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Rūmī's Path of Realization

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Abstract

One of the key terms employed in defining the nature of the Islamic intellectual tradition is *taḥqīq*, "realization" or "verification". Literally, the word means to search out the *ḥaqq* of things, which is their truth, rightness, appropriateness, and at the same time, the word implies the correct and proper human response to this *ḥaqq*. The nature of *taḥqīq* is suggested by the prophetic prayer that Rumi often recites, "Our Lord, show us things as they are."

taḥqīq is often discussed as a methodology by the Muslim philosophers and theologians, and among Sufis, Ibn Arabi and his followers considered it the basic goal of human becoming. It is always associated with proper discernment and correct use of intelligence. As for Rumi, he is often represented as denigrating intellect and elevating love, but it needs to be remembered that the intellect he denigrates is the one-eyed rational mind, not the eye that sees with *taḥqīq*. In fact, *taḥqīq* is a necessary attribute of the true lover.

In the Mathnawī Rūmī tells the story of a traveler who put up for the night at a Sufi lodge, entrusting his donkey to the gatekeeper. The other Sufis staying there were not an especially scrupulous lot. They took the man's donkey, sold it, and proceeded to entertain him with a lavish feast. Soon the man was singing and dancing to the tune of *khar biraft u khar biraft u khar biraft*—"The donkey's gone, the

donkey's gone, the donkey's gone!" Only in the morning, once everyone else had left, did he discover the meaning of the song.

In the story, the donkey represents a human lifetime, or the embodiment that allows for the unfolding of a human soul. Using the same sort of imagery, Rūmī frequently speaks of Jesus and his ass—the spirit and the body. Without the ass, Jesus cannot ride to Jerusalem, which is to say that without the body, the spirit cannot reach its true beloved. In this particular story, the song that the traveler picks up from the dervishes represents the knowledge and information that we gain without understanding its significance. Morning stands for death, when the human spirit wakes up to reality.

Rūmī uses the story to illustrate the evil consequences that may follow upon *taqlīd*, that is, "imitation" or "following authority." If we simply imitate others in our knowledge and fall short of realizing the truth and reality of what we know, we will lose sight of our destination and be prevented from reaching our goal. In Rūmī's tale, once the traveler wakes up and recognizes his own stupidity, he cries out,

> Imitating them has given me to the wind—
> two hundred curses on that imitation! (II 563)[1]

If we look only at the moral of the tale, the words sound strangely familiar. We have been hearing this lament—"two hundred curses on that imitation"— from Orientalists and Muslim reformers for over a century. It might seem that Rūmī, seven hundred years ago, had already perceived that *taqlīd* was leading the Islamic community into decadence and disaster. It also might seem that by criticizing *taqlīd*, he is recommending the revival of *ijtihād*, that is, the exercise of independent judgment in matters of the *Shariah*. However, these would be premature conclusions. In fact, Rūmī is talking about something quite different.

In the Islamic sciences, *taqlīd* is discussed in two contexts. The first is jurisprudence, where it is contrasted with *ijtihād*. A full-fledged *mujtahid* does not follow the opinion of anyone else in the *Shariah*, because he or she is able to derive the law directly from the Koran and the *Hadith*. The vast majority of Muslims, however, do not have sufficient knowledge and training to be *mujtahids*, so they must be

"imitators" (*muqallid*). In other words, they must accept the legal rulings of those who possess the proper qualifications.

During the early centuries of Islam, Muslims developed the legal implications of the Koran and the *Hadith* gradually, but eventually these became quite complex. Even in the early period, becoming a respected expert in the *Shariah* demanded dedicating one's life to the study of the Koran, the *Sunnah*, and the opinions of the Companions and the Followers. Eventually, among Sunnis, it was largely accepted that the "gate of *ijtihād*" had been closed, because it had become too difficult to achieve the proper qualifications to be a real *mujtahid*. At best, scholars could issue *fatwas* in new situations. In modern times, it has often been have claimed that the gate of *ijtihād* must be reopened so that Islam can enter into the modern world.

The second context in which *taqlīd* has been discussed is the intellectual tradition, especially philosophy and Sufism. Here imitation is contrasted not with *ijtihād* but with *taḥqīq*, a word that can be translated as "verification" or "realization." Its basic meaning is to search out the *ḥaqq* of things, that is, their truth and reality. When Rūmī speaks of *taqlīd*, it is always in the context of *taḥqīq*, not *ijtihād* in the technical sense.[2]

Ijtihād and *taḥqīq* pertain to two different realms of religious concern—practice (islām) and faith (*īmān*), or transmission (*naql*) and intellection (*'aql*). The jurists occupied themselves with defining right activity, but the philosophers and Sufis focused on right knowledge of things. The former kept themselves busy with the visible realm of activity, but the latter were more concerned with the invisible realm of understanding.

The Koran sums up the objects of faith with one word—*ghayb*, the unseen, the invisible, the absent (cf. 2:3). It was the objects of faith that Sufis and philosophers investigated in order to achieve *taḥqīq*. In the typical list, these objects are God, the angels, the scriptures, the prophets, the Last Day, and divine providence. They are summed up as the "three roots" of faith, i.e., *Tawḥīd*, prophecy, and the Return to God.

When Sufis and philosophers offered the cognitive results of *taḥqīq*, they spoke of various forms of knowledge that might be classified today as metaphysics, cosmology, and spiritual psychology.

These sciences were central to Islamic "intellectual" knowledge (as opposed to "transmitted" knowledge), and they are precisely the sciences that flesh out the meaning of the *ghayb*. Without understanding the unseen objects of one's faith, one is believing in empty words. Remember here that Shi'ites tell us explicitly that *taqlīd* in matters of faith is forbidden. One must have faith in God and his prophets not on the basis of hearsay, but on the basis of understanding the truth and reality of *Tawhīd* and prophecy.

Knowledge achieved through *ijtihād* explicates the legal implications of the Koran, the *Sunnah*, and the opinions of the forebears. Knowledge achieved through *tahqīq* uncovers the reality of the objects of faith. Indeed, all the objects of faith pertain precisely to the realm of "realities," *haqāiq*. Like *tahqīq*, this word (the plural of *haqīqa*) derives from the same root as *haqq*. A reality is something that is "worthy" (*haqīq*) to be and that is really and actually found in some realm of existence. In the technical language of philosophy, the realities are also called the "quiddities" (*māhiyyāt*), and, in the Sufism of Ibn Arabī, the "fixed entities" (*ayān thābita*). If the realities pertain to the realm of the "unseen," it is because our sensory faculties cannot perceive them, even if they can be perceived by the intellect, or the heart, or the eye of faith.

Everything that exists in the visible and invisible realms is some sort of reality or, depending on definitions, manifests a reality. There are levels of existence in which realities appear in different modes, levels that are very much at issue in the intellectual tradition. It is precisely these that are investigated with the help of concepts like the "Five Divine Presences" of the Sufis or the "gradation of existence" (*tashkīk al-wujūd*) of Mullā Ṣadrā. An important part of *tahqīq* is discerning the specific realm of existence to which any given reality belongs.

Metaphysics, cosmology, and spiritual psychology are all concerned with discovering and explicating the realities and the realms in which they exercise influence. It is well known that the Muslim philosophers, in contrast to specialists in transmitted knowledge, frequently investigated realities in ways that we associate with modern science. If this is so, it is because the philosophers were interested in

understanding realities in every possible mode, not only in respect of their significance for transmitted knowledge. They looked upon the things that appear in the visible cosmos—the realm of "generation and corruption" (*kawn wa fasād*)—as embodied realities or as outward signs and marks of invisible realities. They understood that all realities derive from the First Reality and return back to it.

Everything that modern scientists study in their various disciplines pertains properly to "intellectual" knowledge, not "transmitted" knowledge. Scientists do not concern themselves with discovering the proper ways of acting as defined by transmitted knowledge. Rather, they are bent upon discovering "realities," even if they have no concept of the levels and degrees of reality as traditionally understood.

According to the Islamic division of knowledge, to say that modern science investigates realities means that it pertains to the realm of "faith," which deals with the nature of reality on whatever level. Just as the Muslim philosophers and many of the Sufis wanted to understand the realities and their degrees—that is, they wanted to understand the very reality of God himself and all the implications of his reality for the universe—so also modern scientists are trying to grasp the objects of "faith," which are precisely the realities that can properly be known by the "intellect." They are, apparently at least, engaging in *taḥqīq*, not *taqlīd*. The significance of this fact for the tradition that Rūmī represents will become clear after we look more carefully at the difference between *taḥqīq* and *taqlīd*.

The word *taḥqīq* does not really have an English equivalent. The semantic field of the word *ḥaqq* embraces the ideas of truth, reality, authenticity, rightness, appropriateness, validity, worthiness, justice, obligation, and incumbency. *Ḥaqq* is a Koranic divine name that is commonly used as a synonym for Allah in the Islamic languages. As a divine name, it means that God is the absolute *Ḥaqq* in all senses of the word, and that anything other than God can at best be called *ḥaqq* in a derivative and relative sense.

Taḥqīq is the second form of the verb derived from *ḥaqq*. It means to establish what is true, right, proper, and appropriate. In the context of the philosophical sciences, it can mean to search out the

reality of things, to investigate, verify, ascertain, and confirm. In Sufism, it had been discussed long before Rūmī in the sense of finding the *ḥaqq*—the real, the true, and the appropriate—and then acting in conformity with its demands. Ibn Arabī singles out *taḥqīq* as the goal of the seeker on the path to God. As I have argued elsewhere, if we must choose a label to place on Ibn Arabī —a label that he would be willing to accept and that would do justice to his concerns—we can do no better than *muḥaqqiq*, "realizer," a person who has achieved *taḥqīq*.

Ḥaqq, it needs to remembered, is not simply a name of God. The word is used over 250 times in the Koran, in many cases referring to created things. Several verses speak of the universe in terms of its conformity with *ḥaqq*, such as, "It is He who created the heavens and the earth with the *ḥaqq*" (6:73).

Ibn Arabī often highlights the intimate correlation between *ḥaqq* and God's creative activity. He likes to quote the verse, "Our Lord is He who gave everything its creation, then guided" (20:50). He interprets this to mean that the created nature given by God to each thing is its *ḥaqq*—that is, its reality, truth, appropriateness, and worthiness. In other words, everything has been created exactly as it should and must be. Moreover, God calls upon his servants to recognize the *ḥaqq* of things. Here Ibn Arabī quotes a well-known hadith. In a typical version, it reads as follows:

Your soul [*nafs*] has a *ḥaqq* against you, your Lord has a *ḥaqq* against you, your guest has a *ḥaqq* against you, and your spouse has a *ḥaqq* against you; so give to each that has a *ḥaqq* its *ḥaqq*.

In Ibn Arabī's reading, the commandment "give to each that has a *ḥaqq* its *ḥaqq*" is universal. It is not limited to the specific instances mentioned in the various versions of this hadith. The Koran tells us repeatedly that God created all things with *ḥaqq*. Hence, all things have *ḥaqq*s against us, conditional upon our coming into some sort of relationship with them.

In speaking about the *ḥaqq* of things, Ibn Arabī and others have in mind their objective truth and actual reality, but they also want to highlight the proper human response to that truth and reality. If we look at persons or things in terms of the role that God has given them in creation, each of them has a *ḥaqq*, a "right," an inherent claim on truth

and reality and an appropriate role to play in the economy of the universe. But, if we look at ourselves vis-à-vis those things, we see that they have *ḥaqqs* "upon us" (*alaynā*), which is to say that we have responsibilities toward them. God, who is the Truth and Reality that establishes all things, demands that we respond to each thing appropriately and rightly.

The Koran often uses the word *ḥaqq* as the opposite of *bāṭil*, which can be translated as unreal, false, null, vain, inappropriate, unworthy. Just as God has created all things in accordance with *ḥaqq*, so also, "We have not created heaven, earth, and what is between the two as *bāṭil*" (38:27). In other words, nothing in God's creation is unreal and false, nothing is unworthy and inappropriate. All things are just as they must be, according to God's standards of wisdom and justice.

Of course, there is one partial exception to the rule of universal appropriateness, and that is human beings. Although God has created human beings as they are, with all their faults and inadequacies, he has also given them free-will and responsibility, and he calls upon them to overcome their shortcomings. Inasmuch as they do not follow his call freely, they are not living up to their Lord's *ḥaqq* upon them. One of the several verses that refers to this point is 22:18: "Do you not see how to God prostrate themselves all who are in the heavens and all who are in the earth, the sun and the moon, the stars and the mountains, the trees and the beasts, and many of mankind?"

In other words, all things in the universe acknowledge God as *ḥaqq* and accept the responsibility of being what they are. By their very situation in the cosmos, they recognize God's truth and reality and give him what is due to him. Only human beings, because of their peculiar situation, are able to refuse to give God, people, and things their *ḥaqqs*.

In order to give everything its *ḥaqq*, people must discern the *ḥaqq*. They must not imagine that anything, in itself, is unreal, false, vain, and inappropriate. No creature is in fact *bāṭil*. It is human beings who see things wrongly and fail to discern their *ḥaqq*. The Koran tells us, "Do not garb the *ḥaqq* with the *bāṭil*, and do not conceal the *ḥaqq* knowingly" (2:42). In this way of looking at things, the difficulties, inanities, and falsities that people face in the natural world, society, and

themselves go back to their inability to see things as they are. The teachings of Rūmī and many other Sufis focus on overcoming this failure to discern the *ḥaqq*, which all too often derives from a willful and conscious refusal to acknowledge God's unity and its consequences.

Rūmī's teachings—as he often tells us—confirm the messages of the prophets, who address people in the measure of their understanding. "We have never sent a messenger except in the tongue of his people, so that he may explain to them" (Koran 14:4). By and large people are created in such a way that, at the beginning at least, they fail to see the *ḥaqq* of things and are not able to tell the difference between *ḥaqq* and *bāṭil*. The prophets provide discernment between true and false, right and wrong, *ḥaqq* and *bāṭil*. Everything in creation has a *ḥaqq*, but even Muhammad used to ask God to show him things as they are. The Koran itself tells him (and, by extension, everyone) to pray, "My Lord, increase me in knowledge" (20:114). It would be absurd to think that this means that people should ask God to increase their knowledge of physics, engineering, and sociology. What is at issue is knowledge of the way things really are and of the proper ways of responding to our own existential situation.

God sent the prophets, then, to provide discernment between *ḥaqq* and *bāṭil* and to show how to act in conformity with the *ḥaqq*. As the Koran puts it, "God desires to realize the *ḥaqq* [*yuḥiqqa'l-ḥaqq*] with His words" (8:7). The passage continues by saying that realizing the *ḥaqq* goes hand in hand with "nullifying the *bāṭil*" (*yubṭila'l-bāṭil*, 8:8). In other words, people must recognize that they understand things wrongly, and they also must strive to acquire a correct vision of the way things are.

Rectifying one's vision entails seeing things as transparent to the signs and activities of God. People must see the noumena that lie beyond the phenomena. They should strive to cross over from the outward to the inward, from the form to the meaning, from the surface to the interior, from the material object to the reality. This demands acknowledging that everything commonly perceived as *bāṭil* can only be understood properly when its *ḥaqq* is discerned. The very fact that we often recognize falsehood and wrongness proves that the *ḥaqq* is always there. As Rūmī puts it,

Nothing *bāṭil* appears without the *ḥaqq*—
> the fool takes the counterfeit because of the scent of gold.
If there were no genuine currency in the world
> who would be able to use the counterfeit?. . .
So, don't say that all these traps are *bāṭil* —
> *bāṭil* is the heart's trap because of the scent of *ḥaqq*. (II 2928-29, 33)

It perhaps needs to be pointed out that seeing things as they are is by no means the same as seeing all things as one. Sufis who aim at realization recognize that the vision of the oneness of all things can be a dangerous state of intoxication—even if it is better than the sobriety that fails to recognize that "Wherever you turn, there is the face of God" (Koran 2:115). Those Sufis and theologians who criticized the expression *waḥdat al-wujūd*, "the unity of being," were doing so because they understood it to signify a drunken vision that "All is He" (*hama ūst*) without the necessary discernment between *ḥaqq* and *bāṭil*. As Ibn Arabī often points out, one must see God's face in all things, but one must also know that every face of God is unique. God discloses his face in things with infinite diversity. It is foolhardy and dangerous to confuse the wrathful face of God with the merciful face, the misguiding face with the guiding face. Each of the infinite disclosures of God's face has a *ḥaqq*, and each demands a unique response from those who encounter it.

Rūmī frequently speaks the language of intoxication, but he also reminds us that this is not a mind-numbing intoxication that negates the real differences among things. It is in fact a liberating vision of the true situation of things, and it only appears as intoxication when compared with the "sobriety" of worldly people, a sobriety that we nowadays often call "common sense" or "objectivity." The sober are stuck in their "partial intellects" (*aql juzwī*) and unable to see with the light of God. In contrast, the drunk "are mounted like kings on the intellect of intellect" (III 2527).

In the traditional Islamic view as voiced by Rūmī, the prophets and the saints saw God's face in all things, but they always differentiated between *ḥaqq* and *bāṭil*, right and wrong, appropriate and inappropriate. They knew that everything has a *ḥaqq* and manifests the

Absolute *Ḥaqq*, but they also knew that most people are overcome by *bāṭil* and cannot see the *ḥaqq* of things. Their own role was to instruct people to perceive and act correctly. They saw discernment as an utter necessity for progress on the path to God. As Rūmī writes,

> He who says that all is *ḥaqq* is a fool,
>   and he who says that all is *bāṭil* is a wretch. (II 2942)

In sum, for the Sufi tradition, *taḥqīq* or realization was the process of discerning between true and the false, real and unreal, worthy and unworthy. It demanded understanding the actual situation of things and giving everything exactly what is due to it in keeping with God's wisdom, compassion, and justice. It required differentiating between *ḥaqq* and *bāṭil* and overcoming the *bāṭil*. It necessitated seeing creation just as it is—as the absolute *Ḥaqq* has created it, with everything in its proper and worthy place. It meant acting in the appropriate manner toward God, people, and things. It demanded recognizing the rights of all and fulfilling one's responsibilities toward God and others.

Rūmī uses the words *taḥqīq* (and its derivative *muḥaqqiq*) only a few dozen times. When he does, he employs it as the opposite of *taqlīd*, a word that he uses much more commonly. Simply put, *taqlīd* is to receive knowledge by hearsay. It is not to know the truth of something for oneself, but rather to accept something as true because someone says it is so. It is to believe what one hears from teachers, parents, friends, experts, authorities, books, and so on. It is to take one's knowledge from others and not from the source of knowledge, which is the intelligence within us, the light of God.

Taqlīd is not necessarily a bad thing. In the juridical sense, as the opposite of *ijtihād*, it is necessary and beneficial. In the intellectual sense, it is a preparatory step for *taḥqīq*. One accepts knowledge of things from God and the prophets on the basis of hearsay. However, a sound intelligence that has heard from the prophets that "There is no god but God" knows intuitively and with certainty that this is the truth of things. Here the tradition often speaks of *fiṭra*, the innate human capacity to discern the *ḥaqq*. But, as long as knowledge stays on the

level of rote learning, as long as the *fiṭra* does not awaken, one cannot see the *ḥaqq*.

It should be obvious that the goal of learning is not simply to gather information. Rather, it is to understand things correctly and to act appropriately. To do so one must understand all things relative to the Absolute *Ḥaqq*, the Infinite Reality that has created them. In other words, the message encapsulated in the concept of *taḥqīq* is that nothing can be understood truly, rightly, and properly if it is not understand in relation to God, and no activity can be correctly performed if one does not perceive the *ḥaqq* of the situation. Explaining how it is possible to achieve such *taḥqīq* is precisely what the Mathnawī is all about.

Knowing and doing by way of imitation is the common lot of mankind. One cannot escape from imitation except by harnessing it to proper ends, that is, by imitating the prophets and saints, who have been shown the way to the Real. If one does this correctly and sincerely, one may be shown the way to realization—which, in any case, has many degrees. What is certain is that true knowledge cannot be achieved without the help of a true teacher. Like other Sufis, Rūmī insists upon the necessity of guides on the path to the Real. In one passage, he refers to the guides as "companions." He says,

> You must receive so much influence from good companions
>   that you draw water from the ocean that is not
>   influenced.
> Know that the first influence to fall upon you is *taqlīd*.
>   When it becomes continuous, it turns into *taḥqīq*.
> Until you reach *taḥqīq*, don't break off from the companions—
>   don't break off from the shell until the drop becomes a
>   pearl! (V 566-68)

Realization in the full sense of the word is the knowledge and practice achieved by the prophets and the great saints. Imitation is the share of the rest of us, who think and act like children. As Rūmī says,

> How can children on the path have the thoughts of Men?
>   How can their imaginings be compared with true *taḥqīq*?
> Children think of nurses and milk,

> raisins and walnuts, crying and weeping.
> Imitators are like sick children,
> even if they offer subtle arguments and proofs. (V 1287-89)

Realization, then, is to know things as they really are and to act appropriately. Knowing things as they are is achieved by the innate capacity of the human spirit, a capacity that the tradition calls *aql*, "intellect" or "intelligence." Imitators speak of things they have heard about, but realizes speak of things that they know firsthand. Imitators seek for knowledge from outside, but realizes find it bubbling up in their own hearts. When Rūmī criticizes second-hand knowledge, he is telling us that everyone should try to find the seeing heart.

> You have eyes, look with your own eyes.
> Don't look with the eyes of an uninformed fool.
> You have ears, listen with your own ears.
> Why be in pawn to the ears of blockheads?
> Make vision [*naẓar*] your practice, without *taqlīd*—
> think in accordance with your own intellect. (VI 3342-44)

It might be asked why I am ignoring the primary role that Rūmī accords to love. First, there is no need to remind anyone of love's importance in Rūmī's teachings. And second, too many interpreters have taken advantage of the importance of love to belittle the role that Rūmī gives to discernment and intelligence. For him, love and realized knowledge go hand in hand. One cannot love God without knowing the *ḥaqq* of things, and one cannot see things as they are without loving God. It is the fire of love that transmutes imitative knowledge into realized knowledge. Love, as Rūmī says, "burns away everything except the everlasting Beloved" (V 588). Love allows one to see the face of the Absolute *Ḥaqq* in every relative *ḥaqq*.

> Love makes the wine of *taḥqīq* boil—
> love is the hidden saki of the truly sincere. (III 4742)

It is curious that most people who talk about *taqlīd* nowadays do so only in the context of the transmitted sciences. Hence, they talk as if the issue were simply blind imitation of the religious teachers of

the past. They focus on jurisprudence and the *Shariah*, as if all the failings of Islamic societies can be solved by adjusting the law to fit the modern world. Rūmī, in contrast, had no objections to the received *Shariah*, even if he did not have any great respect for the ordinary run of *ulama*.

However this may be, Rūmī was not talking about the "branches of the religion" (*furū al-dīn*)—the commands and prohibitions that pertain to ritual and society and that are addressed in questions of *ijtihād*. Rather, as Rūmī tells us right at the beginning of the Mathnawī, he was explaining what he calls "the roots of the roots of the roots of the religion" (*uṣūl uṣūl uṣūl al-dīn*)—right faith, right understanding, right intention, right love.

In order to understand things as they are and have correct faith in what one understands, one must grasp the nature of the absolute and infinite *Ḥaqq* and discern its ramifications. As pointed out earlier, most of the ramifications of faith in God pertain to the *ghayb*, the invisible realm, which embraces pure intelligence, angelic light, the afterworld, and the unfolding of the soul's potential. Moreover, given that all concepts and ideas have a real mode of existence in the mind, even deception, illusion, and falsehood pertain to the realm of realities, though the light of *ḥaqq* has become thoroughly obscured.

Rūmī, as we know, often ridicules the philosophers, but it would be a great mistake to assume that he was making a blanket criticism. His overall worldview is completely in keeping with that of the philosophical tradition. For example, he obviously agrees with the philosophers on the primacy of what they call *al-ḥaqq al-awwal*, "the First *Ḥaqq*." He also shares with them the concept of *mabda wa maād*, "the Origin and the Return," the fact that all of reality emerges from the Absolute *Ḥaqq*, descends to the level of the visible world, and then returns to God. His so-called "evolutionary" scheme of human development is found in several earlier philosophers, because it is simply an explanation of the stages that the soul traverses on the path of returning to God.

When Rūmī does criticize philosophers, he has in mind those who rejected the necessity of prophecy or who denied the existence of the *ghayb* and accepted as true and real only what they could perceive

with their own senses. This is obvious, for example, in his retelling of the story of the moaning pillar. This was a tree stump that the Prophet used as a pulpit. When he changed his pulpit, the pillar began to moan. In explaining the significance of the story, Rūmī criticizes those who deny miraculous events. In doing so, he refers to the "speech of all things," a phenomenon reported by many of the Sufis (and mentioned explicitly in Koran 41:21). He also alludes to the common Sufi teaching that rational understanding must be complemented by unveiling, which is to see with the eye of the heart.

> The philosopher is a denier in his thoughts and opinions—
>   tell him to bang his head against the wall.
> The speech of water, the speech of earth, the speech of clay—
>   the folk of the heart hear them all with their senses.
> The philosopher who denies the moaning pillar
>   is a stranger to the senses of the saints.
> He says that the ray of people's melancholia
>   brings many fantasies into their minds. . . .
> When the heart of someone in this world has doubt and twisting
>   he is a hidden philosopher. (I 3280-81, 85)

If this is Rūmī's definition of a philosopher—"someone whose heart has doubt [*shakk*] and twisting [*pīchānī*]"—then surely there are few scholars and scientists today who would fail to qualify for the title.

Another passage shows that Rūmī includes philosophy in the various clever sciences that people devise in order to investigate this world, manipulate physical objects, and divert themselves from searching for the *ḥaqq* of things.

> Weaving robes embroidered with gold,
>   finding pearls from the bottom of the sea,
> Doing the fine work of geometry and astronomy
> and of the sciences of medicine and philosophy—
> All these are connected with this world;
>   none shows the way to the top of the seventh heaven.
> All these sciences are for building the stable,
>   which supports the existence of cows and camels.
> In order to preserve the animal for a few days,
> these dizzy fools name their sciences "mysteries." (IV 1515-19)

  If Rūmī were here today, he would see that the predominant forms of modern knowledge are incredibly obsessed with the sciences and technologies of the stable and madly intoxicated with "mysteries" that are in fact abstruse methods for garmenting the *ḥaqq* with *bāṭil*. The first characteristic of all such knowledge is that it ignores the *ḥaqq* of what is investigated, explained, and utilized. The *ḥaqq* of things can only be determined by placing things in the total context of reality, and this means understanding them as they truly are, not as they are perceived in isolation from their roots in Being, or from their situation in the global context of the Origin and the Return.

  It needs to be remembered that achieving *taḥqīq* is by no means simply a cognitive activity. One must see things as they are, but one must also "give to each that has a *ḥaqq* its *ḥaqq*." All true and real knowledge of reality entails responsibility toward the Creator and his creatures. When the very act of knowing does not make moral and ethical claims upon the knower, this is proof that the knower has failed to grasp the truth of the situation and has garmented the *ḥaqq* with the *bāṭil*.

  The fact that "the sciences of the stable" focus on *bāṭil* does not mean that they are false, untrue, unreal, and vain in every respect. It means that they are *bāṭil* in respect of situating things in their total context and in respect of human responsibilities toward God, other creatures, and the soul. In other words, such knowledge is truncated and superficial. It is extremely useful, of course, for getting things done—the empirical validity of such sciences is not at issue. Nonetheless, the sciences and technologies of the stable cannot tell us if the things that get done should get done or if they should rather be left undone. Only by knowing the *ḥaqq* of something—what is rightfully due to it in the total context of the Real—can one answer the question of shoulds and oughts.

  In other words, from the standpoint of Rūmī and the tradition of *taḥqīq*, modern knowledge is inherently short-sighted. It is innately antagonistic to *taḥqīq*, which means that it is essentially conducive to *taqlīd*. I would go as far as to say that the most striking feature of modern science and learning is precisely that they are explicitly and proudly built upon *taqlīd*. They are cumulative by definition. There are

no realizers, because there can be no realizers when the *ḥaqq* of things is not addressed. Modern knowledge depends entirely on information and theories provided by earlier scientists and scholars. It is not considered remotely possible that one can find the true reality of things in the knowing self, as *taḥqīq* demands. For post-modern scholarship, which follows modern thought to its inevitable conclusions, the very suggestion that there may be something worthy of the name *ḥaqq* is absurd.

One of the ironies of the Islamic world today is that the word used for scientific "research" is often *taḥqīq*. For Rūmī, this is an utter inversion of language, because modern knowledge is based upon *taqlīd*, and its practitioners are imitators. The empirical knowledge that an individual scientist gains can only be based on the theories and experiments of earlier scientists. He may think he is verifying it and thereby verifying the findings of their predecessors, but his knowledge is built upon an initial misperception of the nature of things, the failure to grasp that phenomena can only be manifestations of the noumena that are known and determined by the Absolute *Ḥaqq*. There can be no going back to the very origin of knowledge and understanding—which is the intellect or heart that lies at the very root of the soul—because modern-day researchers seek for knowledge outside themselves. They have no possible access, as researchers, to the realm of the Real. They do not and cannot, as scholars and scientists, know the self that knows.

Taqlīd, then, is the primary characteristic of modern knowledge. Moreover, *taqlīd* has degrees, just as *taḥqīq* has degrees. A zoologist's *taqlīd* in his knowledge of fauna is less than that of a student reading a textbook, or of an engineer who learns from a television documentary. As for information drawn from the Internet, what can be said about "virtual" knowledge that is indistinguishable from illusion?

The point I want to make, then, is that once we look deeply into Rūmī's teachings and get beyond the sentimentalities that are too often presented in his name, we will see that he has a rather harsh message for modern man. He is saying that not only the general public, but also the experts, scientists, specialists, and scholars, who are supposed to know what they are talking about, are in fact happily singing the song, *khar biraft u khar biraft u khar biraft*. The donkeys of all of us have

been sold, and we are being entertained by the proceeds. We revel in our *taqlīd*, singing songs that we don't understand. We imagine that we know so much more than our benighted ancestors. We no longer grasp the significance of our own embodiment. We live in *bāil*. Not only do we fail to see the *aqq* of the world and our own souls, but we even deny that anything at all can have a *aqq*. We are satisfied with the information fed to us by schools, governments, and the media. We accept all our knowledge on the basis of hearsay, faith, and blind imitation. Our only attempt at *taqīq* is to prefer some sources over other sources (let's say, the The Guardian over the tabloids). We are completely unaware that we are *muqallids*—not imitators of the prophets and saints, but of other imitators like ourselves. It is only a matter of time before we wake up and begin to lament, *daw ad lanat bar ān taqlīd bād*—"two hundred curses on that imitation!"

The goal of Rūmī's path of realization is to know the *aqq* of one's own selfhood and thereby to know the *aqq* of God, society, and the world. It is to know these with a certainty that bubbles up from the source of all knowledge, the God-given intelligence that lies at the root of the soul.

I conclude with a singe quotation from *Fīhi mā fīhi* that suggests the nature of the path of *taqīq*. Rūmī is talking about the knowledge of the experts.

The worthy scholars of the time split hairs in the sciences. They have gained utmost knowledge and total comprehension of things that have nothing to do with them. What is important and closer to them than anything else is their own selfhood, but this they do not know.

Endnotes

1   All poetry is cited from Nicholson's edition of the <u>Mathnawī</u>, my translation.

2 Rūmī employs the terms *ijtihād* and *mujtahid* about thirty times in the <u>Mathnawī</u>, but only once in a technical sense (III 3581). He typically uses *ijtihād* as a synonym for *jahd*, *mujāhada*, and *kūshish*—effort and struggle on the path to God—and he does not contrast it with *taqlīd*.

Rumi and Mulla Sadra on Theoretical and Practical Reason

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Abstract

Rumi (1207-1273) great Persian sage has used around 34 terms on Reason in his masterpiece Mathnawi that may be categorised into 3 main types:

1- Meta Theoretical and Practical Reason, which are Universal Reason and First Reason.
2- Theoretical Reason, which is for perception of truth and untruth. These are faithful reason, perfect reason, honourable reason and Divine seeing reason.
3- Practical reason, which is for distinction of Good and Evil. These are material reason, resurrection reason, partial reason, popular reason, and brief reason.

According to Rumi everyone has Reason, which, upon finding a perfect man, may help him to transcendent from Particular Reason to Universal Reason.

According to Mulla Sadra (979-1571) great Iranian Muslim philosopher, there are 4 types of Theoretical and Practical Reason, based on perfection. Theoretical Reason ascends from "material reason" *('aql hayuluni)*, "reason by proficiency" *('aql bi al-malakeh)*, "reason in act" *('aql bi al-fi'l)* to the "acquired reason" *('aql bi al mustafad)*.

Practical reason may be divided into the following: polishing/refinement of apparent/outer part, polishing the inner part, illuminating the heart, annihilation of soul from its essence.

According to Mulla Sadra's transcendent philosophy, which is based on "principality of Being" (*asalat wujud*), each act of knowledge involves the being of the knower and the hierarchy of the faculties of knowledge

correspond to the hierarchy of existence. Reason is in its essence a Divine light.

In contemporary Western languages the essential difference between intellect (*intellectus*) and reason (*ratio*) that one finds in the Middle Ages Christian philosophy is generally forgotten and word intellect is used for all practical purposes as the same of reason. (On the distinction between intellect and reason, see Nasr, *"KNOWLEDGE and THE SACRED"*, chapter 1 and 4). In Islamic languages a single word *'aql* , is used to indicate both reason and intellect, but the difference between the two as well as their interrelationship and the dependence of reason upon the intellect is always reserved in mind. Al 'aql in Arabic language is from root *'ql*, which means to bind. It means it is the faculty that bind man to the Truth, to God, to his Source and Beginning. 'Aql is also used as reason and intelligence.

In Islamic thought, **practical reason** is the use of reason to decide how to act. This contrasts with **theoretical reason** (often called speculative intellect) which is the use of reason to decide what to believe. For example: scientists use practical reason to decide how to build a telescope, but theoretical reason to decide which of two theories of light and optics is the best.

Rumi (1207-1273) the great 13th Persian *'Arif*/sage, has used around 34 terms on Reason/Intellect in his masterpiece Mathnawi that may be categorised into 3 main types:

1- Meta Theoretical and Practical Reason, which are Universal Intellect/Reason and First intellect/Reason. God generates the First intellect. The universal intellect/ *'AQL KULL* is the first creation of God, through which He then creates the universe.

2- Theoretical Reason/Intellect, which is for perception of truth and untruth, and differentiates truth from falsehood, right from wrong. These are faithful reason *'AQL-E IMANI*, perfect reason *'AQL KAMIL*, honourable reason/*'AQL SHARIF* and Divine reason/ *'AQL RABANI*

According to Rumi the origin of intellect is Universal Intellect *'AQL-E KULL*. (See Rumi, Mathnawi, book 1, verses 1906-1910).

Faithful intellect is the intellect which is based on faith and looking for knowledge and perfection. (R.M.B4, V1987, 1983-1992). It has deep and strong connection with spiritual world.

'AQL KAMIL/perfect intellect (R.M.B5,V739) is seeing truth and looking towards the Absolute Truth and the Creator of the Universal Intellect. It is receiving knowledge from the Absolute Wise / 'A*lim*.

The honourable reason / *'AQL SHARIF* (R.M.B2.V 3514 and 3514-3520), which is the intellect that has capacity to find and see the truth. *NAFS AMARIH*/ carnal soul and physical senses are its opposites. They try to stop it to access to truth. This intellect is NUR-E *LATIF*/ fine light. *'AQL JALIL*/the glorious-great intellect (R.M.B1, V 3325), which is the intellect travelling towards God (*SAYR-E ILA ALLAH*)and able to understand secrets of *HAQ* is another term that Rumi used, which is very closed to the *'AQL SHARIF*.

The Divine reason /*'Aql Rabani*, which is intellect that never sees anything without seeing God therein.

The divine intellect is the intellect of the mystic who has reached union with God and who has submerged his intellect in the universal intellect and has therefore become divine.

The divine intellect is capable of understanding and discovering the realities of the the material/physical world and the Divine/metaphysical world, and existence as a whole.

The process of the transformation and perfection of the particular intellect into the divine intellect is by the revolution, changes and transformations that occur in the mystics understanding and spiritual needs, the necessary requirement of which is severing one ties and attachments to the world. (see Discourse five to eight in *The structure of book 3 in Rumi's Mathnai as a whole*, Seyed G Safavi, Rumi International Conference, Istanbul, May 2007).

3- Practical reason, which is for distinction of Good and Evil. These are material reason, resurrection reason, partial reason, popular reason, and brief reason.

The discursive reason 'A*QL MA'ASH* (R.M.B1.V. 1065), which has only attention to the material world and gaining benefit from material issues. *'AQL MAASH*, which is superseded by *'AQL MA'AD*. (

See Discourse four and eight in *The Structure of Rumi's Mathnawi*, Safavi),

The resurrection reason /*'AQL MA'AD* (R.M..B1, V.14- *IN HOWSH*), which is in contrast with the material reason, that is reason which always has attention to God for all of his acts and manners in personal and social life. This reason is connected to the spiritual world and its judgments are according to divine values. That is for those who have escaped from the bondage of the carnal or discursive reason/ *'AQL MA'ASH.* (See Discourse four and eight in *The Structure of Rumi's Mathnawi*, Safavi),

The partial reason *'AQL JOZEI* (R.M.B1, V 2881, 3503, B3, V.15590, 3585, B4, V.1247, 3031, B5, 460-468), which is the reason that only thinks of the material life. Particular reason can accomplish the control of the *NAFS-I AMARIH*, with the clear example in the story "the Caliph, the Arab of the Desert and his wife in book one of Rumi's Mathnawi" of the *'AQL*/ intellect being taken in by *NAFS*/soul and being infected with worldliness. (see Discourse one to four in *The structure of book 3 in Rumi's Mathnai as a whole.* Seyed G Safavi, Rumi International Conference, Istanbul, May 2007).

The popular reason/ *'AQL 'AWAM* (R.M.B4, V. 3287 and 3288-3300), which is reason that can't understand transcendent and divine's values.

The brief reason /*'AQL MOKHTASAR* (R.M.B4, V. 2174, 2170-2178), which is reason that doesn't distinguished between pure and tainted/ impure acts.

According to Rumi everyone has Reason, which, upon finding a perfect man, may help him to transcendent from Particular Reason to Universal Reason.

According to Mulla Sadra (1571-1641),the great 17th century Iranian Muslim philosopher, *Nafs-e Natiqeh* (rational soul) is the distinguishing factor between mankind and animals. This faculty can understand *KOLYYAT*/ universals and *JOZEIYAT*/particulars and is also *MOTOSARIF*/ possessing in meanings and forms. This faculty has two sub-faculties/*QOWEH* which are called the Theoretical Intellect and the Practical reason, because of mankind potentiality to learn knowledge from his superior which is the "world of intellects"/ *'ALAM-E 'UQUL* or the Active intellect and his ability to manage that which is

inferior/*MADUN* to it. Theoretical intellect understands *TASAWORAT*//ideas and *TASDIQAT*/judgments and is able to identify truth and falseness Practical reason comprehends mankind's acts and manners and identifies good and bad acts and manners. There are four types of Theoretical and Practical reason, based on perfection. (Mulla Sadra, *ISHRAQ* 8 ,*MASHAHD* 3 in *Al-Shawahid al-rububiyyah*,.Mulla Sadra, *Mathnawi*,.Mulla Sadra, *Fi Itahad-I al-'aqil wa al-m'qul,* in *Majmieh Rasael Falsafi-I Sadr al-Mot'alehin*,)

Theoretical Intellect ascends from "material reason" *('aql hayuluni)*, "reason by proficiency" *('aql bi al-malakeh)*, "reason in act" *('aql bi al-fi'l)* to the "acquired reason" *('aql bi al mustafad)*. The human being possesses intelligence in virtuality. The four devisions of the theoretical reason are as follows: the first division, is called material or potential intelligence / *BIL-QUWWAH*, on accounts of its similarity to prime matter-*HAYULA*- in being devoid of intelligible an with respect to its potentiality in relation to all forms. The second, is As the soul grows in knowledge the first intelligible forms are placed in the soul from the above, and man attains to the stage of the habitual intelligence/ *BI ALMALAKAH*, which is the plane wherein it understands self-evident concepts (*TASAWWURAT*) and judgments (*TASDIQAT*); for the knowledge of self evident matters (*BADIHIYAT*) precedes the knowledge of speculative matters (*NAZARIYYEH*). The third, Further on, as the intellect becomes fully actualised in the mind, man reaches the stage of actual intellect / *BI LF'IL*, which understands speculative matters through the mediation of self-evident concepts and judgments, though some of them are based on the other; and the fourth, as this process is completed, the acquired intelligence /*MUSTAFAD*, which is the intellect that partakes of all self-evident and speculative intelligibles corresponding to the realities of the higher and lower realms of existence by virtue of having all of them present before it and its actual consciousness of them is reached. Thus it is a "knowledge world" similar to the external world. Finally above these stages stands the Active intellect *'aql-I Fa'al.,* which is Divine, and illuminates the mind through the act of knowledge. (see Mulla Sadra, *ISHRAQ 9-12, MASHHAD 3* in *Shawahi al robobyyeh* and Allameh M.H. Tabatabaei, the elements of Islamic Metaphysics, chapter 7 and chapter 6, part 11 in

Nihayat al hikmat, Nasr, Islamic Philosophy from its Origin to the Present, Chapter 6).

Practical reason may be divided into the following: firstly, the polishing/refinement of apparent/outer part, secondly, polishing the inner part, thirdly, illuminating the heart, and finally the annihilation of the soul from its essence. (see Mulla Sadra, *ISHRAQ 13, MASHHAD 3* in *Shawahi al robobyyeh)*.

The first is practicing the orders of divine messengers. Such as praying, fasting, avoiding wine, free sex, gambling, theft, killing people and etc.

The second is to get far a way from bad moral activity which could transfer the light heart into the dark heart such as, *DOROGH/* lying, *TOHMAT/* accusation, defamation, *GHAYBAT/* backbiting, *GHOROR/* pride, *KEBR/* arrogance, anger, selfishness etc.

عقـل هـا ديـدم بسـان نـور هـا ليـک پنـهان گشتـه در نـار هـوی"
چشم عقل ار چند باشد عين نور خاک شهوت سازدش در گور کور

"چشم عقل ار چند باشد نور پاک کور می گردد چو دل بندد به خاک
(Mulla Sadra, Mathnawi, p162).

"I have seen intellects the like of lights
But they are hidden by the fire of lust

The eye of intellect although like light
Blind it is turned in the grave by the soil of lust

The eye of intellect although pure light
Blind it is turned when it falls for soil"
(Mulla Sadra, Mathnawi, p162).

عقل و شهوت ضـد يکـديگر بود چـون کليـد و قـفـل بـر يک در بـود
عقل تو خوابيد چون شهوت بخاست زان که شهوت ضد عقل است و سخاست

شهوتت بـرخـاست عقلت کرد خـواب عقل خواب آلـود، کـی باشد صـواب
شهوت از خاک است و عقل از کردگار کردگار و خـاک را با هم چه کار
(Mulla Sadra, Mathnawi, p163).

"Countering each other intellect and lust
As luck and key on one door they are

Once lust awoke your intellect slept
As countering intellect and generosity is lust.

Your lust awoke and your intellect slept
When is a drowsy intellect right

Lust is from soil and from the creator is the intellect
What are the creator and soil to one other"
(Mulla Sadra, Mathnawi, p163).

The third, is the illuminating of the heart is by the light of "knowledge forms" (*SOWAR-E ILMIYYEH*) and praiseworthy attributes. and the fourth, is the annihilation of the soul from its essence which can only be achieved by having attention to God and His holy presence. (see Mulla Sadra, *Shawahi al rububeyyeh*, *Ishraq* 13).

According to Mulla Sadra's transcendent philosophy, which is based on the "principality of Being" (*asalat wujud*).each act of knowledge involves the being of the knower. And the hierarchy of the faculties of knowledge correspond to the hierarchy of existence. Reason is in its essence a Divine light and practical reason is based on Theoretical intellect which in essence is the illuminative intellect. (Mulla Sadra, Mathnawi, p165).

نفس چون کامل شد از علم و عمل عقده گیتی بر او گردید حل‘‘
’’هر دو قوت رو به علیین نهند جملگی جسم و روان را جان دهد
(Mulla Sadra, Mathnawi, p165).

"Once the soul is perfected from knowledge and act
Solved for it is the problem of the world
Both attributes are eminent
As they both give life to the body and soul"
(Mulla Sadra, Mathnawi, p165).

▪▪

Conclusion:

Intellect makes no mistake. It's that other thing that makes mistakes.(Chittick, Me and Rumi, The Autobiography of Shams-I Tabrizi, p22, see also Chittick's point of view on intellect according to Rumi in p 381).

Purification of the soul/heart from its material defilement, *TAJARUUD*/catharsis is of utter importance for both Rumi and Mulla Sadra, for having pure theoretical and practical reason. Also both emphasised that only by connecting to the universal intellect, man's intellect can guide him to the truth/*HAQIQAT* and to good acts/*'AMAL HASAN*.

Both believe that the purification of the intellect is by spiritual love. And *'AQL*/intellect and *JAN/RUH/*spirit are used by both to denote the Divine Essence under different aspects.

In Islamic thought, a millennium of discussion on the relations between demonstration / *BURHAN* related to the faculty of intellect/reason, mysticism/ *'IRFAN* related to the faculty of the heart/intellect associated with inner intuition and illumination, and Qur'an or revelation related to the prophetic function reaches its peak in the synthesis of Mulla Sadra's transcendent philosophy.

Note. Abbreviations: R. Rumi, M.Mathnawi, B.book, V.verse.

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The Tavern and Its Keeper: Provoking the Experience of *Maykhāna* By Means of *Samā'*

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Abstract

The Persian Mysticism can be probably described as the Mysticism of *Maikhāna* (literally "the house of wine", but conventionally translated into English as "tavern"). In Sufi lexicon, wine usually symbolizes overwhelming inrushes of ecstatic love (*ghalabāt-e 'ishq*), while tavern refers to a force field of existence which is created by the energies of ecstatic love. In my paper, I shall deal mainly with two concepts: *maykhāna* ('tavern') (or *kharābāt* ('ruins')) and *samā'* ('audition'), attempting to show, how the latter can be used as means to provoke the experience of the former.

I shall then examine the concepts of *tawājud* ('inviting ecstasy'), *wajd* ('ecstasy' proper) and *wujūd* ((a habitude of) 'finding the Real in ecstasy') as they are interpreted by Sadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 1274), arguing that they refer to three stages of substantial evolution.

I: Wine and Tavern

<div dir="rtl">

از صد سخن پیرم یک حرف یادست مرا
عالم نشود ویران تا میکده آباد است
(دولتخوان قاقشال)

</div>

Of a hundred sayings of my master, one letter is left in my memory:
 The world will not perish as long as the tavern is kept well.
 Dawlatkhān Qāqshhāl[1]

In my paper, I shall deal mainly with two concepts: *maykhāna* ('tavern') (or *kharābāt* ('ruins')) and *samā'* ('audition'), attempting to show, how the latter can be used as means to provoke the experience of the former.

Even a slight acquaintance with Persian Sufi mysticism is sufficient to realize that the symbolism of "wine" (*may/bāde/sharāb*) and "tavern" (*maykhāna*) plays a crucial role in it, wherefore it is probably not utterly wrong to describe it as the "mysticism of tavern" (*'irfān-e maykhāna*).

It is obvious that this symbolism refers to some sort of intoxication. When, in hope to get a more specific information about the exact character, properties, manifestations and causes of this intoxication, one recourses to works of Sufi authors, much to his annoyance, he finds that, while the symbols of wine and tavern are exploited at their utmost, very few writers have taken care to explain these symbols in detail. Among the few authors who do explain them, Mahmūd Shabistarī (d. between 718/1318 and 720/1320-1) and his commentator Muhammad Lāhijī (d.912/1506) appear to be the most reliable, therefore I have chosen a passage from Shabistarī's *Golshan-e rāz* ("The Rose Garden of the Mystery") and Lāhijī's commentary on it as my key source of information. The first part of my paper will, thus, consist of the analysis of Shabistarī and Lāhijī's opinion on wine and tavern.[2]

One of the questions posed by Shabistarī's correspondent is the following one:

> What is the meaning of "wine" (*sharāb*), "candle" (*sham'*) and "witness" (*shāhid*)[3]?
> What does one mean by claiming to have become "an inhabitant of the ruins" (*kharābātī*)?[4]
> Shabistarī answers the question thus:
> "Wine", "candle" and "witness" [all] have one [and the same] meaning,
> Which discloses itself in every form.
> "Wine" and "candle" consist of the taste and light of [true] knowledge.
> See the "witness" which is not hidden from anyone.
> "Wine" here is the glass, "candle" – the lamp[5];
> "Witness" happens to be the radiance of the light of the spirits.[6]
> In the first two lines
> "Wine", "candle" and "witness" [all] have one [and the same] meaning,

> Which discloses itself in every form

according to Lāhijī, Shabistarī answers the question from the point of view of the perfect knowers (*'orafā-ye kāmil*) who see the Real in every thing and treat every thing as one of the infinite loci of manifestation (*mazāhir*) of the Real. Regarding these possessors of perfect knowledge, it is said that

> To the eye of the soul, the face of the Friend in the visage of every moon-faced [beauty]
> Every moment shows [itself in] a fresh and different shape.[7]
> Then, in the next two lines
> "Wine" and "candle" consist of the taste and light of [true] knowledge.
> See the "witness" which is not hidden from anyone

the question is answered from the point of view of the possessors of states (*arbāb-e hāl*). In this aspect, explains Lāhijī, ""wine" consists of taste and finding (*wijdān*), and a state which suddenly comes to the heart of the wayfarer-and-lover (*sālik-e 'āshiq*) when the True Beloved discloses Himself to the latter through one of His disclosures, thus making him "drunk" and bewildered".[8]

Besides, in respect to the perfect ones, "wine", "candle" and "witness" can have specific meanings that pertain solely to them, therefore it is said that

> "Wine" here is the glass, "candle" – the lamp[9];
> "Witness" happens to be the radiance of the light of the spirits.

Lāhijī explains that "glass" here refers to the forms of sensible loci of manifestation, in which the Real manifests Himself to a beginning wayfarer who has not yet ascended to the level of witnessing the Unbounded Beauty, in order to befriend him. Such manifestations of the Real in form(s) of different things are called "the active self-disclosures" (*tajalliyāt-e af'ālī*) (i.e., the self-disclosures through the acts) and the Sufis refer to them as "befriending" (*ta'nīs*). The "candle", then, is the spiritual light of such self-disclosure and the "witness" – the radiance of this light of self-disclosure (which pertains to pure and pleasant spirits).

Shabistarī's advice to his correspondent (who, apparently, can be qualified as a beginning Sufi) is:

> Try the wine of selflessness (*bikhudī*) [at least] once.
> Perhaps [by means of it] you will [manage to] escape from yourself.[10]

Lāhijī explains that what is at issue is the "wine" of annihilation and destruction, i.e., a state which accompanies the essential self-disclosure of the Real. The essential self-disclosure (*tajallī-ye dhātī*) is known to destroy its locus. This destruction, in fact, means nothing else than lifting one's entification (*raf'e ta'ayyun*), in the result of which one ceases to identify himself as a particular entity and, instead, perceives himself as the Unbounded Existence (*al-wujūd al-mutlaq*).

> Drink wine, so that it can set you free from yourself
> And bring the existence of a drop [back] to the sea.
> Drink the wine, whose chalice is the face of the Friend
> And whose goblet – the drunk eye of the wine drinker[11]

because, as Lāhijī puts it, drunkenness and selflessness of the lovers come from the self-disclosure of the beauty of the True Beloved.[12]

> Seek the wine [which can be drunk] without a drinking cup and a goblet,
> The wine that drinks up the wine and devours the cup-bearer.[13]

That is, seek the wine of the essential self-disclosure, which brings about a complete annihilation of entifications (because the entities of "wine" and "cup-bearer" pertain to the level on which the essence of the Real descends to and manifests itself in names and attributes). As Lāhijī states, ""[unripe] wine" (*bāde*) here signifies the Real's disclosure in His names; "cup-bearer" – the Essence in the aspect of its love for manifestation, "cup" and "goblet" – preparednesses of the fixed entities".[14]

> The wine itself [comes] from the cup of the subsisting Face[15],
> "Their Lord gave them to drink"[16] is the cup-bearer.[17]

That is, God Himself is the cup-bearer of those who drink wine from the cup of His subsisting face.

> Pure is that wine which purifies you
> From the dirt of existence at the moment (i.e., the state – Y.E.) of drunkenness.[18]

As Lāhijī explains, the Real's self-disclosure at times entails the annihilation of the locus (as it is the case with His essential self-disclosure), and at other times (in case of His self-disclosure in/through His names, attributes and acts) it does not entail it. "Pure wine", then, refers to the essential self-disclosure, which purifies one from the dirt of the metaphorical existence and entification at the moment of tasting and drunkenness.[19]

Having examined the symbol of "wine" in sufficient detail, we can now proceed to the symbol of "tavern" (*maykhāna*).

> The entire world is like His winecellar (*khomkhāna*),
> The heart of every particle of dust is His cup.[20]

As Lāhijī puts it, every existent receives its share of the radiance of God's essence, which, in the form of a specific self-disclosure of one of His names, is poured in the cup of its preparedness (*istiʿdād*).

> [Having drunk] from the cup of wine, the particles of dust are permanently drunk from the pre-eternity.
> The Cup-bearer keeps calling: "The door of the Tavern is open!"[21]

> Through Him, every flirtation became trap and bait,
> And, through Him, every corner became a tavern.[22]

In the eyes of the perfect knowers, both the world as a whole and every particle of it is a "tavern", in which the "cup-bearer" – the Real's essence in the aspect of its love and liking for manifestation – sells out wine to every "drinker" (fixed entity) in accordance with his capacity (the measure of his cup).

One might wonder, if such treatment of the issue does not contradict the words of Dawlatkhān Qāqshāl:

> Of a hundred sayings of my master, one letter is left in my memory:

> The world will not perish as long as the tavern is kept well[23]

since, as we have just learnt, the world itself is nothing but the tavern. The proper maintenance (*ābādī*) of the tavern, however, must be understood here as the abundance of drinkers. The wine and the cup-bearer are always present, those are the drinkers who are at times present and at other times absent (or, even if they are present, they sometimes do not acknowledge the fact of their presence in the tavern and consumption of wine).

II: The Ruins (*kharābāt*)

<div dir="rtl">

پیر خرابات عشق داد مرا جام می
ساقی رندان خود کرد مقرر مرا
(شاه نعمت الله ولی)

</div>

The master of the ruins of love gave me a cup of wine,
Appointing me a cup-bearer to his rinds.
(Shāh Ni'matullāh Walī)[24]

<div dir="rtl">

به جان پیر خرابات و حق صحبت او
که نیست در سر مت جز هوای خدمت او
(حافظ)

</div>

By the soul of the master of ruins and the right of his companionship,
[I swear that] there is nothing in my head except the wish to serve him.
(Hāfiz)[25]

From the tavern, we can proceed straight to the ruins. To put it otherwise, if the tavern is considered from a certain aspect, it appears to be nothing but the ruins.

According to Lāhijī, "ruins" (*kharābāt*) is an allusion to oneness of every kind – be it either the oneness of acts, the oneness of attributes or the oneness of essence. In turn, the "inhabitant of the ruins" (*kharābātī*) is a carefree wayfarer-and-lover (*sālik-e 'āshiq*) who is free from bounds of distinction of acts and attributes, because he sees them annihilated in the Real's acts and attributes. The furthest end of the

"ruins" is the station of the annihilation of the essence, at which the knower sees all essences being annihilated in the essence of the Real.[26]

Shabistarī's bayt

> To become an inhabitant of the ruins means to become free from oneself.
> Being oneself is non-believing (or:hiding) (*kufr*), even if it is (i.e., manifests itself as – Y.E.) piety[27],

according to Lāhijī, describes the affair from the point of view of the possessors of state (*ashāb-e hāl*). The latter understand becoming a *kharābātī* as the wayfarer's abandoning the habits and customs and the bounds of the properties of manyness. "Non-believing" or hiding the Real behind the veil of entification and individual existence, in their opinion, means attributing existence or any other attribute or act to what is other than the Real.[28]

The next bayt:

> Concerning the "ruins", it was pointed out
> That "unification is omitting the attributions"[29]

in turn, allegedly, treats the issue from the standpoint of the possessors of true knowledge (*ahl-e 'irfān*). That is, unification (*tawhīd*) of the reality and profession of the oneness of the Real, to them, means stopping to attribute existence or any other attribute to anything except the Real. The essence of the Real in the aspect of its manifestation in the loci of manifestation is all things. Since the self-disclosure of the Essence occurs in the forms of the loci of its self-disclosure (i.e., the fixed entities), existence is attributed to the latter metaphorically. When this attribution is omitted (not taken into account), they are seen as non-existent affairs.[30] The Sufis use to say that there is certain cunning on part of the Real in His making look non-existents like existents.

> Having Himself become the entire existence, in order to hide His face,
> He gives the name of "existence" at times to one thing, and at times – to other.[31]

At the station of essential oneness, all entifications are destroyed, therefore Shabistarī says:

> The inhabitant of the ruins is ruined [after being] ruined.
> He is the one, in whose desert the world is [nothing but] a mirage.[32]

Lāhijī, in keeping with his habit, interprets the twofold ruinedness of the inhabitant of the ruins as the annihilation of the attributes, which is followed by the annihilation of the essence. The "desert" (*sahrā*), to him, refers to the space of unboundedness (*itlāq*) and essential oneness (*wahdat-e dhātī*).[33] This station of universal oneness, naturally, is outside the scope of any limitations and directions, therefore, as Shabistarī puts it,

> These are ruins without limit and end.
> No one has seen either their beginning, or their furthest limit.[34]

Likewise, there is no place for entification and individuation there, therefore

> If you travel across them a hundred years,
> You will not find either yourself, or anyone else.[35]

Those who deserve most to be called "the inhabitants of the ruins" (*kharābātiyān*) are the carefree lovers and rinds who have arrived at the station of essential oneness. Regarding them, Shabistarī says:

> You will see a group there, without feet and head.
> They all are neither believers, nor non-believers.[36]

The inhabitants of the ruins, typically, are known as rinds. Since I have dealt with the issue of *rind* and *rindī* elsewhere, I shall not discuss it here.[37] To conclude the discourse on the *kharābāt*, I would like to say that "lifting the entifications" (*raf'-e ta'ayyunāt*), in a way, is like making a flight from a high-security prison. There must be someone both daring and knowing, who encourages other prisoners to make such a decision and guides them through the dangers.

> In order that a prisoner[38] might become annihilated from his selfhood and [,instead,] subsist through the Friend,

The Cup-bearer of the Tavern and the Master of the Ruins (*pīr-e kharābāt*) has come. [39]

III: Audition (*samāʿ*)

هر که را ذوقی است گو در نه قدم
جان سید در میان است و سماع
(شاه نعمت الله ولی)

Whoever has taste, say, make the step.
The soul of Sayyed and *samāʿ* are [both] present.
(Shāh Niʿmatullāh Walī)[40]

کشتگان خنجر تسلیم را
هر زمان از غیب جانی دگر است
(احمد جام)

Those killed with the dagger of surrendering
Receive a new soul from the Unseen every instant.
(Ahmad-e Jām)[41]

The "master of the ruins" (*pīr-e kharābāt*), of course, is a metaphor: once you achieve the state of *kharābāt* (i.e., experience the essential self-disclosure), there is no place for "master" and "disciple" in it – like all other entifications, the latter are lifted either. The "master of the ruins", rather, is the one who is able to provoke such experience, thus taking us to the *kharābāt*.

In order to do this, the "master of the ruins" can employ a number of techniques – such as *dhikr* (remembrance through invocation), *khalwa* (retreat), *sawm/rūza* (fast) etc. – in different combinations. In the remaining part of the paper, however, I shall attempt to examine only one of these techniques – namely, the *samāʿ* (literally: 'audition'), i.e., the session of listening to music (which may or may not be accompanied by dancing).

A succinct, but insightful account on the spiritual effect of the *samāʿ* is given by Sadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (605/1207 – 675/1274), Ibn al-ʿArabī's foremost disciple, in his commentary on Ibn al-Fārid's (d. 632/1235) *Nazm al-sulūk* ("the Poem of the Wayfaring"), where he states:

"When a harmonious sound accompanied by a subtle meaning, reaches the ear, the property of oneness and equilibrium (or: harmony) (*'adālat*), [jointly] possessed by this form and meaning, overwhelms the properties and characteristics of manyness and division and predominates over them. Through this [state of] overwhelming, the property of the oneness of existence (*wahdat-e wujūd*), immersed in attention to its proper world of unboundedness, appears in the heart, taking hold of the entire finder. Thus, in this audition (*samā'*) and ecstasy (*wajd*), the finder recurrently finds this property of the oneness of existence turning towards its proper world and the grief [caused by the awareness] of the impossibility of its subsistence, due to that non-finding (*nāyāft*) which takes hold of his soul and mixture (*mizāj*) (i.e., the natural body – Y.E.)… because, in accordance with the property of [his] [this-worldly] configuration (or: mode of existence) (*nash'a*), the property of binding (or: delimitation) is extremely strong and, of course, it is impossible to gain freedom and escape to the presence of unboundedness and to lift the bounds. For this reason, the finder in this finding finds in himself great grief and tension, which seizes him and torments him, and this is the cause of the cries and yells [that occur during the *samā'*]".[42]

As we see, Qūnawī explains the cathartic effect of audition as the result of the overwhelming (*ghalaba*) of the property of oneness of existence and its predominance over the property of manyness. Through this overwhelming and predominance, the individual existence comes in touch with the world of Unboundedness and, for an instant, experiences itself as the Unbounded (which experience is usually referred to as the "essential self-disclosure" and the "ruins"). The mystic wishes the experience to last, but, because in his this-worldly configuration (i.e., in the natural mode of existence) the influence of the property of manyness and binding is extremely strong, it does not continue longer than an instant. (To Qūnawī, the fact that the essential self-disclosure does not last for more than a moment constitutes a sort of Sufi axiom.) The tension between the properties of oneness and unboundedness and those of manyness and binding causes great suffering which, according to both Ibn al-Fārid and Qūnawī, is not different from the suffering and agony of death.[43] (It is well known that a number of Sufis have died during the *samā'*. The Sufis call those who die at the session of listening "the martyrs of love" (*shohadā-ye 'ishq*).[44])

Qūnawī distinguishes between two kinds of finding: *wajd* ('ecstasy') – which, as we have seen, in an instantaneous experience,

and *wujūd* ('habitude of finding'). He explains the difference between them in the following way:

> "...as a [special] term of this tribe (i.e., the Sufis - Y.E.), *wajd* ('finding in ecstasy') means satisfaction of the demand of this relative existence (*wujūd mudāf*) for the presence of its unboundedness (*itlāq*), [which is achieved] by means of annihilation (*fanā`*) and obliteration (*mahw*) of the manyness of descriptions (*awsāf*) and properties of delimitation and distinction, and satisfaction of the demand [to actualize] the relation of disengagement (*nisba mujarrad*) and [to avoid] the delimitation of the property of manyness of levels, which hitherto was prevailing over its oneness. When the satisfaction of this demand becomes a habitude (*malaka*), it is called *wujūd*".[45]

Thus, in respect to the audience of the *samā'* – and to the Sufi wayfarers in general – *wujūd* means a habit of falling in ecstasy through lifting the entifications and coming in an instantaneous contact with the Unbounded Existence. The possessors of this habit are referred to as "the folk of finding" (*ahl al-wujūd*).

A number of Sufi authorities (of whom Abu-'l-Qāsim Qushayrī (376/986 – 465/1072) is probably the most famous) hold that the state of *wajd* , which grows into habitude of *wujūd*, is preceded by the state of *tawājud* ('inviting ecstasy' or 'pretending to be in ecstasy'). Qushayrī defines it as "inviting ecstasy by [one's own] choice"[46], simultaneously pointing out that it is rather a pretension to possess an attribute than its actual possession. However, the Sufis believe that pretension to possess a state and careful imitation of the behaviour of its possessors, sooner or later, bring forth the actual state. (It is believed that for exactly this reason the Prophet said: "Weep, and if you do not (i.e., cannot – Y.E.) weep, pretend to be (i.e., imitate – Y.E.) weeping".[47])

Wajd (ecstasy proper) is described by Qushayrī as "what comes to the heart without effort [to bring it forth] and pretension".[48] It is followed by *wujūd*, which, in turn, is described as "the manifestation of the authority of Reality (*zuhūr sultān al-haqīqa*)".[49]

Thus, *tawājud* (inviting and/or imitating ecstasy) constitutes the initial state of the audience of the *samā'*, *wajd* (ecstasy) – the intermediate state and *wujūd* (a habitude of finding the Real in ecstasy) – the final and ultimate one. To put it otherwise, through a sincere

pretension (sic!) to possess ecstasy and a careful imitation of its effects, one – if God so wishes – achieves a real and genuine ecstasy. Having experienced the state of ecstasy a number of times, he gradually acquires a habit of falling in ecstasy. Once such habit is acquired, the possessor of it is counted among "the people of finding" (*ahl al-wujūd*) – which does not mean that he actually is in permanent state of ecstasy, but refers to the fact that he has had a number of ecstatic experiences and is prone to falling in ecstasy, without necessarily attending the sessions of listening. If and when he attends them, due to the perfection of his preparedness, he is likely to be the first who falls in ecstasy (although not necessarily showing his state outwardly[50]). His state then passes to other participants of the session (provided they have a sufficient degree of preparedness), provoking ecstasy in them.

In order to make a fire, it is essential to have at least one piece of dry wood, which, due to its dryness, catches fire quickly and easily. The main function of the *pīr-e kharābāt*, apparently, is the refinement of preparedness(es) of his disciple(s). This refinement of the preparedness of the disciple usually occurs through his companionship (*suhba*) (i.e., being together) with the master for a sufficient period of time. Most Sufi authorities consider the *samā'* as a powerful means to hasten this process of refinement of preparedness and, latter, to develop and maintain the habit of falling in ecstasy. Among the mediaeval Sufi authorities, there seems to have been a sort of consensus that *samā'* is most powerful and efficient in respect to those wayfarers who are in the intermediate stages of their spiritual journey: not infrequently, it was considered to be dangerous for the novices and useless for the perfect.

The spiritual importance attributed by the Sufis to the *samā'* seems to rest on two principles (beliefs): 1) faking a state can lead to its real acquisition; 2) an often occurring state gradually develops into a habit (interestingly, at least the second principle is fully shared by the Peripatetic philosophers). As for the *pīr-e kharābāt*, I am inclined to think that there is little or no volition in his performance of the above described pedagogical function. Showing the path to ecstasy to others is simply a concomitant of his own ecstatic states and the habit to fall in ecstasy: whoso is drunk, makes the other feel drunk by his very presence.

Endnotes

[1] Kaykhosraw Isfandiyār, *Dabistān-e madhāhib*, ed. Rahīm Ridāzāde Malak, Tehrān: Tahūrī Editions 1362 S.H., p.210.

[2] I must admit that there is an element of simplification in their approach – and, consequently, in my treatment of the issue. As Fakhr al-Dīn Irāqī's *Istilāhāt* ("Glossary [of Sufi terms]") shows, the Sufis employ several terms which refer to different stages of the fermentation of wine. Thus, *bāde* ('unripe, not yet properly fermented wine') is used to refer to "[passionate] love (*'ishq*) when it is still weak, as it is the case with the common folk in the beginning of the [mystical] wayfaring" (Fakhr al-Dīn 'Irāqī, *Dīvānē kāmil*, ed. P.Qā'imī, Tehrān: Enteshārāt-e Paymān 1381 S.H., p.403); *may* ('wine') denominates "the overwhelming states of love, accompanied by sound actions, typical of the folk of perfection (the elite) in the middle stages of their wayfaring" ('Irāqī, *Dīvān*, p.415); *sharāb* ('well fermented wine') refers to "the overwhelming states of love, accompanied by actions that provoke reproach, and such actions are typical of the folk of perfection (the elite of the elite) at the final stages of their wayfaring" ('Irāqī, *Dīvān*, p.411).

[3] I.e., the witness (or symbol) of God's beauty. In Sufi texts, *shāhid* often refers to a handsome young man, regarded as a necessary requisite of the *samā'*. As A.Schimmel writes, "the very contemplation of such a person might induce the Sufi involuntarily to dance (as would any overwhelming experience)" (A.Schimmel, "Raks" (VIII.415b) in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition (CD-ROM), Leiden: Brill 1999). (Ibn al-'Arabī, however, defines *shāhid* as "the trace that witnessing leaves in the heart" (Muhy al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī, *Istilāhāt al-sūfiyya*, ed. A.Sāleh Hamdān, Cairo: Maktaba Madbūlī 1999, p.11).)

[4] Mahmūd Shabistarī, "Golshan-e rāz", in Muhammad Lāhijī, *Mafātīh al-i'jāz fī sharh-e golshan-e rāz*, ed.K.Sami'ī, 5th edition, Tehrān: Enteshārāt-e Sa'adī 1371 S.H., p.39.

[5] An allusion to the so-called "Light" verse from the Qur'ān: "God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The likeness of His Light is a Niche and within it a Lamp: the Lamp enclosed in Glass: the glass as it were a brilliant star: lit from a blessed Tree, an Olive, neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil well-nigh would shine, even if no fire touched it: Light upon Light! God guides to His Light whom He will: God strikes likenesses for men: and God knows all things" (24:25) (*The Holy Qur'an*, translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions 2000, p.290 – 291).

[6] Shabistarī, "Golshan", p.39.

[7] Lāhijī, *Mafātīh*, p.602.

[8] Lāhijī, *Mafātīh*, p.603.

[9] See note v.

[10] Shabistarī, "Golshan", p.40.

[11] Shabistarī, "Golshan", p.40.

[12] Lāhijī, *Mafātīh*, p.606.

[13] Shabistarī, "Golshan", p.40.

[14] Lāhijī, *Mafātīh*, p.607.

[15] An allusion to the Qur'anic verse: "Every thing perishes except the face of God" (28:88) (*Qur'an*, p.328).

[16] A quotation from the Qur'anic verse: "Upon them (the People of Garden (Paradise) – Y.E.) will be garments of fine silk and heavy brocade, and they will be adorned with bracelets of silver; and their Lord will give them to drink of a wine pure and holy" (76:21) (*Qur'an*, p.517).

[17] Shabistarī, "Golshan", p.40.

[18] Shabistarī, "Golshan", p.40.

[19] Lāhijī, *Mafātīh*, p.608-609.

[20] Shabistarī, "Golshan", p.40.

[21] Lāhijī, *Mafātīh*, p.613.

[22] Shabistarī, "Golshan", p.37.

[23] Kaykhosraw, *Dabistān*, p.210.

[24] Shāh Ni'matullāh Walī Kermānī, *Dīvān*, introduction by S.Nafīsī, 2nd edition, Tehrān: Sīmā-ye Dānish 1378 S.H., p.4.

[25] Hāfiz, *Dīvān*, ed. H.Ilāhī Qumsha'ī, Tehrān: Enteshārāt-e Amīrkhānī 1381 S.H., p.416.

[26] Lāhijī, *Mafātīh*, p.624.

[27] Shabistarī, "Golshan", p.41.

[28] Lāhijī, *Mafātīh*, p.624 – 625.

[29] Shabistarī, "Golshan", p.41.

[30] Lāhijī, *Mafātīh*, p.625.

[31] Lāhijī, *Mafātīh*, p.625.

[32] Shabistarī, "Golshan", p.41.

[33] Lāhijī, *Mafātīh*, p.626.

[34] Shabistarī, "Golshan", p.41.

[35] Shabistarī, "Golshan", p.41.

[36] Shabistarī, "Golshan", p.41.

[37] See: Yanis Eshots, "Shah Nematullah Wali on *Rind* and *Rindī*" in *Celebrating A Sufi Master: A Collection of Works on the Occasion of the Second International Symposium of Shah Nematollah Wali (University of Leiden, 11 – 12 October 2003)*, Greenlawn (NY): Simorgh Sufi Society 2004, p.26 – 34.

[38] *Asīrī* ('prisoner') was also the poetical pen-name of Lāhijī.

[39] Lāhijī, *Mafātīh*, p.630.

[40] Shāh Ne'matullāh, *Dīvān*, p.314.

[41] Ahmad-e Jām, *Dīvān*, quoted from: Hasan Dehlavī, *Fawā'id al-fu'ād: Malfūzāt-e khāje Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā*, eds. M.Kiyānī and M.L.Malik, Tehrān: Enteshārāt-e Rawzana 1377 S.H., p.174.

[42] Sa'īd al-Dīn Farghānī, *Mashāriq al-darārī*, ed. S.J.Ashtiyānī, 2nd edition, Qum:

Markaz-e Enteshārāt-e Daftar-e Tablīqāt-e Islāmī Hawze-ye 'Ilmī-ye Qum 1379/2000, p.482. (Farghānī's book consists of the notes he made at Qūnawī's lectures on Ibn al-Fārid's qasīda during their common trip to Egypt ca.1246. The notes were examined by Qūnawī and approved by him.)

[43] See: Farghānī, *Mashāriq*, p.482 – 483.

[44] For an account on a number of Chishti Sufis (e.g. Qutb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī (d. 633/1235)) who died at the state of ecstasy provoked by the *samā'*, see: C.Ernst and B.Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love: Chishti Sufism in South Asia and Beyond*, New York: Palgrave Press 2002. On Qutb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, see e.g.: Hasan Dehlavī, *Fawā'īd*, in particular p.174 – 175.

[45] Farghānī, *Mashāriq*, p.482.

[46] Abū-'l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-qushayriyya*, ed.A.Mahmūd and M.Ibn Sharīf, Qum: Enteshārāt-e Bidār 1374 S.H., p.130

[47] See: Qushayrī, *Risāla*, p.131.

[48] Qushayrī, *Risāla*, p.131.

[49] Qushayrī, *Risāla*, p.132.

[50] In many Sufi books, we find testimonies that Abū-'l-Qāsim al-Junayd (d. 298/910) (the head of the Baghdad school of Sufism) participated in the sessions of the *samā'*, but did not show his states outwardly. Someone, seeing that Junayd remains immovable for the entire session, asked him: "Do you experience anything at all?". Junayd replied with a quotation from the *Qur'an*: "'Thou seest the mountains and assumest them to be firmly fixed: but they pass away by the passing of the clouds" (27:88). (*Qur'an*, p.319) (see: Qushayrī, *Risāla*, p.131).

Kant's Critique of Practical Reason: A Reassessment

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Abstract

The articls attempts to have an assessment of Kant's objective and universal claim that Morality can come to be founded only on pure reason, and that moral laws are universal and categorical because of their form, not their empirical content This can only be discernable when man's freedom, immortality of the Soul and the Existence of God is somehow presupposed.

Keywords: Kant, Ethics, Human Freedom, Immortality of Soul, Existence of God

None of Kant's writings can be understood without a clear recognition of the "Copernican revolution" in philosophy effected by his first critique, the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781). Previously, the predominant rational tradition in Western philosophy was founded on the assumption of reason's capacity for discovering the forms or essential structures characterizing all things. Whether the form of "treeness" was an innate aspect of every existent tree (as Aristotle believed) or a transcendent form in which each existent tree participated (as Plato held), the capacity of reason for perceiving such forms was not doubted. The medieval controversy over "universals" centered not in reason's ability for such perception, but in the nature of this rational activity[1] (Kemp, 1995, p. 10)

From the first questioning of the nominalists, however, through the break between self and "exterior world" in Descartes, doubt as to the precise authority of rational apprehension increased. Human error

and empirical deception began to be seen as intervening between perceiver and perceived, thus raising powerfully the question of the criteria for truth. The Aristotelians, especially from the time of St. Thomas Aquinas on, affirmed that knowledge begins with sense perception; however, because of reason's capacity for extracting forms, human knowledge possessed not only the qualities of necessity and universality, but made possible an inductive knowledge of trans-empirical realities. It was the empiricists, especially David Hume, who provided the most serious challenge to this rationalist claim. Centering his attack on the problem of universal causality (cause and effect as universally operative), Hume raised the question of necessity. On what grounds, he asked, can one insist that, *of necessity*, all "effects" have causes and, similarly that such causes *necessarily* produce identical effects? Hume's conclusion was that the category of causality, like all human ideas, is derived from sense impression, having the status simply of a habitual assumption and expectation; human ideas are forever deprived of necessity.

It was Kant who saw the seriousness of this empiricist challenge. Reason was bankrupt as an agent of knowledge if it could no longer claim necessity and thus universality for its findings. Man and the world had been severed, and skepticism seemed the inevitable result.

The answer provided by Kant's first critique was a revolution, i.e. a complete reversal of the previous conception of the knowing process. If human knowledge cannot claim a necessity which is resident within the empirical world itself, it is possible, nevertheless, to claim universality for it if the locus of necessity is within the universal operations of human reason[2] (Rivaud, 1965, p.95). With this new conception of rational necessity and universality, Kant proceeded to exhibit what he conceived to be the necessary operations of rational apprehension, the manner in which the understanding, by its very structure, has and of necessity will always perceive and organize whatever realities encounter it[3] (Ibid, p.98.)

As Kant interpreted it, Hume's error was in seeing subjective necessity as grounded only in habit instead of being a result of the *a priori* structure of reason. If the latter is the case, rational necessity and universality are guaranteed, although on a far different basis from before. For Kant, the forms perceived through sense experience are the

product of the categories of the human mind, but now the externality so encountered is never known as it is in itself (as "noumenon), but only in its relation to man (as "phenomenon").

While reason attempts to complete this knowledge by bringing it into a comprehensive unity, it is banned from success in this speculative operation by certain antinomies, both sides of which are in harmony with man's phenomenal knowledge. In the area of speculative psychology, these antinomies make it impossible to affirm a soul existing apart from the physical. In the area of speculative cosmology, the consequence of the antinomies centers in the impossibility of establishing man as free agent. And in the area of speculative theology, the antinomies negate the possibility of proving the existence of God. In all cases, the antinomies resist resolution of these questions *either* positively or negatively.

As a result, reason, in its theoretical function, is banned from any cognitive penetration into the noumenal. The important point is that this does not mean that the noumenal realm is necessarily unlike man's phenomenal knowledge of it and that human categories do not apply there; rather, the problem is that pure reason can provide no guarantee of any correspondence.

What is most significant about the first critique is that while Kant revives the old Platonic distinction between noumenon and phenomenon, in exploring reason along the narrowly Aristotelian lines of his day (as a strictly cognitive activity), the Platonic distinction became a severe human limitation[4] (Hoffe, 1994, p.32). In the preface to the second edition of the first critique Kant gave indication that he was moving toward a broader, or more Platonic, conception of reason:

> "I had therefore to remove knowledge, in order to make room for belief"[5](Kant, 1966, p.xxxix (B: xxvi-xxx))

Although "faith", for Kant, was to be understood largely in moral terms (stemming from his pietistic background), we have here a beginning indication of his recognition of modes of human apprehension far broader than simply discursive or cognitive reason. Much of the drive for exploring this possibility came from Kant's

tremendous interest in ethics, made urgent by the seemingly undermining affect of his first critique upon this realm.

The Critique of Practical Reason is of major importance not only as the attempt to create a purely rational ethic, but also as a defense of a non-discursive mode of apprehension, as an insistence that the "rational" is not restricted in meaning to the "cognitive". It is this point which Kant develops further in the third critique, the Critique of Judgment (1790), in terms of beauty and the purposiveness of nature. In order to understand these points, one must be cautious of the misleading title of the second critique. In distinguishing between *pure* reason and practical reason, Kant is not speaking of two human agents or loci of activity; in both critiques he is speaking of pure reason as such, but in the first he is concern with its theoretical or speculative function, in the second with its practical or ethical function. For Kant, this second function is the activity known as will. It is his purpose to show that will is not divorced from reason, controlled internally by pleasure stimuli. In its fulfilled operation it is a purely rational enterprise; it is pure reason in its practical operation which must *control* drives and *determines* external ends.

Likewise, in this realm it was Hume who disturbed Kant, for Hume understood reason as being the agent of passions, and morality as being rooted in subjective feeling. Just as Kant's answer in the cognitive realm depended on exhibiting the *a priori* or categorical laws of man's cognitive activity, so his answer in the second critique depended on discovering the *a priori* or categorical laws of the rational will. Morality could claim objectivity and universality only by being founded not on experience, but on pure reason itself. The task of the second critique, then, is to discover the a priori or necessary principles of the practical reason.

At the heart of the problem of ethics is the problem of freedom; without freedom, morality is an impossibility. But according to the first critique, since all things are seen, of necessity, under the category of causality, all things are seen as determined. Yet, Kant insists, the same noumenon-phenomenon distinction applying to the object of such knowledge also applies to the subject as well. It is man as phenomenon, who is seen under the category of necessity, but the nature of the noumenal man remains unknown. Although the speculative function of

reason strives for an understanding of the human "soul", the antinomies, as one can see, left the matter of freedom for the noumenal self as "problematic but not impossible"[6] (Stratton-Lake, 2004, p.24). If Kant can exhibit the will as free, he believes, he can also show the capacity of pure reason to determine the will's total activity.

If there is to be an objective ethic, an ethic based on freedom, the only possibility for it can be reason presupposing nothing else but itself, for a rule can be objective and universal only if it is not subject to any contingent, subjective conditions. Thus, moral *laws* cannot be based on the pleasure principle, for the objects of pleasure and pain can only be identified empirically, thus having no objective necessity. Further, hedonism can make no legitimate distinction between higher and lower pleasures; only if reason is able to determine the will can there be a higher faculty of desire than base feeling. Likewise, there is no objective, universal basis for an ethic of happiness, for happiness is simply the general name for satisfaction of desire.

Consequently, maxims (subjective, personal principles) of man's commonplace activity can claim the ethical status of law not according to their content, which is always empirically gained, but only according to their form. Every maxim can be tested for such universality by inquiring whether that maxim, if made a universal law, would negate itself or not. For example, all men seeking only their own happiness would soon render happiness impossible; thus, the goal of individual happiness is judged to be lacking the universality required of a moral law.

Now, since it is only the form of the maxim which makes objective claim upon the will, the will must be seen as independent of the natural law of cause and effect; that is, we have here a case in which the will operates in isolation from the phenomenal realm. The act is rooted totally in reason itself. This is the heart of Kant's ethic-

> "Thus freedom and an unconditional practical law reciprocally imply each other[7] (Kant, Critique of Practical Reason)".

Since freedom cannot be known through the theoretical function of reason, its objective reality is discovered by experiencing the moral law as duty, as a rational necessity. This means that the pure practical

laws are discovered in the same manner as the pure theoretical laws, by observing what reason directs in indifference to empirical conditions. Without the moral law, Kant insists, man would never know himself to be free- "thou ought" implies "thou canst".

For Kant, the fundamental law of the pure practical reason is this –

> "Act so that the maxim of thy will can always at the same time hold good as a principle of universal legislation."[8] (Ibid, VII Fundamental Law of the Pure Practical Reason).

Such rational control of the will is objective, for the legislation is made in indifference to any contingencies. Yet a distinction must be drawn between a *pure* will and a *holy* will; although the moral law is a universal law for all beings with reason and will, because of the free man wants and sensuous motives, he is capable of maxims which conflict with the moral law. Thus, this law comes to man as a "categorical imperative". It is categorical because it is unconditioned; it is imperative because it is experienced as "duty", as an inner compulsion provided by reason. Holiness is above duty, but in this life it remains the ideal to be striven for, but never reached. Each maxim must strive for unending progress toward this ideal; it is such progress that deserves the name "virtue"[9] (Gyuer, 2000, p. 163).

Kant's formulation of the moral law is, in effect, a philosophical statement of the "Golden Rule". As Kant says, the moral law of universality alone, without the need of any external motivation, arises as duty to extend the maxim of self-love also to the happiness of others. Or, put on a commonsense level, Kant's moral formula is rooted in the integrity required by reason. It is self-evident that reason, to be rational, must operate in complete self-consistency; since the rational is the universal, reason qua reason must give permission to will to the extent to which that can be consistently willed universally.

For Kant, the demand of duty is unmistakable and can, without difficulty, be perceived by the simplest person. Where the difficulty arises is in following the imperative. Kant's estimate of man is such that he goes so far as to maintain that the good act is done only when duty and inclination are in conflict. What he really means here is that

hate is a sign that the individual has gone beyond self-interest to real duty. It is necessary to insist, Kant maintains, that satisfaction follows but does not precede awareness of the moral law; there is certainly a "moral feeling" that should be cultivated, but duty cannot be derived from it[10].

Man's capacity for obeying the moral law in independence of empirical conditions establishes, for Kant, the objective fact of man's free, supersensible (noumenal) nature. As Kant puts it, the necessity of the practical reason makes freedom a rational postulate. Freedom is not known, in the theoretical sense, but it must by subjectively affirmed as necessary. This does not mean that freedom is simply subjective, but that its objectiveness is perceived through reason's practical rather than theoretical operation. Moral need has the status of law, while the antinomies render the completions of speculative reason hypothetical or arbitrary. Thus, the former provides the certitude which the latter lacks, establishing the factuality of freedom as valid for both the practical and pure reason. Here we see the breadth of Kant's conception of reason, i.e. such a moral postulate is both objective and rational, even though it is not cognitive.

Since it is Kant's concern to show that it is pure (speculative) reason itself which is practical, the postulates of reason in its practical function become objective for reason itself. In actuality, the practical function is prior and the speculative function must submit to it, for

"every interest is ultimately practical, even that of speculative reason being only conditional and reaching perfection only in practical use".

The result of this insight is that the agnosticism of the first critique is transcended by the second, for while still insisting upon his former severe limitations on speculative reason, Kant here provides an alternative mode for metaphysical affirmation. This is most apparent in the two additional moral postulates that Kant draws from the postulate regarding freedom. What is required by the moral law is complete "fitness of intentions", which would be holiness. But since this is impossible for finite man, the practical reason requires that one affirm an "endless progress" in which such fitness can be completed. And

since such progress requires the immorality of the soul, this affirmation becomes an objective postulate of the practical reason. Such a proposition is not demonstrable, but is

"an inseparable corollary of an a priori unconditionally valid practical law".

Thus the second antinomy of speculative reason is practically resolved.

Likewise, a third postulate is involved. The postulate of immortality can be made only on the supposition of a cause adequate to produce such an effect; thus, one must affirm as an objective postulate the existence of God, an affirmation sharing the some necessary status as the other two moral postulates. A further basis for this postulate rests in the fact that although finite existence supports no necessary connection between morality and proportionate happiness, such a connection is morally necessary.

The affirmation of such postulates Kant calls the activity of "pure rational faith", for although they are objective (necessary), freedom, the soul, and God are not known as they are in themselves[11] (Frierson, 2003, p.46). This, he affirms, is in truth the essence of "the Christians principle of morality". It is from morality that religion springs, for religion is nothing more than "the recognition of all duties as divine commands".

Since morality has to do with the moral law, with the form of an action, it follows that no "thing" is good or evil; such designations properly apply only to an acting will. Good and evil are defined only after and by means of the moral law; to reverse this procedure is to develop an empirical, subjective ethic. It is the practical judgment which determines the applicability of a universal maxim to a concrete act. To make an application such as this is very difficult, for it is here that the laws of freedom (the noumenal realm) are applied to the laws of nature (the phenomenal realm). Such a meeting is possible because the moral law is purely formal in relation to natural law. That is, it raises this question: if this proposed act should take place by a law of nature of which you were a part, would your will regard it as possible? The center of moral act thus rests in one's intentions, not in consequences. If the right act occurs but not for the sake of the moral

law, it is not a moral act. The only incentive which is valid is the moral law itself[12] (Ibid, p. 173).

For man as he is, his natural feelings of self-love are ever at war with the moral law. The very fact that morality resides in law reveals the severe "limitation" of man. The moral law is victorious only if all inclinations and feelings are set aside out of respect for the moral law, in and of itself. An act not performed out of such a sense of duty is inevitably tainted with the self-pride of believing goodness to be a spontaneous reflection of one's nature.

Perhaps the major difficulty in Kant's ethic is the problem of application. There are few acts which a performer would not defend as universally valid if the hypothetical performer and situation were in every way identical with those of the actual performer. Every evil has been defended by the demands of person and circumstance. Kant's moral formula is designed to eliminate all such individualized decisions. Yet to the degree that the formula is interpreted, not in such a particularized fashion but in an absolutely universal sense, its inadequacy becomes evident. Total truth-telling, total promise-keeping, and the like, all have obvious moral exceptions. Likewise, how is one to resolve conflicts between these objective duties? And further, law for its own sake tends to be elevated above the individual men between whom moral relation arises.

Kant's moral position has stimulated generations of heated conflict. For certain theologians, Kant's ethic seems to be only an ethic of the fall and not a redemptive and salvation ethic; for others, it is a classic Protestant ethic, judging human pretension and incapacity. For philosophers, the difficulty, as with Anselm's ontological argument, rests in its deceptive simplicity (despite the difficulty of its expression). Such a position is uncomfortable in its rather wholesale rejection of consequences, moral motivations, absolute good, and the like. But there is no denying of Kant's realistic appraisal of human capacity, the absolute quality of moral activity and yet the relativity of concrete ethical situations. It may be that Kant's ethic is too simple, discards too much, and is too uncompromising, but consequent ethicists have found it impossible to bypass this second critique.

Endnotes

[1] Kemp, John, **The Philosophy of Kant**, Bristols: Thoemmes Press, 1995, p. 10.
[2] Rivaud, Albert, **Histoire de la philosophie, Tome V: La philosophie allmende de 1700 à 1850, Première Partie, De l'Aufklärung à Schelling**, Paris: Presses Universtitaires de France, 1968, p. 95
[3] Ibid, p. 98
[4] Hoffe, Otfried, **Immanuel Kant.**, Translated by Marshal Farrier, New York: State University of New York Press, 1994, p. 32
[5] Kan, Immanuel, **Critique of Pure Reason**, Translated by F. Max Müller, New Yord: Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966, p. xxxix [B: xxvi-xxx]
[6] Stratton-Lake, Philip, **Kant, Duty and Moral Worth**., London & New York: Routledge, 2004, p. 24

[7] Kant, Immanuel, **The Critique of Practical Reason**., Translated by Thomas Kingsmill Abbott.
[8] Ibid, **VII. Fundamental Law of the Pure Practical Reason**
[9] Guyer, Paul., **Kant on Freedom, Law, and Happiness**., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 163
[10] Kant's rejection of all ethical theory but his own formal principle provides a helpful summary of alternative ethical systems. He sees six types. Of the subjective type, there are two kinds-external and internal. In the former, men like Montaigne root ethics, in education, while other, such as Bernard Mandeville, sees its basis in a civil constitution. Of the internal variety, Epicurus sees physical feeling as central, while Francis Hutcheson grounds ethics in "moral feeling". There are likewise internal and external types within the objective ethical systems. The former is the ethic of perfection, held by Christian von Wolff and the Stoics; the latter is the "will of God" ethic of theological morality. The subjective group Kant quickly discards as empirically based, thus, by definition, failing to meet the requirements of universal morality. Also, the objective types, though rational, depend on a content which, within the confines of Kant's first critique, can be gained by empirical means only; consequently, these too must be disqualified as being neither universal nor necessary.
[11] Frierson, Patrick R., **Freedom an Anthropology in Kant's Moral Philosophy**., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 46.
[12] **Ibib**, p. 173

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Following the Footsteps of Maulana Jalal ud Din Muhammad Rumi in the Pursuit of Knowledge

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> *"My body's life and strength proceed from Thee!*
> *My soul within and spirit are of Thee!*
> *My being is of Thee, and Thou art mine,*
> *And I am Thine, since I lost in Thee!".*
> *Umar Khayyam*

Abstract

This paper seeks to explain the concept of knowledge believed and practiced by Maulana in the times rife by rational skepticism, political turmoil and moral and cultural upheaval. Perhaps we are again at the same crossroads the history has faced at times of Maulana. Thus we look towards Maulana for spiritual guidance and moral uplift his timeless writings uphold since centuries without loosing their charm and effectiveness. It is again diving deep into ocean of spiritualism and discovering self worth and meaning of existence commanding management in one's worldly material and intellectual affairs and seeking social compliance through love and acceptance rather than control and coercion.

Introduction

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. It requires self knowledge harmonized with social and emotional

intelligence to live and work efficiently and effectively. The knowledge age has 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. So the question arises whether just learning to read and memorize Qur'an will be enough or we will have to decode the principles of knowledge underlying it and develop a code of ethics suiting the needs and demands of the day.

Acquiring knowledge is the first and foremost obligation of every Muslim man and Muslim women. 21st century demands a harder pursuit of knowledge ever than before but Muslims are lagging far behind. Not only they are hesitant to acquire scientific rational knowledge; they are not sure to adapt to the spiritual knowledge system of their forefathers. Muslims always love to live into past, commemorating nostalgia and always desperate to relive past traditions. While they want to regain their glorious rule and reign over world; they forget to acknowledge the untiring pursuit of Muslim sages and social scientists who weaved the Muslim faith and beliefs in the material culture in such a fashion that enabled them to realize their dreams, not only virtually proving their rightful command over the forces of nature as vicegerent of God but also mastering the art to rule hearts of people and not just dominate the minds through scientific craft.

The real challenge for 21st century's Muslims is how to recreate such a knowledge system for them making our education and training systems rejuvenate Muslim values and ethics in society. The secret is not to denounce the material self but make it subservient to the spiritual self. One of the ablest sages who teach us such an art is Maulana Jalal ud Din Muhammad Rumi, who makes us conscious of all social and political vices, encourages and boosts us to overcome these hurdles in our personal, social and psychological growth, and furnishes us with the best of etiquettes of social living and spiritual existence. The aim of this paper is to discover and discuss the concept of knowledge as believed and practiced by Maulana and his followers which has kept him and his teaching alive and source of learning for centuries for believers. It is the Sufi way of climbing the ladder of intellectual evolution that enables us to harness all energies surrounding our physical and intellectual souls and empowering our spirit to uncover

the marvels of universe and part unbounded distances between the man and the Creator upholding the rightful claim of his vicegerent. It is thus touching the live wire of a system not to get shocked but enthralled by psychological and spiritual transformation it brings about both in the individuals and the society.

The Knowledge and Sufism

As we know that Sufism is an alternative system of inquiry into the subtleties of spiritual life; it operates with different ontological realities and adopts a methodology totally different from philosophical modes of inquiry. Sufism is all about personal transformation, becoming better human beings through knowing the purpose of life and learning about universal divine laws, while developing a better understanding of oneself and better adjustment to the world around oneself. It essentially requires adjusting with one's ego, knowing one's responsibility and developing better relationships with other fellow human beings through acquiring better attributes of service and attitude to forgive and sacrifice. Adopting such a course of action leads we do good, not just to one's own self or society but to the life system as whole. We are caught in dynamics of LOVE: as Dhu 'l-Nun RA (d, 859), the great Egyptian Sufi cries,

"To Thee alone my spirit cries;
In Thee my whole ambition lies;
And still Thy Wealth is far above
The poverty of my small love."

Man is chosen to be the vicegerent of God on earth; everyone has the potential imbibed in his/her soul. Do all human beings reach that status or hardly the persons who have strived for it, adopting the best practices to align one self with the Divine Will, and following the course of action we have discussed above? Do we need a teacher and training to acquire such a qualification? What is the curriculum? What will happen to us if we will not take such education? In attempt to answer all these questions, we come to know that Muslims have a great history of people who wrote such a curriculum for them, they were not

just religious authorities, informing people of what is right and wrong in Islam, but they made people realize what was good or bad for them. They checked their mental, psychological, emotional and social health and provided them the therapy which helped them become happy, healthy and contented persons.

This program enables its participants to internalize a certain concept to the extent of proverbially seeing it, as opposed to just knowing it, employing meditation, intuition (*kashf*), aspiring (*dhawq*), observing (*shuhud*), and vision (*basira), i.e.* exercising mental energies to an extent that it reaches a higher level of consciousness and proximity to the truth. However, here I would like to differentiate the goals of Sufism from practical Sufism; it is not just being consummated in love of God, and spending one's life as a heretic, or semi-lunatic. It is stepping towards higher accolades of knowledge, even worldly scientific rational knowledge and then using it for the good of humanity. The Sufi may choose to live among the people and lead a normal life while pursue his/her goal to self improvement. It is not only willingness to improve oneself but granting to others acceptance, love and unconditional respect. Maulana extends an open invitation,

> "Come, come again, whoever you are, come!
> Heathen, fire worshipper or idolatrous, come!
> Come even if you broke your penitence a hundred times,
> Ours is the portal of hope, come as you are."

Thus, we will proceed further in domain called *al-ta*s*'awwuf al-'ilmī or* doctrinal Sufism, as called by Nasr, rather than discussing *al-ta*s*;awwuf al-'amalī*, or practical Sufism, contrasted to theoretical and sometimes speculative gnosis, whereas, in Rumi, we find an eligible mixture, as his audience was both, the common man and the intellectual elite. In the history of Muslim intelligentsia, it is referred to as *'irfān-i naz'arī,* as Nasr further informs us that 'the seekers and masters of this body of knowledge have always considered it to be the Supreme Science, *al-'ilm al-a'lā,* and it corresponds in the Islamic context to what we have called elsewhere *scientia sacra.'* [1] Here, the Sufis speak of They speak of "creation *in* God" as well as creation *by* God. They expound the doctrine of the immutable archetypes (*al-a'yān al-*

thābitah) and the breathing of existence upon them associated with the Divine Mercy which brings about the created order. They see creation itself as the Self-Disclosure of God.[2] The main purpose of the Qur'an is to awaken in man the higher consciousness of his manifold relations with God and the universe. Iqbal has commented that in the higher Sufism of Islam unitive experience is not the finite ego effacing its own identity by some sort of absorption into the infinite Ego; it is rather the Infinite passing into the loving embrace of the finite. He quotes Rumi:

> 'Divine knowledge is lost in the knowledge of the saint!
> And how is it possible for people to believe in such a thing?'[3]

We will lift the control, the control to govern life according to our personal whims and desires and upon failing whine and cry, suffering from pain, shame and lowered self esteem. It is to realize that life has some grand scheme of operations and I have to adjust to it as the best fitted part of the whole. Thus we have to proceed in the domain of consciousness. Let us first define what is consciousness and how can we move to upper levels.

Unveiling the Consciousness

The modern science is trying to deny the concept of consciousness altogether; or the motivation behind the denial of consciousness derives from an attempt to maintain control over the mass thinking. Science has lost its pursuit of truth and traded it for power and control. Capitalism dominating popular knowledge culture of the world hesitates to let individuals think that they can be powerful, unique, and contributing toward universal good. The masses are being robbed of their individuality and sense of self worth. They are told that they are the heirs of animals like monkeys and baboons; they have no choice but to spend this life in fruitless satisfaction of impulses, facing the failure unwillingly and consequently suffering from pain and loss and diminish ultimately. Modern science is denying the human beings their rightful duty to serve life by denying creationism unable to understand that human freedom lies in its creative imagination, exploring ways to know one's relationship with the life and the Creator

and develop strategies to best serve this relationship. Thus, window has been closed to see oneself in light and mirror oneself to find meaning of one's existence. All roads to spirituality have been blocked. However, Maulana has already put us to task,

نقصها آئینه وصفِ کمال

واں حقارت آئینه عزّو جلال

زانکه ضد را ضد کند پیدا یقیں

زانکه با سر که پدید ست انگبیں

هر که نقصِ خویش را دید و شناخت

اندر استکمالِ خود دو اسپه تاخت

زاں نمی پرّد بسوئے ذوالجلال

کو گمانے می برد خود را کمال

Every flaw is a mirror unto precision;
As Slander is mirror of glory and admiration;
Opposites strike at each other clearing the vision;
Vinegar for honey can never be mistaken;
One who has identified his limitation;
Is quickening towards its mitigation
He can never rise to ultimate ascension;
Who is obsessed of self perfection.[4]

Consciousness is to know something in the totality of its being; it requires harmonizing and smoothly linking one's sensation, perception and cognition. Sufistically speaking, consciousness acts upon *Wujud*, where *tajalli* takes place. Peter Senge affirms in the foreword of 'Theory U' that 'understanding the creative process is the foundation of genuine mastery in all fields."[5] Our thoughts are the undercurrents of consciousness which enlivens the '*wujud*' or experience of 'being. Iqbal has explained it in greater detail as follows:

> Thought is, therefore, the whole in its dynamic self-expression, appearing to the temporal vision as a series of definite specifications which cannot be understood except by a reciprocal reference. Their meaning lies not in their self-identity, but in the larger whole of which they are the specific aspects. This larger whole is to use a Qur'anic metaphor, a kind of 'Preserved Tablet', which holds up the entire undetermined possibilities of knowledge as a present reality, revealing itself in serial time as a succession of finite concepts appearing to reach a unity which is already present in them. It is in fact the presence of the total Infinite in the movement of knowledge that makes finite thinking possible.[6]

Such a thought process seems to emanate from creative energy (intellect) of God realized by human beings as '*Ishq*' – The Divine

love, which guides the soul to realize its potential. Therefore thoughts cannot be finite, and an attempt to limit them is to block the creative energy of life itself. Our brain is merely an apparatus of recording sensations; it is the mind which qualifies all these sensations to perception and cognition. We have to reach that inner home where all of it happens. They say that consciousness lies in the domain of soul.

Do We Know Soul?

Avicenna has informed us that it operates at three levels of Nafs, vegetative, animal and rational.[7] Maulana Rumi has also talked of the cyclic progression in the domain of consciousness.

> First man appeared in the class of inorganic things,
> Next he passed therefrom into that of plants.
> For years he lived as one of the plants,
> Remembering naught of his inorganic state so different;
> And when he passed from the vegetive to the animal state
> He had no remembrance of his state as a plant,
> Except the inclination he felt to the world of plants,
> Especially at the time of spring and sweet flowers.
> Like the inclination of infants towards their mothers,
> Which know not the cause of their inclination to the breast.
> Again the great Creator, as you know,
> Drew man out of the animal into the human state.
> Thus man passed from one order of nature to another,
> Till he became wise and knowing and strong as he is now.
> Of his first souls he has now no remembrance.[8]

And he will be again changed from his present soul. *Nafs* is the domain where we realize that something is happening. We try to give it name through our reason and believe that we have known and understood it, thus mind is generated. Evolutionary psychologists define mind as the sum of functions activated by brain. The brain can work only in singular dimension and not in multi-dimension; e.g. when we are aware of our instinctual reality, the reason seems to slip away; and when we are in pursuit of reason (intellect) we do not let our feelings close by. The brain is an organ created to perform certain functions; whereas mind is the power that governs those functions. Since mind comes at

emergent level and is not autonomous in generating, maintenance, retrieval and termination of all of its activities, both the mind and the brain need some external help to carry out and sustain their function. Moreover, in everyday life and science we witness both the failure of mind and the failure of brain, but not failure of life in either case, thus creating the necessity of presence of a third reality, something that exists at the foundation, forming the basis of existence, activating brain, and mind and creating consciousness. Can we call it soul; spirit, wujud, hu, or what?

Chittick has provided us with an explanation of teleology of perception: The soul actualizes itself by perceiving what it has the potential to perceive. The soul's goal in its existence is to move from potential knowing to actual knowing. When its potential knowledge becomes fully actual, it is no longer called a "soul" but rather an "intellect," or an "intellect in act."[9] In Mulla Sadrâ's view, then, the human soul's potential to achieve actual knowledge is called the "mind."[10] Thus, we may argue, if mind is the instrument that carries out experiment on perception on behalf of soul, an entanglement then exists between brain, mind, and soul. To solve this puzzle, we may assume that that our consciousness has three essential dimensions; then we may claim that brain represents our physical, the mind rational and the soul the divine dimension of life. We always try to establish links and chains in everything we sense, feel, think or do and entrainment of experiences occurring in any of these dimensions shall affect the 'whole' and not the part of being. This coding and encoding is the beginning and end of the knowledge system, we must endeavor to create and proceed toward. Learning is a slow process, especially when we talk about bringing change in collective consciousness of a society or a nation. Today, if we will sow the seeds of curiosity and lay down our foundations of research, only then our coming generations shall reap the fruit of knowledge, causing an evolution in thought and action toward life.

The Qur'an repeatedly exhorts man to think and think hard. Those who do are honored.

"The blind man is not equal with the seeing, nor is darkness equal to light" (35:19)

"Are those who know equal with those who know not? But only men of understanding will pay heed" (39:9).

Before discussing the relationship between mental enterprise and evolution, we must revert to an initial point; it must be noted, that the enigma of soul is quite complex. Traditionally speaking it has been believed by Muslim Gnostics that "the goal of human existence it to bring the soul's potentiality into actuality and that at the beginning of its creation, the human self is empty of the knowledge of things";[11] however, I do not agree with this point, because human mind which has to begin the exercise might be an empty slate, a pure energy, but human soul definitely knows its potential to carry forward. This potential is carried by human body coded in DNA. If it has not been true, then human race could never have progressed in any of its social, rational or scientific pursuit, i.e. evolution. Partly it is due to the fact that while explaining these phenomena in present diction the philosophers tend to overlap the state and function of soul, *nafs*, mind, heart and self, confusing them with their modern counterparts coined by science of psychology. The other reason has been condemnation of *Nafs* (lower) in Sufi literature.

Realistically speaking '*nafs*' is the powerhouse of life; it defines the human 'being'. There are two channels of *nafs*, one operating at basic instinctual level, whose purpose is to ensure personal physical survival, better be recognized as lower nafs. The other is rational level, whose aim is the safeguarding of personal psychological survival avoiding all threats to self respect and self esteem, better recognized as "ego". *Nafs* has all sense organs at its command. The third state of nafs '*mutmuinna*' belongs to heart and is achieved after actualization of the potential of soul, i.e. to strive for the sustenance of life system as whole; while the lower *nafs* is present at birth, the "ego" is developed as a result of contact with social reality.

The mind has also the power of logic or reason or feelings or emotions to dictate the action. Plato has said, in choice lies the freedom. Everyone is free to pick apples of his/her own choice. The choice operates between our faculties of soul as well, always trying to override each other, thus creating a state of chaos for us. We may learn one aspect of it but not the whole. We may keep trying reaching a balance

between one's reason and impulses /instincts and may never qualify for higher state of emotions. In order to describe this system we must look at the underlying principles of the system and the role each faculty pays to bring about the best in the system. I understand it as follows:

> The power of mind is the **intelligence**, an ability to construct / deconstruct (ideas), *determining how it will be?*
> The power of matter is the **being,** ability "to be" or not "to be", (things / objects/ phenomena) *dictating where it will be?*
> The power of soul is **love**, ability to sustain to nourish and above all to exist, *pronouncing what will be?*

The job of the mind is to analyze and job of the heart is to synthesize. Both of these processes are essential for the evolution of knowledge. Thus the process of evolution is much similar to the process of heart, expansion, and constriction with only one aim – purification. It is difficult to say which is more important analysis or synthesis; they are different actions one following the other like day and night and their occurrence is cyclical. Many phenomena in physical nature are oft repeating itselves after a certain interval of time, creating an illusion and our job is to save our souls from the deception of this illusion.

Thus nature appears to be cyclical with an ability to conserve its essence or reality. Is it true with the consciousness as well? The answer is no; the reason being that consciousness has no property of matter; thus its life is not synchronous with the life of physical nature. It cannot be cyclical. We cannot say that human knowledge is what it was a thousand or a million years ago. It is not repeating itself in a time bound earth and space, but it is progressively spiral, slowly and gradually rising up to skies and then merging into the limitless, borderless universe. It can also be said that real life belongs to consciousness and it goes on. Human mind is just one operational instrument; the other operational instruments can be the society, the global community, etc. The individual mind and heart are just like one cell in the stream of blood, a drop in an ocean. Thus it will have to dive deep in the search of pearl, as economist W. Brian Arthur comments, "every profound innovation is based on an inward-bound journey, on going to a deeper place where knowing comes to the surface."[12]

Both the mind and the matter are time and space bound. The evolution in life occurs through evolution of knowledge and its seat is human heart and imagination provides us the open ground, where we may consider possibilities of being and consciousness brings about the whole phenomenological understanding of something. Arabi has affirmed, 'Heart' can be understood as the very center of our psycho-physical being, as the meeting place of soul and mind or more precisely, as the focal point where the mind, which itself is all knowledge or light, is reflected in the mirror of the soul.[13] Iqbal has commented, the 'heart' is a kind of inner intuition or insight which, in the beautiful words of Rumi, feeds on the rays of the sun and brings us into contact with aspects of Reality other than those open to sense-perception. Thus he advises us,

> If you have a touchstone, go ahead, choose;
> otherwise, go and devote yourself
> to one who knows the differences.
> Either you must have a touchstone
> within your own soul,
> or if you don't know the way,
> find someone who does.[14]

Einstein's intellectual successor David Bohm has commented, "The most important thing going forward is to break the boundaries between people so we can operate as single intelligence."[15] This reality is also expressed in Bell's theorem which states that "natural state of the human world is a separation without separateness".[16] We are all here to know ourselves and identify ourselves. We need to see us, first, and we need light to enact the vision, and a mirror to give us a name. It is not a metaphorical study but the highest venture in knowledge to conquer the world of non-existence and being in one go and the human consciousness is the best suited arena to play that game because it is the domain where thinking and feeling comes together, whether it is of self-consciousness or other-consciousness or may be god-consciousness. Those who have penetrated to the realities have declared therefore:

"Illumined existence for even a passing instant is preferable to a million years of profitless existence."[17]

And those who have researched into the realities of creation have proclaimed:

"The lights of existence become apparent through recognizing the Necessarily Existent One."[18]

This is the point of awakening; we learn to witness here the vastness of the lights of belief, and the terrifying darkness of misguidance. Who is the 'One'? And what is the 'light'? It is only by following the footsteps of Maulana Rumi, we get informed that phenomenology of Qur'an is the hermeneutic experience, because when we are able to deceive shadows and follow the course of light, that very moment we become light ourselves. However, this light needs a form and that is provided by lexicon; similarly the semantic of Qur'an can lead us to the light. When one concentrates on the darkness and shut the eyes from the numerous shadows that the light has been creating in a lexicon, that black hole is Truth, can we dare to jump into the hole to embrace the whole? Perhaps the world we enter appears to be smaller to our consciousness, and we may have to resize or readjust it to know IT.

The Order of Evolution

Muslim Sufis have a very different conception of human evolution. Though Qur'an does not deny the scope of Darwinian evolution, it rather affirms the fact, that by granting Adam the power to reason and choose, the doors of biological evolution had been closed on all life. Now they had to proceed in the domain of mind, all evolution will be intellectual and rational in business, and our *Tassawuf-i-ilmi'* operates in this domain. Modern science is coming to realization of this point; famous biologist E.O. Wilson has stated in "Consilience" that biological evolution has been halted among the Homo sapiens; thus the intellectual evolution shall dictate any further change determined by

"social choice". According to him all behavior is biologically adaptive, whether it's cognitive, social or moral and is governed by genes."[19]

Being a rationalist determinist, he will allocate power to roots of biological existence, i.e. the DNA. But the Muslims Sufis would argue that the degree of knowledge determines levels among human beings ranging from ignorant, to educated, to masters, to saints and ultimately the prophets. Allah has expressed great diversity in creation. Though many of His creations are emblem of intelligence and will; none of them possesses it in such a balance as human beings do; e.g. angels may have high degree of intelligence, but their intelligence represents 'permanence' and is devoid of free will. Whereas, the human element represents 'evolution' – the capacity to grow, change and/or improve, thus they do not have just 'will'; they have free will to empower themselves and proceed in realms of unknown to make it known, i.e. bearer of the knowledge process.

Thus Mevlana while narrating the story of holy ascension of Hazrat Muhammad (SAW) reminds us that Angel Gabriel held his step back at the threshold of "*Sidra tul Muntaha*" He said, my wings will burn if I go ahead, but you may proceed.

Iqbal has very aptly explained Islamic viewpoint on evolution; he says, "The fact that the higher emerges out of the lower does not rob the higher of its worth and dignity. It is not the origin of a thing that matters, it is the capacity, the significance, and the final reach of the emergent that matter."[20] He further continues, "Indeed the evolution of life shows that, though in the beginning the mental is dominated by the physical, the mental, as it grows in power, tends to dominate the physical and may eventually rise to a position of complete independence….The Ultimate Ego that makes the emergent emerge is immanent in Nature, and is described by the Qur'an, as *'the First and the Last, the Visible and the Invisible.* (Qur'an, 57:3)

In words of Maulana,

> Soul of all souls, life of all life
> - you are That.
> Seen and unseen, moving and unmoving,
> - you are That.

> The road that leads to the City is endless.
> Go without head or feet
> and you'll already be there.
> What else could you be?
> - you are That.

Human evolution denotes evolution in consciousness the ultimate heights would be reaching the consciousness of Allah (unity of consciousness – wahdat al shahud). Consciousness determines the quality of being, thus those reaching higher degrees in levels of consciousness reach evolution in being as well (unity of being – wahdat al *wujud*).[21] Divinity being One, we can't expect any duality in the real existence. The corporeal structures are mandatory for this material world only. Consciousness is the quality of soul and not body. It is the faculty of mind which is the hub of intellect and emotion, the *Qalb*. It is the center where only Allah's *Noor* has its access; the ordinary and the casual senses are oblivious of it. As Allah has locked mind and body into one unity in this life, and we can complain of duality, but separation of one from the other means end of life, and we are not calling it death, because that is a different phenomenon.

We know how much energy is discharged in the synaptic process of human brain, where does its focus lie? What is its nucleus? What is its range of effectiveness? How it is regulated and / or operated? Where does the waves (or light) generated in this process travel to? We may have to look for its evidence beyond the system outside the living organism.

The Niche of Lights

Maulana has declared,

> Soul receives from soul that knowledge,
> therefore not by book nor from tongue.
> If knowledge of mysteries come after emptiness of mind,
> that is illumination of heart.

The realm of the soul is composed of understanding and consciousness as a whole. And this 'wholeness is the holiness'. , as

Henri Bortoft might put it, "Everything is in everything".[22] For the celebrated German writer, Goethe, the whole or the part, neither exists without each other; the whole exists through continually manifesting in the parts, and the parts exist as embodiments of the whole. According to Maulana, "The knowledge" is Solomon's Domain.

جُملهٔ عالم صورت و جان ست علم

The whole universe is a corpse, knowledge is the spirit.

Hossein Ziai, while explaining Illumationist Philosophy of Suhrawardi states, Knowledge is the fundamental state, i.e. knowledge as perception (*idrak*) of the soul is essential and self constituted, because an individual is cognizant of his essence by means of that essence itself. [23] Thus, Consciousness can be reached through the process of inner illumination. Ibn al Arabi would exclaim, "Whosoever knows himself, knows his Lord". Gnosis, according to Arabi, is not the acquired knowledge of the profane learning, but rather, as the Arabic root suggests, an immediate recognition and grasp not of something new or strange but rather of the state and status of things as they really are, have always been, and eternally will be, which knowledge is inborn in man but later covered over and obscured by the spiritual ignorance encouraged by preoccupation with ephemeral and partial data.[24] The aim of this knowledge is:

- Knowing one's own degree of perfection induces in one the desire (shawq) to see the being just above it in perfection, and this act of seeing triggers the process of illumination.[25]

- Self-consciousness and the percept of "I" – the self as self, or its ipseity, its selfhood – are the grounds of knowledge. What is ultimately gained through the initial consciousness of one's essence is a way to knowledge, called the "science based on presence and vision" (al- ilm al-huduri al-shuhudi)[26]

علمہائے اہلِ دل حمّالِ شاں

علمہائے اہلِ تن احمالِ شاں

عِلم چوں بر دل زند یارے شود

عِلم چوں برتن زند بارے بود

گفت ایزد یحمِلُ أَسفارَه

بار باشد عِلم کاں نبود ز هُو ....

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
Whatever you may observe is traveling to soul;
Beware! All parts are but bound to their whole[27]

Otto Scharmer says that there exists a blind spot in all of us from where all action originates in us. It is difficult to explain the working of the spot but still we can confidently say that it "exists", guiding, motivating and inspiring or jilting and cajoling us into some "action".[28]

The question is whether this "blind spot" is self automated or we can pursue its course of action and exert some pre-control or redirect some of its actions. We may believe that "every human being and social system has the potential to activate this deeper capacity to pre-sense and bring into presence one's highest future potential but their remains a question as vague as the blind spot it self, that "when" and "how" can we ever activate it ourselves? Does it require some proper channel, some power to activate it? It appears that it is activated momentarily as in sparks and then again there is darkness. That is why perhaps Muslim Sufis labeled it as "tajaali" a lightening rather than a constant current flowing as we realize in us as "sap of life". May be this sparking leads to reactivate or rejuvenate the spark of life in us, that is about to adopt sleep mode in existence. Modern psychology has only recently begun to realize the importance of a careful study of the contents of mystic consciousness, and we are not yet in possession of a really effective scientific method to analyze the contents of non-rational modes of consciousness.

It is also established fact that neuron activity in human brain charges unbounded energy, but where that energy flows….whether it flows into our body or it flows out of it into some particular wavelength reaching some unknown stations in the universe, bringing into existence new worlds. Perhaps that was the power of "idea" Plato had realized, which mystics have been mumbling in their metaphors. That is the power of mantra or *Zikr* which enables to sustain those worlds and provide them a due course, a path of realization, to substantiate themselves.

Each Sufi concept has been defined among two extremes, e.g. 'fana', non-existence and 'baqa', the subsistence. Why everything has to swing like a pendulum in sands of time, first writing and then erasing it. Similar is the case with learning in human consciousness, which proceeds through "learn … unlearn …and relearn" strategy. One has to learn to recognize each of the material faculty to its best potential, the presence, and then pre-sense another world, a new beginning, an alternative scope of reality, and start unlearning, to arrive at presencing again. Sometimes people remain skateboarding in the "U" of this world. They do not dare to take a high reverse jump in the air to complete the circle, half of which was implicit in the void.

The total reality is not just the "U", but it is the "whole" and to completely realize that whole, we will have to lift ourselves up leaving the boundaries of certainty to taste the thrill and threat of uncertainty, i.e. hitting the blind spot which was always there but we kept ignoring it. It is emptying ourselves out of what we think of ourselves and taking in of what "HE" believes us to "BE' and then helplessly trying to "become" as we touch ground again, as neither do we want to fail nor do we want to disappoint "HIM". Iqbal says,

عشق کی ایک جست نے طے کر دیا قصہ تمام

اس زمین و آسماں کو بے کراں سمجھا تھا میں

On the wings of Love I sail to my destination
Acceding to the limits of limitless ascension
So far rendered inaccessible by the reason[29]

Mevlana, his mentor had already informed,

Since you wish it so, God wishes it so;
God grants the desires of the devoted.
In the past it was as if he belonged to God,
but now 'God belongs to him[30] has come in recompense.

Ibn-e-Arabi says know that secret of life permeates water, which is itself the origin of the elements and the four supports. Thus did God make 'of water every living thing.' Qur'an: 21:30 (BW, p. 213) Dr. Taherah Tavvokali has discussed Maulana's frequent use of "water"[31] as symbol. Water is the medium of life, it is the symbol of the reality of existence; Life has originated within water. Hence water is consciousness, because it emanates from the superior world (rain), overwhelms the world and changes it. Water is revelation, which pours down from heaven to bless the earth, bring the dead land to life, or revive the dead souls. *Mevlana* declares:

جسم جوئے وروح آب سائر است ...

درروانی آب جوئے فکر

نیست بے خا شاک خوب و زشت ذکر

Body is lake and soul is water running through it

Water flow have undercurrents of consciousness[32]

Dr. Taherah has argued, Water is symbol of people of God carrying His Wisdom and knowledge to the people, flowing from top to bottom serving and satisfying everyone in the way.[33] Water keeps flowing, keeps refreshing and renewing itself. The concept of light is in tangible but the concept of water is very tangible even for uneducated common man. Thus Mevlana has very effectively used both of these analogies to explain the process of knowledge in human consciousness. Finally, we may come to conclusion, that one who does not have soul cannot have knowledge, as Mevlana has aptly commented,

زانکه تکمیل خرد ها دُور نیست
لیک تکمیلِ بدن مقدور نیست

One may aspire to reach ultimate consciousness
But a body cannot achieve flawless perfection[34]

Sevkat Yavuz has argued that for *Mevlana* all external representations are just forms or phenomenal conations, whereas the eideitic aspects of things are essence and substance. Thus, "letter is just a pot; but meaning is like containing water in it."[35] The aim of religion was search for Haqq the truth, to realize the secret potentials Allah has endowed to human soul. Islam as a religion puts a great challenge to its believers, demanding them to leave their comfortable positions. As Maulana has called in one of his discourses:

> "Our religion cannot leave the hearth in which it had settled down; unless it channels the path of the heart to that of God and obstructs the self from futile things."[36]

For Muslims there is only one Bayt, the Kaaba, while in this world the butts (idols) are many. Bayt is our inner spirit our soul, the essence of our being and not "butt" the corporeal body. Here is the paradigm shift of Islam from *Zahir* to *Batin*, from illusion to perception; from transient to the permanent; a quantum leap in the consciousness of humanity, making it wholesome and holier ever than before. We see Philosophers of time saying consciousness is our real home and journey back home is the only journey, i.e. self-knowledge. They have found the way but cannot identify the right-path. We the Muslims were blessed with it, but we are lost on the way. The loss is of humanity at large, both Muslims and non-Muslims are suffering from it as 'Love' & 'Mercy' the divine gifts are rare fighting for a survival, we witness but blood on the face of earth.

Alok Singh, an advocate of global youth network complaints, "our systems are failing, and their failures are coming to the surface: they do not serve people. The current crisis will not go away because

we're operating on the symptoms'[37]; and we revert to *Mevlana* who has warned humanity centuries before,

گر ز نام و حرف خواهی بگذری
پاك كن خود راز خود هی یکسری
همچو آهن ز اهنی بیرنگ شو
در ریاضت آئینه بی زنگ شو
خویش را صافی گن از اوصاف خود
تا به بینی ذاتِ پاكِ صافِ خود

Desiring to reach beyond mere names and letters;
Get rid of egotism; slay thy "Self"; it does not matter
Thou must free thyself of "iron-ness" 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![38]

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.

Desire is an inclination toward the particular objects of desire to the exclusion of any other. Desire operating in the domain of free will denies us harmony and equilibrium, being restricted it denies the right to choice, tipping oneself in the dark pit of ignorance, self pity or *zulm & jabr* where no one is going to rescue. It makes us live the life at lower level than human, because exercising choice and free will qualify us as human beings. The choice will always be there, doing things the right way, the good and doing things without any knowledge to do them the right way, the evil / ignorance. Thus ignorance is the darkness we earn for our souls by not exercising the right of choice in the right way.

> Human will → Submission to will of Allah → Correspondence to Divine Will → Free Will → Eternity

Yet at this point, Nasr warns us again, one does not become a saint simply by reading texts of *'irfān* or even understanding them mentally. One has to realize their truths and "be" what one knows. He quotes Frithjof Schuon, one of the foremost contemporary expositors of gnosis and metaphysics, "The substance of knowledge is Knowledge of the Substance." [39] This knowledge is contained deep within the heart/intellect and gaining it is more of a recovery than a discovery, he would enlighten.

Epilogue

Stephen Hawkings has raised such question who regards 'time' as the fourth dimension.[40] Light is carrying through time and the light is the bearer of all information and knowledge. The perception of the time differs but of light it remains the same. Stephen Hawkings claim that net change in matter composition of universe over time is not zero whether the universe is expanding or contracting?

We agree with *Mevlana* that every particle in this universe is living and has a soul – a purpose to 'be' and it keeps charging it with the passion to 'exist' and a will to 'live'. This passion evokes energy through which the matter continuously transforms itself into light. The popular belief says that matter is consuming energy as the light waves condense at a certain wavelength; they assume the shape of a particular substance. But still we do not see the world overloaded with matter; however, we witness the birth of new stars in galaxy.

Thus, may we infer that all inanimate matter is the byproduct or waste of the energy that might have been consumed in carrying out the life process (to create/evolve life) as a complex system? And all the stars that are coming to life are the products (byproducts or waste?) generated by the metabolism of ideas occurring in minds of people and races and nations?

To 'be' we need knowledge of existence and a will to exist, so human thought and human desire has some definite part to play in this transformation of energy into matter and the reverse of it. Hence, the goal of knowledge must be to know about the transformation process rather than analyzing various physical dispositions of just matter.

Looking for the source of knowledge in matter will experience bounded rationality leading to fatalism.

Matter has limited intelligence thus it has a limited scope for operation and free will. Matter is the product, neither the cause nor the process. Thus it is subservient to human soul and human intelligence keep transforming it into desired shape. We read in Qur'an that inanimate and the plants are subservient to human will, their will cannot surpass human will which is boundless, infinitely boundless…it is not that it is striving to become the part of infinite; it has already that status; it is going through the maturation process to acquire self knowledge to discharge its potential in a different way and that characterizes evolution.

The information from different time zones keep flowing into us through the light waves, but our brains are not yet smart enough to decode it fully. Only few can occasionally do it and we 'label' it as "prediction" or "intuition". If we try to explain in physics terms, the Einstein's equation, $E = MC^2$: The 'C' is the light, the forces of nature that are permanent, and the 'M' is the critical mass in shape of human intellect and passion to acquire that light. 'E' is then the power, the knowledge power possessed by a group, an organization, or a nation. Thus, our brain will be fully advanced only when it will be able to decode information with the speed of light because only then it will know what the light traveling all about is really carrying within it – the real challenge of evolution.

Capra has informed us that any metabolism to continue an information is required that helps to carry out that process.[41] E.g. RNA carries such information for DNA; we need a certain knowledge system to exist independently that carries information for epigenetic rules as well, so who would be such a carrier. We know that in plants sunlight plays an important role in metabolism, i.e. photosynthesis. So there must be some light around us that carries information for us as well. With that light the foetus that has been totally dependent on mother becomes independent to be self-responsible for its metabolism – Life.

Light and radiation that fills the space provides a medium in which the planets and stars can carry out their independent metabolism. Though we do not have any scientific evidence of such a process but constant expanding of universe and generation of matter that is going

on suggests the possibility of existence of such metabolic process. We wonder that light which seeps into our brain through our eyes and ears, what infinite messages it carries with in it and how can we empower our brain to decode these messages. Can we say that light carries with itself an immense knowledge to create, recreate, repair, reinvent or destroy or destruct a system and somehow or other it guides and codifies the epigenetic rules. So far our sensory organs are able to decode information around us, but there must be some organ that decodes such information. Mevlana comments at the silent vastness of skies,

پیش معنی چیست صورت بس زبوں

چرخ را مغیش می دارد نگوں

Before Face Itself humbled is all interpretation;
The sky is a closed vault because of its cognition

I have ever wondered Maulana's analogy of "food" becoming light. But now I realize that more than food now human health will be defined by knowledge whether it is ill defined or is well defined to cater human psycho-social needs. Now the age of economics, industry, of sociology and survival is coming to an end. The battle of biological survival has long been won by the human beings; he has learnt to compete with the mass production and win the race of the survival of the fittest. Thus the era of economics and Industry, of biology and sociology are over. The upcoming age of knowledge is that of existence and only psychology, Philosophy or physics alone will not be able to handle it individually. We need to develop a full fledge science of cosmology to enter into its realm. It will not just be a science of life but a Pandora box of life sciences yet waiting to be uncovered, learned and mastered.

Are we ready to accept that challenge?

Endnotes

[1] Latin term to distinguish it from "sacred science" which possesses a more general meaning and includes also traditional cosmological sciences. See Nasr's Theoretical Gnosis and Doctrinal Sufism and Their Significance Today. Transcendent Philosophy. London Academy of Iranian Studies: Vol. 1. pg. 1-36

[2] Ibid.

[3] See Iqbal's Lecture on Religious Experience. **Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam** (1934). [online] available at: http://www.tolueislam.com/Bazm/drIqbal/AI_Reconstruction.htm retrieved [18-06.2002] from Tolu-e-Islam database

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[27] Masnavi. Vol.I. Trans. S. Arif. Op.cit.

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[30] celebrating authentic tradition of the Prophet Muhammad sallallahu alaihi wa sallam peace be upon him: Whoever is for God, God is for him (man kanalillah, kana Allah lahu)

[31] See Analyzing of Symbolical Aspects of "Water" in Maualana's Poems in Dr. Taherah Tavakkoli and Dr. Abbas Zahabi. **Analyzing of Symbolical Aspects of "Water" in Maualana's Poems. In The Mawlana's Thought System**. In Proceedings of International Symposium on Mawlana Jalaladdin Rumi In Thought and Art. Cannakale Onsekiz Mart University. 25-28 May, 2006

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Rereading and Accounting for Sadra's Philosophy according to Kant's Terminology
"With Comparison and Analysis"

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Abstract

In Persian philosophy of Sadr al-Din Shirazi also known as Sadr al-Muta'allihin (end period of the 10th Century and early in the 11th Century), notions such as man, heaven, earth and the like, each of which possessing a particular individuation and being conceived of through mind, are applied only in the sphere of phenomena, and applying them out of this sphere on things-in-themselves (noumena) is not permitted unless accidentally and virtually. According to him, such notions are applied on their referents only because of their senses; and for them it is not possible to ascend from one sense to the other. But the notion of existence, which is a product of some sort of pure a priori intuition (conceiving of the reality of existence in one's knowledge of him, immediately) may not be considered as being phenomenal. For, if we consider it as being phenomenal, no more can we think of it as thing-in-itself, and inform of its being or non-being.

In other words, if we consider a sense for the phenomenal existence other than that of non-phenomenal one, we have to confess that things exist out of our minds but not in the sense that we understand for existence in our minds.

Introduction

Sadr al-Din Shirazi, known as Sadr al-Muta'allihin, is the founder of a philosophical school which is called "Transcendent Philosophy". This school of thought, in the first step, having contemplated linguistic elements and made distinction between the

concept of existence and quiddal concepts, and proved principiality of existence and its gradation, describes metaphysics as a discipline describing existence and its gradation, and thinks that some mistakes or ambiguities in it are due to attributing of qualities of existence to quiddity, and emphasizes to make metaphysics free from such mistakes. Based on this gradual ontology and development of its terminology, Mulla Sadra paves the way for interpretive ontology, and managed to take a single reality as the axis of various mystical, philosophical, religious expressions, which had been previously regarded as directing to various realities, and made a compromise between various mystical, philosophical, religious conceptions which seemed to be in conflict with each other. This innovation is, in own right, unrivalled and should be paid attention to; in terms of some concepts and their spread, it may be compared only with Kant's philosophy among western philosophers, who wanted to solve the problem of recognition, knowledge and its philosophical grounds, ethics, proof of God existence, free will and permanency of the soul, as a whole and in a single philosophical system, which is the same as his critical philosophy. Thus, in this paper, the author will try to expose Sadr al-Muta'allihin in Kant's terminology for those who are unfamiliar with his own, so that some key points of such philosophy may be understood in a comparison with Kant's philosophy. To do this, at first, I mention some issues in Kant's philosophy.

Some Principles and Essential Points in Kant's Philosophy

1- For Kant, scientific knowledge is a product of cooperation between sense perceptions and experiences resulted from the effects of the outer world on mind on the one hand and a priori elements on the other. This is not an unaltered picture of the real and outer world, but a common product of mind and outer world, which is called "phenomenon" and what is independent from mind is "noumenon" which is not independently intuited by us (Kant, 1992, B295-B315).

2- Concerning perceiving "I", Kant emphasizes unique and exceptional role of this perception as compared to others, and speaks of permanent attendance of "I think" with all perceptions, and considers all qualities attributed to "I" as being transcendental, and knowledge of "I" as being phenomenal (Kant, 1992, B185).

3- In the same way that Kant considers sensitivity as containing a priori elements (time and space) which are forms of sense intuitions (Kant, 1992, B46, B42), he takes understanding as containing a priori elements which are forms bringing and necessitating judgments. Such categories (i.e. unity, plurality, totality, necessity, negation, limitation, substance, participation, contingency, existence) are phenomenal and their being phenomenal means that they follow structure and conditions of our minds, and for this reason, they cannot be applied to objects in themselves, and only should be known as qualities of objects as they are in our minds and appear for us (Kant, 1992, B102-B106).

4- According to Kant, analytic propositions produce no new knowledge. A posteriori synthetic propositions as well, though because of being synthetic they produce new knowledge, since they are taken and resulted from sense experience, they cannot be universal and necessary; thus no one of the two establishes scientific knowledge. But a priori synthetic propositions, since they are synthetic, give new knowledge, and since they are a priori, contain necessity and universality and establish scientific knowledge (Kant, 1992, B190-B197).

5-In kant's view , the metaphysics in it's traditional form is considered as a product of applying of phenomena on the world of neumenon , and it is emphasized that this metaphysics is impossible.

Sadra's Philosophy in Kant Terminology

Muslim philosophers divide rational concepts into two categories: primary philosophical intelligibles and secondary philosophical intelligibles. In this classification, they call concepts such as man, heaven, earth… each of which has a particular objectification and because of its sense is applied to its referent such that from one sense no one can go to other "primary philosophical intelligibles" and concepts such as existence, cause, effect, necessary, one, and many which have no particular objectification "secondary philosophical intelligibles".

In the first step of his philosophy and under "Existence and its Principles", Sadr al-Muta'allihin considers existence as "principal" and quiddity as "mentally posited" (Sadr al-Din Shirazi, 1984, pp. 9-18).

According to this view, concepts of the first category, i.e. primary philosophical intelligibles, are mentally-posited ones, and existence cannot be applied on them unless accidentally and virtually. But the concept of existence is principial and speaks of the essence of objects. If we translate this in Kant's terminology, we have to say that for Mulla Sadra, primary philosophical intelligibles may be applied only in the sphere of phenomenon, and out of this sphere, they cannot be applied on things in themselves (noumena) unless accidentally and virtually. The concept of existence, which may be attributed to all concepts of the first category i.e. primary philosophical intelligibles, is not phenomenal, and is applied in the sphere of noumena on objects.

In other words, our knowledge of objects in the field of primary philosophical intelligibles is acquired through mind and follows structure of our mind. Thus, in this field, knowledge is restricted to phenomenal one, but knowledge of existence however is a product of immediate perception of the reality of existence (Sadr al-Din Shirazi, 1981, p. 7) and it cannot be considered as being phenomenal. In this immediate perception, man meets the reality of existence for the first time in his knowledge of his own self and becomes aware of that; this is the meeting point between knowledge and existence and in which knowledge is not separated from existence. Thus, its identity which has been confirmed based on immediate vision of the reality of existence cannot be doubted in (Sadr al-Din Shirazi, 1984, p. 24).

Thus, Mulla Sadra acquires a concept which is phenomenically void, but in the sphere of noumenon, it can be applied on objects. In other words, having discovered the concept of existence and its distinction from other concepts and analyzed immediate perception of it, Mulla Sadra opens a window to know things in themselves.

For him, difference between beings (unanimated things, vegetation, animals, human beings) may be explained only based on their difference in their enjoyment of existence, i.e. based on their existential levels (Sadr al-Din Shirazi, 1981, p. 70). Qualities of cause, effect, necessary, contingent, one, many, potential, and actual… as well suggest of existence of objects, thus they are objective qualities of existence which are applied on objects only in the sphere of noumenon and they cannot be considered as being phenomenal.

In Sadra's philosophy, fundamental rules and principles such as "agreement of two opposites is impossible", "each and every effect is in need of a cause" should be considered as ontological principles which inform of the reality of existence and rules and principles governing it. Thus, such principles may be understood only through understanding of the reality of existence; this is an understanding concerning existential realities of the outer world and thus it gives new information about them, and so it is not analytic. On the other hand, it is not acquired through sense experience, thus it is before experience and a priori. In other words, such principles may be understood not through mentally analyzing them or empirical study of their referents, but through contemplation on the reality of existence and its qualities.

Finally, Mulla Sadra, with such terminology, emphasized noumenal aspect of existence and its qualities and phenomenal aspect of primary philosophical intelligibles and opened a window for metaphysics as a discipline containing necessary and universal, but not, analytic propositions; he tried to refine metaphysics of issues in which qualities of primary philosophical intelligibles (phenomena) had been attributed to existence (noumenon) or qualities of existence (noumenon) have been attributed to primary philosophical intelligibles (phenomena), and bring metaphysics to its climax.

Comparison and Analysis

1- Both philosophers have made distinction between concepts such as "cause", "substance", "unity", "plurality", "existence" and "necessity" which are considered in Mulla Sadra's philosophy as "secondary philosophical intelligibles" and in Kant's philosophy as a priori concepts of understanding on the one hand and primary philosophical intelligibles and sense data on the other; and made uses of this distinction in solution of the problem of knowledge and way to attain universal and necessary knowledge. Difference between the two is that Mulla Sadra thinks that these qualities are applicable on objects in the sphere of neumenon and Kant considers them as being phenomenal.

2- Sadra pays special attention to the concept of existence and mentions it as a concept which may be applied on objects in the sphere

of neumenon, and other secondary philosophical intelligibles are its real qualities. Kant, however, considers existence as one of a priori concepts of understanding and thus phenomenal. That concept of existence is phenomenal means that it follows structure and conditions of our mind, and thus it cannot be applied on objects as they are in the sphere of neumenon. And we should consider them only as qualities of objects as they are in our mind and appears to us.

Concerning existence's being phenomenal, it should be noted that if consider existence as being phenomenal, we cannot apply it on thing in itself which has not yet come into mind, and thus we cannot speak of existence or non-existence of "neumenon" or "thing in itself" and say that it exists or it does not exist. In other words, speaking of phenomenon means speaking of something which is itself "non-phenomenon"; and what occurs to our mind is phenomenon of that non-phenomenon; i.e. we have accept that non-phenomenon, which is a concept correlative to phenomenon and according to Kant, we cannot know it, exists. That is, we apply out existence, which is for Kant one of the concepts of understanding and it is applicable and meaningful only in the sphere of phenomenon, out of this sphere i.e. on the world of things non-phenomenal and in themselves; unless we make a distinction between phenomenal and non-phenomenal existence and say that things exist out of our mind but not in the sense that we understand in our mind for the category of existence as a category of understanding and a phenomenal concept; but things in themselves are and exist of a sense other than this sense.

3- Other point is that relying on principles of his philosophy Kant considers knowledge of "I" as being phenomenal and its qualities as transcendental, and where he informs of exceptional role of this perception as compared to other ones and speaks of permanent attendance of "I think" among other perceptions, understands distionction between this perception and other ones which is discussed in Islamic philosophy under distinction between intuitive knowledge and acquired knowledge.

4- Both philosophers emphasize making correct uses of concepts and consider attribution of qualituis of things in themselves to phenomenal concepts or empoyment of phenomenal concepts in description of things in themselves as sources of ambiguities in

metaphysics; difference is that Kant considers metaphysics in its traditional form as a product of applying of phenomenal categories beyond phenomena on the world of neumenon, and Sadra deems some problems in metaphysics as products of attribution of qualities of existence to primary philosophical intelligibles which are mentiond in Kant terminology as attribution of qualities of the world of neumenon to phenomenal concepts, and emphasize to refine metaphysics of such problems.

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Mulla Sadra And Hamzah Fansuri: A Comparative Study of Some Aspects of Their Metaphysical Teachings[*]

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Abstract

Hamzah Fansuri who lived in northern Sumatra in the sixteenth century is the foremost Malay Sufi poet of the Malay world. He was the first to pen lofty and abstract metaphysical principles and ideas in the Malay language. This paper undertakes a comparative treatment of certain fundamental aspects of Fansuri's metaphysical writings with that of Mulla Sadra. It highlights some of the significant similarities and differences in their metaphysical discussions on the divine Essence, and creation, and also touch upon their influence in their respective worlds.

Introduction

As indicated by the title, the focus of my paper is a comparative study of some aspects of the metaphysical teachings of Hamzah Fansuri and Mulla Sadra. And the aspects I have chosen to deal with as a basis of comparison are their discussions on the divine Essence and creation.

This being a World Congress on Mulla Sadra, I assume that almost everybody present here today is very much familiar with the figure of Mulla Sadra but not many know of Hamzah Fansuri, one of

the most important and famous Sufi writers of the Malay world. As such, I shall begin my presentation by providing some important information on Hamzah Fansuri.

Hamzah Fansuri

Hamzah Fansuri lived in Acheh, in northern Sumatra which was one of the most important and major centers of Islam in South-east Asia after the conquest of the Malay sultanate of Malacca by the Portuguese in 1511. The dates of birth and death of Hamzah Fansuri are not known with certainty, however based on certain written evidences, scholars have established that Fansuri must have lived during the period preceding and during the reign of Sultan `Ala'u'l-Din Ri`ayat Shah (1588 to 1604) which places him in the latter part of the sixteenth century.[1] He was an accomplished Sufi who belonged to the Qadiriyyah *tariqah* and who knew Arabic and Persian very well besides his mother tongue, the Malay language. He was widely travelled, his spiritual quest bringing him to many places, including the Middle-East and many parts of the Malay-Indonesian archipelago. He was well-read and knew the works of many of the great Islamic intellectual and spiritual figures such as al-Hallaj, Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali, Farid al-Din `Attar, Jalal-al-Din Rumi, Fakr al-Din `Iraqi and `Abd al-Rahman Jami. However, it was the teachings of Ibn al-`Arabi and `Abd al-Karim al-Jili which exerted the greatest influence on Fansuri.

Fansuri's fame and importance as a spiritual and intellectual figure of the Malay world is due not only to his profound mystical teachings but also to the fact that he was the first Malay thinker to have penned lofty and abstract metaphysical principles and ideas in the Malay language. His mystical writings in elegant prose and beautiful poetry constitute the earliest extensive works on metaphysics in Malay. Among Fansuri's works which are well-known and accessible to us today are the three prose works: *Asrar al-`arifin* (*The Secrets of the Gnostics*), *Sharab al-`ashiqin* (*The Drink of Lovers*) and *al-Muntahi* (*The Adept*) and a collection of verses or *sha'ir* dealing with topics such as the descent of the Absolute, the divine Qualities, the immutable entities (*al-a`yan al-thabitah*), gnosis (*ma`rifah*) and the spirit (*al-ruh*).[2] However, his teachings are not always well-received. His

mystical philosophy was considered as pantheistic and his person a *zindiq* by the influential `alim`, Nur al-Din al-Raniri (d. 1666) who lived in the seventeenth century and who caused much of Fansuri's writings together with that of his followers, to be burnt and their persons persecuted.[3]

A Discussion od some aspects of Hamzah Amzah Fansuri's Metaphysical Teachings

According to Fansuri when the divine Throne (*al-`arsh*), Heaven and Hell and the Universe were yet dormant, concealed in non-existence, the divine Essence (*al-dhat*) dwelt in solitude without Names and Attributes.[4] This Essence is called *Huwa* and this is Its highest Name. However, Fansuri explains, '*Huwa*' is not an essential Name (*ism dhatiyyah*), rather it is applied only symbolically as the Essence (*ism isharah*).[5] The divine Essence is unconditioned and undetermined and even existence or being cannot be predicated of it. In his *Asrar al-`ariffin*, Fansuri states:

> The Essence, although It can be conceived in terms of symbolical expression is, in Its innermost nature, beyond knowledge, for It cannot be conceived. Although It is One, there is no oneness [to Its Oneness]; and although It is Single, there is no singleness [to Its Singleness]. We predicate of It attributes, essence and names merely as symbolical expressions.....[6]

And in his *Sharab al-`ashiqin*, Fansuri writes:

> Know that the innermost Essence of the Truth, Glorious and Exalted is called by 'the people of the Path' `indeterminacy' (*la ta`ayyun*). It is called indeterminacy because our intelligence and skill in verbal exposition, knowledge (*`ilm*) and gnosis (*ma`rifah*) are unable to reach it....even the prophets and saints are struck with awe of It. Hence, Prophet Muhammad (God bless him and give him peace) says: "Glory be to Thee! We cannot really know Thee." And says further, "Contemplate upon God's creation and not upon His Essence". This is why 'the people of the Path' call this Essence indeterminate, meaning: non-manifest.[7]

A poet, Fansuri often employs imagery to express abstract metaphysical ideas. For example, he compares the divine Essence without Names and Attributes to the "motionless ocean of indeterminacy" which not even "the noonday brightness of human intellect" is able to venture into or fathom.[8]

The divine Essence or God by Himself is also referred to by Fansuri as the Necessary Being (*wajib al-wujud*) who is Self-Existent and is the Cause of all existence or the free and willing agent which gives existence to the creatures.[9]

The Name *Allah* is the all-embracing Name in which all divine Names and Attributes are comprised. Although in the *Asrar*, Fansuri states that the Name *Allah* is "a step lower in grade" than *Huwa*, he does not mean that it is less than *Huwa*, since the Name *Allah* includes the divine Essence. Rather, Fansuri explains, *Huwa* is the secret or inward aspect of *Allah*.[10]

Following Ibn al-`Arabi, Fansuri conceives of God's creative activity in terms of His self-determination involving five stages (*martabat*) of descents (*tanazzulat*), beginning from Him and returning back to Him.[11] The first stage of descent which is also the First Determination (*ta`ayyun awwal*) and by which the Essence becomes individualized involves a four-fold determinacy. These are: Knowledge (*`ilm*), Being (*wujud*), Sight (*shuhud*) and Light (*nur*). The individualization constitutes the outward aspect of the Essence and it occurs at the plane of exclusive Unity (*ahadiyyah*). The First Determination is also the stage in which the Knower and the Known, the First (*al-Awwal*) and the Last (*al-Akhir*) and, the Outwardly Manifest (*al-Zahir*) and the Inwardly Hidden (*al-Batin*) acquire their Names.

The second descent or Determination is that of the immutable entities (*al-a`yan al-thabitah*).[12] When the divine Essence by virtue of Knowledge gazes upon His Perfection, that which is known are referred to as the immutable entities or the Reality of things (*al-haqiqah al-ashya'*). These immutable entities are contained in the divine Essence and are not separate from It. The Second Determination occurs at the plane of inclusive Unity (*wahidiyah*).

The third descent or Determination is the stage in which the immutable entities are imbued with the Relational Spirit (*ruh idafi*)

giving rise to the Primordial Potentialities (*isti`dad asli*) and the particularizations of the human, animal and vegetal spirits. The Relational Spirit is also identified with the Light of Muhammad (*nur Muhammad*), the Universal Intellect (*al-`aql al-kulli*) and the Supreme Pen (*al-qalam al-a`la*).

The fourth descent or Determination is the stage in which the Relational Spirit and immutable entities actualize their Primordial Potentialities through the divine Command: "Be! (*Kun*)". By the divine Command, the Relational Spirit separates from the divine Essence and the Creator becomes distinguished from His creation.

The fifth descent or Determination is the materialization of the human, animal and vegetal spirits into the World of Matter.

Employing the imagery of the ocean, Fansuri explains the five descents or Determinations of the divine Essence in the following manner: The divine Essence without names and attributes is the motionless Ocean of indeterminacy. The First Determination in which the Essence as Knower gazes upon Its Perfection is likened by Fansuri to the heaving of the ocean and waves appearing. The waves are the immutable entities. As the waves are not separate from the ocean so are the immutable entities not separate from the divine Essence. The imbuing of the immutable entities with the Relational Spirit is likened to the ocean subsiding and vapors beginning to arise. The vapors gathering in the sky to form clouds are the Primordial Potentialities. The separation of the Relational Spirit from the Essence and the actualization of the Potentialities at the divine Command "Be!" is the cloud bursting into rain and falling onto the earth. The fifth stage which is the materialization of the spirits into the World of Matter is likened to the drops of rain becoming water flowing in rivers. And the rivers flow back to the ocean; the ocean neither shrinks nor expands, although its waves are perpetually ebbing and flowing.[13]

According to Fansuri, the descent of the Absolute is nothing but the various ways in which God manifests Himself to us in the course of our knowledge of Him. Every created being is a manifestation (*tajalli*) of the Creator. Fansuri does not conceive of creation as a necessity but as a free and voluntary action of the Creator. Since the world is a created thing, it cannot be said to exist eternally with God. In the *Asrar*, he states:

> ...the world is created; the judgement being that it is
> something new (*hadith*) for it comes into existence
> (*muzahir*) by virtue of the divine Command: `Be!'. It
> must not be said that the world is eternal.[14]

However, Fansuri disagrees with the view that the being of God and the world are not one and the same. Since God is the only reality, how can there be a relationship? Thus, for Fansuri, the relation between God and the world is only metaphorical. However, he categorically denies that God is identical with the world. The world is a reflection of the predispositions of the Being of God; it is the effects (*athar*) of His creative activity.[15] In the *Asrar*, Fansuri writes:

> That which we perceive, whether outwardly or inwardly,
> all disappear -- they are as waves. The ocean is not
> `separate' from its waves, and the waves are not `separate'
> from the ocean. In like manner God, Glorious and Most
> Exalted is not `separate' from the World. But He is neither
> `in' the world nor `outside' it; neither `above' nor `below'
> it; neither to the `right' nor to the `left' of it; neither in
> `front' of nor `behind' it; neither `separate' from nor
> `joined' to it...[16]

SOME SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES TO BE FOUND IN THE METAPHYSICAL TEACHINGS OF MULLA SADRA AND HAMZAH FANSURI

In his monumental work, *al- Asfar al-arba`ah*, Mulla Sadra states:

> Know that things in their act of existence (*wujudiyyah*)
> possess three degrees (*maratib*): the first degree is Pure
> Being [the divine Essence] which is without limit.
> This the gnostics call the Hidden Ipseity (*al-huwiyat
> al-ghaybiyyah*), the absolutely Hidden (*al-ghayb al-mutlaq*)
> and the Essence of Unity (*al-dhat al-ahadiyyah*). It is this
> Being which has no name and no quality and which discursive
> knowledge and perception cannot reach, for everything that

possesses name and description is a concept among others and is found in the mind or in apprehension. And all that which can be attained by knowledge and perception possesses a relation with that which is other than itself and is attached to that which is different from itself. Whereas It [Pure Being] is not like that, for it comes before all things and It is in itself without change or transformation. It is pure Hiddenness and Mystery and the absolutely unknowable except by means of its concomitants and effects. And as far as its sacred Essence is concerned, It cannot be limited or determined by any determination, even that of absoluteness, for this would place Its Being under the conditions of restrictions and particularizations such as particular differences and individuating characteristics......

The second degree is that of existence belonging to something other than the thing itself. It is relative existence conditioned by qualifications that are added to it and qualified by limiting conditions such as the intelligences, the souls, the heavens and the elements and the compounds of which men, the animals etc. are comprised. The third degree is that of the `Absolute Existence in its deployment' (*al-wujud al-munbasit*).....It cannot be bound by any particular description or determined by any defined limits such as contingency and eternity, priority and posteriority, substantiality and accidentality......Rather according to the nature of its essence without anything else being added to it, it possesses all the ontological determinations and objective modes of existence.

In fact objective forms of reality issue forth from the grades of its essence and the different modes of its determination and its different states of being. It is according to the common language of the Sufis, the principle of the Universe, the `Throne of the Compassionate', the truth by which things are created and the reality of realities. It multiplies while it remains one, according to the multiplicity of existents. It is eternal with that which is eternal and created with the created. Words are incapable of describing the way it deploys itself and embraces all existents except by means of symbolism....[17]

Thus, Mulla Sadra divides reality into three categories: One, the Pure Being or the divine Essence which is without limit and therefore, beyond definition and description. Two, the Extended Being and three, the relative beings which are all the existents existentiated by the Extended Being by determining Itself in various degrees and grades in accordance with Its nature and attributes.

From the above quotation, it can be observed that there are many similarities in Mulla Sadra's and Hamzah Fansuri's discussion on the divine Essence. They both state that the divine Essence being indeterminate, unlimited and boundless has no name and attributes. It is pure Hiddenness and Mystery and unknowable to man. The Essence which is beyond name and description can neither be apprehended nor conceived by man. Whatever term that is used to denote it is only used symbolically as an aid to refer to it. Since the divine Essence is unconditioned and undetermined, even terms such as being and existence, absoluteness and oneness cannot be predicated of It.

In their writings, both Fansuri and Mulla Sadra also refer to the divine Essence as the Necessary Being who is the source of all beings, and every perfection of being is a manifestation of His Perfection. And that the divine Essence can only be known through its effects.

Like Fansuri, Mulla Sadra views God's creative activity to involve the self-determination of the divine Essence at several ontological levels or planes. The First determination of the Essence is also the beginning of Its individualization and is the creative Principle which causes all things to come into existence. The First determination which Mulla Sadra refers to as "The Extended Being" (*al-wujud al-munbasit*) or the "First Intellect" (*al-`aql al-awwal*) or "The Truth of truths" (*haqiqah al-haqa'iq*) is one in Its essence but It possesses infinite ontological determinations or possibilities.[18] From the divine Essence which is simple and one, only a simple being can issue forth. The possibilities contained in the divine Essence are the immutable entities (*al-a`yan al-thabitah*). And each immutable entity governs the characteristics of its particular existents at the various levels of reality, extending from the spiritual (*ruhani*), the subtle (*mithali*) and corporeal (*hissi*).

Here it should be noted that unlike Fansuri who does not

consider the immutable entities to have a separative existence or reality of their own, Mulla Sadra believes in the reality of the immutable entities in a spiritual world which is independent of the world of particulars. For Mulla Sadra, the immutable entity is in essence one with its particulars but differs from them in characteristics which arise from the substance or `matter' of the particulars. The immutable entity appears different in each stage of manifestation, while in the realm of reality, it is one. The beings of this world are considered by Mulla Sadra as the reflections of the immutable entities so that they (the particulars) are like the immutable entities and share in their reality; and at the same time, are different from the immutable entities in being less real and farther removed from the source of Being.[19]

If Fansuri uses the imagery of the ocean and its waves and the consequent processes of evaporation, cloud formation and rainfall to express and describe the process of the self-determination of the divine Essence at the various stages and ontological planes of manifestation, Mulla Sadra on the other hand, uses the doctrine of *tashkik al-wujud* to explain the same process. For Mulla Sadra, creation is the expansive process of the gradation of Being stretching from the First Determination to Prime Matter.

The term *tashkik* means when a single reality actualizes itself in a number of things in varying degrees. The symbol that is used to demonstrate the principle of *tashkik* is light. Light is a single reality which can actualize itself in many different degrees or grades such as the "light of the sun", the "light of the candle" and the "light of the lamp" etc. In each of these examples or instances of light, the one single reality that is involved is light but it is light in its various degrees of intensity.[20] Being like light can actualize itself in varying degrees and grades. That which is present in every existent is being and that which distinguishes every existent from another is also being. For Mulla Sadra, Being is both the principle of identity, as well as differentiation.

In Mulla Sadra's perspective, it is the intensity of Being which determines the grade and level of existence of an existent.[21] The more intense the degree of being actualised in an existent, the higher is its grade and position in the hierarchy of beings. Every determination of Being is in accordance with Its nature and the degree of intensity of

Being determines the extent of the manifestation of Its attributes. In cases where the degree of intensity is greater, more of the attributes of Being are made manifest and less are non-manifest or hidden; and in cases where the degree of intensity is less, less of the attributes of Being are manifested and more are concealed. Thus, in Mulla Sadra's view it is the intensity of being which determines the extent of the manifestation of the attributes of Being in existents and which in turn determines the level of existence of a particular being in Being's hierarchy of self-determinations or manifestations.

It is clear from the above discussion that both Mulla Sadra and Fansuri subscribe to the doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud* or the unity of Being which is the central doctrine in the metaphysical teachings of the school of Ibn al-`Arabi. According to this doctrine, there is only one Being, that of God besides which there is no other. In reality nothing else can be said to exist (*la mawjud illa' Llah*).Things that appear to exist are nothing but the self-manifestations (*tajalliyat*) of the One Being which alone Is. [22]

However, there is a significant difference between Fansuri's *wahdat at-wujud* and Mulla Sadra's. Fansuri following Ibn al-`Arabi, considers only Being or God as the truly Real (*al-Haqq*) and the multiplicity of existents which are nothing more than the self-manifestations of Being cannot be regarded to possess any reality of their own. In contrast, Mulla Sadra by asserting that Being manifests itself in various degrees and grades of intensity is able to maintain both the ontological primacy of existence in a mode of Being, as well as its reality as a particular grade of being. In Mulla Sadra's metaphysics, the principle of the unity of being involves the assertion of both the sole reality of Being, as well as the reality of existents at their own plane of existence. [23]

Both Mulla Sadra and Hamzah Fansuri share the view that God or the Necessary Being is not only the source or cause of everything that exists but He is also the goal and end of creation. The existentiation of existents or relative beings from Being constitute the descending arc (*al-qaws al-nuzuli*) of creation and the return of relative beings to their source constitute the ascending arc (*al-qaws al-su`udi*). For Mulla Sadra, the descending arc represents the gradation of Being from a more perfect and intense mode or grade of being to a less

perfect and intense state of being in the direction of nothingness (`adam`) or darkness; and the ascending arc, the transformation of being from the less perfect or intense condition of being to a more perfect and intense degree of being in the direction of Pure Being. Mulla Sadra makes use of the principles of *tashkik al-wujud* and *harakat al-jawhariyyah* (motion in substance) to explain the gradation and transformation of being in the descending and ascending arcs.

Finally, a major difference which can be discerned between Mulla Sadra and Hamzah Fansuri is the manner in which they present and express their metaphysical ideas. Mulla Sadra's metaphysical writings are highly philosophical, making use of the technical vocabulary of Islamic philosophy and providing logical arguments and proofs for his position. A sufi and a poet in addition to that, Fansuri's writings reveal his sufi orientation and often makes use of imagery to demonstrate his metaphysical ideas. Nevertheless, they both quote quite extensively from the Qur'an and *Hadith* whenever a point they are making is either in conformity with the teachings of the Qur'an or are considered as commentaries or interpretations to the meanings contained in the verses of the Qur'an or *Hadith*. However, at the heart of their metaphysical expositions, be it in philosophical Arabic or poetic Malay, stands the veritable mystical or illuminative experience of Being which is the source and *raison d'etre* of their metaphysical teachings.

Conclusion

Both Mulla Sadra and Hamzah Fansuri are considered as major intellectual figures in their lands of birth and their neighboring countries who exerted tremendous influence on the thinkers who followed in their wake. In Persia, Mulla Sadra's thought made a tremendous impact not only on the philosophers who followed him immediately but also in subsequent centuries, especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. His philosophy founded a new school -- *al-hikmat al-muta`aliyyah* -- in the history of the Islamic philosophical tradition. Furthermore, much of the revival of *Hikmat* philosophy in post-Safavid Persia revolves mainly around his philosophical thought. Until today, Mulla Sadra's philosophy continue

to fascinate and engage the philosophical minds of the leading intellectuals of Iran. And since his introduction to the West through the works of scholars such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Fazlur Rahman and Henry Corbin, there have developed growing interest in Mulla Sadra's thought as demonstrated by the increasing number of books, articles and dissertations written on him.

In the Malay world, Hamzah Fansuri is regarded as a major thinker whose writings created a new intellectual vocabulary which provided the facility for discourse on profound spiritual and philosophical matters in the Malay language. In the Malay world, he is also considered as a major representative of doctrinal Sufism generally and the school of Ibn al-`Arabi specifically. And in this century there has been much interest in the writings of Fansuri, not only among Malay scholars but also European scholars, particularly the Dutch. Moreover, his sufi poetry has never ceased to inspire the many generations of Malay poets. such as the case with Amir Hamzah, an outstanding Malay poet of the twentieth century.[24] Today, much of the interest in and revival of Islamic thought, doctrinal Sufism and sufi literature in Indonesia and Malaysia are related to his works.

Endnotes

[*] A paper presented at The World Congress on Mulla Sadra in Tehran, Iran from May 23-27, 1999, organized by the Sadra Islamic Philosophy Researches Institute.

[1] Syed Muhammad Naguib al-Attas, *Raniri and the Wujudiyyah of 17th Century Acheh*. Monographs of the Malaysian Branch Royal Asiatic Society III (Singapore, 1966), 44. See also, Zailan Moris, 'Fansuri, Hamzah' in Oliver Leaman (ed.), *The Biographical Encyclopedia of Islamic Philosophy, Vol. I* (London: Thoemmes Continuum, 2006), 122-124.

[2] A romanized Malay edition of Hamzah Fansuri's three prose works and their translations into English are available in S.M.N. al-Attas, *The Mysticism of Hamzah Fansuri* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1970), 233-472 and also several of his Malay *sha`irs*, 490-504.

[3] For a detailed treatment of this subject, see S.M.N. al-Attas, *Raniri and the Wujudiyyah of 17th Century Acheh.*

[4] S.M. N. al-Attas, *The Mysticism of Hamzah Fansuri*, 66.

[5] *Ibid.*, 67.

[6] *Ibid.*, 69.

[7] *Ibid.*, 435.

[8] *Ibid.*, 70.

[9] I*bid.*, 67

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] See *Sharab al-áshiqin*, Ch.5, 'On an exposition of the Manifestations of the Pure Essence of God Most Exalted', *Ibid.*, 435-439.

[12] Following William Chittick, *al-a`yan al-thabitah* is translated as immutable entities. See W.C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-`Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989), 11-12.

[13] S.M.N. al-Attas, *The Mysticism of Hamzah Fansuri*, 436.

[14] *Ibid.*, 74.

[15] *Ibid.*, 68.

[16] *Ibid.*, 68.

[17] Quoted in Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Life and Thought*, (Albany: SUNY Press, 1981), 177-78.

[18] *Ibid.*, 178.

[19] S.H. Nasr, `Sadr al-Din Shirazi (Mulla Sadra)', M.A. Razavi (ed.) *The Islamic Intellectual Tradition in Persia* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1996), 282.

[20] *Ibid.*, 279.

[21] Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *al-Asfar al-`arba`ah* (ed.), Muhammad Rida al-Muzaffar (Tehran: Shirkah Dar al-Ma`rif al-Islamiyyah 1378 A.H./1958 A.D.) Vol.I, Pt.I, p. 433.

[22] S.H.Nasr, *Islamic Life and Thought*, 176.

[23] *Ibid.*

[24] See Md. Salleh Yaapar, *Mysticism and Poetry: A Hermeneutical Reading of Amir Hamzah's Poetry* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka, 1995).

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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Jaspers on Mohammad's personality and the resulting dilemmas for debates on Islam in West

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Abstract

In this article the main idea is to engage with Jaspers' view on Prophet Mohammad and analyze his judgment on Prophet Mohammad and find out on what grounds Jaspers ruled out Prophet's civilizational role. Because, in nutshell, Jaspers thinks there are four primordial personalities who are the main constitutive figures in our contemporary civilizations. These four paradigmatic individuals are Buddha, Confucius, Jesus, and Socrates. The implication of this view is that apart from these four abovementioned personalities who happen to be instrumental in the birth of four grand living civilizations in the world others (and other cultures and civilizations who happen to adhere to other paradigmatic personalities such as Muslims who follow Prophet Mohammad and his Infallible Family such as Imam Ali, Lady Fatima, Imam Hassan, and Imam Hossein) are either insignificant in terms of paradigmaticality or need to merge with one of these living traditions which are the only authentic ones. Although he may not be charged on what his view may imply nevertheless this is what could be inferred and as a matter of fact what he specifically says about Prophet Mohammad makes us to believe that this inference could not be farfetched. On the contrary, it is what one could conclude from his explicit statement in regard to Prophet Mohammad and additionally following Jaspers' reading of paradigm and paradigmatic personalities could assist us in finding the imbedded reasons for the complex engagement of European elites towards Islam and Western intellectuals' approach vis-à-vis Muslims. The elites in Europe and America who have influencing roles on political discourses and social policies do endorse the view that Islam lacks any civic framework and Muslims cannot contribute to civilized life brought by modernity. The reason is not accidental but inherent in what constitutes Islam, namely the

'Prophetic Experience' of Mohammad who is the key man within Islamic tradition. Once it is proved, as it has been claimed by Jaspers, that he lacks the paradigmatic role then it is very easy to discredit Muslims of any claim to heirs for a unique tradition that is the base of any living tradition such as the ones Jaspers relate, namely Christian, Buddhist, Chinese and Secular Europe. Finally our reading of Jaspers may shed some light on the impracticality of Multiculturalism of some British sociologists who are inattentive to philosophical and even theological or historical (which practically means European historians have systematically attempted to downplay the living role of Islam and Muslims in Europe up to this very postmodern day of ours) aspects of the debates on Islam in West that wrongly has been constructed as debates on Islam and West.

Introduction

Who is responsible for this global enmity that we are facing today towards Muslims who happen to be more than one third of world's population and the most mobile ones? Many may hold politicians responsible for this widespread cult of hatred in Europe and America towards Muslims but this is not acceptable for an intellectual who is used to dissect socio-political constructions by laying bare the hidden dimensions within the fabric of society or societies. We take simple examples such as Hijab that has become a great controversial issue within France or Germany that has led to oppression of Muslims in Public Square. When politicians of various ideological backgrounds stand behind such oppressive policies in banning or desiring to reshape the contours of conscience of Muslims in all details, then one cannot but reflect upon the very grounds of ideas which allow such policies to emerge within the public arena. Why is it possible that Muslims could be singled out, stigmatized and finally demonized so easily in Europe and America? Policies which grow upon fear within the minds and hearts of public cannot but have a root in mythology and we, as Muslim intellectuals, need to find out these myths and demythologize the Public Square by deconstructing what has been wrongly constructed for wrong purposes and based on wrong assumptions.

One of those grand myths that equip politicians in Europe and America is the notion that 'Islam' is an alien element which is encroaching upon the European and American culture and it should be

combated in any way and by any means. In other words, if one could establish that 'Islam' is not part of European Identity then by extension one has established the idea that Muslims are not Europeans and their presence is of circumstantial nature, which, shall result in one single conclusion, namely integration based on European Terms, whatever they might be.

However the history tells us a different story than the one plotted by Orientalism-thinkers (who often attempt to geographicalize Islam to contemporary underdeveloped countries, where Muslims are in majority) wherever we look at in Europe both East and West or even in Russia and America.

Let's start with Russia; Islam arrived in Russia in 922 by about 80 years earlier than Christianity. But today one attempt to demonize Islam and Muslims in Russian Federation by designing an image that is not historically correct due to the fact that Russians are both Muslims and Christians as they are Buddhists and Shamanists. In other words, to depict Muslims as an alien element within Russian culture is far from good scholarship as well as based on wrong narrative. When we look at America we soon find out that the story concocted by White/Christian is far from facts of history as Muslims arrived in this continent as early as ninth century and their immigration has never stopped up to this very day. This is true with South America too, as all over South we can find the strong presence of Muslims up to present time. Now we should turn to Europe (as America- Canada and Australia- has always been an extension of European culture) and assess her position vis-à-vis Islam. When you travel across Europe you can encounter two aspects of Islam in Europe: one is the historical dimension of Islam, which one can discover in various forms of buildings, relics, conservatory (such as Gul Baba corner in Budapest) and so on and so forth. The second one is the vital one which could be divided into two dimensions: the physical presence (in the form of communities of Muslims in and around cities across Europe) and the intellectual presence. Once you pass through Turkey through Bulgaria, Bosnia, Serbia, Albania, Croatia, Hungary and then go as far as Austria, Germany, France, Spain, and then from Russia to Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and (not mentioning England, Greece, Italy, …) so on and so forth you can see the immense presence of the first aforementioned dimension, which hardly could be

disputed. In other words, Islam and Muslim have always been part and parcel of Europe since the very beginning of Europe (either as non-Muslims, then Christians, and finally as Muslims). But in this essay we are not mainly concerned with the sociological or demographical dimensions of Islam and Muslims. On the contrary, we would like to look at the intellectual dimension of Islam in Europe and why the native Europeans who have had Islam as their frame of reference have not been as verbal as both Jewish and Christian intellectuals despite the importance of intellectual activity within Islamic tradition in general and Shia-tradition in particular, as there are great many historical facts that prove the presence of many Europeans at the House of Imam Sadigh. Because this lack of intellectual prominence has given rise to two problems within contemporary Europe, which affect Muslims in dual sense and deprives European intellectuals from true dialogue between religious traditions within Europe and without her. The two problems are of political as well as intellectual nature, namely the lack of engagement on behalf of intellectuals within Europe with Islam (as a native tradition within Europe) has resulted in Islamophobia politically and ignorance intellectually. But in my view, both of them are reducible to the intellectual one and once this rectified the other aspects including the political one will follow suit. As long as the intellectual dimension is not dealt with at its proper level with profound engagement Muslims within Europe and Islam in Europe (America, Russia, …) will suffer as it has suffered for so many centuries. In addressing this intellectual problem I would like to look at one of the significant contemporary philosophers who demonstrated very skillfully both dialogical as well as intercivilizational qualities within his frame of thought, namely Karl Jaspers.

Multiculturalism and debates on Islam in West

Many among intellectuals in Europe and America either Muslims or otherwise try to engage with Muslim issue at a socio-political level and in connection to the sociological dimensions which at final analysis is reduced to the question of identity solely. In addition this question about 'identity' is not taken along universal notion of human nature or perennial quest of Man in relation to Cosmos or as it is

put within Indian philosophy Atman-Brahman equation. On the contrary, the pursuit is solely based on a Fichtian notion of self that is purely designed on nationalistic terms which perfectly suits the parameters of Enlightenment philosophy. This line of debate has been interestingly explicated by one of leading Muslims intellectuals in England in terms of multiculturalism that preaches a new Gospel but not for average people on the streets. On the contrary this is a political panacea for highly skilled politicians who need to know how to twist the votes of various ethnic groups in England or elsewhere in Europe. In other words, Tariq Moodod's *Remaking of Multiculturalism* either before 7/7 or afterwards does not go to the roots of the question why Islam is such a problematic issue in Europe or why are Europeans afraid of Islam?

Moodod's attempt to make and gradually remake the parameters of Multiculturalism, to say the least, is an abortive endeavour, as it avoids tackling the real issue which is at the heart and mind of Enlightenment thinkers who cherish their secular tradition deeply and view the world through their glasses and seeing through their eyes Islam has no civic values. Hence Muslims cannot cling to a paradigm which lacks clear civilized guidelines and the only way forward is to transmutate the core of Muslim faith by transforming its metaphysical constituency. And this is what Moodod and many who suggest a Fichtian notion of identity making for Muslims in Europe. Because this is finally an invitation to make an Islam that resembles in its foundation more to Kant than Abu Zar. That is to say, this multicultural project is to reshape the ethics of Islam along proposed lines of Durkheim and Weber where ethics is dissociated from ethos as the former is reduced to the realm of the public self and the latter a matter of psychological being that has no significant bearing on social relations unless a crime is committed, which could bring other aspects of the citizen into equation in the moment of crime.

Moodod and others in academia are expecting something from politicians which is not at their disposal as this goes beyond the reach of political intelligentsia and most of those who look at human problems in terms of political architectural engineering. Because by looking at the heart of the problem we will soon find out that the question of Islam in Europe has not even been rightly contemplated by

modern intellectuals who are supposedly the beacons of knowledge in matters of reason and faith. By analyzing their various discourses we shall find two different approaches to Islam: Islam and Europe; and Islam against Europe. Hardly one may find someone who viewed Islam in Europe, namely Islam as an organic part of European civilization as it is not hard to find many Greeks or Byzantines from the outset of Islam who joined the Prophetic call. To follow the making-remaking-re-remaking projects of Multiculturalism does not lead to the roots of the problem which Muslims and to certain extend non-Muslims are facing in Europe and America as the former is only a political tool in accommodating various conflicting views without addressing them at the right level.

Jaspers' view on Islam

In this article we take Karl Jaspers's view on Islam as a prime example and attempt to understand the bases of his misunderstanding regarding Islam, in general, and prophet Mohammad in particular. For expecting Gerhard Schroder, for instance, to solve the problems of Muslims and Islam in Germany is an unfounded expectation which would not yield any fruitful result. As politicians work within the parameters of civic notions that have been reshaped by intellectual elites of various tastes in any given society and it is meaningless to hope that they can go beyond what is thought by the best, not necessarily true, minds of that society.

We will mainly focus on Jaspers' idea on 'Paradigmatic Individuals' who may be able to generate civilizational units of various characters. He proposes four such individuals, namely Socrates, Buddha, Confucius, and Jesus. Jaspers compellingly argues that these four men exert in various degrees and in different manners deep influence on humanity and what today we call living civilizations are in one way or another indebted to these men in certain significant ways. Buddha, for instance, in becoming what he became gave rise to a **new existential reality** (Jaspers, 1962. 34), which reshaped the history of humanity along lines that almost becomes impossible to fathom human civilization prior to Buddha. Thus[1]

> … for the first time in history the idea of humanity, of a religion for the whole world, became a reality. The barriers of caste, nationality, of all appurtenance to a historically grounded order of society, were breached. (Jaspers, 1962. 35)

In other words, the paradigmatic individuals create a **mode of being** (Jaspers, 1962. 67) that sets new kinds of values within self and society at large by generating the subjective fabrics of the very idea of norm and normative reality that any individual or society cannot exempt itself from. Additionally these paradigmatic individuals enjoy historical influence with great depths along other characters such as Zoroaster, Abraham, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lao-tzu, Pythagoras and Mohammad. However, Jaspers thinks that all these people had not a historical influence of equal breath and duration as the four aforementioned ones apart from Mohammad, who, in his view, might be

> … comparable in historical importance but not in individual depth. (Jaspers, 1962. 87)

At least he concedes that Mohammad could be compared to other four paradigmatic individuals in terms of historical influence but what he lacks is, in Jaspers' view, is individual depth. But it is significant to remember that these deep paradigmatic individuals are not confined to their respective individual consciousness realms anymore as their mode of being has heralded in new existential realities which have respectively become the foundations of various world civilizations. Now the question could be does Jasper suggest what Berlusconi stated, namely that Islam is an inferior culture which needs to be harnessed as Attila the Hun was curbed? If my theory is correct that politicians could not go beyond what elite intellectuals have devised then we can conclude that what Berlusconi expressed in 2003 was based on an intellectual consensus among secular intellectuals in Europe who similar to Jasper has come to believe that Mohammad was not a paradigmatic individual, who could create a mode of being that would generate a new existential reality and the reason for this inability is due to the fact that Mohammad was not a profound individual and

lacked sufficient depth that is vital to the emergence of civilization. In other words, while we agree that Jasper is one of the most dialogical modern intellectuals of contemporary Europe but even this positively perceptive mind sounds in relation to Islam as dogmatic as Luther did centuries ago. However we should not dismiss him outright but to find out how could he decide that Mohammad was not a deep individual?

Jaspers was a medical practitioner by craft who, adhered to a sense of objectivity in determining about the nature of a problem so it would be very constructive to find out how did he decide that the depth of Mohammad's character is not enough to be in the same level as the other four? Although it should be admitted that there were great many other European thinkers such as Anne Marie Schimmel or Henry Corbin too who wrote on Islam and Muslims from a totally different point of departure which were, indeed, engaging and constructive but sadly these constructive views have not come to influence the policy of European politics yet.

Jaspers on paradigmaticality

Before passing any judgments let's glance through the reasons Jaspers provides in considering his four cases over others and afterwards reconstruct the model which would enable us to assess Mohammad in accordance to Jasperian standards and see if he stands the test. In the last part we shall put our own view on this question and offer our critical analysis of Jaspers' view on paradigmaticality too.

Their influence began at once, in their lifetime that it emanated from a living man and not from an image. And we ourselves are caught in the experience of this indubitable impact. The power it still has over us is not a rational proof, but it is an indication that cannot be ignored. These men are still visible because their influence is still at work. (Jaspers, 1962. 88) They set their stamp on humanity. (Jaspers, 1962. 95)

We can reconstruct this model and find out few methodologically interesting guidelines. The first is that they are always contemporary as their influence is not confined to a historical past but they represent the depth of the present by moving the depths of men's souls. The second is that they are historical figures even in their

own lifetime. The third is that their influence is not solely based on rational discourses or proofs as evident in realms of political power but of an existential nature that moves our being wholly and not confined to one human faculty alone.

Now if these guidelines are to be taken as universal indices for understanding the fundamentals of paradigmaticality then one needs to understand Jaspers' view on Mohammad as an individual who has historical importance but not pardigmatical depth. How did he reach at this conclusion? Jaspers elsewhere in the same book on four paradigmatic individuals gives an apt explanation about the role of accident in world-shaking affairs which are not confined to one single domain in a very specific location but existential and universal. In highlighting this point Jaspers give an interesting example about a politician who might be an insignificant man but thanks to fortuitous circumstances to produce an important effect (like Churchill or Bush) and thus gain for a time considerable outward power. But such a man, argues Japsers, cannot move the depths of men's souls. His power over men, so to speak, cannot endure perennially. (Jaspers, 1962. 89) Is it possible that Jaspers compared the historical importance of Mohammad to such political accident that produced an apt occasion for him to unite Arabs and once the occasion gone his lack of depth became evident for his contemporary and everybody afterwards?

For Muslim thinkers it is evident that Prophet Mohammad is a world-shaking reality, as Morteza Muttahari puts it, that is the very manifestation of paradigmaticality but the point here is not to convince Muslims or self-congratulate ourselves. On the contrary here we are trying to find why such a dialogical thinker like Jaspers who went as far as Korean tradition in terms of finding common grounds on what grounds did he disqualify Mohammad and by extension Islam as an authentic tradition which could give birth to civic forms of communal life? Because by arguing that Mohammad is not comparable to paradigmatic individuals such as Buddha, Jesus, Socrates, and Confucius based on the argument that he lacks individual depth he is, in fact, discrediting the civic forms of communal life that is based on Prophet's teaching and what he brought about as Divine codes of life. In other words, the colossal edifice of Islamic civilization, multilayered forms of intellectual traditions and various different forms of arts as

well as architectures that Islam based on the belief that Mohammad brought a world-shaking reality that touches the deepest recesses of humanity regardless of their race, ethnicity or social background has generated is lacking profundity, enormity and complexity or all together. Reading through Jasepers' eyes then we should conclude that Mohammad could not move the depths of men's souls because he was unable to set norms by his attitudes, actions, experience of being, and his imperatives. (Jaspers, 1962. 89-90)

If Islam and Muslims were extinct realities like Babylonians, Maya or Inca civilizations or dead languages such as Latin or Sanskrit and Avesta then we could have taken his points seriously without accusing him of any sense of Eurocentrism or pure ignorance. But the issue is that Islam and Muslims are living social realities and what they have created for the past 1500 years are nothing less than Confuciusian edifices or Buddhist intellectual traditions and Christian mysticism which '…first emanated from a living man and not from an image'. (Jaspers, 1962. 88) But why did Jaspers ignore all these indices and indications that qualify Mohammad as a man of paradigmatic importance even above Moses, Zoroaster, Elijah and so on? Of course I only mean the socio-civilizational importance as in strictly Koranic sense these are all prophets of God and one in essence and there is no superiority in mundane sense in regard to prophets. Now the question is who is to decide that what moves the depths of men's souls is deep enough? Is it up to a historian to decide or a philosopher and a theologian? Who is to determine the enormity of the influence that exerts upon our life internally and as well to decide the relevance of the individual who people consider as paradigmatic which results in physical and intellectual realities that we call civilization? How could we delineate the lines between accident and authenticity as Jaspers himself did and concluded that Mohammad was not a paradigmatic individual with original depth and additionally determined that he did not move the depths of men's souls and finally inferred that Muslims do not have any civilization. Because the four he chose for his study respectively are representatives of Christian civilization, European civilization, Buddhist civilization and Sino-Japanese civilization. It is not then a coincident that today Europe cannot come to terms with Islam and even not surprising that a so-called secular Turkey has hard

time to be accepted in political union of Europe. Because in the view of secular politicians of EU Turkey stands **on** any civic grounds. Following Modood's theory none of these issues would be explained but analyzing the best minds of modern European intellectual traditions then we will be able to make sense of social and political issues and this is indeed the meaning of analysis, namely to make sense of our world.

Jaspers' paradigmaticality discourse reconsidered

Now let's go back to the model provided by Jaspers and see if Prophet Muhammad and even the towering figures within Islam such as Imam Ali, Lady Fatima, Imam Hassan, Imam Hossein, Lady Zaynab, Imam Sadigh, Abu Zar, Salman the Persian, Sohaib the Roman, and Bilal the Abyssinian do fit his model?

1. The first is that they are always contemporary as their influence is not confined to a historical past but they represent the depth of the present by moving the depths of men's souls.

Now my question is to Jaspers and all those who follow his line of logic by ignoring the reality of Islamic civilization and whatever it has produced over the past 1500 years. Is Prophet Muhammad not a contemporary to Muslims being intellectuals, Sufis, laymen and women around the world? The very daily life of any Muslim being in Hamburg, Ankara, Urumgi, Maryland or in Tehran and elsewhere in the globe is carefully patterned along the lines laid by the Prophet and not hard to detect that his name chanted by Sufis even in his homeland (e.g. Titus Buckhardt and Fritjof Schuon who lead the Sufi order of Maryamia or Martin Lings in Kent in England) is moving the souls of men even today 1500 years after his departure. Again, it is not hard to detect that businessmen and women in the middle of business transactions leave their bustling works just because of Friday prayer or researchers who leave their centers for prayers. What are all these if not indications that Prophet is a living contemporary for millions of millions people who ' … are caught up in the experience of this indubitable impact' which its '… influence is still at work'(1962. 88). A criterion is considered as such just because it is independent of my liking or disliking. Then if the standards set by Jaspers are objective criteria why did he deviate from

his own methodology? Is Prophet Mohammad not as contemporary as Confucius? After living in China for over five years I can easily see that Confucius does not touch the hearts of people of China as does Prophet Mohammad as the latter is visible in every sense in everyday life of people as well as elites but the former is at best known by historians or at the same level that one feels about Great Wall of China. This feeling does not in any way compares to the intensity of contemporariness that Jaspers is talking about but the feelings towards Prophet Mohammad fits within the frame that Jaspers describing as paradigmatic contemporariness.

2. The second is that they are historical figures even in their own lifetime.

Wasn't Prophet Mohammad such a figure? As a matter of fact Jaspers himself admits this fact about Prophet Mohammad by stating that '… might be comparable in historical importance' (1962. 87) to other paradigmatic four personalities who are of significance for his civilizational studies. In other words, Prophet Mohammad does qualify in accordance to the second criterion as did he for the first time.

3. The third is that their influence is not solely based on rational discourses or proofs as evident in realms of political power but of an existential nature that moves our being wholly and not confined to one human faculty alone.

Again here we see the shining face of Prophet who's teaching is not based solely on rational discourses (although it does not devalue reason or intellect) and additionally moves the being of each man and woman who happen to be on different time and from different place or even different languages and races. As a matter of fact a cursory look at the very existence of orders within Islamic traditions demonstrate how significant the life of Mohammad has been for anyone who cares about the real meaning of life and the meaning of reality in life individually and communally. What has a man who is born in Bosnia to do with Mohammad who does not share any apparent sociological similarities apart from being both humans? If we look at their languages we see no similarity; if we consider their race we shall not find any commonality; if we take into consideration their geographical locations then we can find great distance; if we think of time and other aspects of reality we shall find many things which could be reasons for not being attached to

Prophet Mohammad. But a Bosnian is a Muslim and lives his life in accordance to the teachings of Islam and his being is wholly shaken by the reality of this man who happened to walk on the warm sands of Mecca 1500 years ago. Even today when his name is mentioned in the mosques of Chicago or London and Baku one does not only think of him as a historical figure who happened to live in the same wavelength as one thinks of Attila or Caesar. On the contrary, one can easily discern the phenomenal facts of how the teachings of this man even today brings tears to the eyes of men and women who never met him or talked to him but the power of his teachings is so overwhelming that, in the words of Allama Iqbal, is world-shaking and reality-generating. This could not come about through accident, as Jaspers rightly says about the other four and wrongly denies about Prophet Muhammad. (1962. 88) Because those who such as Jaspers argue that he lacked personal depth are not even consistent with the criterion they set up. For instance, Jaspers criticizes those who cannot see the greatness of these four men based on sociological explanations. But he falls short when it comes to Islam. Jaspers does not explain what is the essential difference between the greatness of this man and other four who could move the depths of humanity over centuries?

Just a simple statistics could reveal that any man or woman who adheres to the teaching of Islam does call upon Prophet's name at least no less than 40 times in daily life apart from those who go even deeper and establish their entire philosophy of life upon Mohammad as the beacon of light. I made a small empirical research here in Harbin among Chinese students who know Confucius very well and asked them how many times do they call upon Confucius' name in a day or a month? First of all I have to admit that the question sounded very weird for them initially but after explaining my point then most of them in Communist China admitted that he is more of a historical character than a contemporary norm-giving personality. However they conceded that the very tissues of their social life may have been influenced historically by Confucianism but he does not constitute the very fabric of their spiritual well-being as Mohammad does for Muslims around the globe.

Once it is established that Prophet Mohammad does qualify as a paradigmatic personality even within the Jasperian schemes then his view on Prophet's lack of complexity could not but reflect Jaspers' personal uneasiness towards Islam and Muslims which is not based on any rational or existential evidences. On the contrary, it is based on his taste as a man who happened to be born in a specific time, in a particular place and idiosyncratic climate and all these particularities clouded his reason. But this is not what we really worried about as thinkers may do mistake or pass wrong judgment. What is of importance and unfortunate in regard to Jaspers' key concept, namely 'Paradigmatic Individual' is that this concept is directly connected to world-systemic or civilizational units and domains and the result would be theoretically catastrophic for those who don't fall within the orbits of paradigmatic personalities as its absence is equal to savagery or second-class citizenship in world arena. In other words, what Jaspers has actually done is twofold: the first is that he has established a fact about who are the paradigmatic personalities and then made clear who is not and why is not and secondly left to the observant readers to decide that which paradigmatic civilizations are. The rest in general and Islam in particular should not claim any paradigmatic locus for itself and Muslims should put behind 1500 years of Islam and try to integrate to the four paradigms historically and contemporarily available as what moves their innermost recesses day and night is not existentially authentic.

This view is the nub of the problem of why Europe is in trouble with Islam and West cannot grapple with the question of Muslims from a sensible angle. This is why following the recipes of Tariq Moodod who is one of the leading British intellectuals on issues related to Islam and Muslims in West would not lead to anywhere but to brining fame to these thinkers alone while the problems piling up in social arena. This Jasperian view is what leads politicians in Europe and America and this is exactly the sort of sentiment which you can find among modern secular intelligentsia who inculcate the generations of students in various fields of Journalism, social sciences and humanities to think that Islam is a problem for West and Muslims are an alien group of people who need to be managed as they don't have proper civic code of life. This is not explainable by formulae concocted by multiculturalists,

integrationists, assimilationists or alike but it is better, at least theoretically, understood if we follow the lines provided by Jaspers and thinkers who are greatly open-minded but at the same time narrow-minded when it comes to Islam and Prophet Mohammad. Because here at least we can find an intellectual who forthrightly states that Islam is not based on an authentic experience but at the same time provides a framework by which you are able to navigate through and find out for yourself by which criteria he has arrived at the fundamentals of authenticity. Although he is guilty of not following his own guidelines in assessing the fundamentals of paradigmaticality in relation to Prophet Mohammad nevertheless his frame could explain why, for instance, European Union after more than four decades still is ambivalent towards Turkey's membership in the Union and on what grounds does, for example, Austria refuses to accept Turkey into Union. These socio-political issues cannot be explained by following rosy pictures depicted by, for instance, Tariq Moodod (2002) who advocates a policy (which is more like a failed strategy), where every community is different while the nation is one based on multicultural differences that have no organic relations to one another. This is not finding away forward but describing how today Europe is which causes alarm for right wings and ultranationalists who happen wrong or right be on rising. This policy does not explain why someone on the street gets beaten in the midnight apart from being beaten why is he insulted due to his religion but a Chinese on his race? Where does this attitude come from within the mind of a teenager? Why does he not feel Islam is part of Europe as Christianity is? Who is responsible for this deep misunderstanding?

Final Remarks

A great problem which multiculturalists never mention is that what Europe really *is*. The challenging question is how can I be something where there is no 'thing' to be. How can I be 'that' if you tell me the 'thing' has no essence? If that 'thing' is fluid and susceptible to change along the lines that are not its inner lines then those who call Muslims to be more integrated or become European Muslims what actually are they inviting people to be? I happen to think that the

problem of Islam in Europe won't be solved as long as the narrative which propagates Islam as an alien phenomenon is not deconstructed. That is to say, Muslim thinkers in Europe need to unearth the genealogy of Islamic tradition that has flourished within the soil of Europe since the very early days of Islam. To begin with; Bosnia, Spain, England, Italy, Turkey, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Georgia, Russia, Germany, France, Greece, Albania, and many other European countries who have had Muslim populations prior to modernity and at the same time produced men of letter who carried on Islamic tradition to this very day. We, as Muslim thinkers, need to reconstruct the cultures of intellectual traditions that have made possible for contemporary European Muslims such as Fritjiof Schuon (Sheikh Isa), Martin Lings (Sheikh Seraj al-Deen), and many others to reformulate the perennial teachings of Prophet Mohammad within strictly secular culture of modernity today. Once it is established that Islam is part of Europe as Christianity has for great many centuries been then the rest of our wrestling will be conducted according to the rules of the game. You cannot, for instance, wrestle if you don't follow the rules of the game, which requires a specific frame of action. When there is no rule then what we do is not called wrestling but fight and fighting will not lead to any peaceful solution as one is coarse into submission out of fear or lack of sufficient power. Once the balance of power is changed the fight will resume again and this is what has been happening about Europe's relation towards Islam. Once the intellectuals of a society who are the mind of the body politic accept to bow to the demands of reason and intelligence then the rest of society could hope peace and tranquility will reign in their lands.

Reference

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[1] However it is important to notice that this idea was announced to the world by Zaratustra for the first time about 1500 years or so earlier than Buddha. But Jaspers has missed this part of history for unknown reasons.

The Attitude of Bediuzzaman Al-Nursi From Philosophy

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Abstract

This article introduces an exposition and analysis of al-Nursi's attitude from philosophy, his concept of philosophy, and the reason for his attack on it. It aims to investigate, examine and review the comparisons that al-Nursi makes between religious wisdom and philosophical wisdom. It shows that al-Nursi attempts to prove the low status of philosophy and the supremacy of divine knowledge, and how he attributes all social and psychological phenomena to philosophy. Al-Nursi claims that all the shining spots and brilliant conditions in the human history are attributed to religion, supporting his claims by historical samples and conditions. Al-Nursi also introduces his interpretation of the relationship between religion and philosophy, and attributes this relationship to Man in his first stages of development. He also points out states of human understanding and harmony in history, and claims that the detachment of philosophy from religion leads to the destruction of humanity. However, we notice that al-Nursi's criticism of philosophy is not directed at the intellect / mind/ reason of man. In fact, he criticizes the philosophical theories that deal with the issues of the invisible, the unknown, the supernatural and metaphysical aspects, which contradict religion, but he supports science and does not see any contradiction between scientific facts and religion.

The article also confirms that the generality and thoroughness of al-Nursi's discourse do not create a variety of meanings of the used terminology, and some concepts such as 'philosophy' and 'intellectual science' assume meanings that al-Nursi himself does not intend.

1. Introduction

The dialogue between religion and philosophy in Islamic culture began with the beginning of the translation movement (750-950), which contributed to the entrance of sciences from various cultures, mainly the Greek, into the Islamic world. During this period, most of the scientific and philosophical works were translated into Arabic.[1] The movement of translation reached its highest point in the Abbasid period, particularly during the reign of al-Ma'moun (833) who encouraged the translation of the Greek philosophy.[2]

The attitude of the Moslem scholars from philosophy can be divided into the following categories:

a) Some Islamic scholars accepted the Greek philosophy and worked within its frame and according to its principles and logic. Some of them excelled and contributed to its development like al-Kindi (873), al-Farabi (950), Ibn Sina (Avicenne) (1037), Ibn Rusd (Averros) (1198), and others.

b) Some scholars rejected the metaphysical aspects of philosophy, because it contradicts the religious belief, but they accepted 'logic' as an instrument of thinking and an immunizer of the intellect from committing faults. Al-Ghazali (1111) was the first to introduce 'logic' into Islamic sciences in an attempt to base the Islamic jurisprudence on the principles of 'logic'.[3]

c) Some scholars rejected philosophy entirely, considering it a corrupt science that man does not need in his life. Ibn Tiyiyyah (1263) attacked philosophy and considered its logic the cause of corruption and error. On the other hand, he introduced the method of the principles of religion as an alternative to the Greek logic.[4]

It is noticed that the differences in the above attitudes regarding philosophy, ranging between fully supporting to fully rejecting, led to intellectual dialogue that contributed to the enrichment of Islamic culture. Each party did its best to prove its own attitude, and criticize the opposing views. Al-Ghazali's book *Tahafut al-Falasifa* (*The Collapse of Philosophers*) is considered the most famous work that criticized metaphysical philosophy, and which had a negative effect on philosophy in the Islamic world. On the other hand, Ibn Rushd (Averros) wrote a work called *Tahafut al-Tahafut* (*The Collapse of the Collapse*) in which he responds to al-Ghazali's *Tahafut*, but it seems that its influence was limited. Undoubtedly, al-Ghazali's criticism and

Ibn Rushd's (Averros') response are considered two of the greatest cultural works in the Islamic culture.

What characterizes modern age is the defense of Moslem scholars of Islam and the Koran, and their ejection of the Western culture, considering it a threat to Islamic culture. They attempt to confirm the superiority of Islam and its ability to face the challenges of the age, and its ability to form the structure of man's life and his happiness. At the same time, they criticize the Western culture and show its negative aspects.

The Turkish scholar Bediuzzaman al-Nursi (1960) is one of the most prominent scholars in the Islamic world, who has made every possible effort to defend Islam and call for it. His activity represents the combination between theory and practice. On the one hand, he wrote a number of books in the field of religious interpretations, and on the other hand, he was active in calling the people to apply religion in their daily life. Al-Nursi was interested in confirming the ability of religion in securing human happiness, and the failure of philosophical theories, which he considered the cause of man's misery and destruction.

In view of this, al-Nursi directs his harsh criticism to philosophy through comparing it with religion. He considers philosophy as the root of negative aspects in politics and society, and believes that following religion can secure the salvation of the individual and society from the negative diseases, and secures a better life for humanity.

I try in this study to find out al-Nursi's attitude regarding philosophy, and examine his arguments against it. I also examine what he means exactly by "philosophical and intellectual sciences". To answer these questions one is required to analyze his comparison between philosophy and religion, and analyze his concept regarding the development of the relation between religion and philosophy.

2. Between Koranic Wisdom and Philosophical Wisdom

Al-Nurasi compares between two types of wisdom (*hikmah*), and tries to prove the truth of Koranic wisdom and its superiority over the invalidity of philosophical wisdom. He introduces four principles that show the difference between the two types of wisdom.

2.1 The First principle

Al-Nurasi tries to prove this principle through introducing a story in which he exposes the difference between the Moslem scholar and philosopher. He asks each of them to write a wise sentence to describe the Holy Koran, which is written in an ornamented and beautiful handwriting.

> "However, the philosopher's book discussed only the decorations of the letters and their relationships and conditions, and the properties of their jewels, and described them. It did not touch on their meaning at all."

As for the Muslim scholar, when he looked at the Qur'an, he understood that it was the Perspicuous Book, the All-Wise Qur'an. This truth-loving person neither attached importance to the external adornments, nor busied himself with the ornamented letters. He become preoccupied with something that was million times higher, more elevated, more subtle, more noble, more beneficial, and more comprehensive than the matters with which the other man had busied himself.

> "For discussing the sacred truths and lights of the mysteries beneath the veil of the decorations, he wrote a truly fine commentary."[5]

Through distinction between the philosopher and the Moslem scholar, we notice that the philosopher's wisdom deals with the external appearance of things, but does not deal with their real meanings. By the "real meaning," al-Nurasi means the discussion that connects between things and their creator, namely, connection of things to God, being the real cause of the existence of things. It is impossible to reach the real meaning of something by knowing their external phenomena only, because such a discussion abridges the real meaning.

It is known that the philosophical discussion in general, and the Greek in particular, is represented by great philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, whose works centered mostly around the notion of the "quiddity", which is the real meaning of the thing, and they were not satisfied with knowledge of external visible things. These

philosophers depended on the intellect/ mind/ reason as an instrument to achieve this goal, but they did not succeed in that. Thus, we cannot argue that philosophy does not deal with the real meaning of things, and al-Nurasi can be right in his claim, if he means that philosophy did not succeed in reaching the real meanings of things.

2.2 The Second Principle

Al-Nurasi makes a comparison between the philosopher and the Moslem scholar from the educational and moral points of view. He says:

> "The sincere student of philosophy is pharaoh, but he is a contemptible pharaoh who worships the basest thing for the sake of benefit… and that irreligious student is conceited and domineering, but since he can find no point of support in his heart, he is an utterly impotent blustering tyrant. And that student is a self-centered seeker of benefit whose aim and endeavour is to gratify his animal appetites, a crafty egotist who seeks his personal interests within certain nationalist benefits."

> "However, the sincere student of Qur'anic wisdom is a servant, but he does not stoop to worship even the greatest creatures… and its student is humble; he is righteous and mild. Yet outside the limits of his Maker's leave, he would not voluntarily lower and abase himself before anything other than his maker. And he is weak and in want, and he knows his weakness and poverty, but he is self-sufficient due to the wealth which his All-Generous Lord has stored up for him in the hereafter, and he is strong since he relies on his Master's infinite power. And he acts and strives only for God's sake, for God's pleasure, and for virtue."[6]

Al-Nursi describes the philosophy students as mean, immoral, and badly brought-up, because he lacks a corner in the heart to resort to. He sees that morals and virtues result from spiritual education, which cares for purity of the heart, and is based on the belief in one God. This education depends on the constant moral values that God defined in his dear book, and this education endeavours to develop and promote such values along the infinite terraces of civilization, because they are connected to God, the absolute and the unlimited. These values are considered personal meanings that exist in the spontaneity (الفطرة)of man. Therefore, they are human values because they are in harmony

with man's spontaneity. These original values are not reachable through absolute intellectual deduction, which is considered the philosopher's instrument to reach truths, because these meanings are what must exist, while the intellect can deduce what occurs and exists. So, it is impossible to deduce the entire meanings that are embodied in the occurring event, but by revelation whose function is to teach man and acquaint him with these meanings. In this way, the values are considered constant, stable and certain, and they are not subject to experience, probability, or change of place and time.

However, the philosopher's morals are not based on human Koranic values that are supported by God, but derive their legitimacy from the limited human intellect and its wild desires that serve his personal lusts, and satisfy his private desires. The loss of unified reference and its attribution to people's deductions should be characterized by relativity, and change in proportion to people's differences in their minds and desires.

I think that al-Nursi's choice of the term 'the heart' is intentional, as he does not use the term 'intellect'. He commits to the use of the Kuranic term 'heart' to distinguish it from the 'intellect'. The "heart" bears various meanings and indications, as it is the place of the mind, emotions, and soul, besides the original spontaneity that represents the certainty truth. The Holy Koran does not mention the 'intellect' as a noun, but mentions its functional version 49 times. The 'intellect' is an act, an activity, and a fruit of man's experience. The role of this act is connecting between the 'instrument' and the 'value'. In other words, it is the use of the effective and suitable instrument to achieve the original constant value. However, the instrumental philosophy(فلسفة ديوي) connects between the instrument and the end(الغاية), but the end is variable, and it becomes an instrument for another end, which indicates the instability of the end, and its constant change, while the religious value is clear, stable, constant and certain. Therefore, al-Nursi uses the term 'heart' because it includes the 'intellect' that carries the function of connection between the instrument and the value that is connected to spontaneity, which is the origin of certainty truth. Thus, we can argue that the issue of morals is not a pure intellectual one. It is a spontaneous issue that is nurtured and developed by religion, and the intellect connects it with the appropriate

tools and reasons. Besides, the philosophical mental perception cannot judge morals and manners, because it needs to be characterized by the properties of manners, and be accompanied by action so that the mental perception can gain new horizons in its indicative deductions.

Al-Nursi's strong criticism can cause a shock to the reader, especially his choice of the student, Pharaoh, the devoted student to philosophy. It is really difficult to agree with this point of view completely, because philosophy is not one theory, but there are various philosophical views, and even contradictory ones, despite the fact that the common aspects between all philosophies is the consideration of the intellect as the only instrument to reach truth. At the same time, we cannot claim that Pharaoh is not a product of philosophical thoughts, which are unaccepted to us in modern times. However, we cannot consider him a representative of philosophy. In spite of our reservation from the thorough criticism of the manners of philosophy, we should stress that the source of human manners is religion, and even the moral values that the philosophers dealt with originate from religion.

2.3 The Third principle

Al-Nursi criticizes the social life that is produced by the philosophical wisdom, and says:

> "Philosophy accepts "force" as its point of support in the life of society. It considers its aim to be "benefits". The principle of its life is recognized to be conflict. It holds the bond between communities to be racialism and negative nationalism. Its fruits are gratifying the appetites of the soul and increasing human needs."[7]

Al-Nursi rejects the images of social life because they are based, in his view, on faulty bases that ultimately lead to the robbery of human happiness. "Force" is the "power" that rules and defines the social relations between people, and this makes people attempt to possess it as a fundamental condition for social life. Besides, pursuit of personal benefit causes competition and disagreements among people and encourages malice and envy. Al-Nursi rejects the idea that 'argument' should be the rule of life among people, because that leads to clashes and conflicts between them. The term "argument" here means

"subjugating" and "confuting" the other one, rather than debating with him and persuading him. Al-Nursi also rejects racism and nationalism as a basis that connects people and groups, as racism causes blind fanaticism, denying the other, and disrespecting him.

> "As for the Qur'anic wisdom, its point of support is truth instead of force. It takes virtue and God's pleasure as its aims in place of benefits. It takes the principle of mutual assistance as the principle of life in place of the principle of conflict. And it takes the ties of religion, class and country to be the ties bonding communities. Its aim is to form a barrier against the lusts of the soul, urge the spirit to sublime matters, satisfy the high emotions and urge man to the human perfections, make him a true human being."[8]

Al-Nursi introduces images of the social life derived from the Koranic wisdom, making 'right' as a basis on which the social relations are established. In his opinion, 'right' is 'agreement', which means that people agree that 'right' is the ruler and judge among them. Besides, virtue and the divine content become ends in themselves, and man's life becomes guided to achieve this supreme goal. Cooperation is a social value instead of avarice, and the negative competition to subjugate others. He introduces the religious bond as an alternative to the other social relations. It is the religious tie that is based on brotherhood, and respect to the other, and it raises the human being to his perfection so that he will become a human being who holds human values.

I again argue that there are different and contradictory points of view regarding philosophy. Therefore, we cannot argue that all the philosophical theories depend on 'force' or 'power' or 'benefit' as a basis for social life. On the other hand, the social reality supports al-Nursi's description of the relevant societies. Similarly, we cannot claim that the societies he speaks about have not been affected by intellectual and philosophical theories in a way or the other, such as, the theories that put the individual in the center of life, or those that claim the superiority of a certain race or nationality over the others. However, we find also philosophical theories that call for equality, freedom, and respect of human rights. It seems that philosophical theories in general have not managed to reach the real social and certain values and establish them deep within societies.

2.4 The Fourth Principle

Al-Nursi tries to show the highness of the Koran, its inimitability, its wondrous nature, and the infinity of its words. He distinguishes between the words of God in the Koran, and the words of God that are expressed through various inspirations. Inspiration is an immediate contact between God and the heart of man, and this inspiration is considered of God's words, but it is of the second degree after the Koran.

Inspiration is also an epistemological instrument by which man can gain direct knowledge and science from God, be He exalted. In this way, the knowledge of man becomes infinite because of its contact with absolute God, and this gives the human being the possibility of constant and infinite development from the moral and epistemological point of view, and opens the door of constant struggle of man in his attempt to achieve perfection, which he will never achieve! However, man will continue to rise and be elevated, and virtue will continue to be his aim, but he will not be able to acquire.

Al-Nursi sees a big difference in the issue of miracles. Al-Koran includes miracles, which are

> "extraordinary, and miracles of Divine power, and it reveals those astonishing wonders to conscious beings. It attracts their gazes and opens up before their minds an inexhaustible treasury of knowledge."[9]

Miracles are an integral part of the Islamic belief and faith, and they are mentioned in several places in the Koranic text to show the power of God.

> "As for philosophy, it conceals within veil of the commonplace all the miracles of power, which are extraordinary, and passes over them in an ignorant and indifferent fashion."[10]

It is true that philosophy does not accept religious miracles and the extraordinary, because philosophy depends on the pure intellect, while miracles fall outside the borders of the intellect. Besides, philosophy depends on the rules of cause and effect, while miracles

show the effect without showing the apparent causes. The real cause of God's miracles is God Himself, be He exalted. Therefore, miracles lie beyond philosophical discussion, which lacks the instruments that lead to their realities.

Al-Nursi points out that the intellect cannot judge the impossibility of miracles, but can judge its possibility. The intellect is unable to confirm or refute the possibility of miracles. Therefore, miracles fall within the frame of the possible, i.e. they are likely to happen or not.

> "It is unreasonable to foster baseless doubts in such certain witnessed matters. It is enough that they are not impossible. And as for the Splitting of the Moon, it is quite as possible as a mountain's splitting with a volcanic eruption."[11]

3. The Development of the Historical Relations between Religion and Philosophy

Al-Nursi believes that the beginning of philosophy and religion in the world appeared with the appearance of the first man on the Earth. This means that the religious and philosophical question has always occupied man's mind and aroused his interest. Therefore, man has been trying since ancient times to find out answers to the existential and epistemological questions. Despite our ignorance of the philosophy that prevailed in pre-historical times, we can guess that certain philosophical questions accompanied the existence of man, as they are spontaneous questions that concern him as a human creature living on this Earth. This indicates that the religious answer is inspired rather than being a fruit of human search. Therefore, it is considered a certain answer and a constant truth among the believers, and it bears the quality of supreme divinity. The philosophical discussion that depends on the intellect as an instrument to reach the truth has not reached through the human history an answer that is characterized by certainty and constancy. Al-Nursi compares these to trends in a metaphorical way, saying,

> "Like two mighty trees, they have spread out their branches in all directions and in every class of humanity."[12]

Throughout history, there has been a mutual approach and agreement between them, but also remoteness and separation and disagreement. The state of "approach" means that state where the religious answer is accepted and obeyed by the people of philosophy. This conciliatory state grants

> "the world of humanity happiness and social life in a brilliant image."[13] When philosophy rejects the religious answer, "Evil and misguidance gather to the side of the line of philosophy."[14]

As for Greek Philosophy, it had sprung from fables and superstition, and just as it had caused confusion, so also had it opened up a way to mere imitation (taklid) in place of investigative and dynamic scholarship. Supposing there to be points of similarity and agreement between philosophy and matters of the Qur'an that demand the use of reason (akliyat), externalist scholars explained these verses in terms of philosophy and adapted them to it.[15]

Al-Nursi calls the philosophy that denies religion or disobeys the series of religions as "Shajarat al-Zaqqoom". It is the tree mentioned in the Koran, which is considered food for the atheists in Hell.[16] This philosophy has negative effects on human life in all its aspects.

> "It scatters the darkness of ascribing partners to God and misguidance on all sides. In the branch of the power of intellect, even it produces the fruit of atheism, Materialism, and Naturalism for the consumption of the human intellect. And in the realm of the power of passion, it pours the tyrannies of Nimrod, Pharaoh, and Shaddad on mankind. And in the realm of the power of animal appetites, it nurtures and bears the fruit of goddesses, idols, and those who claim divinity."[17]

This means that the causes of human misguidance are attributed to denial of religion and dependence on the powers of the intellect, anger and lust only. But this claim does not mean that al-Nursi denies the existence and importance of these powers in the life of human beings, but it means that it objects to the argument that decision and judgment should be to these powers only. He wants the powers to be guided by inspiration, because man's various powers are limited, and

cannot reach the certain truths by themselves. This is the origin of the need for a supreme referential authority that guides and advises these powers.

As for the religious wisdom,

> " "Which is like the Tuba-tree of worship, are in the two faces of the "I". The blessed branches of the line of prophethood in the garden of the globe of the earth are the following: in the branch of the power of intellect, it has nurtured the fruits of the prophets, the messengers, and the saints. In the branch of the power of repulsion, it has resulted in angelic kings and just rulers. And in the branch of the power of attraction, it has resulted in people of good character and modest and beautiful manner, both generous and gracious."[18]

Thus, when the powers of man obey the religious wisdom, positive types are produced and contribute to the achievement of justice and happiness of man.

Al-Nursi shows the fall of the philosophy that opposes the Koranic wisdom.

> "Human science and philosophy look at the world as fixed and constant. And they discuss the nature of things and their characteristics in detail, if they do speak of their duties before their maker, they speak of them briefly. Quite simply, they speak only of the decoration and letters of the book of the universe, and attach no importance to its meaning."[19]

The philosophical discussion aims to reach the essence of things which are considered constant quiddities, but philosophy has failed to achieve this goal. This failure has made modern science move from the essential discussion of things to the discussion of their appearances and characteristics. Science also neglected the metaphysical research in general because of the inability of the human mind to reach conclusions in this field throughout its history.

This change in research was accompanied by another change in the logic of thinking, which led to creation of types of logic that suit the goals of modern science, such as inductive and probable logic. Modern logic differs from the Greek *formal logic*. The former does not claim that it reaches absolute certainty, but can reach results that are characterized by relativity, probability and change. However, the

formal logic is based on the principle of contradiction, and conformity that deals with the constants and claims that it reaches constant truths.

Therefore, the failure of the intellect and its limitation appear in both cases, the philosophical and the scientific, and as al-Nursi argues, the philosophical research was general, and the scientific research was directed at decorations and lettering. In both types of research, the human intellect was not able to reach the absolute truth and the real cause is God Himself, be He exalted.

> "Whereas the Qur'an looks at the world as transient, passing, deceptive, traveling, unstable, and undergoing revolution, it speaks briefly of the nature of beings and their superficial and material characteristics, but mentions in detail the worshipful duties with which they are charged by the Maker, and how and in what respects they point to His names, and their obedience before the Divine creational commands."[20]

Indeed, the Koran sees life on this Earth as a temporary and transient life, and promises the human beings of eternal and constant life in the afterlife. The researcher of the Koran notices that the Koranic text is divided into two parts: *the first* is general, and it deals with different daily life issues, to which the Koran gives the possibility of adaptation to the changes in time and place. The *second* part deals with the issues of belief and worshipping. These are introduced in the Koran in detail, because they are characterized by constancy, and are not subject to change and development. We notice that Islamic sciences have developed according to the Koranic point of view regarding these issues. In jurisprudence, for example, which is the science that deals with the changing daily life issues, the Moslem scholars depend on methods of research that suit this science, and these methods are called Usul al-Fiqh / Origins of Jurisprudence, which are inductive and probable instruments that depend on experience, but do not claim to reach absolute certainty.

Regarding the science of Usul al-Din/ Principles of Religion that deal with the constant faith, al-Nursi uses methods and tools of research that aim to reach constant and certain conclusion.

Al-Nursi returns the origins of these two approaches to the two aspects of the "I" in these versions:

a) The aspect of 'prophecy'. "That is to say, the "I" knows itself to be a bondsman. It realized that it serves one other than itself. Its essence has only an indicative meaning. That is, it understands that it carries the meaning of another. Its existence is dependent, that is, it believes that its existence is due only to the existence of another, and that the continuance of its existence is due solely to the creativity of that other. Its ownership is illusory, that is, it knows that with the permission of its owner it has an apparent and temporary ownership… As to its function, being a measure and balance for the attributes and functions of its Creator, it is a conscious service."[21]

Man's awareness of his self and his position in this world is considered the origin of wisdom, which characterizes him. The human being who realizes that he is a 'bondsman' creature who is connected to God in his birth, life and death, always attempts to perform the orders of God, and assumes His manners. He is aware of the limitation of his humanity in comparison with the absolute truth of God, and he realizes that behind the phenomena of things, there is a real cause for their occurrence and existence, and that is God, be He exalted.

b) The second aspect is introduced in this quotation.

> "As for the second face, it is represented by philosophy. And as for philosophy, it regards the "I" as carrying no meaning other than its own. That is to say, it declares that the "I" points only to itself, that its meaning is in itself. It considers that the "I" works purely on its own account. It regards its existence as necessary and essential, that is, it says that it exists in itself and of itself. It falsely assumes that the "I" owns its own life and is the real master in its sphere of disposal. It supposes it to be a constant reality. And it considers the "I's" duty to be perfection of self, which originates from love of self"[22]

However, Man's awareness of his self means that he exists for himself, and he owns himself, which leads him to misguidance, polytheism, and disconnection from the Divine wisdom. It makes him look for solutions for life problems, but the result is further misguidance and loss. Al-Nursi gives an example to this saying:

According to the principles of philosophy, power is approved "Might is right" is the norm, even it says, "All power to the strongest." "The winner takes all" and "In power there is right.

" It has given moral support to tyranny, encouraged despots, and urged oppressors to claim divinity."[23]

Al-Nursi opposes the principle of rule that considers the majority and power as a measurement for 'right' and justice, because this measurement creates oppression, and encourages the tyrants to persecute the others. The right measurement is 'right' in itself, and everything is measured by 'right'. Power does not mean 'right' and it can lead to oppression, injustice, enslavement of the weak, and violation of their human rights, but 'right' is stable, constant, and clear scales that create nothing but justice and fairness.

Al-Nursi criticizes the Moslem philosophers who were influenced by the Greek philosophy and Neo-Platonism such as al-Farabi, Ibn Sina (Avicenne) and others. He criticizes the notion that says that "from one, one proceeds,"[24] which is a popular notion in Neo-Platonism. Al-Nursi maintains that this notion contradicts the principle of *Oneness* in Islam, because it is likely to create the belief in the 'unity of the universe,' which says that the 'One' is the first principle, an after the "Emanation of the One' the intellect emanated, an this One is deprived of ability and will, and the process of 'emanation' takes place in a spontaneous way, and after the emanation of the intellect, the whole soul emanated, and out of its emanation, all the existing things in the universe emanated.

The human intellect in this theory is divided into ten sub-intellects, the highest of which is the active intellect, which is able to communicate with the whole intellect, and through this communication, the process of direct epistemological emanation takes place. This theory is in contrast with the notion of divinity in Islam, because it negates God's characteristics, and does not consider God as the real cause of the existence and occurrence of things in this world.

Al-Nursi criticizes also the Mu'tazila imams who took the intellect as a judge, i.e.[25] the intellect is the judge whether things are right or wrong, and it is the criterion and measurement for anything.

This view faced a wide opposition by the Moslem scholars ('ulama). Debate on this issue lasted for a long time, and probably it is still going on. This issue was known in the Islamic history by the name of 'Contrast between the Intellect and Tradition'.

Al-Nursi maintains that philosophy cancels the qualities of God and attributes the causes to Nature and denies the idea of resurrection and afterlife. In this way, it contradicts the corners of Islamic faith. Dependence on the intellect does not lead to realization of the truths of things as they are, because the intellect is unable to reveal the truths of the unknown, the invisible, the metaphysical, and the supernatural, because of its limitation. He says:

> "It is strange that the intellect that aspires to know the universe, and penetrating the circle of possibility, drowns in a drop, and perishes in an atom, and disappears in a hair, and the world for him is limited within the mortal, and he wants to enter with it everything that surrounds him at the point that swallowed him."[26]

Thus, the activity of the intellect outside its limits and borders causes its failure, and al-Nursi emphasizes the mutual relationship between the philosophical research and the heart and moral diseases, since the philosophical research brings diseases, and the diseases lead to intellectual sciences.

> "I witnessed the increase of disease in the increase of philosophical science, as I witnessed the increase of diseases in the increase of intellectual science. Moral diseases lead to intellectual sciences, and the intellectual sciences create heart diseases."[27]

The comprehensiveness of the terms and metaphors that he uses makes it difficult to specify his intended meanings, and do not make it easy for the researcher to comprehend his meanings. Probably al-Nursi means that the relationship between philosophy and diseases is the failure of the philosophical research to reach truths of things as they are, especially in the metaphysical world, which, in turn, leads to misguidance and polytheism, and to the deterioration of the social and moral levels.

How can we understand his argument that diseases lead to intellectual sciences?

I think that al-Nursi means that the social and moral phenomena have a certain effect on the crystallization of invalid and incorrect philosophies. In spite of that, I cannot accept this comprehensive and sweeping argument for all philosophical thoughts, because there are social theories that refuse social negative aspects, and other theories that have contributed to the creation of mere scientific methods. Besides, another part of Moslem scholars such as al-Ghazali, who does not reject intellectual sciences such as medicine, mathematics, and geometry, accepted the Greek logic and consider them the entrance to all sciences, and you cannot trust the knowledge of someone who does not know the Greek logic well.[28]

In view of this, I do not think that al-Nursi means by the term "intellectual science" the natural and the applied accurate sciences, as he mentions that Islam is based on the intellect / reason, wisdom and science.[29]

Ustad considers essential the reconciliation and combining of the reason / intellect and religion, and the religious sciences and the physical sciences, which he calls the sciences of civilization. For man should not be like a one-winged bird. Ustad says that the students' endeavour takes flight with these two wings. In the absence of the reason and the sciences associated with it, the students are like birds with broken wings.[30]

In spite of al-Nursi's criticism of the intellectual science, the intellect has an important role in his epistemological theory. When he relates the story of his movement from "the ancient happiness" to the "new happiness," which is a movement on the intellectual and spiritual levels, we find him wondering about the existence of the intellect "If you have any sense", 'have you come to your senses?"[31]

Such expressions emphasize the role of the intellect as an instrument that can be used to reach the truth. Besides, the intellect is a basic condition in the question of reward and punishment, which requires free choice and free will. Man is responsible for his deeds by his on will, and he is not forced to do that. Therefore, he bears the results of his deeds. On the other hand, he considers the human being as intellect-lacking and he is not responsible for his deeds according to the

religious law. Ustad paid attention to the independent use of the reason. It is not being pressurized or deprived of the will, that is, the freedom to take decisions and power of choice.[32]

So, the reason has an important role in the life of human beings, but it is limited in the issues of the unknown and metaphysics, such as the issue of resurrection. He agrees with all Moslem scholars that the issue of resurrection is a traditional one, and its evidence is tradition, and it cannot be dealt with rationally.

> "All the scholars of Islam unanimously have held that resurrection rests entirely on traditional proofs, it cannot be rationally examined."[33]

4. Summary and Conclusions

From the above discussion, we can conclude that al-Nursi rejects philosophy entirely. He differs in this from other Moslem scholars ('ulama) such as al-Ghazali, Ibn Qudama (1223), and al-Fakhr l-Razi, who accepted some philosophical sciences such as 'logic', but refused others such as 'metaphysics'. However, he does not take the same attitude taken by Ibn Timiyyah and Ibn al-Salah (1265), and others who attacked philosophy and criticized the Greek philosophy strongly.

Al-Nursi compares between divine science/ knowledge and philosophy, and tries to prove the faultiness and invalidity of philosophy and its destructive effect on the life of human beings. He considers philosophy as the cause of all negative phenomena in society and politics, and the cause of the spread of social, moral and psychological diseases. On the other hand, he introduces the supremacy and elevation of religious science and its positive effect on the happiness of man, and its contribution to the creation of the virtuous man, who is good for himself and his society. We notice also al-Nursi's interest in the spiritual aspect and the purity of the heart and refined manners.

Al-Nursi deals with philosophy as one category, and he directs his criticism to philosophy in general, without specifying the subjects that he deals with it in detail. This general approach makes it difficult for the reader or the researcher to understand accurately his intentions,

as he sometimes leaves gaps and ambiguity, especially when he uses terms and expressions that bear general indications, or metaphors or illustrative stories that are employed to clarify to interpret his thoughts.

Al-Nursi criticizes some philosophical thoughts by Moslem philosophers such as al-Farabi and Ibn Sina, especially those which contradict the Oneness of God and His traits, from his point of view. According to al-Nursi, belief in such thoughts leads to polytheism and misguidance, and deviation from the right way.

Finally, Al-Nursi's rejection of philosophy does not mean that he refuses the intellect entirely, but he strongly criticizes the theories that contradict Islamic religion. However, he supports the applied, experimental, accurate scientific theories, and gives the intellect an important role in the search of the truth.

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Socrates on Irony and wisdom

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Abstract

Socratic irony is said to be essentially heuristic: Socrates feigns ignorance in order that he can more easily educe and examine the ideas of others. Then, his irony has a heuristic goal. This view is quasi-universally agreed on. To this view a different one is opposed in this paper: Socratic irony is far from being only heuristic. There are things that, indeed Socrates does not know. But what is it exactly that he does not know. To answer this question, we make reference to Theaetetus. In this dialogue, Socrates tacitly compares himself to Artemis. This Goddess, although childless herself, is patron of pregnant women. By analogy, Socrates is ignorant, but he helps others to give birth to their ideas. So there is a certain relationship between Socratic ignorance and divine childlessness of Artemis. That is why to understand the real meaning of Socratic ignorance, one should first know what Artemis' childlessness really means.

In this paper, it has been tried to made this point clear.

Key words: Artemis, Socrates, childless, irony, ignorance.

Introduction

Socratic irony, which is essentially the same as his well-known ignorance, is then usually perceived in a heuristic sense[1]. Surely some authors take Socrates' confession of ignorance seriously, for instance according to Frederic Copleston "His irony, then, his profession of ignorance was sincere; he did not know, but he wanted to find out, and he wanted to induce others to reflect for themselves and to give real thought to the supremely important work of caring for their souls"

(1946: 107). W. K. C. Guthrie, too, thinks "His profession of ignorance should not be considered as being feigned. His vocation did not consist in transmitting to others definitive doctrines; he liked to reveal the human beings intellectual need of some subjects, and calls them to search the truth together through dialectics. ... The true follower of Socrates considered not only himself but all humanity to be ignorant" (234, 239).

Thus, Socratic ignorance seems to these authors to be something more than a mere heuristic approach: it rather aims at an ethical or methodic goal. But, this view, though more plausible, is hardly in accordance with Socrates' profound Personality, at least with Platonic Socrates. It is not for nothing that Socratic irony comes entirely from Plato (John Burnet: 1962; 127), and that there is no trace of Irony in Xenophon, whose Socrates is not but a good man, a moralist not a philosopher nor a wise man.

In fact, Socratic irony, thus conceived, presents Socrates as a simple honest man, eager to know, who is different from others only by the fact that he knows that he does not know.

Anyway, heuristic, even moralistic interpretations of Socrates' irony seems not to be sufficiently convincing, and this for two principal reasons:

1- If Socrates has merely feigned ignorance, it would have been ridiculous to confess it every time he engaged in a discussion. This attitude is incompatible with the greatness of his personality. Moreover, as for moralistic interpretation, it places Socrates on the same level as others, the only difference between him and others being simply his awareness of his ignorance. By the way, Socrates, though ignorant, is nonetheless capable of shedding light on the most important philosophical notions. So, as we are trying to show it, his ignorance implies a profound knowledge. Hence, it is of a special kind.

2- According to Pythia, Socrates is the wisest man in Greece (Apo, 21a). He, himself, interprets the oracular response as follows: he is the wisest man, because he knows he is ignorant. Here, ignorance obviously means something quite different from some heuristic or moral attitude. Perhaps, that is why, as noted above, Xenophon's Socrates is not at all ironic. Therefore, Socrates is indeed ignorant, and his ignorance is to be understood in a quite different way.

Socratic ignorance and Artemis' childlessness

Lets, then, ask what is the nature of Socratic ignorance? We find in Plato's Theaethetus sufficient indications, for an answer to this question. In this dialogue, Socrates, confessing his ignorance, tacitly compares himself to Artemis. Why does Socrates evoke this divinity, and not any other? Because, as we are discussing it, there are profound affinities between Socrates and Artemis. To clarify this point, lets see how and why Socrates introduces the comparison with Artemis. In the beginning of the dialogue, we find Socrates speak about his art of midwifery with Theaetetus. He begins thus: "well, call to mind how things are in general with midwives and you will find it easier to understand what I mean: no doubt you know that none of them attends other women while she's still conceiving and bearing children herself. It's those who are past being able to give birth who do it … they say it's Artemis who's responsible for that, because, being childless herself, she's the patron of childbirth. She didn't grant the gift of midwifery to barren women because human nature is too weak to acquire skill in matters of which it has no experience. But she did assign it to those who are unable to bear children because of their age, in honor of their likeness to herself (149, b-e). Then, the women are able to attend other women, as soon as they themselves stop conceiving. So, when the women are no longer able to bear children, they begin to resemble Artemis. That is why, she grants them the gift of midwifery, because of their resemblance to herself. But what does Socrates exactly mean, evoking the human midwifery as a gift of Artemis? As a matter of fact, Socrates does not seem to intend to compare himself to human midwives, but rather to Artemis herself. Why? Artemis, to repeat, grants her gift to women who have the experience of childbirth. This is not the case with Socrates, who practices the art of midwifery without having any experience of pregnancy himself. In this regard, he resembles Artemis herself. Because Artemis, being divinity and not human being, has no need of childbirth's experience. Thus Socrates, too, is somehow childless. But how?

First lets recall, how Socrates describes his own art of midwifery in *Theaetetus*. We read on 150 b-c: "well, my art of

midwifery has, in general, the same characteristics as theirs, but it is different in that I attend men, not women, and in that I watch over minds in childbirth, not bodies. Because I have, in common with midwives, the following characteristics: I'm unproductive of wisdom (ἄγενος σοφου), and there is truth in the criticism which many people have made of me before now, to the effect that I question others but don't make any pronouncements about anything myself, because I have no wisdom in me.

The reason for it is this: God compels me to be a midwife, but has prevented me from giving birth. So I'm not at all wise myself, and there hasn't been any discovery of that kind born to me as the offspring of my mind. But not so with those who associate with me … all those to whom God grants it make progress to an extraordinary extend … And it's clear that they do so, not because they have ever learnt anything from me, but because they have themselves discovered many admirable things in themselves and given birth to them … for delivery it's God, and I myself, who are responsible."

Hence, Socrates is "unproductive of wisdom", because he has no wisdom in him. He is not at all wise himself. That is why what other people, who associate with Socrates, discover in themselves, in not the offspring of Socrates' mind. Thus, Socrates is ignorant of wisdom, and his ignorance is the condition sine quo non of his art of midwifery. Socrates is ignorant as Artemis is childless. Artemis, as we said, is both childless (ἄλοχος) and midwife. As soon as she was born, she helped her mother Leto give birth to her twin brother, Apollo (Pierre Grimal: 1951; 42). Never married, thus being childless, she nevertheless is the patron of pregnant women, whom she attends when they are about to give birth to their children. Both childless and midwife, Artemis is an "ironic" divinity. This is the same with Socrates, ironic philosopher par excellence: he is ignorant but educator, he knows nothing, but he is able to discern good and bad, just and unjust, "unproductive of wisdom" he is the wisest man in Greece, having no wisdom in him, he is capable of bringing others to discover "many admirable things in themselves".

To Artemis' childlessness corresponds Socratic ignorance. To say it differently, Socrates is incapable of producing wisdom, as

Artemis is unable to create life. But they are both capable of bringing to birth: Socrates the wisdom or new ideas, Artemis the children.

Consequently, what Socrates declares not to know is wisdom, because wisdom is divine in its essence. That is why, he is unable to teach it; he can not but help others give birth to it. In this regard, only sophist is able to teach virtue, because he pretends to be master and possessor of wisdom. Against this sophistic pretension, Socrates declares that "virtue has no master", (*Rep.*, 617e), being non-human[2]. That is why virtue can not be taught. To false knowledge of sophist is opposed the real ignorance of Socrates.

Artemis according to Pythagoras

Let's come back to Artemis, to suggest another interpretation of Socratic comparison with her. This new interpretation is of Pythagorean inspiration[3]. For Pythagoras, Apollo is number "1" and Artemis is number "2" (Netton, 10-11). Why Artemis is number "2"?

According to Pythagoreans "even" is unlimited an "odd" limited (Aristotle; A, 986a, 18-19). "Two", being the first even number is the number of multiplicity, in other words, it brings all things to existence. On the other hand, Plato, in *Parmenides*, distinguishes between one-one (Tò ἕ ν ἕ ν) (137c) and one-being (Tò ἕ ν ΄ό ν) (142b). One-one is not but one. Thus, it is not predicable. Conversely, one-being is two, that is, one + be, and "two" is the beginning of "infinite multiplicity of beings" (144a). So, "two", for engendering the multiplicity, is not itself the "One": it bursts out of it, so to speak, as its first emanation, or manifestation. Thus, for being able to bring the limitless ocean of being to birth, the one-being should not be "One"; it should be "Two".

Then, "two" is a creative number. Perhaps, that is why Artemis is identified by Pythagoras to number "two" and not to "one". Because, Artemis, too, attending pregnant women, is somehow the source of multiplicity.

But Artemis is "two", in another sense, being both virile and feminine; her virility coming from her love of hunting. Anyhow, there is some analogy between Artemis and one-being.

Conclusion

According to Phaedo, to philosophise, is to die (64 a), while Symposium teaches us that philosophy results from union of Penia[4] and Poros[5] in Zeus' garden (203b-e). Finally from Socrates attitude vis-à-vis knowledge, we could justify infer that ignorance is the necessary condition of wisdom. As it regards Artemis, her divine midwifery requires her childlessness or her virginity. Then, in each of these cases, negation precedes affirmation:

death precedes philosophy

Penia (poverty) precedes Poros (resource)

Ignorance precedes wisdom, and

childlessness (or virginity) precedes midwifery

These are four different ways to say the same truth. Besides, Penia could be considered as the mythological incarnation of ignorance and Poros that of wisdom. The same thing may be said of Artemis' childlessness and midwifery. Verily, Artemis is the most ironic goddess.

In this sense, irony is the very characteristic of genuine philosopher. Ignorance and wisdom unite.

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[2] For a commentary on this sentence, see: (Proclus, pp. 234-236)

[3] Reference to Pythagoras is justified by the affinities between Platonism and pythagorianism. Moreover, there were Pythagoreans among Socrates' disciples ; for example: Kebes and Simmias (J.Burnet: 151)

[4] Penia = Poverty

[5] Poros = bridge, resource …

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Spiritual Ascent in Buddhism, Christianity and Islam: a Study in Comparative Mysticism

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Abstract

This study examines the doctrine of spiritual ascent, central to mystical experience, as taught in theistic mysticism, as exemplified in Christianity and Islam, and non-theistic or monistic mysticism, as manifested in Buddhism. The study highlights the common characteristics and the variations in the teachings of spiritual ascent according to these three world religions. The primary objective is to explore how the universal human aspiration for a transcendental experience common to these mystical traditions could be brought into contact with, or understood in the light of, the belief systems and values in which a particular mystical concept or formula sprouts.

Introduction

Mystical experience lies in the very depth of human spiritual consciousness. All other relationships count for less when compared with the relationship of the soul with God/the Supreme Being. Mystical experience, claimed to be the custodian of this relationship, has been seen by many writers as being at the heart of all religions, the point of light on which all seekers converge.[1] E. G. Browne, a great Orientalist scholar, has rightly observed it that "there is hardly any soil, be it ever so barren, where it [Mysticism] will not strike root; hardly any creed, however formal, round which it will not twine itself … It is in essence an enunciation more or less clear, more or less eloquent, of the

aspiration of the soul to cease altogether from self and to be at one with God."[2]

In moving towards this goal, of union with God/the Supreme Being, there are naturally preliminary stages and processes, marked differently in different traditions, but sharing a number of common characteristics. Spiritual ascent in Buddhism can be found in the doctrines of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Noble Path, and the final goal is called "*Nirvāna*" (annihilation). In Christian mysticism, three stages are described for spiritual ascent, which are: Purgative Life, Illuminative Life and Unitive Life. The experience of these three stages is called the "Dark Night", and the end of the quest is referred to as "Spiritual Marriage." In Islam, spiritual ascent is taught in the Sufi doctrine of *Maqāmāt* and *Ahwāl* (stations and states), and the apex of the quest lies in *al-Fanā'* (self-annihilation).

The study is to a great extent a descriptive account based on the insider's perspective of the doctrine of spiritual ascent. Its purpose is neither to exhibit how a particular mystical teaching of one mystical tradition might have infiltrated into another nor to investigate the validity or the truth claims of a particular mystical experience. It is rather to explore how the esoteric interpretation of religious experience could be brought into contact with, or understood in the light of, the exoteric ethico-religious tradition that harbours it.

Spiritual Ascent in Buddhist Mysticism
Origin and Development of Buddhist Mysticism

Buddhism is a religion and philosophy founded by Siddhartha Gautama in Northeast India within the period of the late Sixth Century to the early Fourth Century BC. The word 'Buddha', which means awakened, illuminated or enlightened, is not a proper name but a title, which the founder of Buddhism obtained only at the time of his spiritual experience.[3] Since Buddha is a title, the Buddhist tradition has postulated that other Buddhas have lived on earth in the past or will do so in the future. All such Buddhas, known as *samma-sambuddha,* or the perfect fully Awakened Ones, are nevertheless seen only rarely within the vast and ancient cosmos. As Buddha does not refer to a unique individual, Buddhism focuses more on the teaching of Buddha and less

on the personality of its founder than, for example, Christianity. Nor does Buddhism recognise the existence of God, as in Christianity and Islam. Nevertheless, Buddhists do show great reverence to Gautama as a supreme teacher and an exemplar of the ultimate goal that all strive for.[4]

The earliest Buddhist mysticism was concerned with the emptying of the subjective being, considered to be the greatest obstacle to individual spiritual growth. Central to the Buddhist teaching is practical renunciation of the worldly appetites binding the soul to suffer and experience illusion. That detachment must be secured by the discipline of meditation which leads to a spiritual enlightenment that allows man to see the apparent world in its true light and thus deprives it of all attraction. Because of this avowed quest for a reality transcending outer appearances, mysticism, according to some writers, is interwoven in the whole pattern of Buddhism.[5]

There are three eminent aspects of Buddhism that aim to guide towards perfection: (1) The Promethean personality of Buddha. (2) Dharma, the Good Law pointing the way to liberation. (3) Shangha or Brotherhood of the Bikhus, whole body of monks and saints.[6]

In the course of its long history, Buddhism has seen the development of three huge bodies of religious doctrine and practice, which are characteristically called *yana* (vehicles). The earliest Buddhist movement was called Hīnayāna (the Lesser Vehicle), later known as Therāvada, (the Doctrine of the Elders). Therāvada Buddhism tends toward a conservative, orthodox interpretation of the Buddha's teaching. Since the beginning of the Common Era, Therāvada has been challenged by a later movement that called itself Mahāyāna (the Great Vehicle). It claimed to be a more comprehensive and universal way toward liberation, with a more ambitious religious ideal, and with a more liberal and innovative interpretation of the Buddha's teachings. In the Sixth Century CE, or perhaps a little earlier, a third orientation emerged, the movement called Vajrayāna (Diamond Vehicle), commonly referred to as Tantric or Esoteric Buddhism in the West. It was characterised by its use of spells, symbols, and very complicated rituals, the acquisition of magic powers as a way toward enlightenment, by the development of psychological techniques; and by a system of esoteric transmission from master to disciple.[7]

The Four Noble Truths

Generally speaking, mystical practices and esoteric sects are to be found in all forms of Buddhism. The essence of the Buddha's teaching lies in the **Four Noble Truths** (*Cattāri Ariyasaccāni*). They are: (1) life is fundamentally disappointment and suffering; (2) suffering is a result of one's desires for pleasure, power, and continued existence; (3) in order to stop disappointment and suffering one must stop desiring; and (4) the way to stop desiring, and thus suffering is the Eightfold Noble Path. The fourfold structure resembles the practice of the doctors of the Buddha's day: (i) diagnose a disease, (ii) identify the cause, (iii) determine whether it is curable, and (iv) outline a course of treatment to cure it.[8]

The Eightfold Noble Path

The Eightfold Noble Path (*Ariya-Atthangika-Megga*), together with the Four Noble Truths sums up the whole of Buddhist teaching. It is also called the Middle Path, as it steers a course between the sensual pleasures of the materialists and the self-mortification of the ascetics. Those who follow the Eightfold Path are freed from the suffering that is an essential part of human existence and are led ultimately to *Nirvāna*, or Enlightenment, as will be discussed below. The Eightfold Noble Path consists of: (1) right view or understanding: faith in the Buddhist view of the nature of existence in terms of the Four Noble Truths; (2) right aspiration: the resolve to practice the faith; (3) right speech: avoidance of falsehoods, slander, or abusive speech; (4) right conduct: abstention from taking life, stealing, and improper sexual behaviour; (5) right livelihood: rejection of occupations not in keeping with Buddhist principles; (6) right effort: avoidance of bad and development of good mental states; (7) right mindfulness: awareness of the body, feelings, and thought; and (8) right contemplation: meditation.[9]

The order of the eight Path-factors can be seen as that of a natural progression, with one factor following on from the one before it. Right understanding comes first because it guides to know the right and wrong form of each of the eight factors; it also counteracts spiritual ignorance. From the cold knowing of right understanding blooms a right way of thinking and intention. From this, a person's speech

becomes improved, and thus his action. Once he is working on right action, it becomes natural to incline towards a virtuous livelihood. With this basis, there can be progress on right effort. This facilitates the development of right awareness, which allows the development of the calm of meditative concentration.[10]

Buddhist Meditation (Dhyana)

The practice of mental concentration, the eighth Path, will lead ultimately through a succession of stages to the final goal of 'spiritual fire', which is *Nirvāna*, 'extinction', 'quenching' or 'blowing out'.[11] Meditation occupies a central place in Buddhism and combines, in its highest stages, the discipline of progressively increased introversion with the insight brought about by wisdom.

The object of concentration may vary according to the individual and the situation. One Pāli (an Indo-Aryan language used as the liturgical and scholarly language of Therāvada) text lists forty types of *Kammatthana*s, including devices (such as a colour or a light), repulsive things (such as a corpse), recollections (as of the Buddha), and the *brahmavihara*s (virtues, such as friendliness). Four stages (in Sanskrit *dhyanas*; in Pāli *jhana*s) are distinguished in the shift of attention from the outward sensory world. They are: (1) detachment from the external world and a consciousness of joy and ease, (2) concentration, with suppression of reasoning and investigation, (3) the passing away of joy, with the sense of ease remaining and (4) the passing away of ease as well, bringing about a state of pure self-possession and equanimity.[12]

The *dhyana*s are followed by four further spiritual exercises, the *samapattis* (attainments). They are described as: (1) consciousness of infinity of space; (2) consciousness of the infinity of cognition; (3) concern with the unreality of things (nihility); (4) consciousness of unreality as the object of thought.[13]

Tantrism, the esoteric sect of Buddhism, has a unique method of how meditation could be practiced. Tantric specialists warn that in order to correctly use the body's processes to achieve an identification of the void with compassion, the aspirant must follow absolutely and unconditionally the instructions of a master or teacher who has been

initiated into the mysteries and can teach the correct use of the body's process. Also, he must prove his sincerity, purity, and detachment before he will be accepted as a disciple; for his spiritual welfare will then be the responsibility of the Guru's instructions much as a patient obeys the instructions of his doctor.[14]

The master first endeavours to direct the student to compassion through meditation on the transitoriness of life, the relation of cause and effect of one's actions, and the general suffering of humanity. After this sympathy for the suffering of humanity is aroused, the master guides his pupil in *yogic*, or contemplative, exercises that help to produce inner experiences corresponding to the various stages of spiritual growth. This process of advancement toward enlightenment involves the identification of the initiate with gods or goddesses that represent various cosmic forces. These gods are first visualised with the help of *mudras* (meditative gestures and postures), *mantras* (sacred syllables and phrases), and images, all of which are believed to possess the essence of the divinities to be invoked. The images are portrayed in a *mandala*, a sacred design that represents the universe as an aid to meditation. After this visualisation, the initiate identifies with the divinities and finds that each in turn is *shunyata,* or emptiness.[15]

Nirvāna

The goal of the Eightfold Noble Path and Buddhist meditation is Nirvāna (Pāli Nibbāna, which literally means 'extinction' or 'blowing out',). The concept of Nirvāna (adopted from Hinduism) is so important in Buddhism that the whole of Buddhist mysticism is reduced to its attainment.[16] Nirvāna is conceived somewhat differently within the various schools of Buddhism. In the Therāvada tradition, it is tranquillity and the blissful unconditioned peace. In the schools of the Mahāyāna tradition, Nirvāna is equated with *shunyata* (emptiness), with *dharma-kaya* (the real and unchanging essence of the Buddha), and with *dharma-dhatu* (ultimate reality). The Buddhist description both of the experience and of the path that leads to it is characterised by a spare simplicity as well as by a persistent reluctance to use any but negative predicates.[17]

The three negative terms - non-attainment, non-assertion, and non-reliance - define a state of utmost emptiness by which Nagarjuna, the most renowned Madhyamika thinker in the Second Century CE, described enlightenment. Non-attainment consists of emptying the self of all personal qualities, desires, and thoughts, indeed of all that might be considered to comprise a "self." Ultimate reality is void of all defining distinctions.[18] Non-assertion is the logical counterpart of the emptiness doctrine. This doctrine reveals an intense awareness of the ineffable quality of ultimate truth. No expression is considered to be definitive, not even the Four Noble Truths on which Buddhism is founded.[19] Writing on Nirvāna from a comparative perspective, E. M. Abrahams explains that "Nirvāna is not a subjective state of mind or being where the aspirant 'arrives.' It transcends the individual mind. It may be likened to the Buddhist version of the Eternal."[20] It is contrasted to samsara, which refers to the fleeting world of temporal events, and of constant change and suffering which are subject to the endless round of reincarnation.[21]

Nirvāna is often divided into two states or levels: Nirvāna and Pari-Nirvāna. In this sense, Nirvāna is not necessarily the annihilation of all existence. Rather it is a state of release from all pain and ignorance, accompanied by a sense of profound rest, which is achieved by all Arhats (saints) while still living in this world, and notably by Buddha when he attained Buddhahood. Higher than this is the state of Pari-Nirvāna which means the absolute termination of migration, with the extinction of all the elements of bodily existence. This took place when the Buddha died after innumerable previous 'deaths'.[22]

Spiritual Ascent in Christian Mysticism.
Origin and Development of Christian Mysticism

Mysticism has indeed been inherent in the teaching of Christianity from the very beginning. The mystical aspect of early Christianity finds its fullest expression in the letters of St. Paul and the Gospel. For Paul, mystical aspiration is always for union with Jesus Christ. The reoccurring phrase "in Christ" implies a personal union, a participation in Christ's Crucifixion. In the Gospel according to John, particularly in the farewell discourse (chapters 14-16), Jesus is reported

to have predicted his imminent death and of his return in Spirit to unite himself with his followers. In the prayer of Jesus in chapter 17, there is a vision of an interpenetrating union of souls in which all who are one with Christ share his perfect union with the Father.[23]

Besides the Pauline and Johannine traditions, an early Christian mystical trend can be traced to the Gnostics (early Christian heretics who viewed matter as evil and the spirit as good). According to the mysticism of the Gnostics, those who are saved must renounce the world completely and follow the pure ethic of love and compassion. They will then be identified with Jesus and become rays of the divine light.[24]

The classic forms of Eastern Christian mysticism appeared towards the end of the Second Century, when the mysticism of the early Church began to be expressed in categories of thought explicitly dependent on the Greek philosophical tradition of Plato and his followers. The notion of deification (*theiosis)* fits in with the New Testament emphasis on becoming sons of God in such texts as 2 Peter 1:4, which talks about sharing in the divine nature. These ecumenical adaptations later provided an entry for the language of union with God, especially after the notion of union became more explicit in Neoplatonism, the last great pagan form of philosophical mysticism. Many of these themes were already present in embryonic form in the works of the early Eastern Christian mystics, i.e. Clement of Alexandria (d. 211-215), Origen (d. 254) and Evanrius Ponticus (346-399).[25]

Perhaps the most influential of all Eastern Christian mystics was Dionysius the Areopagite, probably a Syrian monk who lived about 500 CE. In his Ecclesiastical Hierarchies, Dionysius expounds three ways of spiritual life by which human nature is 'divinized'. These are Purgation, Illumination, and Union, the three stages of mystical progress which appear in the teachings of many later Christian mystics and which were already suggested by the three stages of perfection taught by Plotinus.[26] Dionysius taught that God cannot be known at all in the ordinary sense, but he can be experienced. Though he began his *Mystical Theology* with a passing reference to an invocation of Trinity, Dionysius refrained from mentioning God the Father or the Son. Rather, he focused entirely on the unity of God, the undivided Ultimate Reality

and Godhead that lives in complete darkness beyond all light. Dionysius taught a negative way, wherein the mystic is plunged into the 'Darkness of Unknowing' and is 'wholly absorbed in Him Who is beyond all'.[27] Likewise, the mystic, aiming for the Divine vision, must remove all impediments, so that in "ascending upwards from particular to universal conceptions we strip off all qualities in order that we attain a naked knowledge of that Unknowing which in all existent things is enwrapped by all objects of knowledge, and that we may begin to see that super-essential Darkness which is hidden by all the light that is in existent things."[28]

Another prominent mystic of Eastern Christianity was Saint John Climacus, who lived in the Seventh Century. Using the biblical image of 'Jacob's ladder' ascending into heaven by first renouncing the world and finally ending up in heaven with God, he described thirty steps in the ascent to God in his work, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, which is read in Orthodox monasteries during Lent. Spiritual perfection or salvation is not attainable at once, but comes after a long arduous process of spiritual striving or *askesis*. In this process, with sustained effort, one rises *gradually* through higher and higher levels of spiritual development. The steps eventually lead the spiritual striver to *theosis*, divinization or salvation, which is the ultimate goal of spiritual struggle. Overall, the divinization of a man is fundamental to Eastern Christian mysticism.[29]

The founder of Western Catholic mysticism was Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (354-430). In his *Confession,* Augustine mentions two experiences of "touching" or "attaining" God. Later, in the *Literal Commentary on Genesis,* he introduced a triple classification of visions - corporeal, spiritual, (i.e. imaginative) and intellectual - that influenced later Christian mystics for centuries. The influence of Neoplatonist philosophers, such as Plotinus, was evident in his classification.[30] Other prominent mystics include Johannes Eckhart (1260-1327/28?) and Teresa of Avila (1515-1582). John of the Cross (1542-1591) has been regarded as the most profound and systematic of all Roman Catholic mystical thinkers. His four major works, *The Dark Night of the Soul, The Ascent of Mount Carmel, A Spiritual Canticle of The Soul,* and *The Living Flame of Love,* constitute a full theological treatment of the active and passive purgations of the senses and the spirit, the role of

illumination, and unification of the soul with God in 'Spiritual Marriage'.[31]

Mysticism also finds a rich expression in Protestantism. Contrary to the conventional belief about the corruption of human nature, as held by the established Roman Catholic and Protestant churches, Protestant mystics emphasized the divine element in humanity and that the life of God is already in the souls of men, which was called the "spark" or "ground" of the soul. Thus, supreme authority lies, of necessity, not in the written word of Scripture, but in the Word of God in the self. Among the chief representatives of Protestant mystics are the continental "Spirituals," such as Sebastian Franck (1499-1542), Valentin Weigel (1533–88), and Jakob Böhme (1575–1624).[32]

In general, the tenor of early Christian mysticism was determined by the New Testament and trends in Hellenistic Judaism (especially Philo Judaeus's scriptural theology and the late Judaic meaning of *gnosis*). A third factor was usually referred to as Neoplatonism.

Christian mystics have described the stages of the return of the soul to God in a variety of ways. The three stages of the Way which have been accepted in the Western Catholic Christianity and cover the stages of the Way as set forth in the religious systems of the Eastern Orthodox Christianity are Purgative life, Illuminative life, and Unitive life.

Purgative Life

The first stage is known as Purgative life, whose purpose is 'dying to self,' that is, emptying the self to free up space for God. This is the stage of purification from the fetters of sin represented by sensuality and self-will, to move away from the world of the senses and ego to the higher, eternally abiding reality of God. The soul must be purified of all those feelings, desires, and attitudes that separate it from God. Purification is secured only by self-discipline, and for the majority of mystics, a life of strict asceticism has seemed to be the only way by which the carnal self could be purged of the sins which defile it.[33]

Christian mystics have always taken Christ, especially the crucified Christ, as the model for this process. According to them, following Christ involves a 'dying to self', giving up oneself wholly to God, so that one may be possessed by the Divine Love.[34]

In this stage, the practice of meditation and contemplative prayer is stressed, particularly by the Eastern Christian mystics. This is referred to as Hesychasm (from *hesychia,* "stillness"). The method is the concentration of the mind on the divine Presence, induced by the repetition of the 'Jesus prayer' which was formalized as "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner."[35] Unconditional obedience to the master is necessary to undergo this experience. On this, it is said that "obedience is the food of all the saints. By her they are nourished. Through her they come to perfection."[36]

Through prayer, supplication and meditation, the disciple gets accustomed to a life of mortification. Once this has happened, God suddenly darkens the light of divine favor which had recently been given spiritual delight. The mystic now finds that he is losing the desire to meditate. A feeling of dryness invades his senses, for God has taken the 'goods' formerly infused into the senses, and transferred them to the spiritual faculties. Each divine purgation or bridling of the appetite and faculties will throw the individual into uncertainty about his sanctity, a problem that can be conquered by faith alone. Constant insecurity and the overwhelming need to rely solely on faith are two of the main reasons this route is called a *Dark Night.* The arrival of the "night of faith" is at midnight. "This spiritual night of faith removes everything, both in the intellect and in the senses."[37]

Illuminative Life

When the soul has been stripped of all that is opposed to the One Perfect God, it is ready to pass onto the next stage, known as Illuminative Life. The mystic, purified from the gross hindrances to perfection and enabled to conform in his outward life to what is required of the servant of God, has now the harder task of purifying the inner self. He needs to bring all faculties, thought, feeling, and will, into conformity with what he now knows to be the Divine Will. This

means that all that he was is now merged into the sole desire to serve Him in adoring love. "The soul now seeks not and possesses not, any other will but that of doing the God's Will."[38]

The soul has been on the ascendancy, its sensory part, as well as its spiritual part, is better able to receive God's communications. It is purer now and, locked together with the spiritual part of the soul, is affected by the increased flow of loving, divine wisdom. However, because it is sensible, i.e., weak and incapable of vigorous spiritual communications, one often suffers bodily harms and injuries. This is a direct outcome of the contemplation that the spiritual part of the soul is receiving. As they become progressively united and conformed, the two parts of the soul are prepared to suffer through the more profound and painful darkness ahead. "Both the sense and the spirit undergo such agony and pain that the soul would consider death a relief."[39]

Unitive Life

The mystic who has passed through the stages of the Purgative and Illuminative life now enters upon the last stage of the Way, the final state of perfection which is the main goal of the quest. This is referred to as Unitive Life, in which the soul beholds the Supreme Reality face to face in the Beatific Vision, and is joined thereunto in conscious union. That mystic can now say "I live, yet not I, but God in me." Now the soul is conscious of a Being who surpasses the ego and yet at the same time is identified with it. It feels itself identified in union with the Divine; it has passed from consciousness of self and is absorbed in the consciousness of God; it has become deified.[40]

This Unitive stage is frequently spoken of as a "Spiritual Marriage." While Purgative Life relates to the beginners and Illuminative Life to the advanced, to the state of spiritual betrothal, Unitive Life, being the final state of perfection, the most beatific state relates to the 'Spiritual Marriage' that weds God and the soul. John of the Cross describes the nature of this most beatific state in the following way:

This is the union of the nature of the soul, in solitude, cleansed from all impurity, natural, temporal, and spiritual, with the Bridegroom alone, with His nature, by love only — that of love which is the only

love of the spiritual marriage, wherein the soul, as it were, kisses God when none despises it nor makes it afraid … When the soul has been raised to the high state of spiritual marriage, the Bridegroom reveals to it, as His faithful consort, His own marvelous secrets most readily and most frequently, for he who truly and sincerely loves hides nothing from the object of his affections. The chief matter of His communications are the sweet mysteries of His incarnation, the ways and means of redemption, which is one of the highest works of God, and so is to the soul one of the sweetest.[41]

This stage has two main aspects. First, while the consciousness of self and the world remains, that consciousness is accompanied by a continuous sense of union with God. Second, the spirit is in a theopathic state: the soul is felt to be in all things the organ or instrument of God. In this stage the mystic is able to engage in spiritual activities without losing the grace of union. The mystics are "contemplative in action".[42]

Spiritual Ascent in Islam
Origin and Development of Sufism in Islam

Islamic mysticism is called *'tasawwuf'*, translated into English as 'Sufism'. The term is derived from *safā* (purity) or *sūf,* (wool), plausibly a reference to the woollen garment of the early Islamic ascetics.[43] "The Sufi approach," says Ibn Khaldūn, "is based upon constant application to divine worship, complete devotion to God, aversion to the false splendour of the world, abstinence from the pleasure, property, and position to which the great mass aspires, and retirement from the world into solitude for divine worship."[44]

True Sufism, in its pristine and simple form traces its origin and way of life back to the Qur'ān and Prophetic Sunnah. Numerous Qur'ānic verses urging humans to constantly maintain *dhikr Allāh* (commemoration of God) (i.e. 2:152; 3:191; 29:45; 32:41-42) coupled with the Prophet's experience of retirement in the cave of Hirā' before the Divine Revelation was sent to him, has led Sufis to attach a considerable importance to *dhikr* and meditation. The powerful eschatological overtones of the Qur'ānic message (i.e. 3:14; 57:20) together with the Prophet's austere way of life encouraged Sufis to

renounce worldly affairs and go into retreat, particularly when other people in the community allowed themselves to be dragged into the whirlpool of the world, as was the case in the Second Century of the Islamic era.[45]

Thus, Islamic teaching alone is sufficient to have given rise to Sufism. Nevertheless, when Islam was brought into contact with other cultures, Sufism was subject to different foreign ideas and theories, some of which were believed to be incompatible with Islamic tenets.[46] This adoption and adaptation of foreign elements into Islamic spirituality resulted in Sufism being subjected to severe criticism in philosophical, theological and juristic circles.[47]

There is a little difference between Sufis (who are overwhelmingly Sunnites) and their counterparts in Shī‘ism (a second Islamic sect). Both Sufis and Shī‘ite mystics believe that everything was created from the primordial or pre-created Light known as al-Nūr al-Muhammadiyyah (Muhammadan Light) which continued to be manifested in successive prophets untill it reached its final historical manifestation in the Prophet Muhammad. The Shī‘īs add that ‘Alī ibn Abī ālib is also the part of the pre-creation Light; consequently after Prophet Muhammad only ‘Alī and his successors, known as Imams, can reveal the inner dimensions of the Divine Law. The love of Prophet Muhammad, his cousin, ‘Alī and their descendents and visiting their tombs fill their hearts with spiritual ecstasy much more than the (Sunnite) Sufis.[48]

The first Sufi author was al-Hārith ibn Asad al-Muhāsibī (d. 243/857) in his *Kitāb al-Ri‘āyah li-Huqūq Allāh*, but the oldest surviving general account of Sufism has been credited to Abū Nasr al-Sarrāj's (d. 378/988) *Kitāb al-Luma‘*. The classical formulation of Sufi doctrines on the mystical side has always been attributed to al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072) in his *al-Risālah al-Qushayriyyah*; the recognition, or rather re-recognition, and assimilation of its teachings into mainstream Sunnite theology and jurisprudence was accomplished by Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī (d 505/1111) in his *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*. Henceforth, Sufism, at least a 'sober' type, was accepted as a reasonable and laudable Muslim way of life.[49]

Spiritual ascent, according to Sufism, consists of two stages. The first stage is referred to as '*Maqām*at' (plural of *maqām*, meaning 'stations') and the second stage is referred to as 'Ahwāl' (plural of '*hāl*', meaning states). The apex of the ascent is '*al-Fanā"* (annihilation or obliteration).

Maqāmāt (Stations)

The levels of the stations indicate the degree of progress attained by the seeker in the Path of God. As instructed by Sufis, the obligation of each station must be fulfilled, and the virtues pertaining to it acquired before the aspirant passes onto the next station.[50]

The order and number of the *Maqāmāt* are not uniform among all Sufis. Some believe that there are a thousand *Maqāmāt* or even more. The majority, however, agree on seven major *Maqāmāt*. The first station is *maqām* of *tawbah* (repentance). It means the abandonment of all that is forbidden, repulsive or dubious and the turning to God. The Sufis consider *maqām* of *tawbah* as the first, necessary step without which the way forward is closed.

The second station is *maqām* of *wara'* (abstinence). According to al-Sarrāj, one of the early prominent Sufis, there are three levels of abstinence: abstinence from what is dubious, i.e. neither plainly lawful nor plainly unlawful; abstinence from whatever the conscience bids to avoid; and abstinence from whatever diverts the attention from God. The first level is for the public, the second level for the elite and the third level for the cream of the elite.[51]

The third station is *maqām* of *zuhd* (renunciation, or detachment). This means that the person is devoid of possessions and his heart is without acquisitiveness. *Zuhd* consists in knowing that what is renounced is of little value in comparison with what is received. Whoever does not have this knowledge cannot detach himself from the worldly materials. So he who understood that what belongs to God is abiding and that the other life is better and more lasting than this life.

The forth station is the *maqām* of *faqr* (poverty), in which the Sufi asserts his independence of worldly possessions and his need for God alone. The Sufi possesses little that he can call his own, and *faqr* was practised partly in order that the soul might not be distracted by

worldly things in its quest for God, and partly as a means of self-discipline, because the soul by nature hates poverty and loves wealth. True poverty is not merely lack of wealth, but lack of desire for wealth; the empty heart as well as the empty hand.

The fifth station is the *maqām* of *sabr* (patience), the art of steadfastness and perseverance. Here one remains steadfast and unshakable in all circumstances. *ṣabr* requires that one persist in doing righteous actions and refrain from committing sins. With *sabr* one's drive for the untrammelled enjoyment of worldly materials will be brought under control and thus he will not succumb to passion and ignorance toward the precipice of sin and rebellion against divine command.

The sixth station is the *maqām* of *tawakkul* (trust, or surrender), in which the Sufi completely depends on God. He knows that he cannot be discouraged by hardship and pain, for he is in total submission to God's will and finds joy even in his sorrow.

The seventh station is the *maqām* of *ridā* (satisfaction), a state of quiet contentment and joy that comes from the anticipation of the long-sought union. This means that the Sufi, on his part, is completely acquiescent in all that God ordained for him, and God on His part, is completely satisfied with His servant's attitude towards Him. Because this *maqām* of *ridā* is reciprocal between God and man, as indicated in the Qur'ān (5:119; 9:100; 58:22; 98:8), it is the terminal point of *Maqāmāt* and the starting point of *Ahwāl*."[52]

Ahwāl (States)

Ahwāl are spiritual states of mind that come to the Sufi from time to time during his journey towards God. They are states of ecstasy bestowed upon the seeker's soul, as signs of favour and grace to encourage him on his path. These graces of *ahwāl* cannot be acquired or retained through an individual's own efforts. When the soul is purified of its attachments to the material world, it can only wait patiently for those spiritual gifts of God, which, when they come, fill the Sufi with the desire to continue his journey with new energy and higher expectations.[53]

Though the Sufis speak of hundreds of *ahwāl,* among those most often referred to are the following: the *hāl* of *murāqabah* (watching), the *hāl* of *qurb* (nearness), the *hāl* of *wajd* (ecstasy), the *hāl* of *sukr* (intoxication) and the *hāl* of *wudd* (intimacy).[54]

The *ahwāl* are distinguished by most Sufis from the *Maqāmāt* (spiritual stages) in two main aspects. First, the *ahwāl* are usually transitory, like flashes of lightning they come into the heart and then disappear, whereas *Maqāmāt* stay longer. Second, while *ahwāl* denote a gratuitous favour from God, *Maqāmāt* are granted solely on the person's merit and effort.[55]

Al-Fanā' (Annihilation)

The peak of the quest, which is the main goal of the ascent, is *al-Fanā'* which translates as 'self-annihilation' or 'obliteration. *Al-Fanā'* itself has different levels and different types. Al-Junayd, a prominent early Sufi, describes three stages of *al-Fanā'*: (1) The obliteration of attributes, characteristics and natural qualities in your motives when you carry out your religious duties, making great effort and doing the opposite of what you may desire, and compelling yourself to do the things which you do not wish to do. (2) The obliteration of your pursuit after pleasures in obedience to God's behest - so that you are exclusively His, without any intermediary means of contact. (3) The obliteration of the consciousness of having attained the vision of God at the final stage of ecstasy when God's victory over you is complete. At this stage you are obliterated and have eternal life with God, and you exist only in the existence of God because you have been obliterated. Your physical being continues but your individuality has departed.[56]

Stage one concerns the active life, and requires perseverance in moral training through a deliberately ascetic lifestyle. This often goes against one's natural inclinations and desires, which normally disrupt the attempt to reach God. Stage two involves cutting oneself off from all pleasures, including the enjoyment of fulfilling God's religious injunctions.[57] It is done so that there remains between God and the worshipper no intermediary objects. This aspect of *al-Fanā'* concerns one's mental and spiritual life. Stage three is that of losing

consciousness of everything, even awareness of union with God. The worshipper is so overwhelmed and engulfed by God that he is unaware of anything in the earthly plane of existence. His physical body continues, but his faculty of rational perception has passed away, and he loses his individual awareness.[58]

In addition, Sufis often make a distinction between three types of *al-Fanā'*. The first type is *al-Fanā' 'an wujūd al-siwā* (to be obliterated; to recognize none in existence except God). This type is professed by the pantheists who believe that God is everything and everything is God. Those who subscribe to this type deny any distinction between God and man, good and evil, obedience and disobedience etc. The second type is *al-Fanā' 'an shuhūd al-siwā* (to be oblivious of all except God). It is the type which most of the later Sufis refer to as the goal of spiritual ascent. Sufis do not deny the existence of other things besides God, but they believe that the worshipper who has reached this stage will become oblivious of everything, including himself, except God. This type of *al-Fanā'* is also referred to as intoxication (*sukr*). The third type, *al-Fanā' 'an irādat al-siwā* (to be obliterated to the will of God), is professed by the most righteous people. The worshipper who has reached this stage will renounce his wants to the wants of God. He needs nothing except that which God wants. His want has completely dissolved in God's want and, thus, the two wants become one.[59]

Dhikr

Dhikr, 'remembrance' or 'mentioning' like *fikr* (meditation), is a method the Sufi may use in striving to achieve oneness with God. Based on Qur'ānic injunctions (18:28; 33:41), the *dhikr* is essentially a "remembering" of God by the frequent repetition of His Names. Originally, a simple recitation of the Qur'ān and various religious writings suffice. Within Sufi circles, however, *dhikr* acquired various formulas. As the Sufi brotherhoods (*tarīqah*s) were established, each adopted a particular *dhikr*, to be recited in solitude (*e.g.,* following each of the five obligatory daily prayers) or as a community.

Sufis lay particular emphasis on having a shaykh (master) or murshid (guardian) in upward spiritual journey. Perfect obedience to a shaykh, in whose hands the novice should be like a corpse in the hands of the undertaker, is necessary to survive the extreme conditions of the Path, particularly the forty days' seclusion in which the disciple's mind was constantly watched by the master who taught him how to respond to the various psychic phenomena that appeared to him during this period. A 'seeker' who attempts to traverse the 'Path' without assistance receives little sympathy. Of such a one it is said that "his guide is Satan," and he is likened to a tree that for want of a gardener's care brings forth "none or bitter fruit."[60]

Similarities and Differences

There are particular preliminary stages that an aspirant has to undergo before embarking on a spiritual journey that takes a wayfarer from a lower to a higher state of experience. According to the three mystical traditions, the practice of meditation is necessary in order to concentrate the mind and prepare it for a spiritually extraordinary experience. Compared to general meditations, meditation for spiritual ascent requires a specific technique/formula that an initiate needs to observe meticulously under the guidance of a *murshid, guru* or master.

The main controversy surrounding the spiritual ascent centres on the nature of *al-Fanā'*, Unitive Life and Nirvāna and the relation of those states of being to the major conscious powers of the subject who experiences it. The mainstream Sufis subscribe to *al-Fanā' 'an shuhūd al-siwā* as indicated above. It is a point where the worshipper will be oblivious to all except God. It does not involve infusion of the essence or identification of the divine and human nature, as Nicholson observes.[61] In spite of this proximity to God, the worshipper does not lose his ontological essence or become part of God. Al-Junayd says that *Fanā'* is not the passing away of our whole being into God's being, but the passing away of our will into the will of God. The ego remains, but it is surrendered to Him. In other words, the consciousness of the lover is completely dissolved in the Beloved, from which state of divine

intoxication he returns to himself, to a state of sobriety. He describes how one returns to the state of sobriety after the state of *al-Fanā'*:

He is himself, after he has not been truly himself. He is present in himself and in God after having been present in God and absent in himself. This is because he has left the intoxication of God's overwhelming *ghalaba* (victory), and comes to the clarity of sobriety....Once more he assumes his individual attributes, after *Fanā'*.[62]

Only in that state of sobriety can one provide service to the community, and Sufis are known as "slaves of the One and servants of the many." It is for this reason that Sufis stress the need for sobriety after the state of 'intoxication' and that the stage of servanthood comes after the stage of union.[63] Thus, in the highest stage of *al-Fanā',* the believer is still separated from God by a veil, causing anguish and suspense.

Some have wrongly interpreted *al-Fanā'* as *hulūl* (incarnation) or *ittihād* (identification of the divine and human nature). Al-Hallāj's unfortunate ecstatic utterance, '*anā al-haqq*', ('I am The Truth') was promptly condemned even by mainstream Sufis because it deviated from conventional Sufi teachings. Al-Sarrāj clarifies that:

This doctrine is strictly Unitarian (*al-Tawhīd*). Those who have given it a wrong interpretation have failed to observe that the qualities of God are not God. To make God identical with His qualities is to be guilty of infidelity (*kufur*), because God does not descend into the heart, but that which descends into the heart is faith in God and belief in His unity and reverence for the thought of Him.[64]

A similar controversy about the nature of union with God exists in Christianity. According to some early Christian mystics, Unitive Life does not entail *transmutation* into the divine nature. William of Saint Thierry in the Twelfth Century sketched out a twofold path to union, an intellectual ascent and an affective ascent. In explaining the relation between the two, he says: "in the contemplation of God where love is chiefly operative, reason passes into love and is transformed into a certain spiritual and divine understanding which transcends and absorbs all reason." For him, the man of God "is found worthy to become not God, but what God is, that is to say *man becomes through grace what God is by nature*." As elaborated by McGinn and Turner, there is no

transmutation into the divine nature even though through grace one can be divinised.[65]

St. Bonaventure in the Thirteenth Century stressed on the similar point that all the intellectual powers of the soul are brought to bear in the ascent, but affectivity goes beyond intellect. He also made it clear that the affective joining of God and human brought about through spiritual ascent, never takes away the dignity of our personhood. We can never be said to be "one with God" in any univocal sense, because any affirmation of oneness with the divine nature is incorrect without the addition of some qualification or determination, like *unus "spiritus."*[66]

Another perspective of the nature of union with God indicates substantial union. As McGinn points out, it is probable that Neoplatonic notions of union of identity or indistinction helped provide explanatory categories for some Thirteenth-Century mystics. This view is generally attributed to St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) and Eckhart.

In the *Sermones in Cantica,* Bernard insisted that the only power by which humans can deal reciprocally with God is love, and that marital love is the highest form that best expresses union. He described this highest experience of love as follows:

To lose yourself, as if you no longer existed… is not a human sentiment but a divine experience… It is deifying to go through such an experience. As a drop of water seems to disappear completely in a big quantity of wine, even assuming the wine's taste and colour, just as red, molten iron becomes so much like fire it seems to lose its primary state; just as the air on a sunny day seems transformed into a sunshine instead of being lit up; so it is necessary for the saints that all human feelings melt in a mysterious way and flow into the will of God. Otherwise, how will God be all in all if something human survives in man?[67]

Besides Bernard's view, Eckhart's notion of *unitas indistinctionis* (the union of indistinction) fits this category. It all starts with his formula that "God's ground and the soul's ground are one ground," that is, there is in the soul a "spark" (vünkelîn) or "castle" (bürgelîn), or "ground" (grunt) that is identical with God. Because God's ground and the soul's ground are in deepest reality one ground, then not only "must God's existence be my existence and God's is-ness

my is-ness," but also just as the Father is giving birth to the Son from all eternity, so "He gives me birth, me, his Son and the same Son." Furthermore, since the divine ground, the absolute unity, transcends and has a priority over Trinity, the ultimate mystical goal can be described as a "breaking-through" to indistinct oneness with the Godhead.[68]

While both views can be discerned within the Christian tradition, mainstream Christianity always distances itself from the indistinct union with God and thus Eckhart was posthumously condemned for heresy in 1329. There is no doubt that the Neoplatonic notions of union of identity or indistinction helped provide explanatory categories for some Thirteenth-Century Christian mystics. Nevertheless, *unitas indistinctionis*, as McGinn points out, was born in the depths of the experience of the mystics of the Thirteenth Century.[69] On top of that, it stemmed from the doctrine of Crucifixion which is rooted in the Christian faith.[70] If it was true that Jesus Christ was a human made divine through Crucifixion and Resurrection and that every true Christian is expected to follow in Christ's footstep, then it behoves every Christian mystic to aspire to a similar union. By contrast, such personal deification or divinization has no root in Islam. Never had Prophet Muhammad, whom the Sufis took as their exemplar, set a precedent or claimed to have been united with God even in his well-known *Mi'rāj* (Ascent) event.

The situation is totally different in Buddhism. The question of the nature of union with God does not exist in Buddhist mysticism simply because there is no concept of God in the first place. In the Hīnayāna school, there is a teaching that a man can attain a state of union with the Cosmic Spirit, here called Brahma: "the Bhikkhu who is free from anger, free from malice, pure in mind, and master of himself should after death, when the body is dissolved, become united with Brahma."[71] In another verse, it is stated that "this is the straight path, this the direct way which leads him, who acts according to it, into a state of union with Brahma."[72] But then that state of union is not considered to be the ultimate state. It is believed that even beyond the 'world of Brahma, there are realms of consciousness and being.[73]

Nirvāna or Pari-Nirvāna may be seen as the Buddhist version of Eternity, but it is not eternity of 'being' because no type of life or existence is postulated at that state. It is neither consciousness nor unconsciousness; neither life nor non-life. Rather it is eternity of 'becoming' from multiple re-births to void/nothingness. [74] If 'being' was ultimately suffering, nothing else could give the ultimate and everlasting happiness in Buddhist mystical thought, except the absolute 'nothingness'.

Obviously, this absolute nothingness has no cognitive similitude in the theistic belief systems,[75] except to construe it perhaps as 'an escape from the torment of Hell Fire without a place in Paradise.' In Islam, in particular, *al-khalq* (creation, leading to existence and life) is fundamentally good, because it is contrived by God, Who is the Absolute Good. Had it been all or partially evil, it would not have been made by God.[76] Yet it is the Hereafter which is better in all respects and which counts the most. Retirement from the worldly splendours is meaningful only if practiced as an act of *'ibādah* (worshiping God). Such a retirement is virtuously practiced among the Sufis, not because life is suffering and consequently evil, but only because it is considered to be the best way to attain *taqwā* (piety/God consciousness)[77] which the Qur'ān declares to be the best *zād* (provision) for the Eternal Life in the Hereafter.

Perhaps the best way to account for this variation in mystical spiritual ascent is to relate it to the worldview in which a particular mystical concept or formula sprouts. While mysticism is undoubtedly a universal phenomenon, its universal character can better be appreciated within its distinctive belief systems. Thus it is, as Gimello puts it, "inextricably bound up with, dependent upon, and usually subservient to the deeper beliefs and values of the traditions, cultures, and historical milieux which harbour it. As it is thus intricately and intimately related to those beliefs and values, so must it vary according to them."[78]

Concluding Remarks

The mystical experience in the three religious cultures examined in this study recognizes some ascending stages/states of spiritual experience. This experience culminates in a higher state of

existence that an aspirant could experience spiritually. The nature of this level of existence and its experience varies from one religious culture to another, depending on each religion's conception of God or deity. The Buddhist concept of *Nirvāna* indicates annihilation, tranquillity or emptiness, simply because there is no God to be united with in Buddhism and no higher point a human can reach beyond that point. The Christian concept of 'Spiritual Marriage' would inevitably lead to deification or divinization. This corresponds to its perspective of Jesus Christ as a man made God. The Sufi concept of *al-Fanā'* is presumed to bring one inwards to the terminal point of divinity. Yet one has to retreat to reassume human nature simply because God is not postulated in Islam as an entity/object to be united with.

Despite the variety of their experiences, those wayfarers who have traversed the apex of spiritual ascent have apparently reached a point of mutual understanding and appreciation. Unfortunately, their experience is, in effect, ineffable, and when it is articulated in words, it is often incomprehensible to non-mystics. To express the Infinite Reality with the finite human languages has not been successful, subjecting mystical experience to severe criticism. Given this ineffability, it is not possible to determine objectively whether these experiences relate the same Reality expressed in different cognitive concepts or different realities expressed in a seemingly similar term.

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[23] For more on the New Testament basis of mysticism, see: Louis William Countryman, *Mystical Way in the Fourth Gospel: Crossing Over into God* (Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1994); Goffrey Parrinder, *Mysticism in the World's Religions* (London: Sheldon Press, 1976), 142; Margaret Smith, *Studies in Early Mysticism in the Near and Middle East* (Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1973), 47.

[24] "Aspects of the Christian Religion," retrieved December 13, 2006, from http://www.cyberspacei.com/jesusi/inlight/religion/christianity/christianity/3_2.htm.

[25] See King, *Christian Mystics,* 11-22; Abrahams, *A Comparative Survey of Hindu, Christian and Jewish Mysticism,* 128-132.

[26] Parrinder, *Mysticism in the World's Religions,* 10; Paul Rorem, "The Uplifting

Spirituality of Pseudo-Dionysius," in *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelve Century*, ed. Bernard McGinn and John Meyendorff (London: Routledge, 1986), 139, 143.

[27] Ibid.

[28] King, *Christian Mystics*, 56.

[29] Ibid., 20.

[30] "Christianity," *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 16:332.

[31] John of the Cross, *A Spiritual Canticle of the Soul and the Bridegroom Christ*, trans. David Lewis (Electronic Edition) Retrieved December 13, 2006, from http://www.ccel.org/ccel/john_cross/canticle.txt; King, *Christian Mystics,* 155-157.

[32] "Christianity, Protestant Christianity" Britannica, 16:333; William Ernest Hocking, "The Mystical Spirit and Protestantism," in *Understanding Mysticism*, ed. Richard Woods (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1980), 198-199.

[33] Margaret Smith, *Studies in Early Mysticism in the Near and Middle East* (Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1973), 6.

[34] "Christianity," *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 16:333.

[35] Ibid., 16:331.

[36] Smith, *Studies in Early Mysticism in the Near and Middle East*, 18.

[37] Quoted in Cora Anne Desmond, *A Study in Comparative Mysticism: Spiritual Darkness in John of the Cross and Sufism* (Honston, Texas: Rise University 1980), 33-34, quoting from John of the Cross, *the Dark Night of the Soul* and *The Ascent of Mount Carmel.*

[38] Smith, *Studies in Early Mysticism in the Near and Middle East,* 7.

[39] Desmond, *A Study in Comparative Mysticism*, 38.

[40] Smith, *Studies in Early Mysticism in the Near and Middle East,* 8.

[41] John of the Cross, *A Spiritual Canticle of the Soul and the Bridegroom Christ.*

[42] Ibid.

[43] Abū Nasr al-Sarrāj, *The Kitāb al-Luma' fī al-Tasawwuf,* trans. Reynold A. Nicholson,. (London : Luzac, 1963), 9.

[44] Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 3:76.

[45] Al-Sarrāj, *The Kitāb al-Luma'*, 27-30.

[46] 'Abd al-Rahmān Badawī, *Tārīkh al-Tasawwuf al-Islāmī* (Kuwait: Wikālat al-Matbū'āt, 1975), 44-62; Abd 'Allāh Mustafā Nūmsūk, *al-Būdhiyyah: Tārīkhuhā, wa-'Aqā'iduhā wa-'Alāqat al- ūfiyyah bi-hā* (Riyadh: Adwā' al-Salaf, 1999), 396-401.

[47] On the difference between Sufi and philosophical approaches, see Badawī, *Tārīkh al-Tasawwuf al-Islāmī,* 63-82; William C. Chittick, "Mysticism versus Philosophy in Earlier Islamic History: The al-Tūsī, al-Qūnawī Correspondence," *Religious Studies*, 17 (1981): 87-104.

[48] Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi "Shī'ī Mysticism and Sufism," *The Maghreb Review,* 13(1-2) (1988): 97-99.

[49] [49] Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, 3:80; A. J. Arberry, *Suffism: An Account of the*

Mystics of Islam (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1950), 83.

[50] Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, *al-Risālah al-Kushayriyyah*, ed. Khalīl al-Mansūr (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 2001), 91.

[51] Al-Sarrāj, *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ fī al-Tasawwuf,* ed. Reynold A. Nicholson (London: Brill, 1914), 44-46; Al-Sarrāj, *The Kitāb al-Lumaʿ,* 13-14.

[52] Ibid., 12-20; Abū al-Hasan al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb* (Cairo: Dār al-Turāth, 1974), 217; Smith, *Studies in Early Mysticism in the Near and Middle East,* 164-174.

[53] Al-Qushayrī, *Al-Risālah al-Kushayriyyah,* 92.

[54] "Hāl", *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 5:627.

[55] Al-Qushayrī, *Al-Risālah al-Kushayriyyah,* 92; Reynold A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1914), 29.

[56] Quoted in Ali Hassan Abdel-Kader, *The Life, Personality and Writings of al-Junayd: A Study of a Third/Ninth Century Mystic with an Edition and Translation of His Writings* (London: Luzac, 1962), 81.

[57] Desmond, *A Study in Comparative Mysticism,* 58.

[58] Ali Abdel-Kader, "'Al-Junayd's Theory of Fanāʾ," *Islamic Quarterly,* 1(4) (December 1954): 220.

[59] Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Madārij al-Sālikīn Bayna Manāzil Iyyaka Naʿbud wa-Iyyaka Nastaʿīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb ʿArabī, 1972), 1:145-155, 166-167.

[60] Nūmsūk, *al-Būdhiyyah,* 496-500; Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam,* 32; Annemarie Schimmel, "Sufism and Islamic Tradition," *Mysticism and Religious Traditions,* ed. Steven T. Katz, (Oxford: Oxford University Pres, 1983), 137.

[61] Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam,* 157.

[62] Quoted in Abdel-Kader, *The Life, Personality and Writings of al-Junayd,* 90; "'Al-Junayd's Theory of Fanāʾ," 156. See also Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee, *The Circle of Love* (California: The Golden Sufi Center, 1999), 142-145.

[63] Vaughan-Lee, *The Circle of Love,* 145-146.

[64] Al-Sarrāj, *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ fī al-Tasawwuf,* ed. Reynold A. Nicholson (London: Brill, 1914), 433; *The Kitāb al-Lumaʿ fī al-Tasawwuf,* 119-120.

[65] Odo Brooke, "William of St. Thierry's Doctrine of the Ascent to God by Faith", *Studies in Monastic Theology* (Kalamazoo, 1983): 134-207; Bernard McGinn, "Love, Knowledge, and Mystical Union in Western Christianity: Twelfth to Sixteenth Centuries," *Church History,* 56 (1987): 10; Denys Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 144, 159.

[66] McGinn, "Love, Knowledge, and Mystical Union in Western Christianity," 11.

[67] King, *Christian Mystics,* 67-68.

[68] McGinn, "Love, Knowledge, and Mystical Union in Western Christianity," 15-16; Turner, *The Darkness of God,* 137-167.

[69] Bernard McGinn (ed.), *Meister Eckhart and Beguine Mystics* (New York: Continuum, 1994), 12.

[70] Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam,* 151.

[71] From the *Tevigga-Sutta,* in the *Sacred Books of the East* series, vol. 11, 3:8.

[72] Ibid., chapter 1, verse 9.

[73] G. de Purucker, *The Esoteric Tradition* (Theosophical University Press, Online Edition), Retrieved June 13, 2007, from http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/et/et-4.htm.

[74] Monier-William, *Buddhism*, 141-142, 235.

[75] For an extensive discussion about the distinction between Nirvāna and *al-Fanā'* see Masitoh Ahmad, "*Ma'ālim al-Tajribah al-Rūhiyyah bayna al-Būdhiyyah wa-al-Islām: Dirāsah Muqāranah,*" Unpublished Ph D Thesis (Kuala Lumpur; International Islamic University Malaysia, 2007), 189-193, 212-217, 221.

[76] For more on Islamic perspective of the existence of evil amidst God's creation, see Abdul Kabir Hussain Solihu, "Making Sense of Natural Disasters: An Islamic Hermeneutics of Malevolent Phenomena in Nature and Its Implication for Sustainable Development," *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences,* 24.1 (Winter 2007): 63-65.

[77] Al-Qushayrī, *al-Risālah al-Kushayriyyah*, 138-142; Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, n.d.), 2:226-236.

[78] Gimello, "Mysticism in its Contexts," 63.

Book Reviews

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Philosophy from its Origins to the Present*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006, pp. x + 380, paper, $25.95.

The book under review represents a summation of Nasr's work over the last few decades and epitomises his thinking about intellectual history and philosophy in Islam. A number of short pieces are (reworked and) reproduced and some of the later chapters represent his more recent pronouncements and encouragements for new avenues of research. There can be little doubt that Nasr has made a significant contribution to our study of Islamic philosophy, making the vitality of the post-Avicennan period known to a wider audience and introducing philosophers from the Safavid and Qajar periods into the 'pantheon' of Islamic intellectual history. In its rich scope of thought, it mirrors the late Henry Corbin's *Histoire de la philosophie islamique* (on which Nasr collaborated) and Nasr's earlier collections of article, in particular *The Islamic Intellectual Tradition in Persia*, edited by his former student Mehdi Amin Razavi. Of course, as one would expect of such a sweeping works, there are a number of small errors on which one need not dwell; there are evident certainly for those familiar with the field but the publishers ought to consider correcting them if the book is to be adopted by students. On that count, it is not clear whether Nasr expects this book to replace other 'introductions' to Islamic philosophy.

For those familiar with Nasr's thought there is little in this book that is new or revealing. It is divided into four sections. Section 1 comprises three musings on the nature of philosophy in Islam and its study and reproduces some work originally published almost thirty years ago. Section 2 on philosophical ideas considers ontology and epistemology and once again reprints earlier material. Section 3 on intellectual history and 4 on the present situation are more mixed between older material and some new thoughts. The final chapter actually seems to overlap a fair amount with the very first in the book,

as a short summary. The extensive annotation that follows the main text allows one to construct a useful and up to date bibliography of important publications and editions that have appeared in recent years relating to the later Islamic philosophical traditions in Islam. Throughout the books, arguably the twin ideas of Nasr's own philosophy dominate the text: first, that philosophy is an intellectual meditation and reflection upon scriptures and is a 'prophetic practice' that cannot be divorced from a religious life; and second, concomitantly, that philosophical truth *qua* perennial philosophy is manifest as a 'sacred science' in many different religious traditions. Re-orienting a study of Islamic philosophy to take into consideration the notion of philosophy as a way of life that involves religious commitments and spiritual practices makes perfect sense; in this way, it is clear that Islamic philosophical traditions continue the venerable neoplatonic ones. However, the stress on the prophetic and the link with the more 'theurgic' traditions of Neoplatonism is problematic. There are a number of philosophers in the Islamic tradition who do not sit comfortably in such an intellectual history. Philosophy is indeed more than 'rationalism' as Nasr puts it, or the Anglo-American analytic tradition as I would put it; but the appreciation of work of philosophers such as Pierre Hadot has also already made that clear. At the same time, it would be difficult to reduce philosophy to irrationalism and mysticism. Nasr's interpretation does make the task of a serious comparative engagement with Islamic philosophy rather elusive.

His historical encompass deals with little known areas of philosophy which he systematises into schools – Azerbaijan in the 12th century onwards, Shiraz in the 15th and 16th, Isfahan in the Safavid period and Tehran in the Qajar 19th century. But even here his choice of significant texts is skewed by his taste and in his overall history of philosophy he continues to adhere to notions that many others have questioned or dismissed such as the so-called 'Oriental philosophy' of Avicenna.

There is a clear need for a more sophisticated introduction to what philosophy was and is in Islam and for a fuller intellectual history that engages with ideas and themes as well as names and dates with a proper contextualisation. A perennialist perspective does not really account for context. Without advocating a full conventionalism (akin to

Skinner) or historicism, understanding the social contexts and networks in which and through which knowledge is produced and transmitted is of key significance and has not been adequately studied. A more complete intellectual history of Islam needs to consider these factors. Nasr's book does not. It summarises and recapitulates his understanding and establishes another text of his school. While indicating useful inquiries that students may follow up, this reader at least can only offer a rather qualified recommendation.

Sajjad H. Rizvi
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**D. G. Leahy, *Faith and Philosophy: The Historical Impact,*
Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2003, 194 pp., paper $39.95, cloth $99.95**

The book under review is based on a series of lectures conducted for the author's colleagues in philosophy and other faculties at Loyola College in Maryland, USA, in 1999. Therefore, it is aimed at the educated 'general reader' rather than experts in philosophy or theology. It has also been used as a textbook for the university students. However, in my opinion, this book is not really written for students, not even for students of philosophy or theology, because, first its style of writing is quite verbose and opaque. Second, the author seems to assume that the readers already have in-depth knowledge of western philosophy and theology as he cited extensive material directly from the primary sources without an intention to simplify or contextualise them for non-specialist or student. Third, the languages of the quotations cited involve classical Greek, Latin and German but the author does not always translate them into English and does not prepare a list or appendix for translation of the foreign words or phrases. Fourth, there are no sub-headings in chapter (each chapter has more than twenty pages). This is definitely difficult for anyone to follow the arguments of each chapter from the first page to the last without having

a break. Fifth, some of the subject keywords in the index are presented in a useless way like "agency", "chance", "change" "command" "decision", "destroying", "error" "general" "obedience" "reality" "society" "yes-saying" and so on. Each of them occupies merely one or two pages and if readers search the words of the index in the book, they will find that the words do not demonstrate a significant implication. Worse still, some even cannot be found in the corresponding pages. Finally, the present title of the book is misleading as well. The topics discussed in the book are concerned with "being", "essence", "substance", "the beginning", "the foundation of knowledge" and so on, the term "metaphysics" is therefore more appropriate and accurate than the term "philosophy" used in the title and the book actually does not have any assessment of historical contexts of the thought connecting philosophy and theology. It mainly focuses on the intellectual relations between these two. Therefore, the title should be: *Faith and Metaphysics: The Intellectual Impact* instead. There is certainly no shortage of books of this kind that are more concise, lucid and readable than this one if people truly consider buying a textbook. However, if people want to challenge their reading ability, it is a good book to try!

The author, D.G. Leahy, is the research consultant of the Skin Sciences Institute, Children's Hospital Research Foundation, University of Cincinnati. He is the author of *Novitas Mundi: Perception of the History of Being* and *Foundation: Matter the Body Itself.* He was tenured in Classics and has taught Religious Studies at New York University and is former Distinguished Visiting Professor of Philosophy at Loyola College in Maryland.

This book consists of seven chapters and an appendix. The purpose of the study is "an examination at the level of fundamental thinking of the particular question as to just how Christian faith has impacted the notion of…divine mind in Western thought up to and including the present (p. iv)." In chapter one, "Creation *Ex Nihilo* and the Aristotelian Essence," Leahy examines the notion of the divine mind of Aristotle, contrasts it with that of Plotinus and finally analyses the Augustine's synthesis of the two. Chapter two, "Descartes and the Image of God," discusses how the transcendental form of natural reason affects the thinking of Descartes in his *Meditations*. In chapter three, "Kant, Hegel, and the Proof of God," he examines the relations

of the thoughts of Descartes, Kant and Hegel and the notions of Hegel and Augustine on the contact of the divine mind with the world. Chapter four, "Kierkegaard and the Absurdity of Faith," studies the notions of the beginning of Truth itself starting from Augustine, then Hegel and finally Kierkegaard. In chapter five, "Jefferson, Emerson, and the Incarnate Word," Leahy turns to American thinkers and discusses the deism of Thomas Jefferson and pragmatism of R. W. Emerson in relation to the Incarnation of Christianity. Following chapter five, chapter six, "Nietzsche, Levinas, and the Death of God'" continues to examine the relations among the thinking of Emerson, Nietzsche, and Levinas. Nietzsche's notion of death of God should not be understood as the pure negation of the divine mind but a Dionysian promise of redemption and Levinas' notion of Infinite is the immemorial responsibility for the other and the divinity of the natural world. In the final chapter, "The Logic of Faith, or, Beyond Modernity", Leahy wants to develop a "new thinking" of faith after reviewing so many great thinkers, he writes the following in the first paragraph,

"What would be a categorically new logic? It would be a logic otherwise than intentionality or beyond meaning. It would be a logic without meaning but not meaningless. The category of a categorically new logic would be *being for the first time*. The logical category would be *being beginning*. Nothing other than being for the first time would be thought. Thought would be nothing other than being beginning. To think essentially would be to create. The essence beyond essence – the exception to essence that *is* essence – of a categorically new logic would be the essence of the new. For the first time the essence of logic would be novelty. The mean proportionally this thing & that thing would be the excluded middle, the beginning. If this beginning is the excluded middle then this mean proportional is not the end of the beginning and the beginning of the end, but is the beginning of this thing, the beginning of the first term and the end of that thing, the end of the last term, the beginning of the beginning and the end of the end (p.115)."

Is it clear what Leahy wishes to say? Personally, I find it rather esoteric and hard to understand. This jarring and obscure style permeates the book and that's why, I say, his writing is difficult to read (to be fair to Leahy, maybe I do not have the special training or

knowledge for reading this book) but it is interesting to read his concluding sentence, he says, "in this thinking, for which the beginning of reason is not a null point, not the vanishing point, not a nothingness, for the first time the beginning of the infinite *is* (without qualification) the *object* of sensibility & immediate cognition (p.141)." In my interpretation, Leahy may try to link the metaphysical notion of "the infinite" to the physical notion of human sensibility and cognition. If my interpretation is correct, then it may be a philosophical or secular version of God or Jesus (the infinite) dwelling among us (human sensibility and cognition) mentioned in the Gospel of John (John 1:14) but I am not sure.

Finally, Leahy pays no attention to some significant philosophers such as Foucault, Gadamer, Habermas, Lyotard, A. MacIntyre, Ricoeur and Rorty, just to name a few, and mentions in passing or merely the names of some others like Derrida, Heidegger, Husserl and Sartre, so the study seems incomplete to me. Borrowing the writing style from Leahy, I would like to suggest, if Leahy considers "the negation of negation" of those philosophers as "the beginning" of "the end" of the book, then it would be a book "without meaning but not meaningless" and "the essence beyond essence of a categorically new logic would be the essence" of the book. If Leahy does not understand what I am writing and he really wants to promote his new thinking of Christian faith or metaphysics to a wider audience, then I urge him to re-write it in a readable style!

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John Dillon, *The Heirs of Plato: A Study of the Old Academy (347–274 BC)*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003, pp. x + 252, cloth, £49.50.

Dillon's book is an excellent contribution to our understanding of Platonism. Building upon the rise in interest in Neoplatonism ('late' Platonism) and Middle Platonism (to which his own contribution was

pioneering), Dillon provides us with a systematic account of the key players in the formation of the doctrine of the Academy, engages with the debate on the 'esoteric' teachings of Plato, considers the relationship of the Academy with Stoicism, and tackles the central question of the existence of a Platonic school and its nature (and by implication what we mean by a philosophical school that adheres to a philosopher). *The Heirs of Plato* is the first attempt to make sense of the Old Academy, not least due to the paucity of sources. Dillon adopts a historical method familiar to those who will already have read his earlier book on Middle Platonists: five chapters deal chronologically with key thinkers beginning with Speusippus on the search for a system of principles, moving to Xenocrates and the systematization of Platonism to Polemo and the ethics of Platonism, followed by a consideration of some minor figures such as Heraclides of Pontus and Crantor of Soli, and culminating with Arcesilaus and the turn to scepticism in the New Academy. This is history of philosophy in its most rigorous and exemplary form.

These chapters are prefaced by arguably the most important section of the book. Chapter 1 tackles the 'riddle of the Academy', taking head on Harold Cherniss' book of the same title and his rejection of the extra-dialogic material on Plato's thought. Dillon argues that any work that 'declines to go beyond the evidence of the dialogues... and which therefore treats Aristotle... as simply misinterpreting such evidence' would preclude any study of the Old Academy. Instead, he opts to search for other evidence without assuming the existence of esoteric late teachings. His approach, he contends, is the most systematic and possible means for discerning the dynamics of the Academy as an institution and its relationship to Plato's teachings. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first, on the 'physical structure of the Academy' draws on Diogenes Laertius and literary material on the nature of the Academy, whether it was public property or private and its relationship to its environs. He concludes the section with a discussion of the leadership of the Academy and argues that the 'democratic' nature of the selection of the head of the Academy allowed for change and development in doctrine and pedagogy. The second section on Plato's intellectual legacy examines the key ideas and questions that were established by the end of his life: the nature and

importance of the Indefinite Dyad and Pythagorean influence, the relationship of the World Soul and the Forms, and some elements of ethics on the purpose of life and wisdom, and the logical method of division. But this is not intended as a check list of key Platonic doctrine but a set of concerns. Dillon insists that Plato's real legacy was a 'method of inquiry' (p. 16), the Socratic method and an 'open-ended, intellectual tradition' (p. 29).

Chapter 2 is devoted to Plato's nephew and successor, Speusippus, about whom we know quite little but whose seemingly idiosyncratic syntheses show evidence of some coherence. Dillon examines his relationship with Aristotle. The fact that the Stagirite far outstripped him in significance may have something to do with the lack of systematization: Speusippus, for example, reveals an interest in Pythagoreanism, possibly Epicureanism and even Stoicism. The structure of the chapter sets the template for the book: a biographical section examining anecdotes about the life of the thinker is followed by a consideration of his philosophy.

Chapter 3 on Xenocrates and the systematization of Platonism, no doubt due to its subject, is the longest chapter of the book. The biography is more extensive as the sources available allow. Dillon discusses the significance of Xenocrates' distinction of three branches of philosophy, namely physics (including metaphysics), ethics and logic that remained the tripartite division in the Platonic and Stoic traditions. Religious influence allows him to characterise the Monad as a feminine principle. On the forms, he remains faithful to Plato. Pythagoreanism is also a major influence: he describes the soul as a 'number moving itself', and ethics is not merely concerned with the soul, but also involves the body. Finally, Xenocrates systematized the Platonic theory of logic based on diaresis. Dillon's main conclusion is that Xenocrates defined Platonism for the Academy.

Chapter 4, the shortest, looks at Polemo, another thinker about which we know little but who seems to have been influenced by Stoicism at a time when there was some convergence between Stoicism and Platonism. His main contribution seems to have been the formation of a dogmatic Platonism. Because of the paucity of the material, the structure of this chapter is rather more basic.

Chapter 5 on minor figures is similarly sketchy and begins to trace the history of the encounter with Stoicism, preparing the way for the turn to scepticism. Crantor's main contribution seems to have been the innovation of writing commentaries on the dialogues that later became the main vehicle for Platonism in the middle and later periods.

The final chapter, or epilogue, is devoted to Arcesilaus and the turn to scepticism. Arguing that much work has already been undertaken on the 'sceptical Academy', Dillon attempts merely to trace the beginning of that tendency and the decline of the dogmatic certainty of Platonism, arguably a return to the Socratic elenchus.

The Heirs of Plato is a significant historical contribution to the study of Platonism and a welcome corrective to some previous certainties (and thus in itself rather Socratic). Biography is infused with philosophical analysis but Dillon is careful to point out that the sketches are often 'anecdotes' and need to be treated with some caution. This is not a positivist's approach to material but an important excavation of what is extant and what might be said. A historical approach also alerts us to a basic realisation that some key concerns of Neoplatonism, for example, the true nature of the Forms, the hypostases and the role of the Demiurge among others were already present as issues of contention among the successors to Plato. As such, this book contributes to the ongoing research into later forms of Platonism and is a welcome addition to that literature.

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George E. Karamanolis, *Plato and Aristotle in Agreement?
Platonists on Aristotle From Antiochus to Porphyry, Oxford: Oxford
University Press, 2006, pp. 432, cloth, £50.**

The Neoplatonic project in Late Antiquity was defined by the attempt to harmonize the teachings and philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. Inherited by early Muslim philosophers, harmonization was

enthusiastically championed by al-Farabi in his *Reconciliation of the Opinions of the Two Philosophers*. (Neo)Platonic pseudo-epigraphica attributed to Aristotle such as the famous *Theology of Aristotle* further bolstered the harmonizing tendency that was carried through into Latin scholasticism. The modern academic study of ancient and late antique philosophy on the other hand has tended to be somewhat hostile to harmonization and assumed that it rested purely on historical accidents and mistakes. More recently, however, the interest in Neoplatonism has led to a reconsideration of the question of harmonization. Lloyd Gerson, one of the foremost champions and specialists on Neoplatonism has argued in a recent book *Aristotle and Other Platonists* (Cornell University Press, 2005) that the project of harmonization actually began with Aristotle who himself was a Platonist. The Middle Platonist and Neoplatonist thinkers who often wrote commentaries on Aristotle were not misguided. Karamanolis's book, a revised version of his Oxford D.Phil, continues this tendency by considering the evidence in the thought of a number of Middle Platonists such as Antiochus of Ascalon (d. c. 68 BCE), Plutarch of Chaeronea (d. c. 125), Ammonius Saccas (3rd century, Plotinus' teacher), Numenius (2nd century), and Atticus (2nd century), and Neoplatonists such as Porphyry (d. c. 305 C.E.) and Plotinus (d. 270) for and against harmonization. It is a useful companion piece that corroborates much of Gerson's argument. The problem, however, is that often for many Middle Platonists, there is scant textual evidence to consider.

Karamanolis' book is divided into seven chapters, one each on thinkers from Antiochus to Porphyry. The longest and most significant chapter in the study, unsurprising given the extensive textual evidence and significance of the figure articulated for example in the *Eisagoge* and in the commentary on the *Categories*, is on Porphyry. As he argues, extant commentaries on Aristotle after 300 are all Platonist (p. 1). The systematic writing on commentaries on the Stagirite is thus seen as evidence for the project of harmonization. The role of the works of Aristotle in the Neoplatonic curriculum confirms the view that he was seen as part of the Platonic school. What is more interesting, although it does not play a significant role in the argument, is the Peripatetic agreement on harmony; thinkers such as Aristocles of Messene were harmonists (pp. 36ff). But it seems that whereas later Platonists tended

to see the study of Aristotle, particularly of the *organon* as a propaedeutic to the study of the 'higher wisdom' of Plato, Peripatetics reversed the order of study. Of course, all this begs the question: what does one understand by Platonism? Was it a coherent school? Could Aristotle have been a Platonist without adhering to the theory of Forms, for example? Did Plato and Aristotle both adhere to a coherent and systematic philosophy? For example, can the Platonic dialogues as a whole be considered as a corpus proposing a philosophical system? Platonists tended to read Plato's dialogues as articulations of theory; Karamanolis, on the other hand, argues that, 'Plato's thought is elusive, if one confines oneself to the dialogues, since they do not offer us direct expressions of his views' (p. 9).

Antiochus was the first important harmonizer. He was a pivotal figure for two reasons; as Karamanolis says, he was the last Platonist to continue the Hellenistic concern with ethics in particular, but also the first to insist upon the value of Aristotle as a means for accessing Plato. Antiochus' project of harmonization is even more wide ranging because he considered the Stoic tradition to be broadly Platonic (p. 51ff).

The chapter on Plutarch shifts the interest to metaphysics. Plutarch's emphasis on the aporetic nature of Plato's philosophy was linked to elements of skepticism in Aristotelian dialectic. He considered Aristotle to be a communicator of Plato's ideas. For example, Aristotelian hylomorphism proposes that knowledge pertains to forms, which at one level may be associated with Platonic forms; whether those forms are transcendent or not is a different matter that would not violate Platonism. Generations of philosophy students have wondered how Aristotle's universals really differ from Platonic forms.

Three fairly short chapters follow on Numenius, Atticus and Ammonius Sacca, no doubt mainly because we know so little about them; very little has survived. The latter is important particularly as the teacher of Plotinus and seems to have been famous as an 'arch-harmonizer'. This does not really put him at odds with Plotinus. The chapter that follows on Plotinus seems somewhat conflicted between the Peripatetic influence and material in the *Enneads* and Plotinus' fluent and regular criticisms of Aristotle. One of the basic problems of the schemata of school traditions is that a school is not usually so much

a body of doctrine but often more an interpretative community that coalesces around particular texts and textual hermeneutics.

The final chapter on Porphyry is the most extensive discussion of harmonization. Karamanolis begins with a discussion of the two texts that Porphyry is supposed to have written on the question of harmonization: On the Harmony of Plato and Aristotle, and On the Disagreement of Plato and Aristotle. Even the latter text seems to have been in a harmonizing vein; one thinks of the parallel with al-Farabi's *Reconciliation* and his separate works on the *Philosophy of Plato* and on the *Philosophy of Aristotle*. Difference did not lead to hostility to Aristotle (p. 253). It merely indicated distinct perspectives defined by different aetiological approaches to events, for example. A classic example is the difference on the nature of the soul as the entelechy of the body. Later in the Muslim period, in the *Theology of Aristotle*, one encounters differing views on the nature of the soul as entelechy reflecting Platonic, Aristotelian and arguably Porphyrian perspectives especially in the first chapter (*mimar*). It was Porphyry's harmonization that determined the project of late Neoplatonism.

Karamanolis' book is a welcome and scholarly contribution that addresses the question of what one understands by Platonism. The textual argument is further supported by two appendices on Platonic works and extensive scholarly notes and textual discussions. While it is not as accessible or perhaps influential as Gerson's book, it is remain an indispensable and useful complement to it.

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Michael Ignatieff, The Lesser Evil: Political Ethics in an Age of Terror, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005, 224 pp., paper £9.99.

In a liberal democratic society, where human rights are highly respected and protected, criminals, whether their crimes are serious or

not, must be submitted to judicial review within a reasonable period of time and punishment is mostly physically non-violent. Even in the case of the death penalty or other violent punishment, criminal cases are still highly procedural and duly supervised in order to ensure the protection of individuals. However, for fighting terrorism, especially after 9/11, deprivation of human rights seems to be justified in one way or another, even in a democratic liberal society.

Therefore, we can see that there are more requests for a longer detention period without trial, more police and electronic surveillance on the street, more restrictive laws on alleged terrorists' activities and even rationalization or legalization of some forms of torture of the suspected terrorists. We are not saying the above enforcements are wrong or unnecessary, but the problem is how to balance human liberty on one hand and security on the other. The purpose of this book is to provide a possible balance of these two – what the author calls the lesser evil approach.

The book is originally based on six Gifford Lectures delivered at the University of Edinburgh in 2003. The author, Michael Ignatieff, who is a novelist, historian and broadcaster, is Carr Professor and Director of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. His books include Isaiah Berlin: A Life, Blood and Belonging, The Warrior's Honor, and The Needs of Strangers. His novel Scar Tissue was nominated for the Booker Prize, and his book The Russian Album, A Family Memoir won Canada's Governor General's Award and the Heinemann Prize of Britain's Royal Society of Literature. This book was also the finalist for 2004 Lionel Gelber Prize.

The book consists of six chapters and can be divided into three parts. Part one is chapters one and two. In the first chapter, "Democracy and the Lesser Evil", the author explains what he means by "lesser evil". There are two different emphases on the meaning of democracy. One is more inclined to the protection of the majority of the state. From this perspective, it is acceptable to harm or suspend individual rights in the war on terror in order to safeguard the life and interests of the majority. However, democracy can also mean the supreme respect of individual rights and human dignity, even in the time of terrorism emergencies. Therefore, from this perspective, if human rights can be

suspended or ignored because of (alleged) terrorist attacks, the suspension itself is also an attack on democracy.

The lesser evil approach is at the mid-way point between these two. It does not prohibit the suspension of rights in the time of terror but it requires government to justify their anti-terror policies by replying publicly to various institutions like the mass media, courts and legislative council, in what the author calls "adversarial justification," to persuade the parties who are obliged to counter, limit and modify the governmental policies. Following the lesser evil approach discussed in the first chapter, the second chapter, "The Ethics of Emergency," examines, in the time of terror, the impacts of the suspension of civil liberties on the rule of law and human rights and what role human rights should play in formulating public policy, especially in the observance of the international convention of human rights in a particular state. The author asserts that the suspension does not necessarily destroy the rule of law and human rights if they are only temporary in terms of enforcing the sunset clause, publicly justified and used only as a last resort.

Part two includes chapters three and four. Chapter three, "The Weakness of the Strong," explains that since it lacks precise information about terrorist attacks and must respond quickly in order to secure the public safety, the state usually overreacts toward the terrorist attacks and so impairs individual rights and human dignity. The word "strong" here refers to the idea of democracy and democratic liberal states. The weakness of these states is the self-destruction of their core values like liberty, respect of human rights and dignity, trust, tolerance and so on, when they confront terrorism. In chapter four, "The Strength of the Weak," the focus is shifted to the terrorists. The terrorists or the oppressed rationalize themselves to slaughter, intentionally or unintentionally, civilians because they think that they are the weak party and so the only way for them to succeed is terrorist attacks like suicide bombings. This "only-way" conviction turns out to be their strength. The author believes that states under terrorist attacks must provide peaceful political ways to address the injustice that the terrorists experience before executing their anti-terror policies.

Part three comprises of chapters five and six. These two chapters are more future- oriented. In chapter five, "The Temptation of

Nihilism," the author examines the nihilism that both democratic liberal states and terrorists may face, that is, violence for violence's sake. The way for states to avoid this nihilism is to reaffirm the strength of the "check and balance" system or adversarial justification. Finally, in chapter six, "Liberty and Armageddon," the author assumes what states should do if the terrorists obtain the weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), especially nuclear weapons. If this were to happen, the danger to humans as a whole is undisputedly enormous. The ultimate solution for Ignatieff is still to return to the sound justifications of governmental policies and military actions.

This book is not simply presenting an abstract theory, it also provides many historical cases, using the examples from countries such as UK, US, Canada, European and Middle East countries, and even Japan. And the argument, i.e. the lesser evil approach, is coherent and thoroughly explicated throughout the book. However, there are two remarks which I want to draw attention to. First of all, the distinction between the concepts of freedom fighter and terrorist is still not discussed clearly. Ignatieff argues that those who obey the rules of war (mainly not to kill the civilians) are freedom fighters and those who do not are terrorists (p.95). However, understood in this way, we can also argue that the U.S. government is the terrorist as it has killed many civilians in its war in Iraq. Furthermore, as more information is disclosed by the press, the U.S. government in fact did not follow the rules of war as it proclaimed that it did. The difference between the freedom fighters and terrorists remains obscured in the book.

The second remark is that the author relies heavily on the concept of justification, i.e. human reasoning and argument, in justifying the anti-terror policies and so he ignores completely the influence of power and money in democratic politics. What I want to say is that war on terror may not be due to the struggle for democracy and justice or against evil, but may be simply for the sake of money or oil and power to manipulate other countries. The government will therefore try all its best to "the manufacture of consent" in the media and in legal and legislative bodies so as to support an immoral policy. In my opinion, the virtues and morality of individuals, especially the politicians or policy-makers, cannot be ignored and must work together with adversarial justification like two sides of a coin.

Finally, I would like to recommend this book as it is informative and argued coherently and I hope that the lesser evil approach can provide a new way of thinking to de-radicalize both the war on terror and terrorism.

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T.L.S. Sprigge, *The God of Metaphysics, Being a Study of the Metaphysics and Religious Doctrines of Spinoza, Hegel, Kierkegaard, T.H. Green, Bernard Bosanquet, Josiah Royce, A.N. Whitehead, Charles Hartshorne, and Concluding with a Defence of Pantheistic Idealism*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2006, pp. 576, cloth, £60.

The nineteenth-century style title well sums up the author's intentions: he surveys the metaphysical systems of what one could call the idealist tradition, with a focus on nineteenth-century Anglo-Saxon philosophers. This indicates the author's own philosophical stance: emeritus professor at the University of Edinburgh, T.L.S. Sprigge has been a life-long defender of idealist philosophy, notwithstanding the fact that it is nowadays rather associated with the history of philosophy than with contemporary thought. I leave the justice of such a relegation to the margins aside. He does a good job in laying out clearly the different systems, their problems and achievements. The book seems to bear the traces of its didactic origins: each chapter is carefully subdivided in brief sections which take the reader step by step through the various systems, usually with a focus on understanding rather than criticism. It culminates in Sprigge's own system which draws on the various authors he has surveyed and on F.H. Bradley, whom he did not include because he has treated him elsewhere at length. As such I found this a good introduction to the various philosophers surveyed, with a clear lay-out of arguments and possible weaknesses.

Rather than summarising the book chapter by chapter, I want to discuss briefly the general point that Sprigge aims at making: that a religious view of the world can be based on rational arguments, or, more specifically, that the God constructed by his idealist philosophers is the worthy object of human religious feelings. He argues against the tradition starting with Pascal, who separated the God of the philosophers from the God of Abraham and Isaac, in favour of the view that a philosophy can support a religious world view. His survey shows that it is indeed possible, even though in his perspective religion becomes the consequence of a metaphysical system, whereas many people may feel that their religion precedes any distinct philosophy. A more important problem arises when it comes to Sprigge's concept of religion. On pp. 9-10 he lists six characteristics that a religion should fulfil: all of them focus on beliefs, emotions, and moral precepts. Religion should offer a message of hope. This is the usual philosopher's take on religion: it will be hard to find a handbook of philosophy of religion which gives a place of honour to ritual and tradition. Such an individual, moralistic conception of religion also underlies much popular works on religion, like Karen Armstrong's. I do not want to argue that the philosophers discussed in the book, most of whom fulfil the conditions, cannot be called religious in some way. But the reconciliation between philosophy and religion happens on the terms of philosophy, by reducing religion to an abstract, general and vague category. This very definition excludes any traditional religion, which all heavily rely on ritual and tradition. Unsurprisingly, the book suggests that a religious philosophy cannot coincide with an adherence to established religion: most philosophers discussed by Sprigge distanced themselves from it or were ejected like Spinoza. Worship is only treated in the margins and never really incorporated in his view of religion. He also points to incompatible elements with Christianity in the various doctrines. Authors like Kierkegaard, who suggest that philosophical reason is insufficient to come to a religious attitude, receive a less favourable press. Thus, the ideal of a religion purified by philosophical reason definitely underlies the book. Religion seems to be the emotional and moral epiphenomenon of metaphysics. But this entire construction falters when one refuses to reduce religion to belief and morality, and instead focuses on its ritual dimension, embedded in

a narrative of tradition. Implicitly, Sprigge seems to ban these to the realm of the irrational: his rational religious philosophies seem unable to deal with these features of human life. Indeed, they are in the first place metaphysical systems that end by attributing a religious content to the concept of God they produce. Philosophies that focus on anthropology rather than on metaphysics are much more able to make sense of traditional religions (for example Lacan's psychoanalysis has been put to use for such a project). Such an approach implies a different project than Sprigge's. His argument makes religious sense of certain metaphysical systems, by reducing religion to an abstract set of criteria. The more challenging question for those interested in the phenomenon of religion would be to make philosophical sense of religions in their full glory and disrepute.

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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	يِّ	وُّ
aw	ai	iy (final form ī)	uww (final form ū)

Persian Letters

پ	چ	ژ	گ
p	ch	zh	g

Instructions for Contributors