notebooks; a black notebook which is to do with Anna Wulf the writer; a red notebook concerned with politics; a yellow notebook, in which she makes stories out of her experience; and a blue notebook which tries to be a diary’ (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 461-2). Each of the first three notebooks records her involvement in a different experience and in each Anna is trapped in the deadlock which results from limiting

herself to one level of perception. Unaware of the reason for her impasse, Anna closes one after the other of these notebooks with a 'double black line' (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 510, 515, 525, 585). The Blue Notebook dramatizes her reluctant acknowledgement of an inner reality which gradually emerges to the foreground. Once she is able to acknowledge that area of her consciousness she gives up writing in the four notebooks and buys a 'Golden Notebook' which sets the counter thrust of the action. She also writes a novel entitled 'Free Woman' whose five chapters intersect with the notebooks. The notebooks and the 'Free Woman' segments give *The Golden Notebook* its shape.

While this intricate form enabled Lessing to illustrate both fully and economically the wide range of experience open to the protagonist, it also provoked a controversial response to the novel ranging from the feeling that 'a novel about a novelist writing . . . is a ponderous bore' (Mitchell 1962: 518), to its evaluation as 'the most absorbing and exciting piece of new fiction . . . in a decade' (Howe 1962: 17). In the domain of feminist criticism, the mixed response of reviewers ranges from the conclusion that Anna is 'one of "those" women—the ones who cry "freedom" while hugging their chains' (Wilson 1973: 71), to its evaluation as 'Doris Lessing's most important work which has left its mark upon the ideas and feelings of a whole generation of young women'. Such an attempt at reading the novel from any one entry in isolation distorts its meaning. While each notebook focuses on a different realm of experience, none, on its own, offers the central meaning. It is in bringing together the different threads of the narrative that the meaning of equilibrium lies, providing unity for the overall work. In an interview with Roy Newquist, Lessing (1972: 51) reveals that 'the point of the book was the relation of its parts to each other'.

Moreover, a closer study shows that however different the experiences in each notebook may appear to be, the reason for Anna's literary and emotional block is one her one sided perception of reality. Anna's anxiety and dissatisfaction is intensified by her initial inability to see that connection. We therefore find that although in each notebook Anna is dealing with a different group of people in a different milieu, the

same search for Sufi equilibrium gives the action its dynamic and is only fulfilled in the 'Golden Notebook' segment which gives the novel its title.

The search for Sufi equilibrium is therefore a comprehensive theme that runs through all the novel's parts and binds its different strata. I shall first deal with that central theme and the different issues it raises throughout the notebooks, and the 'Free Women' segments, and then examine the significance of the structure.

The Black Notebook is ostensibly about Anna's novel 'Frontiers of War'. She is an author who has published one highly successful novel a best seller but now suffers from writer's block. In her notebook she records her business dealings connected with the novel and her experience in Africa the material out of which the novel has written. The intrinsic motif, however is her relentless attempt to understand why both the novel and the substantial facts she records in the notebook equally fail to capture 'the truth'. She is exasperated at the fact that what seemed to have been representation of truth at the time it was written, now appears to be 'false' and dishonest. Her preoccupation was to represent reality in her novel, but her understanding of reality at that point of her life was limited to the 'outward oriented' world. She therefore succeeds in portraying the factual events of racialism and war but is appalled at the emotion of nihilism and fatality which the novel initiated in its readers. At first, she refers such a response to the misunderstanding of the readers as well as the film-makers who wanted to make the novel into a film called 'Forbidden Love'. But in the course of her recollection, she becomes more and more aware that both readers and film-makers have rightly recognized the novel's essence and that its success in depicting and emphasizing the nihilistic spirit of the age was 'precisely what made it successful as a novel'. She reasons with herself:

I said nothing in it that wasn't true. But the emotion it came out of was something frightening, the unhealthy, feverish, illicit excitement of wartime... Nothing is more powerful than this nihilism, an angry readiness to throw everything overboard, a willingness, a longing to

become part of dissolution. This emotion is one of the strongest reasons why wars continue. And the people who read *Frontiers of War* will have had fed in them this emotion, even though they were not conscious of it. That is why I am ashamed, and why I feel continually as if I had committed a crime. (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 82)

The tone of this novel was sharply at odds with Anna's cherished belief that a novel should make a statement of hope and of moral commitment, 'strong enough to create order, to create a new way of looking at life' (ibid: 80): but she finds herself incapable of this kind of writing because of her personality is dominated by one level of perception:

I know very well from what level in myself that novel, *Frontiers of War* came from. I knew when I wrote it. I hated it then and I hate it now. Because that area in myself had become so powerful it threatened to swallow everything else. (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 81)

This realization does not make the situation any better for Anna since she is not very aware of an alternative to redress the balance of her personality.

Anna's problem is a complex one. She is a daughter of her age, and shares its reverence for intellect and rationality. Her education within the circles of humanism and Marxism—'the "liberal" or "free" intellectuals' (ibid: 548)—not only binds her to one level of perception, but also intensifies her sense of nihilism and frustration. She felt:

discourage and depressed. Because in all of us brought up in a Western democracy there is this built-in belief that freedom and liberty will strengthen, will survive pressures, and the belief seems to survive any evidence against it. This belief is probably in itself a danger. (ibid)

Tormented by the discrepancy between these teachings and the chaotic reality she perceives, Anna tries to transcend that limited perception in order to understand that gap. However, a complementary source of perception is out of reach and her anxiety is intensified: 'I suffer

torments of dissatisfaction and incompleteness because of my inability to enter those areas of life my way of living, education, sex, politics, class bar me from' (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 344).

In her attempt to redress the failure of *Frontiers of War*, Anna proceeds to record accurately the material which fuelled it. Recalling the group of friends with whom she spent her youth in Africa, raiding the Mashopi Hotel in the weekends, she discovers with surprise that Paul Blackenhurst's tendency towards violence and his alleged cynicism was no more than an expression of his 'frustrated idealism' (ibid: 108). What Anna fails to realize is that not only Paul, but also she herself, Mary Rose, Jimmy, Ted and George Hounslow were entangled in that trap – 'the gap between what I believe in and what I do' (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 142). They all oscillated between the two possibilities open to them; to abide by an ideal and become 'naïve' or to acknowledge that chaotic reality and eventually give way to cynicism, which Anna refers to as the 'wrong tone':

I hate that tone, and yet we all lived inside it for months and years, and it did us all, I'm sure, a great deal of damage. It was self-punishing, a locking of feeling, an inability or a refusal to fit conflicting things together to make a whole. The refusal means one can neither change nor destroy; the refusal means ultimately either death or impoverishment of the individual. (ibid: 83-4)

It is worth noting here that Annis Pratt (1973: 150) has related the main duality in *The Golden Notebook* to Blake's myth of innocence and experience. Pratt (ibid) finds this dichotomy central to the novel. While I argue that this duality expresses Anna's frustration, I make the provision that this dichotomy is but a symptom of the central problem facing Anna, namely her alienation from the inner self and the imprisonment in the one-dimensional mode of perception which refuses to fit conflicting things together.

In his study of psychological of the modern Western individual, Jung (1964: 83) points out how dimensional attitude reduces the autonomy of the individual and breeds violence: 'Modern man does not understand

how much his “rationalism”. . . has put him at the mercy of the psychic “underworld”. Alienated from the inner self as the centre of experience, the individual identifies exclusively with the empirical reality, an attitude which breeds violence on the individual and the collective levels: ‘The whole world wants peace and the whole world prepares for war, to give but one example (Jung *The Integration of the Personality* 1940: 71). Modern man, therefore, according to Jung, becomes entangled in further violence and his anxiety and cynicism are intensified by his inability to revert his action.

In her memoirs, Anna recalls two separate incidents in which this group of young people were entangled in perverse violence. Reflecting on the incident in which they deliberately provoke Mrs. Boothbys, the landlady of the hotel, Anna is especially tormented by that attitude:

What is so painful about that time is that nothing was disastrous. It was all wrong, ugly, unhappy and coloured with cynicism, but nothing was tragic, there were no moments that could change anything or anybody. From time to time the emotional lightning flashed and showed a landscape of private misery, and then we went on dancing. (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 146)

In the third segment of the Black Notebook, Anna records another incident of violence where the groups go pigeon-hunting. Paul goes on shooting cooing pigeons in a sickening scene of blood and violence. He further shares Jimmy’s attempt to impose ‘the scientific approach’ (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 409) on a group of mating grasshoppers. They classify the big insects with each other and they all wait to watch ‘the triumph of commonsense’ (ibid). The insects die in the evenly matched battle which had ‘upset the balance of nature’ (ibid: 422).

It is ironical, of course, that Anna recalls these two incidents without being able to connect them or to realize the cause underlying their perverse actions. What worries her though is that the latter incident was completely buried in an area of herself with which she was out of touch: ‘I haven’t thought of it for years... I am again exasperated because my brain contains so much that is locked up and unreachable’ (*The Golden*

Notebook 1962: 405). She's even unable, at first, to detect the connection between this material and her novel. As she ends the long memoir, she concludes, 'that was the material that made *Frontiers of War*'. Of course the two 'stories' have nothing at all in common.' (ibid: 162) But when she reads over this new account, she finds that, like the novel, it distorts the 'truth' by reflecting a tone of false nostalgia.

As Anna probes into her memories, the reader realizes that her difficulty lies in a basic imbalance in her perception; 'when I think back to that time..... I have to first switch off...' (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 82) It becomes clear that the reason underlying Anna's literary block lies in her inability to acknowledge that other realm as a source of perception; 'trying to remember-it's like wrestling with an obstinate other-self who insists on its own kind of privacy. Yet it's all there in my brain if only I could get at it' (ibid: 148). In that context, the technique of memoir writing employed by Doris Lessing is a successful strategy which enables her 'to say things about time, about memory... what we choose to remember about the human personality because a personality is very much what is remembered' (Rubens 1962: 32). I should add here that this technique of memoir writing becomes a major one in Lessing's later novels namely: *Memoirs of a Survivor*, *The Canopus in Argos: Archives* series and later also in *The Diaries of Jane Somers*-as the title of these works signify.

It is therefore significant that Anna finds difficulty in remembering the events and connecting between them. In her attempt to recall the material that she used in writing the 'Frontiers of War', Anna is thereby forced to reckon with a dimension of herself with which she was entirely out of touch, as the opening passage of the *Black Notebook* implies:

Black

Dark, it is so dark

It is dark

There is a kind of darkness here...

Every time I sit down to write, and let my mind go easy, the words, It is so dark, or something to do with darkness. Terror.

The terror of this city. (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 75)

Unable to retrieve that darkness, the notebooks ends with Anna's sense of 'total sterility' (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 510). As far as her psychoanalyst is concerned, this fear of the dark areas of the self should be unravelled and 'named' in order to outgrow that 'sick' phase. But apparently Anna has something more in mind; 'that is, ultimately, what I couldn't stand. Because it means one level of morality for life, and another for the sick' (ibid: 81). Her aim is not merely to 'name' and resolve the fears, but to bring that realm of the unconscious to light as a counter-source of perception.

SUFI CONCEPT OF WHOLENESS IN *THE GOLDEN NOTEBOOK*

The reason underlying Anna's literary block, therefore, was due to the fundamental imbalance in her personality as is revealed in the Black Notebook. The Red Notebook dramatizes how her involvement in practical life the 'outward oriented' political realm without the solidification of an inner mode of consciousness, further hazards the integrity of her personality.

Limiting herself to the external reality, mistaking it for the whole, Anna joins the Communist party in the hope of achieving harmony; 'Somewhere at the back of my mind when I joined the Party was a need for wholeness, for an end to the split, divided, unsatisfactory way we all live' (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 171). No simple-minded idealist, however, Anna's keen perception of the actual practice of socialism, ranging from the Prague executions and Stalinism to the McCarthy hearings, intensifies her cynicism 'that awful dilettantish spite' (ibid: 170). Her frustration is further intensified by her being out of reach of a deeper level of understanding which could have enriched the linear mode of thinking that refuses to accommodate contradictions. Therefore, 'joining the Party intensified the split' within Anna, and it is not merely that disparity between its ideals and its practice, 'but something much deeper than that. Or at any rate, more difficult to

understand. I tried to think about it, my brain kept swimming into blankness, I got confused and exhausted' (ibid: 171).

Towards the centre of the Red Notebook, Anna records a dream in which she sees a web of a red material made of 'the myths of mankind' (ibid: 297) and shaped like a map of the Soviet Union, which spreads out to create a world harmoniously unified under Socialism. That image of harmony suddenly collapses because 'somebody pulled a thread of the fabric and it all dissolved' (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 298). This dream symbolically expresses her situation, and harps on the sense of pseudo-harmony under which she is trying to shelter. But at this stage she cannot afford to understand its significance; the meaning is going, catch it, quick, then I thought, but I don't know what the meaning is' (ibid). Carried away by the wave of happiness it evoked, she cannot grasp a moment of 'vision' in which she has a more 'holistic' view of the world; where 'pain' is a 'counterpoint' to the 'great soaring hymn of joy' (ibid). However, at this stage, she chooses to block out such mode of perception, 'I was very frightened... as if I were being invaded by some feeling I didn't want to admit' (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 297).

Another disturbing effect of belonging to the Party, one that results from the same surrender to the external world, is that the individual operates within 'a false system' which involves him in a superficial relationship with his community. Alienated from the inner self as the centre of experience, the individual seeks shelter by identifying with what his environment wants him to be. As Laing (1960: 150) explains, this protective stance which is 'designed in the first instance as a guard or barrier to prevent disruptive impingement on the self, can become the walls of a prison from which the self cannot escape'. It is within this pattern of playing and replaying roles that Anna finds herself trapped, a description of her meeting with Joyce, as recorded in the Red Notebook, reveals that pattern in epitome:

This evening had dinner with Joyce, New Statesman circles, and she started to attack Soviet Union. Instantly I found myself doing that automatic-defence-of-Soviet-Union act, which I can't stand when other

people do it. She went on; I went on. For her, she was in the presence of a communist so she started on certain clichés. I returned them. Twice tried to break the thing, start on a different level, failed the atmosphere prickling with hostility. (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 166-7)

In the Red Notebook as well as in the Black, Anna records several instances in which she is trapped in situations from which she cannot break free, and, as in the Black Notebook she still records but cannot connect. She is only aware of the deepening rift between what she writes and what she does, but is still unable to act upon that awareness; 'I see that everything I write is critical of the Party. Yet I'm still in it' (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 168). The Red Notebook closes with newspaper cuttings referring to events in Europe, the Soviet Union, China and the United States and 'Like the cuttings on Africa in the same period, they were about, for the most part, violence' (ibid: 510).

Anna's personal relationships, like her political life, operate within the same 'false system'. The male-female relationships, the dynamics of which form the central subject of the Yellow Notebook, operate on that fundamental disequilibrium. We have seen how Anna sought shelter by her desperate clinging to the Communist Party; in her personal relationship she is urged by a similar need for men who will rescue her from her sense of fragmentation who will 'complete her'. Such a relationship is doomed since according to Lessing, the basic tenet for a healthy relationship is that each should first mature as an individual in his or her own right. The reason why Anna's relationships with men were a recurrent disappointment, was that she as well as they, 'were all in fragments, not one of them a whole reflecting a whole life, a whole human being' (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 226). It is therefore clear that the inherent premise here is not a quest for 'Women's Liberation' but rather for the equilibrium within a personality be it man or woman.

Jung (1966: 11) explains how the desperate attempt by both men and women to hold fast to sexual relationships in order to hide their incompleteness leads to fragmentation in both. According to Jung's sex configurations, man's anima, being repressed in the unconscious, is embodied mainly in the archetype of the 'mother-imago' (ibid: 12)

which the man seeks in his relationship with every woman. However, man's need to be reunited with that image is undermined by the fear of losing himself in that relationship's overwhelming involvement. This ambivalent attitude towards woman is expressed in his need to betray as soon as the woman makes demands. In compliance with that cycle, women have to suppress that animus to please men. Their need to keep the relationship intact urges them to gratify their lover's need to see them as the embodiment of the mother image. Fear of losing that relationship under which they shelter, however, makes them more jealous.

This 'sadistic-masochistic cycle' (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 584) is the paradigm underlying Anna's ambivalent relationship with Michael, Nelson and De Silva. Both Anna and the men with whom she comes into contact only attempt to gratify the ego and therefore once the relationship is broken, they feel ultimately devastated and shattered. In the *Yellow Notebook*, Anna writes a fiction entitled 'The Shadow of the Third' in an effort to understand the reason for the break-up of her affair with Michael. This novel describes the relationship between Ella and Paul Tanner the fictional projections of Anna and Michael from their first meeting until he deserts her when she becomes more demanding and jealous. Reading what she had written, Anna realizes how far 'the experience of being rejected by Michael had affected her' (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 327). As she reflects on her relationship with Michael, she is bewildered at her unwitting entanglement in such a vicious circle, and realizes how far she had chosen not 'to admit what was wrong' in order to make it work out:

And so now, looking back at my relationship with Michael... I see above all my naivety. Any intelligent person could have foreseen the end of this affair from its beginning. And yet I, Anna, like Ella with Paul, refused to see it... And when his own Paul's distrust of himself destroyed this woman-in-love, so that she began thinking, she would fight to return to naivety. (ibid: 216)

So in her relationship with men, as in here social and political experience, she is forced to choose one of two alternatives; either to

'collude' in this repeated cycle of role playing, or to be disillusioned and give way to cynicism and a sense of being betrayed. It is worth to note that Laing (1961: 90) defines this state of 'collusion' as a 'game' played by two or more people whereby they deceive themselves. The game is the game of 'mutual self-deception'. Anna sees these two alternatives 'not merely as denying her, but as denying life itself' (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 574), and she feels that this is a 'fearful trap for women' (ibid).

We leave Anna, at the end of the Yellow Notebook, with an emotional block:

I, Anna would never begin an affair with Paul. Or Michael. Or rather, I would begin an affair just that, knowing exactly what would happen: I would begin a deliberately barren, limited relationship (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 216)

Apparently Anna cannot go any further at that point although she closes the 'The Shadow of the Third' with a glimpse of the solution: 'A man and a woman—yes. Both at the end of their tether. Both cracking up because of a deliberate attempt to transcend their own limits. And out of the chaos, a new kind of strength' (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 454).

SUFI TEACHING STORIES IN *THE GOLDEN NOTEBOOK*

It is noteworthy to remind the readers of my paper that Lessing's distancing technique of a fiction within a fiction is of particular interest in *The Golden Notebook*. Projecting the relationship of Anna and Micheal onto the fictional characters of Ella and Paul Tanner achieves a dual perspective. While Anna is conscious of the usefulness of this experience, the device is also valuable for the reader who can see more clearly than Anna the significance of the discoveries she makes. Putting the notebooks against each other as Lessing does, the reader perceive obliquely the basic tenet underlying Anna's frustration. Although Anna makes the bitter discovery that in her relationship with Micheal she was mediating with one level of the self, not the 'whole' (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 226) of her personality, the reader—not the fragmented

Anna—perceives that fundamental disequilibrium as the basis of her literary as well as her emotional block, distorting her relationships with her community at large. However, Anna herself is incapable such perception. She sees each aspect of her life as separate. Her fragmented perception—operating on the ‘outward oriented world’—resembles that expressed in Sufi story quoted by Lessing to reveal how such perception distorts reality. The story refers to how a group of people try to figure the reality of an elephant—an animal through piece by piece investigation:

One finding its trunk, said that it was a hosepipe. Another, that it was a fan: he had touched its ear. A third said it was a kind of pillar, while a fourth reported it must be a living, throne. Each was sure he was right; yet none had formed a complete picture; and of the part he felt, could only talk in terms of things that he knew (*Lessing An Elephant in the Dark*, *The Spectator* 1964: 373)

Throughout the notebooks, Anna had attempted to understand reality through making fiction—the Yellow Notebook—or through rewriting fiction—the Black Notebook. In the second segment of the Blue Notebook, she attempts to portray reality by recording bare facts, moment by moment as they happen. All attempts prove equally inadequate—‘a failure’ (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 360). The reason ‘why all this is untrue’ (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 231) is, as she later discovers, ‘that the materials have been ordered by me to fit what I knew’ (*ibid*: 597). They were all ‘written in terms of analysis’ in which her restrictive and selective intelligence is ‘instinctively isolating and emphasising the factors’. At this point Anna does not ‘see any other way to write it’ (*ibid*: 231), but later in the Blue Notebook she starts to realize that this sequential mode of thinking is only one side of the coin:

This quality, this intellectual ‘I wanted to see what was going to happen,’ ‘I want to see what will happen next’, is something loose in the air, it is in so many people one meets, it is what of what we all are. It is the other face of: It doesn’t matter, it didn’t matter to me . . . (*ibid*: 485)

The Blue Notebook opens with Anna's 'lack of feeling' (ibid: 235), her sense of 'being frigid' (ibid: 236) and 'enclosed by the repetitive quality' (ibid) but ends with her decision: 'I'll pack away the four notebooks. I'll start a new notebook, all of myself in one book' (ibid: 585). Surely somewhere in between lies the decisive action which led to that turning point in Anna's hitherto fragmented character—a counter action which makes her experience regenerative and developmental instead of being repetitive and cyclic.

In the Blue Notebook Anna acknowledges for the first time that 'the raw unfinished quality in my life was precisely what was valuable in it and I should hold fast to it' (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 239). She realizes that 'something has to be played out, some pattern has to be worked through' (ibid: 457). It is then that she finally decides to leave the Communist Party because she sees for the first time that the reality underlying the Marxian dialectic is cycle rather than developmental:

suddenly I see it differently. No, there's a group of hardened, fossilised men opposed by fresh young revolutionaries as John Butte once was . . . And then a group of fossilised hardened men like John Butte, opposed by a group of fresh and lively minded and critical people. But the core of deadness, of dry thought, could not exist without lively shoots of fresh life, to be turned so fast in their turn, into dead, sapless wood . . . And as I think this, that there is no right, no wrong, simply a process, a wheel turning, I become frightened, because everything in me cries out against such a view of life. . . (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 339)

Such a process which turns individuals into cyphers is intolerable to Anna and she decides to leave the Party.

Her leaving the Communist Party coincides with Michael's deserting her and Janet going to boarding school. Janet's leaving frees Anna from another role under which she was sheltering: 'I have depended a great deal on that personality-Janet's mother' (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 531), and once Janet goes she feels that 'An Anna is coming to life that died when Janet was born' (ibid). Janet's leaving also frees Anna from the responsibility of having to cope with the external world, and lifts

the pressure of clock time for her. Furthermore, the arrival of Saul Green, who has no sense of time, helps to release layers of her mind previously unused. Her affair with Saul brings her self-division to a crisis point; she obeys him while she is 'conscious of two other Annas, separate from the obedient child' (ibid: 525). The fourth segment of the Blue Notebook is therefore continued 'without dates' and as Anna's outer life loses shape, she realizes that she 'Must give it an inner shape' (*The Golden Notebook* 1962: 537).

CONCLUSION

Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* operates on two principle modes, the outer and inner action. Towards the end of the novel, that 'false' dichotomy is resolved as Anna participates in practical life by negotiating with an inner voice. The novel consequently requires both linear and non-linear reading. The reader must employ his or her analytic faculties in comparing and elucidating different parts. He/She should also suspend the rational mode in order to perceive the underlying balance with the emerging mystical dimension which does not pertain to the laws of time and space. The ultimate effect does not aim at an experience of absolute aesthetic freedom from tangible reality. Rather, its aim is the transcendence of the one-dimensional mode of experiencing reality so that a new equilibrium may become possible. The great power from the book comes from the way it interweaves all its levels and combines all its parts into a balanced whole. Its structure builds a comprehensive and compelling picture, which fulfils its meaning through both form and content.

References

- How, Irving. (1962). 'Neither compromise, nor happiness, *New Republic* 15 (December): 17-20.
- Howe, Florence. (1973). "A conversation with Doris Lessing." *Contemporary Literature* 14 (Autumn): 418-36.
- Jung, C.G (ed). (2006). *Man and his symbols*. London: Aldus books.
- Jung, Carl, G. (1954). *The development of personality: the collected works of C.G.Jung*, vol.17,R.F.C. Hull trans.), London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Jung, Carl, G. (1959). *Psychological types, the collected works*, Vol.6, H.G.Baynes (trans.), London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

- Jung, Carl, G. (1960). *The structure and dynamics of the psyche: the collected Works*, Vol. 8, R.F.C. Hull (Trans.), London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Jung, Carl, G. (1961). *Memories, dreams, reflections*. New York: Vintage.
- Jung, Carl, G. (1968). *The archetype and the collective unconscious: the collected works of C.G. Jung*, Part I. R.F.C. Hull (trans.), London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Jung, Carl, G. (1940). *The integration of personality*, Stanley Dell (trans). London: Kegan Paul, Trench Trubner & co.
- Laing, Roland, D. (1961). *Self and others*, London: Tavistock publications.
- Laing, Roland D. (1960). *The divided self: a study of sanity and madness*, Chicago: Quadrangle Books.
- Laing, Roland D. (1970). *The politics of experience and the bird of paradise*, 1967, rpt., Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Inc.
- Lessing, Doris. (1972). "if you knew sufi..." *Guardian*. 8 Jan.12.
- Lessing, Doris. (1972). "Report on the threatened city." *The temptation of Jack Orkney: collected stories Vol., 2*. London: Cape.
- Lessing, Doris. (1974). "Sufi philosophy and poetry." *books and bookmen*. New York: Knopf.
- Lessing, Doris. (1983). *The sentimental agents in the volyen empire*. New York: Knopf.
- Lessing, Doris. (1994). *Under my skin*. New York: Harper.
- Lessing, Doris. (ed). (1989). *The Doris Lessing reader*. London: Cape.
- Lessing, Doris. (1950). *The grass is singing*. New York: Popular Library.
- Lessing, Doris. (1952). *Martha Quest*. New York: Simon.
- Lessing, Doris. (1954). *A proper marriage*. New York: Simon.
- Lessing, Doris. (1962). *The golden notebook*. New York: Bantam.
- Lessing, Doris. (1963). "To room nineteen." *A man and two women*. ed. Doris Lessing. New York: Knopf.
- Lessing, Doris. (1965). *Landlocked*. London: MacGibbon.
- Lessing, Doris. (1968). "Sufic samples." *Listener* 79 (June). 744.
- Lessing, Doris. (1969). "Some kind of a cake." *Observer* New York: Knopf.
- Lessing, Doris. (1969). *The four-gated city*. New York: Knopf.
- Lessing, Doris. (1970). *A ripple from the strom*. New York: Simon.
- Lessing, Doris. (1970). Letter to the editor. "The mysterious east." *New York Review of Books* 22: 51-52.
- Lessing, Doris. (1971). "An ancient way to new freedom." New York: Vintage.
- Lessing, Doris. 1971. *Briefing for a descent into hell*. New York: Vintage.
- Lessing, Doris. (1972). "In the world, not of It." *Encounter* 39: 61-64.
- Lessing, Doris. (1972). "What looks like an egg and is an egg?" *New York times book review* 7 (6): 41-43.
- Lessing, Doris. (1973). Preface to *collected African stories*, Vol.1, London: Michael Joseph. Preface to *The collected African stories*, Vol. 2, London: Michael Joseph.
- Lessing, Doris. (1974). "Unmasking burton." *Guardian* 20 July. 23.
- Lessing, Doris. (1974). "The living stream." *Guardian* 24 Aug. 23.

- Lessing, Doris. (1974). "The way of mecca." *books and bookmen*: New York: Knopf.
- Lessing, Doris. (1974). *The memoirs of a survivor*. New York: bantam.
- Lessing, Doris. (1975). "The east's new dawn." *books and bookmen*. New York: Knopf.
- Lessing, Doris. (1975). "Building a new cultural understanding with the people of the east." *times*. London: Longmas.
- Lessing, Doris. (1976). "The ones who know." *Times Literary Supplement* 30: 514-15.
- Lessing, Doris. (1979). *Re: colonised planet 5, shikasta*. New York: Knopf.
- Lessing, Doris. (1980). *The marriages between zones three, four, and five*. New York: Vintage.
- Lessing, Doris. (1981). Introduction. *learning how to learn: psychology and spirituality in the sufi way* (French Edition). By Idries Shah. New York:Harper.
- Lessing, Doris. (1982). "The making of the representative for planet 8. New York: Knopf.
- Lessing, Doris. (1982). Introduction' *kalila and dimna: selected fables of bidpai*, Ramsay Wood, London: Granada Publishing.
- Lessing, Doris. (1982): "Learning how to learn." *Asia magazine* July/Aug. pp 12-15.
- Lessing, Doris. (1983). *The diaries of a good neighbor*. New York: Alfred A Knopf.
- Lessing, Doris. (1983). *The diaries of Jane Somers*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Lessing, Doris. (1984). "Preface. *seekers after truth [chercheur de la verite*, French ed.] By Idries Shah. Reprinted in *The Doris Lessing reader*. (Ed.) Doris Lessing. New York: Knopf.
- Lessing, Doris. (1985). *The good terrorist*. New York: Knopf.
- Lessing, Doris. (1987). "Omar Khayyam." *New Statesman* 74 (Dec): 847.
- Lessing, Doris. (1987). *Prisons we choose to live inside*. New York: Harper.
- Lessing, Doris. (1987). *The wind blows away our words*. New York: Vintage.
- Lessing, Doris. (1988). *The fifth child*. New York: Knopf.
- Lessing, Doris. (1964). "An elephant in the dark." *Spectator* 213: 373.
- Lessing, Doris. (1972). "The temptation of Jack Orkney." *The temptation of Jack Orkney: collected stories*. Vol. 2. London: Cape.
- Lessing, Doris. (1973). Preface to *the golden notebook* (June 1971), *The golden notebook*, London: Granada Publishing, Panther Books.
- Lessing, Doris. (1973). *The summer before the dark*. New York: Vintage.
- Lessing, Doris. (1975). "A revolution." *New York Times* 22 Aug. 31.
- Lessing, Doris. (1992). *African laughter: four visits to Zimbabwe*. NewYork: Harper.
- Mitchell, Julian. (1962). *Spectator*, London: Longmans.
- Ornstein, Robert, E. (ed). (1974). *The nature of human consciousness*, New York: Viking Press.
- Ornstein, Robert E. (1977). *The psychology of consciousness*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc.

- Pratt, Annis, and L.S. Dembo (eds). (1974). *Doris Lessing: critical studies*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P.
- Pratt, Annis, and L. S. Dembo. (1973). 'The contrary structure of Doris Lessing's *golden notebook*', *world literature written in English*, Guelph, Ontario, Vol.12 (November), 150-61.
- Shah, Idries. (1970). *The way of the sufi*, 1968. New York: Dutton.
- Shah, Idries. (1982). *Seekers after truth*. London: Octagon.
- Shah, Idries. (1964). *The sufis*. New York: Doubleday.
- Shah, Idries. (1967). *Tales of the dervishes*. New York: Dutton.
- Shah, Idries. (1971). *Thinkers of the east*. London: Cape.
- Shah, Idries. (1972). *The exploits of the incomparable Mulla Nasrudin*. New York: Dutton.
- Shah, Idries. 1973. *The pleasantries of the incredible Mulla Nasrudin*. New York: Dutton.
- Shah, Idries. (1973). *The subtleties of the inimitable Mulla Nasrudin*. New York: Dutton.
- Shah, Idries. (1978). *a perfumed scorpion: of the way to the way*. London: Octagon.
- Shah, Idries. (1979). *The world of the sufi: an anthology of writings about sufis and their work*, London: The Octagon Press.
- Shah, Idries. (1981). *Learning how to learn: psychology and spirituality in the sufi way*. New York: Harper.
- Wilson, Basil. (1973). *The seventeenth-century background*. London: Chatto.

Religious Response to Metaphysical Rebellion

Bilal Ahmad Dar

Higher Education Government Degree College Beerwah,
India

Abstract

Camus popularized the notion of the absurd and the response of metaphysical rebellion. He argued the case of modern man condemned to live without transcendence after Nietzsche declared the death of God. Highlighting his critique of theism and theodicy and analyzing his basic assumptions regarding man's state in the world, his alienation, and meaninglessness of life, and absence of God it is argued that his conclusions are not warranted and there are a lot of philosophical difficulties in his thesis. This paper presents an eastern metaphysico-mystical critique of the idea of absurd and metaphysical revolt. It points out misperception/misconstruction of theistic thesis. Through the traditionalist perennialist and mystical rereading of basic terms in theistic thesis weaknesses of Camusean absurdist thesis are highlighted.

Introduction

Modern man's distrust of the traditional theological and metaphysical narratives and postmodernism's incredulity towards all metanarratives—in short the absence or death of traditional God in the post-Nietzschean world implicates the death of traditional man and his world of meaning and consequent alienation, pessimism, nihilism and relativism. Modern literature is a painful record of modern man's agonizing search for a (lost) soul, for alternative gods, for meaning in a supposedly meaningless universe, for dealing with the absences, the silence and nothingness at the heart of existence and reconciling with

his absurd Sisyphian predicament. Man is condemned to endure, although not without resentment, this hell of life which offers nothing except misery and tears and sometimes a meaningless laughter. Absurdist literature is a response to the problem of meaning in a universe where God is supposed to be dead or absent or irrelevant. But the problem or challenge before modern man is how to be saint without God or how to find meaning in meaninglessness and hope in hopelessness and goodness and redemptive grace in evil and suffering. Absurdist literature fails to convincingly evolve an alternative to the absence of transcendence and is condemned to see in all its agony despairing consequence of absurdist logic as purposelessness of life, despair, meaninglessness, failure of communication, life as a morass of ambiguities and contradictions which are all corollaries of rejection of traditional attitude of metaphysical submission that privileges the Other in relation to the self of man. Camus's advocacy of the absurd and metaphysical rebellion is one of the most influential positions in modern literature that takes transcendence to be a fiction. The paper seeks to appraise Camus vis-à-vis traditional religious/mystical position on the same.

The Absurd and the Absurd Universe

Camus' fundamental assertion is that "absurdity" is the key description of the universe as man experiences it and the proper response to it is metaphysical revolt. He thus describes his point: "Metaphysical rebellion is the means by which man protests against his condition and against the whole of creation. It is metaphysical because it disputes the ends of man and creation (R: 29). Thus he is making grand metaphysical and philosophical claims. A scrutiny of these claims in these pages is proposed here, especially of the response that he suggests. For Camus it is evil and injustice of the creation that entitles man to revolt against whatever power planned and organized this universe. Camus' problem is to search for human happiness and a response worthy of man in the face of incomprehensible and alien universe. The eternal injustice revealed in the confrontation of man and his human condition could only be resisted; it can't be accepted or tolerated or changed. It is bleak tragedy. His revolt is primarily "against the sky

rather than against the world." The metaphysical revolt is revolt against the creation as man finds it. His statements about God and evil clarify his conception of metaphysical revolt. Camus explains:

The world in itself is not reasonable, that is all that can be said. But what is absurd is the confrontation of this irrational and the wild longing for clarity whose call echoes in the human heart ... Man stands face to face with the irrational. He feels within him his longing for happiness and for reason. The absurd is born of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world.
(Quoted in Friedman 1970:452)

Camus finds no divine justification of useless suffering not only of so-called wicked men, but also of innocent children. This injustice gives birth to Camus's frustration and the resulting metaphysical rebel, who lives the absurd by revolting against the insufficiency of divine-mystical-metaphysical principles which, according to Camus, fail to justify the necessity of pain and suffering. Camus writes:

The protest against evil which is at the very core of metaphysical revolt is significant in this regard. It is not the suffering of a child that is repugnant in itself, but the fact that the suffering is not justified. After all pain, exile, confinement are sometimes accepted when dictated by good sense.
(Camus 1953: 35)

The revolt constitutes the heart of Camus's philosophy. Dr Rieux's famous words in *The Plague* express this revolt in presence of the priest Paneloux: "No, Father, I have a very different idea of love. And until my dying day I shall refuse to love a scheme of things in which children are put to torture" (Quoted in Connellan 1974: 34). In other words, rebellion is the mode in which Camus thinks humans must live if they are to live in terms of the Absurd. For Camus, the Absurd retains meaning only insofar as one does not consent to it. An appropriation of the Absurd is tantamount to a destruction of it. Thus, if one is to live in terms of the Absurd, although not in acceptance of it, one must live in rebellion. Camus captures this sense of a living in

recognition of, but not in acceptance of, the Absurd that characterizes rebellion by claiming: "...revolt is the certainty of a crushing fate, without the resignation that ought to accompany it" (Camus 1975: 54). Thus, one does not become resigned to the Absurd, since resignation indicates an act of acceptance. He presents a somewhat different, although related, conception of rebellion in *The Rebel* that the human insurrection, in its exalted and tragic forms, is only, and can only be, a prolonged protest against death, a violent accusation against the universal death penalty. In other words, a rebel recognizes the finitude of humans, thereby acknowledging the death sentence hovering over all humans, while simultaneously living in protest. Camus reveals the particular sense in which one lives in protest by maintaining: "The rebel obstinately confronts a world condemned to death and the impenetrable obscurity of the human condition with his demand for life and absolute clarity" (Camus 1956:101). The obscurity of the human condition of which he speaks refers to the impossibility of possessing rational clarity with respect to the world and the inability to feel comfortable or "at home" in the world as a human. However, in spite of this, the rebel lives in protest and demands clarity, while simultaneously being cognizant of the futility of attempting to achieve such clarity. The act of rebellion confers a certain value to life, since the rebel lives in protest and aims to "defend what he is." Thus one protests because one identifies something in oneself that is worth preserving. This recognition, however, soon leads to the realization that, once life is recognized as good or worth living, it becomes so for all humans. Once one identifies oneself with other humans, rebellion seeks to defend what humans are, not solely what the rebel is. It is from this position that Camus broaches the question of the legitimacy of murder in terms of the Absurd.

For Camus appearance is the only reality worth living but from the mystical/metaphysical point of view appearance is a manifestation of Truth and the Truth is *really real* as the appearance is flux i.e. why it is an illusion. The silent pain of unresolved doubts about the finalities of life and death, pain and suffering leave Camus restless and peaceless. Camus rightly says that the rebel is free with regard to 'common rules', whereas a mystic is absolutely free because his choice with regard to all

laws is metaphysical 'choiceless awareness' and Camus's inevitable choice (i.e. his metaphysical rebellion against truth) is his alienation and absurdity, as explained earlier. Camus writes: "The prince of darkness has only chosen this path because good is a notion defined and utilized by God for unjust purposes" (Camus 1953: 44). Camus elaborates further:

...the spirit of rebellion accomplishes in a process of thought that is already convinced of the absurdity and apparent sterility of the world...Metaphysical rebellion is the means by which a man protests against his condition and against the whole of creation. It is metaphysical because it disputes the ends of man and of creation. The slave protests against the condition of his state of slavery; the metaphysical rebel protests against the human condition in general. The rebel slave affirms that there is something in him which will not tolerate the manner in which his master treats him; the metaphysical rebel declares that he is frustrated by the universe. For both of them it is only a problem of pure and simple negation. In fact in both cases we find an assessment of values in the name of which the rebel refuses to accept the condition in which he finds himself.

(Camus 1953: 28-29)

Schoun offers 'metaphysical submission' as the worthy end of man's position with regard to his Creator and the existence. To quote him:

Man, having shut himself off from access to Heaven and having several times repeated, with ever narrower limits, his initial fall, has ended up by losing his intuition of everything that surpasses himself. He has thus sunk below his own true nature, for one cannot be fully man except by way of God, and the earth is beautiful only by virtue of its link with Heaven. Even when man retains belief he forgets more and more what the ultimate demands of religion are; he is astonished at the calamities of this world, without its occurring to him that they may be acts of grace, since they rend, like death, the veil of earthly illusion, and thus allow man "to die before death", and so to conquer death.

(Schoun 2005: 395)

Camus fails to find 'bliss' because the first and the last principle that leads one to 'bliss', not earthly enjoyment, is to accept and to surrender to the nature of things as they are – flux and movement and change. The Buddha calls it *tathata* (suchness of things) and the Prophet Muhammad calls it Islam—submission to the will of God and the ensuing peace. Islam also connotes the surrender of 'human ego' to 'divine ego'. At its highest point the will of a '*Mumin*' (one who has surrendered himself), as Iqbal says, becomes the will of *Allah* (impersonal Godhead). Camus wants, like Satan, immortality and bliss without submission. This is the reason, as Schoun comments, that man is addressed in the holy Quran as a tiny creature and exhorted to humble down his ego five times a day before God by remembering the death that will soon engulf him. In contrast, one can well understand Camusian egoistic ethics—in the following quotes—in which man is condemned to remain tied to the pull of gravity rather than rising to heavenly grace:

The enchained hero [Prometheus] maintains, amid the thunder and lightning of the Gods, his quiet faith in man. This is how he is harder than his rock and more patient than his vulture. More than his rebellion against the gods, it is this stubbornness which is meaningful for us. It accompanies this admirable determination to separate and exclude nothing, and which always has and always will unite the suffering heart of men and the springtimes of the world.
(Camus 1970: 131)

Existence is a mystery. Science and philosophy can not pin down consciousness because the instruments applied are fit only to dissect, analyze and systemize in a mechanical way. The fundamental principles on which scientific and philosophic knowledge are based are logic and reason. This knowledge, so useful, is indirect – influenced by the presence of the subject (perceiver) and the object (perceived). The knowledge of the world that we get through our senses is distorted by our senses. As an example, the modern quantum mechanics proves that the 'solidity' one feels on touching a solid substance is an illusion of the senses because all matter is not like 'solidity' but just a bundle of elementary particles (electrons and nucleons and other elementary

particles). And the nature of these particles (matter) is dual and uncertain. Sometimes they behave as a wave (non-solid) and sometimes as a particle (solid) as proved by Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle. So it is dangerous to rest our whole knowledge on the verification of our logic and senses. The senses are good servants but dangerous guides. This supports the claim of the mystics that the true knowledge or gnosis is supra-sensible or supra-rational: the subject-object duality dissolves and remains what Krishnamurti calls 'experiencing'. It would not be an exaggeration to assert that the knowledge that Camus speaks out in his works is based on logic or 'illogic' and senses. Camus fails to affirm intellectual intuition/revelation because to him nothing exists beyond senses and if anything does that is not worth knowing:

This world I can touch, and likewise judge that it exists. There ends all my knowledge, and the rest is construction. For if I try to seize this self of which I feel sure, if I try to define and summarize it, it is nothing but water slipping through my fingers...between the certainty I have of my existence and the content I try to give to that assurance, the gap will never be filled. Forever I shall be a stranger to myself...there are truths but no truth.

(Camus 1975:24)

However from the mystical point of view 'true knowledge' is reflected in the domain of time and space and yet beyond it. As Schoun says explains:

It is important to state here that the supernatural or the divine is quite evidently not 'contained' in the created or the world, despite certain appearances, but that it is in principle accessible starting from its traces in the cosmos, which is quite different; in other words, things – thanks to their existence – and the intellectual subject – thanks to Knowledge – open concrete ways towards the Absolute... the Divinity, while being absolutely transcendent in relation to the world, is none the less 'present' at the centre of all cosmic reality. The world shows its 'divine quality in two ways: firstly by the miracle of its Existence...and secondly – on the basis or within the framework of

that miracle – by its multiple and inexhaustible symbolism which manifests the Infinite in the most diversified ways...

Existence crystallizes, divides and disperses; Intelligence, on the contrary, brings back to unity; however, if subjects – human, animal, angelic or others – are multiple, it is precisely because they are in Existence and because, by this fact, the Principle of Existence diversifies them; inversely, if universal Existence is one, this is because it proceeds from the divine Intellect, manifesting it in crystallizing mode without thereby losing its metaphysical homogeneity. Once a thing exists, there is in it ‘all that exists’, hence Existence or, indeed, absolute Reality, of which Existence is only the ‘illusory dimension’ advancing towards ‘nothingness’; equally, there is in every act of knowledge ‘all that knows’, hence Principle of all possible knowledge, namely the divine Subject or the Self; but this Subject is in itself beyond the polarization into subject and object. (schoun 1959: 36-37)

If man is a mere composition of elements then it is these things that disappear when man dies. If, however, man is more than these things, then, death must mean not the end of man but the end of his apparent life which was manifested in the elements of his body. This implies the existence of consciousness (spirit) that never dies. Ibn Arabi puts the same idea in a more comprehensive way when he writes that “If you say that [the sphere of life] is the cosmos, you are correct; that it is not the cosmos, you are correct; that it is the Real or not the Real, you are correct. It accepts all that” (Quoted in Almond 2004: 105). Camus’s attitude towards death becomes clear when we read the following quote:

It does not please me to believe that death opens upon another life. It is for me a closed door. I do not say that it is a step that must be crossed but that it is a dirty and horrible adventure. (Quoted in Friedman 1970: 40)

.Camus presents a separate explication of the essence of living in *The Myth of Sisyphus*: “Being aware of one's life, one's revolt, one's freedom, and to the maximum, is living, and to the maximum” (Camus

1956:63). Thus, he gives great priority to the concept of consciousness and awareness in one's life. Thus, Sisyphus must be imagined happy because he is cognizant of the fact that he controls his own fate. Although the gods have condemned him to a life of ceaseless toil, it is Sisyphus alone who must discover and create meaning in his life. The gods have no control over this aspect of him. However, because mastery of one's fate must be seen as tantamount to happiness, Sisyphus controls what is of supreme importance—the determination of meaning in his life. As mentioned, Camus confesses that the possibility of a transcendent meaning of life remains unknowable. Thus, it is humans who must actively create meaning in their lives, living in terms of the Absurd.

Immediately following the imperative “to live” is the equally crucial phrase “to die” Camus captures the meaning of this phrase in *The Myth of Sisyphus*: “It is essential to die unreconciled and not of one's own free will. Suicide is repudiation. The absurd man can only drain everything to the bitter end, and deplete himself” (1956:55). Thus, it is important to remember that to live in rebellion is to live in protest of, but not in renunciation of, the death sentence of humans. Certainly, it is undeniable that humans are all condemned to death. However, by no means are they to fall into such despair over this realization that they commit suicide due to the recognition of the inevitability of death, since suicide is not a logical consequence of the Absurd. Nor are they to placate themselves by committing philosophical suicide and deluding themselves into believing in an eternal life after death. Camus captures the meaning of the phrase “to die perfectly” in his notion that one is to die “unreconciled.” Camus' assertion that to live is to act asserts the primacy of living in terms of the Absurd by living in rebellion. As rebellion is a protest against the universal human death sentence, the life of the rebel is a life of impassioned activity. The most authentic rebel lives in artistic rebellion, engaging in acts of ephemeral creation. Thus, for Camus, absurdist art is art that values and exhibits process rather than art that reveals an obvious concern with the construction of a finished product that will endure permanently. The authentic artistic rebel creates, fully aware that the creation is merely ephemeral and only meaningful for the duration of its construction.

Sisyphus is to carry the rock to the hill forever and forever he is sure that it will never stay on the hill. According to Camus, we must expect Sisyphus to be 'happy' in such a state. But what is happiness: A deep sense of eternal alienation, frustration with a strong will to futile striving that characterizes Camus's concept of rebellion. If this is happiness then psychology has to redefine its definition of happiness. A hero can suffer the tragedy of life either with an agitated and restless heart or else with the grandeur of contentment and hope. The Camusian cult of modern rebellious heroes represents an aberration and misrepresentation, not only of the archetypal human behavior, but also of the religious heroic sensibility in which a Christ or a Hallaj carries the cross of suffering with the loud heroic acclamation of union with the transcendental reality. Moreover happiness normally comes from contentment and not from helplessness. Contentment, in turn, is a product of the equilibrium in which seemingly antagonistic elements are set and seen in a broader structure of parallels. Total contentment can come only when one knows 'totality' and one can understand the totality when one is in harmony with the whole. Otherwise, one, like Camus's characters, is very much justified in being at war with oneself and with the whole existence. The Buddha could be silent and content only when he himself knew 'totality'. But Camus does not see any totality, so he is not content. So if Sisyphus is content in the former sense then there can be no absurdity or rebellion. But he is not, so are Camus's other characters. Viktor Frankl rightly observes that Man is ready to suffer provided his suffering has a meaning and "meaning is possible even in spite of suffering... if it were avoidable, however, the meaningful thing to do would be to remove its cause, be it psychological, biological or political. To suffer unnecessarily is masochistic than heroic" (Frankl 2004: 117). Whether one rebels or submits, one still has to suffer for being born. To be human is to suffer. But one's suffering may yield meaning and hope while others' suffering may end up in despair and meaninglessness. Do Sisyphus and the Promethean cult of heroes suffer with contentment of heart or with the resentment and disgust against the absurd condition and useless suffering? If it is former then there is joyful acceptance of everything that life offers as the mystic do. However it is the latter condition that characterizes Camus's heroes. But one may notice, as Camus claims,

that it is resentment, rebellion, despair and disgust that must give meaning to life. These are values of modern man which he is to live. However such a value system is not only contrary to the 'heroic' mentality but is also against the nature of things and against the fundamental archetypal principles of love, joy, suffering, peace, truth, sacrifice, birth, death, prayer and even suffering of which man is an embodiment. And can we say that resentment, disgust, alienation and deep sense of exile of the Camusian heroes is happiness and joy in the normal sense of the term? Sisyphus, like all rational humanistic persons, conforms to his absurd condition by rebelling against it. The true religious man confronts the absurdity of existence by his submission to the Principle that creates not only the absurd condition but also determines the human capacity to perceive the world as absurd. As the artistic rebel does not replace the reality of the apparent world by some other world rather he defies the apparent absurd reality, similarly religious hero accepts the apparent absurd reality by subsuming it into the Absolute Reality. Both the artistic rebel and the religious hero don't believe to destroy the present world for the other world. However the former derives its values by 'hopeless striving' and conflicting with the reality, while as the latter by first surrendering to the nature of Reality as it is in its manifest or non-manifest forms thereby transcending the absurd and then aiming the union with the Absolute Reality. Thus, to live in rebellion, according to Camus, as a human and not as a god is to constantly bear in mind the fact of one's finitude. The act of rebellion precisely recognizes and protests the death sentence of humans. This is why, for Camus, rebellion is a protest against death. The rebel stands crushed between human evil and destiny. In other words, the rebel stands between the suffering and inequities in the world and the universal death sentence of humans. From such a position, one must attempt to save as many humans from murder as possible. If humans were capable of saving everyone from evil and suffering, they would be deemed gods. As they are not, they must provide their greatest effort in trying to decrease suffering in the world. Thus, what it means to live as a human is to be cognizant of one's finitude and, therefore, to refuse to be a god. The mystics of all religious traditions embrace the tragedy of existence by envisioning the beatific visions of a reality that not only transcends the tragic existence but also relativises the so called absolute

character of the tragic vision. Only such a vision can unchain the logical and rational forged demands of a Prometheus or a Sisyphus. One can't rebel against one's own nature as one can't derive value out of nothingness. So the Camusian attitude is antinatural and is based on an impossible possibility. Edith Weiskopf-Joelson rightly says that "such a value system [of the Camusian fruitlessly striving and rebelling heroes] might be responsible for the fact that the burden of unavoidable unhappiness is increased by unhappiness about being unhappy" (Quoted in Frankl 2004:118).

Redemption through Love

The suffering, pain and the loss that damn Camus, redeem mystics, like Eckhart, from despair and absurdity. Mystical attitude is antithesis to the Camusian attitude. Eckhart puts this attitude beautifully in the following words:

Now I say that when external harm befalls a good or just person, and he is not excited by it and the peace in his remains undisturbed, then what I have been saying is verified: the just are not troubled by anything that befalls them. If, however, a man is troubled by some external harm, then truly it is only fair and just of God to have ordained that the harm befall the man who could believe himself just and yet be upset by so little a thing. And if it is just of God, then truly the man need not mind but he ought far more to rejoice than he does at his own life...

The third truth one should and may know is this: the elemental fact is that the only stream, the only living artery of goodness, real truth, and perfect comfort is God, and that whatever is not God bears in itself a native bitterness, discomfort, and sorrow and it can never make for good, the good which is only of God. Rather, it diminishes, covers up and conceals the sweetness, the rapture and comfort of God

I further maintain that sorrow comes of loving what I cannot have. If I am sad about my own losses that is a sure sign that I love external things and really enjoy my sorrow and disease. What wonder, then, that I grow sad, loving my affliction and sorrow, if my heart seeks

what it has lost and my mind attributes to things what belongs to God alone? I turn toward the creature from which discomfort comes in course and turn away from him from whom joy and comfort naturally come. What wonder, then, that I am sad and grow sadder? Truly it is impossible either for God or the world that any person should ever find true comfort when he looks to a creature for it, but those who only love God in the creature and the creature only in God shall discover real, true, and opposite comfort on all sides.

(Eckhart 1973: 46-47)

This shows that the mystical love towards God can enable the whole modern world to create heaven out of hell in which modern man finds himself. And such a love can grow in the modern wasteland because its growth needs the soil of pain, despair and anguish. The fall is a gift from God to every man. Heaven is to be won in hell. Such a love ensures personal immortality of the lover provided he surrenders the Promethean freedom of thought to the divine will and discerns divine perfection in the imperfections of our existence. It is no science fiction rather an empirical fact that pure love with God can create a heaven out of hell. It is love that has created Christ, Hallaj and Ramakrishna like heroes in this world. Love does not change the genetic make up or material position or the intellectual horizons of man rather it transforms his very soul from alloy to pure gold. It is alchemy to happiness. It enables mystics to do miracles. And more importantly it teaches how to live and die peacefully amidst our ever changing world of death and despair. It enables the Buddha to see divine beauty in a lotus and the whole existence as one single drop of the ocean. It does not change the world but it changes our imperfect vision of it. Such a love is the very substance of the whole cosmos. Death, old age, suffering and even alienation are its complements rather than distraction from the face of the beloved. Even in the burning pain of self-consciousness a mystic's heart discerns contentment and bliss for the lover knows only how to love: to accept every command from the beloved as a gift that assures him that his beloved has not forgotten him. The excruciating vibrations of pain strengthen the faith of the true lover. Nausea, angst or absurdity is the condition of human mind arising out of the cleavage and arbitrariness that sets human condition as an 'other' in relation to the rest. While as love enables to entertain and enjoin human conditions

with divine attribute of infinite freedom because the kernel of mystical love is to seek union with the beloved in all her manifestations and attributes. That is why a mystic sees his beloved in every good or bad change. Even if he others himself from her, he is aware of the cause that forces him to do so. Love never leaves him free to create an 'other' which is hell for Sartre. All the others of human personality are sacrificed for the beloved. A stage comes in this love relationship when even the duality of lover-beloved is lost and only pure love remains with no distinctions or yearnings. Such a state is the final goal of every true lover. Underhill rightly observes in this connection that:

We know a thing only by uniting with it; by assimilating it; by an interpenetration of it and ourselves. It gives itself to us, just in so far as we give ourselves to it; and it is because our outflow towards things is usually so perfunctory and so languid, that our comprehension of things is so perfunctory and languid too... Wisdom is the fruit of communion; ignorance the inevitable portion of those who "keep themselves to themselves", and stand apart, judging, analyzing the things which they have never truly known.
(Underhill 2004: 2)

Moreover it is this love that lights a mystic's heart to sing out in the stings of pain the song of joy that communes him with God:

O blessed pain and sickness and fever!
O welcome weariness and sleeplessness by night!
Lo! God of his bounty and favour
Has sent me this pain and sickness in my old age;
He has given me pain in the back, that I may not fail
To spring up out of my sleep at midnight;
God in his mercy has sent me these pains
.....
Pain is a treasure, for it contains mercies;
The kernel is soft when the rind is scrapped off.
O brother, the place of darkness and cold
Is the fountain of life and the cup of ecstasy.
So also is endurance of pain and sickness and disease.

For from abasement proceeds exaltation.
The spring seasons are hidden in the autumns,
And autumns are charged with springs; flee them not.
Consort with grief and put up with sadness,
Seek long life in your own death!
(Rumi 2003: 90)

Such love is alien and fictitious to Camus and most modern western philosophers on account of their over reliance on human logic and the earthly limited 'humanistic' vision of man. Camus's love begins and ends with the preservation of a mortal individual where as mystic's love ends with the union of God. Conellan observes in this connection:

Camus wants to protect the individual human being against the absurdity and irrationality of the universe; to preserve something he found infinitely valuable, namely, human life as it is lived naturally ... on a purely physical plane.
(Conellan 1974: 38)

Although Camus's characters such as Meursault, Caligula, Dr Rieux, Tarrou and others wage the never ending struggle against the inescapable conditions in which man is trapped but the value of their love and conviction is limited to the affirmation of the world of flux and change which is only the one half of the circle of love. Their struggle and love for human condition "is unremitting and deadly serious, with no chance of permanent victory, no hope of more than a temporary respite. [Their] rebellion ... is a Modern Job's rebellion within the dialogue with the absurd – contending with the absurd yet trusting in the meaning that arises from this contending" (Friedman 1970: 433). The other half is the mystic's selfless love that surrenders his ego on the altar of God and thus he transcends both limited 'human love' and its sentimental demands. Nothing less than one's own ego and life ensure the entry in the kingdom of God. But the cult of atheistic humanism and Prometheanism is committed to the kingdom of duality, exile, absurdity and damnation. To Kierkegaard the 'absurd' of existence proves that there is God and the way is the 'leap of faith' not of reason but to Camus 'absurd' necessitates rebellion and guilt

because reason can determine everything knowable and faith is mere escape from the actual condition. However we can't deny archetypal human tendency that we must believe in order to understand. No child is born a believer or unbeliever but every child believes first which (the act of believing) teaches him what he later learns – to be his belief or unbelief, or rebellion. Philosophical enquiry can believe the object of its disbelief and disbelieve its belief but existence, life and the dazzling mystery of the Universe, as given entities are devoid and beyond the pressures of believing or disbelieving or of rebelling and submitting. Speaking in absolute terms, nothing is added nor subtracted to the sum total of 'being' by our actions or 'beliefs'. No becoming can alter the nature of 'being' because being is being as it was, is and will forever be. The scriptures say it is not action but the grace of God. His grace lies in our conformation to being or 'uncreated light' or 'wisdom perennias'.

Instead of starting with the idea that 'I think therefore I am' one should say that 'I am therefore being is' or as Franz von Baader says somewhere that " I am thought by God therefore I think and I am". Divine intelligence and being precede our reasoning and our limited human values. What counts here is not some more or less correct reasoning but intrinsic certitude itself:

The fact that we are accidents, since we exist without being absolute, explains the confrontation with Truth or with the Sovereign Good; evil is the trace of estrangement between accident and that which subsists by itself...this substance-accident relationship also explains the meaning of our devotional attitudes, such as adoration, obedience, piety, love of God: if we must adore God in order to conform with That which is, we must be conscious of our accidentalness and of the Substance upon which it depends; our mind is made for this consciousness and is nothing without it. To revolt... is to go against our profound nature and thus against the nature of profound Reality. We can't reasonably revolt except against ourselves or against our own revolt.

(Schoun 2004: 78)

Meaning of Death

We can now safely argue that Camus actually wants to ‘cling’ to the ‘known’ and is fearful to jump, like a mystic, into the ‘unknown’. He seeks the ‘security’ which nature does not offer to anybody. He feels lost and deprived in relation to death because he sees nothing beyond death. He is ignorant to the mystical visions in which the mystery of life and death are revealed. He cannot say, like all the prophets and mystics of all civilizations, that man *actually* never dies. It is the ignorance of Camus, as we discussed so far, of these issues that tie him to the world of absurdity, enforce him on the path of ‘metaphysical rebellion’ and finally land him in the hell of alienation. There are five basic tendencies, from the traditional religious point of view, which drag Camus to conclude the absurd as the ultimate end of man in pursuit of truth. They are: ignorance (*avidyā*), ego-feeling (*asmitā*), attachment (*rāga*), aversion (*dvesha*) and fear of death (*abhinivesha*). Camus is horrified by death because he, unlike a mystic, does not know the nature of death:

... [I] gaze upon my death with all the fullness of my jealousy and horror ... I fear death most, attaching myself to the fate of living man instead of contemplating the unchanging sky.
(Camus 1963: 79)

Krishnamurti experiences death as the beginning of a new creative life. He writes:

It is only when continuity [present Life] ends that there is a possibility of that which is ever new. But it is the ending that we dread and we don't see that only in ending can there be renewal ... not in carrying over from day to day our experiences, our memories and misfortunes. It is only when we die each day to all that is old that there can be the new ... the eternal, God or what you will.
(Krishnamurti 2001: 216)

Rebellion as Ignorance

The “death of God” in the western world gave birth to such heroes as Nietzschean ‘Superman’ (overman), Camusian ‘Rebel’ or Dostoevskian ‘Man-god’ or ‘god-man’ but not to any ‘Buddha’ or ‘Perfect Man’ who could proclaim the existence of *Nirvana* or heaven or Nagaarjuna’s statement that Samsara is Nirvana or as Eckhart pointedly says that “God expects one thing of you, and that is that you should come out of yourself in so far as you are a created being and let God be God in you” (Quoted in Huxley 1957: 200). All these ‘births’ led modern man in different and diametrically opposite directions as becomes so clear when one studies the existentialists. Instead of becoming truly free after he imagined God is dead, modern man has become a slave to the resulting ‘freedom’. He has become a slave to his baser and irrational tendencies. There is an unparalleled freedom in thought and in action. Modern man has ‘accepted Luciferian freedom to be in hell. It is his choice to be in hell so he is. Modern man has closed his eyes to his inner treasures. The positive side is that the modern man affirms life, despite its heavy demands, but the negative side is that he rejects death. He has forgotten his substance – pure consciousness – and identifies himself with the accident which is time and space and his personal ego:

The world is as if the ‘conscious Substance’ which is the Self had fallen into a state which would cut it up in many different ways and would inflict on it endless accidents and infirmities; and in fact, the ego is ignorance floundering in objective modes of ignorance, such as time and space. What is time, if not ignorance of what will be ‘after’, and what is space, if not ignorance of what escapes our senses? If we were ‘pure consciousness’ like the Self, we would be ‘always’ and ‘everywhere’; that is to say we would not be ‘I’, for that, in its empirical actuality, is entirely a creation of space and time. The ego is ignorance of what is ‘the other’; our whole existence is woven of ignorances; we are like the Self frozen, then hurled to earth and split into a thousand fragments; we observe the limits which surround, and we conclude that we are fragments of consciousness and of being. Matter grips us like a kind of

paralysis, it imposes on us the heaviness of a mineral, and exposes us to the miseries of impurity and of mortality; form shapes us according to such and such a model, it imposes on us such and such a mask and cuts us off from a hole to which we are nonetheless tied, though at death it lets us fall as a tree lets fall its fruit; finally, number is what repeats us – inside ourselves and also around us – and what, in repeating us, diversifies us...But the ego is not only multiple externally, in the diversity of souls, it is also divided within itself, which is not the least of our miseries; for ‘strait is the gate’ and ‘a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven’. And since we are ‘not other’ than the Self, we are condemned to eternity. Eternity lies in wait for us and that is why we must find again the Centre, that place where eternity is blessedness...The Centre is the Self ‘freed’, or rather that which has never ceased to be free – eternally free.

(Schoun 1959: 120-121)

Action and knowledge can liberate him but contemplation and realization (‘experiencing’) can save him. And every modern man has to realize this fact himself. He has to be what the Buddha said – light unto one’s own self. And one can be light unto oneself when one ‘sees’ that there is no eternal bliss in things finite. It is only infinite (God) that is bliss:

All created things refuse to satisfy me as ends. Such is the extreme mercy of God towards me. And that very thing constitutes evil. Evil is the form which the mercy of God takes in this world...To say that the world is not worth anything, that this life is of no value, and to give evil as the proof is absurd, for if these things are worthless what does evil take from us.

(Weil 2002: xx)

Conclusion

Camus’ rebel attempted to find meaning while refusing the transcendental temptation. But, despite his vetoing transcendence, he

finds refuge in limited form of transcendence called love though he failed to find compassion in the traditional sense of the term. In his journal he told himself that the step beyond the Absurd and Revolt was compassion: *l'amour et la poesie*, but he felt that demanded an innocence he no longer possessed. All he could do was to survey the road which led to it, and "let the time of the innocents arrive." He concluded: "See it, at least, before I die. The important point is that the rebel doesn't and cannot rebel against life itself. He consents to live despite logic. As Camus quotes Ivan: "I live in spite of logic." Logic demands suicide but neither Ivan nor Camus would accept this. Ivan will live, then, and will love as well without knowing why. When the meaning of life has been suppressed, there still remains life." The point is what religion demands if not only life, more life, larger life.

Endnotes

¹Ahern, M H. 1971. *The Problem of Evil*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

²Friedman, Maurice. 1970. *Problematic Rebel*, Chicago & London: Chicago Press.

³ Camus, Albert. 1953 *The Rebel*, trans., Anthony Bower, Middlesex: Penguin Books.

⁴Connellan, Colm. 1974. *Why Does Evil Exist?: A Philosophical Study of the Contemporary Presentation of the Question*, New York: Exposition Press Hicksville.

⁵ Camus, Albert. 1975 *The Myth of Sisyphus*, trans., Justin O'Brien, London: Penguin Books.

⁶Camus, Albert 1956. *The Rebel*, trans., Anthony Bower, Middlesex: Penguin Books.

⁷ Camus, Albert. 1953. *The Rebel*, trans., Anthony Bower, Middlesex: Penguin Books.

⁸ Schoun, Frithjof. 2005. *The Essential Writings of Frithjof Schoun*, ed., Syed Hossein Nasr, London: Perennial Books.

⁹ Camus, Albert. 1970. *Selected Essays And Notebooks*, ed. and trans., Philip Thody, New York: Penguin Books.

¹⁰ Schoun, Frithjof. 1959. *Gnosis: Divine Wisdom*, trans., Geh Palmer, London: Jon Murray.

¹¹Almond, Ian. 2004. *Sufism and Deconstruction: A Comparative Study of Derrida and Ibn Arabi*, London: Routledge.

¹² Frankl, Viktor E. 2004. *Man's Search for Meaning*, London: Rider Books.

¹³ Eckhart, Meister. 1973. *The Sermons of Meister Eckhart*, ed., R B Blakney, London: Harvard University Press.

¹⁴ Underhill, Evelyn. 2004. *Practical Mysticism*, New Delhi: Abhishek Publications.

¹⁵ Rumi, Moulana Jalalu-d-din. 2003 *Masnavi I Manvi*, trans., E H Whinfield, London: The Octagon Press.

¹⁶ Schoun, Frithjof. 2004. *Logic And Transcendence*, Lahore: Suhail Academy.

¹⁷ Camus, Albert. 1963. "The Wind at Djemila," *Selected Essays and Notebooks*, ed. and trans., Philip Thody, Middlesex: Penguin Books.

¹⁸ Huxley, Aldous. 1957. *The Perennial Philosophy*, London: Chatto & Windus.

¹⁹ Krishnamurti, Jiddu. 2001. *The First and Last Freedom*, Chennai: Krishnamurti Foundation India.

²⁰ Simone Weil, *Gravity and Grace*, London and New York: Routledge Classics, 2002, p.XX.

176 Bilal Ahmad Dar

Theology of Islam in Western Framework and Mawdudi's Politico-Stylistic Pragmatics

Abdul Rahim Afaki
University of Karachi, Pakistan

Abstract

Drawing upon certain concepts of contemporary hermeneutics, linguistics and philosophy of language, this study undertakes Mawdudi's hermeneutical approach to the Qur'an lopsidedly oriented by his commitment with the political ideology of fundamentalist type. In the perspectives of certain pragmatic and stylistic themes, this paper reviews Mawdudi's interpretation of the Qur'anic symbols being the building blocks of his political thought. It argues that there is a wide gap between the semantic givenness of the Qur'anic meanings and their pragmatic interpretations of Mawdudian type owing to the ideology of the universal political dominion of Muslims being the *telos* of Islam. Through the application of certain pragmatic concepts like deixis, presupposition, implicature and felicity etc. as well as the stylistic devices like simplicity/decoration, decisiveness/vagueness, succinctness/long-windedness and objectivity/subjectivity, this paper tends to establish that Mawdudi's political approach toward the teleology of Islam and his hermeneutic approach toward the Qur'anic symbols sound infelicitous.

The unique stylistic literary expression and the revolutionary political-ideological commitment are the two saliencies by virtue of which Sayyad Abū 'l-A'lā Mawdūdī is recognized as one of the most distinguished Pakistani/Indian scholars of twentieth century Islamics. These strong elements of Mawdūdī's academic make-up are two of the

most significant themes subjected in this study to a critical analysis. Drawing upon certain concepts of contemporary linguistics and philosophy of language, this paper analyzes the pragmatic characteristics of Mawdūdī's hermeneutical approach to the Qur'ānic symbols. I undertake the semiotic framework of language to be grounded upon the sign-meaning relationship in order that it may be hermeneutically viable to conceive of the semantic-pragmatic coherence. If such coherence evaporates during the interpretation of meaning of some language sign, then the interpreter experiences the semantic-pragmatic aberration exposing the blur between the semantic givenness of the meaning of language sign and its pragmatic implicature. In the discourse of language, the pragmatic aspect of meaning, which is based on the sign-interpreter relationship, is an exclusive signature of the interpreter concerned showing the degree of refine of his intellectual orientation as well as the stylistic traits, if he himself an author, of his literary expression. With respect to this philosophical frame of reference, I interpret Mawdūdī's political-stylistic interpretation of the Qur'ānic verses showing how it is possible to analyze his political ideology of fundamentalist type and his apparently simple, decisive, succinct and objective style in the nexus of contemporary triadic structure of semiotics, linguistics and hermeneutics.

I.1. The Sign-Meaning Relationship and the Semiotic Orientation of Language: The Pragmatics-Semantics-Syntactics Triad and its Hermeneutic Orientation

The expression 'semiotic orientation of language' coupled with the notion of 'the sign-meaning relationship' is pivotal in erecting the superstructure of Mawdūdī's politico-stylistic pragmatics. Owing to the semiotic orientation of language, its science being a study of signs can have a tripartite structure having syntactics, semantics and pragmatics as its constituent parts. In order to understand language being a system of communicating meanings through signs, the semiotic framework can be drawn from Charles Sanders Peirce's notion of the sign-meaning relationship. Focusing the sign-semiotics mutuality he defines the latter as 'the formal doctrine of signs...[while] A sign, or *representamen*, is

something stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity.¹ If one takes language to be a semiotic system,² word is taken to be a sign translating the sign-meaning relationship into the word-meaning connection. Peirce is not the pioneer in conceiving language a semiotic system based upon the sign-meaning relationship. John Locke much before him explored the semiotic approach to language though very limitedly in that his exploration was made to consolidate his project of representative realism.³ Unlike Locke, Peirce does not take semiotics as a secondary area of his academic interest in order to accomplish some other project of primary interest. His whole philosophical endeavor instead is characterized by his semiotic commitment. He illustrates this commitment in his famous letter that he wrote to Lady Welby:

“...know that from the day when at the age 12 or 13 I took up, in my elder brother’s room, a copy of Whetely’s *Logic* and asked him what logic was, and getting some simple answer, flung myself on the floor and buried myself in it, it has never been in my power to study anything, -mathematics, ethics, metaphysics, gravitation, thermodynamics, optics, chemistry, comparative anatomy, psychology, phonetics, economics, the history of science, whist, men and women, wine, metrology, except as a study semiotic.”⁴

Peirce’s definition potentially contains the tripartite structure of linguistics (as semiotics) as mentioned in the beginning of the argument. The sign-sign interplay is to show syntax whose study is syntactics which defines the major grammatical interface of language relating together the other two basic components of the grammatical whole namely phonetics (sound of sign) and semantics (meaning of sign) respectively.⁵ The syntactic descriptions (the sign-sign interplays) and their phonetic forms (sounds of signs) both are encompassed within the boundaries of grammar or language while the former’s semantic representation makes language relate to the life-world wherein the communication community speaks it. As regards the language/life-world mutuality, Peirce’s three phrases, in his definition of sign, namely ‘to somebody’, ‘for something’ and ‘in some respect or capacity,’ are highly significant in not only deciphering the

contribution of semantics to meaning but also in extending its scope to pragmatics.

Drawing from the syntactic structure, the semantic constructions of meanings focus on the relations of signs to the objects for which they stand whereas the pragmatic constructions of meanings refer to the relation of signs to the people who use them in certain context.⁶ Semantics and pragmatics both are in the broadest sense the studies of meaning but still each has its own specific subject matter. The former, with reference to the language/life-world mutuality, is more committed rather than the contextual life-world to the uncontextual language in terms of the grammatical rules and syntax in order to construe meanings. The latter, on the other hand, is more prone to the context of life-world wherein the language users are capable of interpreting those inferences and implicatures concerning meanings that do not come under the territory of the semantic investigation. Both should be taken to be complementary to each other, as the pragmaticist can explore the hermeneutic orientation of the contextuality of an utterance only if he is committed to the semantic content being drawn from syntax. The semantic content likewise cannot be appropriately meaningful without the pragmatic reference to the context in which the language users are to form and use the syntax. It shows that in order to expound meaning in full blown, one requires the semantics-pragmatics 'modular account', for it is more viable to have a 'hybrid theory' comprising of:

“the components, a semantics and a pragmatics working in tandem, each can be built on relatively homogeneous and systematic lines...than a single amorphous and heterogeneous theory of semantics.”⁷

In order to interpret meaning of a given utterance in the most plausible manner, the interpreter requires the syntactics-semantics-pragmatics module. The foremost of the three components is always given to the interpreter as a fixed pattern of the sign-sign interplay on whose ground he has to acquaint with the semantic content and its pragmatic contextuality. In the process of interpreting a text (or utterance), the major hermeneutical task for one is to continue with the semantic-

pragmatic coherence. That is to say, interpreting meaning on the pragmatic plane of contextuality of the text, one is not supposed to go so far from the givenness of the semantic content that there appears a dark gap between the semantic meaning and its pragmatic interpretation. This is what I term *the semantic-pragmatic aberration* caused by *the hermeneutic aberrance* of the sign-interpreter pragmatic relationship. Apel while responding to the question concerning 'the appropriate interpretation of the pragmatic dimension of the sign function' warns against this problem:

“...it is obvious that the pragmatic relationship between the sign and its interpreter must be accorded at least the same significance and epistemological status as the syntactic relationship between signs and the semantic relationship between signs and states of affairs...It is pragmatics which analyses the whole function in whose context the result of the syntactic-semantic analyses of systems of language or science become meaningful.”⁸

Pragmatics is to play the leading role in the portrayal of meanings as given at the hierarchical levels namely (i) of the sign-sign syntactic pattern according to the rules of grammar and (ii) of the sign-state of affair relationship of semantic nature. The primary level of the meaning construction in language, the sign-sign syntactic pattern is explanatory (scientific) in nature in that the pattern of meanings as set at this level is governed by the rules of grammar. The semantic level based upon the sign-state of affair relationship appears both to be explanatory (scientific) and interpretational (hermeneutical) depending upon what reference one owes to in order to analyze the semantic content. In case of logical positivism for instance meaning is construed owing largely to the truth-conditions determined by the application of the grammatical rules on the symbolic plane of language. It is an attempt to transform the practice oriented ordinary language into some sort of fixed scientific framework of symbols like calculus wherein meanings can be attained through the application of rules to show the linguistic symbols interplay on the plane of grammar. Here the analysis of linguistic expression takes the form of a scientific process of explanation through the application of grammatical rules for the determination of

meanings.⁹ In case of the later Wittgenstein's conception of language, on the other hand, 'the application of the grammatical rules...can only be learned as a connection between language and practice and internalized as part of a form of life.'¹⁰ In this case, one hermeneutically acquaints with the semantic content in its necessary relation to the practically oriented life-form wherein one may grasp meanings through the contextual interpretation rather than the scientific explanation. Semiotically speaking, meaning evolves here through the hermeneutical process of relating the language signs to the form of life rather than the explanatory process that operates on the plane of signs through the rules of grammar. But one should not cautiously refer to the logical positivists and the later Wittgenstein analyses of meaning as exclusively explanatory and hermeneutical respectively, as even in case of the latter the significance of the rules of grammar is not overlooked in the determination of meaning with reference to the language-life relationship.¹¹ It means that as compared to the syntactic level the semantic level of the determination of meaning is more hermeneutical in nature, as the former exclusively operates at the symbolic plane of language while the latter not only functions through the grammatical rules but it also makes language prone to the form of life. It also shows that the hermeneutic orientation of the semantic level functions complementarily with the pragmatic level, as the sign-state of affairs relationship becomes workable in connection with the sign-interpretation relationship in the process of the appropriate attainment of meaning. With reference to Peirce's definition of sign one may construe the pragmatic model of language focusing one's emphasis on sign's standing 'to somebody...in some respect or capacity.' The language-sign's being meaningful to some interpreter in certain contexts is a characteristic that defines pragmatics as something complementary to syntactics and semantics. This sphere of linguistics is least explanatory, for it is concerned with the sign-interpretation relationship that does not function through the *causality* of the grammatical rules to be explained. It is instead highly hermeneutical in its orientation, as it works through interpreters' *intentionality* that is subjected to interpretation rather than explanation. Thus if one puts syntactics, semantics and pragmatics in the descending order with respect to the degree of their hermeneutical

orientation (hermeneuticality), the order will be pragmatics-semantics-syntactics.

I.2. Pragmatics and the Possibility of Politico-Stylistic Pragmatics

There are various non-syntactic and non-semantic ‘putative meaning components and inferential relations of an utterance’ that contribute to the building up of pragmatic interpretation of meaning. A tentative list of such pragmatic elements of the meaning content of an utterance includes deixis, presuppositions, felicity conditions of speech acts, conversational implicatures etc.

One of the most common place pragmatic features of the ordinary language is the use of deixis or indexicals in signifying the context of an utterance. Deriving from the Greek verb *δεικνύω* (to point or to indicate), the term deixis refers to those words used to pointing towards somebody or something (e.g. this, that etc.), personal pronouns (e.g. I, you), time and place adverbs (e.g. now, here) and the grammatical features of the same kind directly related to the context of utterance. When deictic expressions are used in an utterance, one finds it difficult to rely solely on the truth-conditional semantics in order to amount, in the light of the semantic content of the utterance, to a specification of the states of affairs in which the utterance is verified to be true. For instance, the semantic content of

(1) ‘Āishah was the daughter of Abū Bakr

amounts to a specification of the state of affairs that the individual known as ‘Āishah was there in the formative period of Islamic history to be identical to the individual who was the daughter of Abū Bakr, the first caliph of the Prophet Muhammad after his death. The truth of (1) does not depend upon any context but simply upon the historical fact. But if one rephrases (1) by using certain deixis,

(2) I am the daughter of Abū Bakr

then if one analyses the semantic content of this sentence without taking into account what the deictic sign 'I' stands for, one cannot assess its truth, as (2) is true only in case when the speaker is identical to the individual who is indeed the daughter of Abū Bakr and false otherwise.¹²

Another type of pragmatic inference is presupposition. The pragmatic presupposition can be understood by distinguishing it from the semantic presupposition. One may grasp the latter drawing upon P. F. Strawson's distinction between 'entailment' and presupposition. Developing his logical theory, when Strawson acquaints with the subject-predicate-existence triad, he remarks on the truth-condition of statements giving rise to the notions of entailment and presupposition. Delivering the sentence

(3) Zulfi's daughter is playing

meaningfully, one must have several considerations in order to avoid absurdity in one's saying so. One's being sure that what one is saying in (3) is correct if one thinks that

- (i) one is referring to a girl whom one thinks to be playing
- (ii) Zulfi has a daughter
- (iii) the girl one is referring to is Zulfi's daughter

'It would prima facie be a kind of logical absurdity', for Strawson, to make the statement (3) without knowing (ii), for (ii) is a condition that makes (3) be true or false. Such an inferential relation between two statements S and S' that the latter is a necessary condition of the truth or falsity of the former and so the conjoining of S with the denial of S' will be a logical absurdity is what Strawson calls presupposition. That is to say, when one makes the statement S-'Zulfi's daughter is playing', one presupposes the existence of the subject-'Zulfi's daughter' and that presupposition that S'-'Zulfi has a daughter' is to become a necessary condition of the truth or falsity of S. On the other hand, S is said to

‘entail’ S’ if, according to Strawson, ‘S’ is a necessary condition of the truth, simply, of S’ and so the conjoining of S with the denial of S’ ‘is self-contradictory.’¹³

Unlike semantic presupposition where the inference is concerned with the truth-conditional relationship between the statements, pragmatic presuppositions are the inferences concerned with the relationship held between ‘a speaker and the appropriateness of a sentence in a context.’¹⁴ There is no logical necessity of an utterance in relation to another one regarding their truth or falsity, instead, in case of pragmatic presupposition it is all about how an utterer or an interpreter, depending upon the context, appropriates the utterance. In the way of the context-dependent appropriating of an utterance, one may acquaint two important factors namely (i) *defeasibility* of presuppositions in the discourse context and (ii) *the projection problem* that is the presuppositional behaviour in complex sentences. Defeasibility of presuppositions is taken by Levinson to be their susceptibility ‘to evaporate in certain contexts, either immediate linguistic context or the less immediate discourse context, or in circumstances where contrary assumptions are made.’¹⁵ One’s background beliefs, fore knowledge and opinions shaped in the context of life-world contribute to the presupposition’s being subject to cancellation.

Drawing upon Frege’s theory of meaning, Langendoen and Savin suggested of the presuppositions of a complex sentence that the set of presuppositions of a complex sentence is the sum of the presuppositions of its constituent parts. For instance, if S_0 be a complex sentence comprising of the sentences S_1, S_2, \dots, S_n as its constituent parts then the set of presuppositions of $S_0 =$ the presuppositions of $S_1 +$ the presupposition of $S_2 + \dots +$ the presupposition of S_n . This simple arithmetic regarding the presuppositions of a complex sentence may be workable semantically but pragmatically there is always a problem in formulating a theory that can ‘predict correctly which presuppositions of component clauses will in fact be inherited by the complex whole. This compositional problem is known as the projection problem for presuppositions.’¹⁶ One of such complex sentences is the conditional sentences comprising of the antecedent and the consequent like:

- (4) If Mawdūdī writes *Khilāfat-o-Mulūkīyyat*, he will regret writing it
(5) Mawdūdī will write *Khilāfat-o-Mulūkīyyat*

In (4) the consequent alone presupposes (5) while the antecedent remains hypothetical and so the presupposition of the complex whole is not simply the sum of the presuppositions of its constituent parts namely the antecedent and the consequent.

Responding to the factors of defeasibility and the projection problem of presuppositions, there are sketched various theoretical proposals. One of them is to focus two of the well-known pragmatic notions namely ‘*appropriateness* (or *felicity*) and *mutual knowledge* (or *common ground* or *joint assumption*)’ (emphasis is mine). Owing to these two concepts, one may workout the definition of pragmatic presupposition as Levinson puts it:

“An utterance A *pragmatically presupposes* a proposition B iff A is *appropriate* only if B is *mutually known* by participants.”¹⁷

It shows that pragmatic presupposition made on the ground of mutual knowledge shared by the participants of an utterance warrants the felicity of the utterance for them. Here Levinson seems to reduce pragmatic presupposition to felicity condition which is a part of his relatively larger reductionist programme which he calls ‘re-allocation programme’ in order to deal with the problem of presuppositions. In this programme, presuppositions taken to be ‘a heterogeneous collection of quite different phenomena’, are proposed to be reduced to ‘other kinds of inference, in particular to semantic entailment and matters of logical form on the one hand, and to conversational implicatures, felicity conditions and the like on the other.’¹⁸

In what follows our discussion will focus felicity and implicature being two highly significant pragmatic notions. Let’s take first the former one.

The notion of felicity may be taken as a ground for grasping how one can move from semantics to pragmatics covering both the implicitness

and the explicitness of meaning of an utterance. The felicity/infelicity distinction should be taken in contrast with the truth/falsity distinction so that the former refers to pragmatic interpretation of the utterance while the latter concerns with its semantic meaning. Certain philosophers of language (e.g., J. L. Austin) take the former distinction as an alternative to the latter which shows that the meaning of language phenomena cannot fully be covered through their propositional (or semantic) study. Austin, like the later Wittgenstein, is of the opinion that meaning in language owes to how it is *used* in a life-form. Limiting the scope of propositional semantics, Austin introduces the notion of 'performative utterance' or 'speech act' to illustrate the pragmatic aspect of the language use. Speech act or performative utterance is an utterance which reflects that the speaker 'is *doing* something rather than merely *saying* something' and so the utterance transcends its truth-condition. Instead of its being true or false, a performative utterance may be felicitous or infelicitous depending upon its contextual conditions. Austin illustrates at least five such conditions that can make a speech act felicitous or infelicitous or 'happy' or 'unhappy' respectively. In what follows I will take all five conditions one by one to illustrate how an utterance becomes infelicitous if does not meet the criterion of felicity as set by the respective condition.

I. There must be either an 'oral' or a practical 'conventional procedure' for performing the utterance

In Muslim cultures, according to Levinson, the way of divorce is a kind of speech act that may be actualized on the social plane through a religiously conventionally accepted oral procedure namely husband's uttering thrice in front of his wife: 'I hereby divorce you.'¹⁹ Owing to the Qur'ānic teachings one cannot approve it to be a felicitous procedure of divorce. Certain scholars may appeal to the appropriateness of the circumstances in which the conventional procedure is invoked. For instance, the utterance (I hereby divorce you) shall be made by husband in three different occasions with a specific time interval in order to appropriately divorce his wife. After the first such occasion, the husband should let his wife be staying at his own place for a specific time period so that if he is willing to go back to his

wife again, then he can do so. The second divorce will stand if he fails to do so provided the wife should not, on both of these occasions, be in her period of menstruation. After the second occasion he can also go back again to his wife or otherwise in the third period of cleansing after the menstruation he can ask her to leave his place. After the divorce, the husband is advised by the Qur'ān not take back from his former wife whatever he had already given her as gifts.²⁰ This interpretation of the religious-conventional procedure of divorce points both to the second and the third felicity condition of an utterance:

II. The circumstances in which the conventional procedure is invoked 'must be appropriate for its invocation'

III. [T]he procedure, whatever it may be, must be 'carried through 'correctly and completely'

If the three conditions are 'not observed, then the act', says Austin, 'that we purport to perform would not come off-it will be...a misfire.' The next two felicity conditions are

IV. The verbal design of the conventional procedure involves people who must hold 'the requisite' 'beliefs, feelings or intentions'

V. The speaker and the hearer must be considerate towards both what the former is referring to in the utterance and what the latter is understanding by this reference

If the fourth condition is not observed 'then there is an abuse of the procedure' which Austin terms 'insincerity.' Finally, in case of the violation of the fifth condition, there will be a 'misunderstanding' between the speaker and the hearer. The misfire, the insincerity and the misunderstanding-all are different forms of infelicity or unhappiness that may make the speech act go wrong.²¹

It is common place in the ordinary language practice that the language practitioners interpret *what is said* extrapolating its meaning beyond *what is said* though still being committed to the givenness of *what is*

said. This hermeneutical extrapolation of meaning of a given utterance is something what one may simply call implicature or conversational implicature. From the semiotic-hermeneutic point of view, implicature is the most significant notion of pragmatics in that one's pragmatic implicating of language phenomena depends upon how an interpreter takes the language sign to be meaningful in some context against the sign-meaning semantic relationship. The distinction between pragmatically implicated meaning of a language sign and its semantic counterpart is the most important contribution which the notion of implicature makes to the pragmatic practice of language.²² When a semanticist is to analyze a language phenomenon, his approach is propositional towards the truth-condition of the phenomenon on account of the fixation of meaning in relation to its designatum.²³ For instance, '*and*' is a language sign that is semantically taken to be a conjunction that conjoins two propositions *p* and *q*. Its role is to establish that the complex of two conjuncts *p* and *q* is true if *p* and if *q* are separately true, and false otherwise.

- (5) If *p*
- (6) If *q*
- (7) Then *p* and *q*
- (8) *p*
- (9) *q*
- (10) therefore *p* and *q*

This is the way a semanticist cognizes '*and*' being a conjunction but if he finds '*and*' standing in an utterance as more than being merely a conjunction, he will take '*and*' to be ambiguous appealing to the 'protean' nature of the language signs in general. This is the point in the process of the fixation of meaning where pragmatic implicature complements the meaning of a language sign beyond the semantics of its truth-condition. In the following utterance for example 'and' appears to be more than a conjunction:

- (11) 'Alī brandished his sword and attacked the rivals

In (11) ‘and’ does not mean to be merely a conjunctive sign it instead shows a historical connection between two events that did not take place together but either one after the other or one before the other. This extra-semantic namely pragmatic interpretation of ‘and’ beyond its conjunctive role in the context of temporal relation between the conjuncts is to reflect the notion of implicature. The phenomenon of implicature brings it forth that the ordinary language signs have two phases of their meaningfulness: one is ‘the semantic core’ containing ‘stable’, singular and context-free meanings of the language signs; and second is ‘the pragmatic overlay’ having ‘unstable’, manifold, and context-dependent implicatures. The semantic core and the pragmatic overlay are not two isolated fields of the interplay of meanings rather they constitute together, as mentioned above, a modular structure for the interpretation of language phenomena, which is to say, an interpreter is required to be committed with the semantic content of a language phenomenon while interpreting beyond the semantic boundaries its meaning in terms of the pragmatic implicature. This is what I have already termed above as the semantic-pragmatic coherence. Furthermore, one’s failure in the hermeneutical process of cohering one’s pragmatic implicature with the semantic content leads one towards what I have already termed above the semantic-pragmatic aberration.

The what-question concerning pragmatic implicature gives rise to the how-question concerning the same, which is to say, after having seen what implicature is we now have to turn to how one is able to implicate explicitly meaning from what is implicitly given as semantic content. In this regard, H. P. Grice’s proposals that he delivered through the William James Lectures at Harvard in 1967 are highly significant. Grice gave suggestions regarding how one, following certain principles, would be able to implicate meanings ‘in a maximally efficient, rational, co-operative way.’ Levinson briefly cites the whole scheme of Grice’s proposal as follows:

“1. *The Co-operative principle*

make your contribution such as is required, at the stage while it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in you are engaged

2. *The maxim of Quality*

try to make your contribution one that is true, specifically:

- (i) do not say what you believe to be false
- (ii) do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence

3. *The maxim of Quantity*

- (i) make your contribution as informative as is required to the current purpose of the exchange
- (ii) do not make your contribution more informative than is required

4. *The maxim of Relevance*

Make your contribution relevant

5. *The maxim of Manner*

be perspicuous, and specifically:

- (i) avoid obscurity
- (ii) avoid ambiguity
- (iii) be brief
- (iv) be orderly”²⁴

If one hermeneutically reflects on Grice’s maxims concerning implicature, one will obviously implicate that the *a priori* of life-world and language both are presupposed by Grice in his proposal. The *a priori* of life-world defines that the participants of an utterance have already been engaged with the meanings and practices shared by them in the context of the life-world. Whereas the *a priori* of language defines the contextual discourse of language as a whole in whose context any specific utterance becomes meaningful for the participants. Along with these two fundamental *a priori* conditions one more condition of the mutual exchange of meanings that reaches at the level

of *a priori* is the participants' interest in the exchange that is triggered by the degree of their intellectual refine and the orientation of their social stature. One's co-operation in an utterance, one's consciousness of the truth and falsity of what one says, one's assessment that how much one has to deliver in an utterance, one's awareness of the relevance and the manner of what one is contributing to an exchange of meanings-all are possible owing to the *a priori* of life, language and interest. It shows that if implicature hermeneutically imparts meaning owing to the contributors' (or pragmaticists') intellectual orientation then the meaning import in this regard should mirror in return the intellectual characteristics of the contributors (or pragmaticists). This reversible process is not implicature-specific rather it may also be relevant with other pragmatic notions like presupposition and felicity of utterance, as every act of pragmatic interpretation imports meaning explicitly to the implicitness of the utterance and so it is always possible to have the reversibility between the pragmaticist's intellectual insight and the concerned pragmatic notion. For instance, if a politically oriented stylistic scholar like Mawdūdī pragmatically interprets the symbols of Islam, then whatever explicit meanings his interpretation imports will be the exclusive signatures of Mawdūdī's and so it will obviously be reversibly mirroring the intellectual orientation of the Mawdūdīan brand. This is what one may term the Mawdūdīan style of expression. The building up of an author's style constituted of many traits depends on manifoldness of linguistic relationships. Wilhelm Schneider describes the multifacetedness of one's style in relation to the multiplicity of the respective linguistic relationships:

“According to the relations of words to the object, styles are divisible into conceptual and sensuous, succinct and long-winded, or minimizing and exaggerating, decisive and vague, quiet and excited, low and high, simple and decorated; according to the relations among the words, into tense and lax, plastic and musical, smooth and rough, colourless and colourful; according to the relations of words to the total system of the language, into spoken and written, cliché and individual; and according to the relations of words to the author, into objective and subjective.”²⁵

As per the scope of this study, two from among those four linguistic relations given in the above citation are very significant namely the relations of words to the object and to the author. The former reflects the semantic (the word-object relation) aspect of meaning while the latter the pragmatic (the word-author relation) one and so their mutuality shows how stylistics is related to semantics and pragmatics. In case of Mawdūdī's stylistics, one, after having gone through his works, may conclude that the articulation of his style is to 'encompass conflicting traits.'²⁶ That is to say, the signature of his politico-stylistic unity contains, depending upon different linguistic relations, various conflicting traits namely the subjective-objective, the simple-decorated, the succinct-long-winded, the decisive-vague etc.

What follows will illustrate Mawdūdī's politico-stylistic pragmatics that is his pragmatic-hermeneutic approach to the Qur'ānic symbols lopsidedly reflecting his specific style of expression as well as his political-ideological commitment.

II. Political Ideology and Islamic Teleology: Development of Mawdūdī's Politico-Stylistic Pragmatics

Why I choose to refer to pragmatics coupled with hermeneutics in order to analyze Mawdūdīan principle of Qur'ān exegesis in general and his interpretation of certain Qur'ānic symbols in particular. The problem it is that *the way his interpretation of certain Qur'ānic symbols sounds is found incoherent with the hermeneutical principles he seems to follow in his approach to Islam*. This problem is obviously a pragmatic one based upon the relationship between the language sign and the interpreter. Further, the problem is developed throughout his literature including his Qur'ān exegesis on the plane of two most important aspects of his scholarship namely the style of his expression and his political orientation. So the topography of the analysis of the problem cannot solely be hermeneutical in approach rather it has to be coupled with pragmatics for the appropriate investigation of his style developed in relation to his political ideology.

In the post-partition era, the geo-political reshaping of the Subcontinent was seemingly based on the Hindu-Muslim divide grounding upon certain socio-economic-political interests of the religious groups. Deep into this apparent Hindu-Muslim divide there was the Muslim-Muslim divide with reference to the anti-West/pro-West tension of the Muslim psyche rather than to any Islamic tenets. After the establishment of a separate Muslim nation in the Subcontinent, nearly the century old cracking of the Muslim intellect into fundamentalism and modernism was to co-produce a new crisis characterized by the question: *Being a free nation how to interpret Islam to accomplish the task of having sovereignty in every aspect of contemporary form of life?* During the 1857 crisis they were after an *ad interim telos* of the Muslim survival against the dominion of the British Imperialism. But this time the Muslims had already survived as a self-determinate political unity. Owing to the situation, the question led both the fundamentalists and the modernists to a different teleology or purposiveness of Islam. Mawdūdī is from amongst those fundamentalists who attempt to address the question of Islamic teleology in terms of his political ideology coupled with the articulated style having specific expressive value.

Responding to the question concerning the *telos* of Islam, Mawdūdī builds up his argument on the ground of the denial of the religious-mundane (*madhhabī-dunyavī*) dichotomy of human life-world. ‘The whole of mundane life is’, judges Mawdūdī, ‘a religious life’ that ranges every aspect of human life-world from ‘beliefs (*i’tiqādāt*) and worships (*ibādāt*)’ through ‘culture (*tamaddun*) and socialization (*mu‘āsharat*)’ to ‘politics (*siyāsāt*) and economics (*ma‘īshat*).’ All of these components of human life-form are coherently connected through a meaningful *telos* so that the latter is to ‘coherently’ hold the entire structure of the former ranging from their ‘roots (*uṣūl*)’ to ‘branches (*furū‘*)’. None of the fragments of the life-world especially politics and economics, emphasizes Mawdūdī, can be practiced in accord with any ‘scheme’ other than that suggested by Islam. If one does so, that is, if a group of Muslims builds up their political and economic systems within the parameters defined by certain non-Islamic paradigms like Western democracy and capitalistic economy respectively, then, according to

Mawdūdī, they will be supposed to commit a ‘partial apostasy (*juzwī irtidād*)’ that results into an ‘absolute apostasy (*kullī irtidād*)’.²⁷ In this regard, Mawdūdī cites a verse from the Qur’ān:

“*afatū’ minūna biba’ di’ l-kitābi wa takfurūna biba’ dī*” (And then do ye believe in one part of the Book and reject the other?)” (*Baqarah* 2:85)

Interpreting this verse Mawdūdī has drawn a very decisive and aggressive conclusion but he has missed in doing so an important pragmatic component of meaning of this verse. The appropriate interpretation of this verse depends upon taking into account what the deictic signs, *al-tā’ al-maḍmūmah* and *al-tā’ al-maftūḥah* appearing respectively in the beginning of the two verbs namely *tū’ minūna* and *takfurūna* stand for. Without explaining whether or not the verse can any way be applicable to those Muslims who are unable to practice all of the teachings of the Qur’ān, Mawdūdī has firmly concluded that if they are unable to do so they will cease to be Muslim and they will be taken to be apostates though partially first but at some later stage they will become absolute apostates. Mawdūdī was obviously aware of those for whom the deictic signs stand, as in his exegesis, *Tafhīm al-Qur’ān* he had to illustrate that the addressees of the verse were the Jews who released the war captives after taking ransom from them (which is in accord with the divine Book) but they did not accept the divine decree forbidding them to fight against the followers of their own religion.²⁸ After the appropriate pragmatic interpretation of the contextuality of inferential relations of the verse, none can claim like Mawdūdī that those Muslims will be apostates who are unable to practice the Qur’ānic teachings in full blown.

Mawdūdī’s concept of *the partial apostasy leading to the absolute or total apostasy* owes mainly to his interpretation of the *four fundamental terms*, so he mentions them, of the Qur’ān namely *ilāh*, *rabb*, *‘ibādat* and *dīn*. These four language-signs are the most significant Qur’ānic symbols, expounds Mawdūdī, that constitute the ‘central idea of the Book’ reflecting the whole mission (*da’wat*) of Islam:

“The whole text of the Qur’ān is revolving around the pivot of these four terms. The central idea of this Book it is that: Allāh is *Rabb*; And *rubūbiyyat* and *ilāhiyyat* are for none but Allāh; therefore, *‘ibādat* shall be of none but Allāh and *Dīn* shall purely be for Him.”²⁹

The most important aspect of Mawdūdī’s hermeneutical approach to these four language-signs is his claim that he is the only scholar of Islam since the Prophetic era who has understood the ‘true meaning (*aṣl ma‘nā*)’ of these Qur’ānic symbols, as by the passage of history Muslims all over the ages had lost the true meanings of these signs and in the later epochs linguists and hermeneuticians had started to interpret these signs untruly. Owing to this centuries long fallacious interpretation of these Qur’ānic symbols, ‘nearly three fourth teaching of the Qur’ān rather its true spirit has obscured from the Muslim sight’ collectively with an obvious exception of Mawdūdī.³⁰ Here again is Mawdūdī committing a pragmatic fallacy by making an infelicitous claim on the ground of the contextually defeasible presupposition. The claim that: ‘*after the companions of the Prophet Mawdūdī is the only scholar in Islamic history to understand the true meanings of the four terms*’ presupposes that all great scholars of Muslim tradition including jurists, exegetes, *ḥadīth* scholars, historians and philosophers did not know the true meaning of the terms. The claim does not sound felicitous, for the presupposition is susceptible to evaporate in the context of more than millennium long discourse of Islamic history. The presupposition, owing to which Mawdūdī has started making such claims, cannot be mutually endorsed by the participants of the discourse, as this is not the common ground or joint assumption upon which the participants are agreed in the context of less immediate discourse of Islamic history.

Interpreting the term of *ilāh* Mawdūdī construes that the term refers to somebody in whose hands is ‘all authority (*ikhtiyār*) and power (*iqtidār*), all creature (*khalq*) is his, all blessing (*ni‘mat*) is his, all command (*amr*) is his...everything is willingly or unwillingly submitting to him.’ Mawdūdī reiterates that ‘none has power (*quwwat*), none commands and none is able to share his authorities to rule (*ikhtiyārāt-e-ḥukūmat*).’ Another language-sign that he takes to be the

synonym of *ilāhīyyat* (divinity) is *iqtidār* (power). But the Qur'ānic evidences he cites in support of his argument do not unfortunately fulfill their job. The first evidence he brings forth in his support under the heading of Qur'ānic Argument is:

“*Wa Huwa 'lladhī fī 'l-samā'i Ilāh^{um} wa fī 'l-arḍ Ilāh^{um} wa huwa 'l-Ḥakīmu 'l-'Alīm* (And it is He Who is *Ilāh* in the heaven and *Ilāh* on the earth and He is the Wise-the Knower).” (*Zukhruf* 43:84)

One more evidence from the middle of his argument is:

“*Alladhī lahu mulku 'l-samāwāti wa 'l-arḍi wa lam yattakhidhu walad^{an} wa lam yakun lahu sharīkun fī 'l-mulki wa khalaqa kulla shayⁱⁿ faqaddarahu taqdīr^{an} wa 'ttakhadhu min dūnihi ilāhatan lā yakhlūqūna shay^{an} wa hum yukhlāqūna wa lā yamlikūna li' anfusihim ḍarr^{an} wa lā naf^{an} wa lā yamlikūna mawt^{an} wa lā ḥayāt^{an} wa lā nushūr^{an}* (He to Whom belongs the rule of the heaven and the earth; Who has begotten no son; none is to share Whose rule; Who created all things and put them in order as per the due proportion. Have people taken except Him those to be their *ilāh* who cannot create anything but they are themselves created [by Him]; they have no authority on their own loss and gain; they have no authority on either death or life or resurrection).” (*Furqān* 25:2-3)

In the end of his argument regarding the interpretation of the language-sign, *ilāh*, Mawdūdī clearly shows his pragmatic extrapolation of meaning through his unique style of expression lopsidedly impacted by his political ideals. He argues to take *the divine power of cosmological type* to be *the mundane power of political type*. He expounds that ‘the uniqueness of the sovereignty (*iqtidār-e-a 'lā*) necessitates that all types of dominion ought to be centralized in the self (*dhāt*) of the sovereign (*muqtadir-e-a 'lā*) so that not even the iota of the dominion is left to any other body.’ Further, ‘if somebody in political terms’ assumes to be ‘sovereign’, then such assuming of political type will be tantamount to the claim to be divinely ‘sovereign like God.’³¹ Mawdūdī’s argument throughout reflects the conflicting traits of his stylistic expression. His style semantically sounds simple, succinct and decisive while pragmatically appears to be objective. In order to convince his

addressees he is fully equipped with all required devices. His expression is uniquely clean and flowing like a stream. He never uses linguistic ornaments to decorate his prose rather it is always simple and succinct. His tone is always decisive. He never refers to the linguistic devices like ‘it seems’ or ‘it appears’ or ‘I guess’ or ‘I conjecture’, his expression instead is like ‘two plus two is equal to four’ even in those cases where it is unlikely to be so sure. He puts things to his readers as whatever he is presenting it is objectively true. It may be true in certain cases but when he does so in order to argue in favour of his political ideals it is rarely true. When for instance he cites verse-84 of *Sūrat al-Zukhruf* in order that he may establish with the support of that verse what the verse does not imply, he says: ‘now listen in the language of the Qur’ān the way it argues in this regard’ while there was no Qur’ānic argument in the verse. The verse only shows that Allāh has got divine wisdom and knowledge of cosmological type whereas Mawdūdī draws from it every kind of power including social, political and cosmological etc. Pragmatically speaking it is what Mawdūdī infelicitously implicates drawing from the semantic content of the verse. So under the overlay of his objectivist-pragmatic tone there is subjectivist-pragmatic implicature as regards what he interprets. The same is true for all of the semantic traits of his style, which is to say, under the overlay of simplicity, succinctness and decisiveness of language there is in the core long-windedness, decoration and vagueness of meaning. In order to take *illāhīyyat* (divinity) to be a synonym of *iqtidār-e-a’lā* (political sovereignty) in his simple language he long-windedly puts about 36 verses of the Qur’ān but none of them has the word, *iqtidār* to be equal in terms of meaning to *illāhīyyat*. The sign of political sovereignty is something he puts *within* the semantic boundary of divinity from *without* may be from his ideological commitment. In terms of Grice’s theory of implicature, one may remark that Mawdūdī’s implicature does neither follow the maxim of quality that: ‘do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence’ nor it is in accord with the maxims of relevance and manner that: ‘make your contribution relevant and be perspicuous, and specifically avoid obscurity [and] ambiguity.’ The implicature of Grice’s theoretical proposals concerning implicature shows, as we have already discussed above, that he presupposes in his proposals the *a priori* of life, language and interest. If one applies it to

Mawdūdī's implicature, one may conclude that the *a priori* of his political interest was so predominant in his interpretation of the Qur'ānic verses that it determines its pragmatic implicature to be aberrant in its relation to the semantic content of the verses. The semantically unjustifiable relation between divinity and political sovereignty coupled with his decisive claim in terms of the concept of the partial apostasy leading to the absolute or total apostasy as discussed above creates a huge vagueness in his overall argument. This vagueness takes the form of a question: *What a Muslim should do in order to guard him against the partial apostasy leading to the absolute or total apostasy being committed by him practicing his life within a non-Islamic socio-economic-political world like for instance a capitalistic democracy?*

Before referring to the Mawdūdīan answer to this question, I shall undertake the fourth language-sign, *Dīn*,³² for the discussion itself concerning this sign will give rise to the answer to this question making Mawdūdī's stylistic vagueness, as mentioned above, reach at its height. Interpreting the language-sign, *Dīn*, Mawdūdī shows, in his usual apparently simple, succinct and decisive tone, his conviction that the Qur'ān uses this word in four different meanings namely '(i) dominion (*ḥākīmīyyat*) and sovereignty (*iqtidār-e-a'lā*), (ii) submission (*taslīm*) and compliance (*itā'at*) against the dominion, (iii) the theoretical and practical system (*nizām-e-fikr-o-'amal*) built up on the ground of this dominion, and (iv) recompense (*mukāfāt*) that is given by the sovereign to one as a reward against one's compliance or as a punishment against one's disobedience or revolt against the system.'³³ The Qur'ān, according to Mawdūdī, uses these connotations at times in their particular senses or at times as a term referring to a 'whole system (*pūrā nizām*) comprising of the four elements as its constituent parts.' Further he claims that it is a 'comprehensive term (*jāmi' iṣṭilāḥ*)' in that it refers to 'such a system of life (*nizām-e-zindagī*) in which man submits and complies to some sovereignty in order that he may lead his life within the parameters of law and regulations fixed by the sovereignty.' It reminisces of Mawdūdī's concept of religious life which I refer to in the beginning of this discussion and that encompasses every aspect of human life-world from beliefs and

worships through culture and socialization to politics and economics. Owing to his all encompassing implicated meaning of the language-sign, Dīn, Mawdūdī christens it “state” supplementing this christening with the cautionary remark that Dīn nearly not exactly means to be state. But the Qur’ānic verses he cites in this regard do not support his claim instead these citations highlight the infelicitousness of his pragmatic implicature. For instance the last five verses he cites are as follows:

(i) “*inna ’l-Dīna ’inda ’llāhi ’l-Islāmu* (For Allāh indeed the Dīn is Islam)” (*Āl ’Imrān* 3:19)

(ii) “*wa man yabtaghi ghayra ’l-Islāmi Dīn^{an} falan yuqbala minhu* (And whoever looks for a Dīn other than Islam, from him that Dīn will not be accepted)” (*Āl ’Imran* 3:85)

(iii) “*Huwa ’lladhī arsala rasūlahu bi ’l-hudā wa Dīni ’l-ḥaqqi li yuzhirahu ’alā ’l-dīni kullihi wa law kariha ’l-mushrikūna* (It is Allāh Who sent His Apostle with the right guidance and the Dīn of Truth so that he would be able to dominate His Dīn on genus religion even though the pagans may detest it)” (*Tawbah* 9:33)

(iv) “*wa qātīlūhum ḥattā lā takūna fitnat^{un} wa yakūna ’l-Dīnu kulluhu li ’llāhi* (And fight them on until there remains no more *fitnah* (religious disorder) and there prevails the Dīn completely for Allāh)” (*Anfāl* 8:39)

(v) “*idhā jā’a naṣru ’llāhi wa ’l-fathu wa rayta ’l-nāsa yadkhulūna fi Dīni ’llāhi afwāj^{an} fasabbih biḥamdi rabbika wa ’staghfirhu innahu kāna tawwāb^{an}* (When comes the help of Allāh and then victory and thou dost see the people entering the Dīn of Allāh in huge number. Celebrate the praises of thy Lord, and pray for his forgiveness, He is the Most Forgiving) (*Nasr* 110:1-3)³⁴

None of these citations reflects what Mawdūdī implicates pragmatically from them. The word, Dīn does not, in any of the verses, shows that gigantically overarching connotation that entails every element of

social institutionalization including even the belief system, culture, economics as well as politics. If I put the semantic content of all these five verses together in a paragraph it may read:

“Allāh has chosen Islam as a religion for human beings so he will accept nothing but Islam as such. He sent Muhammad as His Apostle with that religion to flourish in his society and at some stage of his prophetic career it had to dominate all other religions of that society. Ultimately, it prevailed throughout that society and the people started to get into the fold of Islam in huge number that Allāh promised as a victory for His Apostle.”

After reading that paragraph, if somebody makes the claim that in this paragraph the word, religion means to be something approximately equivalent to the notion of modern state, it will sound extremely infelicitous in the given context. In Grice's words, Mawdūdī's implicature will be qualitatively untrue, extremely irrelevant, obscured, and ambiguous. His presupposition throughout is: *The aim of Islam is to dominate the whole world like the phenomenon of modern state in every compartment of the human life-form.* But it is a very inappropriate inferential relation regarding what he implicates on its ground, as this presupposition appears to be defeasible in the context of the Qur'ānic discourse which Mawdūdī refers to in order to strengthen what he argues. There is a huge gap between what is semantically given in the verses and what Mawdūdī pragmatically implicates owing to the aberrance of his hermeneutical approach towards the sign of Dīn as something close in meaning to the notion of state. This is what I have already termed the semantic-pragmatic aberration. This is a vagueness of meaning that appears when an interpreter attempts to implicate something infelicitously in pragmatic terms from the givenness of the semantic content. In terms of stylistics, one may illustrate it as a subjective attempt of an interpreter to use linguistic and literary devices aiming 'at some specific expressive end' in relation to the text he is to interpret.

Now turn to the question I put above in *italics*. Mawdūdī gives a teleological answer to the question that makes the already given

vagueness be more obscure. Mawdūdī draws his teleological answer to the question interpreting verse 8 of *Sūrat al-Anfāl* as discussed above along with the other verses of the same subject matter like verse 193 of *Sūrat al-Baqarah* and verse 29 of *Sūrat al-Tawbah*. According to Mawdūdī, the Dīn, as discussed above, is a religio-cultural-socio-political life-system revealed as such onto the Prophet to dominate in political terms all other religion-types of the globe. That is to say, the *telos* of Islam as the Din is to be predominantly prevailed all over the globe as a state of God. Under the heading of *Islamic Mission* he reminds today's Muslims that:

“...if we are true believers, then our obligation it is that wherever the Divine Law (*khudā kā Qānūn-e-Shar‘ī*) is not operational we should struggle to enforce it... [No matter if the struggle is required to be bloody], as Islam cannot be the supporter of such peace (*amn*) that is established by other than Muslims. Islam needs to establish its own peace and considers it safe for all human beings.”³⁵

This is not only the *telos* of the Dīn presented by the Prophet Muhammad rather it had been the *telos* of every revealed religion that it had to be predominantly overshadowing all other religions of the antiquity. Mawdūdī finds this ‘principled reality’ as a ‘law’ in the biographies of all prophets without any exception.³⁶ There are several hermeneutic-pragmatic problems with the Mawdūdīan interpretation of the verses concerned. The semantic contents of the verses do not provide any such ground that on that one may explicitly implicate such a horrible scheme of action for the twentieth century Muslims. In all three verses the addressees are the Prophet and his companions who are asked by Allāh to stand against the then pagans and the non-Muslims of the Arab Peninsula and to fight them on until they enter the fold of Islam. There is no semantic element in those context-specific verses that can be stretched to implicate explicitly a general rather a universally applicable imperative for all Muslims all over the ages to engage themselves in an infinitely extended war against the non-Muslims all over the globe until all enter the fold of Islam or at least agree to accept Islamic state as the only political power in the world. These meanings of political-ideological orientation are neither

implicitly found *within* the semantic content nor can they be explicitly-pragmatically implicated from it. It is instead an infelicitous implicature worked out by Mawdūdī from *without* on the ground of his fundamentalist political commitment that myopically rejects every form of life to be invalid except one that is supposedly approved by the revelation to be True. Thus, it is justifiable to eliminate every such False life-form that can be invalidly flourished parallel to the True one. The presupposition behind such myopic interpretation of the verses is that ‘only and only Islam is to prevail *politically* all over the globe’ which sounds defeasible, as it becomes susceptible to evaporate in the context of the verses.

Thus, in order to establish the Din as it is required to be established being the only political power in the globe Mawdūdī laid foundation of a political party called *Jamā‘at-e-Islāmī* (The Islamic Party). This I take to be a performative utterance or speech act of Mawdūdīan-type that transcends its truth-condition, which is to say, this is something reflects that the subject is not only *saying* something but he is also *doing* something which cannot be true or false rather may be felicitous or infelicitous depending upon certain conditions of its being actually done. In Austin’s words the speech act the Mawdūdīans purport to perform has not come off-it is a misfire, as (i) there is no conventional procedure for its performance; (ii) the circumstances in which the conventional procedure, if any, may be invoked are not appropriate for its invocation; and (iii) the procedure, if any, has not yet carried through correctly and completely. Besides, the whole discourse is completely misunderstood, as the speaker and the hearers both are engaged in a dialogue for the communication of infelicitously implicated meanings.

Conclusion

The growing richness of the Western intellectual discourse has made it viable even for the non-Western scholars to look for the possibilities of its application to the problems of their own discourse in order that they may be able to find solutions for them. This paper is an example of such fruitful application of the Western discourse in terms of semiotics,

linguistics, philosophy of language and hermeneutics etc. to Mawdūdī's Qur'ānic hermeneutics marked by his political ideology and stylistic traits. Interpreting Mawdūdī's interpretation of certain Qur'ānic symbols, it has come into light that the pragmatic implicatures worked out by him are not in match with the semantic content of those signs. This wide gap between semantics and pragmatics owing to the hermeneutic blur caused by the prior orientation of the interpreter's intellectual make-up, which in Mawdūdī's case is his being an ideologue of fundamentalist political commitments, is what I term the semantic-pragmatic aberration. This aberration is concluded to be the Mawdūdī an signature in his hermeneutic approach towards the Qur'ānic symbols and the Islamic teleology. I have found that while building up his politically oriented argument, what he had to pragmatically implicate regarding the semantic givenness of meaning is often transcendent of the latter. After having applied various pragmatic concepts like deixis, presupposition, implicature and felicity etc. as well as stylistic devices like simplicity/decoration, decisiveness/vagueness, succinctness/long-windedness and objectivity/subjectivity, I have come to the conclusion that his political interpretation of the teleology of Islam and the symbols of the Qur'ān sounds infelicitous.

Endnotes

¹ C. S. Peirce, *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, 8 Vols., ed. C. Hartshorne & P. Weiss (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1931-5), Vol. II, 227-8

² Tracing the history of considering word a 'language sign,' Sebeok concisely discusses the mutuality of language and semiotics. See T. A. Sebeok, *An Introduction to Semiotics* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1994), 105-127

³ J. Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. & tr. A. D. Woozley, (New York: The New American Library Inc., 1974), 256-319

⁴ C. S. Hardwick, (Ed.), *Semiotics and Signifys: The Correspondence between Charles Sanders Peirce and Victoria Lady Welby* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977) cited in Sebeok (1994), 108

⁵ For the details concerning the triangular structure of grammar (especially regarding English language) comprising of phonetics, syntax and semantics see N. Chomsky, & M. Halle, *The Sound Pattern of English* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 6-7

⁶ Owing to Locke's semantic expounding concerning the thing-idea-word triad as well as Peirce's exploration concerning semiotics and sign, Charles Morris worked out syntactics, semantics and pragmatics as three distinct spheres of semiotic inquiry. He defines syntactics as the study of 'formal relations of signs to one another', semantics as the study of 'the relations of signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable' and pragmatics as the study of 'the relations of signs to interpreters'. See Morris, C. W., *Foundations of the Theory of Signs*, in O. Neurath, R. Carnap, & C. W. Morris (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), 6. For the semiotic connection among syntactics, semantics and pragmatics also see K-O. Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie (Towards the Transformation of Philosophy)*, tr. G. Adey, & F. D. risby, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 93-94

⁷ S. C. Levinson, *Pragmatics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 15

⁸ Apel (1973), 96

⁹ Carrathers, exploring the semantic orientation of *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, taken sometimes in the past to be the Bible of the logical positivists, shows how Wittgenstein takes the understanding of a sentence to be the knowing of its truth-condition with reference to the rules of grammar as well as to how they relate to something in the world namely state of affairs. See P. Carrathers, *Tractarian Semantics* (Oxford: Basil & Blackwell, 1989), 158-168

¹⁰ J. Habermas, *Zur Logik der Sozialwissenschaften (On the Logic of the Social Sciences)*, tr. S. W. Nicholse, & J. A. Stark (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 148

¹¹ Even when Wittgenstein related language to the form of life in order to attain meaning through the application of the rules of grammar he 'remained,' according to Habermas, 'positivistic enough to think of this training process as the production of a fixed pattern, as though socialized individuals were wholly subsumed under their language and activities. The language game congeals in his hands into an opaque oneness.' See Habermas (1998), 148-9

¹² I have followed Levinson's method with different examples to briefly show the pragmatic significance of the deictic expression in the ordinary language. For the details in this regard see Levinson (1994), pp.54-96

¹³ In arguing out regarding the semantic presupposition I have followed the same line of argument as Strawson explores in his theory but with different examples. See P. F. Strawson, *Introduction to Logical Theory* (London: Methuen, 1952), 174-5

¹⁴ Levinson (1994), 177

¹⁵ Ibid., 186

¹⁶ Levinson (1994), 191

¹⁷ Ibid., 205

¹⁸ Ibid., 217

¹⁹ Levinson, giving that example, refers to the specific Hanafite circumstantial approval of the procedure of divorce rather than the Islamic procedure that has an entirely different interpretation. See *Ibid.*, 229-230

²⁰ Qur'ān syas: *Al-tallāqu marratāni fa imsāk^{un} bi'l-ma'rūfⁱⁿ aw tasrīh^{un} bi ihsān wa lā yaḥillu lakum an tākhudhū mim mā' ātaytumūhunna shay'^{an}* (The divorce is twice. Then [after the second occasion you may ask your wife] to stay with you as per the convention or they may be allowed to leave with benevolence. You are not supposed [after having divorced them] to take from them back whatever you had already given them [as gifts]) (*Baqarah* 2:229). Also see A. A. Iṣlāḥī, *Tadabbur-e-Qur'ān*, 9 Vols. (Lahore: Fārān Foundation, 1996), Vol. I, 534-535

²¹ For the details concerning the various felicity conditions and the respective infelicities see J. L. Austin, *Philosophical Papers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 220-239. Also see Levinson (1994), 226-235

²² Levinson counts several contributions made by the concept of implicature including (i) its standing as something 'paradigmatic' source of pragmatic interpretation, (ii) its being an additional 'explicit account' of 'what is actually 'said'', (iii) its effect on the semantic content, (iv) its being essential in proper account of language, and (v) its explanatory power to deal with various problems of the language use. See Levinson (1994), 97-100

²³ Robert C. Stalnaker attempts to define semantic as 'the study of propositions' while comparing it with pragmatics being 'the study of linguistic acts and the contexts in which they are performed.' But throughout his argument he tries to consolidate the idea of the semantics-pragmatics complementarity, as for him: "...One of the jobs of natural language is to express propositions, and it is a semantical problem to specify the rules for matching up sentences of a natural language with the propositions that they express. In most cases, however, the rules will not match sentences directly with propositions, but will match sentences with propositions relative to features of the context in which the sentence is used. These contextual features are a part of the subject matter of pragmatics...See R. C. Stalnaker, "Pragmatics," in D. Davidson & G. Harman (Eds.), *Semantics of Natural Language* (2nd ed., Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1972), 380-97

²⁴ Levinson (1994), 101-102

²⁵ W. Schneider, (), *Ausdruckswerte der Deutschen Sprache: Eine Stilkunde* (Leipzig, 1931), 21. The English version of the summarized form of this citation is given in R. Wellek, & A. Warren, *Theory of Literature*, (3rd ed., London: Jonathan Cape, 1966), 179

²⁶ Wilhelm Dilthey's hermeneutical approach to stylistics is to give rise to the concept of style 'as the inner form that individuates a work of art. Style or inner form develops from the content of the work and is a pervasive structure that provides unity even when the outer form of the work is relatively complex. Whereas strict formal unity demands a coherence of composition, stylistic unity may encompass conflicting traits.' See R. A. Makkreel, *Dilthey: Philosopher of the Human Studies* (New Jersey:

Princeton University Press, 1975), 393

²⁷ S. Abū 'l-A'lā Mawdūdī, *Tehrīk-e-Āzādī-e-Hind aur Musalmān*, ed. K. Ahmad (Lahore: Islamic Publications Limited, 1968), 118. Khurshid Ahmad has also compiled all of the major political writings of Mawdūdī's in one volume in which also this debate can be found. See S. Abū 'l-A'lā Mawdūdī, *Islāmī Riyāsat*, ed. K. Ahmad, (Lahore: Islamic Publications Limited, 1968), 46

²⁸ S. Abu 'l-A'la Mawdudi, *Tafhim al-Qur'an*. 6 Vols. (Lahore: Maktabah-e-Insānīyyat, 1968), Vol. I, 90-92

²⁹ S. Abū 'l-A'lā Mawdūdī, *Qur'an kī Chār Bunyādī Iṣṭilāḥayn* (Lahore: Islamic Publications Limited, 2000), 9

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 10-13

³¹ *Ibid.*, 36-7

³² Mawdūdī has adopted the same line of argument in his interpretation of the second term *rabb* taking it equal in meaning to the term *ilāh*. The same semantic and pragmatic problems of meaning as we have discussed in the case of *ilāh* are applicable to *rabb*. The discussion concerning the third term, '*ibādat* is beyond the scope of this study. I, therefore, have skipped these two terms to go further through our argument.

³³ *Chār Bunyādī Iṣṭilāḥayn*, p. 125

³⁴ I have rendered into English Mawdudi's Urdu translation of the verses though I do not agree with most of his Urdu rendering of the verses.

³⁵ *Islāmī Riyāsat*, 63

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 70

Iḥbāṭ and Takfīr: two theological concepts in Islamic literature

Maryam Kianifarid
Azad University, Tehran

Abstract

Iḥbāṭ and *takfīr* are two theological concepts widely debated during the formative and classical periods. Theologians have expressed their opinions according to their schools of thought, as well as personal premises and beliefs. The word *iḥbāṭ* comes from the root *ḥ-b-ṭ* and means to annul or void an action. Its terminological definition in theology is to have one's good deeds annulled due to one's sins. The word *takfīr* comes from the root *k-f-r* and means to cover something, and its terminological definition is the opposite of *iḥbāṭ* and means to have one's sins covered, meaning forgiven, due to their good deeds.

In this article we will begin by examining the standard and terminological definitions of these two words, and the causes of *iḥbāṭ* and *takfīr* as stated in the Qur'ān and Shi'a tradition literature. We begin with these two sources due to the fact that *takfīr* and *iḥbāṭ*, similar to other theological debates, have their roots in these religious texts. Then we shall discuss the minor and major sins that pertain to *takfīr* and *iḥbāṭ*, as well as the relevant debates on this topic, especially the debates between the two mu'tazilī theologians, Jabbai and Abu Hashim. After which we discuss the meaning of *mawāzana* as well as the views and arguments of those who reject the concept of *iḥbāṭ*.

Keywords: *iḥbāṭ*, *takfīr*, *mawāzana*, major sins, minor sins

Introduction

The topic of *iḥbāṭ* and *takfīr* is a debated subject amongst theologians. In the Qur'ān there are verses which state that certain bad deeds will annul one's good deeds, and certain good deeds will stifle the consequences of one's bad deeds.

The majority of the debate centers around *iḥbāṭ* and there are not many conflicting views about *takfīr*. The reason being that on the issue of *takfīr*, most scholars believe that the forgiveness of sins is up to God, and since God is merciful and forgiving and has promised to forgive sins, there are no rational or scriptural arguments against this view. Certain deeds have been specifically mentioned in the Qur'ān as deeds that will cover one's sins, such as belief in the existence of God, charity given in private, piety, staying away from major sins, doing deeds ordained by God, and seeking forgiveness. There is no disagreement amongst scholars as to whether or not God will stay true to his promise. The disagreement between the Mu'tazalī versus the Shi'a and 'Ash'ari scholars centers around God's threat of punishment. The Mu'tazalī's argue that it is obligatory for God to keep his promise, and that God has promised the sinners that they will be punished and it would be obligatory to keep this promise. On the other hand, the Mu'tazalī and Shi'a scholars say that it is not obligatory.

In this study after we examine the terminological definition of *iḥbāṭ* and *takfīr* as well as their causes as defined by the Qur'ān and tradition literature, we will examine the arguments presented by those who are for and against *iḥbāṭ*.

Definition

We shall explain both the Qur'ānic and theological definitions. The word *iḥbāṭ* is derived from the root *ḥ-b-ṭ* which means to void or obliterate something. It's theological definition is to annul one's good deeds due to one's bad deeds. *Takfīr* is the opposite of *iḥbāṭ*. *Takfīr* is derived from the root *k-f-r* which means to cover and conceal. It's

terminological definition is the annulment of bad deeds due to the performance of good deeds. The word *kafārah* is also derived from this root and means to annul the effects of sins.

Terminological Definition

Based upon the commentary found in the exegeses on the verses which discuss *iḥbāṭ* and *takfīr* it is possible to state that the meaning of *iḥbāṭ* is the annulment of the rewards of one's good deeds. The reasoning is that the right to a reward is conditional to the fact that it is not followed by any acts of infidelity, or a major sin. If these conditions are not met, it shows that one did not deserve the reward in the first place. Similarly, *ḥabṭ* is considered to be the annulment of a deed such that it seems as if the deed was never performed. The reason is that the deed which was annulled was a deed that was done against the ordainment of God, and it can be said that such a deed is not deserving of a reward (Ṭabarsī, ad Q 3:22; ʿ:88; ʿ: 5; Ṭūsī, ad loc). Shaykh Ṭūsī (ad Q 3:ʿʿ) states that if the reward of a deed has been clearly stated than it will never be annulled, because there is no contradiction between the entitlement to a reward and the entitlement to a punishment. The Sunni exegetes have interpreted *ḥabṭ* as the annulment and obliteration of one's reward or compensation for one's deed (ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, ad Q 2:217, 6:88, 9: 69, 18: 15; al-Zamakhsharī, 5: 53)

Also according to the exegesis the *takfīr* of one's sin means to have one's sin covered (al-Zamakhshari, ad Q 47: 2; al-Ṭabarsī, ad Q 5: 65), to have one's sins erased (Maqātil ibn Sulaymān, ad Q3:195, 5: 65), the pardoning of punishments (al-Ṭūsī, ad Q 3:195) the forgiveness and pardoning of previous sins (Ṭūsī, ad Q 5: 12), giving rewards to one who had his sins pardoned (al-Ṭabarsī, ad loc), and the forgiveness of his sins (Magātil ibn Sulaymān, ad Q66:8).

The Causes of *Iḥbāṭ*

The word *iḥbāṭ* which originates from the Qur'ān and is derived from the root *ḥ-b-ṭ* is used 16 times in the Qur'ān including its derivatives.

In all instances it used to mean annulment. According to the Qur'ān the following acts lead to the annulment of one's good deeds: turning away from faith (2: 217; 5: 5), disbelief towards God's signs and his prophets (3: 21-22, 7: 147, 18: 105); polytheism (6: 88; 9: 17; 39: 65); hypocrisy and secret alliances with the enemies of Islam (5: 51-53); love of this mundane world and to be engrossed in it (9: 69; 11:15-16); to put fear in the hearts of believers about war and *jihad* (33: 17-18); to loathe God's commandments (47: 9); to be after God's wrath (47: 32), and it has also been mentioned in the second verse of chapter *al-Hujjarāt* that the deeds of those who raise their voice above the Prophet's voice will be annulled (49: 2). The twenty-third verse in *al-Furqān* states that those who perform the obligatory deeds but fail to abstain from forbidden acts will also have their deeds annulled. Verse 18 of chapter *Ibrāhīm* equates the deeds of disbelievers to ashes that disperse in a strong wind. The tradition literature (*hadīth*) states other deeds that will lead to annulment, such as being impatient when it comes to tribulations (*Naḥḍj al-Balāghah, al-hikmah* 136; Kulaynī, 3: 224); not performing one's obligatory prayers (al-Haythamī, 1:295), or not performing the midday 'Asr prayer (ibn Ḥanbal, 5:350; ibn Mādja 1: 227), harassing the Prophet (al-Nisā'ī, *Khasā'is*, 120); not paying one's rent (Ibn Bābawayh, hadīth #1417, 513); slander (Ibn Bābawayh, hadīth 1368, 285); giving a ruling based on a doubt or a guess (al-Kulaynī, 2: 400); excessive desire (ibn Faḥḍ al-Ḥilī, 249; Majlisi 69: 199, 74:182); trampling the rights of others (Muttagī al-Hindī 4: 237); defaming a believer to a Sultan (Ibn Bābawayh, hadīth #1368, 285; Mutaqī al-Hindī 3:486); jealousy (al-Kulanī 2:306; ibn Dawūd 2:457), arrogance (al-'Aynī, 11:77; Mutagī al-Hindī 3:514), to think bad about someone (Qadhī Num'mān al-Maghribī 2:352), backbiting (*ibid*), or bragging (Ibn Bābawayh hadith #1417, 582-583). Another point that is mentioned in the tradition literature is that by performing the corporal punishment (*ḥad*), it suffices as *kafareh* to cover one's evil deeds, and the sins committed do not annul one's good deeds. (Haythamī, 6:365; Mutagī al-Hindī 5:443).

The Causes of *Takfīr*

Takfīr means to cover one's sins, and has been used 14 times in the Qur'ān. According to the Qur'ān the following deeds will cover one's bad deeds: faith in God (3: 193; 39:35; *al-Fatḥ*), piety (5: 65; 8:29; 65: 5), performing good deeds (29: 7; 47: 2; 64:9), giving charity in private (2: 271), immigrating or going to war in the path of God (3: 195), abstaining from major sins (*al-Nisā'*: 31), performing the obligatory prayers, paying alms (*zakāt*), faith in as well as aiding the messengers of God, giving no-interest loans (5: 12), and repentance (66: 8; 25: 359). In addition to the Qur'ān the tradition literature also emphasis the fact that repentance will also lead to *takfīr*. Also, according to statements made by Prophet Muḥammad the doors of heaven will be open to anyone who performs the daily prayers, fasts in the month of Ramadan and abstains from performing the major sins (Ḥākim Nayshaburī, 1:200; al-Bayhaḡī, 10: 187). Imam 'Alī considers those worthy of *takfīr* as being those who perform the daily prayers, pay the *zakāt* and safeguard their tongues (Kulyanī, 8:288-289).

Major and Minor Sins

According to verse 31 of chapter *al-Nisā'* if one abstains from the major sins then God will forgive and cover up his minor sins. Thus it is important to identify the major sins, such that abstaining from them will lead to the forgiveness of minor sins. Some have described major sins as being any sin that God has forbidden us from performing. (al-Nawawī, 2:84; al-Haythamī 1:103). It has also been said that any sin in comparison to the glory of God is a major sin and that only in comparison to each other can minor sins be differentiated from major sins (al-Nawawī, 2:84-85; Ibn Ḥajar, 10:343). Qāḍī 'Abd al-Djabbār, though he believes that only prophets can discern major sins from minor sins, states that if the number of obligatory deeds one has performed is greater than the sin, the sin is a minor sin (1408, 794; *ibid*, 1385, 14:393-394). Nonetheless, many Mu'tazlīs believe that adding up smaller sins together does not equal a major sin. According to Jubbā'ī, the minor sins of those who have performed a major sin will be

forgiven, but it is possible that their minor sins combined will equal a major sin. In a tradition from Imam al-Ridhā the major sins whose abstinence will lead to the forgiveness of smaller sins are sins which God has threatened with punishment (al-Ṣadūq, 1368, 130). A few narrations (Ḥākīm al-Nayshabūrī, 1:59; Haythamī, 7:4-3) state that the major sins described in verse 31 in chapter *al-Nisā'* are the sins which been detailed from the first till the thirtieth verse in this chapter. According to Imam al-Sadiq, anyone who abstains from the major sins, God will forgive his minor sins. He considers faith as performing the major obligatory deeds and abstaining from the major sins, thus as long as one is performing the obligatory deeds and has abstained from major sins he is still within the bounds of faith, and according to verse 31 in chapter *al-Nisā'* God has forgiven his sins (*takfīr*) (ibn Shu'bah al-Ḥaranī, 329). Yet while *takfīr* is for minor sins, God has ordained *shafā'ah* (intercession) for a believer who has committed a major sin. In the Shi'a tradition literature it is narrated that one of the specifics of the followers of Imam 'Alī is that their minor sins will be transformed to good deeds, and this is similar to the concept of *takfīr* (Kulaynī, 1:444).

Mu'tazalī theologians on the issue of *iḥbāt* and *takfīr* have also detailed the differences between the major and minor sins. They consider the sin that leads to *iḥbāt* as a major sin and a major sin is a sin where the punishment of the agent is greater than his reward. A minor sin is a sin where the reward of the agent is greater than its punishment. Jubba'ī and Abū Hāshim differ as to whether the identification of sins is a rational process or only possible through the traditional sources. According to Jubba'ī, one can differentiate between minor and major sins only through the Qur'ān and tradition literature, and rationally all sins are major sins (Qāḍī 'Abd al-Djabbār, 1408, 632-634). According to Abū Hāshim it is probable to differentiate between minor and major sins through rational reasoning to a certain degree (*ibid*, 624). The Mu'tazala, however, don't believe that it is permissible for God to disclose which sins are the minor sins, for this would be promoting immorality and it is not permissible for God to promote immorality (*ibid*, 635).

The 'Asha'rī theologians believe that all sins are major sins, for God is too esteemed for any one to disobey his command. Nonetheless, there are differing opinions as to what is and what is not a major sin (Juwaynī, 391).

The Difference Between *Iḥbāṭ* and *Muwāzinah*

Take as an example a certain individual that has performed a good that deserves 10 pieces of reward, but also has committed a sin which deserves 20 pieces of punishment. According to Abu 'Alī all his good deeds will be annulled and 20 pieces of punishment will be applied. Abū Hāshim considers such a decision by God to be morally wrong and instead presents the concept of *Muwāzinah*. He argues that divine justice dictates that the 10 pieces of reward should cancel out 10 pieces of punishment and the individual should be punished for only the remaining 10 pieces. Qāḍī 'Abd al-Djabbār al-Mu'tazalī (1408, 629-631) agrees with Abū Hāshim and argues that in this instance the individual has obeyed God in the manner that was ordained. In other words, if he had not committed any sins he would be entitled to the reward. Thus, it is mandatory for someone who has performed an obligatory deed to be rewarded, even if he has committed sins. Verse seven in chapter *al-Zilzāl* emphasises this same argument and states that if one does even speck's worth of a good deed, he will be given its reward.

The Arguments Against *Iḥbāṭ*

The Shi'a and 'Ashari theologians argue against the concept of *iḥbāṭ*. They have presented arguments from the Qur'ān such as "We do not fail to reward those who do good" (12: 56, 18: 30) "Whoever has done an atom's weight of good will see it" (99: 7) "Whoever has done a good deed will have it ten times to his credit, but whoever has done a bad deed will be repaid only with its equivalent" (6 : 160), and verses that state good deeds will annul bad deeds (11: 114)

The rational arguments they have presented are as such: *Iḥbāṭ* is only

relevant when there is a conflict between two opposing things, while there is no conflict between punishment and reward. Because it is possible for a reward and a punishment to coexist. For example, it is possible for an individual to both give alms and perform a good deed, and with the other hand slap an orphan and have committed a sin. Yet, if they were contradictory, they could not appear at the same place at the same time. In addition, reward and punishment are two such entities, and there is no conflict amongst entities that don't have a physical existence. Moreover, since obeying and disobeying God, and rewards and punishments are all from the same class, it is not possible for them to be in conflict. Another argument about the entitlement to reward and the entitlement to punishment is that there is only one essence for entitlement and it is not possible for their conflict to be essential (*dhatī*). Even if we were to assume the conflict to be on the consequents (*lawāzim*), it is still not acceptable. Consequents in one essence do not take different forms. Thus if we were to assume that there is a conflict, the only option left is to state the conflict is in the accidental states (*'awāridh*), and that is resolvable. In addition, to say that many good deeds will be annulled because of one sin is not rational. Also there is no reason that the second deed should cause the first deed to become *ḥabṭ* or lead to the Muwāzinah of the reward and punishment as it has no precedence to having the reverse occur. Moreover, *iḥbāṭ* is in conflict with God's promise in verse 7 of chapter *al-Zilzāl* and would necessitate injustice. The Shi'a scholars, unlike the Mu'tazila, believe that because God has promised a reward, and he must fulfill his promise. On the other hand, if he has threatened a punishment then it is his decision to act on it or not. If he acts on his threat then it is according to his divine justice, but if he were to forgive then he has forgiven based on his own greatness. Another argument against *iḥbāṭ* is that as long as a complete cause (*al-'illah al-tām*) exists the effect of that cause also exists. The individual had faith before the sin and faith is a complete cause which necessitates a reward. Thus, while faith exists after the sin, then it also necessitates its effect which is the reward. Both the Shi'a and the Ashari's state the final destination of a believer is in heaven. The believer, if he has not repented for his deeds, will first be punished for his deeds, and then will enter heaven. The verses that state a sinner will be in hell for eternity, are interpreted to mean simply

a very long time.

An Analysis of the Two Views

It is clear that according to the Qur'ān and tradition literature that one will be rewarded for faith and good deeds. On the other hand, apostates, infidels and believers that commit various types of sins will be exempt from those rewards. A question arises here as to whether or not infidelity or committing sins can annul fixed rewards. Is there even such a thing as a fixed reward so that it can be annulled by another deed? To answer these questions we must first clarify the two views about the rewards for faith and good deeds. The first view, which is in essence the view of those who don't believe in *iḥbāṭ*, is that the entitlement to rewards for faith and good deeds is conditional to the fact that one does not leave the faith nor commit major sins. Such that if this condition is not met and the individual apostatizes or commits a major sin it reveals that he was not deserving of the reward from the beginning. According to this view the word *iḥbāṭ* is used metaphorically, the reason being that preparations were done to give the reward but apostasy or a major sin stopped it. In other words there was no complete cause thus the effect (the reward) was not realized.

The second view, the view of those in favor of *iḥbāṭ*, is that a faithful individual who has faith deserves a reward for his faith and good deeds from the beginning. Yet, the evil deeds which he committed, including more than just apostasy and major sins, burned the rewards of faith and good deeds. In this context *iḥbāṭ* is used literally and in effect it annuls another deed. In other words, according to this view there was a complete cause and the rewards were recorded in the persons book of deeds. It was his later actions, however, which caused his rewards to annulled.

Thus, between the literal meaning of the verses of the Qur'ān which point towards *iḥbāṭ*, and the rational arguments and tradition literature against it, it is possible to say that the verses that seem to detail *iḥbāṭ* are not to be interpreted in the sense that rewards will be annulled.

Rather, they should be understood in the sense that these rewards were conditional to the fact that other bad deeds are not to be committed, and if they are committed then one is no longer entitled to a reward. The entitlement of the reward in the future is conditional to fact that no sin is committed.

Bibliography

- ‘Alī al-Muttaqī al-Hindi, *Kanz al-‘ummāl*, ed. Ḥayyānī and Saqqā, Beirut, 1409/1989
- ‘Alī B. Abī Ṭālib, *Naḥḍj al-balāghah*, ed. Ṣ. Ṣālih, Cairo, 1411/1991
- al-‘Aynī, *‘Umda al-qārī*, Beirut, 1988
- Abū Dā’ūd Sidjīstānī, *Sunan*, ed. Al-Liḥām, Dār al-Fikr, 1410/1990
- Aḥmad B. Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, Dār Sāder, Beirut, 1989
- Bayhaqī, *Sunan al-Kubrā*, Dār al-Fikr, Beirut, 1990
- al-Hākīm Nayshābūrī, *al-mustadrak ‘ala ‘l-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, ed. mar‘ashlī, Beirut
- Ibn Bābawayh, *Thawāb al-A‘māl*, ed. al-Kharsān, Qum, 1368
- Ibid, *Al-Amālī*, Qum 1417
- Ibn Djarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Djāmi‘ al-Bayān ‘an Ta‘wīl al-Qur‘ān*, Būlāq, 1322-1330
- Ibn Fahad al-Ḥillī, *‘Udda al-Ddā‘ī*, ed. Muwaḥḥidī Qumī, Qum, 1360
- Ibn Ḥadjar al-‘Asqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, Beirut, 1992
- Ibn mādja, *Sunan*, ed. ‘Abd al-Bāqī, Dār al-Fikr, 1991
- Ibn Shu‘bah al-Ḥaranī, *Tuḥaf al-Uqūl*, ed. al-Ghaffārī, Qum, 1404
- Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Djuwaynī, *Kitāb al-Irshād*, ed. M. A. Mūsā and ‘A. ‘A. Hamīdī, Cairo, 1950
- al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, ed. Ghaffārī, Beirut, 1401
- Madjlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, Beirut, 1983
- Muqātil B. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr*, ed. A. Farīd, Beirut, 1424/2003
- Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Beirut, 1407/1987
- al-Nisā‘ī, *Khaṣā‘iṣ Amīr al-mu‘minīn*, ed. al-Amīnī, Tehran, 1361
- Nur al-dīn al-Haythamī, *Madjma‘ al-zawā‘id*, Beirut, 1408/1988
- Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Djabbār, *Sharḥ al-Uṣūl al-khamsa*, ed. ‘A. ‘Uthmān, Maktaba wahaba, 1408/1988
- Ibid, *al-Mughnī fī abwāb al-tawḥīd wa ‘l-‘adl*
- Qāḍī Nu‘mān Maghribī, *Da‘ā‘im al-Islām*, ed. Fayḍī, Cairo, 1987
- al-Ṣaffār al-Ḷumi, *Baṣā‘ir al-daradjāt*, ed. Kūča Bāghī, Thehran, 1362/1404
- al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, Beirut, 1998
- al-Ṭabarsī, *Madjma‘ al-bayān*, ed. Rasūlī Maḥallāti and Yazdī Ṭabāṭabāyī, Beirut, 1408/1988
- al-Ṭūsī, *al-Tibyān*, ed. Qaṣīr al-‘Amilī, Beirut, 1997
- al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf ‘an ḥaqā‘iq al-tanzīl*, Beirut, 1366/1947

Transliteration Table

Arabic Characters

Consonants

ء	ب	ت	ث	ج	ح	خ	د	ذ	ر	ز	س	ش	ص	ض
'	b	t	th	j	ḥ	kh	d	dh	r	z	s	sh	ṣ	ḍ

ط	ظ	ع	غ	ف	ق	ك	ل	م	ن	ه	و	ي	ة	ال
ṭ	ẓ	'	gh	f	q	k	l	m	n	h	w	y	ah;at	al ; 'l

Long Vowels

اى	و	ي
ā	ū	ī

Short Vowels

َ	ُ	ِ
a	u	i

Diphtongs

وَ	يَ	يَ	وُ
aw	ai	iy (final form ī)	uww (final form ū)

Persian Letters

پ	چ	ژ	گ
p	ch	zh	g

Instructions for Contributors

Submissions

Submitted articles should not be previously published or being considered for publications elsewhere. Authors of the accepted articles will be asked to sign a copyright form. Authors are responsible for obtaining the permission to use any material for which they do not possess the copyright. They would also be responsible for including the appropriate acknowledgements in the articles.

Articles

All articles should be sent to the Editor, Dr S. G. Safavi, Journal of Transcendent Philosophy, 121 Royal Langford, 2 Greville Road, London NW6 5HT, UK
E-mail: philosophy@iranianstudies.org
Fax: (+44) 020 7209 4727

Two copies of the typescript of the articles along with a copy on floppy disk (Microsoft Word) should be submitted. Articles (including main text, notes, tables, etc.) should not exceed 40 double-spaced A4 pages. Text must be in legible, 12-point font and clear English. The title of the article and author's full name should be typed at the top of the first page followed by a brief abstract. The institutional affiliation, postal and e-mail addresses as well as fax and telephone numbers of the author should be submitted in an attached covering letter.

Book Reviews

Books for review and completed reviews should be sent to the Book Review Editor, Dr Sajjad H. Rizvi, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter, Stocker Road, Exeter EX4 4ND, ,United Kingdom, E-mail : s.h.rizvi@ex.ac.uk

Two copies of the typescript of reviews along with a copy on floppy disk (Microsoft Word) should be submitted. Reviews should not exceed 6 double-spaced A4 pages. The reviewed author's full name, book title and other specifications (place of publication, publisher, date and number of pages) as well as the reviewer's full name and affiliation should be typed at the top of the first page.

Endnotes

Endnotes should be typed double-spaced at the end of the article rather than at the bottom of each page and numbered in a single sequence. Acknowledgements should be the last number in the article and placed in the endnotes accordingly. Endnotes are for the citation of the sources.