

## Articles

Rumi's Spiritual Shiism  
Seyed G Safavi [1-16]

Plato and Suhrawardī on Illumination  
Mahdi Ghavam Safari [17-30]

Emptiness, Identity &  
Interpenetration in Hua-yen  
Buddhism  
Atif Khalil [31-62]

Are "Protocol Sentences" of science  
and "Core Statements" of religion  
two mutually inconsistent  
foundations of the same worldview?  
Mashhad Al-Allaf [63-80]

The nature of mind in Islamic  
Philosophy  
Hassan Abdi [81-96]

Aspects of the Saints in the Masnavi  
of Rumi  
Sayyed Ali Asghar Mirbagheri Fard  
[97-108]

...

## Book Reviews

Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas on Being*,  
Oxford: 2002  
Sajjad H. Rizvi [227]

Christopher Bobonich, *Plato's Utopia  
Recast: His Later Ethics and Politics*,  
Oxford: 2002  
Sajjad H. Rizvi [231]

John N. Martin, *Themes in  
Neoplatonic and Aristotelian Logic:  
Order, Negation and Abstraction*,  
Burlington: 2004  
Asad Q. Ahmed [233]

Paul Thom, *Medieval Modal  
Systems: Problems and Concepts*,  
Burlington: 2003  
Asad Ahmed [237]

Wolfgang Künne, *Conceptions of  
Truth*, Oxford: 2003  
Alan R. Perreiah [241]

Robert F. Drinan, S.J., *Can God and  
Caesar Coexist? Balancing Religious  
Freedom and International Law*, New  
Haven and London: 2004  
Andy C. Yu [247]

## **...Articles**

Social Philosophy in The Balance of  
Religious Intellection: GIDDENS and  
Philosophical Social Theorizing  
Seyed Javad Kafkazli [109-164]

Modified Notion of Representative  
Knowledge by Correspondence  
Amir Salehi [165-188]

The Symbology of the Wing in  
Suhrawardi's  
*The Reverberation of Gabriel's Wing*  
Mohammed Rustom [189-202]

Zaehner- Arberry Controversy on Abu  
Yazid the Sufi: A Historical Review  
Mahmoud Khatami [203-226]

## Rumi's Spiritual Shiism

Seyed G Safavi

London Academy of Iranian Studies, UK

### Abstract

The present paper aims to provide textual evidence in support of Rumi's spiritual shiism. The evidence will be taken from Rumi's *Mathnawi*.

Shiism, in its true form, believes in the *welayat* (authority) of Imam Ali and his eleven descendents following the demise of Prophet Muhammad. Allah has chosen Ali and his descendents, as the true spiritual and religious successors of Prophet Muhammad, after whom there will always be a representative from Ali's family to guide and lead human kind.

This paper deals with three types of *welayat*: solar, lunar and stellar *welayats*.

Interpretation of the *Mathnawi* text by 'conceptual', 'synoptic' and 'hermeneutic circle' research techniques – makes clear that Maulana Jalal-Din Rumi honoured the office of the *Imamate* that is the authority – *Wilayah* of Allah, the Prophet Muhammad and his 12 Divinely appointed successors.

In this context, Maulana focuses on the *Wilayah* of Imam 'Ali – the first Divine successor of the Prophet Mohammad.

According to Dr Shahram Pazouki "Maulawi is a Shiite, not in the current sense of the jurists or dialectical theologians, but in its true meaning, that is, Allah only appoints the *wali*, belief in the continuing spirituality and *walayah* of the Prophet Mohammad in the person of Imam 'Ali and his sons which appointed by Allah. Allah appointed Ali to be the spiritual successor and *wali* after the prophet Mohammad and belief that after the prophet there is always a living spiritual guide, *wali*, from Imam 'Ali family on the way of love. Then here there is different between spiritual Shiism and jurisprudence Shiism.

The Sufis believe that in every period of time there is a divine spiritual guide or *wali*, and that it is only through him that one can find the way to *Allah*. *Walayah* is the reality of Sufism and inner aspect of Islam. The *wali* is the shadow of Allah on earth. The *wali* is the perfect of the age and the intermediary of grace from Allah to man. *Walayah* differs from caliphate. It is possible to engage in choosing the caliph by giving him their vote, but only Allah appoints the *wali*. Allah appointed 'Ali to be the spiritual successor and *wali* after the prophet Muhammad". (Pazouki, Shahram. (2003). *Spiritual Walayah*. In: SG. Safavi (ed), RUMI'S THOUGHTS. Tehran: Salman Azadeh Publication)

'Ali appointed as *wali* by Allah is based on some Qur'an verses and prophet Mohammad narrations such as *balegh ma onzel ilaik* (Chapter 5:67), *alum akmal lakom dinakom* (Chapter 5:3), *Hadith Ghadir Khoma* and *Ttheqlain*. What is important is believing that after the prophet, *walayah* continued in 'Ali and after 'Ali, *walayah* continued through the other Shiite Imams which are appointed as *wali* by Allah.

Shi'ism is based upon the principle of *Imamah* or *Wilayah* (referred to in gnostic – *Irfanic* literature as 'The Perfect Man' – *Insan al-Kamil*). Qur'anic and *ahadith* references, narrated by all Muslim sources, confirm that love for the Prophet's progeny is a basic precept of Islam. The *Mathnawi* evidences that Maulana believed in the *Wilayah* of Imam 'Ali, one of the main principles of Shi'ah Islam.

### **The different levels between *Imamah* and *Wilayah*:**

The Ultimate Guardian – *Wali* is Allah, followed, in order, by:

The Prophet Muhammad and the 12 Imams. As the Prophet and the 12 Imams are all manifestations of 'The Perfect Man' who represent Divine Guardianship in their times – *Imamah* in Shi'ah literature, and 'The Perfect Man' in Sufi literature, correspond to the same identity. That the essence of 'The Perfect Man' in Sufism is denoted by *Imamah* – the distinguishing principle of Shi'ism, indicates that Sufis, regardless of the religious practices they follow – *taqlid*, are, in this respect, Shi'ah Muslims.

In the 'Irfanic view there are two distinct types of *Wilayah* , “General *Wilayah*” – “*Wilayah 'Ammah*” and “Specific *Wilayah*” – “*Wilayah Khassah*”.

General *Wilayah* – *Wilayah 'Ammah* (Lit. Stellar), comprises two levels:

- 1) The first starts with “withdrawal” – “*takhliyyah*”, and ends with the station of the “nearness of supererogatory works” – “*Qorb Nawafil*.” When Allah becomes the eyes, ears, and tongue of His servant, the seeker of truth – *salik* achieves the state – *maqam* of “the reality of certainty” – “*Haq al-Yaqin*”.
- 2) The second level relates to those – annihilated in “the Real” – *Haqq* – who remain in the Existence of the King of Existence The final stage of this state is referred to as “*Maqam Qab Quysayn*”.

“Specific *Wilayah*”, *Wilayah Khassah*, is only held by the Prophet Muhammad and his Divinely appointed successors from his Ahl al-Bayt, Prophet's Houshold (The family of the Prophet, specifically his daughter Fatima, her husband 'Ali, and their children Hassan and Hussein). Such *Specific Wilayah* proceeds from *Maqam Qab-e Quysayn*, to the achievement of “The Station of Manifestation on Intrinsic Discourser” – “*Maqam-e Mazhariyyat-e Tajaliya-e Zati*” and “*Maqam-e Aw Adna*”.

At that stage, those who hold this *Wilayah* comprehend the seventh inner level, *Battn Haftom* of *Kalam Allah*, i.e. the word of Allah, namely the Qur'an. It is recorded in one narration – *hadith*, regarding the *Qur'an* that, ‘The *Qur'an* has a superficial level and an inner level of understanding that encompasses seven inner depths.’ ( 'Alama Tabataeai, *Tafsir Al-Mizan*, Vol. 3, p. 72).

Holders of *Wilayah Khassah* – *Wali's*, are like a great tree of which *Abdal*, *Noqaba* and *Awtad* are mere shadows. For every age

there is a single Perfect Man – *Qutub*, with all other spiritual beings of the age under his shadow. (See verses 1924 – 2305 Book 3 of Rumi’s *Mathnawi* and Mulla Hadi Sabzavari’s commentary on verse 2003 of Book Three of the *Mathnawi*).<sup>4</sup> Maulana said *Wilayah Khassah* has two aspects, *Wilayah Shamsiyyah* (Lit. Solar) and *Wilayah Qamariyyah* (Lit. Lunar). (Book Three verses 3104 – 3106).

The manifestation of *Wilayah Shamsiyyah* is *Wilayah Muhammadiyyah* – held by Prophet Muhammad Mustafa, while *Wilayah Qamariyyah*, refers specifically to those of his progeny – *Ahl Al-Bayt*, who Allah appointed to inherit his authority and succeed him.

According to *Mathnawi* Book One, verses 2959 – 2980, *Wilayah Allawiyyah* – that is the *Wilayah* of Imam ‘Ali and the inheritors of his authority – falls within *Wilayah Muhammadiyyah*. According to Book One, verses 3761 – 3766, the *Wilayah Qamariyyah* of Imam ‘Ali falls within the *Wilayah Shamsiyyah* of the Prophet Muhammad. Rumi based his repeated comments of Imam ‘Ali’s *Wilayah Khassah*, on the Prophet Muhammad’s saying, ‘Whomever I hold authority over, ‘Ali holds authority over’ – ‘*Man kuntum Mawla fa ‘Aliyun Mawla*’.

In the first story at the beginning of Book One of the *Mathnawi*, ‘The King and the Handmaiden’, the Perfect Man – *Pir* or *Hakim Haziq* is raised in reference to one of Imam ‘Ali’s titles ‘The Approved One’ – *Murtadha*, whom he then proceeds to describe as, ‘The One who holds authority over the people – *Mula al-Qum*’. (*Mathnawi* Book One verses 99- 100). In the last story of Book One – A Story about Imam ‘Ali, Rumi discusses *nafs mutma’nah* (verses 3721-3991) and introduces Imam ‘Ali as a holder of *Wilayah Khassah*. In the last book, Book Six, he again raises the *Wilayah* of Imam ‘Ali based upon the Prophet’s saying ‘Whomever I hold authority over, ‘Ali holds authority over’, ‘*Man kuntum Mawla fa ‘Aliyun Mawla*’. Book Six, verse 4538. Thus, the *Mathnawi* of Rumi both begins and ends with the *Wilayah* of Imam ‘Ali.

Sequential textual evidence in the *Mathnawi* that supports Rumi’s acceptance of Imam ‘Ali’s *Wilayah* and spiritual superiority over other companions of the Prophet.

1) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, '*AMIR AL-MUMININ* – COMMANDER OF THE FAITHFUL – TRANSLATED BY NICHOLSON AS PRINCE OF THE FAITHFUL' – in the story titled Imam 'Ali.

See Book One, heading after verse 3720.

2) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'THE ONE WHO ACTS SINCERELY' – 'Learn how to act sincerely from 'Ali'.

Book One, verse 3721 (first part).

3) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'THE LION OF ALLAH' – 'Know that the lion of Allah ('Ali) was purged of all deceit'.

Book One, verse 3721 (second part).

4) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'THE PRIDE OF EVERY PROPHET' – 'Ali, the pride of every Prophet'.

Book One, verse 3723.

5) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'THE PRIDE OF EVERY SAINT' – 'Ali the pride of every Prophet and every saint.'

Book One, verse 3723.

6) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'THE FACE BEFORE WHICH THE MOON BOWS LOW' – 'He spat on the countenance before which the face of the moon bows low in the place of worship.'

Book One, verse 3724.

7) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'THE LION OF THE LORD' – 'In bravery you are the lion of the Lord: in generosity who indeed knows who you are?'

Book One, verse 3732.

8) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'ALL MIND AND EYE' – 'O 'Ali you who are all mind and eye, relate a little of that which you have seen.'

Book One, verse 3745.

9) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'FALCON OF THE EMPYREAN' – 'Tell, O falcon of the empyrean that finds goodly prey, what you have seen at this time from the Maker.'

Book One, verse 3750.

10) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'THE LEARNED WHO PERCEIVES THE UNSEEN' – 'Your eyes have learned to perceive the unseen while the eyes of the bystanders are sealed.'

Book One verse 3751.

11) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali u as, 'THE ONE WHO IS APPROVED BY ALLAH' – 'Reveal the mystery O 'Ali you who is approved by Allah.'  
Book One, verse 3751 (part 1).

12 Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as being, 'GOODLY EASE' – 'O you who are a goodly ease after evil fate.'  
Book One, verse 3752.

13) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'ORB OF THE MOON (*WILAYAH QAMARIYYAH*)' – 'From you it shone forth on me, how could you conceal it? Without tongue you are darting rays of light, like the moon. But if the moons orb come to speech, it more quickly leads the night-travellers the (right) way. They become safe from error and heedlessness: the voice of the moon prevails over the voice of the ghoul.'  
Book One, verse 3759-3761.

14) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali u as, 'LIGHT UPON LIGHT' – 'In as much as the moon (even) without speech shows the way, when it speaks it becomes light upon light.'  
Book One, verse 3762.

15) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'GATE OF THE CITY OF KNOWLEDGE ('Ali GATE OF *WILAYAH MUHAMMADIYYAH*)' – 'Since you are the Gate of the City of Knowledge, since you are the beams of the sun of clemency (Prophet Muhammad ).'  
Book One verse 3763.

This verse refers to the Prophet Muhammad saying, 'I am the City of Knowledge and 'Ali is its gate, so anyone who seeks knowledge should enter through its gate.'

16) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'GATE OF MERCY' – 'Remain open forever.'  
Book One, verse 3765 (part one).

17) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'ENTRANCE-HALL TO 'NONE IS LIKE UNTO HIM.'  
Book One, verse 3765.  
This is a reference to *Surah Ikhlas* – Qur'an 112.

18) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali u as, 'THE SUN OF *WILAYAH*' – 'Speak, O Prince of the faithful, that my soul may stir within my body like an embryo. How has the embryo the means (to stir) during the period when it is ruled (by the stars)? It comes (turns) from the stars towards the sun. When the time



comes for the embryo to receive the (vital) spirit, at that time the sun becomes its helper.

Book One, verses 3773-5.

These verses refer to the *Ahl al-Bayt's Wilayah Qamariyyah* being within the *Wilayah Shamsiyyah* of the Prophet Muhammad . Here Rumi clarifies that those who hold general or stellar *Wilayah – Wilayah 'Ammah / Wilayah Najmiyyah* are merely stars in comparison to 'Ali who, being like the sun, represents the Perfect Man or perfect shaykh. Thus, while those who hold *Wilayah 'Ammah* may aid a 'Searcher for Truth' – *Salik*, complete guidance is only obtainable via those who hold *Wilayah Shamsiyyah* – a reference to Imam 'Ali and his successors. Here Rumi presents the three types of *Wilayah* described in the introduction – *Wilayah Shamsiyyah* and *Wilayah Qamariyyah* – aspects of Specific *Wilayah – Wilayah Khassah*, and *Wilayah 'Ammah*, that is also referred to as Stellar *Wilayah – Wilayah Najmiyyah*. These may be considered Advanced and Elementary levels of *Wilayah*.

19) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as 'HOLDER OF SOLAR *WILAYAH – WILAYAH SHAMSIYYAH*' – 'When the time comes for the embryo to receive the (vital) spirit, at that time the sun becomes its helper. This embryo is brought into movement by the sun, for the sun quickly endows it with 'spirit'.'

Book One, verses 3775-3776.

On the spiritual journey towards Allah, the embryo – Spiritual Seeker – *Salik*, obedient to *Wilayah Allawiyyah*, arrives at her/his destination.

20) Rumi refers to all Spiritual Seekers having, if they are aware of it not, an inherent connection with *Wilayah Allawiyyah*, that is, the *Wilayah Shamsiyyah* of Imam 'Ali – 'By the hidden way that is remote from our senses-perception, the sun in the heavens has many ways,'

Book One, verse 3779.

It is via that inherent connection, with the *Wilayah Shamsiyyah* of 'Ali, that exists beyond the physical senses, that the Spiritual Seeker is able to develop.

21) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as 'THE ROUTE OF SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE – *WILAYAH*', – 'And the way whereby it makes the Ruby red and the way whereby it gives the lightening-flash to the (iron) horse shoe. And the way whereby it ripens the fruit, and the way whereby it gives heart to one who is distraught.'

Book One verse 3781-82.

These verses refer to Qur'an 100 – Surah Al-'adiyat that was revealed to illuminate the status of Imam 'Ali.

22) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'A FALCON WITH SHINING WINGS' – 'Say it O falcon with shining wings,'  
Book One verse, 3783 (part one).

23) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'THE ONE WHO LEARNED FROM AND BECAME FAMILIAR WITH THE TRUE KING OF THE UNIVERSE' – 'Who has learned from the King and His fore arm.'  
Book One, verse 3783 (part two).

24) Rumi refers to Imam Ali as, 'ROYAL FALCON OF ALLAH WHO CATCHES THE ANGAS.' – 'Say it, O Royal falcon who catches the *Anga*, O you who vanquished an army all by yourself'  
Book One, verse 3784.

25) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'THE ONE NATION OF HUMANITY' – 'You alone are the (entire community) you are one and a hundred thousand. Say it O you to whose falcon your slave has fallen prey'.  
Book One, verse 3785.

This verse refers to an ayah of the Qur'an in which Allah tells us that all people are 'a single nation' Qur'an 2:213. While all have the potential, only some actually follow the *Wilayah* of 'Ali, the one who is obedient to Allah.

26) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'THE SERVANT OF ALLAH' – 'He said I am wielding my sword for Allah's sake. I am the servant of Allah; I am not under the command of the body.'  
Book One verse 3787.

27) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'THE LION OF ALLAH' – 'I am the lion of Allah, not the lion of my passions.'  
Book One, verse 3788 (part one).

28) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'HE WHOSE DEED WITNESSES HIS RELIGION' – 'My deed bears witness to my religion.'  
Book One verse 3787 (part two).

29) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'THE MANIFESTATION OF THE WILL OF ALLAH' – 'In war I am the manifestation of the truth of "It was not you who threw when you threw": but the sword and the wielder is the (Divine) Sun.'  
Book One, verse 3789.

This is a reference to Qur'an 8:17.

30) Rumi refers to Imam ʿAlī u as, 'ANNIHILATED IN ALLAH' – 'I have removed the baggage of "self" out of the way.'  
Book One, verse 3790 (part one).

31) Rumi refers to Imam ʿAlī as, 'THE ONE WHOSE *TAWHID* IS "ESSENTIAL" *TAWHID*' – 'I have deemed (what is) other than Allah to be non-existent.'  
Book One, verse 3790 (part two).

32) Rumi refers to Imam ʿAlī u as, 'SHADOW OF THE DIVINE' – 'I am a shadow, the Sun is my Lord.'  
Book One, verse 3791 (part one).

Ali's *Wilayah* is from Allah.

33) Rumi refers to Imam ʿAlī as, 'THE CHAMBERLAIN OF ALLAH' – 'I am the chamberlain, not the curtain (that prevents approach) to Him.'  
Book One verse 3791 (part two).

ʿAlī's function is to guide people to Allah.

34) Rumi refers to Imam ʿAlī as, 'FILLED WITH THE PEARLS OF UNION WITH ALLAH' – 'I am filled with the pearls of union like a (jewelled) sword.'  
Book One verse 3792 (part one).

35) Rumi refers to Imam ʿAlī as, 'THE REVIVER OF SPIRITUAL LIFE' – 'In battle I revive but do not kill people.'  
Book One, verse 3792 (part two).

36) Rumi refers to Imam ʿAlī as, 'ADVANCER OF LEVELS OF SPIRITUAL ESSENCE AND DIVINE MORALITY' – 'Blood does not cover the sheen of my sword: how should the wind sweep away my clouds?'  
Book One verse 3793.

The great commentator of Rumi's Mathnawi, Akbar Abadi said that 'Sword and clouds here refer to the advanced level of the Spiritual Essence of ʿAlī u – wind refers to negative morality (*Akhlaq Nafsani*) and the sheen of the sword to Divine Morality. Clear reference that negative attributes do not impinge upon the perfected attributes of ʿAlī u.' See Akbar Abadi, *Sharh Mathnawi*, Book 1. P. 307.

37) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'MOUNTAIN OF FORBEARANCE, PATIENCE AND JUSTICE' – 'I am not a straw, I am a mountain of forbearance, patience and justice: how should the fierce wind carry off the mountain?'

Book One, verse 3794.

38) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'ALLAH'S BUILDING BEING THE BEING OF 'ALI' – 'I am a mountain and my being is His building. If I become like a straw, my wind (that which moves me) is the recollection of Him.'

Book One, verse 3797.

39) In reference to Imam 'Ali, Rumi writes, 'HIS COMMANDER IS 'LOVE OF ALLAH' – 'My longing is not stirred save by His wind; my captain is naught but Love of the One.'

Book One, verse 3798.

40) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'REPRESSOR OF ANGER' – 'Anger, king over kings is to me but a slave: even anger I have bound under the bridle.'

Book One, verse 3799.

41) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'IMMERSED IN THE LIGHT OF ALLAH' – 'I am immersed in the light although my roof is ruined.'

Book One, verse 3801 (part one).

42) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'A DIVINE GARDEN' – 'I have become a garden although I am (styled) Father of Dust – Bu Turab.'

Book One, verse 3801 (part two).

This verse refers to the *hadith* in which the Prophet titled 'Ali; *Abu Turab*.

43) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'LOVER OF ALLAH' – 'That my name may be 'He Loves for the sake of Allah.' That my desire may be 'He hates for the sake of Allah'

Book One, verse 3803.

44) Rumi refers to the manifestation of 'Ali's 'generosity' as, 'GIVING FOR ALLAH' – 'That my generosity may be 'He gives for the sake of Allah'

Book One verse 3804 (part one).

45) Rumi refers to the manifestation of 'Ali's 'withholding' as, 'WITHHOLDING FOR THE SAKE OF ALLAH' – 'That my being may be "He withholds for Allah's sake" '.

Book One, verse 3804 (part two).

Verses 3803 and 4 refer to a hadith, 'The faith of any who give for the sake of Allah or withhold for the sake of Allah or love for Allah or hate or marry for Allah, will attain perfection.' Foruzanfar, *Ahadith Mathnawi*, P.37, Tehran 1361.

46) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'BELONGING ENTIRELY TO ALLAH' – 'I belong entirely to Allah, I do not belong to any other.'

Book One, verse 3805 (part two).

The will and being of Imam 'Ali is circumscribed by the Will and Existence of Allah.

47) In reference to Imam Ali Rumi writes, 'ALI'S ACTIONS ARE FOR ALLAH ALONE DRAWN FROM HIS u ILLUMINATED KNOWLEDGE OF ALLAH' – 'And that which I do for Allah's sake is (not done in) conformity, it is not fancy or opinion, it is naught but intuition.'

Book One, verse 3806.

'Ali's knowledge is intuitive rather than theoretical.

48) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'ATTACHED TO ALLAH ALONE' – 'I have been freed from effort and search, I have tied my sleeve to the skirt of Allah.'

Book One verse 3807.

49) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'SEEING ALLAH EVERYWHERE' – 'If I am flying, I behold the place to which I soar; and if I am circling, I behold the axis on which I revolve.'

Book One verse 3808.

50) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'THE HOLDER OF LUNAR AND SOLAR *WILAYAH*, *WILAYAH QAMARIYYAH* AND *WILAYAH SHAMSIYYAH*' – 'I am the moon and the sun is before me as my guide.'

Book One, verse 3809 (part two).

51) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'GATE OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE' – 'Come in! I will open the door for you.'

Book One verse 3841.

52) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'GRANTING ETERNAL TREASURE TO HIS FOLLOWERS' – 'What then do I bestow on the doer of righteousness? Know you, I bestow treasures and kingdoms everlasting.'

Book One verse 3843.

53) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'MASTER OF THE SPIRIT' – 'But do not grieve: I am intercessor for you: I am the spirit's master, I am not the body's slave.'

Book One, verse 3942.

54) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'Sun of The Noble' – 'This body has no value in my sight: without my body I am the noble (in spirit) the sun of the spirit.'

Book One verse 3943.

55) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'THE GUIDANCE OF KINGS' – 'Outwardly he strives after power and authority, but (only) that he may show princes the right way and judgement. That he may another spirit to the Princedom; that he may give fruit to the palm tree of the Caliphate.'

Book One, verse 3946-47.

56) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'THE DIVINE BALANCE' – 'You have really been the balance with the just nature of the One (Allah).

Book One, verse 3981 (part one).

57) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'The Balance By Which To Weigh Other Saints' – 'Nay, you have been the pivot of every balance.'

Book One, verse 3981 (part two).

58) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'THE ILLUMINATION OF HIS *WILAYAH* IS THE LIGHT OF ALLAH'S *WILAYAH*' – 'I am the slave of that eye-seeking lamp from which the lamp receives its splendour.'

Book One, verse 3984.

59) Rumi refers to Imam 'Ali as, 'THE PEARL OF ALLAH'S OCEAN OF LIGHT' – 'I am the slave of the billow of that Sea of Light that brings a pearl like this into view.'

Book One verse 3985.

60) Rumi refers to Imam Hussein as, 'KING OF RELIGION, ROYAL AND PURE SPIRIT' – 'A royal spirit escaped from a prison; why should we rend our garments and how should we gnaw our hands. Since they (Hussein and his family) were Kings of the (true) religion, it was the hour of joy for them when they broke their bounds.'

Book Six verse 797-8.

In Book Six of the Mathnawi, Rumi refers, with deep respect, to Imam Hussein son of Imam 'Ali as Royal Spirit and King of Religion. Although greatly upset by it, he introduces the Day of Imam Hussein's martyrdom – '*Ashura*, as a day of mourning for his spirit.

Rumi regards love for Imam Hussein as the continuation of love for the Prophet Muhammad, in the same way that an ear loves a pearl. He describes Prophet Muhammad as being the ear and Imam Hussein as the pearl, 'Don't you know that the Day of '*Ashura* is a day of mourning for a single soul that is more excellent than an entire century. How this tragedy should be lightly estimated by a true believer? Love for the earring (Hussein) is in proportion to love for the ear (Prophet Muhammad). In the view of a true believer, the mourning for that pure spirit is more celebrated than a hundred floods of Noah.'

Book Six verses 790-92. (Verses 776-805 refer specifically to the Shi'ah community in the city of Halab, whom Maulana criticises for having spirits that are asleep. He tells them to mourn for their spirits that are as good as dead. He then refers to the Royal Spirit of Imam Hussein that escaped from prison and is still alive. Some commentators have misunderstood this to imply that Rumi was against Shi'ah which from the above references he clearly was not.

From a synoptical understanding of the Mathnawi, each of the six books of the Mathnawi contains 12 discourses – a total of 72. The repetition of 12 discourses was not accidental but rather a tribute to each of the 12 Imams 1 of *Ahl al-Bayt* – spiritual inheritors and successors of Prophet Muhammad. The 72 discourses equate to Imam Hussein's 72 companions who were martyred with him at Karbala.

Since their inception, the *sama'i* of the *Mevlevi* order pays respects to the martyrs of Karbala. In Maulana's shrine in Konya, the names of the fourteen *Masumin*, the Prophet to the twelfth Imam (Muhammad, 'Ali, Fatima, Hassan, Hussein, 'Ali ibn Hassan, Mohammad ibn 'Ali, J'afar ibn Muhammad, Musa ibn Ja'far, 'Ali ibn Musa, Muhammad ibn 'Ali, 'Ali ibn Muhammad, Hassan ibn 'Ali, Muhammad ibn Hassan (Mahdi)) are inscribed on the walls of his burial chamber.

This textual evidence illustrates that Maulana was a real Shi'ah of 'Truth Shi'ism', *Tashaya Haqqiqi*, and follower of Imam 'Ali (A.S).

As Dr Shahram Pazouki said "the conclusion we would like to draw from this is that the most important principle shared by both Shi'ism and Sufism is the question of Imamate or Wayalaah, and the wali is the divine mediator and guide through whom God saves humanity. The point that should be taken into consideration here is that, contrary to what is commonly asserted, Shi'ism originally is not a political movement against the caliphs or a jurisprudential school, alongside the Sunnite school of jurisprudence, or a school of kalam with affinity to the Mu'tazilites. Shi'ism is a heartfelt way based on the concept of wayalah, and the differences in jurisprudence, politics and theology are secondary issues aside from this main core. Thus, in true Shi'ism, one believes that God is known not by one's own reasoning and speculations, nor by narrations handed down through others, but by submission to the wali and way faring on the path of love.

Thus we see that in his Mathnawi, Mawlavi speaks favourably about all the first four caliphs, but his tone of speaking differs completely when he comes to Ali, because he recognises him as being the wali after the Prophet". (Pazouki, Shahram. (2003). *Spiritual Walayah*. In: S.G. Safavi(ed), *RUMI'S THOUGHTS*. Tehran: Salman Azadeh Publication)

## Bibliography

### 1- See on Rumi's Life :

- Aflaki, Ahmad, *Manaqeb al – 'arefin*, Tehran, 1983.
- Alavi, Mahvash, *Maulana, Khodawandegar-e Tariqat-e Ishq*, Tehran, 1998.
- Chittick, William, *Me & Rumi*, Kentucky, 2004.
- Foruzanfar, Badi'a al- Zaman, *Mawlavi*, Tehran, 1971/1354.
- Golpinarli, Abdalbaki, translated into Farsi by Sobhani, Tofiq, *Mowlana*, Tehran, 1996.
- Iqbal, Afzal, *Rumi*, Lahore, 1991.
- Lewis, Franklin, *Rumi: Past and Present, East and West*, Oxford, 2,000.
- Sepahsalar, Faridun, *Mowlavi*, Tehran, 1983.
- Shams al-Din Shirazi, *Maqalat-e Shams Tabrizi*, ed. Mohamad 'Ali Movahed, Tehran, 1990.
- Zarrinkub, Abdul Hosayn, *Pele-pele molaqat ta Khoda*, Tehran, 1994.



## 2- For a full account of Maulana's theological and spiritual thought see:

- Chittick, W, *The Sufi Path of Love*, SUNY, New York, 1983.  
 Este'lami, Muhammad, edited with commentary, "Masnavi-ye Jalal al-Din Mohammad-e Balkhi", 7 volumes, (6<sup>th</sup> edition), Tehran, 2000/1379.  
 Schimmel, A, *The Triumphal Sun*, Fine Books, London, 1978.  
 Homaei, Jalal al-Din, *Mowlawi nameh*, Tehran, 1996/1374.  
 Ja'fari, Mohammad Taqi, *Mowlawi wa Jahanbinih dar maktabhay-e sharq wa gharb*, Tehran, 1992/1370.  
 Safavi, Seyed G., *Rumi's Thoughts*, Tehran, 2003.  
 Safavi, Seyed Ghahreman, *The Structure of Rumi's Mathnawi*, London, 2006.  
 Turkmen, Erkan, *The Essence of Rumi's Mathnawi Including his Life and Works*, Konya, 2004.

## 3-See on Classical Persian Literature:

- Arberry, A J, *Classical Persian Literature*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1958.  
 Baldick, J, "Persian Sufi Poetry up to the Fifteenth Century" in Morrison, G. (ed) *History of Persian Literature*, Brill, Leiden, 1981.  
 De Bruijn, J T P, *Persian Sufi Poetry*, Curzon, Richmond, 1997.

## 4- See on Rumi's spiritual shiism:

- Ashtiani, Seyed, Jalal al-Din, *Sharh-e Moqadameh Qaysari, Mashhad*,  
 Homaei, Jalal al-Din, *Mowlawi nameh*, Tehran, 1995/1374  
 Khowrazmi, Kamal al- Din Hossein b. Hassan, *Jawaher al-asrar wa Zawaher al-anwar, Sharh-e Mathnawi*, ed. Shariat, M.J., Isfahan,  
 Khowrazmi, Taj al-Din Hossein, *Sharh-e Fosos al-hekam*, ed. Najib Mail Harawi, Tehran, 1985/1364.  
 Safavi, Seyed, G., *Rumi's Thoughts*, Tehran, 2003  
 Safavi, Seyed, G, *The Structure of The Rumi's Mathnawi*, London, 2006.

**Sufi terms**

<i>Wali</i>	divine spiritual guide
<i>Walaya</i>	sanctity
<i>Awlia</i>	the spiritual successors
<i>Wali</i>	Perfect Man, Shadow of Allah, Divine mediator, Divine guide
<i>Baqā</i>	subsistence
<i>Fana</i>	annihilation
<i>Qorb-e Nawafil</i>	the nearness of supererogatory works
<i>Ibadat-e wajib</i>	obligatory work/worship
<i>Takhalli</i>	withdrawal
<i>Tahalli</i>	Adornment
<i>Maqam</i>	station

<i>Haqq</i>	the Real
<i>Haqq al yaqin</i>	the reality of certainty
<i>Qotb</i>	poles, absolute pole
<i>Zahir</i>	manifest, outward, outer
<i>Batin</i>	non-manifest, inward, inner
<i>Mazhar</i>	locus of manifestation
<i>Zati(dhati)</i>	intrinsic
<i>Tajalli</i>	discloser
<i>Maqam-e Mazhariyat-e Tajalli-e Zati</i>	The Station of Manifestation on Intrinsic Discloser

## Plato and Suhrawardī on Illumination

Mahdi Ghavam Safari  
Tehran University, Iran

### Abstract

Perception, for Plato, is the first stage of epistemic dialectic, but staying at this stage does not lead us to the knowledge (episteme). One must pass from this stage and from the stage of right opinion and rational reasoning; and it then that the pure reality illuminates suddenly upon his mind, which exerts all its powers to the limit of human capacity. The Platonic illumination, therefore, is a limited one and is restricted to a special stage of epistemic dialectic.

Suhrawardī's theory of illumination, on the other hand, is very expanded. Since the Light of lights continuously illuminates upon everything, and since the beholding of everything both in the domain of dusky substances and of incorporeal lights depends upon His illumination, the beholding of dusky substances by the human soul, and the beholding of incorporeal lights one another, are the products of His illumination.

At this paper, I have tried to set forth an explanation of these two theories of illumination in proper details.

### Part 1

In *Phaedrus*, in the context of what I previously have entitled “myth of the souls’ journey” (246 d6- 250 b 1), Plato sets forth the important epistemic subtlety. Since he holds that the souls of animals and those of men have descended from the upper world, the myth prepares answer to the question that why, in the process of descending, some souls enter into the bodies of animals while others enter into those of men. The response is this:

For only the soul that has beheld truth may enter into this our human form-seeing that man must needs understand the language of forms, passing from a plurality of perceptions to a unity gathered together by reasoning – and

such understanding is a recollection of those things which our souls beheld aforetime as they journeyed with their god (*phaed.*, 249 b6- c2).

This means that perception, though Plato in *Theaetetus* (164b) denies it's being knowledge, is a way toward knowledge. As myth says, since in the heavenly journey of the souls all of them could not see truths, all of them could not select a human body in the terrestrial life because a soul which has not seen the truths, or some of the truths, can't perform human's special rational function; that is to say, due to lacking of rational power, this soul can not pass "from a plurality of perception to a unity gathered by reasoning". So, the epistemic function of perception, as a way toward knowledge, is allowed for human alone.

However, even by possessing a rational power, by passing through plurality of perceptions to synonyms of Ideas, and so by acquiring of universals and unit concepts (which correspond to Ideas), we have not reach to knowledge yet, and we are still in way to knowledge. The allegory of cave and the philosophical part of the *seven letter*, which is largely concerned with epistemology, are two serious evidences for this interpretation.

In this part of *seven letter*, Plato, in fact, enumerates the necessary preconditions of knowing the objective realities as preliminary steps of *episteme*. According to him, for every thing that exists there are three classes of objects through which knowledge about it must come; the knowledge itself is the fourth, and the actual object of knowledge which is the true reality is fifth (342 a-b). We have then, first, a name, second, a description, third, an image (sensible representation), forth, a knowledge, and fifth, the real self of a thing, which is its Idea. Of the first four things, understanding though approaches nearest in affinity and likeness to the fifth entity (Idea), it is not corresponds exactly to the thing itself; while the others are more remote from it. The access to forth thing, however, without passing from third thing (i.e. from perception) is impossible, and, speaking exactly, we must say that

if in the case of any [thing] a man dose not somehow or other get hold of the first four, he will never gain a complete understanding of the fifth (342 e).

Seeing that the acquisition of true knowledge is the outcome of the acquaintance with the *ti* of things, Plato thinks that the common defect of first three steps is in this that they want to discover the *poion ti* of things. Even the fourth stage is, in a sense, in the sensible realm and here too we seek the *ti* of things in the world around us, for this stage also shares the three in putting the *poion ti* of things in an inadequate form of words and language, although the fourth stage tries to do this about the *ti* of things, which we recognize by intelligence, as opposed to *poion ti*, which we recognize by senses. These four stages, however, are necessary also to develop our mental powers unto its extremes by the way of conversation and by efforts and sufferings. It is in this case, and on condition of the existence of affinity between our souls and the higher realities, that we can hope to reaching the knowledge and catching eternal truths and transcendent Ideas. Plato describes this final stage as thus (344b):

Hardly after practicing detailed comparisons of names and definitions and visual and other sense perceptions, after scrutinizing them in benevolent disputation by the use of question and answer without jealousy, at last in a flash understanding of each blazes up, *and the mind, as it exerts all its powers to the limit of human capacity, is flooded with light.* (With my italic)

The recent sentence, which I emphasized with italic letters, in fact, means confrontation with the truth itself and its illumination upon human soul; and this is the intuition of the Idea that corresponds with the sensible thing. This confrontation and illumination constitute the true knowledge (*episteme*). Thus, we can say that the illumination in Plato's philosophy is restricted to fifth stage of epistemic dialectic and has a narrow domain; and the process of perception and those of other types of acquisition such as imagination are not occur in this narrow domain of illumination.

The illumination of truth, on the other hand, has a farther condition, which is more ethical than epistemological. According to this condition the power of soul, which is the human percept instrument (*republic*, 518 c5-6), although, in Plato's term, is "a more divine quality, a thing that never loses its potency", not only is not successful in performing its task all the time but also it is possible that, under the special condition, "according to the direction of its conversion", to be

“useless and harmful” (518e). Those who are popularly spoken of as bad, in the many cases, occasionally, are quicker than others in pursuit of thing that they interests. The indwelling power of their souls in not by no means weak, but it is in the employment of badness and pollution; so that the sharper its sight the more mischief it accomplishes. The power of human soul is like an eye, in that it could not be converted to the light from the darkness except by turning the whole body; so this organ of knowledge must be turned around from the world of becoming together with the entire soul, until the soul is able to endure the contemplation of essence and the brightest region of being.

Here we have the obvious influence of mystical doctrine of Orphic- Pythagoreans and, especially, of Empedocles’ *katharmoi* upon Plato’s thought. According to Empedocles, the souls of all living creatures are immortal *daimones* whose home is the celestial world,

but who have been seduced by strife into sin and are now exiled by an inexorable decree and condemned to be tossed in torment from one element to another of the sublunary world (Guthrie, 1969, p. 245).

Only by strict employment of the rules of *katharmoi*, and by gaining a true understanding of the divine nature, will they escape from the unlimited cycles of reincarnation in different bodies and return to their original and proper home. The excellent and impressive fr.115 submits a dreadful report of the fallen soul’s destiny (Guthrie’s tr., *ibid*, p.251):

There is an oracle of **Necessity**, an ancient decree of the gods, eternal, sealed with broad oaths: when any errs and pollutes his own limbs with the blood of slaughter, or following Strife swears a false oath-the spirits whose portion is length of life- they must wander for thrice ten thousand seasons away from the blessed ones, being born through time in all manner of forms of mortal creatures which tread in turn the troublous paths of life. The mighty heavens pursue them to the sea, the sea spews them out on to the floor of the earth, earth to the rays of the shining sun, and he casts them into the circling heavens. One receives them from another and all abhor them. Of these I too am now one, an exile from the gods and a wanderer, having put my trust in raving **Strife**.

Since all cognition is of like by like (frs. 109, 107), the only way to salvation is this: the soul must learn that first by practicing the rules of *katharmoi* “to fast from evil” (fr. 144), and then, since according to fr.132

Blessed is he who has obtained the riches of divine wisdom and wretched he who has a dim opinion in his thought concerning the gods

must obtain this divine wisdom; and we know that this aim, as Pythagorean have said, can be attained only by way of assimilation to the divine.

Under the influence of these wisely teachings that Plato in *Republic* (500c) speaks of assimilation to the divine where Socrates says to Adimantus that

the man whose mind is truly fixed on eternal realities has no leisure to turn his eyes downward upon the petty affairs of men, ... , but he fixes his gaze upon the things of eternal and unchanging order, and seeing that they neither wrong nor are wronged by one another, but all abide in harmony as reason bids, he will endeavor to imitate them and, as far as may be, to fashion himself in their likeness and assimilate himself to them.

To close of the current section of this paper, I repeat two points: first, according to Plato the gaining of true knowledge (*episteme*) consists of the confrontation with the higher and eternal realities, and this is the illumination of truth upon the human mind. The process results in this illumination starts from perception and goes on to rational understanding. Here, then, we have restricted sense of illumination. Second, the illumination of pure truth without the purity of human soul is impossible. These two conclusions, especially the latter one, are leading we to the meeting point of Plato, and even Pythagoreans and Empedocles, with Suhrawardī, the famous Iranian muslim theosophist and philosopher.

## Part 2

Shihāb al-Dīn Yahyā ibn Habash ibn Amīrak Abu'l-Futūh Suhrawardī, well-known in the history of Islamic philosophy as Master of Illumination (*Shaykh al-Ishrāg*), was born in Suhrawad in north-

western Iran in 549/ 1154. Having finished his fashionable studies, he began to travel through Iran, and during this period, he met many of contemporary Sufi masters and enjoyed from their presences and teachings. He was man of Faith, blessing, spiritual meditation and retreat. Suhrawardī also journeyed through Anatolia and Syria and finally he went to Aleppo. It was in this city that the religious authorities, who considered some of his opinions dangerous, asked for his death; and finally he met a doleful death in the prison in Aleppo in the year 587/1191, at the age of 38. Some say that he was suffocated to death; others say that he was died of starvation (S.H. Nasr, 1996, p. 126).

Suhrawardī's style in philosophy was the same that Ibn Sinā (Avicenna) had entitled it "*Al-mashriqiyyīn*", and had written some treatises with allegorical language and structure in this style. Already in his unfinished *Manti al-mashriqiyyīn*, Ibn sinā wrote that there are sciences that not come from Greeks (1405, p.3); and in his introduction to the Logic of his encyclopedic philosophical masterpiece *al-Shifā* (Healing), He entitled this style of philosophy, "the philosophy of *mashriqiyyah*, which means the oriental philosophy (1405 a, p.10). The philosophical Allegories and mystical treatises of Ibn Sinā, such as *Hayy ibn Yaqzan* ("The Living son of the Awake"), *Risālat al-tayr* ("The Treatise of the Bird") and *Salāmān wa Absāl* ("Salāmān and Absāl"), and his pleasant and exhilarant commentary to sufism and mysticism ("*irfān*") in the three last chapters of his *Isharat wa Tanbihat* are undoubtedly the important part of suhrawardī's sources of inspiration.

In his introduction to *Qissat al-ghurbat al-gharbiyyah* ("The Story of the Occidental Exile"), which is one of his allegorical and mystical treatises, Suhrawardī Frankly shows that he has great attention to this dimention of Ibn Sinā's philosophy. Here he writes (1999, p. 112):

When I saw the tale of *Hayy ibn Yaqzan* ... and *Salaman wa Absal* put together by the author of *Hayy ibn Yaqzan* ... I desired to mention some of these things in the form of a tale for some of dear brethren.



Moreover, he translated Ibn Sinā's arabic treatise *Risālat al-tayr* into Persian, and wrote a commentary on his *Isharat wa Tanbihat* (Shahrzuri, 1384, p. 464).

Suhrawardī came also, on one hand, under the influences of Muslim Sufies such as Hallāj, Abū Yazīd Bastāmī, Abu'l – Hassan Kharagāni, Abū Sahl Tustarī and Dhū'l Nūn Misrī, and, on the other hand, of ancient Persian wisdom, of which representatives he repeatedly mentions, such as kiūmarth, Farīdūn and kai khusraw. He also had great attention to Zoroastrian sages and their teachings and, especially, their symbolism of light and darkness. He identified their wisdom with that of Hermes and Pythagoras, Empedocles, Plato and Plotinus, who suhrawardī thought that he is Plato. Without attention to Suhrawardī's confusion between Plato and Plotinus, one can not understand his high interest to Plato.

In any rate, Suhrawardī, as S.H. Nasr rightly pointed out,

considered himself to be the reviver of the perennial wisdom, *philosophia perennis*, or what he calls *Hikmat al-Khālidah* or *HiKmat al-atīqah* which existed always among the Hindus, Persians, Babylonians, Egyptians, and the ancient Greeks up to the time of Plato (1996, P.128).

All this ancient sages, which belongs to different ancient cultures and different lands, in fact, are speaking of one truth, which like sun is one and never accept plurality due to its plural manifestations; thus all their apparently discrepancies are only verbal one (*opera*, 4, p. 102).

### Part 3

What is this *philosophia perennis*, or, to use Shurawardī's term, *Hikmat al – Isharq*? Before discussing his answer to this question, we must discuss about his classification of philosophers and peoples who seek knowledge (*talib*). He divides the former in to five classes, the latter in to three classes (*opera*, 2, p. 12):

1. The *hakim ilahi* , who knows gnosis (*ta' alluh*) but is a stranger to discursive philosophy.
2. The philosopher who is acquainted with discursive philosophy but is a stranger to gnosis.

3. The *hakim ilahi* or *theosophist*, who knows both discursive philosophy and gnosis.
4. The sage who is middle or weak in discursive philosophy.
5. The sage who is middle or weak in gnosis.

The *talibs* are divided into, (1) those who seek gnosis and discursive philosophy, (2) those who seek only gnosis, and (3) those who seek only discursive philosophy.

All of the above mentioned belong to the class of *theosophos*; and this *theosophy*, which Suhrawardī entitles *Hikmat al-Ishrāq* (the wisdom of Illumination) has been always beyond any skepticism and it will be so long as the heavens and the earth endure (opera, 2. p.2).

In my opinion, this latter sentence, which is quoted from his *Hikmat al-Ishraq*, obviously show that the defence of philosophy against Ghazzali's political-oriented attack on it was one of his philosophical engagements.

In any rate, the *Hikmat al-Ishraq* is a wisdom of which Suhrawardī says:

it has another method and provides a shorter path to knowledge .... It is more orderly and precise, less painful to study. I did not first arrive at it through cogitation; rather, it was acquired through something else. (*The philosophy of Illumination*, 1999, p.2).

This wisdom has two main aspects, one is ontological and the other is epistemological. The ontological aspect is as follows. According to his teachings a thing either is light in its own reality or is not. Light is divided into light that is a state of something else (the sensible accidental light), and light that is not a state of something else (the incorporeal or pure light). That which is not light in its own reality is divided into what is independent of a locus (the dusky substance) and what is a state of something else (the dark state). "Intuition affirms that" says Suhrawardī in *Hikmat al-Ishraq* (pp.78-9),

no lifeless dusky substance receives its existence from another, since with respect to the lifeless reality of the barrier no one would have priority over the others. ... Moreover, neither the barrier nor its dark and Luminous states

can receive their existence in a circular manner from something else, for nothing can depend on something that depends on it .... Since they are not independent by essence ..., they are all dependent on incorporeal light.

From this we plainly know that if an incorporeal light is dependent in its quiddity, its need is not directed toward the lifeless dusky substance, for how could the dusky emanate light? Thus, though the actualization of the incorporeal light depends on a self – subsistent light, these lights ordered in ranks cannot form an infinite series, since we know that an ordered simultaneous series must be finite. Therefore, the self-subsistent and accidental lights, the barriers, and the states of each must end in a light beyond which there is no light. This is the Light of lights, the All-Encompassing Light, the Eternal Light, the Holy Light. It is absolutely independent, since there is nothing beyond it. The existence of two independent lights is inconceivable, because they would not differ in reality, and one would not be distinguished from the other by something they have in common; nor would they be distinguished by something assumed to be concomitant of their reality, since they share in this as well. Therefore, the independent incorporeal light is one. Everything other than it is in need of it and has its existence from It. (*ibid*, p.87).

Like other Muslim philosophers, Suhrawardī is under the influence of the rule that says

from the truly One, in that respect in which It is one, only one effect is generated.

The first effusion of Light of lights is the nearest light (*nūr al- aqrab*) or *Bahman*, which is an archangel. From *Bahman*'s contemplation of the Light of lights the second light is generated, and from this the third light, and in this manner the other lights are generated, which suhrawardī calls longitudinal order, and in which the number of lights far exceeds the number of Intelligences in ibn Sina's and Farabi's cosmology. In this order each higher light has domination (*qahr*) over the lower and each lower light love for the higher. This longitudinal order give rise to a new class of lights in Being which suhrawardī calls latitudinal order, the member of which are no longer generators of one another; rather, each is integral in itself (S.H. Nasr, 1996, p. 139). He

identifies these latitudinal lights with the platonic Ideas and calls them lords of species (*arbāb al-anwā*) or the luminous species.

#### Part 4

To begin the other aspect of Suhrawardī's illuminationist wisdom, the epistemological aspect, It is better to quote the very opening sentences of his allegorical treatise *Qissat al-ghurbat al-gharbiyyah*. The exhilarant and pleasant tale begins as follows (1999b, pp.112-3):

When I traveled with my brother *Asim* from the region of Transoxiana to the lands of occident in order to hunt down a folk of birds on the shore of the Green Sea, we suddenly fell into a town *whose inhabitants were wicked*, that is the town of kairouan. When the people perceive that we had come amongst them unexpectedly, we being sons of the elder known as *al-Hādi ibn al-Khayr al-Yamāni*, they surrounded us and took us bound in shackles and fetters of iron and imprisoned us at the bottom of an infinitely deep pit.

In this tale, which symbolic words of it are selected with high accuracy, Transoxiana is the sublime world, and the lands of the occident world are the realm of matter, the relation of which to the Sublime world is a covering of darkness; Kairouan is this world, which according to teachings of Muslim sages is the world of opposites and obtrusiveness, so by the wicked he means the people of this world. By *Asim*, literally means "the guardian", he means the speculative faculty, which is the exclusive property of the human of soul, not of his body. This property of the soul, according to the teachings of all Muslim sages is the assistant of the human soul in its way towards truth. The soul receives its succor from two ways: first, from its abilities in thinking about whole existence, and second, from its resistance against passions; thus *Asim* is a safeguard from dangerous passions and speculative errors.

The narrator of the tale is soul. *Asim* is the brother of soul, and they are sons of *al-Hādi*, which means "guide". From the guide, Shurawardī means the First Emanation (i.e. *Bahman*). *Al-Hādi* is the son of *al-Khayre*, and I think that by *al-Khayre* he means the Light of lights, and not, as the tale's unknown commentator says the universal

Intellect. *Al-Yamāni*, means from Yemen, which is located east of the main port of the Islamic world, as Kairouan, in present-day Tunis, is located west of Islamic world. The Light of lights from Yemen is the source of light and knowledge, as the occident is the place of the decline of light.

By the Green Sea, Suhrawardī means the realm of sensibles, and by birds he means the science of sensibles. This means that, while the final cause of souls' falling is to acquire of knowledge, its occupying with concupiscible desires makes this sensible world the prison of the human soul.

Having all these points in mind, we can say that the main goal of *Hikmat* (wisdom) is deliverance from material world; which, of course, is to be reached only by a question of knowledge and purification of the soul.

## Part 5

Now we can put forward the answer of Suhrawardī to the question that what is the *Hikmat al-Ishrag*? In his major work, *Hikmat al-Ishrag*, he first criticizes the two major contemporary theories of vision (*ibsar*) (*Hikmat al-Ishrag*, 1999a, PP.70-73), and then sets forth a new one of himself. He says that (*ibid*, p. 45) vision can only be the illuminated object's being opposed a sound eye - and nothing more. When a man is opposed with this illuminated object, his soul surrounds it and is illuminated by its light. Thus vision is the illumination of the living soul; and this he calls *Ishrag*. We say "living" thing, because what is not living, because of lacking of self-consciousness can not benefit from illumination of the illuminated object upon it; since the beholding is not the same as illumination. And this is another Illuminationist principle explains that beholding the light is not the same as the shining of a ray of that light upon that which beholds it (*ibid*, p.97).

Apart from these two precondition of perceiving of knowledge, i.e. the illumination of light upon the soul and self-consciousness of the soul as an incorporeal light, the purification of the soul is another precondition of

knowledge, without which the illumination of light upon the soul does not lead to actualization of knowledge.

The two foundations mentioned above, i.e. vision, the illumination of light and the absence of veil, are exactly in work in the process of knowledge in the domain of incorporeal lights. Bahman as a pure immaterial light is self-conscious, the Light of lights is continuously illuminates upon it, and Bahman beholds the Light of lights. In the longitudinal order of incorporeal lights, “at the root of the deficient (lower) light is love for the higher light and at the root of the higher light is dominance over the lower light. The dominance of the higher light is the illumination of it upon the lower light, and the love of the latter for the former is its beholding of it.

Now, the Light of lights is continuously illuminates all over the world, upon incorporeal lights and upon dusky substances; so the one main element of the beholding of truth is in working continuously; the other element, i.e. the attention of human soul to this illumination and so beholding of truth depends to his abilities and his conduct. Therefore, the purification of soul is the only human way towards knowledge.

## Bibliography

- Guthrie, W.K.C. (1967), *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. One, Cambridge University Press, London
- (1969), *A History of Greek Philosophy*, Vol. Two, Cambridge University Press, London.
- Ibn Sinā (1405a), *Al-Shifa*, Vol. One, Iran, Qom.
- (1405b), *Mantiq al – Mashriqiyyān*, Iran, Qom.
- Nasr, S.H. (1996), Ed. M.A. Razavi, *The Islamic Intellectual Tradition Persia*, Curzon press, London.
- Plato (1989), *The Collected Dialogues*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington.
- Sharzuri, Shams al-Din Muhammad (1384), *Nuzhat al – Arwah wa Rawdat al – Afrah*, translation by Maghsoud Ali Tabrizi, ed. M.T. Daneshpajoh, Tehran.
- Suhrawardī (1976-7), *Opera*, Vols. 1-2, ed. H. Corbin, Académie Iranienne de Philosophie, Tehran.
- (1970), *Opera*, Vol. 3, ed. S.H. Nasr, Académie Iranienne de Philosophie, Tehran.

- (1977), *Three Treatises*, ed. N. Gh. Habibi, Iranian Academy of Philosophy, Tehran.
- (1999a), *The Philosophy of Illumination*, tr. J. Walbridge & H. Ziai, Brigham Young University Press, Provo, Utah.
- (1999b), *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, tr. W.M. Thackston, Jr., Mazda Publishers, Costa Mesa, California, U.S.A.





## **Emptiness, Identity & Interpenetration in Hua-yen Buddhism**

Atif Khalil

University of Toronto, Canada

*Know that the whole world is a  
mirror. In each atom are found a  
hundred blazing suns. If you split  
the center of a single drop of water,  
a hundred oceans spring forth...A  
universe lies hidden in a grain of  
millet. Everything is brought  
together at the point of the present.*

Shabistari (d.1340)

### **Abstract**

Hua-yen represents one of the most sophisticated attempts in the Buddhist intellectual tradition to understand the nature of the world. Its vision of existence sees the universe as an intricate and elaborate web in which each and every entity causally contains each and every other identity. This underlying interpenetration and identity is possible because of the fundamental emptiness of all things. This article explores the Hua-yen understanding of emptiness, identity, and interpenetration, in an attempt to reveal the inner logic of a worldview that remains, for the most part, historically alien to dominant 'Western' modes of philosophical thinking.

### **Introduction**

Hua-yen represents one of the most sophisticated attempts in Buddhist intellectual history to explain the nature of reality. Its vision of existence, in contrast to the mainstream Western intellectual tradition, sees the universe as an infinite network of entities that acquire their particular existences through each other. Because their particular existences are inter-causally generated, in-and-of-themselves they are non-existent, which is to say that, in Buddhist terms, they are empty (*sunya*). Since no one particular locus is the absolute cause of all

phenomena, any and every locus is the primary and central cause of all phenomena. As such, every entity causally contains every other entity. This idea is most vividly depicted in the Buddhist metaphor of the Jewel Net of Indra – a vast net on which a spherical, crystal clear jewel is tied on each mesh, so that each jewel reflects the entire net (the whole) and each individual jewel (the part), which itself reflects the whole and the parts. This metaphor succinctly captures the Hua-yen notion of *emptiness* (exemplified by the crystal clarity of the jewels), *identity* (exemplified by the sameness of the jewels) and *interpenetration* (exemplified by the infinite reflections in the jewels).

This article attempts to explain the inner logic of Hua-yen<sup>1</sup> philosophy and its holistic vision of existence from the perspective of the school itself. With this in mind, it has been divided into three broad sections. (1) It begins by examining the early Mahayana notion of emptiness (*sunyata*), and then, the particular manner in which Hua-yen thinkers re-conceptualised this pivotal Buddhist concept. (2) Then it proceeds to analyse the nature of identity and interpenetration. First it looks into the relationship between emptiness (the absolute) and interdependent origination (phenomena), and then, the relationship between phenomenal entities themselves. This section relies heavily on metaphors found in Hua-yen texts, the purpose of which is to illustrate, through concrete examples, the rationale behind a *weltanschauung* that is difficult to conceptualise solely at the abstract level. (3) Finally, the article highlights the central place that direct experience occupies in Hua-yen epistemology. This is followed by a concluding overview of the relation between enlightenment and universal compassion.

## **1: Emptiness (*Sunyata*)<sup>2</sup>**

### ***1a: Early Indian Mahayana Notions of Emptiness***

Francis Cook points out in that the phrase “everything is empty” (*sarvan sunyam*) first appeared in India in a collection of Buddhist scriptures known as the *Perfection of Wisdom* (*prajnaparamita*), authored approximately 350 years after the death of the Buddha. However, Cook goes on to argue, it is quite possible that this concept existed in the earliest period of Buddhist intellectual history and only later acquired prominence.<sup>3</sup> Despite the uncertainty surrounding its exact origin, the doctrine of emptiness serves as the fundamental

cornerstone of Mahayana Buddhism, and by extension, its Hua-yen branch.

The first Buddhist to systematically explicate the meaning of emptiness was the Indian philosopher Nagarjuna (2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> century CE),<sup>4</sup> who, through rigorous analysis, dissected phenomena to reveal that nothing possesses inherent existence or self-essence.<sup>5</sup> So rigorous was his logic that a whole school, the Madhyamaka, was founded on the basis of his arguments.<sup>6</sup> The philosophical position Nagarjuna advocated, which denies the ontological reality of essences, remains one of the most complicated and intriguing features of Buddhist thought. We can perhaps better understand the rationale behind this denial of self-essences by resorting to a simple example of a fully grown oak tree. As it stands, the oak tree is an oak tree. But if we were to pluck out all of the leaves of this oak tree, would it still be a tree? Most people would definitely say yes. Trees lose their leaves in the winter all the time yet still remain trees. Suppose now that we were to saw off a few branches. Would our tree still remain a tree? Most people, again, would probably respond affirmatively. We have all seen trees without a few branches. But let us say that we were to take another step and cut off all of the branches. What would we be left with? Now the response we would most likely get would be a trunk on a root, definitely not a tree. The point of this analogy is to illustrate that once any existent is subjected to thorough analysis, we soon realise that its nature is not fixed and determinate. In the case of the tree, this becomes clear when we ask: exactly when in our process of sawing off the branches does the tree stop being a tree? The difficulty in pin-pointing a universal essence which we can unequivocally identify as “treeness” is one reason for believing there is no such essence to begin with. For Nagarjuna, this implies that what we take to be things that exist in their own right are actually empty in themselves, no more than conglomerations of specific conditions, which, in the case of the tree, consists of the coming together of a root, trunk, branches and leaves. From this perspective, phenomena are differentiated by a mind that has an inherent tendency to mentally break apart the objects of existence. The mind perceives, or more accurately, projects objects to be things they are not in-and-of-themselves.

One of the presuppositions of Nagarjuna's Madhyamaka school is that if things did have inherent existence, the more they would be scrutinised, the clearer they would become. But as the example of the tree shows, the opposite seems to be the case, namely, the more something is analysed, the vaguer it gets, until it is lost altogether. Paul Williams expresses this point nicely when he writes:

...if x has inherent existence it would be found as either identical with its parts, taken separately or as a collection, or as inherently existing entity apart from them [...] the letter A, if it inherently exists, is identical either with any one of / \ , or with their shapeless collection, or with a separate entity from them. Clearly it is not found in any of these ways, so it does not inherently exist, that is, it does not exist from its own side.<sup>7</sup>

This is to say that phenomena, from their "own side," are empty. When they are conceptually broken down into their parts, and the components of these parts are themselves broken down, there comes a point in the deconstructive process when everything gets lost. No fundamental component is found which possesses an independent existence (*svabhava*).

Another reason for the fundamental emptiness of all things lies in the unceasing flux which characterises the phenomenal world. That is to say, there are no fixed, static loci in the world that remain the same while everything else changes, since even the loci are not immutable. The Buddha expressed this view when he said, "the world is a continuous flux and is impermanent".<sup>8</sup> But such an idea is not peculiar to the Buddhists. Heraclitus echoed it in the Western scientific and philosophical tradition when, characterising existence as a fire, he famously declared "it is not possible to step into the same river twice." This idea also finds its counterpart in classical Islamic thought in the doctrine of the unrepeatability of existence (*la takrar fi al-wujud*).<sup>9</sup>

For the Mahayana Buddhists, there is no fixed stage upon which the cosmic drama is enacted because the entire cosmos is permeated by a continuity of alterations. Or we could say that the stage is itself a character in the play. Absolutely nothing remains the same for any two successive moments. Since phenomena lack a nature that remains unchanged through the unfolding of time, they are empty. Existence is therefore best characterised not by "being" but "becoming". Using our

previous example of the tree, we might ask, when does the seed become a plant, and when does the plant become a tree? Once again, we encounter obscurities in our attempts to pinpoint the exact natures of “seedness,” “plantness,” and “treeness,” and these obscurities are, for the Buddhists, proof that there are no such natures to begin with.

The concept of emptiness is intricately tied to the first and second noble truths of the Buddha: that existence is *dukkha* (generally translated as “suffering”), and that the root of such *dukkha* is *tanha* (“desire,” “thirst,” “craving”). Put simply, it is because we have desires that we suffer, and this suffering arises when we do not get the things we want. If properly understood, the doctrine of emptiness can help eradicate suffering because it teaches us that there is really nothing to be possessed; since everything is inherently empty, nothing can be truly grasped. Our continuous and unceasing attempts to satiate our hunger by acquiring the objects of our *tanha* are doomed to failure from the very onset. These attempts are like the futile effort of a thirsty man, who, stranded in a desert, runs after a mirage in the hopes of finding water.

But Buddhism goes beyond teaching us that our objects of desire are empty. It claims that even the desirer is empty. The 4th century Theravadin Buddhist, Buddhaghosa, expressed this view when he contended, “mere suffering exists, but no sufferer is found”.<sup>10</sup> What this means in the context of Mahayana is that the claim “everything is empty” applies equally to the human self, which we have a natural propensity to think of as an independently existing entity every time any one of us says “I”. But how is the self empty? To understand this emptiness, we need simply to analyse the self the same way we did the oak tree earlier. We cannot say the self is the body because the body is unconscious, as Descartes also contended. And if we say that it is the mind, then which particular state of the mind is it? The mind undergoes a myriad of states from its birth to its death. Yesterday I was happy, today I am depressed, and tomorrow I may be overjoyed. Which of these states represents the real me? It cannot be all of them, nor can I single out one of them. Perhaps it is something that lies behind the mental states, the locus upon which the mental fluctuations occur. But if this were the case, how could I know it at all, since it would be distinct from my thoughts? On what basis would I be able to

convincingly postulate that such a thing existed in the first place? According to Mahayana, I have no real reason for such a postulation.

Even though both the phenomenal world and the self are empty, it should be clarified that Mahayana does in fact acknowledge the value of our everyday, common sense understanding of the world, and the important role this understanding plays in our daily affairs. That phenomena are empty does not mean they cannot affect us. What Mahayana intends by the doctrine of emptiness is to expose the real nature of things. The difference between conventional truth and ultimate truth is not simply based on two different ways of looking at things, since ultimate truth is actually the way things are.<sup>11</sup> The importance of Mahayana's acknowledgement of the common sense understanding of the world lies in the fact that without it, we could not understand the real nature of things and attain genuine enlightenment. And so Nagarjuna writes:

The doctrine of the Buddhas is taught with reference to two truths – conventional truth (*lokasamvrtisatya*) and ultimate truth (*paramarthasatya*). Those who do not understand the difference between these two truths do not understand the profound essence (*tattva*) of the doctrine of the Buddha. Without dependence on everyday practice the ultimate is not taught. Without resorting to the ultimate *nirvana* is not attained. If emptiness is coherent then all is coherent. If emptiness is not coherent then likewise all is not coherent.<sup>12</sup>

The key to understanding the ultimate nature of reality lies in *correctly* understanding emptiness, as Nagarjuna's final words indicate, otherwise "all is not coherent". It is here that a crucial distinction must be drawn between nihilism and emptiness. The emptiness of phenomena does not imply that nothing exists at all on any level, or that there are no ethical values one should abide by.<sup>13</sup> This misunderstanding of emptiness denigrates the significance of the doctrine. To those who make such a mistake, Nagarjuna writes: "You understand neither the object of emptiness, nor emptiness itself, nor the meaning of emptiness".<sup>14</sup> It was such a misunderstanding that led some Western thinkers like Schopenhauer and Nietzsche to equate emptiness with nihilism and erroneously characterise Buddhism as an inherently pessimistic religion.<sup>15</sup> Likewise, it should be made clear the emptiness

is not a *thing* either, especially not something to be grasped as a refuge from human suffering. From this point of view, it is also an error to equate emptiness with common notions of Divinity.<sup>16</sup> Emptiness is not a Creator in the conventional sense, nor is it an inherently existing substratum underlying phenomena. It is instead the complete absence of inherent existence. It was for this reason that Nagarjuna opposed all attempts to hypostasize or reify emptiness. The impossibility of reifying emptiness lies, for Nagarjuna, in the very emptiness of emptiness (*sunyata*).<sup>17</sup>

“Buddhists have been wary of a practice which led to a final attachment to emptiness,” writes Cook, “and it has been said that such an attachment is so destructive that it is better for a person to be attached to the concept of *atman* [self] than to that of emptiness”.<sup>18</sup> Rather than transforming it into an object of worship, Mahayana Buddhists have sought to use *sunyata* as an iconoclastic hammer to destroy all false views. For this reason, Nagarjuna considers emptiness an antidote for the sickness of misguided beliefs (*dristis*).<sup>19</sup> But antidotes must to be properly taken. Medicine, when improperly or carelessly consumed, can exacerbate a sickness rather than cure it. Nagarjuna goes so far as to say that the dangers inherent in misapprehending emptiness are so severe that it is like carelessly grasping a venomous snake.<sup>20</sup> Only those who correctly understand emptiness can ever hope to attain enlightenment.

Now it might be asked here, cannot that the claim, “everything is empty”, apply to Nagarjuna’s argument as well? Or as Arindam Chakrabarti cleverly asks, “Isn’t the Voidist yelling ‘Don’t yell?’”<sup>21</sup> To this criticism Nagarjuna does furnish a response: he simply replies that even though his own thesis is empty, it does not lack refutative force. This is why he can claim not to have a thesis and yet still be critical of all them.<sup>22</sup> From this point of view, we might conceive of emptiness as an intellectually sophisticated bomb, one which destroys everything including itself to allow for the emergence of a correct understanding which is in fact aconceptual, unattached to any particular *dristi* or false view. Nagarjuna writes, “If I had a view I could have a flaw, but, emptied of all views, I am flawless”.<sup>23</sup>

On account of the all-pervasiveness of emptiness, Mahayana contends that the Buddha’s four noble truths, ignorance, the elimination

of ignorance, and *nirvana* are all equally empty. The truly enlightened person is she who, fully comprehending emptiness, attains this “nothing-to-be-obtained”, which is *nirvana*.<sup>24</sup> Despite the apparently self-contradictory nature of this doctrine, it must be kept in mind that only when the tendency to grasp – materially, emotionally, conceptually – is *completely* cut off does one attain *nirvana*. Enlightenment is simply the existential realisation that there is nothing to be attained and no one to attain it.

Before closing our brief overview of emptiness, a few words should be said about another Indian concept closely tied in to emptiness, and which, along with it, serves as a conceptual cornerstone for Hua-yen thought.<sup>25</sup> Here I am referring specifically to the idea of the *tathagatagarbha*, the “womb of the Buddhahood”. Early Mahayana espoused a doctrine according to which there is an element within all beings that will insure their final liberation. The doctrine of *tathagatagarbha* allows one to recognise that the ultimate goal of the religious path should not be sought externally. As the Scripture states:

all beings are the wombs of the Buddhahood.<sup>26</sup>

Since moral and intellectual faults prevent one from realising enlightenment, the doctrine is also an exhortation towards self-purification. It is an *upaya*, a skilful means to guide humans towards final liberation. The relation between *tathagatagarbha* and emptiness lies in the fact that the latter expresses more an ontological view of reality, whereas the former, at least in Indian thought, expresses a soteriological doctrine pertaining to the end-goal of enlightenment. But this enlightenment is nothing but the experience of reality in its emptiness mode. Consequently, *tathagatagarbha* is partially addressed to unenlightened beings pursuing enlightenment.

Hua-yen, as we shall see in greater detail, holds to a slightly modified version of the Indian doctrine of *tathagatagarbha*. According to the Chinese thinkers, all beings, rather than possessing a seed-potential of the Buddhahood, already possess a fully sprouted Buddha-nature.<sup>27</sup> Such a subtle modification aligns Hua-yen thought, from its own point of view, more consistently with the notion outlined earlier that nothing is to be attained. The particular Hua-yen approach to



*tathagatagarbha* lifts it from a soteriological doctrine to a cosmological and ontological one; it implies that the womb of the Buddhahood and Buddhahood are, through interpenetration, one and the same.

***1b: Hua-yen Developments of the Indian Understanding of Sunyata***

Having examined the nature of emptiness, we are now in a better position to understand the Hua-yen conception of the universe, which, as Cook contends, “is an elaborate reworking of the Indian concept of emptiness.”<sup>28</sup>

For the remainder of this article we shall explore the particular manner in which the Chinese Hua-yen thinkers ingeniously re-envisioned and further built upon prior Indian Mahayana notions of *sunyata*.

It was noted earlier that emptiness is not nihilism, annihilationism, or the view that nothing exists, and that, on the contrary, it signifies that what does exist, exists as merely an appearance without self-existence. This apparent existence arises from the inter-causal relationality of phenomena. And so Nagarjuna writes:

It is interdependent origination that we call emptiness.<sup>29</sup>

We shall begin to see, through the course of some illustrations, the importance that an awareness of the identity of emptiness and interdependent origination plays in fully comprehending the Hua-yen worldview.

By the time of Chih-yen (d.668) and Fa-tsang (d.712),<sup>30</sup> the second and third patriarchs of Hua-yen, the Chinese Buddhists had an accurate understanding of emptiness, and creatively reworked the doctrine to make it accord with the more positive Chinese way of looking at things. The notion of emptiness in Indian Buddhism tended to present existence negatively, and this often led to an assessment of the natural world as loathsome or undesirable. This was expected, to a certain extent, since enlightenment entailed liberation from attachments to the natural, everyday world. However, the idea of interdependent origination, which, although it signified the same reality as emptiness, had a more positive ring to it. Chinese Buddhists were able to capitalise on this fact and thereby integrate Indian Mahayana Buddhism into the

Chinese intellectual landscape more easily. Cook observes this when he writes the following:

The Chinese chose to emphasise the point that *emptiness is interdependence*. But interdependence is also emptiness, and even for the Chinese the fact of emptiness functioned as a way of criticising the common mode of experience, thus devaluing it, so that this aspect was not ignored. But what is evident in the Hua-yen texts is that simultaneously as the empty mode of perception abolished clinging to the concept of substances of selves, there emerged from the new mode of experience a very positive appreciation for the way in which things related to each other in identity and interdependence. This is what seems to be lacking in the Indian literature. The genius of the Chinese lay in their ability to interpret emptiness in a positive manner without hypostasizing emptiness, without falling into the error of even greater attachment to the world.<sup>31</sup>

A similar sentiment regarding the more positive view of emptiness by the Chinese Buddhists is echoed by Robert Gimello:

Whereas it is more typical of earlier Buddhism to employ negative, ‘neither/nor’ phrasing to express this teaching [of emptiness and dependent origination] and its corollaries, Hua-yen favoured more affirmative locutions, even if they required figurative rather than literal language.<sup>32</sup>

The shift from a negative to a more positive view of emptiness – the result of a synthesis of Chinese and Indian thought – raised, what some might consider, Chinese Buddhist thought to a higher level of sophistication than its Indian counterpart.<sup>33</sup> This was at least the view of Hua-yen, which saw itself as the culmination of the Buddhist intellectual tradition, embodying the deepest and most profound teachings the Buddha, teachings which the other Indian schools had not fully grasped.<sup>34</sup> For this reason, Hua-yen thinkers referred to its own foundational collection of texts, from which it derived its worldview, the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, (lit., the “Flower Ornament” sutra, translated into Chinese as “Hua-yen”),<sup>35</sup> as the “king of sutras”.<sup>36</sup>

## 2: Identity and Interpenetration in Hua-yen

We have seen that existence refers to the fact that entities exist as a result of causal conditions, and that emptiness, on the other hand, refers the fact that what exists remains dependent on causal conditions that lack self-existence. This particular bifurcation of reality into two realms, existence and emptiness, was respectively designated by Hua-yen thinkers as *shih* and *li*. Both of these were standard philosophical terms in Chinese philosophy.<sup>37</sup> Along with these two dimensions of reality, Hua-yen also emphasised another two: (a) the non-interference of *li* and *shih*, and (b) the non-interference of entities within the realm of *shih*. On account of this four-fold stratification, the “dialectic of Hua-yen philosophy,” Thomas Cleary poignantly observes, “is consummated in the doctrine of the four realms of reality”.<sup>38</sup> According to this four-fold classification, existence and emptiness are one, and all phenomenal entities are also one. However, this oneness or unity is only truly apprehended by an enlightened mind. Hua-yen philosophy attempts to explicate the dialectical relationship between these four reality-realms to aid those who do not already see this unity themselves.

### 2a: Identity and Interpenetration of Emptiness and Phenomena

The doctrine of the identity of *li* and *shih* is essentially the same as the notion brought up in the *Perfection of Wisdom*, that “emptiness is form” (*rupam sunyata*) and “form is emptiness” (*sunyataiva rupam*).<sup>39</sup> So integral is the relationship between these two aspects of reality – *li* and *shih* – to Hua-yen philosophy, that one might accurately describe the entire corpus of Hua-yen writings as essentially a discussion of these two realms and their non-dual relationship.<sup>40</sup>

We have seen that the relational mode between entities is itself emptiness. This refers to the fact that form is emptiness. We have also seen that emptiness expresses itself in the phenomenal mode of beings through interdependent origination. This refers to the fact that form is emptiness. When it is said that emptiness is form, we might say that we are stressing the disclosure of emptiness through the arising of phenomena. When it is said that form is emptiness, we are tracing phenomena back to their real nature, which is emptiness.

Although the idea of the interpenetration of *li* and *shih*, as an abstract concept, may appear difficult to grasp, we can understand this complex relationship between phenomenal forms and the absolute (*sunyata*) through the analogy of the statue of a golden lion. This is the example Fa-tsang used to help Empress Wu understand the interrelationship between *li* and *shih*, puzzled, as she was, by their non-duality. In this metaphor, Fa-tsang says that the gold of the lion represents *li*, while the shape of the lion represents *shih*. He writes:

*Clarifying the fact that things arise through causation:* It means that gold has no nature of its own. As a result of the conditioning of the skilful craftsman, the character of the lion consequently arises. This arising is purely due to causes. Therefore it called arising through causation.<sup>41</sup>

From this passage it can be gathered that emptiness (the gold of the lion) is disclosed through the interdependent origination of phenomena (the character of the lion). Emptiness has no nature of its own (natureless gold) because emptiness itself is empty, (since gold in itself has no shape). The shape of the lion represents the entirety of interdependent origination, which is the whole. The interdependent causes that generate phenomena are the “skilful craftsman”. Fa-tsang continues:

If we look at the lion (as lion), there is only the lion and no gold. This means that the lion is manifest while the gold is hidden. If we look at the gold, there is only the gold and no lion. This means that the gold is manifest while the lion is hidden.<sup>42</sup>

From this we gather that, from one point of view, there are only phenomena (when we look at the lion qua lion) and no emptiness. This view sees phenomena as true and emptiness and false. From another point of view, phenomena are unreal, (since there is no lion at all, only gold). This perspective emphasizes the truth of emptiness and the falsity of phenomena. When, however, we combine both of the perspectives, *li* and *shih* overlap, and true and false come together. “If we look at them both,” writes Fa-tsang,

then both are manifest and both hidden. Being hidden, they are secret, and being manifest, they are evident”.<sup>43</sup> The reason that the lion and the gold may be either hidden or manifest is because “neither has self-nature.”<sup>44</sup>

So emptiness can be hidden while phenomena are revealed, and phenomena can be hidden while emptiness is revealed. This interchangeability is possible because both *li* and *shih* are without self-nature. Emptiness is empty, form is empty, and form is emptiness.

However, even though the gold and its shape are intrinsically unified they are amenable to conceptual separation. In the example of the golden lion, the unenlightened individual's encounter with the phenomenal world is comparable to one who sees the statue and only notices the lion-shape. This is because he does not see the underlying emptiness of forms. Thus, "the lion is spoken of in order to show the meaning of ignorance". The gold, on the other hand, "is spoken of in order to make sufficiently clear the true nature," which is emptiness.<sup>45</sup> Since, however, gold is inseparable from the shape it takes, it is clear that enlightenment does not entail an encounter with reified gold, but rather, an awareness of the integral unity of emptiness and phenomena. This is why the metaphor of the golden lion successfully demonstrates the integral unity of *sunyata* and phenomena.

The unity of *li* and *shih* as illustrated in Fa-tsang's example of the golden lion is more abstractly expressed by Tu-shun, in a passage from his *Cessation and Contemplation in the Five Teachings of the Hua-yen*:

Non-duality means that conditionally originated things seem to exist but are empty [read: form is emptiness]. This emptiness is not vacuity but turns out to be existence [read: emptiness is form]. Existence and emptiness are non-dual; they are completely merged in one place. Here the two views (of existence and non-existence) disappear, and emptiness and existence have no interference (since both are one). Why? Because reality and falsehood reflect each other and completely contain and penetrate each other. What does this mean? Emptiness is emptiness which does not interfere with existence; it is empty yet always existent. Existence is existence which does no interfere with emptiness; it exists yet is always empty. Therefore emptiness is not existent – it is apart from hypostasized existence; emptiness is not empty – it is apart from nihilistic emptiness. Since emptiness and existence merge into one, with no duality, emptiness and existence do not interfere with each

other; since they can take away each other's appearance, both are apart from either extreme.<sup>46</sup>

Like so many Mahayana thinkers, Tu-shun stresses that even though phenomena are empty, reality is not nihilistic, and that, moreover, even though phenomenal forms are, through interdependent origination, real, this reality does not imply eternalism, the opposite of nihilism. The actual truth of things lies between the two extremes of nihilism and eternalism. One must see that the gold and the lion are not separate.

### ***2b: Identity and Interpenetration of Phenomena***

Having illustrated the interpenetration of *li* and *shih*, we shall now explore the fourth reality-realm: the non-interference of phenomena with phenomena. This refers to the fact that each entity causes and contains each and every other entity, as well as the totality of those entities put together. That is to say, any entity causes and contains both every individual part of reality and the whole of reality. The doctrine implies that not only can one find the entire desert contained in a grain of sand, but that any one grain can be seen as the cause for the existence of reality in its entirety, which, in Hua-yen, is infinite in expanse.<sup>47</sup> This particular aspect of Hua-yen, on the surface, seems to directly contradict what seems obvious to most of us, namely, that phenomenal entities are separate and discrete objects that cannot possibly interpenetrate or contain each other, or that they cannot be the causes of phenomena they clearly have no relation to. But it should be recalled that what we consider to be obvious is really nothing more than a common sense, conventional understanding of the way things are, and Hua-yen attempts to unravel our conventional understanding of things to expose their real natures.

We shall now examine phenomenal interpenetration on the basis of primarily three analogies brought up in Hua-yen literature: (i) Cheng-kuan's (d.830) use of Tu-shun's (d.640) example of the ten mirrors, (ii) Chih-yen's (d.668) example of number, and (iii) Fa-tsang's (d.712) example of a rafter and a building. Although the full details of each analogy will be not probed, the purpose of employing these three different metaphors is to present the idea of phenomenal

interpenetration and intercausality from different angles. This is because no one analogy fully captures the idea of the identity and interpenetration of phenomena.

**(i) Cheng-kuan's Example of the Ten Mirrors**

In the *Mirror of Mysteries*, Cheng-kuan (d.839) writes:

If we use the example of the ten mirrors (arrayed in a circle or sphere so that all face all the others) as a simile [for phenomenal interpenetration], one mirror is the one, nine mirrors are the many [...] one mirror includes in it reflections of nine mirrors, meaning that one mirror is that which includes and nine mirrors are that which is included – yet because the nine mirrors also are that which includes (because they contain the reflection of the one mirror), the aforementioned one mirror which includes also enters the nine mirrors, so one mirror enters the nine mirrors.<sup>48</sup>

One mirror's reflection of the nine mirrors illustrates the idea that one entity contains all other entities. Conversely, the reflection of the one mirror in the nine mirrors illustrates the idea that all entities likewise contain the one entity. Thus the metaphor of the mirrors accurately conveys the principle of all-in-one (nine mirrors in the single mirror) and one-in-all (the single mirror in the nine mirrors). The mirror analogy also shows us the principle of one-in-one (any one mirror contains any other mirror), and all-in-all (every mirror contains every other mirror).

The mirror analogy also illustrates the infinite interpenetration of the one and the all. This is so because each mirror reflects not only every other mirror, but also what every other mirror itself reflects. Anyone who has stood in the middle of two mirrors will understand what is being referred to here, namely, the infinite reflections that appear in mirrors facing each other. As Fa-tsang says,

Among the phenomenal characteristics [...] each one again contains the others, includes the others – each contains infinitely multiplied and remultiplied delineations of objects.<sup>49</sup>

One of the shortcomings, however, of the mirror-analogy, and any spatially based analogy for that matter, is that it does not capture the reality of temporal interpenetration. This refers to the fact that each

moment contains every other moment. This is important to note because time is also a part of the phenomenal expression of *sunyata*, and is not above cosmic interpenetration. “An atom,” writes Fa-tsang,

contains the ten directions with no abrogation of great and small; an instant contains the nine time frames, with extension and brevity being simultaneous.<sup>50</sup>

The nine time frames are (1-3) the past, present, and future of the present, (4-6) the past, present, and future of the past, and (7-9) the past, present, and future of the future. All moments fluidly interpenetrate since time, like all spatial entities, is empty. Temporal interpenetration does not dissolve the distinct identities of all the time frames, since

it is like the five fingers making a fist yet not losing fingerhood.<sup>51</sup>

## (ii) Chih-yen’s Example of Number

Another shortcoming of the mirror analogy is that it does not effectively convey the idea of the identity and causal interpenetration of *different* entities, since all the mirrors are the same. To grasp this idea we must turn to the metaphor of number, which Chih-yen brings up in the *Ten Mysteries Gates*. Quoting scripture, he writes:

In the book on Bodhisattvas gathering like clouds in the assembly in the Suyama heaven, it says, ‘it is like the principle of counting ten, adding ones up to infinity – all are the original number’.<sup>52</sup>

This means that each and every number – despite its obvious difference from every other number – is made up of the same counter, which is one. This aspect manifests the principle of one-in-all. By the same token, because all the numbers are brought into being through one, one causally contains them all. This aspect manifests the principle of all-in-one.

Since all numbers are inherently empty, they arise through mutually causal relations with each other. Two-ness comes into being from its relation to oneness, which is its cause. Without one, there can be no two or ten. Two and ten are therefore without self-existence since they depend on one to be two and ten. At the same time, one and ten



also come into being through two, since oneness and ten-ness are generated through relations with two-ness. From this point of view, two causes one and ten, and one and ten are empty in themselves. In actual fact, since one, two and ten are brought into being through mutual relationships with each other, all are causes for each other, and contain each other. Therefore all numbers serve as causes for all other numbers, and causally contain all other numbers. Without any one number, the entire numerical system falls apart,<sup>53</sup> and all numbers lose their identities.

Question: How is it that if only one is not established, ten is also not established?

Answer: It is like this: if pillars are not a house, then there is no house: if there is a house, there are pillars – so because the pillars are identical to the house, when there is a house, there are pillars. Because one is ten and ten is one, the establishment of one implies the establishment of ten.<sup>54</sup>

The analogy of the pillars and the house reveals the integral, unified vision of Hua-yen. Without pillars (one) there is no house (ten) and without the house there are no pillars; the pillars are the house and the house is the pillars. Without pillars, the house falls apart; without one, ten dissipates.

We can extend this analogy in a way Chih-yen does not, but to which he would probably have no objection, and equate the pillars with all the numbers, and the house with the numerical system. If we suppose that the house is structured so that the house and the pillars are equally dependent on each other, by removing one pillar, the entire house and all the pillars fall. That is to say, if one number is removed, the entire numerical system collapses, and all the numbers lose their particular quantitative identities.

Chih-yen concedes that this seemingly illogical conception of number is

not the same as the common sense conceptions.<sup>55</sup>

He therefore emphasises the distinction between conventional and ultimate truth to clarify that Hua-yen is well aware of the difficulties

involved in conceptually grasping the notion of interdependent origination.

### (iii) The Metaphor of the Rafter and the Building

Another example employed in Hua-yen literature to illustrate the identity of the part and the whole, and the capacity of the part to generate the whole, lies in Fa-tsang's example of the rafter and the building.

*Question:* what is the universal? *Answer:* it is the building. *Question:* that is nothing but the various conditions, such as the rafter; what is the building itself? *Answer:* the rafter is the building. Why? Because the rafter by itself totally makes the building. If you get rid of the rafter, the building is not formed. When there is a rafter, there is a building.<sup>56</sup>

Although it is difficult to understand how the rafter can, on its own, produce the building, we must recall that emptiness implies interdependent origination. Without one part, the whole cannot be itself. If the rafter is removed, the building is not that particular building anymore. It therefore requires the rafter for it to be the specific building it is. As we saw in the previous analogy of number, the entire numerical system collapses once any number is removed. The case is no different with the rafter and the building. Furthermore, in so far as the rafter functions as the sole causative power behind the construction of the building, it contains the building, and so *is* the building. The rafter can be seen as the sole cause of the building because it integrates the various conditions of the building, such as the nails, planks, and tiles, into itself. The rafter is able to do this because it, the building, and the various entities it integrates are all empty. If the rafter had a fixed nature of "rafterness," it would be unable integrate all of the involved entities, since it would, by its own nature, be nothing but a rafter. That is to say, if it had a fixed nature it could not be a cause for the entire building. This point is expressed by Williams in reference to an argument made by the Madhyamaka thinker, Buddhapalita:

If *x* produced *y*, and they are *inherently* distinct entities, then we have no actual explanation of causation, since *x* is equally inherently distinct from *z*.<sup>57</sup>

Cook provides a useful example to illustrate the phenomenon of an entity's integration of various conditions. He says that, from one perspective, one can argue that a seed contains a tree, because a tree comes into being out of it. Without the seed there could be no tree. However, the seed by itself does not cause the tree to emerge, since it needs to integrate both the nourishing capacity of the soil and the water along with the heat of the sun in order to produce a plant, which then grows into a tree. Without any of these supporting conditions the seed would simply remain a seed.<sup>58</sup> We can use this same kind of logic to understand the integration of the various conditions by the rafter in its causation of the building, in that without the supporting conditions it would only remain a rafter.

The problem with the analogy of the seed and tree, however, is that causation is not unidirectional. In the case of the rafter and the building, it is not simply the building that is caused by the rafter, but the rafter is also caused by the building. Without the building there is no rafter because "rafterness" is a condition brought about by the relation of a long, rectangular piece of wood to a building. Both the building and the rafter must causally create each other in order for them to acquire their respective identities. If the rafter does not cause the building there is no rafter, and if the building does not cause the rafter there is no building. Both therefore stand in mutual need of each other to acquire their respective existences. Thus causality is multidirectional. Like Chih-Yen in his analogy of number, Fa-tsang also concedes that these concepts are ultimately

difficult to conceive, and surpass common sense notions.<sup>59</sup>

#### **(iv) The Cosmic Permeation of Buddhahood.**

The underlying reason that different entities can be the same through conditioning lies in their fundamental emptiness. That is to say, because of emptiness, phenomena are different through conditional emergence, yet fundamentally the same in nature, which is a "non-nature". Put another way, the identity of phenomena lies in their differences because the differences are without self-nature. But through the all-pervasive absence of this self-nature, differences are dissolved at

the groundless level of emptiness. This level is “groundless” because emptiness is not an ontological foundation upon which existence rests.

In so far as emptiness reflects the way things truly are, it is *tathata* or suchness. The Hua-yen Buddhists anthropomorphized it in the figure of Vairocana, the cosmic Buddha. Because emptiness is inseparable from its phenomenal mode of expression through interdependent origination, the cosmic Buddha is also the totality of phenomena and therefore the body of the universe. The cosmic Buddha is transcendent through its absoluteness, (emptiness in itself), and immanent through phenomenal interconditionality, (the disclosure of emptiness). On account of the interpenetration of *li* and *shih*, the Buddha is simultaneously transcendent and immanent.

This doctrine of the true nature of things as Buddhahood is tied to another doctrine mentioned earlier, that of the “the womb of Buddhahood.” It was pointed out that one of the modifications of this Indian doctrine in the hand of Hua-yen thinkers lay in the transformation of all entities from simply possessing a potential Buddhahood, to being fully realised Buddhas. What this means in the context of our discussion is that since every entity is the Buddha, every entity is the same as every other entity, since they are all Buddhas. Furthermore, each entity, which is a Buddha, is the same as the whole, which is the cosmic Buddha, and the whole cosmic Buddha is the same as each individual Buddha. On account of this infinite cosmic permeation of Buddhahood, there is nothing in existence but the Buddha.

Referring to the interpenetration and cosmic permeation of Buddhahood, Cheng-kuan, commenting on Tu-shun’s four propositions – (i) one-in-one, (ii) all-in-one, (iii) one-in-all, (iv) all-in-all – writes:

Now speaking in terms of the Buddha vis-à-vis sentient beings, taking the Buddhas as the all, that which includes and contains, sentient beings would be that which is contained or included and that which is entered. The first proposition would be the Buddhas contain one sentient beings and enter into all sentient beings; in the second, the Buddhas containing all sentient beings, enter into one sentient being; in the third, the bodies of the Buddhas containing one sentient being, enter into the hairs on the bodies of all sentient beings; in the fourth, the Buddhas, each containing all sentient

beings, enter into all sentient beings. The relativity of other things, one and many, are also like this.<sup>60</sup>

### 3: Enlightenment & the Role of the Bodhisattva

#### *3a: Realising the Buddha's Direct Awareness of the Nature of Things*

The significance of speaking of universal interpenetration as the infinite permeation of Buddhahood lies in the Hua-yen understanding of the relationship between philosophy and meditative realisation. It is not in vain that Hua-yen equates *tathata* with Buddhahood, since to fully realise *tathata* once must be a Buddha. To see the infinite permeation and interpenetration of Buddhahood, and to be the Buddha, are one and the same. The reason for this is because there is no difference between knowing and being. Hua-yen's non-dual ontology affects its understanding of knowledge in that it does not recognise a distinction between what one knows and who one is. This implies that only those who witness reality through the eyes of *prajna* insight are capable of fully appreciating the Hua-yen universe. This helps us better understand why some concepts of Hua-yen appear so far-fetched. But Hua-yen is acutely aware of this natural human propensity towards incomprehension. This is why many of the school's thinkers, as we saw, after explaining a mind-boggling point of doctrine, concede that this is not the common sense view, but the ultimate truth of things.

It is important to bear in mind that Hua-yen thinkers did not expound the doctrines of the school simply for the purpose of engaging in complicated mental games. Their intention in doing so was in the hope that such teachings might encourage others to directly realise, for themselves, the nature of things. The primal importance that Hua-yen lays on direct vision lies in the fact that Hua-yen considers its philosophical worldview that of the Buddha himself, which he taught while in a state of *samadhi* or non-dual enlightenment.<sup>61</sup> One cannot fully claim to understand Hua-yen without realising what Fa-tsang calls "oceanic reflection", which is the realisation of *tathata*. Oceanic reflection is the state of a still mind freed from the waves of ignorance which are created and sustained by our unceasing attempts to grasp phenomena. But this freedom from the waves of ignorance does not mean that forms entirely disappear, and that one stares into a blank void,

as some neo-Buddhists have claimed to have accomplished.<sup>62</sup> Rather, the true nature of the forms, which is emptiness, is made clear in the still and peaceful water of the ocean. Thus Fa-tsang writes:

When delusion ends, the mind is clear and myriad forms equally appear; it is like the ocean, where waves are created by the wind – when the wind stops, the water of the ocean grows clear, reflecting all images. The ‘Treatise on the Awakening of Faith’ calls it ‘the repository of infinite qualities – the ocean of true thusness of the nature of things.’ That is why it is called the oceanic reflection meditation.<sup>63</sup>

Through attaining such a level of enlightenment, one witnesses directly what is theoretically expounded in Hua-yen doctrine, namely, the deepest wisdom taught by the Buddha. And so Fa-tsang writes, on the realisation of this quintessential knowledge through observing but a single object:

The scripture says, ‘The inexhaustible ocean of all teachings is converged on the enlightenment site of a single thing. The nature of things as such is explained by the Buddha’ [...] Great knowledge, round and clear, looks at a fine hair and comprehends the ocean of nature, the source of reality is clearly manifest in one atom, yet illuminates the whole of being.<sup>64</sup>

How exactly is such enlightenment attained? Although it is not the purpose of this article to probe into the kind of spiritual and religious life demanded by Hua-yen, it is important to at least note that one must cultivate meditation, since enlightenment is the fruit of meditative success. Meditative success, in turn, depends on appropriate ethical conduct. As Fa-tsang says, quoting Hua-yen scripture,

Morality is the basis of unexcelled enlightenment – you should fully uphold pure morality

and elsewhere he writes,

If conduct is not pure, concentration does not develop.<sup>65</sup>

At the same token, while proper conduct aids in meditation, meditation also aids proper conduct, because, as Cook observes, “the ethical life is the outflow of this meditation.”<sup>66</sup>

Fruitful meditation and appropriate ethical activity are, in the eyes of Hua-yen, mutually dependent.

Now one might at this point interject and ask: if all beings are already the Buddha, as the Hua-yen doctrine of the “womb of the Buddhahood” clearly states, why the need to seek enlightenment, the state of the Buddha, through meditation and proper conduct? Hua-yen does, it is true, concede that all beings are already enlightened. Fa-tsang asserts this very point when he writes,

if you comprehend the inherent emptiness of sentient beings, there is really no one to liberate or be liberated.<sup>67</sup>

But the truth is that enlightenment, while omnipresent, has not been realised by the vast majority of human beings. The proof of this widespread ignorance is very easy to locate: it lies in the prevalence of human suffering. This is why, from the perspective of conventional truth, one must seek enlightenment.<sup>68</sup> Fa-tsang equates the enlightened Buddha within to a great jewel:

its essential nature is bright and clear, but having been covered by layers of dust, it has the stain of defilement.

By the clarity of its essential nature, he means its emptiness, and by the stain of defilement, he means the ignorance which clouds one’s direct perception of the transparency of the self and the world at large.

If people only think only of the nature of the jewel,

he continues,

and do not polish its various facets, they will never get it clean.

That is to say, if they only philosophise about it, they will never directly see it, i.e. attain enlightenment. What is the polish that will

wipe away the stain of ignorance and false attachments? According to Fa-tsang it is the "various practices of morality, meditation, and knowledge".<sup>69</sup>

What this means is that while all beings are already enlightened Buddhas, their ignorance prevents them from existentially apprehending this truth. This ignorance is the jewel's defilement, which, in actual fact, is an illusory defilement, a false mental projection. Thus the defilement, because it is non-existent, is clear, like the jewel itself, since both ignorance and enlightenment are empty. But because the unenlightened take the defilement to be real, distinct from the clarity of the jewel, they presume their ignorance to be actual, so they are ignorant of the true nature of their ignorance. If they were fully aware of the essence of their ignorance, which is empty, they would be enlightened. But if they were enlightened, they would not seek an escape from their supposed ignorance.

### ***3b: The Role of the Bodhisattva***

The purpose of the Bodhisattvas is to guide the ignorant out of their supposed ignorance<sup>70</sup> through teaching them about the true nature of their ignorance, its causes, and the means to eliminate it. The Bodhisattvas do this out of the great compassion that arises in them from witnessing the cycle of suffering that ignorant sentient beings are trapped in. The Bodhisattvas see that these ignorant folk are like children who are frightened by holograms of demons, so they act like adults who come and run their hands through the holograms, and point to the projector from which the images of the demons are formed. The fear of the children, like the suffering of the ignorant, comes from their misunderstanding of the nature of what they take to be real. The Bodhisattvas explain to the ignorant that the demons arise from the projector of their mind, and that the holograms

are empty and quiescent, of their own nature fundamentally nonexistent.<sup>71</sup>

They teach the ignorant how to turn off the projector of the mind through right conduct and meditation, for once the



mind is not aroused, the environment is fundamentally empty.<sup>72</sup>

Once the ignorant fully realise the emptiness of things, their suffering, like the fear of the children, abates.

Guiding the ignorant out of their net of delusions is not an easy task. Even though many might theoretically acknowledge the emptiness of phenomena, they will continue to suffer as long as they do not existentially realise for themselves the suchness of things. Their existential ignorance is like that of a person who gets frightened by a horror movie, knowing, all the while, that it is fiction. The enlightened person, however, is like the one who goes onto the set of the film, meets the actors, and observes the various tricks used to make the film appear real. Such a one, when he eventually watches the final production, will see something entirely different from the first person who had no such exposure to the making of the film. The role of the Bodhisattva is like that of the free tour guide, who, having special access to the film-site, takes all those who are interested so they can see first-hand, by themselves, how such films are made. Without the Bodhisattva, it is almost impossible to enter the film-site. This is why their role in guiding humans to liberation from ignorance and suffering is indispensable. Hence Fa-tsang says:

For ordinary people and beginning students false and true are not yet distinguished; the net of delusion enters the mind and fools the practitioner. Without an adept teacher to ask, they have nothing to rely on [...] as days and months pass, over a long period of time, false views become so ingrained that even meeting with good conditions they become difficult to change.<sup>73</sup>

Who exactly are the Bodhisattvas? In Hua-yen, and by extension, all of Mahayana, they are those beings who aspire towards the realisation of Buddhahood, but renounce entry into final *nirvana* and escape from the world of birth-and-death until all beings are saved. This means that even if they are on the verge of achieving final *nirvana*, they will retain certain intellectual and moral faults (*klesas*) so as to ensure their rebirth into the world in order to help others.<sup>74</sup> One becomes a Bodhisattva by making a genuine vow to postpone one's own *nirvana* until all reach *nirvana*. From the standpoint of Hua-yen, such a vow reflects a truly profound understanding of the Buddha's teachings. One of the reasons

for this is because the Bodhisattva, aware of the inter-dependence of all things, realises that everyone else's suffering is his own. When a fly gets caught in a spider's web, its frantic movements send vibrations across the entire web. The suffering of the ignorant is no different: it affects the totality of existence.

This picture gets more complicated when we realise that there will always be those in need of help. As Fa-tsang points out, Bodhisattvas forgo their own *nirvana* to

ransom all suffering beings from states of misery in order to cause them to attain happiness. *This they will do for ever and ever, with flagging* [emphasis mine].<sup>75</sup>

From this one might gather that the Bodhisattvas will never reach the final goal. But this is not completely true either. Recall that the doctrine of emptiness implies that all beings are ontologically without self. Buddhists advocate detachment because there is no one to attach, and nothing to be attached to. Covetously seeking *nirvana* betrays a genuine understanding of the nature of things because one is attempting to attain or realise one's own individual perfection. By foregoing *nirvana* and escape from *samsara*, the Bodhisattva in effect embodies the highest level of detachment possible, since he selflessly forgoes his own final and personal goal to help liberate others from ignorance and suffering.<sup>76</sup> But strangely, by this final sacrificial act, the Bodhisattva realises the only true enlightenment there is. By this grand feat of personal renunciation, he experientially attains the true meaning of selflessness, which is the goal of the Buddhist life. It was earlier pointed out that *nirvana* entails reaching the state where there is "nothing to be attained". The Bodhisattva attains final liberation from the yoke of self-centred clinging in the world by breaking all attachments, so that, indeed, for him, "there is nothing to be attained". This, in turn, enables him to attain *nirvana* in *samsara*. The idea is not so far-fetched once we recall the doctrine of interpenetration. As Nagarjuna says,

There is nothing whatsoever differentiating *samsara* from *nirvana*. There is nothing whatsoever differentiating *nirvana* from *samsara*.<sup>77</sup>

That is to say, since *li* and *shih*, the absolute and phenomena, interpenetrate, the Bodhisattva actually realises Buddhahood through the life of the Bodhisattva, which is a selfless life devoted to the liberation of all beings. He thus attains *nirvana* by renouncing *nirvana*. Or to put it another way, he attains *nirvana* in *samsara* by renouncing *nirvana* in *nirvana*, and so comes to embody, in the fullest sense, the reality of identity and interpenetration.

By engaging in the work of selflessly guiding others, the Bodhisattva realises the true nature of Buddhahood. That is to say, he embodies the egoless universal compassion which the Buddha himself embodied, and which led him to seek the liberation of others. In fact, according to the *Saddharmapundarika Sutra*, the Buddha himself has not completed the work of the Bodhisattva.<sup>78</sup> According to this text, the Buddha himself is a Bodhisattva, and the Bodhisattvas are likewise Buddhas.

We can conclude by noting that in the coming together of the Buddha and the Bodhisattva, one witnesses the union of wisdom and compassion. This union signifies the merging of the knowledge that ensues from enlightenment (wisdom) and the work that enlightenment entails (centred on compassion). Wisdom is the fruit of tracing phenomena to emptiness, while compassion is the fruit of realising that emptiness reveals itself through interdependent origination. Thus wisdom and compassion, Buddhahood and Bodhisattvahood, *nirvana* and *samsara*, emptiness and phenomena, all interpenetrate. Fa-tsang writes,

Seeing that form is empty produces great wisdom and not dwelling in birth-and-death; seeing that emptiness is form produces great compassion and not dwelling in *nirvana*. When form and emptiness are non-dual, compassion and wisdom are not different; only this is true seeing.<sup>79</sup>

And true seeing, it might be said, is the axis around which Hua-yen revolves. Only through such a mode of seeing does one fully grasp, both conceptually and existentially, the reality of emptiness, identity and interpenetration.<sup>80</sup>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The Chinese term “Hua-yen” literally means “flower decoration,” “ornament” or “garland.” The name is derived from the title of a Mahayana text, *The Garland Sutra*, (*Avatamsaka Sutra*), which is the school’s main source of doctrine. According to tradition, the Buddha delivered this *Sutra* immediately following his enlightenment under the Bo tree. See Garma Chang, *The Buddhist Teaching of Totality: The Philosophy of Hwa Yen Buddhism* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971), ix, 251. See also note 35 below.

<sup>2</sup> *Sunyata* (Chinese: *k’ung hsin*) can also be translated as “voidness,” or the “void” (Chang, 61, 254); “openness,” (Nancy McCagney, *Nagarjuna and the Philosophy of Openness*, New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997. xix-xx); and “transparency” (Roger Corless, *The Vision of Buddhism*, New York: Paragon Books, 1989. 20-21).

<sup>3</sup> Francis Cook, *Hua-yen Buddhism: The Jewel Net of Indra* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University, 1977), 37.

<sup>4</sup> For a good overview of what Western scholarship has been able to determine so far about the historical Nagarjuna, see “Locating Nagarjuna,” the second chapter of Joseph Walser’s recent study, *Nagarjuna in Context: Mahayana Buddhism in Early Indian Culture* (New York: Columbia, 2005).

<sup>5</sup> Paul Williams, *Mahayana Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations* (London: Routledge, 1999), 60-61.

<sup>6</sup> Gadjin Nagao, *The Foundational Standpoint of Madhyamika Philosophy*, trans. John P. Keenan (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), 1. Walser disagrees with this generally accepted view when he writes, “Nagarjuna appears to have been not so much a founder of a specific school of philosophy as a champion of Mahayana more generally.” See Walser, 3.

<sup>7</sup> Williams, 64.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught* (New York: Grove Press, 1974), 26.

<sup>9</sup> For an excellent overview of this perspective in the thought of the 13<sup>th</sup> century Sufi, Ibn al-‘Arabi, see William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-‘Arabi’s Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany: SUNY, 1989), 103-112. Chittick very lucidly explores the significance and implications of Ibn al-‘Arabi’s famous axiom, originally articulated by Abu Talib al-Makki (996 CE) in the *Nourishment of Hearts*, that “self disclosure never repeats itself” (*la takrar fa al-tajalli*). See also Henry Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn ‘Arabi*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969) 200-207. This doctrine was not confined to Ibn al-‘Arabi and was held by other prominent Sufis, Asharite theologians, and later Islamic philosophers.

<sup>10</sup> Rahula, 26.

<sup>11</sup> Nagao, 21-33, 73-85; Williams, 72.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Williams, 69.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Cook, *Jewel*, 38.

<sup>15</sup> Two examples from Nietzsche are sufficient to illustrate his misunderstanding of Buddhism. In the *Gay Science* he writes, “*Pessimists as victims*. – Wherever a deep discontent with existence becomes prevalent, it is the after effect of some great dietary mistake made by a whole people over a long period of time that are coming to light. Thus the *spread* of Buddhism (*not its origin*) depended heavily on the excessive reliance of the Indians on rice which led a general loss of vigour.” See *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix in Songs*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 134. And in *Beyond Good and Evil*, he writes: “whoever has really with an Asiatic and supra-Asiatic eye, looked into the, down into the most world-denying of all possible ways of thinking – beyond good and evil no longer, like the Buddha and Schopenhauer...”. See *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 56.

<sup>16</sup> For an excellent study of “alternative” notions of God primarily in Christianity and Islam, see Michael Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsaying* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994). See also Corless’s relevant remarks in the *Vision of Buddhism*, 133.

<sup>17</sup> Williams, 63.

<sup>18</sup> Cook, *Jewel*, 39.

<sup>19</sup> Williams, 62.

<sup>20</sup> Cook, *Jewel*, 40.

<sup>21</sup> Chakrabarti, Arindam. “Nagarjuna,” *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, ed. Ted Honderich (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 601.

<sup>22</sup> Williams, 64.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Chakrabarti, “Buddhist Philosophy,” *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, ed. Ted Honderich (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 109.

<sup>24</sup> Cook, *Jewel*, 37.

<sup>25</sup> Cook, *Ibid.*, 45. See also Robert M. Gimello, “Huayan,” *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones. Vol. 6 (New York: Thomson Gale, 2005) 4145-6.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Cook, *Jewel*, 45.

<sup>27</sup> Cook, *Jewel*, 51.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in Williams, 61.

<sup>30</sup> Fa-tsang is considered to be the most important master of Hua-yen. See Chang, 197.

<sup>31</sup> Cook, *Jewel*, 48.

<sup>32</sup> Gimello, 4147.

<sup>33</sup> The synthesis was possible because of certain significant parallels between Indian and Chinese, (particularly Taoist and Neo-taoist), thought, which eased the integration of Indian Buddhism into China. For example, Neo-taoism held that the Tao was not ontologically distinct from the phenomenal world, but simply the way things are,

which is to say, their harmonious and balanced state of equilibrium. Such a view of the Tao bore a striking resemblance to emptiness as interdependent origination (Williams 131; Cook, *Jewel*, 48). Another significant parallel lay in the Taoist view that the natural world is characterised by constant transformation, and the Indian view that existence is a flux. See Francis Cook, "Causation in the Chinese Hua-yen Tradition," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 6 (1979): 370.

<sup>34</sup> Fa-Tsang, *Treatise on the Golden Lion*. In *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963), 410. Garma Chang also holds to this view as he makes clear in his preface. See Chang, *Buddhist Teaching*, ix.

<sup>35</sup> Fa-tsang, the third patriarch, provides his own explanation for the meaning of the name, "flower ornament," and its relation to the Hua-yen worldview. The "flower," he says, "has the function of producing the fruit and action has the power to effect results." Thus, he likens the "flower" to the generative spiritual force that leads to proper conduct and understanding. This seems to be his intended meaning because he then says that "'ornament' means the accomplishment of practice, fulfilment of the result, meeting with the truth and according with reality." In this sense "flower" refers to the actions that lay the seeds for enlightenment, which is the "ornament." In the end, "'nature' and 'characteristics' both vanish, subject and object are both obliterated – it shines clearly revealed and is thus called an ornament." See Fa-tsang, *Return*, 153.

<sup>36</sup> Heinrich Dumolín, *Zen Buddhism: A History. India and China*, trans. James W. Heisig and Paul Knitter (New York: Macmillan, 1988), 46.

<sup>37</sup> Williams, 130.

<sup>38</sup> Thomas Cleary (trans. and ed.), "Introduction," *Entry into the Inconceivable: An Introduction to Hua-yen Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983), 24.

<sup>39</sup> Cook, *Jewel*, 99.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Fa-tsang, *Lion*, 409.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 412–413.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 412.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 413.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 412.

<sup>46</sup> Tu-Shun, *Cessation and Contemplation in the Five Teachings of the Hua-yen*. In *Entry into the Inconceivable: An Introduction to Hua-yen Buddhism*, trans and ed. Thomas Cleary (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983), 56–57.

<sup>47</sup> Fa-tsang, *Cultivation of Contemplation of the Inner Meaning of the Hua-yen: The Ending of Delusion and Return to the Source*. In *Entry into the Inconceivable*, 152–153.

<sup>48</sup> Cheng-kuan and Tu Shun, *Mirror of the Mysteries of the Universe of the Hua-yen*. In *Entry into the Inconceivable*, 119.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Fa-tsang, *Return*, 156.

<sup>51</sup> Chih-yen, *Ten Mysterious Gates of the Unitary Vehicle*. In *Entry into the Inconceivable*, 139.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>53</sup> Each number requires every other number because the numerical system exists as a whole or does not exist at all.

<sup>54</sup> Chih-yen, 128.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>56</sup> Quoted in Cook, *Jewel*, 78.

<sup>57</sup> Williams, 66.

<sup>58</sup> Cook, *Jewel*, 68.

<sup>59</sup> Quoted in Cook, *Jewel*, 82.

<sup>60</sup> Cheng-kuan, *Mirror*, 121.

<sup>61</sup> Cook, *Jewel*, 74.

<sup>62</sup> Corless, *The Vision of Buddhism* (New York: Paragon Books, 1989), 23.

<sup>63</sup> Fa-tsang, *Return*, 152-53.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 158-59.

<sup>66</sup> Cook, *Jewel*, 109.

<sup>67</sup> Fa-tsang, *Return*, 157.

<sup>68</sup> This is so because ultimate truth is reached *through* conventional truths in the same way that emptiness is postulated through an observation of phenomena.

<sup>69</sup> Fa-tsang, *Return*, 159.

<sup>70</sup> Those who are ignorant but think they are enlightened are another case altogether.

But they also receive the compassion and guidance of the Bodhisattva.

<sup>71</sup> Fa-tsang, *Return*, 161.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>74</sup> Cook, *Jewel*, 110.

<sup>75</sup> Fa-tsang, *Return*, 160.

<sup>76</sup> Cook, *Jewel*, 112.

<sup>77</sup> Quoted in Williams, 68.

<sup>78</sup> Cook, *Jewel*, 111.

<sup>79</sup> Fa-tsang, *Return*, 156.

<sup>80</sup> I would like to thank Professor Leonard Priestley for introducing me to Hua-Yen Buddhism a number of years ago, and for his helpful comments on this article. I also wish to express my gratitude to Omer Fereig and Mohammed Rustom for their critical feedback on earlier drafts of this piece.





## **Are “Protocol Sentences” of science and “Core Statements” of religion two mutually inconsistent foundations of the same worldview?**

Mashhad Al-Allaf

Philosophy University of Toledo, Ohio, USA

### **Abstract**

In this paper I attempt to reconcile science and religion by appealing to the very foundation of knowledge in each. Through the analysis of protocol sentences in science and core statements in religion I attempt to show that we are not talking about two mutually inconsistent worldviews, indeed they are just different methods of structuring the same reality in two different languages; they share the same logic. While the language of science is legitimate in world (A) of physical reality, the religious language is legitimate for world (B) of the unseen realm of reality, as well as for the physical reality.

The analysis of the very epistemological nature of the “basic statements” and “protocol sentences” (in the legacy of the Vienna circle: Moritz Schlick and Otto Neurath) shows that their ultimate constituents are not “basic.” The controversy over this issue is essential to contemporary philosophy, because the question on “how to justify the truth-value of certain scientific complex statements” is first of all a question about “truth” and “certainty,” and second, “truth” in science and philosophy are usually discussed within an ontological frame, i.e., it reveals the ontological contents of both science and philosophy. In one word, “foundation” of knowledge is not only an epistemological issue, but also an ontological one. The title of Schlick’s famous article was “Über das Fundament der Erkenntnis” (“The Foundation of Knowledge”).

Simultaneously and parallel to this I argue that religion has certain statements that I call “core statements” that constitute the foundation of the language of the non-physical realm of reality. These core statements of religion have an epistemological structure that is even more logically consistent than that of scientific knowledge. Proving this will, at least, show

that the system of spirituality cannot be considered as less consistent or less reliable than that of science.

## I. Basic Statements

Scientific statements such as: “all metal expands by heat,” “there is an inverse relationship between the volume and pressure for an ideal gas” (Boyle’s law), and “for every action there is an opposite and equal reaction” (Newton’s third law), are somehow complicated; they refer to “every” and “all” events at any given time in different places. Empirical sciences are based on inductive reasoning. Imperfect induction does not cover every case, but only great number of them; to say, “all swans are white” does not necessarily mean that we have observed all swans, but that we have observed enough cases to formulate a general conclusion that refers to “all” of them. Later in time for example, a black swan was observed. The main question is: how could science justify the truth-value of those statements about “all” and “every” future case?

Scientists usually appeal to their own method of inductive reasoning since in the past all the cases observed had such and such a description, then in the future all these cases will have such and such a description. One well known problem in the methodology of science is the justification of induction itself; therefore, philosophers of science attempted to justify complex statements and theories by reference to what are called “**basic statements.**” These are usually considered factual sentences that describe what is directly given such as “here now red”; thus they need no justification or verification.<sup>1</sup> These statements are based on immediate observation and are directly related to experience. The process of justifying the truth value (whether it be verification or falsification) regresses ultimately to these basic statements. These types of statements must be strong enough that they cannot be shown false (empirically speaking). If they were shown false by another statement, then the other statement is more basic. Also, if they can be proven false, then they are not eligible to be the foundation of knowledge. These statements called protocol sentences<sup>2</sup> by Otto Neurath<sup>3</sup> and Carnap.<sup>4</sup> Otto Neurath defined protocol sentences by further elaboration:

Protocol sentences are factual sentences of the same form as the others, except that, in them, a personal noun always occurs several times in a specific association with other terms. A complete protocol sentence might, for instance, read:

"Otto's protocol at 3:17 o'clock: [At 3:16 o'clock Otto said to himself (at 3:15 o'clock there was a table in the room perceived by Otto)]."

This factual sentence is so constructed that, within each set of brackets, further factual sentences may be found.<sup>5</sup>

The importance of this protocol statement is derived from the ability to replace each term in it by a group of terms of an advanced scientific language, for example a physical designation can be given to replace the term "Otto" and this system of designation can be defined by reference to the "position" of the name "Otto."

**Moritz Schlick** debated this issue with Otto Neurath.<sup>6</sup> Schlick discussed the need for *basic statements* (he called them *confirmations*) that operate as the ultimate unshakable foundation of knowledge. These statements will count as

a firm basis on which the uncertain structure of our knowledge could rest.<sup>7</sup>

According to Schlick the search for the basis or foundation is, in other words, a search for the truth, a search, as he thinks

of affording a *true* description of the facts. For us it is self-evident that the problem of the basis of knowledge is nothing other than the question of the criterion of truth.<sup>8</sup>

Schlick made the connection between the foundation of knowledge and truth because any description of facts can be proven true or false by reference to a criterion of truth-test. Schlick rejects Neurath's coherence criterion of truth. According to Neurath, the truth of a protocol sentence is determined based on its inner coherence (non-contradiction) with the system:

"when a new sentence is presented to us we compare it with the system at our disposal, and determine whether or not it conflicts with that system. If

the sentence does conflict with the system, we may discard it as useless (or false)”,<sup>9</sup>

Schlick argues that basic statements cannot be accepted due to the coherence that it shows with the system of empirical knowledge, because the system itself is in question. In the coherence theory, the truth of any statement consists in the mutual agreement of the statements of the system itself, without being in agreement with facts or needing to be checked with facts.<sup>10</sup> The statement: “sharks live in the Euphrates River” is false because it does not cohere with the system of knowledge that sharks do not live in fresh water, they live in salt water (the Euphrates river in Iraq is a fresh water river). But the statement: “the sun revolves around the earth” is true in the ancient theory of physics because it cohered with the system of knowledge that held that the earth is the center of the universe. But the whole system of knowledge was tested by the Copernican theory. Thus, the coherence criterion of truth allowed scientific and non-scientific statements to be true. Schlick said:

If one is to take coherence seriously as a general criterion of truth, then one must consider arbitrary fairy stories to be as true as a historical report, or as statements in a textbook of chemistry, provided the story is constructed in such a way that no contradiction ever arises.<sup>11</sup>

The absence of contradiction in the coherence test is not enough in the epistemological search of the ultimate *foundation* of scientific knowledge. If science and scientific theory is about the world, then we have to appeal to material facts as the ultimate justification of the truth, and we have to search for the most unshakable and indubitable statements that constitute the basis of all knowledge. Schlick called these statements the *basic statements*. These statements are about personal experience; since in experience we describe and report events or objects, then these statements, according to Schlick, are no more than “*confirmations*.” These are statements expressing “the immediately observed.” For example, if the investigator makes a note such as: “Under such and such conditions the pointer stands at 10.5,” then he knows that this means “two black lines coincide.” These basic statements, according to Schlick, have the following characteristics:<sup>12</sup>

1. They are descriptive, spatial, and temporal statements. For example: "here now pain" referring, at present time, to the chest, or "here two red lines meet."

2. Their meaning is determined immediately without verification. Since these statements are references to "the immediately perceived" here and now, then the direct understanding of their meaning can stand as a valid verification for their truth.

3. Since they are spatial temporal demonstrations they cannot be written because what they are referring to is continuously changing. Logically speaking, nothing depends on them. They cannot be replaced by an indication of time and place; if we do this, then we substitute the observation statement by a protocol statement, which is very different in nature.<sup>13</sup> He says,

They are an absolute end. In them the task of cognition at this point is fulfilled. That a new task begins with the pleasure in which they culminate, and with the hypotheses that they leave behind does not concern them. Science does not rest upon them but leads to them, and they indicate that it has led correctly. They are really the absolute fixed points; it gives us joy to reach them, even if we can not stand upon them.<sup>14</sup>

4. They are empirical statements; neither hypotheses, nor hypothesized. Schlick thinks that these confirmations, in their individuality, "are the only synthetic statements that are not *hypotheses*."<sup>15</sup>

5. These statements are not the factual data that a scientific theory starts from; rather they are the means by which the scientific theory can be confirmed because the predictions of the theory have to end with what is taking place in specific space and time.

The issue of “basic statements” seems quite problematic because it was always dealt with from the perspective of the philosopher’s epistemology. Logical empiricists (Schlick, Neurath, and Carnap) were more concerned about verification of empirical knowledge. According to them the complicated statements of scientific knowledge can be verified by reducing them to the meaning of the protocol sentences or basic statements. Their main questions were how to verify the predictions of a given scientific theory and how to achieve the testability by more confirmation. According to logical empiricism, the scientific theory is true if the predictions of it are true; the more of this empirical verification, then the more support the theory receives. This line of reasoning is logical and can be presented in the hypothetical or conditional form of syllogism, in which the conformation of the antecedent proves the validity of it. This form is called *modus ponens*, an example of which will be:

If the predictions are true, then the theory is true	If P, then Q
The predictions were confirmed and verified as true	P
-----	-----
Therefore, the theory is true	Therefore, Q

Science uses the method of inductive reasoning to collect data and deal with facts, it also uses a hypothetical deductive method for forming theories and deriving or inferring statements related to facts. The more the applicability of the theory to facts is confirmed, the more support there is that the theory is true. The meaning of its statements is reduced to the meaning of the protocol sentences.

**Karl Popper** thought that the process of the testability of the deductive consequences of any scientific theory is different from that of logical empiricism. Further, any event referred to in any basic statement must be observable, which make the basic statement testable. Popper said that there must be a class of “basic statements” by reference to which we should be able to test or decide about the truth value of the theory. Thus Popper uses the basic statements not as confirmations by which we verify, but to falsify the predictions of the theory.<sup>16</sup> Falsification, in other words, is negation, thus if the theory allows such negation of the basic statements, then it is falsifiable, and

thus scientific, if not, then it is not scientific. A system of statements in astrology, for example, cannot be counted as scientific because its basic statements are not falsifiable. If you read in the horoscope: "You are going to make a decision today, be careful." A statement like this is not falsifiable because at the end of the day many things you did might be called a decision. None of these actions is a prediction that is so specifically derived from the reading of the horoscope. While in science, from the theory and other statements, certain predictions can be derived. Karl Popper considered a case in which one of the predictions of the theory was falsified (not confirmed); then this case will stand as a case for falsifying the theory. His way of reasoning also goes through another conditional syllogism in which denying the consequent will make the form valid. This form is called modus tollens, an example of which will be:

If the theory is true, then its predictions are true too	If P, then Q
But sometimes the predictions are not true (can be falsified)	Not Q
-----	-----
Therefore, the theory is not true	Therefore, Not P

Notice that this form has a negation in the second premise, the negation also appears in the conclusion.

## II. Core Statements

In general, I will divide the statements of both science and religion into four kinds:

- A. Statements about the world (or physical reality).
  - A.1. Statements about our own experience of the world.
- B. Statements about the non-physical realm of reality.
  - B.1. Statements about our own experience of the non-physical realm of reality.

Our account for searching the very foundation of religious knowledge coincides with that of Moritz Schlick, namely it is about the ultimate constituents of knowledge and the truth-value of the statements in religion.

<b>physical realm of reality</b> (world of witness = <i>'alam ash-shahada</i> ) <b>A</b>	<b>non-physical realm of reality</b> (world of unseen = <i>'alam al-ghaib</i> ) <b>B</b>
scientific theories describe it	revelation expresses it linguistically
personal experience is expressed in language	personal experience is expressed in language

Religion (I refer here to Islam) includes statements that are essential not only to B, but also to A, I will call these statements “**core statements**.” These core statements have the following characteristics:

1. Each core statement of type B cannot be self-contradictory or self-canceling;
2. Core statements of B do not contradict each other;
3. A derived statement from B cannot be inconsistent or contradictory to the core statements of B;
4. The core statements of B do not have an empty extension;
5. Two core statements of B can be true for this world (world A) and all possible worlds; and
6. Core statements of B (revelation) do not contradict the statements of A (reason).

It seems that the ultimate justification of the truth-value of world B (religious statements) is logic, i.e., the opposite of which is contradictory, in addition to observation. While the justification of the basic statements of A is immediate observation, according to Schlick. The following are some examples of the core statements of religion in world B:

- world A (physical world) is one of motion and continuous change
- world A has a cause
- the Lord of world A is one
- the Lord of world A is ever-living
- world A has a beginning in time
- world A has an end



- other statements . . .

The evidence of the truth-value of such core statements is both logical and observational. Let us take three examples from the Qur'an.

### **First example of core statements**

Or were they created by nothing, or were they the creators [of themselves]?  
Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Rather, they are not certain.  
(Qur'an 52:35-36)

Let us go over some of these statements (verses) from the Qur'an. It is impossible for a "thing" to bring itself into existence, because it will be in existence prior to its existence which is impossible. Also it is impossible for a "thing" such as this world A to come into existence without a cause. Human beings can neither be the cause of their own existence, nor the cause of this world (heavens and earth). It is possible to put some of these statements in a logical form:

Either this world has a cause or it is uncaused  
It is impossible to be uncaused (a physical world cannot be actually infinite)  
-----  
Therefore, the world has a cause

This argument is a valid disjunctive syllogism that negates one of the disjuncts and has this valid form:

Either P or Q  
Not Q  
-----  
Therefore, P

### **Second example of core statements**

Let us take another core statement such as: "the Lord of this world is one" as expressed in the following Qur'anic statements (verses):

Had there been therein (in the heavens and the earth) gods besides Allah, then verily, both would have been ruined. Glorified is Allah, the Lord of the

Throne (High is He) above all that (evil) they associate with Him! (Qur'an 21:22)

Say: if there had been (other) gods with Him—as they say—behold, they would certainly have sought out a way to the Lord of the Throne! (Qur'an 17:42)

And your god is one God. There is no deity [worthy of worship] except Him. (Qur'an 2: 163)

Embedded in the above core statements of world B is a very simple form of sound logical reasoning and immediate observation, which together give the core statements of religion a solid logical status similar to those basic statements of science that appeal to more immediate observation. Core religious statements in the above logical format have the syllogistic form:

If this world has more than one God, then it will collapse (from revelation)  
The world has not collapsed (from observation)

-----  
Therefore, this world has one Lord

The argument has a valid conditional form that negates the consequence and affirms the antecedent in the conclusion:

If P, then Q  
Not Q  
-----  
Not P

### Third example of core statements

Indeed, your God is One. (Qur'an 37:4)

This core statement has the least simple factual-logical structure because it affirms that there is only one God. This “One” is also the simplest structure because it is not compound and not dividable. In science the number “one” is the simplest mathematical entity; that the structure of the mathematical reality builds from. But number “one” in mathematics is an empty abstracted entity; there is no *necessity* that it

has existence in reality outside the mind. While in religion, this “one” does have ontological content, “one” is *Necessary* in the sense that both its essence and its existence exist together. Also this “one” is necessary in the sense that the mathematical and physical realities are both contingent upon it. The above statement reduces the reality of the two worlds (A and B) to the simplest form of the “one” by the *affirmation* of the necessary being; other core statements reduce reality to “one” by *negating* the existence of all other possible contingent existents, as in the following statement:

That is Allah, your Lord; there is no deity except Him, the Creator of all things, so worship Him. And He is Disposer of all things. (Qur'an 6:102)

### **Logical evaluation of the above core statements**

Each core statement in the above three examples passes the test of the logical requirements of the core statements that was set in section II. Each core statement is not self-contradictory, it does not contradict other core statements of world B, it cannot be inconsistent with statements of world B, however, their validity and truth-value is not based on internal coherence, but on observation and logical necessity that it is impossible to be otherwise. Each core statement does not have empty extension, and most importantly each core statement of world B does not contradict observational statements of world A; in other words, there is no contradiction between Reason and Revelation.

### **III. A Comparison of Core Statements with Basic Statements**

Let me make some comparisons between the core statements of religion and the basic statements of science, as mentioned by Schlick and other philosophers of science:

1. Inasmuch as these basic statements are demonstrative confirmation statements dealing with personal experience, religious experience is also personal utterance confirming—demonstrating experience with the non-temporal, non-spatial in terms of the here and now; “here now faith” as compared to “here now red.” Also “here now spiritual pleasure (from prayer for example)” as compared to “here now pain.”

2. The meaning of the basic statements (especially Schlick's statements) is determined without verification because they relate to what is immediately perceived, while core religious statements have direct meaning based on logic and observation, i.e., the opposite of which is impossible, and based on observation.

3. Basic statements are inexpressible in writing because their object is continuously happening beyond space and time. Core religious statements in (B1) writing and describing religious experience are almost fiction. Religious experience in B1 is inexpressible, yet is livable. This is probably why some Sufi or saints did not want to express this experience in language.<sup>17</sup>

4. Basic statements are empirical statements; they are neither hypothesis nor hypothesized. Core statements in B1 are also empirical in the sense that they refer to things that are immediately observed; they are neither hypothesis nor hypothesized. Thus the core statements of B1 cannot be put together to make a system of belief that replaces B itself.

5. The basic statements according to Schlick cannot be considered the starting point of science, but they can be considered as means of confirmation. Core statements in B1 are not the actual beginning or making of religion, but they can be used to confirm religion because they are a direct report of the religious experience. They are the end to which the practice of religion can lead. There is a joy in reaching them, even though one does not stand upon them.

6. In physical sciences not all basic statements have been tested; if all of them were tested and confirmed, then we would be certain about our empirical knowledge, and if this were the case then science will end. But science is contingent and has no end. Only some of its basic statements have been fully tested and can be accepted as non-contradictory.

With this in mind, in regard to the non-physical world, we can start from a theoretical system in which the core statements, at the least, do not contradict themselves, each other, and do not contradict empirical knowledge or observation.

7. The most important difference, if we follow Popper's reasoning, is that basic statements in scientific knowledge are contingent statements, their negation is possible without contradiction, and if their negation is true, then the basic statements can be proven false. Core statements in religion are neither contingent nor tautological, their opposite is contradiction.

#### **IV. Objections and Reply**

Let us consider some of the objections that might be raised against this thesis.

***The first objection (on solipsism):*** In regard to B1, religious experience is very personal and not transferable to others. The religious experience starts and ends within the person alone. Thus it is a clear form of solipsism. According to Schlick "here now so and so" and "here yellow borders on blue" both have demonstrative terms that have the sense of the present gesture; an experience points to something observed. In other words, someone somehow point to reality and by these statements confirms and compares them with facts.<sup>18</sup>

But Schlick's statements are also a clear form of solipsism; in which the person is reporting his/her experience in the frames of "here pain now," which no one else can verify, not only in terms of space-time reference, but also because what is reported is a purely personal observation.

***Second objection (on confirmation and future predictions):*** The statements of spiritual experiences of B1 might be meaningful to the person having the experience, but not to other people. Notice that Schlick's statements have only momental meaning during occurrence and as such cannot be used for future predictions, and if they cannot be used for future predictions then scientific theory cannot use them for

confirmation, thus defeating the purpose of scientific knowledge. But in B1 statements the spiritual experience can, at least, confirm something to the person himself, if this is achieved then the goal of religion is achieved too, i.e., discovering the reality of the unseen—a goal that is a personal enterprise, and that therefore has no need for transferability, while scientific knowledge is communal. In religion the message is for each individual to believe in the reality of the unseen, and this goal can be achieved individually through personal experiences, there is no need for transferability of knowledge. Science depends on certain agreement on certain things, and the goal cannot be achieved without transferring individual experience and knowledge to others.

***Third objection (on the complexity of core statements):*** The core statements of world B and B1 do not seem to be basic; they are somehow complicated. The answer is that basic statements or protocol sentences in scientific knowledge are also complicated. Let us analyze a simple statement such as: “here now red.” This statement is more complicated than anyone can imagine; I will divide my analysis into two groups: the observed elements and the hidden elements.

The observed elements of “here now red” are *three*:

Spatial:	here
Temporal:	now
Quality:	red

The hidden elements of “here now red” are many:

1. a hidden subject who observed “red” in space and time (the one who reports the observation of “here now so and so”)
2. a hidden object which is the “so and so” that has the color “red”
3. a hidden theory of universals and particulars stating that “red” does not exist by itself but exists as a quality of this particular “so and so”
4. a hidden comparison that “here now red” and “not” any other color (not green, not black, not. . .)

5. a hidden logical negation "not" that is not observational or part of observation
6. a hidden logical conjunction "and" in: "here 'and' now" which is not observational
7. a hidden experience of "other" things
8. a hidden ontological assumption about the existence of things and their qualities in general
9. a hidden theory of space that takes "here" as a relative concept
10. a hidden theory of time that assumes the "now" as a relative unit of it
11. a hidden theory of knowledge that governs the idea of "basic statement" as "basic" and related to direct observation
12. and so on. . .

This is not only true for logical empiricism, but also for empiricism in general. The above analysis is also applicable to Locke's theory of knowledge, especially his distinction between simple and complex ideas and the simple idea of one sense, such as that of color.

***Fourth objection (on synthetic-a priori):*** When one says that core statements in religion are not contingent (their opposite is contradiction) and at the same time they are not tautological, it seems as if a theory is being promoted, similar to that of Kant, about statements that are synthetic-a priori.

The answer: All the statements of God about worlds A and B have an actual real content and at the same time they are absolutely certain. Thus on one hand they have the characteristics of a synthetic statement, but on the other hand they have those characteristics of a priori statements. All possible statements about worlds A and B have been said by God (before the existence of here and now) and preserved with Him in beyond "here" and "now" in a book called "The Preserved Tablet." All possible statements about worlds A1 and B1 are matters of rational and spiritual discovery that must undergo the "here" and "now" and be preserved in human knowledge. Thus, the reason that God's statements always have true content without being contingent is not due to the fact that they are "true by definition," indeed they are always true

because God's knowledge about his creation is comprehensive and beyond all "here" and all "now." Second, the reason that God's statements are absolutely certain is not because they are tautological, but because they are necessary and they cannot be proven false. The core statement: "This world must have a cause" is true in religion not because the principle of causality is presupposed by human experience, i.e., our observation is made possible by apriori category that some events are causes and others are effects, but because logically speaking it cannot be otherwise. Those synthetic statements of God that exist a priori are the very principles of a scientific religious knowledge comparable to that of science, if not better.

The main difference between this account and that of Kant is that the focus of Kant's metaphysics is innately epistemological and deals with the structure and principles of the human mind and pure reason that justifies and validates the principles of metaphysics. Since these synthetic-a priori principles exist in mathematics and pure natural science, therefore, Kant thinks, that they must be possible in metaphysics too. The role of the philosophers is to investigate them in the realm of pure reason itself, not in the external world.

God's statements about A and B give philosophers and scientists the ability to deal with reality-in-itself or, simply, it focuses on external ontology rather than inner epistemology. This type of statement by God makes the philosophers and the scientists able to investigate reality without neglecting spirituality.

Another difference is that Kant's synthetic-a priori principles are necessary and a priori because the experience presupposes them, i.e., because of something else other than themselves. While in core religious statements they are a priori because they cannot be otherwise logically speaking.<sup>19</sup>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> In regards to verification, I should note here that there are some departing points between Carnap and Neurath on this issue: Neurath rejected Carnap's thesis that



protocol sentences are those which require no verification. See Neurath in A. J. Ayer, ed., *Logical Positivism* (New York: Free Press, 1959), p. 203. Neurath thinks that Carnap was trying to introduce a concept of "atomic protocol" which might be understood in traditional academic philosophy in which the belief in "immediate experiences" coincides well with its ontology that "there are, indeed, certain *basic elements* out of which the world-picture is to be constructed." Only in this traditional ontology, Neurath thinks, these sentences do not require verification. (Neurath, in Ayer, *Logical Positivism*, p. 204). Neurath probably left enough room for verifying protocol sentences in order to handle situations in which two conflicting protocol sentences appear in the system of unified science, since this system does not accept contradictory sentences, then one of the protocol sentences must be discarded, which means the other one is somehow verified. Carnap was trying to keep verification only to laws and non-protocol sentences, thus they can be discarded or excluded.

<sup>2</sup> See A. J. Ayer, ed., *Logical Positivism* (New York: Free Press, 1959), pp. 199–208.

<sup>3</sup> Otto Neurath, "Protocol Sentences," trans. George Schick, in A. J. Ayer, ed., *Logical Positivism* (New York: Free Press, 1959), p. 199.

<sup>4</sup> R. Carnap, *The Unity of Science*, trans. Max Black (London, 1934). Also see his book *The Logical Syntax of Language*, trans. Amethe Smeaton (London, 1937).

<sup>5</sup> Neurath, "Protocol Sentences," in Ayer, *Logical Positivism*, p. 202.

<sup>6</sup> The debate over the issue of protocol/basic statements was within the legacy and among the members of Vienna circle (M. Schlick, F. Waismann, Otto Neurath, R. Carnap, C. G. Hempel); however, some outside philosophers such as Russell, Wittgenstein, and Popper soon became involved in it. According to Russell, for example, the ultimate justification of the truth of such basic statements is the perception itself. See B. Russell, *The Analysis of Matter* (London, 1927), and his book *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth* (London, 1940). Wittgenstein, in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, thinks that if a proposition contains complex expressions, then its sense depends on the truth of more basic components or propositions that describe these expressions.

<sup>7</sup> M. Schlick, "The Foundation of Knowledge," in Ayer, *Logical Positivism*, p. 209.

<sup>8</sup> Schlick, "Foundation," in Ayer, *Logical Positivism*, p. 213.

<sup>9</sup> Neurath, "Protocol Sentences," in Ayer, *Logical Positivism*, p. 203.

<sup>10</sup> See an important paper by Lorenz B. Puntel, "On The Logical Positivists' Theory of Truth: The Fundamental Problem and a New Perspective," *Journal for General Philosophy of Science* 30 (Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999):101–130.

<sup>11</sup> Schlick, "Foundation," in Ayer, *Logical Positivism*, p. 215.

<sup>12</sup> Schlick, "Foundation," in Ayer, *Logical Positivism*, pp. 220–221.

<sup>13</sup> Schlick, "Foundation," in Ayer, *Logical Positivism*, p. 226.

<sup>14</sup> Schlick, "Foundation," in Ayer, *Logical Positivism*, p. 223.

<sup>15</sup> Schlick, "Foundation," in Ayer, *Logical Positivism*, p. 227.

<sup>16</sup> K. Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (London, 1959). Also see his book *Conjectures and Refutations* (London, 1963).

<sup>17</sup> See al-Ghazali in his book *The Deliverance from Error*.

<sup>18</sup> According to C. G. Hempel, the comparison with “reality” or “facts” presupposes a “cleavage” between statements and reality; this is the result of a “redoubling metaphysics.” It seems that the issue of comparing statements to facts is related to a pseudo-problem. (See his article “On the Logical Positivists’ Theory of Truth,” published in: *Analysis* 2, 1935, p. 51.) Facts, according to him, are not a scientist’s choice of the language and its rules, rather they are more akin to essential ontological entities; “the imagination that the ‘facts’ with which propositions are to be confronted are substantial entities and do not depend upon the scientist’s choice of syntax rules.” (See his article “Some Remarks on ‘Facts’ and Propositions,” published in: *Analysis* 2, 1935, p. 95.)

<sup>19</sup> According to Kant, there are four kind of judgments: analytic, synthetic, a priori and a posteriori: analytic a priori judgment, synthetic a posteriori judgment, analytic a posteriori judgments (impossible), and synthetic a priori (possible).

## **The nature of mind in Islamic Philosophy**

Hassan Abdi  
Tehran University, Iran

### **Abstract**

This paper tries to give an explanation of mind and its function according to Islamic philosophy point of view.

We can divide the questions to which this paper answers, into two groups: premier questions and secondary questions.

The premier questions are:

- 1- What is mind? Or what is the definition of mind?
- 2- Is there any thing that conforms to that definition? Or does mind exists?

And the secondary questions are:

- 1- What makes knowledge of mind necessary?
- 2- What are mental faculties?
- 3- How mind does work?
- 4- Does mind have stages or not?
- 5- Is mind immaterial? And if so, what are the reasons upon which the immateriality of mind can be demonstrated?

Now, to answer the questions above, we organize the paper in this way:

- 1- Preface: the necessity of knowing mind
- 2- Subject matter:
  - 2-1 The definition of mind
  - 2-2 The mind's specifies
  - 2-3 Demonstration of existence of mind
  - 2-4 demonstration of immateriality of mind
  - 2-5 Mind's function
  - 2-6 The relationship between mind and body
  - 2-7 The relationship between mind and external world
- 3- Ending: conclusion

### **1- Preface: the necessity of knowing mind**

The necessity of knowing mind will be very obvious if we note that it is the mind that products or receive all of our conceptions. In

other words we know what we know about the external world through the mind. So any information about mind will help us to know how much of our conceptions are real and how much of them are not. In another aspect by knowing how mind works we shall easily analysis various philosophical conceptions, such as causality, possibility, and existence. This fact will be very useful for dissolution of philosophical problems. M. Motahari (d. 1402/1980) sided that: we can not comprehensive knowledge if we do not know the mind<sup>1</sup> (Epistemological aspect)<sup>2</sup>.

On the other hand, if we accept that philosophy discuss the universal judgments about existence, such as division of existence into external existence and mental existence, knowing mind should help us in one of the main philosophical subjects (Ontological aspect).

## **2- Subject matter**

### ***2-1 The definition of mind***

By searching in Islamic philosophical sources, we can find several definitions of mind. This definitions vary from one philosopher to another, furthermore some philosophers have defined mind in several way<sup>3</sup>. According to the limitation of these definitions, we classify them in four classes as mentioned below:

**2-1-1** The human soul; as for example in Sadr al-Mutallihin (d. 1050/1640): the human soul is mind<sup>4</sup>, and in Abdurrazaq lahigi (d. 1072/1662): mind, namely rational soul, ...<sup>5</sup>

**2-1-2** What include both knowledge by presence and knowledge by correspondence; as for example in Abu Hayyan Tohidi (d. 403/1012): It is sided that: what is mind? The answer is: good specification of thing<sup>6</sup>. Or as in Farabi (d. 339/945): mind is the power of specifying true judgments where the sound opinions are struggling and the faculty of correcting it<sup>7</sup>. Obviously, in knowledge by presence true judgments are specified from untrue judgments, as in knowledge by correspondence.

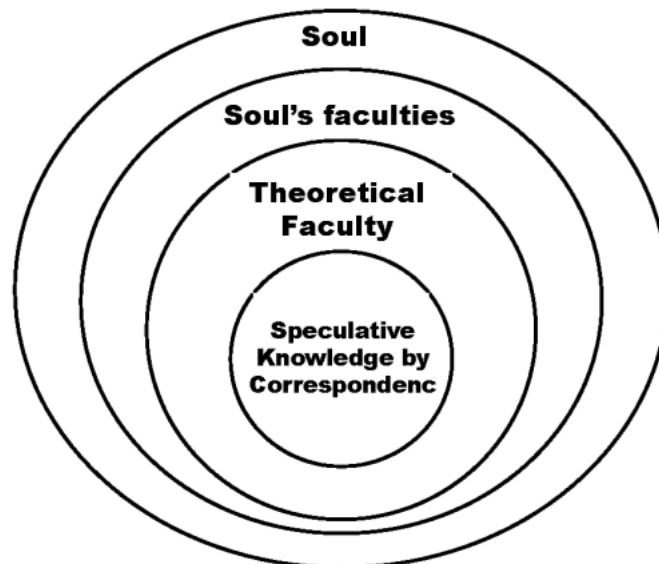
**2-1-3** What involves knowledge by correspondence; such as the definition of mind in al-Jurjani (d.808/1405): Do know that human being has comprehensive faculty that things' forms impressed in it, as

in the mirror, ... every form that is accrued in human's comprehensive faculty, which named mind, is ether conception or acknowledgment<sup>8</sup>. And Abdurrazaq lahigi (d. 1072/1662) in another work of his sided that: mind is the faculty and the instrument that the forms of things are accrued in it<sup>9</sup>.

**2-1-4** Speculative knowledge by correspondence; for example Avicenne (d. 428/1037) sided that: mind is faculty for soul, which makes soul ready for acquiring definitions and opinions<sup>10</sup>. And for al-Jurjani (d.808/1405): mind is the full preparedness for comprehension of sciences and agnostic knowledge by thinking<sup>11</sup>. You know that self-evident knowledge does not need to thinking. So these definitions do not include it.

In the next page there is a scheme that show the limitations of these definitions.

However, which of these definitions we can take as the correct definition about mind? To solve this problem we return to the Islamic philosophy sources and see if Muslim philosopher ascribed any specifies to mind or not?



*Scheme 1: The limitations of mind's different*

*definitions are shown in this scheme*

## **2-2 The mind's specifics**

Muslim philosophers in a few stray statements have mentioned to several specifics of mind. By searching in Islamic philosophy sources we find at least five specifics for mind. These are:

**2-2-1** The place for mental forms; roughly all of Muslim philosophers have mentioned to this specify. For Avicenne (d. 428/1037)<sup>12</sup>, Nasirddin Tusi (d. 672/1071)<sup>13</sup>, Sadr al-Mutallihin (d. 1050/1640)<sup>14</sup> and other philosophers mind is a place for mental forms.<sup>15</sup>

**2-2-2** Exploratory movements to the known for obtaining the unknown; Avicenne (d. 428/1037) sided that: thinking is the movement of mind to the principles for obtaining the quests.<sup>16</sup> We can find this matter in Nasirddin Tusi (d. 672/1071)<sup>17</sup>, Sadr al-Mutallihin (d. 1050/1640)<sup>18</sup>

**2-2-3** Possession of stages; though the fact that mind possesses stages has prime roll in philosophical problems, especially in epistemological ones, Muslim philosophers have mentioned to this fact incidentally. In this ground, if you search in the Islamic philosophy courses you would find that Muslim philosophers have talked about secondary intellectual concepts and explained them in the way that refers to this specify of mind. Abdurrazzaq lahigi (d. 1072/1662), above all, clarified this subject and sided: The intellect abstracts it [secondary intellectual concept] from the essence that exists in mind from the respect of its existence in mind not from the respect of its existence in external world<sup>19</sup>. Avicenne (d. 428/1037)<sup>20</sup>, Sadoddin Attftazani (d. 792/1188)<sup>21</sup>, Sadr al-Mutallihin (d. 1050/1640)<sup>22</sup> and other philosophers have mentioned to this subject too.

**2-2-4** Faculties of mind; Mind has several faculties the common specification of which is having contact with mental forms. These faculties can be divided into three sets: external senses, internal senses, and theoretical intellect. Here is some explanation about each of them:

**2-2-4-1** External senses; every human being has five external sensations, namely touch, vision, hearing, smell, and taste. Note that every of these senses has own instrument for sensation. For instance the eye is considered as vision's instrument, ear is hearing's instrument, and so on.

**2-2-4-2** Internal senses; though do not agree on especial number, Muslim philosophers counted five internal senses for human being. These are: common sense, imaginal faculty, estimate faculty<sup>23</sup>, retentive faculty, and dominant faculty.

**2-2-4-3** Theoretical intellect; the task of this faculty is to abstract universal conceptions from particular conceptions received previously by other faculties.<sup>24</sup>

### ***2-3 demonstration of existence of mind***

Traditionally the first argument given for demonstration of existence of mind has developed by Avicenne (d. 428/1037). He has sided that: the universal conceptions are not in external world but in mind<sup>25</sup>. The logical form of this argument is as below:

- (1) We comprehensive universal conception. (Self-evident premise)
- (2) Every conception that we comprehensive exist. (Self-evident premise)
- (3) Universal conception exists. (Inference from (1) and (2))
- (4) Universal conception does not exist in external world. (Because every thing that exist in external world is particular)
- (5) Universal conception does exist in some place that is not external world and we named that place mind.

Nasirddin Tusi (d. 672/1071) has given the second argument: And it [existence] divided into mental and external otherwise verity-proposition would be wrong<sup>26</sup>. The logical form of this argument is as below:

- (1) There are verity-propositions that are true. (Self-evident premise)

- (2) The truth of positive judgments implicates the existence of their subject. (Because the affirmation of one thing for another is branch of the existence of the other thing).
- (3) Some extinctions of the subject of verity-propositions do not exist in external world. (Self-evident premise)
- (4) Those extinctions do exist somewhere we name it mind.
- (Inference from (2) and (3))

And we organize the third argument that has given Sadr al-Mutallihin (d. 1050/1640) in his great work in logical form as below:

- (1) We conceive several non-existential things. (Self-evident premise)
- (2) We diversified these non-existential things from each other. (Self-evident premise)
- (3) The diversification of non-existential thing that does not exist at all is impossible. (Because the diversification of nonbeing is impossible)
- (4) Non-existential things do exist somewhere we name it mind.
- (Inference from (2) and (3))<sup>27</sup>

#### ***2-4 Demonstration of immateriality of mind;***

Although Muslim philosophers hold that mind is an immaterial being but by searching in Islamic philosophy sources, one cannot find any argument for demonstration of Immateriality of mind. So notes that all of argument to which we mentioned here can be inferred from whole of the subjects which Muslim philosophers expressed. The first argument is so:

- (1) Every thing that is material has these third specifics: divisibility, time, space. (Premise)
- (2) Mental forms do not have these specifics. (Premise)
- (3) Every thing that does not have these specifics of material is not material. (Conversion by contradiction of (1))
- (4) Mental forms are not material. (Inference from (1) and (2))
- (5) Mind is place of the mental forms.



- (6) If mind were material would be the space of the mental forms.
- (7) Every thing is ether material or immaterial.
- (8) Mind is not material. (Inference from (1) and (2))
- (9) Mind is immaterial. (Inference from (1) and (2))

The second argument is so:

- (1) We comprehensive big and great forms, such as mountain and sea. (Premise)
- (2) If mind were material, this implies that the big impressed in the small. (Premise)
- (3) But the impression of the big in the small is impassible. (Premise)
- (4) Mind is not material. (Inference from (2) and (3))<sup>28</sup>

### ***2-5 Mind's function***

The function of mind can be classified in three ways: affection, action, and conservation.

**2-5-1 Affection<sup>29</sup>**; when eye faces an external object become affected from it and through this affection a form of that object accrued in mind. So mind becomes affected from the external object too.

**2-5-2 Action<sup>30</sup>**; In this case mind after affection of the external objects tries to generate a new conception. To do so mind considers two external objects, such as a crow and a wall in situation that crow is standing on the wall, mind compares the crow to the wall and abstracts from this situation the concept of 'abovenees'. Here mind generates new conception. Many of mind's conceptions have been obtained through the action. These conceptions have an important roll in philosophy and other intellect realms.

**2-5-3 Conservation<sup>31</sup>**; suppose that you are walking in a street, suddenly you face a man whose face is very familiar for you. Then you

know your friend. This fact that you remember your friend's face after many years led us to claim that mind function as a conservator.

## **2-6 The relationship between mind and body**

For knowing how mind related to the body we must previously know what the nature of mind really is. According to the Islamic philosophical sources we can claim that for Avicenne (d. 428/1037), Fakhr raze (d. 606/1017), Nasirddin Tusi (d. 672/1071) as well as Sadr al-Mutallihin (d. 1050/1640), and other philosophers mind is the soul itself. Here are some evidences that affirm unite of mind and soul: First of all, in many cases you can find the word soul has been used instance of the word mind. For example, in one case we see that Avicenne (d. 428/1037) have ascribed to mind what he have ascribed to the soul in the other. Fakhr raze (d. 606/1017) in one page ascribes to soul a specify that ascribes to mind in the next line. Here is the translation of his expression: That form is the form, which *exists in particular soul* so it has an existence in external world therefore things from the face that *exist in mind* have existence in external world. (Italics added)<sup>32</sup>

And Nasirddin Tusi (d. 672/1071) has done so too. However, this fact became very clear in Sadr al-Mutallihin (d. 1050/1640), because in addition to the fact that he also ascribes to soul a specify that has ascribed to mind<sup>33</sup>, he hold that all human's faculties are the soul itself<sup>34</sup>. As soon as we realize this fact we will understand that all of the faculties that we have ascribed to mind are indeed of soul. So there is not an entity, which has some faculties other than soul.

Secondly, if the reader denies this subject and argues that the use of soul instead of mind in itself is not enough to affirms that mind is the soul, we reply that we would return to the arguments which we have presented before to affirm the existence of mind and see if those arguments can affirm an entity, namely mind, independent from soul or not. All of what those arguments did affirmed was so:

- (5) Universal conception does exist in some place that is not external world and we named that place mind.

In other words, there must be something that the mental forms ('Universal conception' as in the first argument, 'Some extinctions of the subject of verity-propositions' as in the second argument, and 'Non-existential things' as in the third) accrued in it. Now, we ask: Could soul be the place that mental forms accrued in it? Absolutely can. So when soul has several faculties that function mind's tasks, there will be no need to an independent entity.

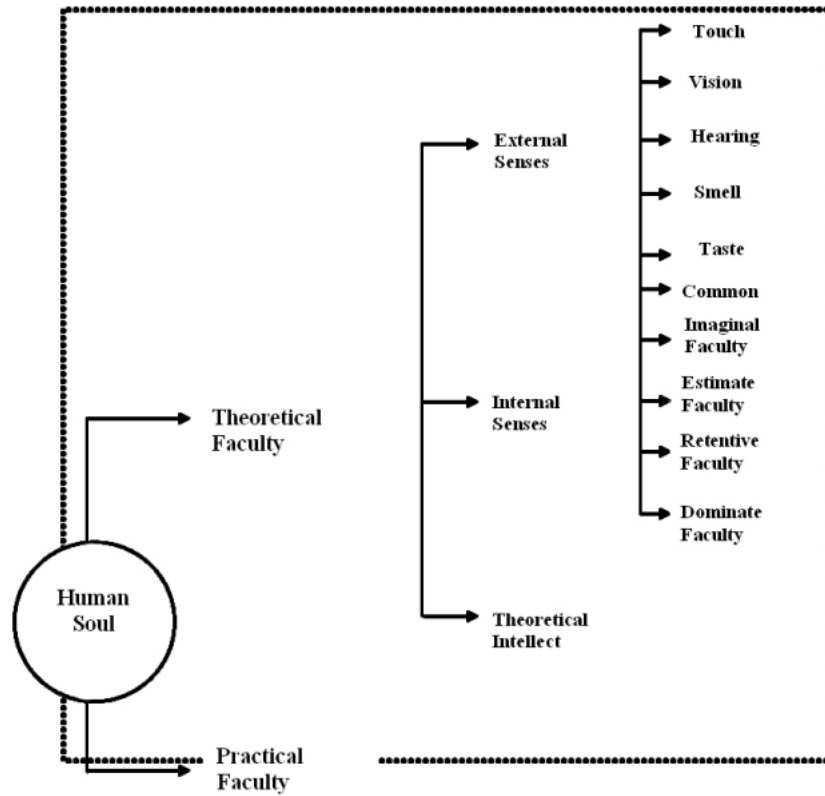
Lastly, if someone thinks of this fact carefully will find that the position is exactly the same as we deny the existence of mind. So far, you must be able to hold that in Islamic philosophy mind is the soul itself.

Avicenne (d. 428/1037), for example, has presented several subjects through which we can obtain what relationship between mind and body is. The translation of his words is so: The foundation of stimulator faculty, faculty of comprehension and faculty of keeper of temperament is the other thing, you can name it soul, and this is the substance which is spread in members of your body then in your body and this substance is one and indeed it is you, and it has minutiae, namely spread faculties in your members<sup>35</sup>. Avicenne (d. 428/1037) continue to explain the interplaying relation between soul and body. He holds that soul influence on body and body influence on soul too. He instance the bristle of one's hair when meeting experience of God's great presence, for the influence of soul on body, and the influence of body's custom on soul to work easily, for the influence of body on soul<sup>36</sup>.

According to this explanation we can conclude that for Avicenne (d. 428/1037) there are not two things separately; soul and mind. In other words, soul and mind are just the same. There are many evidences, which make this claim well founded.

After all, we can say that Moslem philosophers in various issues instead of using the word soul have created the word mind to mention to the aspect of soul. They abstracted this concept from those faculties of soul that manage knowledge by correspondence. Given that, they

use soul somewhere and mind somewhere else and specific faculties in the third.



**Scheme 2:** This scheme shows soul's faculties and the dotted line refers to the domain of mind

### 2-7 The relationship between mind and external world

Today the problem of the relationship between mind and external world is considered as the most remarkable problem in philosophy and its branches. Yet to understand the relationship between mind and external world from Islamic philosophy point of view we focus on the discusses about the nature of knowledge. The reader may very well understand the reason that forces us to focus on these discusses. Moslem philosophers have generally attempted to explain the nature of knowledge from ontological point of view so their

explanation does not include the entire domain of the relationship between mind and external world. Therefore all of what we described to them is explained incidentally in discusses about the nature of knowledge.

Now we first classify the Islamic standpoints toward this issue into three main class then explained each of them.

### **2-7-1** Explanation of shadow

Shamsodin Assfahani (d.?) believed that: we do not accept that what is ascribed to the mental existence is the essence of the known but is its shadow and idea and though the idea is correspond to the known, it is contrary to the known itself<sup>37</sup>. There are several objections to this approach.<sup>38</sup>

### **2-7-2** Explanation of relation

Fakhr raze (d. 606/1017) thought that knowledge is relation between the knower and the object: Chapter six; the study of the true view on knowledge we say that knowledge and comprehension and awareness are relative cases.<sup>39</sup> Though the majority of scholastic philosophers hold that knowledge is specific relation between the knower and the known<sup>40</sup>, Sadr al-Mutallihin (d. 1050/1640) has rejected this approach.<sup>41</sup>

**2-7-3** Explanation of mental forms; Most of Moslem philosophers hold that knowledge is mental forms but when they are going to explain this idea they are divided into three groups as illustrated below:

**2-7-3-1** Essential explanation; most of Moslem philosophers holds that the mental forms are mental essences, which correspond to the external essences. Bahmamyar (d. 485/ 1066) has written that: you knew previously that the reality of intelligible and that it is the essence, which is clear of the other.<sup>42</sup>

**2-7-3-2** Conceptual explanation; in Islamic courses we can find another approach. Notes that Moslem philosophers did not distinguish these approaches one from the other thus you can find more than one of them in one philosopher's work. Here is the translation of Sadr al-Mutallihin (d. 1050/1640)'s words: what exists in mind namely the concept of animal and exhumation and motion and heat and so on are concepts of those things and their meaning not their essence and reality<sup>43</sup>.

**2-7-3-3** Conceptual-Intentional explanation; some of contemporary Moslem philosophers, especially Ghollamreza Fayyazi, believes that indeed mental forms are concepts of things, included being, nonbeing and essences, and the intentional aspect of mental forms is essential to them. This approach, however, is not explained very well.<sup>44</sup>

### **3- Ending: conclusion**

So far we have illustrated the nature of mind and its place in Islamic philosophy. Now and according to the subjects to which we mentioned previously we could conclude that:

- (1) The best definition of the mind is so:  
That aspect of soul which manages knowledge by correspondence, namely the knowledge through the forms of thing.
- (2) The mind's specifics are of the soul itself.
- (3) The arguments that demonstrate the existence of mind, in fact, do demonstrate the existence of the soul.
- (4) The arguments that demonstrate the immateriality of mind demonstrate the immateriality of soul.
- (5) We must ascribe mind's function to the soul.
- (6) The relationship between mind and body is the relationship between soul and body.
- (7) The relationship between mind and external world is indeed the relationship between soul and external world.
- (8) And finally, as an explanation to the M. Motahari (d. 1402/1980)'s idea, we can not comprehensive knowledge if we do not know the soul.

Through previous discussions we arrived at the point that mind must be an entity which:

- (1) is the place for mental forms,
- (2) has exploratory movements to the known for obtaining the unknown,
- (3) possesses stages,

- (4) have faculties,
- (5) is an immaterial being
- (6) becomes affected from the external object,
- (7) generates new conception,
- (8) has a memorizing function.

According to this explanation we can conclude that for Avicenna (d. 428/1037) there are not two separated things: the Soul and mind. In other words, the Soul and mind are just the same. There are many evidences, which make this claim well founded.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> See:

- مطهری، مرتضی، شرح مبسوط منظومه (تهران: انتشارات حکمت، ۱۳۶۶ ه.ش.) ج ۱ ص ۳۶۸

<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, we must be careful that when we study the epistemological issues, do not mistake judgments about mind's function for judgments about epistemological validity of conceptions.

<sup>3</sup> Sadr al-Mutallihin (d. 1050/1640), For example, have given three different definitions for soul, see:

- صدر المتألهين، الحکمه المتعالیه فی الاسفار الاربعه العقلیه (بيروت: دار الاحياء العربی، ۱۴۱۰ ه.ق.) ج. ۴، ج. ۳ ص ۱۵.  
- همان، ص ۵۱۶-۵۱۵، همچنین صدر المتألهين، مفاتيح الغيب، تصحيح محمد خواجه (تهران: موسسه مطالعات و تحقيقات فرهنگي، ۱۳۶۳ ه.ش.) ص ۱۳۸.  
- صدر المتألهين، الحکمه المتعالیه فی الاسفار الاربعه العقلیه، همان، ج. ۴، ص ۲۵۱.

<sup>4</sup> See:

- صدر المتألهين، همان ج ۴، ص ۲۵۱.

<sup>5</sup> See:

- عبدالرزاق لاهیجی، سوارق الالهام، تعليق آقا علي مدرس (تهران: کتابخانه فارابی، ۱۴۰۱ ه.ق.) ص ۵۴، س ۲.

<sup>6</sup> See:

- ابوحيان توحیدی، المقابسات، تصحيح محمد توفيق حسين (تهران: مرکز نشر دانشگاهي، ۱۳۶۶ ه.ش.) ص ۳۶۲.

<sup>7</sup> See:

- ابو نصر فارابی، فصول منتزعه، تصحيح فوزي متری نجار (تهران: انتشارات الزهراء، ۱۴۰۵ ه.ق.) ج. ۲، صص ۵۹-۵۸.

<sup>8</sup> See:

- مير سيد شريف جرجاني، *الكبرى في المنطق* (قم: دفتر نشر معارف اسلامي، ۱۳۶۹ ه.ش.) صص ۲۱ - ۲۳.
- <sup>9</sup> See:
- عبدالرزاق لايجي، *گوهر مراد*، تصحيح زين العابدين قريباتي (تهران: سازمان چاپ و انتشارات وزارت فرهنگ و ارشاد اسلامي، ۱۳۷۲ ه.ش.) ص ۵۴.
- <sup>10</sup> See:
- ابن سينا، *الشفاء*، كتاب البرهان (مصر: وزاره التربيه و التعليم، ۱۳۷۵ ه.ق.) ص ۲۵۹.
- <sup>11</sup> See:
- مير سيد شريف جرجاني، *كتاب التعريفات* (بيروت: دار الكتاب العلميه، ۱۴۰۸ ه.ق.) ج ۳، ص ۱۰۸.
- <sup>12</sup> See:
- ابن سينا، *التعليقات*، تحقيق عبدالرحمن بدوي (قاهره: الهيئه المصريه العامه للكتاب، ۱۳۹۲ ه.ق.) ص ۶۴، س ۱۸.
- <sup>13</sup> See:
- خواجه نصيرالدين طوسي، *شرح الاشارات و التنبهات* (تهران: دفتر نشر الكتاب، ۱۴۰۳ ه.ق.) ج ۳، ص ۲، ص ۳۵۹.
- <sup>14</sup> See:
- علامه حلي، *الجواهر النضيد* (قم: انتشارات بيدار، ۱۳۶۳ ه.ش.) ص ۳۱۴ [رساله التصور و التصديق].
- <sup>15</sup> Yet Sadr al-Mutallihin (d. 1050/1640) says that when we tell that this exists in external world and that exists in min, we do not mean that mind is place or space or locus, but we mean that things have existences which
- <sup>16</sup> See:
- ابن سينا، *الشفاء*، قسم المنطق (قم: مكتبه المرعشي النجفي، ۱۴۰۵ ه.ق.) ج ۱، ص ۲۵۹.
- <sup>17</sup> See:
- خواجه نصيرالدين طوسي، همان.
- <sup>18</sup> See:
- علامه حلي، همان، ص ۳۲۴.
- <sup>19</sup> See:
- عبدالرزاق لايجي، *شوارق الالهام*، همان، ص ۷۱، س ۲.
- <sup>20</sup> See:
- ابن سينا، *الشفاء*، همان، ص ۲۳، س ۱۳.
- <sup>21</sup> See:
- ملا عبدالله يزدي، *الحاشيه علي تهذيب المنطق* (قم: موسسه النشر الاسلامي، ۱۴۲۱ ه.ق.) ج ۱۰، ص ۱۹، س ۱.
- <sup>22</sup> See:
- صدر المتالهي، همان، ج ۱، ص ۳۳۲، س ۱۳.
- <sup>23</sup> Fakhr raze (d. 606/1017) has denied this faculty, see:
- فخر رازي، *شرح عيون الحكمة*، تحقيق احمد حجازي (تهران: موسسه الصادق، ۱۳۷۳ ه.ش.) ج ۲، ص ۲۴۹.
- And Sadr al-Mutallihin (d. 1050/1640) has inepreted it as rational faculty, see:
- صدر المتالهي، همان، ج ۸، ص ۲۱۷، س ۴.
- <sup>24</sup> For more detailed explanation see:
- خواجه نصيرالدين طوسي، همان، ص ۳۳۱، س ۲.
- <sup>25</sup> See:



- ابن سینا، *التعليقات*، همان، ص ۱۸۳، س ۹.

<sup>26</sup> See:

- علامه حلي، *كشف المراد في شرح تجريد الاعتقاد*، تصحيح حسن زاده (قم: انتشارات اسلامي، ۱۳۶۳ ه.ش.)، ص ۲۸، س ۵.

<sup>27</sup> See:

- صدر المتألهين، همان، ج ۱، ص ۲۶۸، س ۱۰.

<sup>28</sup> See:

- شهاب الدين سهروردي، *مجموعه مصنفات شيخ اشراق*، تحقيق هنري كرين (تهران: انجمن ... فلسفه ايران، ۱۳۹۷ ه.ق.)، ج ۲، ص ۱۰۰، س ۷.

<sup>29</sup> See:

- همان، ص ۱۵، س ۵، هم چنین ابن سینا، *التعليقات*، همان، ص ۶۹.

<sup>30</sup> See:

- ابن سینا، *الشفاء*، همان، ص ۲۵۹، هم چنین علامه حلي، *الجواهر النضيد*، همان، ص ۳۱۲، هم چنین سبزواري، *شرح المنظومه*، تعليق حسن زاده (قم: نشر ناب، ۱۳۸۰ ه.ش.)، ج ۲، ص ۱۲۴.

<sup>31</sup> See:

- خواجه نصير الدين طوسي، همان، ص ۳۳۱، س ۲.

<sup>32</sup> See:

- فخر الدين رازي، *المباحث المشرقيه* (طهران: مکتبه الاسدي، ۱۹۶۶ م.)، ج ۱، ص ۳۳۸، س ۱۴.

<sup>33</sup> See:

- صدر المتألهين، همان، ص ۳۷۰.

<sup>34</sup> See:

- صدر المتألهين، همان، ج ۸، ص ۲۲۱.

<sup>35</sup> See:

- خواجه نصير الدين طوسي، همان، ص ۳۰۲، س ۹.

<sup>36</sup> See:

- همان، ص ۳۰۷، س ۱۰، و ص ۳۰۷، س ۱۷.

Sadr al-Mutallihin (d. 1050/1640) instance for the influence of body on soul by saying: your imagination of sour makes some affection in you. See:

- صدر المتألهين، همان، ج ۱، ص ۲۷۵، س ۱۰.

<sup>37</sup> See:

- اصفهاني، شمس الدين، *مطالع الانظار على طوابع الانوار* (هند: شرکه علميه، ۱۳۰۵ ه.ق.)، ص ۲۱۱ [به نقل از *مطابقت صور ذهني با خارج* نوشته عباس عارفي]

<sup>38</sup> You can find these objections in:

- صدر المتألهين، همان، ج ۱، ص ۳۱۴، س ۷.

<sup>39</sup> See:

- فخر رازي، همان، ص ۳۳۱، س ۱.

<sup>40</sup> See:

- قطب الدين رازي و ديگران، *شروح الشمسيه* (مصر: شرکه شمس الشموس، بي تا) ص ۶۰، س ۲۲.

<sup>41</sup> See:

- صدر المتألهين ، همان ، ج ۳ ، ص ۲۹۱ ، س ۱۹ .

<sup>42</sup> See:

- بهمنیار ، *التحصيل* ، تصحيح مرتضي مطهري

(تهران: انتشارات دانشگاه تهران، ۱۳۴۹ ه.ش.) ص ۷۴۵ ، س ۸ .

It should be noted that he also has mentioned to the conceptual-intentional explanation and has written that: their existence for us are the affections which intent them. See:

- همان ، ص ۴۰۳ ، س ۶ .

<sup>43</sup> See:

- صدر المتألهين ، همان ، ج ۱ ، ص ۲۹۱ .

<sup>44</sup> For more detailed discusses see:

- عارفي ، عباس ، *مطابقت صور ذهني با خارج* ، پایان نامه کارشناسي ارشد رشته فلسفه در موسسه آموزشي و پژوهشي امام خميني(ره) شماره ۷۶ .

## **Aspects of the Saints in the Masnavi of Rumi**

Sayyed Ali Asghar Mirbagheri Fard  
University of Isfahan, Iran

### **Abstract:**

Aspects of the Saints in the Masnavi of Rumi

Perfection is an important mystic issue and its different aspects discussed immensely in Sufi literature. Mystics believe that man was created in order to acquire perfection and that the perfect man is the most precious divinely creature who directs others towards truth. Mowlana Jalaladin Rumi (died A.H/1272 A.D) in his divine Masnavi presents a perfect weltan schauung based on Islamic mysticism. Describing and elucidating the characteristics of perfection and the means to achieve it, he thus introduces the figure of the perfect man in his works. Rumi highly appreciates the importance of the perfect man and considers him the pivot of creation, the criterion by which man is guided towards real felicity. According to Rumi, man attains perfection when he perceives the truth and his value is measured according to his level of gnosis. Thus man's perfection is an issue of such importance in Rumi's mystic weltan schauung that one is obliged to deeply investigate his viewpoints on perfection and the perfect man's characteristics in order to recognize his intellectual principles. Through a comparative analysis of Rumi's views with those of other mystics, the current paper then aims to investigate his opinions concerning perfections.

### **Introduction**

In mystical texts, whenever the subject of the creation of man is raised, the issue of perfection comes to our attention. In response to the question as to why the pure and abstract soul has entered and made itself at home in the clay and concrete body, religious sages have written that man's soul possesses perfection potentially but, in order for this potential perfection to become actual, it must take its place in the lower world and clay body so that it may attain to perfection and return to the higher world. In the opinion of these sages, all men are

essentially searching for perfection, though not all of them are aware of this. Thus, men are divided into three classes: commoner ('avam), elite (khavass), and super-elite (khass ul-khass). Commoners are said to be those who do not know that they have come to this world so as to seek perfection while the elite are those who, although aware, nevertheless do not search for it. Among these groups it is only those termed super-elite who seek for perfection, although even among them not all reach the goal<sup>1</sup>.

In the opinion of mystics, the man who, while placed in this world for the purpose of perfecting himself, remains in the course of his life far from this understanding and does not benefit from his material life, stays cheated and ignorant and distant from true joy. Therefore, great mystics such as Jalal ud-Din Mohammad Balkhi who have themselves found perfection have struggled throughout all their works and deeds, in their teachings and in the composition of mystical writings, to bring others out of ignorance and impel them toward perfection. The *Masnavi* of Rumi, from its very opening "Listen", tries to awaken the addressee and bring him out of the valley of ignorance into consciousness so that he may not remain amongst the binds of mundane attachments, distant from his supreme goal.

In this paper our intention is to further our awareness of Rumi's view upon this matter through an introduction to the concept of the perfect man (ensan-e kamel). It is to be noted that, for purposes of concision and fluency of argument, we have refrained from citing verses of the *Masnavi*, although the book number and page of the *Masnavi* have been placed in footnotes following each topic for facility of reference.

In Islamic mysticism and in the *Masnavi*, the term 'perfect man' is applied to someone who has reached perfection and is considered an exemplar and incarnation of perfection. The elucidation of the characteristics of the perfect man is in fact an explanation of the dimensions of perfection itself. An introduction to the perfect man is useful from another point of view too. Since one of Mulana's aims in composing the *Masnavi* was to make people aware of and guide them towards perfection, there is no better way to accomplish this task than by acquainting oneself with the perfect man, because only those are

able to guide others towards perfection who have themselves reached perfection and traversed this road.

O you who are unaware try to beware  
Not led yourself, leading how will you fare?

Hafiz

In mystical texts the subject of the perfect man arises in connection with the station of repentance (*towbeh*). Repentance is the first mystical station, in which the traveller comes out of ignorance and wants to take a new road to bring him to perfection and the true Besought. It is natural that he cannot cross the twisting, curving path of the way on his own. At this stage the traveller is like a blind man who wants to step into a dense and dangerous jungle; if no guide helps him, he will doubtless be caught in one of the chasms of danger. The perfect man is one who, having traversed this road, rushes to his aid and guides him away from these straits and into the light<sup>2</sup>.

The perfect man has been introduced under various headings in mystical texts, and each one of these refers to a certain particularity and attribute, and is in perfect accordance with his leading and guiding role. The most famous term for the perfect man is 'saint' (*vali*), which the mystics have taken from the Koran and which they define as the following: the saint is one who stands within a halo of God's special graces and divine chastity and who is protected from contaminations and impurities. Discussions relating to the perfect man mostly occur under the rubric of 'sainthood' (*velayat*). This subject is so important in Islamic mysticism that Hojviri states that the base and foundation of Sufism and mysticism stand upon sainthood<sup>3</sup>.

From the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.H. (9<sup>th</sup> A.D.), mystics have engaged in serious discussion regarding sainthood. Perhaps Sahl Tustari and Hakim Termezi were among the first to speak at length on this matter. Termezi in his *Khatm ul-Owlia* and Kharraz in his own treatise both elucidated this matter, and Termezi introduced the expressions relevant to sainthood in his hierarchy of the saints<sup>4</sup>. The saints are not all at the same stage and they do not all occupy the same position. They have various stages which can be divided into seven stages. These stages are ranked in an orderly and gradual manner according to which each stage is connected to that above and below it<sup>5</sup>. The highest station of the

saints is termed 'pivot' (ghotb) or 'assistant' (qowth) and, according to Rumi and other mystics, he who holds this position is the axis of the created world, without whom it would lose its order and welfare. In their opinion, the world is as the body and the saint as the heart. Just as the body is worthless without the heart, so too the world is without value without the saint. The saint is the medium between the nether- and the present world, and men can attain to meaning only through him. It is on the basis of these beliefs that Rumi founds his *Masnavi* on the axis of the saints and expresses his fundamental doctrine and conclusions, as though the saints were the heart of the *Masnavi*, whose tale is meaningless without them.

Rumi does not pay much attention to the stages and divisions of the saints. Sometimes he crystallizes a saint under the guise of the Prophet of Islam Mohammad, or under that of Moses, Jesus or 'Ali, or occasionally under that of the Companions of the Prophet, or that of great mystics such as Bayazid Bastami, Ebrahim Adham, or even under the guise of his own particular disciple Hasam ud-Din Chalabi. In mystical texts, a distinction has been made between the prophet (nabi) and the saint, or between prophecy and sainthood and there have even been those who evaluated the two, sometimes reckoning prophecy superior to sainthood and at other times the saint superior to the prophet. Although this topic has been the subject of attention since the beginning of Sufism, it was particularly emphasized in the works of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries A.H.<sup>6</sup> In the *Masnavi* of Mulana, there is no great difference to be seen between the prophet and the saint, and Rumi considers them to share the same characteristics. Only in some matters, such as when he compares Elias (Kheizr) with Moses, does he grant superiority to the one, on the grounds that Elias was aware of certain secrets which Moses was unable to comprehend<sup>7</sup>.

### **The Description of the Saints in the *Masnavi***

The picture Rumi draws of the saints in the *Masnavi* is varied, comprehensive and perfect. In his opinion, the saints attain such proximity to the Truth that they stay in the sanctuary of divine special graces and God feels jealousy towards them, causing Rumi to call them the children of the Truth since they pass their time in the chastity of

God, whose power aids them<sup>8</sup>. God nourishes them, speaks with them, and provides them with special spiritual teachings<sup>9</sup>.

Rumi says that such a bond is formed between the saints and God that God considers their burdens and discomforts as his own burden. This comes out in a story from the *Masnavi*: God calls to Moses saying: 'I was sick, why did you not come to visit me?' Moses, astonished, asks: 'O my God, there is no corruption or sickness in your being; how is it that you call yourself sick?'. In response God says to him: 'What I mean is not that I am sick but rather that one of my special servants has become burdened and his burden is my own burden'<sup>10</sup>. For this very reason, remoteness from the presence of the saints is interpreted as remoteness from God, and anyone wanting to become the companion of God must reach the presence of the saints<sup>11</sup>.

One of the signs of a saint is the performance of wondrous deeds (*keramat*). According to mystics, a wondrous deed is an extraordinary act, similar to a miracle, which the saint performs owing to his contact with God and His permission<sup>12</sup>.

Rumi refers to the wondrous deeds of the saints, and introduces their various kinds, in various places of the *Masnavi*. He says that, were the power of God not to come to the aid of the saints, they would never be capable of performing such acts<sup>13</sup>.

That which causes the saint to perform wondrous deeds is his nearness to God. Although many have pretended to arrive at divine proximity, true proximity is the prerogative of the saints, the sign of which is precisely the performance of wondrous deeds. According to Rumi, the proximity of the saints is accompanied by wondrous deeds, grandeur and majesty such that iron turns soft in their hands; pretenders, however, are devoid of these blessings and wax turns hard in their hands<sup>14</sup>.

In the *Masnavi*, one of the features of the state of perfection is that the traveller reaches a state of wisdom such that he cuts his attachments from all that is not God – the Worldly, the Other-Worldly – and only pays attention to the true object of worship. Of course, this does not mean that the traveller throws himself into worldly burdens and privations, but rather that worldly and other-worldly allures do not detain him from the main goal and object of his search. Rumi introduces this man as the 'shadow of God' (*saye-ye Khoda*) and

understands his very being on this earth as guidance: one who guides us toward the sun of the Truth<sup>15</sup>.

### **The Characteristics of the Saints**

Among the most important characteristics which Rumi attributes to the saints is that they have clarified and purified their interior, which is precisely the reason for their arrival at the station of sainthood. He likens the pure interior of the saints, in terms of purity and clarity, to that of a mosque in which God is present and observant<sup>16</sup>. With this inner purity, the divine light manifests itself in their conscience, and they find insight by means of God's light<sup>17</sup>. Their being becomes absolute light from the senses to the thoughts<sup>18</sup>. Thus it is that the words and conduct of the saint are accompanied by perfect insight and every word he utters or action he commits is correct and faultless. In Rumi's opinion, even if a shaykh is hypocritical, his hypocrisy is better than our sincerity because he benefits from the divine light and insight whereas we are deprived of them<sup>19</sup>. The purity and clarity of the saints' conscience is so important to Rumi that he considers their heart and inner dimension superior to the heavens<sup>20</sup>. It is through this pure and clear interior that the saints obtain divine inspiration and conduct themselves in accordance with this inspiration. As such, one must not find fault with their acts even though they may appear inappropriate. For example, in the story of the king and the slave girl, the killing of the goldsmith by the divine doctor seems on the surface to be inappropriate; Rumi, however, understands the carrying out of this act to be of divine inspiration<sup>21</sup>.

The clarifying of their interior and obtainment of divine insight enables the saints to attain to the secrets of God and pass from the exterior to find the inner dimension and truth of each thing. For this reason, the saints are aware of a man's conscience, and some of them have been called the spies of the hearts (*jasus ol-gholub*)<sup>22</sup>.

Among the other reasons which render the saints cognizant of the secrets is the fact that Rumi understands their body to be created but their soul eternally pre-existent. Based on this belief, their souls witnessed and observed the affairs of the world in pre-eternity in the presence of God, and looked upon its creation. Thus they are informed



of any thing prior to its coming into being, or of any phenomenon prior to its occurrence<sup>23</sup>.

Since the saints are, on the one hand, informed of the secrets and truths and, on the other, only pay attention to God and do not heed anything else, their actions are conducted in such a way that they proceed along Truth's course according to God's satisfaction, toward the attainment of the real goal. For this reason, no work of theirs is contrary to the true interests of man. All of their works open the path; their wrath and mercy, severity and softness are profitable. In the story of Elias, Rumi explains that, however much his actions appeared strange to others, since he was informed of the secrets, his actions remained founded upon the truth<sup>24</sup>.

Although the saints are cognizant of Truth's secrets, they never allow themselves to disclose these mysteries, a characteristic which, like other characteristics, exists in them through God's blessing. In Rumi's words, God's order is such that a seal of silence is placed upon the lips of anyone who knows Truth's secrets, so that they become a keeper of the secrets. Apart from withholding the mysteries, saints also veil vices. They who are aware of a man's conscience and his faults nevertheless never disclose the creature's faults; rather, they try to put an end to those faults. In the story of the repentance of Nosuh, the saint's prayer and veiling of his faults enable Nosuh to succeed in attaining repentance<sup>25</sup>.

Awareness of the secrets is important in Rumi's perspective, and he understands the criterion for man's superiority to the angels to lie precisely in this. In his perspective, the more aware of the secrets each man's spirit and soul are, the more perfect and lofty he is. When he refers to the story of the angels' prostration before Adam, he is convinced that Adam was superior to the angels who prostrated before him because it would not be appropriate for a valuable being to prostrate before one of little value<sup>26</sup>.

One of the very important points Rumi makes regarding the saints is that, since they move in accordance with the Truth and there is only one reality in their eyes, their speech and conduct proceeds in one direction and towards one goal. On this basis, all the saints from the beginning until the end of the world are not in the least point contrary to one another and their words and actions are not opposed to each

other. Citing a Tradition, Rumi reckons all the saints to be one person or single ego, and believes that, although on a physical level they are numerous, yet in the spiritual dimension they are to be accounted one and are united, precisely in contradiction to the ignorant and lost among whom no agreement or concord exists and who are perpetually engaged in conflict and dispute.<sup>27</sup>

Among the other particularities of the saints resulting from their cognition of the divine secrets, another is that they always proceed in the station of satisfaction (*reza*); a station in which they are so immersed that they refrain from saying prayers on their own behalf and are cognizant that whatever is destined for them from the Friend is good<sup>28</sup>.

In Rumi's perspective, those who possess such characteristics are accounted the divine mercy through which God sends down his mercy to creatures. He understands them to be the *Esrafil* (life-bestowing angel) of their times, through whom true life comes to fruition<sup>29</sup>.

### **The Role of the Saints in the Created World**

Another topic comprehensively discussed in the *Masnavi* of Rumi is what kind of obligation creatures and non-saints owe to saints. Like other mystics, Rumi believes that anyone wanting to reach true life, real joy and, ultimately, truth, has no option other than to follow the saints. In his perspective, saints are considered 'total' (*kolli*) and non-saints 'partial' (*joz`i*). Without a total, no partial can continue, and perishes. This total is united with the total truth, and anyone wanting to reach that total truth must needs pass through this path. The saints are the friends and shadow of God, and one may only find the divine sun through them. Resorting to the intellect and following the men of reason is only useful in the exterior world and in one's mundane life; for reaching the spiritual and nether-world, only the saints can be profitable<sup>30</sup>. In Rumi's mystical view, man's need for the saints is so evident and clear that he attributes the commoners' straying to their not following and not appreciating the importance of the saints<sup>31</sup>.

One of the reasons why saints remain unrecognized by people is that their outer appearance is like that of others. People do not see a difference between their own outward form and that of the saints, and

imagine them to be like themselves. Some saints even present a less impressive exterior than that of others so that no-one suspects it may be possible for them to be one of the saints<sup>32</sup>. Of course, this issue of why some saints remain unrecognized and intentionally proceed in anonymity requires an independent investigation. In any case, Rumi, citing a Tradition, mentions that it is God's decree that some saints should remain hidden<sup>33</sup>.

In spite of all this, seekers of the truth must search for the saints and find the road to reaching the truth through following them. Although the saints' exterior may resemble that of others, their interior is deeper than the oceans and wider than the heavens. They are as a sun concealed within a particle<sup>34</sup>.

Rumi, in a beautiful simile, likens the saint to the rod of Moses and to the life-bestowing breath of Jesus. He says that Moses' rod seemed to be no more than wood and on the surface it was like other rods, and Jesus' word too seemed no more than letter and sound just like the word of others; but Moses' rod possessed such power that it could swallow the created world, and Jesus' word had such an effect that it took death away from people<sup>35</sup>.

Regarding the actions of saints and of people, Rumi also believes that, although their appearance may be the same, the essence and quality of those actions are different and they result in different outcomes. In another simile, he beautifully says that a wasp and a bee nourish themselves from one flower, but the flower's nectar turns to a sting in one and into honey in the other<sup>36</sup>.

According to Mulana, a saint is not necessarily an aged man who has spent many years in austerity and striving. What he means by a saint is not someone who has reached a great age but rather one whose intellect and wisdom is perfect even though he may be young or even a newborn. In his perspective, Jesus in the cradle and John the Baptist while a child at school were saints of God and are considered guides for humans toward the truth<sup>37</sup>.

## Bibliography

- Avicenna *Resale-ye Azhavi* Khadivian (ed.), Ettela'at, Tehran, 1364 A.H.;  
 Ghoshairi, Abul-Ghasem *Resale-ye Ghoshairie* Foruzanfar (ed.), Asatir, Tehran, 1361 A.H.;  
 Hafiz *Divan* Khanlari (ed.), Kharazmi, Tehran, 1362 A.H.;  
 Hamuya, Sa'd ud-Din *Al-Mesbah fit-Tasawwof* Heravi (ed.), Mowla, Tehran, 1362 A.H.;  
 Hojviri, 'Ali ibn Othman *Kashful-Mahjub* Zhokufski (ed.) Amir Kabir, Tehran, 1336 A.H.;  
 Kashani, Mahmud *Mesbah ul-Hedaie wa Meftah ul-Kefaie* Homai (ed.), Sanai, Tehran;  
 Nasafi, 'Aziz *Bayan ut-Tanzil* Mirbagheri Fard (ed.), Anjoman-e Athar va Mafakher-e Farhangi, Tehran, 1379 A.H.;  
 - *Kashful-Haghayegh* Damqani (ed.), Bongah-e Tarjome va Nashr-e Ketab, Tehran, 1359 A.H.;  
 - *Ketab al-Ensan al-Kamel* Mole (ed.), Tabari, Tehran, 1993 A.D.;  
 Rumi, Jalal ud-Din Mohammad Balkhi *Masnavi* Este'lami (ed.), Asatir, Tehran;  
 Sarraj, Abu Nasr *Al-Loma fit-Tasawwof* Mahmud & Sorur (eds.), Dar ul-Ketab, Maktabat ul-Mosanna, Egypt & Baghdad, 1960 A.D.;  
 Schimmel, Anne-Marie *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* Govahi (trans.), Daffar-e Nashr-e Farhang-e Islami, Tehran, 1375 A.H.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> For further information, cf. Avicenna, *Azhavi*, 82-3; 'Aziz Nasafi, *Kashful-Haghayegh*, 55-8 & 144-5; Nasafi, *Ensan-e Kamel*, 53-4; Nasafi, *Bayan ut-Tanzil*, 72.  
<sup>2</sup> For further information of the station of repentance, cf. Abu Nasr Sarraj, *Al-Loma*, 68-9; the (Persian) translation of the *Resale-ye Ghoshayrie*, 136-145; Mahmud Kashani, *Mesbah ul-Hedaie*, 366-371.  
<sup>3</sup> Abu 'Ali Hojviri, *Kashful-Mahjub*, 210.  
<sup>4</sup> Schimmel, Anne-Marie, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, 317-322.  
<sup>5</sup> For further information, cf. Hojviri, *Kashful-Mahjub*, 269; Nasafi, *Ensan-e Kamel*, 317-322.  
<sup>6</sup> See also Sarraj, *Al-Loma*, 393; Sa'd ud-Din Hamuya, *Al-Mesbah fit-Tasavwof*, Introduction, 27-35; Jalal ud-Din Homayi, *Mowlavi Name*, Vol. II, 891-902.  
<sup>7</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, I/19; II/27.  
<sup>8</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, III/12.  
<sup>9</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, I/74; IV/84; VI/17.  
<sup>10</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, II/99.  
<sup>11</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, II/99; II/101-2.

<sup>12</sup> For further information, see Sarraj, *Al-Lama'*; the *Ethbat ul-Ayat wa al-Karamat*, 390-406; Nasafi, *Kashf ul-Haghayegh*, 93, 103 & 107; Nasafi, *Bayan ut-Tanzil*, 219

ff

<sup>13</sup> See for example Rumi, *Masnavi*, I/85, 105 & 154; II/146 & 171-2.

<sup>14</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, III/38.

<sup>15</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, I/28.

<sup>16</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, II/141.

<sup>17</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, II/74; VI/141.

<sup>18</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, II/61.

<sup>19</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, II/168.

<sup>20</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, III/107.

<sup>21</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, I/19.

<sup>22</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, II/16 & 68; V/136.

<sup>23</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, II/16.

<sup>24</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, I/19 & 101-2; II/27; IV/32-4.

<sup>25</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, V/110.

<sup>26</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, II/151; VI/100.

<sup>27</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, II/17 & 168-170; II/84.

<sup>28</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, III/91; VI/71.

<sup>29</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, I/96; III/88.

<sup>30</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, I/28 & 142-3; II/10 & 99; IV/ 33-4 & 164.

<sup>31</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, I/21.

<sup>32</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, I/21, 121 & 122; III/12; V/101.

<sup>33</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, III/145.

<sup>34</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, I/121-2.

<sup>35</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, III/195.

<sup>36</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, I/21-2; V/66.

<sup>37</sup> Rumi, *Masnavi*, V/66.



## **Social Philosophy in The Balance of Religious Intellection: GIDDENS and Philosophical Social Theorizing**

Seyed Javad Kafkazli  
Chita State University, Siberia, Russia

### **Abstract**

In this article we are attempting to analyze the ideas of Anthony Giddens from England who has been considered as one of the classics of post-modern social theory. To engage with Giddens would be of great significance for anyone who is interested in intercivilizational dialogue between Islam (as a civilization as well as an intellectual tradition) and secularism (as a world order as well as an intellectual tradition). Here I would like mainly focus on metaphysical dimensions of his social theory which have been less pondered upon generally and by Muslim intellectuals in particular. By the metaphysics I don't mean the theological significance of his theory (which is of great importance as the absence of traditional theology within his episteme demonstrates an important lack within contemporary debates by influencing various domains of theory and praxis) but how the absence of these concerns have created a chaos of meaning within secular tradition in generally and in Giddens' work in particular as theological concerns are not only of abstract significance but of profound praxiological import which without the constitution of self and society would lose the canopy of meaning in an integral sense which connects now to eternity, finite to infinitude or Man to God.

### **Anthony Giddens (1938- )**

Does Giddens' sociology contain any notion of authentic extra-Occidental civilizational unit? Does Giddens' sociology go beyond monological civilizational understanding? What are the parameters of Giddens' historical vision? Where does his sociology lie in terms of meta-theory?

In order to address these issues I have chosen two of his works which are of relevance to my questions: *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory* (1971), *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism I, II, III* (1981, 1985, 1994<sup>1</sup>). However this does not mean that I have

excluded other books or articles written by Giddens. I have used other works whenever I have seen they would shed some light on my questions and additionally would be enlightening in regard to my points. In other words, I have followed his works up to recent.

### **Why is Giddens significant for an inter-civilizational sociological project?**

It would be more constructive to say a few words about my choice of Giddens before going any further in discussing his social theoretical views. Why is Giddens important? What is there in his sociological quest, which deems him a significant figure in contemporary context?

As it was demonstrated in the previous chapter, Gouldner argued vehemently that 'Western Sociology' is in crisis and the critical mode is impending upon modern contemporary secular social theory. This was a fact that was discerned by a progressive sociologist such as Gouldner. He forcefully attempted to document the anatomy of sociological crisis and sincerely put forward his own remedy called: reflexive sociology.

Although not at the same time nevertheless around the same period and within the similar culture of science, another sociologist from Britain embarked on the same reconstructive project. This sociologist was no one less than Anthony Giddens. The anatomy of crisis were laid bare by Gouldner in 1970 but Giddensian 'rescue mission' did not await longer than 1971 by ecumenical reinterpretation of 'Classical Trio' and a re-writing of sociological rules in 1976.

In other words, by the middle of seventies, it became clear, at least for post-Marxist-Revisionist sociologists, that Giddens, if not 'The Man' but definitely, is one of the men who can rescue the western sociology from impending crisis. And by that latter understanding one did not mean that Giddens is the chosen sociologist to rescue the narrow academic disciplinary sociology. The proponents of Giddensian project had a wider understanding of sociology and its mission. For them, sociology was a society's understanding of itself, and the disciplinary sociology along other disciplinary approaches to the 'Social' did represent this broad societal self-conception. (Mann, 1983, p.v.)



In other words, the proponents of Giddens did not think of him as another disciplinary teacher. On the contrary, he was going to be considered, by sociologists such as John Urry as early as 1977, as the saviour of western sociology. In Urry's own words,

If western sociology is to be saved from its continuing crisis, Anthony Giddens may be the author to achieve it ... (1977. 911).

And another sociologist, John Rex, as early as 1983 considered the Giddensian project as an attempt to reconceptualize the whole edifice of classical sociological reasoning in terms of what he called *philosophization of sociology*. In Rex' own words,

Giddens began to draw on ... existentialism, structuralism, European Marxism and critical theory, ... and as well as on his own wide and erudite reading to 'rewrite sociology'. (1983. 1005)

Although Giddens' own claim that his work has major significance for the understanding of late modernity and socialist theory of society is contestable, nevertheless, as Bob Mullan notes,

Giddens' work emphasises more than many the role of human agency ... (1987. 5).

That Giddens more than any other sociologists emphasise the role of human agency was not just an assertive fact in the mind of those sociologists who favored this Giddensian 'Re-Writing Project' in early seventies right after Gouldner's prophetic warning. But it was praise for a new re-emerging breed of sociologist who could save western sociology from its continuing crisis in Urry's words. (1977. 911)

Some authors, such as Rex in eighties, went even further to declare that,

There are many who would argue that Giddens represents the major significant development in English sociology. This claim, however, is difficult to assess, since it is extremely unlikely that there are many practising sociologists who even begin to understand the issues with which he is concerned (1983. 1005).

And others such as Mullan concluded that Rex was not surely too cynical about Giddens and his sociological 'Re-writing Project', and in addition argued the substantial significance of Giddens for western sociology. (1987. 4-5)

In other words, although there are many who do not consider Giddens and his philosophization of sociology rewarding, nevertheless they all agree that certainly without doubt " ... Giddens has been the most oft-quoted British sociologist" (Mullan, 1987. 4) since late 70s. And there is no argument that the very politics of quotation and citation is not a matter of accident or chance in *academicus terra* or academic context.

On the contrary, it demonstrates the relevance of the author and the topics raised by the author. Although it is not certain that whatever raised and discussed are accepted by the community of sociologists, nevertheless it demonstrates that one has made a point and a very substantive point indeed. Now if his points are taken or not, this is beside the point. Because the issue is not an orthodoxical agreement upon all the issues raised, and as Mann argues,

Sociology can only be a society's understanding of itself and this, of course, is contested and constantly in flux; in other words no orthodoxy exists (1983. p.v.).

If I argue that Giddens is one of the contemporary fathers of western sociology this assertion should not be interpreted, as his sociology is the only valid sociology. On the contrary, it should be interpreted as his sociology is one of the substantially significant sociological touchstones in secular social theory which could not be ignored unless at our own peril. And this is one of the meaning of being classics or classical. Being a classic does not mean that everyone does agree with whatever point made by a classical figure.

On the contrary, it means that one cannot get by the points made by the classic and one cannot ignore the points made by the classic. The very impossibility of ignoring and the very imperative of engagement are two sides of the same coin which are inherent in any

classical figure or text. That is to say, as what one once said of Kant that,

you can do philosophy with Kant or against Kant, but you cannot do philosophy without him.

The same applies to Giddens, i.e. one can do social theory either with Giddens or against Giddens, but certainly not without him. Or as Philip Cassell argues, Giddens

... is presently at the very forefront of contemporary social theory, and is certainly the pre-eminent figure in the English-speaking world. It is impossible not to be impressed by the extraordinary range of his work, its inventiveness, and its ability to illuminate what is otherwise obscure. His writings are the subject of widespread critical attention ... and his influence on the social sciences is considerable and growing (1993. 1).

In other words, it would not be unfair to claim that Giddens is one of the avenues to get into the universe of secular social theory. Imagine that social theory is like a 'city centre' and like all modern city centres there are more than one way to get to the centres. Although the routes to the city centre are many but they are not innumerable. By analogy, the city of sociology has a centre and there are few routes for any sociological pilgrim to get to that centre and without any doubt Giddens is one of those living routes to the Centre of Secular Social Theory. And this point is beyond any fair doubt.

### **Giddens' Meta-Socio-Theoretical Position**

To my knowledge, Giddens has not written about metatheory as a distinct category within or without social theory, sociology or social philosophy. However, this claim should not be understood as a denial of importance of this dimension within his sociological quest. On Giddens' own account, his social theory in terms of being and time is " ... strongly influenced by Heidegger ..." (Giddens, 1979. 3); and in terms of knowing social life as a 'form' of life is influenced by Wittgenstein's later philosophy where the latter takes the problem of 'limits of the language' as the fundamental basis of a semantic theory. (Giddens, 1979. 4-5) And above and beyond these obvious meta-

sociological threads, one can see many other metaphysical positions that Giddens has successfully appropriated within his social philosophy, which are not expressed explicitly but are implicitly interwoven in the texture of his thought. The question of naturalism is a case in this point. (1979. 8, 237) The 'Critique of Religion' is another case in this regard. (1971. 215, 220-1) His metatheoretical inclinations become more evident when one comes closer to Giddens as a political theorist in relation to family and value-related problems. (1994. 14, 224, 250) His uncritical reliance on 'received wisdom' in terms of *Religionkritik* displays nuances of his metaphysical stance, which could be termed as post-Christian metaphysics called 'secularism'. However, at the outset, I should very briefly announce that by 'secularism' I do not mean 'secularization' which has come, rightly or wrongly, to be associated within social science literature with a historical dynamic - that needs to be empirically assessed and re-assessed. Because, given its existence and dominance, its presence cannot be constant and deemed irreversible. On the other hand, the position Giddens eloquently demonstrate in his sociology is of 'secularism', which is an ideology open to discussion right into its very single premises. It is in this dimension that most of his metaphysical and metatheoretical presuppositions are embedded and implied.

Below, I would bring both implicit and explicit influences in his work into the theoretical fore. And try to explicate them as clearly as possible in terms of what I understand as his metatheoretical inclinations, which could open a tight, but right, avenue for a more open debate with other positions.

## Part I

When one talks about 'Historical Materialism', it is inevitable to recall Marx and to a lesser degree Engles. Although here I am not concerned with what this concept meant in their scheme of philosophy of history, nevertheless it is of importance to emphasize that Giddens' discourse on historical materialism is a tireless engagement, in Giddens own particular way, with this aspect of Marxism:

A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism seeks to move away from all forms of teleology save for those directly associated with individual human beings ... (Giddens, 1981. ix)

This study is ... a ... critical appraisal of some of the main themes of Marx's historical materialism. (Giddens, 1981. 1)

However it should be clear that his critique is not levelled at the philosophical level. Because as Giddens himself is aware, these kind of critiques are abundant and widespread among both Marxists and anti-Marxists circles either in Western Europe or Eastern Europe.

Giddens is more concerned with the thematic aspects of Marx's historical materialism and its application on historical phenomena. He vehemently argues that

My intention is not to produce a critique of historical materialism written in hostile mien, declaring Marxism to be redundant or exhausted. There has been an abundance of attempts of that sort ... (Giddens, 1981. 1)

His approach to Marx's historical materialism is a thematic approach in the sense that he takes the major social theoretical concepts within Marx social theory and assesses them individually or collectively in the light of recent philosophical and inter-disciplinary thoughts. Issues discussed by Giddens in terms of a contemporary critique of historical materialism range from the concepts of 'Time', 'Property', 'Class', 'Labour', 'State', 'Nation', 'Capitalism', 'Socialism', 'City', 'Power', and etc. In one word, the whole conceptual arsenal of Marxism is at stake in Giddens critical and contemporary assessment. (Giddens, 1981. 1-25)

Giddens' approach to Marx's social theory is based on a firm belief that

Marx's analysis of the mechanisms of capitalist production ... remains the necessary core of any attempt to come to terms with the massive transformations that have swept through the world since the eighteenth century (1981. 1).

But this belief is a reflexive one; at least on Giddens own account. Because there is, Giddens argues, much in Marx that is mistaken, ambiguous or inconsistent. (1981. 1) And Giddens' epochal conception of social theory and the conditionality of sociological imagination (due to its epochal parameters) compel him to declare that

Marx's writings exemplify features of nineteenth-century thought which are plainly defective when looked at from the perspective of our century. (1981. 1)

Although he does not 'plainly' explicate what is our century's determining perspective, nevertheless Giddens is completely certain about the defectiveness of Marxism and its social theoretical injunctions. This certainty emerges very strongly when Giddens takes issue with Marx's all-comprehensive dimensions of politics-ethics-philosophy-social theory in relation to critical theory and its inevitable re-structuration:

In refashioning critical theory, we need Marx's realism: that is to say, political strategies must be shaped by diagnoses of immanent trends of institutional development. On the other hand, in opposition to Marx, we also need utopias: forms of idealism, influenced by ethical considerations, which suggest how the good society might be pictured. A reworked critical theory, such as I conceive of it at any rate, would mix utopianism and realism in equal measure (Giddens, 1995. xix).

This realist-idealist approach to Marx and Marxism is based on his radical conception of science and social science where he takes the very concept of 'scientificity' in a new light. For most of their disciplinary history, to say the least, scientific disciplines, such as Physics, Chemistry, Biology and etc. were considered as hard sciences in comparison to Humanities and Liberal Arts, which were branded as 'soft' disciplines. The emergence of social sciences is situated within these para-disciplinary schemata of conceptualizing knowledge. This distinction implied a categorical imperative on behalf of soft knowledge pursuits and social sciences in accelerating their efforts in becoming 'harder' and 'harder', i.e. less interpretative and more explanatory.

Giddens argues that this state of affair has dramatically changed and the post-positivist philosophies of science do not adhere to this hard-soft doctrine anymore. (1987. 2-3) Because the assumption of science being non-interpretative enterprise is a false one and consequently the social sciences don't need to be less interpretative. In other words, the German idealist tradition of *Verstehen* cannot be regarded as the lowest ideal of scientific explanation. On the contrary, science is " ... presumed to be an interpretative endeavour, such that problems of meaning, communication and translation are immediately relevant to scientific theories" (1987. 2).

If science is not all about to collect facts and empirically assess their validity within the parameters of logical empiricism or positivism, then Marx's (or even the mainstream nineteenth-century social thought) view that critical social analysis should dispense with ethical values " ... should not be accepted". (Giddens, 1995. xviii). The reason for Giddens' rejection in distinguishing between politics and ethics in one hand and social theory in other hand is his belief that sociology does not take the world as given. Not because there is an inherent reluctance on sociology's behalf to take things for granted. Far from it; the reason is simply there is nothing 'social' that one can take it for granted. The social and all its manifestations are 'negotiable' products and critical theory should pose double-edged questions. That is to say, sociology should ask, for example, what types of social change are feasible and desirable (and this is an ethical question), and how should we strive to achieve them (and this is a political quest). And the one who asks these both questions is the sociologist who incorporates the idea of critical social theory in his person. (Giddens, 1986. 1-22, 157)

In other words, a theory of society based on 'Scientific Socialism', which was based on an uncritical remodelling of social sciences in accordance to 'supposed' natural scientific ideal is doomed to failure. And what Giddens offers instead is 'Utopian Realism'. (Cassell, 1993. 330). His utopian realism has two dimensions. One is the theoretical or meta-theoretical aspects which are close (just in terms of its realism, not utopianism) to Bhaskar's critical realism and the other part is related to his politics of modernity. (Giddens, 1994. 246).

Although both aspects are interconnected Giddens would like us to believe that they could be taken separately. That is to say, the rejection of one should not lead to the refusal of the other.

For Giddens, the main philosophical trends in modernity are caught in the subject-object dualism, just as social theory is engaged with the structure-agent dichotomy. In order to rectify what he sees as a lack in the social sciences in terms of a theory of action, Giddens critically appropriates elements of functionalism, structuralism, the hermeneutic philosophy of Hans Georg Gadamer, on the one hand and critical scientific realism of Roy Bhaskar in the other hand. (Giddens, 1982. 1-17) This collective reappropriated conceptual frame of social theoretical position is called by Giddens the *theory of structuration*. (Giddens, 1979. 2)

The theory of structuration, in its formal dimension, is based on a methodological proposition, i.e. the lack of a theory of agency in the metasociology. (Giddens, 1976.) But this formal aspect has a normative dimension as well, which seeks to re-appropriate the critical realism of Bhaskar in a very selective sense.

The critical realism of Bhaskar seeks to build a 'common sense ontology' based on the realist and materialist premise that the objects of science exist independently of the activities of science and condition the limits of scientific theories. This, in Andrew Collier's words, means that realism is substantially an ontology before it is an epistemology. Scientific explanations do not invoke universal laws - rather, science exposes the causal mechanisms beneath the phenomenal forms registered in experience or experimentation. Bhaskar is therefore not committed to a *unified field theory* nor to the unity of scientific rationality - only to the concept of inference to the best explanation and to the realist principle that the causal mechanisms disclosed by science *exist*. (See Ch. 1, 1994)

Yet Giddens, while sympathetic (Giddens cast his conceptions of social phenomena in ontological terms and explicitly contravenes positivist injunctions against metaphysical postulates.<sup>2</sup>), retreats from Bhaskar's programme for a science of society. (Giddens, 1979. 63) Although it might seem irrelevant to mention that Bhaskar is a Marxist and Giddens is not; nevertheless this is an important fact if one takes Giddens' view of the role of social theory and its ethico-political



consequences into consideration. (Giddens, 1995. xviii) For Giddens, the distinction between *Geist* and *Natur* means that social theory is predominantly *hermeneutic* and not *scientific*. Although he proposes that social ontologies are pragmatically oriented towards the solution of particular problems, in specific regional contexts, in reality the theory of structuration creates 'ontologically-based theory', to use Cohen's description of Giddens' approach (1987. 9) and political hermeneutics, to use Geoff Boucher's description of Giddens' politics. (2001. See the chapter on Political Hermeneutics) It is this ontological orientation to the self-understanding of actors that informs Giddens' rejection of functionalism. (Geoff Boucher, 2001)

In believing that sociologist is not a scientific observer standing apart from the society and in proposing that the sociologist is not a participant observer (who interprets the subjective responses of social agents in Winchian terms) either - but rather he is a combination of both objective and subjective elements, Giddens attempts to go beyond contemporary dualistic approaches to social reality. (Geoff Boucher, 2001. See the chapter on Towards Structuration Theory) This belief has, above epistemological and apart from methodological considerations, a praxiological significance for Giddens in terms of delineating his political position both within European currents and Global politics. In *Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics* (1994), Giddens elaborates his position in contrast to Habermasian version of modernism and Foucaultian branch of postmodernism by arguing that a radical politics needs to be " ... reconstituted ... on philosophic conservatism but [should preserve] some of the core values hitherto associated with socialist thought" (Giddens, 1994. 12).

Giddens' normative concern with both politics and ethics in conjunction with his politicized conception of social theory and his own role as a leading defender of non-radical positions pave the way for a non-disciplinary debates on grand issues such as 'Human Existence', 'Existential Contradiction', 'Revival of Ethics', and so on. (Giddens, 1995. xviii) His concern with politics is an ethical engagement, which reciprocally conditions his political theory that is, in turn, an expression of his ethical vision. Let me explain what I mean by the reciprocity of Giddens' political and ethical theories.

In *The Third Way: A Renewal of Social Democracy* (1998), Giddens sets to 'rethink' the very project of democracy in terms of social solidarity and ethical responsibility. (Giddens, 1998. 113-7) In *Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics* (1994), Giddens explore his view of social solidarity as follows:

In a world of high reflexivity, an individual must achieve a certain degree of autonomy of action as a condition of being able to survive and forge a life; but autonomy is not the same as egoism and moreover implies reciprocity and interdependence. The issue of reconstructing social solidarities should therefore not be seen as one of protecting social cohesion around the edges of an egoistic marketplace. It should be understood as one of reconciling autonomy and interdependence in the various spheres of social life, including the economic domain (Giddens, 1994. 13).

In other place, he expounds his idea of 'existential contradiction' by connecting the idea of 'personhood' to what he calls the 'rediscovery of moral life' by the social agent. (1994. 224). That is to say:

One cannot 'become someone' without rediscovering the moral life, no matter how oblique or fragmentary that re-counter might be. Or perhaps this should be put the other way around. Without such a contact with an ethics of personal life, a brittle compulsiveness tends to take over... (1994. 224).

Although Giddens' social theory is ethically impregnated nevertheless his concern on ethical issues should not be conflated with traditional formal debates on ethicality and morality. In other words, in rethinking democracy in order to foster social solidarity and bring about ethical responsibility, Giddens does not ask what the substantial components of a universal ethics are; or what is the meaning of responsibility and how an ethic of responsibility is conceivable in Late Modern Capitalism.

In order to address the current socio-political and even geo-political issues (EU is such a case), he chooses to think within the parameters of Western Social Democratic institutions. And the concept of a dialogical democracy is intended to perform this task. (Giddens, 1998. 113-7) In addition to and despite of formal ethics, Giddens approach to normative dimension of collective ethics is his catchword of 'cosmopolitan citizenship'. This concept is based on universal values

that are emerging today and have global significance, argues Giddens. (1994. 253)

His global cosmopolitanism is based on the belief that the world community is a post-traditional society, which needs to be galvanized and promote 'cosmopolitan solidarity' - which would enable us to curb the fundamentalist threat. (1994. 253) Although it is not clear what would happen if a regional supra-state structure such as the Islamist Umma (which principally does not share the normative aims and goals of Giddensian Global Cosmopolitanism), however one can predict the hypothetical scenario when one looks at polity issues such as family and values related to it.

In realizing social solidarity based on ethical responsibility in relation to cosmopolitan citizenship, Giddens assigns a significant role to the family both as a concept and as an institution, which educates a citizen whose responsibility is based on shared normative principles. The family along nation (and the state) and the European Union constitute the very basics of cosmopolitan citizenship that Giddens has in mind. (Geoff Boucher, 2001. See the chapter on The Politics of the Third Way) However his totalizing approach to social reality and its connection to both regional and global politics in the absence of normative values (in relation to family and how it should and ought to be conceived) would, to say the least, run the risk of ethnocentrism. Let me explain to the readers what I mean by providing an example from the field of family and family values.

Giddens, for instance, views the diversity of family forms in post-traditional society as a pioneering act that would increase the centrality of 'life politics'. (1994. 14) For instance, to have a post-traditional and non-heterosexual family form is not a 'life chance', but a 'life style', which should be recognized, if the societal solidarity, i.e. the cement of citizenry sentiments is our concern. (Giddens, 1994. 14-15) The 'Asian Values' supported by Asian intellectuals such as Buddhist (Sulak Sivaraksa, Chairat Kantawong, Pracha Hutanwatr) and Muslim intellectuals (Chandra Muzaffar, Sharifah Munirah Alatas, Dato Osman Bakar) are prominent cases in this regard. (Sivaraksa & Muzaffar, 1999) I will not explore this aspect any further at this juncture but surely would instantiate and substantiate my points in the next section. (See Critique)

Giddens' value-agnosticism or his inattentiveness in relation to transcendental values is related to his belief that social agents " ... produce, sustain and alter whatever degree of 'systemness' exists in society" (1981. 41-8; 1984. 164-5) That is to say, the one who creates values and delineates the normative boundaries of values versus non-values is the social agent who deems heterosexuality a decent norm today and homosexuality a modern life style tomorrow. I should haste to add that this post-traditional value-conception is related to Giddens' *ReligionKritik*, shared by many modern secular intellectuals (which would be addressed later on in this part.).

Yet here again it must be underscored that the Giddensian approach to the social agent and the value-creativity of agency is part of substantive elements of his structuration theory. That is to say, the structuration theory is, before anything else, an *ontology of potentials*. Or as Ira J. Cohen puts it:

[The structuration theory] ... maintains that one potential possessed by all social agents is the ability to produce historical variations in their own forms of conduct (Cohen, 1987. 288-9).

In other words, the critique of historical materialism, despite Giddens' own insistence that his is not a philosophical approach, when couched with Giddens' ontological quest is aimed at reconstructing liberalism and its philosophy of individual. That is to say, Giddens' approach to historical materialism was meant to " ... move away from all forms of teleology" (Giddens, 1995. ix) except for 'designs' or 'teleologies' that are directly associated with individual human beings.

Although Giddens does not provide any argument against the Marxian belief that the sum of human history has a meaning, nevertheless he holds that " ... there is no overall teleology to history ..." (1995. ix). Giddens' *Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* ranges across three volumes and two decades, yet the guiding idea could not be sought in various themes he attempts to remould. On the contrary, the very meta-theoretical or metaphysical stance of Giddens' post-traditional materialism is based on one absolute presupposition in Collingwodian sense:

... history has no teleology or overall dynamic form (Giddens, 1995. x).

Having this in mind, Giddens goes through all aspects of social theory and themes and puts forward his own 'Utopian Realism'. (1990. 154-8) Although he rejects what he discerns in Marx as 'providentialism' (1995.x), nevertheless he does not want the 'social agents' lose the ability to 'foresee'. One of the meanings of 'Providence' is to have foresight. To foresee is not substantially the same as providentialism but the ability to foresee is embedded in the idea of providentialism.

Based on his earlier '*Religionkritik*', Giddens makes clear that his ontological sociology and philosophy of agency do not have transcendental basis. Although Giddens does not discuss religion as such nevertheless there is a substantial debate on this issue by him in early seventies based on a reconstructive approach to the Classics.

Giddens does not explicitly reveal that his utopian realism and the values embedded in his politics which would enable us to bring about his utopia into the realm of reality (hence his insistence on realism) have substantial connections to his view on religion. Nevertheless it is doubtless that any discussion about values could not afford to ignore the problematique of 'sacralization versus secularization' of values. And this is another way of saying what is the place of religion in the scheme of modernity.

Although most of modern discussions on religion within sociology are aimed at the external aspect of religion nevertheless this external concern does reveal a 'sociological consensus' on the value of intellectual content of religion (or religious intellectual discourses).

However the problems of 'values' and how to absolutize them while aware of modern stance on moral relativism is the excellent occasion where the 'content of religion' (and religious thought as an intellectual category) re-emerges from the ashes of modern critique of religion.

Although some sociologists of religion like James A. Beckford (2001) would argue that Giddens has " ... necessarily anything interesting or new to say about" religion, nevertheless it is a mistake to disregard Giddens' position on transcendental issues as uninteresting. Because his view on religion is part of a tradition that assumes that the

contentual relevance of religion has long been discussed and relegated to the bookshelf of history. And as for its symbolic meaning, one could follow three classical critiques of religion best exemplified by Marx (religion as a false consciousness); Durkheim (religion as a factual mirroring of the reality of social order and what makes moral society to be held together); and Weber (religiously or magically motivated behaviour is relatively rational behaviour which follows rules of experience, though it is not necessarily action in accordance with a means-ends schema best exemplified in capitalistic entrepreneurial frame of action).

Like most secular sociologists, Giddens agrees that the birth of modernity has coincided with a decline of religion. This process is called secularization. (Giddens, 1971. 205) Although he distinguishes between different levels of secularization however his ontology is a materialist view of being. That is to say, he thinks that the rise of rationalism into all spheres of social life is a progressive historical movement, which causes a tremendous displacement of religious thought and practice. (Giddens, 1971. 206)

Here, I would not explicate what Marx or other sociologists thought about religion but try, instead, to present very briefly what Giddens thinks of religion. Because I think his stance in relation to religion (and his dis-engagement with religious thought or traditions) demonstrate a deeper side of his metaphysical and existential views on grand issues such as the normative content of 'emancipation', 'utopia', 'family values' and 'values' in general.

In different ways the classical social thinkers of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century (of Christian calendar) all thought that religion would either disappear or become progressively attenuated with the expansion of modern institutions, resulting in a "secularization thesis" aptly captured in the title of Freud's famous *The Future of an Illusion* (see Durkheim, 1912/1965; Freud, 1957; Marx and Engels, 1848/1858; Tylor, 1871; Weber, 1904/1958: 182; and Giddens, 1990: 207)

Giddens writing from within this secular brand of sociological tradition adopts the classical view on the declining role of religion (1971. 205). And more importantly this view on the declining role of religion allows him to brand any political force that unites with a

traditional religion as dangerously radical which needs to be pushed off “... the middle ground” (Lars Kaspersen, 2000. 183).

Giddens' exegesis of Marx, Weber and Durkheim gives him the apt opportunity to express his overall views on issues such as universalism and moral relevance by saying:

... the difference between the two thinkers [Durkheim and Marx] upon this issue [the question of the 'illusory' character of religious belief as an appropriate bridge between the theory of primitive religion, and the significance of religion in modern societies], as in the case of Weber and Marx, stem from a discrepancy in their respective ethical standpoints. Durkheim rejects philosophical neo-Kantianism in favour of his own particular conception of ethical relativism, based upon the notion of social 'pathology'. According to this view, the 'valid' morality for one type of society is not appropriated to a society of a different type; there are no moral ideals which can claim universal validity (Giddens, 1971. 220).

Giddens endorses the relativity of moral ideals and argues that religious ethos is not functionally compatible with modern life. He holds that Durkheim is right in rejection the Freudian thesis on religion as illusion but this view should not be conflated with any substantial and intellectual significance of religion and more importantly with world religions' own claim of universalism. In explicating Durkheim's thesis on religion, Giddens attempts to connect this classical view (religion as based on the only reality, i.e. the factual order of society) to his own 'consequences of modernity-thesis' by saying:

For Durkheim, by contrast [to Marx's thesis of alienation which argued that the hold of religion is nonetheless based upon an 'illusion', since it disguises human capacities as those of super-human powers], religion cannot be illusory in this sense, except insofar as a given set of religious beliefs is no longer functionally compatible with the existence of a given type of society. This [hold Giddens emphatically] indeed is the case with traditional religion in modern society (Giddens, 1971. 221).

In other words, Giddens argues that everything changes and the societal transformations bring new needs and modes except what he calls 'traditional religion'. Although he admits that the normative modernity has forced religious ethos to adapt to modern conditions nevertheless religion, as a category is a dogmatic and non-changeable

entity. That is to say, religion as a symbolic expression of the 'Holy' should accept the role given to it by the secularizing process. And Giddens has a normative view on the sacred, which comes to the fore very lucidly when he tries to put Marx's utopian view against Durkheim's sober realism:

The transcendence of religion [in Marx's view] is possible because the resolution of the dichotomy and opposition between the individual and society is possible. From Durkheim's position [which is Giddens' own view as well], this is sheerly utopian, as regards the organisation of contemporary societies. There is a sense in which Durkheim is in accord with Marx that a form of society can exist in which there is no dichotomy between the individual and society - in the case of mechanical solidarity. Mechanical solidarity 'binds the individual directly to society without any intermediary'. But this societal form has ceded place to organic solidarity, and cannot be recovered; and even if it were possible, the type of society envisaged by Marx would only be conceivable given a reimposition of a pervasive **conscience collective**, which would necessarily entail a vast re-extension of the realm of sacred (Giddens, 1971. 222-223).

Although Giddens argues that this is a contrast between Marx and Durkheim nevertheless it would be a mistake not to discern Giddens' own position in this lucid interpretation of classical views on religion. Because Giddens holds that organic solidarity (one of the consequences of modernity) has already substantially and ontologically taken over the mechanical societal formation. And it is not possible to recover the pre-modern mode of being.

In analyzing the modern capitalist ethos and the role of secularization, Giddens argues (and this argument is related to his view why religion and its role is not irrecoverable) that both Marx and Weber

... treat mature capitalism as a world in which religion is replaced by a social organization in which technological rationality reigns supreme. Marx frequently underlines the secularising effects of the progression of capitalism, which 'has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egoistic calculation'. It is because of this that ... in bourgeois society, ... 'all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober



senses his real conditions of life and his relations with his kind' (Giddens. 1971. 215).

Between these lines, Giddens argues that the consequences of modernity change three fundamental issues: ontology, epistemology, and existential mode of being. Given the fact that he does not offer any reasons for the universality of these changes and additionally due to his critique of historical materialism (which is based on the view that history does not have any telos and hence accidental), and then the question is as follows:

Why should men in general (and men in non-western contexts in particular) accept these accidental state of Western European affairs in terms of religion and religious ethos?

I might be running ahead than my story but I need to pinpoint to this issue before entering next step. And that is Giddens' approach to the problem of modern and contemporary in relation to 'religion'. Without replying to this question he resorts to Durkheim's sober realism that religion cannot have the all-comprehensive role it had once in mechanic societies. As though this mode of description is an explanation.

Before beginning my critique on Giddens, one note is in order. It should be clear from my exposition that Giddens metaphysical or meta-theoretical views are not all expressed in his discussions on or about social theory. On the contrary, I think one should sometimes start from his politics or views of family-values and therefrom build up an opinion about the foundations of his sociological reasoning. That is why I started with his critique of historical materialism but did not confine my exposition to that realm alone. It is my firm view that one's stance in regard to transcendental issues determines one's politics and social theory as it does with Giddens.

## **Part II**

Whatever form the 'critique' against Giddens would take, one task is for certain and that is the very concept of 'Critique' and its substantial content. In other words, what are the substantive bases of Giddensian notion of 'Critique'? What are the elementary nurturing substances that hold the very structure of Giddensian 'critique'?

Giddens argue that,

... a reconstituted critical theory must grapple with what critique means, and how it might be justified, in a world precisely where 'history' has no teleology or overall form (Giddens, 1995. x).

Before going any further one should be clear about the implicit assumptions of Giddens where he conflates 'teleology' and 'overall dynamic form'. He takes these two concepts as though they are the same and substantially similar notions.

To say 'history' has no goal is not similar to argue that the history of mankind does not have any overall dynamic form. Because, regardless of what one might mean by 'telos' and 'dynamism', the very point is what one does mean by the term 'history'? In what tradition is Giddens standing and declaring that history has no telos? And how could Giddens equate the substantial meaning of 'telos' with 'dynamism'?

Besides if both 'telos' and 'dynamism' are the same for Giddens then how could he save the teleological dimension at the individual level and opt for an organic relation between society and individual?

Although Giddens presents his critique as a contemporary critique of historical materialism within Marxism, however the arrows of his critique are pointed to a wider debate. In my view, the real question is not if the abstract concept of history has any meaning or an overall dynamism. The more significant question is does the sum of human endeavours and efforts as a being on this planet have a meaning or not? If not, then how could one determine its meaninglessness and therefrom extract a meaningful individual ideology in the midst of meaningless collective humanity?

I think what Giddens proposes is the constructed and mechanically preserved notion of 'nation and state'. Meanings are particular and meaningfulness is possible in the domain of society. And a functional society is possible where there is a state with clear boundaries, which would make the doings of the state accountable for its citizen. This is, to say the least, the *de facto* recent history of

Western Europe. And it could not shed any light on the universal notions of 'meaning', 'history', and 'dynamism and its overall forms'.

However I have not said anything so far about the very concept of 'critique' which envelopes the whole Giddensian idea of social theory as a reconstituted category " ... in a world precisely where history has not teleology ..." (Giddens, 1995. x). His view of critique provides an apt point of departure for us in terms of meta-theoretical assessments.

There have been many critiques of Giddens' structuration theory and its empirical applicability or inapplicability. (McLennan, 1984. 23-9; Cohen, 1986. 123-34, 1989; Cassell, 1993; Craib, 1992.) I would not repeat them here. On the contrary, what I would like to do is to converse with Giddens in another level, which I have called the meta-theoretical one. Let me illustrate my points in the following.

Giddens, himself, holds that,

... the theory of structuration [is aiming to understand] ... social systems as situated in time-space [and this situated system] ... can be effected by regarding structure as non-temporal and non-spatial, as a **virtual order of differences** produced and reproduced in social interaction as its medium and outcome (Giddens, 1979. 3).

In other words, this is the substantial content of structuration theory. My meta-theoretical argument is not aimed at this level. I am not going to discuss how applicable or inapplicable is to view the social universe and societal texture in Giddensian structuration terms. On the contrary, what I am interested is what, to my knowledge, few have paid any attention. And that is Giddens as an intellectual who thinks of existential issues.

In *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, structure, and contradiction in social analysis* (1979), Giddens states that he invents this intellectual tool (called structuration theory) in order to grasp something which goes on above and beyond our theories. *Unser Leben geht hin mit Verwandlung*, i.e. Our life passes in transformation is what Giddens seek to grasp by his structuration theory. (1979. 3-7) And then he says: None of us would have anything to live for, if we didn't have something worth dying for. (BBC Reith Lectures 1999. Lecture 3-Tradition-Delhi.)

Put these two sentences together, then you will undoubtedly get a Giddens who is an existential thinker that does sociology; not a conventional existentialist though.

Every thought has a parameter. Or to put it differently; each thinker works within specific parameters. The streaks of one's parameters are like fences that guard one's garden of thought. Giddens' sociological thought is substantively concerned with 'transformational nature of our life'. Although he talks about 'surveillance', 'state', 'nation', 'violence', 'democracy', 'property', 'labour', 'cosmopolitanism', and so many other empirical notions within social theory, nevertheless he comes to these issues and this theoretical realm from one specific angle.

By concentrating and confining our sociological quest to this aspect of Giddens would deprive us from a very significant dimension of his thought, which, if not the most important, is as important as the theoretical side of Giddens. And that is Giddens as a man who thinks of social issues both in normative and descriptive sense.

Giddens, before entering the realm of empirical issues, **must** have had an 'impetus'. He must have had an urge that made him to 'commit' to certain moral obligations over others. And the nature of these moral obligations is not a passive one. These moral obligations inform and shape the very direction of his intellectual thought. The universe of this impetus is what characterizes Giddens' entire sociological quest. This is what I called meta-theory.

It is beyond any doubt that Giddens is not a Marxist. That is not any crime in itself but what makes his position towards Marxism substantially significant is the very idea of 'critique'. How is a critique possible? How could one launch a critique? That one can 'launch' something presupposes that one has already occupied a position in order to use his 'lance' against an enemy. This is the etymological meaning of the term, which is preserved in our modern use of the phrase: launching a critique.

To launch a critique, one needs to have an intellectual position. To detect a thinker's intellectual position the best way is to look at 'who' or what 'position' he is 'against'. The contrast between Giddens and Marxism is educationally significant and intellectually enlightening. Because it gives us the opportunity to present a critique which is not either Marxian or Giddensian, but not for that matter irrelevant.

His view in relation to social life as something that should be connected to ideals and values that are worth 'dying' for opens an apt opportunity for a critique of his own critique. His views on what makes a life worth living and dying for are an abbreviated form of continental existentialism. Although it is of importance to note that due to the supremacy of analytic philosophy in Anglo-Saxon world there was no significance space for existentialism as a philosophical option. Nevertheless the collapse or disintegration of analytic tradition in its hegemonic form explains the belated emergence of existential concerns within sociology in general and Giddens' in particular.

However the question is, what are the parameters of human existence depicted by Giddens? How much of this picture is borne out of Giddens as a British, how far as Giddens as a secular humanist, and how deep as Giddens as a sociologist who practices an intersubjective enterprise?

Family, the idea of Cosmopolitanism, Values, Self, Agency, and Religion are major areas that the substantial infrastructure of 'Critique' in Giddens' sociology expresses itself in full force. Although one could reassess the credentials of Giddensian critique of Marxian critique, however I would not take that route. Because, apart from that there have been many debates in that direction, the bases of Giddensian and Marxian *Weltbild* are not substantially different from each others. In other words, they both do share the same metaphysical horizon, regardless of what the appearances might suggest otherwise. Here, I would like to confine myself to two fundamental concepts of 'family' and 'religion'. I hope that this critical engagement would extract out Giddens' meta-theory and metaphysical foundations of his social philosophy.

### **Giddens and Basic Collective Unit of Humanity: Family**

Giddens does not have any normative conception about what the family should be, but ironically enough he has a normative concept about how the family should be regulated.

In discussing the so-called 'diversity' of family forms in Europe, Giddens uses the concept of 'pioneering'. (1994. 14) He says:

Strengthening family commitments and obligations, so long as these are based on active trust, does not 'seem' incompatible with the diversity of family forms now being 'pioneered' in all the industrialized societies (Giddens, 1994. 14).

If one doesn't have any normative conception about what family is, then how could one be sure that the application of 'commitments', and 'obligations' from another institution would function and fit on a different institution?

The institution of family is consisted of two human beings; one called 'Mother' and the other is 'Father'. This is, at least prior to the pioneering act of industrialized nations, what one called family. If now the relationship between two men or two women is supposed to be regulated and legalized, regardless of all its moral dilemma, then one cannot use the same concept as 'family' for these new evolutionary forms of relationship. Because the concept of family is not a descriptive term founded by social scientists. The concept is part of religious traditions and is in its totality a normative concept; a concept which is meant to convey a world-philosophy and a particular set of religio-moral obligations.

One can discern the confusion created by Giddens when one comes to his view about how the modern family should be regulated:

Contractual commitment to a child could thus be separated from marriage ... enforcing parenthood contracts ... Children should have responsibilities to their parents ... could be legally binding... (1994. 95-97).

And,

There is only one story to tell about the family today, and that is of democracy. The family is becoming democratized, in ways which track processes of public democracy... (1994. 93).

Giddens focuses on the market and the growth of contractual relations as the substantially significant trend, and he describes this process as one of 'democratization'. But is this tenable? Is the diversity of relationship a form of 'pioneering' in terms of family and

educational-emotional values? Without a substantial discussion of the psychology of 'man' and 'woman', and the differences between them Giddens sets out to tell the only 'pioneering' story of family. And ironically enough, Giddens explains the institution of family in non-capitalistic contexts as " ... above all an economic and kinship unit" (1994. 91).

In Giddens' social theory, the normative content of the concept of family is disregarded. Moreover, he does not conceptualize the substantial significance of transcendental values that hold together the familial life to the communal one. Giddens is aware of the significance of 'sacred' in his existential quest when he states that " ... all of us need moral commitments that stand above the petty concerns and squabbles of everyday life. ... None of us would have anything to live for, if we didn't have something worth dying for" (BBC Reith Lectures 1999. Lecture 3- Tradition- Delhi.). But, in his existential reflections, there is no substantive space assigned to the problem of sacred.

In other words, he, first of all, does not rise the fundamental question what is 'sacred'? Or how is 'sacred' possible in a materialistic theory of being? Secondly, how does one decide the realm of sacred from non-sacred? What are the methodologies for recognizing the realm of sacredness?

It is of importance to mention that, one of the reasons that Giddens' meta-theoretical dimension is poorly equipped in terms of fundamental questions is that he has not raised these questions in his sociology in the first place. Giddens admits that this fundamental and existentially inevitable (and metaphysically imperative) question was asked by 'fundamentalists' (BBC Reith Lectures 1999. Lectures 3- Tradition-Delhi.), who resist and oppose secular humanism and normative globalism.

Every critique has a particular point of departure. Giddens' notion of 'Critique' deprives him of asking questions that are existentially imperative for our life and death; the questions one cannot live without. That's why in his substantial works; there are no serious or in-depth discussions about the 'sacred', and the 'holy' as fundamentally and existentially significant themes. If the idea of 'sacred' is an inevitable imperative for the survival of the fabric of society, then it must be clear what are the sources of the 'Holy'? The 'Sacred' does not

receive its sacredness from the 'societal consensus'. If it does, then it is not 'sacred'. It is some kind of 'nationalism' or 'chauvinism' based on 'blood', 'language', 'geographical location', 'normative globalism as pan-nationalism', 'shared history' or alike which cannot reach humanity at large.

The lack of any substantial engagement with the idea of 'sacred' from within the religious intellectual traditions drives Giddens toward some kind of prescribing a normative globalism of nationalist kind, but based on a wider view of nation, i.e. European Nation rather than British, Scottish, German or alike. In one of his lecture, Giddens holds that

We should be prepared to mount an active defence of [our Cosmopolitan values] wherever they are poorly developed, or threatened (Giddens, 1999).

This is the fundamentalism of the stronger, or what used to be called the discourse of 'imperialism' or 'neo-colonialism', which guards the benefits of the 'colonial powers'.

Moreover, if the fundamentalism asks the right question about the relation between 'sacred' and 'family', and Giddens does not ask this fundamental question (but admits the inevitability of this question) then why should one accept his trendy views on family and its diversified forms over the fundamentalist ones?

Giddens does not provide us with any conception about transcendental values when it comes to the fundamental concepts. But this lack does not stop him in using transcendental position in 'regulating' social and political problems. The problem of family is not an isolated issue in his sociology but it is related to his view on 'sacred'. Within secular sociology, the idea of 'Holy', or 'Sacred' does not have any substantial consequence or relevance. The only 'function' it generates is its cementing of social bond, whatever 'form' that bond would take.

The concept of family is a value-laden concept like religion, knowledge, wisdom, sacred, and holy. Without deciding the source of 'values' and what are the substantial elements of values versus non-values, Giddens jump into labelling some recent social configurations within Western societies as 'pioneering act'. It is not clear what makes a



social movement a 'progressive' or 'regressive' one. One might argue that what has this concept to do with the meta-theoretical aspect of sociology?

The question is a very apt one. When Giddens argues that the only story about family is the story of democratization, he is not getting into the bottom of one of the most problematic issues of modern time. And that is what is 'man'? What is the normative, or if you like the moral, basis for relation between individual and individual, individual and community? Is the relation between humans one of a contract or covenant? (Jonathan Sacks, 2000. 61-4)

Without a substantive discussion on the essential elements of moral sense (James Q. Wilson, 1993. 251), it would be futile to brand some forms of diversity as 'pioneering' and 'progressive'. Additionally, it would be very naïve to design the parameters of the story of 'family' in terms of 'democracy' (whatever that word means) as Giddens proposes. (1994. 93)

The story of family is more of 'covenant' than 'contract'. The demise or decline of 'covenant' in modern societies is not a sign of 'pioneering' or 'progress'. Instead of opening a debate about 'what should be done?' Giddens argues for 'how should we regulate?' And then here again, one is left without any substantive guidelines in relation to his propositions. If these propositions (e.g. family form) are not transcendental and therefore binding, then how could one deem their emergence 'pioneering'? Because if this is a pioneering form which emerged in all 'industrialized societies' then the next step (as all modern forms and productions which emerge in West and should be applied in the Rest) is its universalization. And the second step would be to deem all the forces which resist this 'distorted notion of universality' as 'Fundamentalism' and dangerous for Giddens' branch of metaphysics.

Giddens argues that the most basic question asked by fundamentalism is: can we live in a world where nothing is sacred? And, his own answer is the following: I don't think we can. (BBC Reith Lectures 1999. Lecture 3) Although he does not give any accounts of what are the answers of fundamentalists (because he regards them as problematic and the enemy of cosmopolitan dialogue which he counts himself as one of the Cosmopolitans). Nevertheless one is left with

questions such as what is the basis of sacredness, either immanent or transcendental, within his sociological thought? Isn't an ontological secular sacredness another post-traditional name for 'secular humanism'?

In other words, without any normative or metaphysical debates on the universal sources of 'utopia', 'values', 'sacredness', 'family', how would one brand a form of relationship which has just emerged recently as 'pioneering'? And how could one without any substantial engagement with the idea and ideal of 'sacred' and 'religious thought' which underpins the very concept of family, decide the compatibility between family and diversified forms as a universal category? (1994. 14).

### **Giddens and Primordial Unit of Meaning: Religion**

Giddens' view on religion and tradition is related to his *Weltbild* and demonstrates the metaphysical underpinnings of his social theoretical reflections.

The basic struggle of sociologists has been to arrive at a classification of 'substantive' definitions of religion. Broadly speaking, there are two approaches: those which refer to the body of beliefs in reference to 'supernatural' or 'non-empirical' reality; and functional definitions which refer to the function of providing an individual with a sense of belonging and an ultimate meaning for existence. (Bryan Wilson, 1982. 1-26)

It should be noted that these definitions are mainly formulated in substantive reference to logical empiricism and analytical philosophy. And the main problem with the first definition is that it takes the ill-defined category of 'supernaturalism' in the same fold as 'non-empirical'. The very category of 'non-empirical' due to the recent development within philosophy of science (post-positivist philosophies) has gone through substantial metamorphoses.<sup>3</sup> And the functional ones are rejected as being

... so all-inclusive that they allow apples and oranges to be cast in the same unproductive bag with golf, Opus Dei and Islam (McGuire, 1987. 5-11).

Apart from these two broad positions, there are some other intellectuals who prefer to maintain a safe distance from both positions and affirm:

The error made by proponents of both substantive and functionalist definitions is to assume that **religion** is a phenomenon which exists in reality and that any belief or practice could be permanently labelled as being either religious or not religious if only we could agree upon an acceptable definition (Greil, 1993. 163).

And of course, the substantially agreeable definition is still unavailable or unattainable due to the methodological misconception. The problem with the third position, which is prominent in the works of Luckman (1987), Berger (1973), Lewis Carter (1996), and the substantial and functional ones are the lack of engagement with 'religious intellectual traditions' from within.

This lack is 'justified' by secular social theorists in terms of 'position' and 'methodological insight'. However the use of scientific language should not deceive us that here we are faced with a purely metaphysical or meta-theoretical problem. And that is whose position renders the true nature of reality comprehensible. Although it should be noted that the problem of 'transcendence' is connected to what one does mean by 'comprehension'. Because it could mean the 'ultimate reality' is beyond all analytical comprehension but not for that matter 'unintelligible'.

Secular social theorists, due to their analytical philosophical inclinations, take the category of 'comprehension' equal to 'analysable'. And this is one of the main reasons why they don't take issue with 'religion' and world religions intellectual traditions from 'within'. And the flaw in the third position (which sets apart itself from the first and second one) should be seen in this light. i.e. its lack of intellectual engagement with religious intellectual traditions. Each world religious traditions such as Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and etc. have its own specific notion of 'intellect' and 'intelligible'.

However, after these primary remarks, I would like to look at Giddens' view on religion and tradition. It is my firm belief that his views on moral values, religious sensibility and modernity are not all derived from one empirical category. On the contrary, there are

reasons to believe that what scaffolds the structures of his social reflections are not empirically renderable and analytically demonstrable categories, but are based on his 'Ethos'.

Now, the question is, does Giddens have any substantial definition about 'religion' and 'tradition'? What are the bases of his view on 'religion'? How does this view influence his ideas about 'values', and 'ideals'? Could, in other words, one find any correlation between Giddensian view on religion and metatheory?

The short answer is a categorical yes. But before elaborating that point some few primary remarks are needed.

The very category of 'religion' by secular social theorists is thought in terms of 'accommodation' to modernity. That is to say, any claims based on 'traditional religions' are thought to be either some kind of rear-guard action on the part of anti-modernist (whatever that means), or they are thought to be the products of some basic accommodation to the realities of modernity, which has secured a permanent place for religion in the contemporary world, but in a much reduced capacity and with declining significance. In other words, few of modern discourses on religion such as Berger (1967, 1983), Hadden (1987), Wilson (1982), Giddens (1971, 1991) and et. al. Have truly abandoned the 'positive' correlation of modernity and secularization. They, on the contrary, have merely found ways to modify the secularizationist thesis to allow for some measure of religious survival. However, this 'minimalist approach' in methodology has been described in relation to the empirical appearance of 'religion' as a category in late capitalism. Or rather as a consequences of modernity. That is to say, the sociologists who conceptually minimized the role of 'religion' as an intellectual category did not relate this approach to their own 'Ethos-dimension' position, but explained this meta-sociological approach as an empirical issue. They did not reveal that their own 'Ethos' position is based on 'secular humanism', which would be unintelligible without a substantial reference to the history of Catholicism and post-reformation notion of religion.

In other words, any concern with religion, either as a *Lebensphilosophie* or intellectual category, is explained by reference to

the creation of a secularized society, which perpetually accommodates tradition and religion in modern society. (Wilson, 1988. 965)

It is this perspective that still dominates most of sociology, especially sociological reflections on the place of religion in a post-traditional society and globalized world (e.g., Robertson and Chirico 1985; Giddens 1991; Bauman 1992; Robertson 1992; Lyon 1996), despite the claims often made to the contrary in these analyses about detecting some important new role for religion in the contemporary world. (See the assessments of these works offered, for example, in Beckford 1996.)

Giddens' assessment of religion in the contemporary context still seems to be restricted to the imaginal horizons set some time ago by such prominent sociologists of religion as Peter Berger and Bryan Wilson. And that's Beckford's point when he criticizes Giddens, Bauman and Manuel Castells (1997) by pointing to the relation between social theory and religion:

Many of those social scientists and social theorists who had seen no reason to take religion seriously in the middle decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century [in Western Europe] were lulled into a false sense of security. Events in the final decades of the century all around the world forced a re-think. This not to say, of course, that writers who suddenly woke up to the unexpected importance of religion such as Giddens, Bauman and Castells have necessarily had anything interesting or new to say about it. The fact that secularization was taken-for-granted for so long helped to make the re-discovery of religion's significance all the more surprising or shocking (Beckford. 2001).

In explicating Durkheim's views on religion, Giddens informs us that " ... religion cannot be illusory [in Marxian sense], except insofar as a given set of religious beliefs is no longer functionally compatible with the existence of a given type of society" (Giddens, 1971. 221) And in affirming this Durkheimian metaphysics, Giddens holds that this " ... indeed is the case with traditional religion in modern society" (Giddens, 1971. 221).

There are two problems with this view. One is related to the concept of 'society' and the other one is the concept of 'belief'. What are the boundaries of Giddensian society? Are the boundaries of Giddensian society as wide as modern Britain (as depicted in

international map located in Europe), or Imperial Britain? Secondly, what are the criteria of assessing 'compatibility' and 'belief'? Are the categories derived from religions the only domain of 'belief' or does belief include other domains of human cognitive activities? Besides, Giddens does not provide us with any analytical means to assess and distinguish if he is taking the category of belief in normative or descriptive sense and if 'the existence of modern society' is conceptualized in normative terms? And if the latter is a normative concept, then where does the norms come from? And if the norms come from technological innovations and scientific explorations, then how and in what sense are they different from 'belief'?

Because I don't think the concept of 'modern society' as an explanatory concept can stand on its own alone. It is evident that within this so-called modern societal universe there are contrasting and contradictory elements which cannot be taken as an empirically verifiable or falsifiable criteria in assessing other historical or contemporary processes. In other words, the concept of 'modern society' is not an explanans but an explanandum. That is to say, the ideal-type of modern society is not the same as the actual modern societies where the majority of people do believe in ghosts or other supernatural entities. (Steven D. Schafersman, 1997)

On the other hand, it seems what Giddens refers as functionally incompatible with the existence of a modern society in relation to traditional religion are confusion between two ideal types that never existed in reality. (1971. 221) And I think what he really means by this 'existential incompatibility' is nothing but a re-statement of what Larry Shiner (1965. 279-95) defined as *the decline of religion*. By this, as Michael Hill holds (1973. 229), is meant that previously accepted symbols, doctrines and institutions lose their prestige and influence; and the end point of such a process would be a religionless society.

One of the most classical statements, which informs Giddens' thesis on 'existential incompatibility between traditional religions and modern society', is that of Bryan Wilson (1966, 1969). Wilson defines secularization as a 'process whereby religious thinking, practice and institutions lose social significance'. (See Wilson in Hill, 1973. 230)

The substantial point in Wilson and subsequently Giddens is the concept of 'religious thinking'. According to this tradition, the

heralding of modern society influences the area of 'religious thinking' most conspicuously of all. That is to say, Giddens thinks that men act less in terms of religious motivations and view the world in increasingly 'empirical' terms. Although he himself does not use these very terms nevertheless this is what he means. And again, Giddens being situated in this tradition does not say if modern society is where religious thinking does not play any role (a statement of fact)? Or modern society should be where religious thinking does not have any say? It seems he has the regulative conception in mind. A look at his normative globalism reveals this point.

This point will be clearer if one looks at his treatment of 'fundamentalist movements'. Giddens argues:

Fundamentalism is beleaguered tradition. It is tradition defended in the traditional way ... in a globalising world that asks for reasons (Giddens, 1999. BBC Reith Lecture 3).

Moreover, what is hidden in Giddens' discourse is the arbitrary switching between 'normativity' and 'descriptivity' in using fundamental concepts such as 'tradition', 'religion', and 'modern'. In above-quoted statement Giddens rejects the fundamentalist discourses (and I take this term equal to Islamic discourses due to his own reference to Islam and Iran) due to their 'struggling against criticism'. And the point is not if Giddens is right about that fundamentalists are against critique or not. The substantial point is his own formulation of the concept of 'tradition'.

In Giddens' view, the substantial feature of tradition is 'ritual' and 'repetition'. (1999. BBC Lecture 3). This is again another assumption, which does not accord to the reality of what tradition is. At least, in Muslim Tradition (with all its variety) this is not what is meant by the 'Sunna'. One small aspect of Islamic tradition is assigned to what Giddens calls 'rituals' which might look as 'repetitive' when approached from 'without'. It is undeniable that man has an 'inner life' and the state of that inner life is not constant or at the same level all the time. In other words, when someone goes to 'prayer' in its so-called repetitive-ritual form, one is not in the same state of mind in relation to 'Ultimate Reality' (or for Muslims Allah).

But this point apart, the 'tradition' is not confined to this ritual aspect. And a man who approaches the 'religious tradition' does not approach it in terms of 'ritual' and 'repetition' alone. A Muslim scholar approaches the tradition in terms of 'inspiration', and 'imaginal conversation'. (Steven M. Wassertrom, 1999)

Now, the question is why does Giddens caricature 'tradition'? What are his assumptions? There are two points related to his view. One is related to the semantic of ontology of tradition; and the other one is related to the question of 'authenticity and modernity'. As Talal Asad says, the secular notions of tradition are all operating within specific parameters where 1) one takes the story of modernity as the only authentic story where traditions all either evaporated or were accommodated to the modern secular parameters; 2) "real tradition" is unchanging, repetitive, and non-rational. (Asad, 1996) And this is what Giddens means by "... traditional religion in modern society" (1971. 221) where a given set of religious belief should give away to modern society, even if that modernity means 'colonialism', 'westernism'?

Now it is time to look at Giddens' substantial view on 'religion' and see in what aspect does this view condition his metaphysical engagement with 'religious thinking' and assess, very briefly, the outcome of this conditionality on his metatheoretical imagination within social theory.

In his BBC Reith Lecture series, Giddens present his views on 'Religion' and the metaphysical dimension of his social reflections on issues such as 'Faith', and 'Individual Reflection and the Transcendental Realm' and what is the substantial nature of 'Religion and Faith'. There, Giddens argues that

Religion is normally associated with the idea of faith, a sort of emotional leap into belief (1999. Lecture 3).

Although he has already in his substantial work on 'Religion, Ideology, and Society' (1971. 205-223) in relation to the classical social theory set his own views on the 'substantial status' of religion in modern (society and) social theory, nevertheless his views here are worth to be elaborated. Because I think his views on religion is one of the best entries into the universe of his meta-theory.



The historical context of Giddens' *Normal Associational Thesis* on religion needs to be explored in brief. What Giddens calls the substantial element of religion as 'faith' and what he normatively equates with the universal 'emotional leap into belief' are not as 'universal' as he depicts. In this short but normatively depicted account of what 'religion' as a universal category is, Giddens has accomplished and restated few core theses of 'modernity' versus 'religion'. He has tacitly argued a place for 'religion' as an emotional component of human existence. Secondly, he has presented religion as a pre-modern residue, which needs to be accommodated within the modern context a la tradition in general. Thirdly, the Humean Critique of religion is still the guideline of modern discussions about religion. Fourthly, the history of man's relation to transcendental values should be 'read' in terms of secular humanism. Last but not least, the 'context of historical experience' of post-Catholic Western Europe is the infallible norm of metaphysics.

It is not hard to depict that Giddens' views on religion is conditioned by the context of Christianity and should indeed be read within the context of western religious tradition. Although this tradition is not a monolithic whole, nevertheless it could be distinguished from, say, Tibetan Buddhism, Judaism, or Islam.

What Giddens sees as 'Religion' is indeed a specific notion of 'religiosity' which could be understood when seen in relation to the particular historical background. It cannot be taken, as Giddens suggests, as a universal depiction of religion and religious substantive. When he says, religion is normally associated with the idea of faith; one needs to ask what are the norms that inform his normative conception of 'religiosity'? Because his conception of faith is closely related to Sir Thomas Browne's fideism (Keynes, 1964. 18), where the latter attempts to establish the authority of faith over reason by an appeal to The Classical Christianity. (Cochrane, 1957. 222-24) In this view, which is shared by Giddens as well, the ideas of religion and faith are devoid of any *intellectus*. As a matter of fact, faith is what it is due to its absurdity. Or to put it differently: *Credo quia absurdum est (to be believed because it is absurd)*. I don't think Giddens' scholarly quest has taken him as far as Tertullian but it is certain that he views 'religious phenomenon' in terms of this tradition who has been seen as

the forerunner of later religious thinkers who disparaged 'reason' such as Bayle, Kierkegaard and Barth. (Osborn, 1997)

In other words, when Giddens says that

... [R]eligion is ... a sort of emotional leap into belief ...

he is actually discussing or viewing 'religion' in terms of Kierkegaardianism, which definitely differs from, say, Buddhist, or Islamic view on 'intellectus' and 'fides'. At least, in Islamic Tradition, one's 'Din' (one's presence in life) is not complete when the 'aql' (reason) is not employed in matters of life, which obviously include 'Akhirah' or transcendental issues as well.

What I want to say is that Giddens' normal association of religion with an 'emotional' leap into belief is not as normal as he wants us to believe. This is a Kierkegaardian view of religious belief and not 'a normal association'. Hence its particularity and context-relatedness, which would, at least, falsify the pretension that Giddens has said something substantial about 'the heart of religion' (Mehta, 1976. 29) and its universal form, let alone religious thinking.

In his more substantial work on religion and sociological classics, Giddens takes issue with the problem of pre-modern transcendentalism (and values) and modern societal needs in classical sociology. (1971. 220-222) He argues that

Durkheim's theoretical linkage between the religions of former times and the moral needs of the present *should not be allowed* to gloss over

(what Giddens thinks is the substantial and ontological difference between traditional societal configuration and contemporary societal universe)

... the equally significant divergences between traditional and contemporary society (1971. 221).

Again here, he takes the concept of 'traditional society' as a descriptive term, as though it really there is something out there identifiable as *traditional society*. And confuses this descriptive term with his normative concept of 'modern society' and presents the latter as a

descriptive term. As though, this concept is a novel invention that lives beyond history and temporal imperative.

I think what we witness here in Giddens is his own inclination, which endorses :

a) the invention of secular condition, b) the perpetuation of modern condition, and c) the realization of what are 'felt' to be modern and anti-religious (meaning a religion that would entail a vast re-extension of the realm of the sacred). (1971. 223)

In other words, he does not reveal that this is, in fact, his own utopia based on secular conception of life and the ideals distilled from this utopia are conditioned to his own history. And they do not present the universal history of mankind.

I started my conversation with Giddens from his view on history as a 'telosless' project in *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism (I, II, III)*, where he stated that the structuration theory seeks " ... to move away from [history] all forms of teleology save for those directly associated with individual human beings" (1995. ix). But in his *Religionkritik*, Giddens cautions us that one should not misunderstand Durkheim's engagement with religion as though nothing 'significant' occurred in history in terms of values and metaphysics. He says, if you notice that classical social theory in general and Durkheim in particular links the symbolical universe of 'pre-modern' religions to the moral needs of 'modernity', this is " ... because Durkheim defines 'religion' in a broad sense which identifies it with the sacred, and thence with moral regulation in his sense, that he is able to emphasise the continuity in symbols and values while at the same time stressing the **important elements of discontinuity** between past and present" (Giddens, 1971. 221).

Apart from that Giddens is mistaken in his interpretation of Durkheim in terms of theoretical linkage between religious symbolic and human morality - Durkheim's view about human nature is much closer to the idea of universal human nature and its relation to morality-, it should be remarked that Giddens is negating his own view on teleological dimension of history. Because if the history is lacking any overall dynamic form, then how is Giddens able to detect the 'significance' of *historical discontinuity*? And why is important to draw the lines between past and present if there is no overall historical forms?

Why is it substantive to know about the historical discontinuity between past and present if there is no telos and nowhere collectively to head? Why does Giddens need to deprive us from teleological aspect of history but at the same time teach us about the historical motions (that would, in his view, change our morals and values)?

To say the least, it seems it would be easier to discuss these issues within a Marxian metatheory where the history still has some meaning and people still 'care' about where they go together. Because what Giddens tries to demonstrate as a reflective sociology in terms of values, morals and metatheoretical reflections are not but a derivation of his 'secular' cosmogony or *Weltbild*. Or what used to be called a secular philosophy of history, which needs to be compared with other philosophies of history. In other words, it cannot stand as the 'touchstone' of other philosophies of history but one among many which should stand in 'dialogue' with each other.

### **Giddens and Meta-Collective Unit of Humanity: Civilization**

If one expects that Giddens has a specific field of discussion for the concept of 'civilization' and approaches him with this expectation, then he would soon or later be disappointed. However, that is not to say that Giddens' social theory and his philosophical reflections on the 'social' are devoid of any concerns whatsoever with collectivities larger than 'state', or 'nation'. Because, in my view, this would not be fair to Giddens' ceaseless engagements with various aspects of extra-national or extra-state entities such as EU, Global Village or Global Pillage. Regardless of one's agreement or disagreement with substantial aspects of Giddens' view regarding the concept of 'civilization' (or its plural reality, i.e. civilizations) two points are significantly *sine qua non* of his social theory in relation to civilizational discussions. Although both are inter-connected, and as a matter of fact as Giddens puts it one is the consequence of the other one, nevertheless one could present them as two analytically distinguished concepts. One is the concept of 'modernity' and the other one is the idea of 'subjectivity'. Giddens' discourse on 'civilization' are substantially related and conditioned by these two concepts. It seems to me that Giddens argues that one of the consequences of modernity (as a civilizational paradigm) is the birth of modern mentality, which constitutes one of the essential pillars of

modern society. Below I would try very briefly explicate Giddens' views on civilizational matters and then get into a critical assessment of his substantial views on 'civilization' (in terms of modernity) and the relevance of the idea of 'subjectivity' in civilizational debates (and their impact on social-theoretical reflections).

### **Part I**

Concepts such as 'capitalism', 'runaway world', 'globalization', 'cosmopolitanism', 'global village', 'global pillage' and so on are part of Giddens' social theory. (Giddens, 1999) These terms are the substantial outcome of his 'consequences of modernity-thesis' and make up the normative dimension of his civilizational understanding and orientation. (Giddens, 1990) Although there are abundant references to the concept of civilization, nevertheless what is prominent in Giddens' social theory is the idea of modernity.

One needs to reconstruct Giddens' view on civilization through his vast debates on issues such as 'Cosmopolitanism', 'Globalization', 'Fundamentalism' and the absence of other fundamental concepts such as 'civilizational subjectivity' and non-modern collective configuration. Let me now first explicate Giddens' views on 'Globalization' and 'Cosmopolitanism' and demonstrate their civilizational relevance. However, I should caution the reader that my assessments would remain very brief and selective.<sup>4</sup>

In demonstrating the undeniable reality of globalization Giddens resorts to one of his friends who studies village life in central Africa. "A few years ago", Giddens narrates,

She paid her first visit to a remote area where she was to carry out her fieldwork. The evening she got there, she was invited to a local home for an evening's entertainment. She expected to find out about the traditional pastimes of this isolated community. Instead, the evening turned out to be a viewing of *Basic Instinct* on video. The film at that point hadn't even reached the cinemas in London. (Giddens, 1999. Lecture 1).

This story is supposed to reveal something essential about our world and Giddens assures us that what they reveal is not a trivial issue. He argues that for better or worse,

... we are being propelled into a global order that no one fully understands, but which is making its effects felt upon all of us (Giddens, 1999. Lecture 1.).

This story reveals that, despite what both radicals and sceptics claim, we now all live in one world. What does this mean? Giddens argues that there are intellectuals who might be viewing the true nature of 'globalism' in terms of it being a force that creates a life of 'village' or a life of 'pillage'. (Giddens, 1999) However, nobody attentive to the affairs of the world, even in the remotest area of central Africa, could deny the very presence of 'globality'.

Further, Giddens informs us that substantial aspect of his argument rests on the idea that

... globalisation today is only partly Westernisation. Of course the western nations, and more generally the industrial countries, still have far more influence over world affairs than do the poor states. But globalisation is becoming increasingly de-centred - not under the control of any group of nations, and still less of the large corporations. (Giddens, 1999).

Although it is not clear which part of globalization is tantamount to westernization, Giddens embarks on a normative and regulative formula for the global order. He discerns in the consequences of modernity

... something that has never existed before, [and that is] a global cosmopolitan society (Giddens, 1999).

Thanks to the

two great revolutions, which initiated the modern period (Giddens, 1994. 84)

we are living in a world that globality is not an option but a force driven

... by collective human will (Giddens, 1999).

Although he admits that the infrastructure of this collective will is not democratic nonetheless it is undeniable that it is

... shaking up our existing ways of life, no matter where we happen to be (Giddens, 1999).

In order to rectify its current anarchic, haphazard fashion Giddens introduces his own version of Cosmopolitanism, which is actually another way of demonstrating his own civilizational concerns.

One should agree that Giddens' cosmopolitanism is based on both philosophical and strategic reflections. Since the collapse of Soviet Union and the disintegration of Eastern Bloc post-1989 critical Left theorists have attempted to re-conceptualize the international relations vis-à-vis post-colonial realities and risks.

Seen in this context, Giddens' view on normative cosmopolitanism which he argues that

... are [based on the universal values] emerging today (Giddens, 1994. 253)

should be seen in relation to other 'normativity' and 'subjectivity' which Giddens thinks either are 'dangerous' or lack any substantial concerns for 'dialogue'. In other words, his philosophically-oriented political civilizational theory is situated within the tradition of normative globalism or political cosmopolitanism à la David Held's *Democracy and the Global Order* (1995), Richard Falk's *Humane Governance* (1995), and Lynn Miller's *Global Order* (1994), just mention a few from a long tradition.

Giddens sees that opposition to this branch of globalism tantamount to non-dialogical discourse. Hence, his view on fundamentalism as 'problematic'. Giddens thinks that it is " ... edged with the possibility of violence, and it is the enemy of cosmopolitan dialogue" (Giddens, 1999. Lecture 3).

Although it is of importance to note that he equates any concerns with so-called pre-modern philosophies and worldviews as 'fundamentalist' and 'traditionalist' nevertheless he holds that globalization is somehow related to westernization. What Giddens is not revealing is in what aspect, say, Islamic or Pan-African discourses defy globalism? I don't want to run ahead than my next step but it is necessary to mention that Giddens admits that the globalism is a mixture of westernism (an abbreviation for modern subjectivity) and

globalism (a short name for an historical process). But at the same time he does not grant any 'authenticity' on people or traditions, which choose to 'regard' something as 'westernism' and the other as 'globalism' based on their own tradition and subjectivity.

That is to say, Giddens tells the story based on his own modern subjectivity but at the same time depicts the end of the story again based on his own subjectivity. And whoever refuses to accept or comply with this frame of normative globalism Giddens would call them fundamentalist. And that is why he suggests that " ... fundamentalism ... can be understood exactly as a refusal of dialogue ..." (Giddens, 1994. 124).

In other words, Giddens' engagements with civilizational issues are embedded within his social theory and are expressed and couched in a normative language. It will be more obvious what he means and where he heads when one considers who are the foes or adversaries of his 'global cosmopolitanism'. (1994. 252) Because, as Andy Blunden rightly points, it is not always clear with Giddens when it comes to what he says is a *description* of social processes, or he is *advocating* for those processes. (Blunden, 2000. Giddens' Ethics) and maybe this is why he is so popular and considered as a progressive sociologist. Maybe.

## Part II

As I told earlier, a critique needs a critic. And a critic is a person who adjudicates in accordance to a position. Etymologically speaking, the term 'critic' (*kritēs*) meant a sense of 'inquired judgment' as performed by a judge in a very considerable manner. However, it meant a judgment based on external factors and the insightful adjudication of the person of *kritēs*. In other words, the very doing of judgment is based on a dual process, which has a substantial element of 'subjectivity' but is not divorced from objective realm. That is to say, although we all do sociology that does not necessarily mean that we all share the same 'position' or 'subjectivity'.

In other words, my critique is not performed in terms of if his global cosmopolitanism is more preferable to Held's liberal cosmopolitanism (see: Globalization, Cosmopolitanism and Democracy: an interview with David Held by Montserrat Guibernau.). Because



there are, in my view, plenty of dialogue and debates in those terms. What is needed is not a more dialogue in that regard but in other direction.

My own position is right where Giddens calls fundamentalism and considers its very substantial fundament as 'anti-dialogical'. (Giddens, 1994. 124) And his own position on fundamentalism is one of non-dialogue. Because, Giddens argues (1999. Lecture 3), that fundamentalism due to its traditional defence of tradition, is the enemy of cosmopolitan dialogue.

Let's go back right to where we started our conversation with Giddens on civilizational issues. In the outset of my discussion on Giddens I quoted him where he narrated a story about his friend who wanted to study the village life in central Africa. When she arrived there and wished to 'observe' the traditional pastimes of this isolated community, she found unexpectedly that the members of this isolated community are watching Basic Instinct on video.

Let's deconstruct this story, which Giddens told us as a matter of example that would reveal the fact of globalization and the necessity of his version of global cosmopolitanism (which is partially embedded in westernization). What he calls 'Central Africa' is actually consisted of a) Democratic Republic of the Congo, b) Chad, c) Central African Republic, d) Republic of the Congo, and e) Cameroon. A closer look at the history of these nascent nation-states would reveal that all of them were part of Western colonialism and did not have any independent position, either intellectually or institutionally, to explicate and establish their own 'subjectivity'. That is to say, his naïve social anthropology does not reveal the problem and to me what this story reveals is not the need for a global cosmopolitanism. On the contrary, it reminds us how deep and continuing colonialism is.

The lack of political economic analysis in Giddens dis-informs his civilizational orientations and makes him to either disregard the causes of African lack of native subjectivity or distort other active subjectivity such as Chinese Communism or Islamic Revivalism.

What Giddens calls 'Global Cosmopolitanism' is a more sophisticated and informed elaboration of the discourse of modernity. I think the discourse of modernity, despite all its varieties and its critics, is a secular faith in how the universe of man functions. It (modernity) is

the subjectivity of modern man and modern civilization. In deconstructing Giddens' views on globalization and cosmopolitanism one is faced with a very profound reality and that is the 'facelessness' of other civilizations or cultures wherever they are encountered by global forces.

In *Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics* (1994), Giddens argues that the modern social order came into being in the context of a break with the past. The 'two great revolutions', which initiated the modern period each in their way, were detraditionalizing forces. (1994. 84) If these assumed revolutions were of a detraditionalizing characters in Western Europe that does not necessarily mean that the same should happen all over the world.

To me, it seems Giddens using these two revolutions as a normative paradigm not just as historical processes, which were described by historians. And then he turns to fundamentalists and argues that in the context of dialogic democracies these forces are reactionaries. Because, in Giddens' view, the fundamentalists are refusing to get into the process of dialogue. (1994. 117-133)

But I think Giddens is mistaken in his assessments of fundamentalist and traditionalist discourses. I have two reasons for my claim. One is related to the very idea of 'tradition' (which I have already set it out in my previous discussion) and the other is related to what fundamentalists actually refuse. Let me explain myself.

What Giddens terms as tradition and what he considers as traditionalist are more of fiction than scholarly discussion. Moreover the concept of 'tradition' in Giddens lacks conceptual sophistication. The concept of 'tradition' is not as naively conceived and employed by traditionalists as Giddens reports. In other words, traditionalists are not as unreasonable as Giddens depicts them for us.

Giddens confuses modernity (which is a state of mind) with 'contemporariness' (which is a feature of external reality). The traditionalist writers such as Frithjof Schuon (1907-1998), Kenneth Oldmeadow, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, or Seyyed Naqib al-Attas do distinguish between the terms 'contemporary' and 'modern'. The former designating that, which is of the present age, be it traditional or modern, and the latter, in contrast to Tradition,

designating that which is cut off from the Transcendent. (Nasr Seyyed Hossein, 1990, Al-Attas Seyyed M. Naquib, 1995.)

In other words, I don't think Giddens meets the traditionalists on their own terms or at the same level of engagement. His view of tradition obstructs him to approach other forms of subjectivity that do not equate 'modernity' with the contemporary world.

The second point is, I think what, say, Islamic discourses claim is not a refusal of 'dialogue' as Giddens portrays. What is, on the contrary, refused is the 'regulative' or 'normative' status assigned to 'modern subjectivity'. If this subjectivity were conceived as one among others that needs to negotiate its own place in the civilizational context of humanity then no danger or risk would arise. This dimension is totally absent from his civilizational concerns. And that is why whenever Giddens discusses other extra-Occidental cultures they are portrayed as faceless or their subjectivity is not explicated fully. The so-called fundamental discourses are traditional but not in the sense described by Giddens. What, say, an Islamic Traditionalist argues is not a ritual repetition of traditional dogma but is an active defending of 'Islamic Subjectivity'. After all, what is a civilization without any 'coherent subjectivity'?

### **Giddens and Meta-Methodology: Historiography**

Conventionally, historiography is conceived as the art, or employment of, writing history. The recent philosophical and meta-theoretical revisions and revolutions had sensitized the very concept of 'history' and 'graphicing historical scene'. The very idea of history has become problematically multi-layered and the traditional divisions between 'science', 'philosophy', and 'history', if not a tale of past, at least, are not unproblematical either.

To think of history and how to 'paint' its moves and motions (and even telos) are not conceived by many possible or even desirable. In other words, to think of historiography is to conceptualize about grand narrative. And there are, right or wrong, many who oppose any kind of grand narratives in the name of grand name of 'post-modernity'.

However, it is undeniable that even those who do not grant any meaning or telos to 'history', do, indeed, need to presuppose some kind of 'signposts' in the matrix of history. I mean, even those who think of

history as a telosless deity at the end of the day feel the need to assume some 'happenings' in the history as 'significant', 'normative', 'substantial' or all three together in comparison to other 'occurrences'. Although they might argue that these assumed norms are 'significant' just due to their inherent utilities in relation to the 'individual person', nevertheless they assume that one historically context-bounded concept of 'individual' is tantamount to the universal history of humanity.

In other words, to think of history is always accompanied with conceiving of 'vision' and 'mission'. That is to say, to speak of history is to speak of human existence. To speak of human existence is at a certain level is to speak of contingency, and to situate man in any given manifestation is to invoke a necessary correspondence between contextuality and contingency. Regardless of recent debates on modernity versus post-modernity in terms of grand narratives, I think the axis of debate is somewhere else, i.e. between the Traditional Metaphysics and Modern (or secular) Metaphysics. The difference between the outlooks of Tradition and Modernity lies in their different orientations, which account for their different interpretations of the world. That is to say, historiography is not divorced from epistemological and existential concerns; and moreover the whole edifice of historical imagination is not conceivable without any coherent *Weltbild*. Although some within social science discourses argued that epistemological and meta-theoretical matters had damaged the growth of sociology nevertheless it is undeniable that the historiography of sociology in Giddens is not exempted of meta-theoretical issues. I will briefly explicate his historiographical views on sociology and then put my own view on his historiography of sociology.

## Part I

In his *Capitalism and modern social theory: An analysis of the writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber* (1971), Giddens resorts to Lord Acton's vision of the birth of modern history as an act of semi-cosmological deliverance:

Unheralded, it founded a new order of things, under a law of innovation, sapping the ancient reign of continuity. In those days Columbus subverted the notions of the world, and reversed the conditions of production, wealth,

and power; in those days Machiavelli released government from the restraint of law; Erasmus diverted the current of ancient learning from profane into Christian channels; Luther broke the chain of authority and tradition at the strongest link; and Copernicus erected an invincible power that set for ever the mark of progress upon the time that was to come ... It was an awakening of new life; the world revolved in a different orbit, determined by influences unknown before (Acton quoted in Giddens, 1971. xi).

This narrative is assumed by Giddens as a guideline in order to set the authentic historical imaginal backbone of modern social theory. This story is supposed to present the essential characteristic of modern view of life from the traditional society. (Giddens, 1971. xi) Because the post-Renaissance worldview brought something new into the European mind and the collection of all what Acton described above is nothing but the birth of modern subjectivity.

Giddens seizes upon this idea and argues that if

... [R]enaissance Europe gave rise to a concern with history, it was industrial Europe which provided the conditions for the emergence of sociology' (Giddens, 1971. xi)

The reasons for this emergence are twofold: the first one is related to the meta-theoretical dimension of social theory based on naturalism (Giddens, 1979. 8), and the second one is the contextual matrix of sociology, i.e. the modern social order brought about by the 'two great revolutions'. (Giddens, 1994. 84)

In other words, to draw the imaginary historiographical parameters of sociology, one needs to explicate the contours of modern subjectivity. That is to say, the emergence of sociology cannot be possible with a transcendental philosophy of science that does not exclude the natural order but subsumes it in the order of things.

The sociological reasoning is scaffolded upon what C. Wright Mills called 'sociological imagination'. The contours of this imagination are patterned by Giddens on the modern history of Europe where

... past has become, in some degree, a burden from which men seek to be freed. (Giddens, 1971. xi).

The striking point in Lord Acton's historiography, where Giddens situates it at the outset of his sociological historiography is its comprehensiveness. The story includes all aspects of life: the external and internal dimensions of universe of Man.

In other words, in this narrative the interior life of man and all his attributes are included within the same plot. And the origin of everything newly 'ordered' is detected and related to the 'source of origin': Europe. More importantly, Acton narrates that the underlying spirit is not to be found in its external glory or discoveries. On the contrary, the most important aspect of this new era, where sociology's history and mode of inquiry began, is its

... awakening of new life (Acton quoted in Giddens, 1971. xi)

The history of sociology in this account is related by Giddens substantially to this mode of life. And this is nothing less than a Cosmogony of modern thought.

## **Part II**

Let me now very concise to explain myself and assess some aspects of Giddens' historiography of sociology.

Traditionally, 'Cosmogony' stands for the study of the origin and development of the universe or a theory of such an origin or evolution. What really sparked the first cosmogonical questions were questions such as "why is there anything at all?" Or "How did this set of system come into being?" and on and on. These are assumedly questions that fall within religion and mythology. But the modern science has not been regressive in this arena and as a matter of fact there are many modern cosmographical accounts of the universe.

However, my point is not to discuss the debate between modern and pre-modern cosmographies. On the contrary, what I would like to pinpoint is that most of the cosmogonical accounts deal with the birth of the 'inanimate' universe. The point I wish to make is that within historical sociology there is a tendency towards 'cosmogony'. By this term, I do not mean its technical use but the concerns of sociologists and historians in narrating the 'exact origins' and 'development' of the universe of modern society.

What Acton narrates and Giddens affirmatively puts at the centre of his historiographical quest (and by doing so, confines the range of historical sources which are supposed to nourish the 'Sociological Stem') is a historical theory of the birth of modern societal universe. There are good reasons to doubt the viability of this Actonian theory of origin or what I call modern book of *genesis*. Among many reasons, one can mention the falsity of 'abruptness theory'. The modern epoch, argues Acton (and this is what Giddens holds too), did not succeed the mediaeval era by normal succession, with outward tokens of legitimate descent. (Acton, 1960. 19) The relation between mediaeval Europe and Renaissance was far more complicated than this Victorian narrative.

Moreover and more important to my discussion is the result that Giddens wishes to infer from this narrative. There is no way to prove that the forces which brought the new order of things were all brought about by 'Columbus', 'Machiavelli', 'Erasmus', 'Luther', 'Copernicus' and etc. in the 'fashion' told us by these modern historians. Giddens is not aware of the presentist dangers embedded in this historiography. However, I think what he is more interested in is not to be historically correct. On the contrary, he is looking for something more vital in the constitution of social life and that is the idea of 'subjectivity'.

What Acton narrates does not have any coherent historical credibility but that does not minimize its credential as a 'good story'. Because I think a good story is not always a true story. As a matter of fact most good stories are not concerned with 'truthfulness' in secular scientific sense. For example, the myth of creation of the World in African Cosmogony (in the story of Bumba told by Central Bantu Tribe of the Lunda Cluster) is not telling about the 'atoms' or 'physical particles'. But it is certainly narrating something essential about the sensibility and life as human beings:

When at last the work of creation was finished, Bumba walked through the peaceful villages and said to the people, 'behold these wonders [life, trees, nature and etc.]. They belong to you.' Thus from Bumba, the Creator, the First Ancestor, came forth all the wonders that we see and hold and use, and all the brotherhood of beasts and man (Leach, 1956. 145-6).

What the significant point is in Giddens' Actonian narrative is the formulation of 'Modern Subjectivity'. Giddens' historiographical account is important, not in terms of *wie es eigentlich gewesen*, but in terms of presenting the contours and substantial dimensions of modern subjectivity. What Giddens introduces as the historical background of sociology is not the only valid historical background but the one, which is based on modern subjectivity. This is an important fact which when related to Giddens' civilizational and political views (such as normative globalism and cosmopolitanism versus fundamentalism) would open an apt dialogical avenue for re-moulding the parameters of academic sociology upon multi-civilizational dimensions.

The other significant point in this Actonian narrative that Giddens wish to infer a substantial historiographical conclusion is the idea of 'break'. Although it is not clear from this account what are the features of this modern break nevertheless it is not hard to imagine that this 'break' is foremost of a metaphysical character. Again here this point could be pursued in two distinct ways. One could assess the credibility of modern 'break' as an intellectual option or on the other hand one could look at the 'universal' character of this 'modern paradigm'. Here I would like to look at the second option very briefly in connection to other civilizational units in the light of Giddens' cosmopolitanism - which is inferred from his historical view on the paradigmaticity of modern subjectivity.

Assuming that Europe broke with her past in order to enter the realm of modernity that does not necessarily entail that other civilizational units need to do the same. Looking at Giddens' cosmopolitanism, which is based on his modern subjectivity, one gets the feeling that he is over-anxious about the political assertion of other 'civilizational subjectivity' that does not share the same cosmogonical universe of the social. Giddens goes as far as to call all, what he calls fundamentalism, fundamentally different subjectivities 'enemies of the global cosmopolitanism'. (Giddens, 1999. BBC Lectures)

In other words, sociology needs to recover the rich of human history and all forces that are substantially vital in the 'awakening of life'. The story of 'Renaissance', 'French Revolution', 'Scientific Revolution', and 'The Birth of Nationalism' are normative signposts and substantial occurrences within the psyche of modern subjectivity. And



the story of sociology told in these terms is the story of social reflections in the realm of this subjectivity. I wish not to belittle this story because there are many who do 'believe' in this story and interpret their own ethos in terms of this story. But the project of sociology cannot be fulfilled in monological terms.

In other words, the normative signposts of, say, Hindu or Islamic discourse are not 'French Revolution', or 'Industrial Revolution'. The normative revolution of Islamic paradigm is the birth of 'Islamic Logos' and the establishment of the al-Medina City. This is the story of Muslim Subjectivity. And if now the assertion of this subjectivity on the political arena does not fit the parameters of modern subjectivity the answer is not branding one 'Global' and the other 'Enemy of the Global Cosmopolitanism' as does Giddens. The way forward is dialogue between genuine and different subjectivities. Last but not least it should be noted that, the non-modern civilizations do not need to comply with the modern subjectivity in order to adapt to the modern conditions. These are two different aspects. Because, as the Algerian thinker (Malek Ben Nabi) said once about the importance of 'original subjectivity':

A society which does not have its own guiding ideas can make neither its consumer goods nor its equipment. It is not by means of ideas imported or imposed that a society can develop. [An original subjectivity is based on] ... intellectual originality [and through this original act] ... [one can] ... regain [original] ... independence (Malek Ben Nabi quoted in Anwar Ibrahim, 1990. 7).

Giddens' views on sociology, social theory, world politics, and more importantly his global cosmopolitanism versus fundamentalism are based on the substantiality of modern subjectivity in adjudicating substantive issues of humanity. What he claims is that all other emerging kinds of non-modern subjectivity, if there is any at all, need to comply with his normative globalism abroad and Third Way at home. My conversation with Giddens on all three accounts (metatheory, civilizational, and historiographical) led me to believe that there are good reasons not, as Swedes say, *Köpa Grisen I Säcken!* What I want to say is one needs to open up the black box of Giddens' sociological reflections before buying his political and normative inferences.

Because it seems Giddens is deeply oblivious to the very idea of multifarious spirits of civilizations, which was aptly addressed by Chinese philosopher Ku Hung-Ming almost over a century ago. The question Giddens forgets to ask and is, on the other hand, perceptively raised by Ku Hung-Ming about the very nub of civilization is that we must not ask what great cities, what magnificent houses, what fine roads the civilization in question has built and is able to build; what beautiful and comfortable furniture, what clever and useful implements, tools and instruments it has made and is able to make; no, not even what institutions, what arts and sciences it has invented: the question we, Ku Hung-Ming argues, must ask, in order to estimate the value of a civilization, - is, *what type of humanity*, what kind of men and women it has been able to produce. In fact, the man and woman, - the type of human beings- which

... a civilization produces, it is this which shows the essence, the personality, so to speak, the soul of that civilization. (Ku Hung-Ming 1915. 5)

Seen from Ku Hung-Ming's point of vantage then we realize that the idea of modernity which envelops the whole perspective of Giddens is in dire need of critical re-evaluation based on intercivilizational dialogue. In the coming article we shall review this aspect of Giddens based on Ku Hung-Ming's reading of civilization and the essence of civility which makes possible the birth of various human social realities.

## Reference

- Al-Attas, Seyyed, M. N. 1995. *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam: An Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islam*. ISBN.
- Archer, M. S. 1982. "Morphogenesis versus Structuration: On combining structure and action." *British Journal of Sociology* 33:455-83.
- Archer, M. S. 1988. *Culture and Agency: The place of culture in social theory*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Asad, Talal. 1996. "Modern power and the reconfiguration of religious traditions", *SEHR*, vol. 5, issue 1: Contested Politics. Online at: <http://www.stanford.edu/group/SHR/5-1/text/asad.html>
- Bauman, Z. 1992. *Intimations of postmodernity*. London: Routledge.

- Beckford, A. J. 1996. "Postmodernity, high modernity, and new modernity: Three concepts in search of religion," in *Postmodernity, sociology, and religion*, edited by K. Flanagan and P. C. Jupp, 30-47. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Beckford, A. J. 2001. *Is secularisation good for the sociology of religion?* Unpublished paper presented at the Department of Sociology, University of Edinburgh, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2001.
- Berger, P. 1973. *The Social Reality of Religion*. Penguin, Great Britain.
- Blunden, A. 2000. *Giddens' Ethics: Liberalism, Communitarianism and Equality*. Online at:  
**<http://home.mira.net/~andy/blackwood/andy02.htm>**
- Boucher, G. 2001. *The Theory of Structuration and the Politics of the Third Way*. A Sketch Draft Online at:  
**<http://home.mira.net/~andy/blackwood/politics1.htm>**
- Carter, L. 1996. "The problem of authenticity in the study of religious traditions", in *Between Sacred and Secular: Research and theory on Quasi-religion*, edited by A. L. Greil and T. Robbins. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Cassell, P. (1993). *The Giddens Reader*. Edited by P. Cassell. The Macmillan Press.
- Cochrane, C. N. 1957. *Christianity and Classical Culture*. New York.
- Cohen, J. Ira. 1986. "The Status of Structuration Theory: A Reply to McLennan", *Theory, Culture, and Society*, 3:123-34.
- Cohen, J. Ira. (1987). *Structuration Theory and Social Praxis*; in *Social Theory Today*; edited by Anthony Giddens and Jonathan Turner. Polity Press.
- Cohen, J. Ira. 1989. *Structuration Theory: Anthony Giddens and the Constitution of Social Life*. London: Macmillan.
- Collier, A. 1994. *An introduction to Roy Bhaskar's philosophy*. London & New York: Verso.
- Craig, I. 1992. *Anthony Giddens*. London: Routledge.
- Durkheim, E. 1912/1965. *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. New York: Free Press.
- Falk, R. 1995. *On Humane Governance: Towards a New Global Politics*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Freud, S. 1957. *The Future of an Illusion*. Garden City, NY: Anchor.
- Giddens, A. 1971. *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory: An analysis of the writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber*. Cambridge University Press.
- Giddens, A. 1976. *New Rules of Sociological Method: A positive critique of interpretative sociologies*. London: Hutchinson; New York: Harper & Row.
- Giddens, A. 1979. *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, structure and contradiction in social analysis*. The Macmillan Press: London and Basingstoke.
- Giddens, A. 1981. *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*. The Second Edition was published by Macmillan Press in 1995.
- Giddens, A. 1982. *Sociology: A brief but critical introduction*. The Second Edition was published by Macmillan in 1986.
- Giddens, A. 1984. *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Giddens, A. 1985. *The Nation-State and Violence: Volume Two of A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*. Polity Press, Cambridge, in association with Basil Blackwell, Oxford.
- Giddens, A. 1990. *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press; Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Giddens, A. 1994. *Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics*. Polity Press.
- Giddens, A. 1998. *The Third Way: A Renewal of Social Democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Giddens, A. 1999. *Runaway world: How globalization is reshaping our lives?* London Profile.
- Giddens, A. 1999. *Tradition: Runaway World*. BBC Reith Lectures. Lecture 1,2, 3, 4, 5.
- Greil, Arthur L. 1993. "Explorations along the sacred frontier: Notes on para-religions, quasi-religions, and other boundary phenomena." In *Religion and the Social Order*, Volume 3, 153-172 JAI Press Inc.
- Guibernau, M. 2001. *Globalization, Cosmopolitanism and Democracy: an interview*. Interview with **David Held**, in Cambridge, 11 March 2001. This interview was, initially, published in the journal IDEES of the Centre d'Estudis de Temes Contemporanis, Generalitat de Catalunya, this article appeared in **Constellations** 8:4. And it was online at:  
<http://www.polity.co.uk/global/held.htm>
- Hadden, J. 1987. "Towards desacralizing secularization theory", *Social Forces* 65:587-610.
- Helal A. A. 1995. *Social Philosophy of Sir Muhammad Iqbal*. Adam Publishers & Distributors: Shandar Market, Chitli Qabar, Delhi. India.
- Held, D. 1995. *Democracy and the Global Order: From the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Hill, M. 1973. *A Sociology of Religion*. Heinemann Educational Books. London.
- Hung-Ming, K. 1915. *The Spirit of the Chinese People*. Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, Beijing
- Ibrahim, A. 1990. "Towards a Contemporary Philosophy of Islamic Science", *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, Vol. 7, No. 1. This paper was primarily presented as a keynote address at the International Seminar on Islamic Philosophy and Science at the University of Science Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia on May 30, 1989.
- Kaspersen, L. 2000. *Anthony Giddens: An Introduction to a Social Theorist*. Translated by Steven Sampson. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Keynes, G. (ed.), *The Works of Sir Thomas Browne*. Chicago, 1964.
- Leach, M. 1956. *The Beginning*. New York: USA.
- Levine, D. (1989). "Simmel as a Resource for Sociological Metatheory." *Sociological Theory* 7:161-74.
- Luckmann, T. 1987. "Religión y condición social de la conciencia moderna" en *Razón Etica y Política* No. 37. Anthropos, Barcelona.

- Lyon, D. 1996. "Religion and the postmodern: Old problems, new prospects", in *Postmodernity, sociology, and religion*; edited by K. Flanagan and P. C. Jupp, 14-29. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Mann, M. (ed) 1983. *Student Encyclopaedia of Sociology*. Macmillan, London.
- Marx, K. and Engels, F. 1848/1955. *The Communist Manifesto* (S. Beer, Ed.). New York: Appleton Century- Crofts.
- McGuire, M. 1987. *Religion: The Social Context*. Wadsworth Publishing Company, California.
- McLennan, G. 1984. "Critical of Positive Theory? A Comment on the Status of Anthony Giddens' Social Theory", *Theory, Culture, and Society*, 2:23-9.
- Mehta, P. D. 1976. *The Heart of Religion. Great Britain*. This edition was published in 1987 by Element Books.
- Miller, L. 1994. *Global Order: Values and Power in International Politics*.; Third Edition. Boulder: Westview.
- Mullan, B. 1987. *Sociologists on Sociology*. Croom Helm, London and Sydney.
- Nasr, S. H. 1990. *Man and nature the spiritual crisis of modern man*. London: Unwin.
- Osborn, E. 1997. *Tertullian, First Theologian of the West*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rex, J. British Sociology 1960-80-- An Essay. *Social Forces*, 61, 1982-83, 999-1009.
- Sacks, J. 2000. *The Politics of Hope*. Published by Vintage.
- Robertson, R. and J. Chirico. 1985. "Humanity, globalization and worldwide religious resurgence: A theoretical exploration," *Sociological Analysis* 46: 219-242.
- Robertson, R. 1992. *Globalization: Social theory and global culture*. London: Sage Publications.
- Schafersman, D. Steven. 1997. *Naturalism is an essential part of science and critical inquiry*. This paper was originally presented at the **Conference on Naturalism, Theism and the Scientific Enterprise**, and appeared at: <http://www.freeinquiry.com/naturalism.html>
- Shiner, L. 1965. "Toward a theory of secularization", *Journal of Religion* vol. XLV, no. 4, 279-95.
- Sivaraksa, S. and Muzaffar, C. 1999. *Alternative Politics for Asia: A Buddhist - Muslim Dialogue*. International Movement for a Just World. Printed by Vinlin Press Sdn. Bhd., Kuala Lumpur.
- Turner, J. 1990. "Analytical Theorizing" in *Social Theory Today*, eds. Anthony Giddens and Jonathan Turner, Polity Press.
- Tylor, Edward B. 1871. *Primitive Culture*. London: John Murray.
- Urry, J. New Rules of Sociological Methods by Anthony Giddens (1976). Book Review. *Sociological Review*, N. S. XXV, 1977, 911-5.
- Wassertrom, M. Steven. 1999. *Religion After Religion: Gershom Scholem, Mircea Eliade, and Henry Corbin at Eranos*. Published by Amazon. See in particular the debate on Henry Corbin and his views on 'Tradition and Religion'.
- Weber, Max. 1904/1958. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Scribners.

- Wiley, N. 1988. "The Micro-Macro Problem in Social Theory." *Sociological Theory* 6:254-61.
- Wiley, N. 1989. "Response to Ritzer." *Sociological Theory* 7:230-31.
- Wilson, Bryan R. 1966 *Religion in Secular Society*. Watts, London.
- Wilson, Bryan R. 1969. "When union means weakness", *Observer* 6 July.
- Wilson, Bryan R. 1982. *Religion in Sociological Perspective*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, New York.
- Wilson, Q. James. 1993. *The Moral Sense*. New York, Free Press.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> It is important to mention that Giddens never wrote the third volume but this work was based on the ideas he sketched for the third volume and other issues. (See Giddens' preface 1994)

<sup>2</sup> In regard to the Giddensian move from epistemologically-oriented social theory to ontologically-committed social philosophy (and their assumed liberating consequences) see: Structuration Theory and Social Praxis; by Ira J. Cohen in *Social Theory Today*, edited by Anthony Giddens and Jonathan Turner, 1987. 276.

<sup>3</sup> In addition, it should be mentioned that the substantive definitions have been criticized for disguising the specific historic reality of Judeo-Christianity and church organization as a universal category.

<sup>4</sup> For those who are interested in Giddens' (and his intellectual peers') views on normative globalism and a critique of normative globalism I would refer them to: For criticism of the claimed inevitability of nation-eroding globalism see Fred Northedge, Fred 'Transnationalism: the American illusion', *Millennium, Journal of International Studies*, 5: 1, 1976, pp. 21-27; Kevin Cox, 'The politics of globalization: a sceptic's view', *Political Geography* 11: 1993, pp. 427-429; and Anthony D. Smith, 'Towards a global culture?', *Theory, Culture, and Society*. 7: 1990, 171-191; Anthony McGrew, 'Conceptualizing global politics' in Anthony McGrew et al., Eds. *Global Politics: Globalization and the Nation State* Cambridge: Polity, 1992), pp. 1-28, p. 23.; and David Held, *Democracy and the Global Order: From the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995); Lynn Miller, *Global Order: Values and Power in International Politics*, Third Edition (Boulder: Westview, 1994); Richard Falk, *On Humane Governance: Toward a New Global Politics* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995). Recent non-mainstream cosmopolitanism is reviewed in Heikki Patomäki, 'Emerging Late-Modern reconstructivism', *Journal of Peace Research* 31: 4, 1994, pp. 451-459. A recent article in the Rechtsstaat tradition is Waldemar Schreckenberger, 'Der moderne Verfassungsstaat und die Idee der Weltgemeinschaft', *Der Staat* 34: 4, 1995, pp. 503-526.

## **Modified Notion of Representative Knowledge by Correspondence**

Amir Salehi

Front Range Community College, Colorado, U.S.A

### **Abstract:**

Since Yazdi's epistemology of Knowledge by Correspondence (1992), published in *Principles of Islamic Epistemology, Knowledge by Presence* does not elaborate and explain how Knowledge by Correspondence as representative knowledge originates, this article aims at modifying Yazdi's account with the purpose of developing explanations about the origin of representative Knowledge by Correspondence. To modify Yazdi's account, the article substitutes Yazdi's realist account of Knowledge by Correspondence with an irrealist account of this knowledge (proposal). Specifically, the proposal defines the correspondence relationship between the representation (immanent object) and the object represented (transitive object) in terms of the claim of correspondence and therefore as a judgment that assigns representational status to the immanent object. Based on this understanding, the article explains the origin of this judgment in accordance with the interests and expectations of the subject. In addition, the article explains the origin of the representations (immanent objects) constituted by the cognitions of the subject internalistically. Further, the transitive object as the object represented, which is defined in Yazdi's account as the transcendent object, is defined by the proposal realistically but also as object that is known by Presence and contrary to Yazdi's account as an object that is available to the subject.

### **Introduction**

This article is based on the epistemology of Hairi Yazdi (1992), published in *Principles of Islamic Epistemology, Knowledge by Presence*. In his book, Yazdi discusses two types of knowledge. One is Knowledge by Presence (KP), which is defined by him as non-

representative knowledge, and the second is Knowledge by Correspondence (KC), which is defined by him as representative knowledge. Since Yazdi discusses the notion of Knowledge by Correspondence mainly in comparison with the notion of Knowledge by Presence, the notion of Knowledge by Correspondence does not receive the elaboration it deserves; Yazdi's understanding of KC lacks explanations regarding the nature and origin of this knowledge. In this regard, it can be clearly stated that the notion of Knowledge by Correspondence is not fully developed in Yazdi's epistemology, and therefore addressing these shortcomings becomes the main objective of this article. Specifically, the project of this article is to establish a modified notion of representative Knowledge by Correspondence called the proposal, which has more explanatory potential. The aim of the proposal is to show how the origin and the nature of KC as "representative knowledge" can be explained. One should not forget that Yazdi's epistemology is already a unique analytic work and certainly one of the most analytic works so far in the history of Islamic Philosophy. Specifically, since Yazdi's project offers a meta linguistic but rational account of Knowledge by Presence while the very nature of this type of knowledge has its roots in mysticism, it allows one to define Yazdi's project as an analytical account of mystical experiences.

In Yazdi's account, while the notion of KP is independent from the notion of KC, the notion of KC is not independent from the notion of KP; but on the other side, Yazdi's constant reference to the notion of KC in the process of developing an analytical understanding of KP often gives the impression that an analytical account of KP is only possible in contrast to the notion of KC. This means specifically that although the very nature of KP as non-representative knowledge can be discussed independently from the notion of KC in the context of the linguistic study of mystical apprehension (Irfan), an analytical account of KP seems to not be possible without contrasting the notion of KP against the notion of KC. Assuming that this understanding is correct, namely that one can have an analytical account of KP only in contrast to KC, then a proper understanding of the notion of KC becomes a requirement for the analytical understanding of KP.

In regard to the project of this article, it can be stated further that an expansion of the notion of KC as it is intended here could



contribute to the further analytical understanding of KP. In addition, it cannot be predicted if the modified notion of KC developed by this article would confirm or refute Yazdi's analytical understanding of KP, but the possibility that the modified notion of KC developed here could challenge Yazdi's interpretations of KP cannot be ruled out. Regardless if the proposal of this article points at a new analytical understanding of KP or if it simply confirms Yazdi's understanding of this notion based on the above mentioned, it appears that *a comprehensive understanding of KC is crucial for any analytical understanding of KP*.

In accordance with Yazdi's epistemology of KC, the correspondence relationship is defined between the subjective object or the immanent object and the objective object or the transitive object. Yazdi writes,

There is on the one hand an external object existing independently outside of my mind, the reality of which belongs to the reality of the external world and has nothing to do with the constitution of this episode of my perceiving. This is the objective object, which is the physical reality of the shape of my television set itself regardless of my perception of it. On the other hand, corresponding to this, there is also an object that is present in and identical with the existence of my perceiving power. This is the subjective object that constitutes the essence of my immanent act of perceiving, the reality of which belongs to the reality of my perception.<sup>1</sup>

Both Yazdi's account and the proposal of this article define the very nature of Knowledge by Correspondence through the relationship between the immanent object and the transitive object; therefore it is central for the project of this article to not only clarify the distinction between the two objects but also to highlight the contrast between Yazdi's and the proposal's understanding of these two objects.

As stated, the proposal's and Yazdi's account both consider the immanent object to be the representation of the transitive object and the transitive object as the object represented. Yazdi equates the transitive object with the objective object or external object, also called by him the absent or transcendent object. Further, Yazdi's realist notion of the transitive object defines this object as an object that is not available to the subject from the standpoint of first-person consciousness. *With realism it is meant that an object, entity or property is defined*

*independently of human sense, beliefs, theories and conceptual frameworks as well as human evidential judgments or practices.*

Similar to Yazdi's account, the proposal also defines the transitive object realistically, namely as an object that exists independently from the subject's beliefs, theories, experience, conceptual framework and human evidential practices or judgments, but contrary to Yazdi's realist account, the proposal understands the transitive object as an object that is available to the subject from the standpoint of first-person consciousness (the proposal no longer considers the transitive object as an absent or transcendent object).

In addition to the differences between Yazdi's realist and the proposal's realist account of the transitive object, the proposal defends an irrealist account of Knowledge by Correspondence while Yazdi defends a realist notion of this Knowledge. *With semantic realism it is meant that truth is defined as a non-normative, non-epistemic relationship between propositions (statement, sentence) and some state of affairs or fact.*

Regarding Yazdi's notion of correspondence, the above definition means that there is a non-epistemic relationship between the immanent object and the transitive object.

Further, with semantic irrealism the article means *that the notion of truth is defined in irreducibly normative (epistemic) terms such as good belief, warranted assertability or rational belief, or irreducibly normative (moral or aesthetic) terms such as human emancipation, flourishing, or well-being.* Specifically, as it will be demonstrated through out the article, the proposal redefines the notion of correspondence as a correspondence claim and with that as a judgment that establishes the truth of Knowledge by Correspondence in accordance with the interests and expectations of the subject (the relationship between the immanent object and the transitive object is defined by the proposal normatively, hence the proposal's irrealist account of KC).

In summary, while Yazdi's realist notion of the transitive object defines this object as an object that is not available to the subject, the proposal's realist notion of the transitive object defines the transitive object as an object known by Presence and therefore as an object that is available to the subject (both realist accounts consider the transitive

object as an object that exists independently from the subject). Further, while Yazdi offers a realist account of Knowledge by Correspondence, the proposal defends an irrealist account of Knowledge by Correspondence.

### **Yazdi's and the proposal's epistemology of Knowledge by Presence and Knowledge by Correspondence**

This section has two main objectives. One is to lay out the structure of the proposal and the second is to show how or in which aspects the proposal replaces Yazdi's account of KC (Knowledge by Correspondence). In regard to the second objective, this section discusses both notions of Knowledge by Presence and Knowledge by Correspondence consistent with Yazdi's epistemology. The importance of this section in relation to the entire article is to clarify criteria that Yazdi's account introduces for defining Knowledge by Correspondence as *representative*.

The following sections are concerned with characterizing Yazdi's understanding of Knowledge by Correspondence. Further, it will be established that Yazdi's epistemology lacks explanations about how KC originates as well as what constitutes the "correspondence relationship."

The fourth section develops a modified notion of KC (proposal) beginning with Yazdi's original understanding. It should be emphasized that the modified notion is partly developed by redefining terms such as "correspondence relationship."

The fifth section distinguishes between Yazdi's and the proposal's understanding of KC by comparing various components of both accounts, such as Yazdi's and the proposal's metaphysical presuppositions as well as the notions of truth and the correspondence relationship.

### **Yazdi's understanding of Knowledge by Presence and Knowledge by Correspondence**

Although in accordance with the Western tradition the possibility of non-representative knowledge is considered and discussed by some philosophers as sensory knowledge, it is common for the Western tradition to consider knowledge as "representative."

Because of this cultural tendency in the West, it would not be wrong to say that one can distinguish between Western and the Islamic Philosophy by stating that non-representative knowledge is more common in Islamic Philosophy and therefore more the subject of philosophical inquiries than it is in the West. In this regard, the notion of Knowledge by Presence that is defined by Hairi Yazdi (1992) as non-representative knowledge provides the best example. The unfamiliarity of the Western tradition with the notion of Knowledge by Presence (KP) could be due to the cultural origin of KP, which is closely associated with Islamic culture and tradition (the notion of KP is often expressed and discussed by Irfan (Yazdi defines Irfan “as the linguistic science of mystical apprehension”).

The short way of expressing Yazdi’s understanding of KP is to say that this knowledge is present in the mind of the knowing subject immediately and with such a degree of intensity that its truth is “self-evident.” With the term “self-evident” Yazdi means self-explanatory, obvious, clear and independent. In this regard, Yazdi uses the example of “self awareness.” Accordingly, awareness of self is presupposed by any state of awareness about being aware of something; therefore one must be aware that one is aware of this thing. Yazdi also uses the example of “pain” to illustrate “the self-evidence” of KP. In this context, Yazdi states that one cannot doubt pain because the awareness of pain is immediate and therefore self-evident. In addition, the “self-evidence” of Knowledge by Presence is explained by asserting that this knowledge is neither deduced from anything nor corresponds to anything. This means that KP is not about the subject-object relationship. Since KP is not about the relationship between representation and the object represented, it is not concerned with the issue of correspondence. Yazdi states,

One of the main characteristics of Knowledge by Presence is its freedom from the dualism of truth and falsehood. This is because the essence of this pattern of knowledge is not concerned with the notion of correspondence.<sup>2</sup>

In accordance with the above mentioned (non-representative character of KP), Yazdi concludes that there can be no issue regarding the accuracy of a representation in relation to the object represented.

Therefore, the notion of KP is independent of the dualism of truth and falsity that appears in representative knowledge (Yazdi provides a separate ground for the truth of Knowledge by Presence).

Knowledge by Presence is the kind of knowledge that has all its relations within the framework of itself, such as the whole autonomy of the notion can hold true without any implication of an external objective reference calling for an exterior relation.<sup>3</sup>

The above-mentioned quote of Yazdi's takes us to another characteristic of KP, namely its "oneness." With "oneness" is meant that in the context of such knowledge there is no subject – object relationship, and therefore the mode of what is known by Presence (its presentation to the consciousness) allows no distinction to be made between the experiencing subject and the experienced object. It is in such context that Yazdi states that what is known by Presence belongs to the "order of beings" and not to the order of representations.

This is essential for indicating that we are dealing with a case of Knowledge by Presence if, and only if, we are in the act of experiencing our sensations and are not engaged in the act of "reflecting" upon our experiences. Conclusions are drawn such that Knowledge by Presence is not experienced by reflection, for the very meaning of "Presence" and its nature which pertains to the order of being as distinct from the order of conception and perception such an eventuality.<sup>4</sup>

Here we see that Russell is also discussing a theory of knowledge similar to the notion of Knowledge by Presence called "Knowledge by Acquaintance." In his account, Knowledge by Acquaintance is to be understood as non-representative knowledge and therefore, like Knowledge by Presence, free from dualism of truth and falsity. As Russell states,

So far as things are concerned, we may know them or not know them, but there is no positive state of mind which can be described as erroneous knowledge of things, so long, at any rate, as we confine ourselves to knowledge by acquaintance. Whatever we are acquainted with must be something; we may draw wrong inference from our acquaintance, but the acquaintance itself cannot be deceptive. Thus there is no dualism as regards acquaintance.<sup>5</sup>

What explains in Russell's account that Knowledge by Acquaintance is free from truth and falsity is that Knowledge by Acquaintance is not known by representation. Specifically, the absence of a representation is to be interpreted, as Knowledge by Acquaintance is not conceived of a subject-object relationship (the relationship between a representation that the subject has and the object represented). The crucial point is that Knowledge by Acquaintance, like Knowledge by Presence, unites the subject with the object, and as a result of this there is no relationship to be confirmed or negated, hence the notion of truth and falsity do not apply to such knowledge. In addition, one can explain consistently with Russell's account how representative knowledge depends on Knowledge by Acquaintance. Accordingly, if only representative knowledge were possible, then how can one know that one has representative knowledge about something? The answer must be by representation. In such a case, the challenge continues by asking how one can know that one knows by representation that he has representative knowledge about something. To end this infinite regress, it can be argued that knowing about possessing a representative knowledge is Knowledge by Acquaintance and not representative knowledge.

In contrast to Knowledge by Presence, Yazdi defines the notion of Knowledge by Correspondence as "representative." Accordingly, while Knowledge by Presence contains all its relations in itself (the anatomy of this notion is present without a reference to an external object), Knowledge by Correspondence aims to represent an external object, the existence of which is presupposed. This means that in Yazdi's account, what makes the nature of Knowledge by Correspondence representative is that there is an existing correspondence relationship between a subjective object and its corresponding objective object.

It has been already pointed out that, unlike Knowledge by Presence, Knowledge by Correspondence is marked by being involved in a twofold sense of objectivity. It has a subjective object, as the essence of knowledge as such requires, and it also has an objective object that lies outside the order of conception and counts as the objective reference of that knowledge.<sup>6</sup>

Yazdi's understanding of an objective object and its function becomes even more clear once Yazdi defines it in the above-mentioned quote as the "objective reference" of the knowledge. In this regard, Yazdi considers the objective object as the object that is to be represented, while the subjective object is understood as the "representation" of that object. Yazdi states,

In the case of this knowledge, the subjective object plays an intermediary representation role in the achievement of the act of knowing. That is to say, the subjective object represents by means of conceptualization the reality of the external object before the mind of the knowing subject.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, since in the context of Knowledge by Correspondence Yazdi defines the main concern of the relation between the subjective object and the objective object to be the degree of correspondence (degree of correspondence between the "representation" and the object "represented"), it may be said that contrary to Knowledge by Presence, the adjectives true and false would apply to Yazdi's notion of Knowledge by Correspondence.

### **Characteristics of Yazdi's notion of Knowledge by Correspondence and its shortcomings**

The main concern of this section is to discuss various components of Yazdi's epistemology of KC, including the correspondence relationship, his notion of truth, and Yazdi's criteria of epistemic justification. In regard to the project of this article, namely to address the shortcomings of Yazdi's notion of KC, it will be established at the end of this section that Yazdi's epistemology lacks explanations concerning the origin of this knowledge (how the correspondence relationship originates, what constitutes the possibility of the immanent object, etc.). As stated in the introduction, it is because of these issues that this article intends to develop an alternative to Yazdi's account of this knowledge.

### **Correspondence relationship**

The notion of "correspondence relationship" is very central for the understanding of Yazdi's account because it explains the

“representative” nature of Knowledge by Correspondence. As already stated, Yazdi asserts that the correspondence relationship is the relationship between the immanent object (representation) and the transitive object (the object being represented). Yazdi states,

As representation, the subjective object, and consequently the whole unity of knowledge, makes sense only if it has conformity and correspondence with the external object. Knowledge by Correspondence, therefore, is that in which:

- a) There are two kinds of objects: one is internal and the other external. That is, both subjective object and objective object must already be in the order of the act.
- b) There is a correspondence relation between these two objects.<sup>8</sup>

As explained in previous section the main concern of Knowledge by Correspondence is the degree of correspondence, and for this reason the adjectives “true” and “false” will be applicable for this type of knowledge (the highest degree of correspondence asserts an accurate representation of the object represented and therefore true knowledge, while the lowest degree of representation indicates a misrepresentation). Yazdi explains,

If our subjective object truly corresponds to the objective object, our knowledge of the external world holds true and is valid, but if the condition of correspondency<sup>9</sup> has not been obtained, the truth of our knowledge will never come about.

Consistent with Yazdi’s realist account of KC, only if the subjective object represents the transcendent object well is the knowledge true and therefore valid, but the unanswered question is how one can determine epistemically that the conditions of correspondency have been obtained (what are the specific epistemic criteria allowing the judgment that an accurate representation of the transcendent object is present or not?).

In another place Yazdi gives a more specific understanding of the correspondence relationship, but he fails to elaborate on what constitutes this relationship. Yazdi states,



The meaning of correspondence used here, in this theory of knowledge, is briefly considered, “resemblance” in content and “identity” in form.<sup>10</sup>

All things considered, Yazdi’s descriptions are very short and incomplete as far as the understanding of the correspondence relationship is concerned, including what is meant specifically with “resemblance in content” and “identity in form.” Consequently how Yazdi’s account of the correspondence relationship should be interpreted in the context of his epistemology becomes the subject of speculation in this article. For example, since according to Yazdi the adjectives true and false are applicable to Knowledge by Correspondence, one can interpret that Yazdi’s epistemology of KC is truth-centered, which means that the ends of cognitions (from the epistemic point of view) are to maximize truth and minimize falsehood.

### **Yazdi’s realist account of the transitive object**

In regard to Yazdi’s understanding of the transitive object, the following paragraph seems to contain some clues:

The transitive object is an external, material or immaterial form of the object, which is existentially independent of and separate from the state of our mentality and has no susceptibility to any degree of abstraction.<sup>11</sup>

In accordance with the above understanding, it can be interpreted that since according to Yazdi the subject has no direct access to the transitive object, the subject gains a mediated access to the transitive object through the immanent object, although Yazdi fails to further elaborate on the nature of this immanent object that he defines as a mental representation of the transitive object. Yazdi confirms this realist interpretation of the transitive object by reiterating that the epistemic activities of the subject, including how the immanent object is perceived, have no influence on the independent reality of the transitive object.

There is on the one hand an external object existing independently outside of my mind, the reality of which belongs to the reality of the external world and has nothing to do with the constitution of this episode of my perceiving. This

is the objective object, which is the physical reality of the shape of my television set itself regardless of my perception of it. On the other hand, corresponding to this, there is also an object that is present in and identical with the existence of my perceiving power. This is the subjective object that constitutes the essence of my immanent act of perceiving, the reality of which belongs to the reality of my perception.<sup>12</sup>

### **Yazdi's notion of "truth"**

Considering that Yazdi gives no specific indication regarding what the truth of Knowledge by Correspondence is conceived of as well as what makes this truth possible, based on the above evaluations, it seems that Yazdi's understanding of "truth" is conceived of a non-epistemic relationship between the immanent and transitive objects (semantic realism). Semantic realism, such as correspondence truth, is defined as a non-normative, non-epistemic relationship between propositions (statement, sentence) and some other state of affairs or fact. This means that Yazdi's notion of truth presupposes semantic realism in the Cartesian sense (transitive object as the object in the external world), and accordingly the cognizer will have no ability to shape or determine the reality of this transitive object. Further, since Yazdi fails to explain what constitutes the correspondence relationship between the immanent and the transitive object, this indicates that the subject might not have access to what makes this relationship possible. This means that Yazdi defends the externalist theory of truth because the truth-maker is not accessible to the cognizer from the standpoint of first-person consciousness (semantic externalism). Externalist theories of truth maintain that that which makes a proposition, assertion or belief true (i.e. its truth-maker) need not be in principle accessible to a cognizer from the standpoint of first-person consciousness.

### **Yazdi's Criteria for epistemic justification of Knowledge by Correspondence**

What is Yazdi's account about the epistemic justification of KC? Does he defend an internalist or externalist view of epistemic justification? All things considered, it seems that Yazdi offers internalist criteria for epistemic validation of KC. Specifically, since Yazdi explains the origin of Knowledge by Correspondence through the notion of Knowledge by Presence, this rather indicates that what

epistemizes belief of KC is constituted by the means that are accessible to the cognizer from the standpoint of first-person consciousness. Yazdi states,

We can therefore understand from all this that Knowledge by Presence has creative priority over Knowledge by Correspondence. In fact, Knowledge by Correspondence always emerges from its rich and ever-present source, which is Knowledge by Presence.<sup>13</sup>

In the above quote, Yazdi's understanding of "emergence" in the context in which it is mentioned can be interpreted as an indication that KC originates from KP, not to mention that in the last sentence Yazdi himself identifies KP as the epistemic source of KC. In short, since Yazdi considers the notion of KP to be what constitutes KC, and since in accordance with Yazdi the subject has direct and immediate access to KP, it can be concluded that Yazdi defends the internalist account of epistemic justification for both Knowledge by Presence and Knowledge by Correspondence. Internalist theories of epistemic justification maintain that that which epistemizes belief must be in principle accessible to a cognizer from the standpoint of first-person consciousness, e.g. certainty, indubitability, consistency, coherence, etc.

Considering Yazdi's understanding of KC, it remains unclear what ultimately establishes the representation status of the immanent object. The only clue that strongly indicates Yazdi's internalist theory of epistemic justification is that Yazdi points at an existing relationship between KP and KC under which one can state that if KC "emerges from its rich and ever-present source," namely Knowledge by Presence, while Yazdi understands that what is known by Presence possesses characteristics such as self-evidence or certainty; therefore it follows that Yazdi would have to defend the internalist theory of epistemic justification concerning Knowledge by Correspondence.

### **Problems associated with Yazdi's notion of Knowledge by Correspondence**

Assuming that the above interpretation concerning Yazdi's account of what validates KC is correct, this would only establish the internalist view of Yazdi, but it does not explain how such knowledge

actually originates. Specifically, it is unclear how a subjective object or immanent object does originate (Yazdi asserts that the immanent object is the mental representation of its corresponding transitive object without specifying the nature or the developmental process of this mental representation). In addition, although the context in which Yazdi intends to use the epistemology of Knowledge by Correspondence is clear, including that KC provides a foundation or grounding for beliefs concerning the external world, Yazdi's epistemology leaves many questions regarding the nature of the correspondence relationship still unanswered (see Yazdi's definition of the correspondence relationship as resemblance in content and identity in form).

### **Modified notion of Knowledge by Correspondence (Proposal's account)**

Based on the shortcomings of Yazdi's epistemology of KC in providing explanations about the origin of this knowledge as well as the problems that are associated with Yazdi's account listed at the end of the previous section, one may ask if it would be possible to develop a modified notion of Knowledge by Correspondence that is more sophisticated and comprehensive than Yazdi's account. Specifically, one must ask if it is possible to develop an account of KC that is more explanatory yet also coherent with the overall understanding of this knowledge in accordance with Yazdi's epistemology.

This section intends to develop a modified notion of KC called "the proposal" which is more adequate than Yazdi's account in regard to providing explanations about the origin of the immanent object, what constitutes the correspondence relationship, but also in regard to why and how the representative Knowledge by Correspondence in general becomes possible.

The process for developing the proposal begins with offering a realist account of the transitive object, which differs from the Yazdi's realist account. By doing so, the proposal states specifically that the transitive object is to be defined as the object known by Presence and therefore as an object that is available to the subject from the standpoint of first-person consciousness. By redefining the realist notion of transitive objects as objects that are in principle accessible to the

subject, a new understanding of the correspondence relationship will be introduced and defended. Once this alternative understanding of the correspondence relationship is offered, then the proposal aims at explaining how the immanent objects become possible. Such explanations would not be limited only to how the immanent objects as the representation of the transitive objects are formed, but also what the nature of the correspondence relationship is as well as what the criteria are constituting the correspondence between the immanent objects and the transitive objects. In this context, it will be expected that the conjunction of these explanations would be able to explain the source and origin of Knowledge by Correspondence in a more comprehensive way than Yazdi's original understanding of KC.

### **The proposal's understanding of the correspondence relationship**

The proposal intends to establish a new understanding of the correspondence relationship by asking if there is a preexisting relationship between the immanent and transitive objects that the "correspondence relationship" aims to confirm. In other words, could the nature of the correspondence relationship be interpreted as the process of validating an already existing relationship? Yazdi's account as discussed in the previous section seems to rule out this possibility (in Yazdi's account this relationship could not be interpreted as a formal demonstration concerned with verifying an already existing relationship).

*Premise 1:* Either the correspondence relationship is there to confirm an already existing relationship between an immanent and transitive object, or it is there to constitute a relationship between the two objects.

*Premise 2:* Yazdi's epistemology provides no basis that a "correspondence relationship" is about confirming an existing relationship.

Therefore, the "correspondence relationship" in Yazdi's account must be interpreted as a relationship that is created or constituted by the judgments or evidential operation of the subject.

In fact the above stated conclusion is also the position of the proposal, but knowing that the subject's judgment or evidential operation constitutes the correspondence relationship as the above argument suggests explains neither the nature of this relationship nor how such relationship is constructed.

One possible interpretation for the nature of the correspondence relationship is that the correspondence relationship is a claim. Accordingly, the subject expects and raises the general expectation that the immanent object can be seen as a representation of the transitive object. This means that the immanent object is declared or awarded the status of representation while the judgment that establishes this status is the proposal's understanding of the correspondence claim. This means that the proposal defines the relationship between the immanent object and the transitive object unrealistically. Unrealism is understood in this article as some object, entity or property is defined in terms of human sense experience, beliefs, theories, conceptual frameworks, or human evidential judgments or practices. In regard to the proposal's account, it is the judgment that assigns the claim of correspondence to the immanent object that establishes the irrealist account of KC.

It must be emphasized that the notion of "correspondence claim" is not the same as the notion of "inferential claim" used in formal logic. It is pertinent to consider that the process under which an immanent object originates is not the same process that establishes the correspondence claim, although there might be a link between both processes. This means that not any immanent object that is being constructed is entitled to be the representation of its transitive object, but it is rather a selective process of the cognitions of the subject that determines if the claim of correspondence can be awarded to an immanent object or not. In other words, it is only after attaching the claim of correspondence to an immanent object that a particular immanent object can be understood as the representation of the transitive object and not before that.

As already stated, although the cognitions of the subject seem to be actively involved in constituting the claim of correspondence, this would not suggest necessarily that the subject consciously shapes such a process, because the subject could also be guided unconsciously (unconscious activities of the mind could also direct and therefore lead

the process of assigning the claim of correspondence to an immanent object).

All things considered, the proposal suggests that while the conscious and intentional activities of the mind construct and constitute the origin of the immanent object, the conscious and unconscious activities of the mind constitute the correspondence claim. It should be noted that in the background the transitive object has its realist constraints on the judgment of whether an immanent object can be awarded the status of a representation or not. The influence of the transitive object on the process by which the claim of correspondence is assigned to an immanent object can be seen as the external cause.

In summary, there are five premises that are not only crucial for developing or constructing the proposal, but that also define the framework of the proposal.

This means that the proposal is based on a hypothetical ground stating that if these premises are true, then the proposal is true, including the explanations that it provides.

But at this moment the proposal neither aims at introducing these premises independently from each other nor does it intend to justify all of these premises.

*First Premise:*

Yazdi's epistemology of Knowledge by Correspondence has shortcomings concerning the origin of this knowledge.

*Second Premise:*

While the proposal aims at replacing Yazdi's account of KC, it intends to be mostly consistent with the overall epistemology of Yazdi (what supports this premise is the understanding that one cannot start from scratch in epistemology, and as the result one must continue modifying the tradition that has been given).

*Third Premise:*

The proposal redefines the realist notion of the transitive object (it substitutes Yazdi's realist account of the transitive object with a modified realist account of the transitive object as discussed above).

*Fourth Premise:*

The proposal emerges from the conclusion that the correspondence relationship is actively constituted by the judgment of the subject, and prior to that there is no relationship between the immanent and the transitive object.

*Fifth Premise:*

The correspondence relationship is to be interpreted as the correspondence claim.

**Proposal's notion of "the transitive object"**

As stated in the previous section, the proposal intends to explain the origin of the immanent object through the cognitions of the subject, but how could the subject develop an immanent object or representation of the transitive object without having direct and immediate access to the transitive object? Example: How could one have an impression or idea about someone without having a chance to meet that person?

In accordance with the proposal, representations (immanent objects) are possible if the subject has direct and immediate access to the transitive object (the transitive object in principle must be accessible to the subject). To say that the availability of the transitive object is a condition for having a representation of it does not say that one cannot have a representation of something that does not exist. Further, the proposal's realist account of the transitive object understands the very nature of the transitive object as an object that is immediately available to the subject (transitive object as object known by Presence enjoys the presentation mode of "oneness" and the "immediateness" which are characteristic for KP). This means that since the proposal understands the transitive object as the object known by Presence, the features of Knowledge by Presence as discussed in previous sections are also to be found in the proposal's realist notion of the transitive object. Based on such an understanding, the transitive object is presented to the consciousness, and therefore the subject intentionally influences neither the process concerning when transitive



object is presented, nor how this presentation occurs. Further, as it was explained earlier, Knowledge by Presence is non-representative, which means that it is characteristic of this type of knowledge (KP) that the knowing subject is united with the object known (“oneness” is what KP is about).

In summary, the proposal’s notion of the transitive object refers to the notion of Knowledge by Presence offering an understanding of this object, and as the proposal states, “oneness” or unification of the knowing subject with the object known is characteristic of Knowledge by Presence and its object (transitive object).

### **Proposal’s notion of the immanent object**

The Proposal is in agreement with Yazdi’s account that the immanent object is the representation of the transitive object; however, Yazdi’s epistemology cannot explain how the immanent object originates. Contrary to Yazdi’s account, the proposal aims at explaining the process that leads to the construction of the immanent object. Accordingly, the proposal defends the view that the transitive object is somehow relevant to the process that makes the immanent object possible. It seems that the transitive object provides the model for how the immanent object as a representation of the transitive object is constructed. In fact, it is this indirect involvement of the transitive object that explains how or why Knowledge by Presence can be considered the source of Knowledge by Correspondence (this understanding is consistent with Yazdi’s epistemology). Regarding how the immanent object is actually constructed, the proposal defends the view that the subject is actively and intentionally involved in the process that makes the immanent object possible. Specifically, the cognitions of the subject guide the thinking activities that ultimately develop the immanent object. In short, the immanent object is conceived internalistically because the immanent object is the result of the consciously directed cognitive activities of the subject.

If there are universal criteria under which immanent objects are generally constructed or not will not be demanded by the proposal *a priori*, although it is possible that a naturalized account of the immanent

object could identify certain conditions under which any immanent object is formed. The existence of such conditions (assuming their existence could be established *scientifically*) could explain what makes a cognitive construct a representation of the transitive object.

### **Clarifying the proposal's account of Knowledge by Correspondence against Yazdi's account**

Since the proposal is concerned with replacing Yazdi's account, there are major differences between the proposal's account of KC and Yazdi's notion of KC. At the center of this difference stands the correspondence relationship, the interpretation of which not only determines what can be known, but also what the metaphysical status of the object represented (transitive object) is.

#### **Correspondence relationship**

While the proposal interprets the nature of the correspondence relationship as the "claim" that is initiated and actively pursued by the epistemic activities of the subject, Yazdi's account remains unclear as far as what is meant by saying that the correspondence relationship is conceived of "resemblance in content" and "identity in form."

The irrealist account of the proposal does not replace Yazdi's definition of correspondence due to its understanding that there are no such things as "correspondence." This means that correspondence is to be interpreted strictly as a correspondence claim, which is the same as asserting that an immanent object has been assigned the status of representation. In other words, correspondence is equated with the claim to correspond, which means nothing but the judgment that a particular immanent object has been chosen as the representation of the transitive object. It should be emphasized that the claim of correspondence is conceived irrealistically, because it is initiated according to the interests and expectations of the subject.

Further, it must be recognized that the notion of "correspondence" requires far more discussion and evaluation than can be offered by this article. This recognition is critical due to the fact that Yazdi's understanding of "correspondence" is far from complete.

### **Transitive object**

As was stated in the previous sections, because of the proposal's understanding that the transitive object is the object known by Presence, the transitive object consists of presentation and not representation. In this context, the object known by Presence (transitive object) must be immediately present in the consciousness. Further, the transitive object is presented to the consciousness in a unitary form ("oneness" as the characteristic of what is known by Presence). In accordance with the "oneness" as a feature of the transitive object, there is no distinction to be made between the experiencing subject and the experienced object.

But what is the very nature of the transitive object? What is meant specifically with "object" in this regard? The proposal asserts that not only physical objects that appear through experience but also any memory of a past experience, as well as any creative or imaginative state of awareness that is immediately present in the mind, can be considered the transitive object and therefore represented by the means of KC (immanent object). In this regard, it is not the immanent object that can be considered as true or false, but what can be considered true or false is the judgment assigning the claim of correspondence to an immanent object.

### **Notion of "truth"**

Yazdi's understanding of the transitive object, which is understood as the transcendent object, establishes Yazdi's realist account. In regard to Yazdi's understanding of the "correspondence relationship," truth is conceived of a non-epistemic relationship between the immanent and transitive objects (semantic realism). Concerning the truth-maker, Yazdi's account is not clear, but based on his account of the transitive object, one may assume that the subject lacks direct and immediate access to the truth-maker (what makes the truth possible is in principle not accessible to the subject from the standpoint of first-person consciousness); therefore one may conclude that Yazdi defends the externalist theory of truth (semantic externalism).

Similar to Yazdi's account, the proposal's understanding about the ontological status of the transitive object points at realism. Further,

since the proposal defines “truth” in terms of epistemic activities of the subject (“the correspondence claim”), the proposal’s notion of truth defends semantic irrealism.

Regarding the truth-maker, since what constitutes the judgment of the subject to assign the claim of correspondence to an immanent object (interests and expectations) are in principle accessible to the subject from the standpoint of first-person consciousness, the proposal defends the view that the subject has direct and immediate access to the truth-maker (semantic internalism).

### **Differences between the proposal and empiricism**

It should be emphasized that the proposal should not be confused with the empiricist view because one cannot choose, according to empiricists, to have or to not have a representation about an experience, while according to the proposal it is the case. In other words, while the proposal explains the origin of representation (immanent object) based on cognitions of the subject by stating that the subject directs cognitive activities, Hume’s empiricism, for example, suggests that representation is formed passively through experience. In addition, the main difference between the empiricist view and the proposal consists of what is or can be considered “representation.” While empiricists might consider memories of past experience “representation,” the proposal would not (the notion of representation according to the proposal is strictly reserved for the immanent object, while memories are considered by the proposal as transitive objects).

### **Avoiding possible misunderstandings about the proposal**

If one limits knowledge to the type of Knowledge by Correspondence discussed here, one might prematurely conclude that this article defends solipsism, but this is not the case. The proposal must be understood only in relation to Knowledge by Presence, but the notion of Knowledge by Presence in accordance with Yazdi’s account is based on a realist and not an irrealist account. In short, a comprehensive understanding of the proposal asserts that representative Knowledge by Correspondence allows knowledge about the external

world because “its source” (Knowledge by Presence) emerges from the realist framework.

### Conclusions

Considering the ability of the proposal to offer detailed explanations regarding the origin of the immanent object, it may be concluded that the proposal is a more comprehensive account than Yazdi's original account. The comprehensiveness of the proposal also consists of its ability to offer a detailed understanding of the relationship between the immanent object and the transitive object. Further, the possibility that the proposal can be supported by a naturalized account gives it an additional advantage over Yazdi's account, while Yazdi's account clearly withdraws itself from such a possibility.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Yazdi, Mehdi Hairi; *The Principles of Epistemology in Islamic Philosophy: Knowledge by Presence*, State University of New York Press 1992. Page 31

<sup>2</sup> Yazdi, Page 45.

<sup>3</sup> Yazdi, Page 43.

<sup>4</sup> Yazdi, Page 61.

<sup>5</sup> Yazdi, Page 58.

<sup>6</sup> Yazdi, Page 49.

<sup>7</sup> Yazdi, Page 49.

<sup>8</sup> Yazdi, Page 49.

<sup>9</sup> Yazdi, Page 49.

<sup>10</sup> Yazdi, Page 48.

<sup>11</sup> Yazdi, Page 39.

<sup>12</sup> Yazdi, Page 31.

<sup>13</sup> Yazdi, Page 54.



## **The Symbology of the Wing in Suhrawardī's *The Reverberation of Gabriel's Wing*<sup>\*</sup>**

Mohammed Rustom  
University of Toronto, Canada

### **Abstract**

This paper explores how the famous 6<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> century Muslim philosopher Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī presents his teachings on self realization in his symbolic treatise, *Āwāz-i parr-i Jibrāʾīl* (*The Reverberation of Gabriel's Wing*). In order to draw out the inner meaning of this treatise a close reading of its symbols is offered, culminating in an analysis of the function of Gabriel's wing. Scholars who have worked on this tale have often translated the term *Āwāz* as 'sound' or 'song'. In this paper, it will be rendered as 'reverberation', which is equally plausible. By reading *Āwāz* as 'reverberation' instead of 'song' or 'sound', there emerges a more nuanced understanding of the significance of the esoteric symbology of the Angel's wing within the cosmological matrix of the tale.

### **Introduction**

Amongst the writings of the founder of the school of Illumination and key figure in post-Avicennan Islamic philosophy, Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191)<sup>1</sup>, are a series of mystical/philosophical narratives or 'recitals' written in Persian.<sup>2</sup> In the context of each of these narratives Suhrawardī employs numerous symbols which take his readers through the multiple levels of initiation into the very depths of their being. As is the case with all of his symbolic recitals, the narrator of these tales is Suhrawardī and is not Suhrawardī. It is he because he relates the tale in the first person. But it is not he insofar as those reading the tale follow the footsteps of the narrator and become initiated into the esoteric significance of its

symbols. Through unveiling the text by 'becoming' the narrator, its readers unveil and therefore 'become' their true selves.

At the beginning of perhaps his most famous symbolic treatise, *Āwāz-i parr-i JibrĀ'ī* (*The Reverberation of Gabriel's Wing*)<sup>3</sup>, Suhrawardī speaks of his being freed from the womens' quarters and from some of the shackles and limitations experienced by children.<sup>4</sup> In a state of discomfort as the result of what he calls "the onslaughts of a dream" (*hujūm-i khwāb*),<sup>5</sup> he takes a lamp and goes towards the mens' quarters of his home. This entire scene takes place against the background of the setting of darkness, which is referred to as "the hand of the brother of non-existence" upon the regions of the lower world.<sup>6</sup> Suhrawardī encircles these quarters until the break of dawn, at which time he wishes to enter his father's *khānaqāh* or Sufi lodge. One of its doors leads to the city and the other door leads to an open field (*āīrā*) and a garden (*bustān*).<sup>7</sup> After closing the door that leads to the city he proceeds towards the field and the garden. Once outside, he encounters ten beautiful Sages (*pīrān*) seated upon a bench. With great hesitation he approaches them and greets them.<sup>8</sup>

### **The Angel and the Interior Temple**

The meeting that takes place with these Sages is indeed mysterious. Ten, which is the number assigned to them, would seem arbitrary if it were not known that in the classical Islamic philosophical conception of the cosmos there were ten Intellects, one proceeding from the other in a series of emanative descents from the First Intellect (the first descent from the Godhead) all the way to the tenth or Active Intellect. These Intellects were identified with the Angels by Avicenna and Suhrawardī further angelizes the cosmos by assigning an angelic function to everything in the cosmic system. The tenth or Active Intellect is identified with the Angel Gabriel, that is, the Angel of Revelation who is the Sage seated at the furthest end of the bench. Gabriel is the Angel who brings revelations to the Prophets and acts as the guide of humanity since he is the 'link' between Heaven and Earth.

When Suhrawardī approaches these Sages he addresses the Angel Gabriel, asking him where the Sages have come from. Gabriel replies in the following manner:



‘We are a group of disengaged Folk who have come from the direction of No-Place-Estan (*nÁ kujÁ ÁbÁd*).’ I did not understand the reference, so I inquired, ‘To which clime does that city belong?’ He replied, ‘That clime which cannot be pointed out by the index finger.’ Thus I came to know that the Sage was extensive in knowledge.<sup>9</sup>

The Angel reminds Suhrawardī of the eighth clime,<sup>10</sup> that place “which cannot be pointed out by the index finger.” The place which is no place is, in fact, where this very encounter takes place. By meeting the Angel he becomes initiated into what he always has been *in divinis*. The Angel, as celestial guide, orients him to his own situation by ‘pointing’ out to him that place from whence they came, which is the place that cannot be ‘pointed out.’

The meeting with the Angel implies initiation at the very moment of the encounter, but it also requires one to re-turn to one’s true self in its entirety. The Angel is a guide for Suhrawardī because he will cause him to re-trace those steps leading him back to himself. The Angel will allow him to perform the necessary *ta’wīd* of his own soul so that he may re-turn to his primordial nature.<sup>11</sup> His perfect nature or true self is, from this perspective, distinct from him, which is why it can function as his guide. In reality they are not different. However, because his soul is still trapped in the world he must re-learn what he always has known, so that he may know once again who he truly is.

As Henry Corbin notes in his *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, a fundamental change must take place within the individual which allows it to re-cognize itself as a prisoner in the cosmic crypt, thus acting as an impetus for its awakening for the encounter with the Angel.<sup>12</sup> That there needed to be a fundamental shift in Suhrawardī’s being is confirmed by the Angel when Suhrawardī asks him why it is that these Sages who are characterized by immobility have in fact descended into the lower world, “How is it that you have descended (*nuzūl*) upon this *khÁnaqÁh* after you just said that motion and change does not proceed from you?”<sup>13</sup> The Angel provides Suhrawardī with an analogy of a blind man who does not see the light of the sun. The sun never changes. It is always in its ‘place.’ If the blind man does not perceive it, it is not because of the sun. Rather, it is because he does not possess that faculty which will allow him to see it:

We, too, have always been seated upon this bench, yet your [prior] inability to see is not a proof of our non-existence, nor does it indicate [that we] have changed or moved. [Rather,] a change has come about in *your spiritual state* (*Īlāl*).<sup>14</sup>

This ‘meeting’ could only have taken place in a semi-dream state, when Suhrawardī was imaginally positioned between waking and sleeping. In the beginning of the narration of *The Reverberation of Gabriel’s Wing* Suhrawardī provides precisely this background for what will pave the way for the meeting with his celestial archetype. When man ‘awakens’ to the situation of imagination there arises within him a desire to transcend the ephemeral realm and join his celestial archetype,<sup>15</sup> which is what he always has been and never ceased being but of which he had been heedless on account of his material existence. The desire to move inward is occasioned precisely by this awareness, without which one can never turn inward because of being deluded by the outward, the *Īlāl*. Yet in order to enter the inward, the *bāṭn*, one must proceed *from* the *Īlāl* but not be *of* it. The cosmic situation is therefore perfectly set up for us at the beginning of this tale. The semi-dream state in which Suhrawardī finds himself is that realm in which he has never ceased to be, but of which he is only now aware by virtue of his realization of his being trapped within the cosmic crypt.

It will be recalled that Suhrawardī encircled the mens’ quarters—here symbolizing his state of contemplation—until the break of dawn, which symbolizes illumination. He then states, “the intense desire to enter my father’s *khānaqāh* came about.”<sup>16</sup> Corbin notes that the term *khānaqāh* is to be understood here as “the interior temple as the ‘place’ for the encounter with the Angel.”<sup>17</sup> It is precisely in this interior temple that Suhrawardī has this encounter. The ‘father’ referred to by Suhrawardī is the Angel of his own being, his personal celestial guide. By entering the temple of his ‘father’ he turns towards himself: he turns inward.

This initial step Suhrawardī takes towards himself is instantiated from outside of himself, hence the symbolism of illumination. It is an inner illumination, but one which proceeds from *without*; that is to say an illumination from his archetype forever fixed in the divine ‘mind’ impels him from *without* to turn *within*. This ‘from

without' is not to be understood in terms of physical space. I use it here to denote the complete dependency the spiritual aspirant has upon the divine volition (in this sense 'outside' of him) for him to turn to himself, which is nothing but an image of the divine Self. The Angel whom Suhrawardī encounters is none but his own true self *in divinis*. Suhrawardī enters the temple in order to *contemplate*, that is, in the etymological sense of the term, to enter that place where one may witness God's divine signs. By entering the temple of his father, who is responsible for bringing him up and for guiding him, Suhrawardī is able to concentrate upon the one whose image he seeks and who seeks him. By concentrating, he returns to his *centre*, which is his own image *in divinis*, being none other than his father, his Angel and guide.

### The Art of Tailoring and the Tablet of One's Being

The Angel continues to initiate Suhrawardī after his initial initiation into the different orders of cosmic reality to which his soul, in its pure luminous substance unbounded by matter, truly belongs. The different levels of initiation which the Angel takes him through allow him to understand the text of the cosmos with greater clarity. As he increases in knowledge, he re-cognizes more of himself and his situation *in divinis*. The Angel goes on to teach Suhrawardī the art of tailoring (*'ilm-i khiyā'at*), telling him that knowledge of this science will allow him to repair his own patched frock (*muraqqa' ūh*) whenever it needs to be stitched.<sup>18</sup> This patched frock worn by the Sufis symbolizes their orientation in the world. The science of tailoring therefore can be taken to be a type of spiritual method in which the Angel instructs Suhrawardī so that he may never go about without his Sufi frock, that is, so that he may never be without his fundamental orientation in the world. This spiritual method which the Angel teaches him is nothing other than the invocation (*dhikr*). So long as the soul is tied to the material world, the 'frock' of one's being will be torn. It is only through the *dhikr* that the *dhākir* (invoker) may mend the substance of his soul, thus transcending himself into the presence of the *madhk ūr* (Invoked).<sup>19</sup>

Suhrawardī then asks the Sage to teach him the Word of God (*kalām-i khudāy*).<sup>20</sup> When Suhrawardī met the Sage at the beginning of the tale the latter told him that both he and the other nine Sages were

“preservers of the Word of God.”<sup>21</sup> The Sage responds to Suhrawardī’s request by telling him that so long as he is “in this city” (*dar ʔh shahr*) he could only learn so much of God’s Word.<sup>22</sup> “This city” is to be understood as the material world. This explains why Suhrawardī when describing the inner temple, speaks of it as having two doors, one which leads to the city and the other which leads to an open field and a garden. By closing the door which leads to the city he closes himself off to the materiality of this world, to the ‘city’ full of distractions, and enters through the door leading to the open field, which symbolizes that infinite interstitial space known as the world of imagination (*ʔlam al-khayāl*).<sup>23</sup> When one enters the open field of imagination the city is seen for what it truly is: a place engrossed in materiality and within which its adherents- whom Suhrawardī shall at the end of the tale refer to as merchants<sup>24</sup>, that is, the merchants of the material world- are imprisoned by virtue of their distance from the open field, and hence their true selves. At the end of the tale we encounter this city once again, where Suhrawardī cites a verse from Q 4:75 in which the people dwelling in the city (*qaryah*) are oppressors.<sup>25</sup> Yet so long as man is embodied in the city, so long as he is characterized by some type of material framework, the city is ‘inhabited.’ It is to the degree of man’s detachment from the city that he will learn the Word of God.

Recounting how the Angel taught him God’s Word, Suhrawardī says:

Quickly, he took hold of my tablet (*lawī-i marāʔ*), and then taught me a rather mysterious alphabet (*hijāʔ*) with which I could know whatever *sūra* [i.e. a chapter of the Qurʔān] I wanted [to learn]. He said, ‘Whoever does not know this alphabet, those secrets (*asrār*) of God’s Word which one should know will not be grasped by him. And whoever understands the spiritual significance of this alphabet will attain nobility and constancy thereby.’<sup>26</sup>

Suhrawardī goes on to say that numerous unexplainable wonders (*ʔajāʔib*) were revealed to him and that whenever he was unable to understand a ‘passage’ from the *sūra* of the cosmic text, the Angel would teach him the answer.<sup>27</sup> The reference in this passage to the tablet of one’s own being immediately calls to mind the *lawī ʔl-maʔfūʔ* or the Preserved Tablet mentioned in Q 85:22. The Preserved Tablet is the primordial, celestial archetype for all the Words of God.

The Qur'Ān, which is the Word of God, is in the Preserved Tablet, as are the other Words of God. Yet here we are also told that Suhrawardī has his own tablet upon which the mysterious alphabet taught by the Angel was transcribed and with which he was able to read the *suwar* of the Word of God.

The tablet of one's being is nothing other than a reflection of this primordial Tablet: there is a direct correspondence between the archetype and its symbol. The Words inscribed upon the Preserved Tablet are also to be found in the cosmos and upon the tablet of one's being. That Suhrawardī had in mind this correspondence between the metacosmos, the macrocosm and the microcosm is made perfectly clear in the lines which follow, where he asks the Angel about the correspondence (*munāsabat*) between the blowing of the Spirit (*nafath-i rŪĪ*) and the Holy Spirit (*rŪĪ al-quḍus*).<sup>28</sup> As will become clear from the Angel's answer, the correspondence between the blowing of the Spirit and the Holy Spirit is the same as the correspondence between the spirits of humans and the Holy Spirit.

### The Words of the Cosmos

The Angel answers Suhrawardī's question concerning the correspondence between the blowing of the Spirit and the Holy Spirit by stating that everything in the four corners of the world proceeds from Gabriel's wing.<sup>29</sup> Suhrawardī asks him how he is supposed to understand what this means. The Angel replies in the following manner:

Know that the Real great and glorious has several Great Words which are luminous Words [proceeding] from the august glories of His noble Countenance, some of which are above others. The First Light is the Highest Word, beyond which there is no greater Word. Its relation in light and manifestation to the other Words is like the relation of the sun to the other stars.<sup>30</sup>

The Angel then says that the 'rays' of the Highest Word (*kalimah-yi 'ulyĀ*) form another Word, whose rays then form another Word and so until their number becomes complete.<sup>31</sup> The Angel states that these Words are collectively to be referred to as the Engulfing Words (*kalimĀt-i ŌmmĀt*).<sup>32</sup> We also learn that the last of these Great Words (*kalimĀt-i kubrĀ*) is none other than the Angel Gabriel and that

the spirits of human beings proceed from this Great Word. The Great Words above Gabriel are therefore the nine Angelic Intellects of Neoplatonic Islamic cosmology and Gabriel is the tenth or Active Intellect.

The Angel offers an exegesis of several key Qur'anic passages to prove that the Word and the Spirit have the same reality. He cites, for example, Q 19:17, *And We sent to her Our Spirit*. Then he cites Q 4:171, in which Jesus is referred to as the Spirit of God (*r-Ūl AllĀh*) and *His Word which He conferred upon Mary*. After equating the Spirit with the Word the Angel demonstrates how the spirits which proceed from the last Great Word are the 'Small Words' (*kalimĀt-i ŪghrĀ*).<sup>33</sup> The question of the correspondence between the blowing of the Spirit and the Holy Spirit is thus answered by the Angel through his long exposition of the descent of the great Words of God down to the last Great Word and ultimately to the Small Words which are the spirits of human beings.

What is elucidated here by the Angel is the essential divine nature of the things in the world. If the spirits of human beings are Words and the Angel is a Spirit and the last of the Great Words, then there is an intimate relationship between this Angel and the spirits which proceed from it. The blowing of the Spirit is, therefore, the coming about of human spirits from the last Great Word. They are not only related to the Angel. Through the emanative descent beginning with the Greatest Word or the First Intellect in the language of Islamic philosophy, the Small Words or breaths of the Spirit are also related to the other Words. Ultimately, all the Words are rays issuing from the divine Light. But insofar as the last of the Great Words is a ray proceeding from the divine Light, the Small Words which come from the last of these Great Words are rays of its light. It is with this image in mind that we shall now turn to Suhrawardī's exposition of Gabriel's wing.

### **Gabriel's Wing**

Suhrawardī had to be initiated into all the others symbols before he could be informed of the function of Gabriel's wing. The myth which the Angel presents to him is not simply a recasting of the Neoplatonic structure of the cosmos. There is something deeper at work

here. It was mentioned above that the Great Words, taken as a whole, form the 'Engulfing Words.' It is the function of the Angel's wing which will enable us to understand these 'Engulfing Words.' The Angel addresses Suhrawardī

Know that Gabriel has two wings, one of which is right and is absolute light (*nūr-i ma'īā*), the entirety of whose being is completely devoted to [the side facing] the Real. And [he has] a left wing, upon which are some traces of darkness, like the spots on the surface of the moon [or] the feet of a peacock. This is a sign that its being has one side towards non-being. [Yet] when you consider the relation of its existence with respect to the Being of the Real, it is characterized by His Being.<sup>34</sup>

The Angel's right wing, characterized by pure luminosity, faces the world of pure Light, that is, the 'side' of the Great Words. The left wing is not 'dark' as such. Its traces of darkness result from a deprivation of the light coming from the side of the Great Words. In other words, the window into the prison of the world only allows for a certain amount of light from the garden of pure luminosity to seep through. From the shadow cast by the Angel's left wing emerges "the world of falsehood and delusion."<sup>35</sup> Hence, the spirits which appear in this world proceed from the light of the right wing of the Angel which is pointed towards the world of Light, "Every ray of light which falls upon the world of delusion is from its light."<sup>36</sup>

As Suhrawardī has already shown, the Spirit and the Word share the same reality. Therefore, the 'reverberations' of the wing of Gabriel are the same as the patches of darkness upon its left wing. Just as the imperfection of light is cast as a shadow, the imperfection of the Small Word is cast as a reverberation. A shadow at once bespeaks its source and a deficiency on its own part. Likewise, a reverberation denotes from whence it proceeds yet by its function it also denotes its imperfection since it is removed from its source. The spirits of human beings are therefore reverberations of the Angel's left wing because they are imperfect as a result of their descent into the cosmic crypt. By being characterized by the dual nature of light and darkness the Spirit or Small Word is therefore 'confused.' Like the spirits of the righteous, the spirits of the evildoers and those who do not believe in God are also reverberations of the Angel's left wing but are "entangled

reverberations (*ʿūdā ʾāmḏ*).<sup>37</sup> In other words, their reverberations are more muddled and confused than the reverberations of the righteous. Since the righteous are closer to their source their reverberations are less confused and they therefore manifest in a clearer sense their true natures. In the language of light and darkness, the rays of the unbelievers are darker than the rays of the believers since the latter are closer to the Sun.

It is not until the penultimate paragraph of this tale that the function of the Angel's wing becomes entirely clear. In response to Suhrawardī's question concerning the form (*ʾūrat*) of the wing of Gabriel, the Angel replies, "Oh heedless one! Do you not know that these are all symbols (*rumūz*), which, if taken literally, would not allow these 'Engulfing Words' (*ʾāmmāt*) to be understood?"<sup>38</sup> It was mentioned earlier that the Great Words are referred to as the *ʾāmmāt*. This term appears in the singular in Q 79:34 with reference to the 'great calamity' of the day of judgement.<sup>39</sup> It conveys the idea of 'calamity' and 'disaster', its triliteral Arabic root denoting 'overflowing', 'flooding' and 'being engulfed'. In Q 79:34 the final day will be a great calamity since it will 'overtake' people and its terrors will 'engulf' them. The reason the Great Words are 'engulfing' is because they proceed from the Greatest Sound (which is the first existentiality from the Godhead), and through the downward flow of their descents 'engulf' and 'overflow' and thus 'fill' the cosmos. Yet those in the material world cannot grasp their reality. The Great Words are so far removed from the creatures on earth that the creatures have no access to them. It is only through the Angel- who is the last of the Great Words- that they may comprehend them.

There would not be a purpose for those in the material world to understand the function of the Great Words on their own. It is, therefore, necessary to comprehend them through the symbols in the tale insofar as they convey to those in the material world their own cosmic situation. The symbols employed in this tale are there simply to relate the nature and purpose of human existence. The function of the Angel's wing is to act as an intermediary, demonstrating our celestial origin and how it is that, from our descent into the cosmic crypt, we have become trapped by materiality but may return to our true Home once again. The wing also plays an important role in the very



symbolism of the flight of the human spirit to its Origin: we descended into the world by virtue of that very thing which will allow us to ascend.

## Conclusion

At the beginning of *The Reverberation of Gabriel's Wing* Suhrawardī cites an early Sufi figure, Abū 'Alī Fārmadī (d. 403/1011), as saying, "of all of the reverberations of Gabriel's Wing, one of them is you."<sup>40</sup> It is only after having been shown the function of the wing by the Angel that Suhrawardī comes to understand why he was not able to learn much of God's Word while trapped in the 'city.' At the same time, the initiation he received into whatever of the Word he could read from the tablet of his being becomes all the more clear to him, as he now understands the correspondence between the tablet of his being and the Words of God. It is nothing but a reverberation of the wing of the Angel which Suhrawardī realizes that he himself is. He is a Word of God and he reads the Words of God in the very cosmic reverberations which find their manifestations in forms on the outward plane, and upon the tablet of his soul on the inward plane.

## Endnotes

\* I would like to thank Maria Subtelny for her insightful remarks on an earlier version of this essay. My thanks also go to Andrew Hicks and Donald Smith for their comments on aspects of *Āwāz-i parr-i Jibrāʾīl*.

<sup>1</sup> For Suhrawardī's life and work see, amongst others, Mehdi Amin Razavi, *Suhrawardī and the School of Illumination* (Surrey: Curzon, 1997); Henry Corbin, *En islam iranien*, vol. 2 (Paris: Gallimard, 1971); Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages* (Delmar, NY: Caravan, 1997, rep. ed.), 52-82; Anthony Tuft, "Symbolism and Speculation in Suhrawardī's *The Song of Gabriels' Wing*," in *Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism*, ed. Parviz Morewedge (Delmar, NY: Caravan 1981), 207-221; John Walbridge, *The Leaven of the Ancients: Suhrawardī and the Heritage of the Greeks* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000); Hossein Ziai, "Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī founder of the Illuminationist school," in *History of Islamic Philosophy*, eds. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman (London and New York: Routledge, 2001, rep. ed.), 434-464.

<sup>2</sup> Suhrawardī's Persian works can be found in Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī *Oeuvres philosophiques et mystiques*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, vol. 3. (Tehran: Académie Impériale Iranienne de Philosophie, 1977, rep. ed.). For French translations of most of his visionary recitals, which are accompanied by complete notes and introductions to

each recital as well as paraphrases and summaries of anonymous Persian commentaries upon his *Āwāz-i parr-i Jibrāʾīl* and his *Muḥlis al-ʿīshshāq* (also known as *Fāṭḥ al-ʿīshshāq*), see part two of Suhrawardī *L'Archange empourpré: quinze traités et récits mystiques*, trans. Henry Corbin (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1976). In 1982 Wheeler Thackston published his English translations of Suhrawardī's visionary recitals. Readers familiar with the 1982 edition of translations would do well to read Hermann Landolt's review article of this work, "Suhrawardī's 'Tales of Initiation,'" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 107:3 (1987): 475-486. Thackston's translations have been slightly revised and reissued in a bilingual edition, the Persian text of which is primarily based on Nasr's edition. See Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, trans. Wheeler Thackston (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 1999). An English translation of a commentary upon Suhrawardī's *Āwāz-i parr-i Jibrāʾīl* can be found in Mehdi Amin Razavi, *op. cit.*, 150-165. Two other English translations of Suhrawardī's Persian treatises are available. See the bilingual edition, *The Book of Radiance*, trans. Hossein Ziai (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 1998) and *The Shape of Light*, trans. Tosun Bayrak (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 1999). For more on Suhrawardī's Persian writings in general, see Nasr, "The Significance of Suhrawardī's Persian Writings," in Nasr, *The Islamic Intellectual Tradition in Persia*, ed. Mehdi Amin Razavi (Surrey: Curzon, 1996), 154-159.

<sup>3</sup> Suhrawardī *Āwāz-i parr-i Jibrāʾīl*, in Suhrawardī *Oeuvres philosophiques et mystiques*, 208-223. All translations in this paper are my own.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>10</sup> Suhrawardī *L'Archange empourpré: quinze traités et récits mystiques*, 258, n. 12. See n. 23 below for references to the 'eighth clime', more commonly referred to as 'the world of imagination.'

<sup>11</sup> *Taʾwīl* is literally defined as 'taking something back to its origin.' For the *taʾwīl* of the soul, see Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Irvine: Spring Publications, 1980), 28-35.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>13</sup> Suhrawardī *Āwāz-i parr-i Jibrāʾīl*, 215.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, 26.

<sup>16</sup> Suhrawardī *Āwāz-i parr-i Jibrāʾīl*, 210.

<sup>17</sup> Suhrawardī *L'Archange empourpré: quinze traités et récits mystiques*, 258, n. 6.

<sup>18</sup> Suhrawardī *Āwāz-i parr-i Jibrāʾīl*, 216.

<sup>19</sup> For the significance of *dhikr* in Sufism, see Georges Anawati and Louis Gardet,

*Mystique Musulman: aspects et tendances, expériences et techniques* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1961), 187-260; Gerhard Böwering, "Dekr", *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 1996), 7:229-233; William Chittick, "Dhikr", *Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: MacMillan, 1987), 4:341-344; Idem, *Sufism: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2000), 52-60; Aīmad Ghazālī "No god, but God is my fortress...": *Aīmad al-Ghazālī on Dhikr*, trans. Joseph Lumbard (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, forthcoming); Ibn ʿArabī, *The Key to Salvation and the Lamp of Souls*, trans. Mary Ann Koury Danner (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1996); Idem, *The Pure Goal Concerning Knowledge of the Unique Name*, trans. Mokrane Guezou (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, forthcoming); Joseph Lumbard, "The Function of dhikrullāh in Sufi Psychology," in *Knowledge is Light: Essays in Honor of Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, 251-274; Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 167-178.

<sup>20</sup> Suhrawardī *ʿAwāz-i parr-i Jibrāl*, 216.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 211.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 216.

<sup>23</sup> For the world of imagination in Islamic thought, see Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds: Ibn ʿArabī and the Problem of Religious Diversity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 67-113; Corbin, *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth: from Mazdean Iran to Shiʿite Iran*, trans. Nancy Roberts (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977); Ibn ʿArabī "The World of Imagination", trans. William Chittick in *The Meccan Revelations*, ed. Michel Chodkiewicz (New York: Pir Press, 2002), 1:169-180; Fazlur Rahman, "Dream, Imagination and 'Ālam al-mithāl," in *The Dream and Human Societies*, ed. Gustave Grunbaum (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 409-419.

<sup>24</sup> Suhrawardī *ʿAwāz-i parr-i Jibrāl*, 223.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 216.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 217.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. The phrase, "from the august glories of His noble countenance" is taken from the famous Prophetic tradition which speaks of the seventy thousand veils of light and darkness that veil God from His creatures. In his *Mishkāt al-anwār* (*The Niche of Lights*) al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) comments upon both this tradition and the famous Light verse (Q 24:35). See Abū ʿĀmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī *The Niche of Lights*, trans. David Buchman (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1998).

<sup>31</sup> Suhrawardī *ʿAwāz-i parr-i Jibrāl*, 218.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 219.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 220.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 221.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 222.

<sup>39</sup> Q 79:34 and the verse following read, “And when the Calamity comes- the day people shall recall that for which they strove.”

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 209.

## **Zaehner- Arberry Controversy on Abu Yazid the Sufi: A Historical Review**

Mahmoud Khatami  
University of Tehran, Iran

### **Abstract**

In the history of orientalist approach to Persian Sufism, a historical controversy generated by Zaehner's askew interpretation of Abu Yazid Bistami's sayings, which Arberry so effectively refuted. This controversy deals specifically with the question of possible Hindu influence on the Persian Sufi. The overall objective of this paper is to review the history and themes of the controversy, and aims to examine and indeed answer the questions of the debate by appealing to the original Persian and Arabic sources.

### **Historical Background**

Within the context of orientalist study of Sufism, there has always been a contentious question: Is Sufism a natural and authentic part of Islam, or is it a set of foreign ideas and practices resulting from contact with non-Muslims? Since some great figures of Sufism had emerged early in Persia, it is inquisitively looked forward to find the presumed influence of non-Muslim cultures on Sufism through an study of these figures.<sup>1</sup> Following this line of thought, it was not an accident that orientalists in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries picked up Abu Yazid Bistami (d. 234/848)<sup>2</sup> as a supreme exemplar for their claim. The case of Abu Yazid seems plausible, because (a) he belonged to the earliest period in the history of Sufism; (b) and he was born, lived and died in Iran (actually, in Bistam, halfway between Tehran and Nishabour, that is, in Khurasan area in which Magian tradition was alive at the time of Abu Yazid,<sup>3</sup> and (c) he had an absolute priority and immense influence on the great Sufis and Sufism in general so that he is received the

significant title of *Sultan al-'Arifiyn* (the King of Gnostics)<sup>4</sup> So it was not an accident to choose him to exemplify the presumption of Hindu influence on Sufism. However, this hypothesis was denied by some other scholars in 20<sup>th</sup> century, and this led to a challenging controversy over this problem:

In 1906, the orientalist Nicholson suggested that Abu Yazid Bistami was "probably" influenced by Buddhism<sup>5</sup> Ten years later, however, he wrote that he was certain of this influence.<sup>6</sup> At the same period, Massignon studied some basic terms of the classical Yoga of Patanjali, and of Sufism concluding that some of these terms, e.g., *nafs* and *atman*, *qalb* and *manus* have equivalent meanings.<sup>7</sup> Yet, he maintained that some Sufi term, like *fana*, and *shatah* has no equivalents in Patanjali texts, since there is no personal God in Patanjali thought.<sup>8</sup> This study led Massignon to doubt about the possibility of Hindu influence on Sufism.<sup>9</sup>

"Islamic mysticism in its origin and development proceeded from the Qur'an constantly recited, meditated and practiced."<sup>10</sup>

In 1927, while supposing Hindu influence on Sufism, Horten tried to show that Abu Yazid, among other Sufis, was influenced by Hindu thought.<sup>11</sup> But, as Arberry judged, "his methods of argumentation and the categorical nature of his conclusions"<sup>12</sup> was artificial and industrious.

This controversy was then taken up by R.C. Zaehner and A.J. Arberry. Since 1957, these two British professors talked back and forth on the problem in the form of a dialogue. For Zaehner, Bistami is the exemplar of Sufism as a borrowing from Hindu mysticism. For Arberry, Bistami can be explained entirely within a Muslim frame of reference. Zaehner was an enthusiastic supporter of the theory of Hindu influence on Abu Yazid as propounded by Nicholson and Horten. He presented his position in 1957.<sup>13</sup> Two years later he elaborated further on his position in Hindu and Muslim Mysticism.<sup>14</sup> In his "Bistamiāna", in 1962, Arberry tried to refute Zaehner's thesis point by point. Since then, later discussion on the question has traced back to their dialogue.

In brief this is a history of the debate on the problem of possible Hindu influence on Abu Yazid. Now we turn to the controversial claims in this debate.

### A Sketch of the Controversial Claims

The hypothesis that Abu Yazid was influenced by Hinduism can be reduced into two major claims: (a) Since, in the sources concerning his life, we find that Abu Yazid talks about a companion (*mosahib*) called Abu 'Ali al-Sindi, it is claimed that he has been taught by peoples of Hindu tradition who converted to Islam (giving that *Sindi* is derived from *Sind* in India). I call it "the claim of Hindu direct contact". (b) There are also similarities of Abu Yazid's sayings and teachings with Hindu traditional doctrines and teachings. I call it "the claim of influence in doctrines" upon which it illogically leaps from some apparent similarities among doctrines to their sameness. Let us now take up these major issues on which the controversy concentrates and examine them one by one.

#### I) The Claim of Hindu Direct Contact: the Case of al-Sindi

In the sources concerning Abu Yazid's life, we find that Abu Yazid talks about a companion (*mosahib*) called Abu 'Ali al-Sindi. Al-Sarraj records that Abu Yazid said:

I used to keep company with Abu 'Ali al-Sindi and I used to show him how to perform the obligatory duties of Islam and in exchange he would give me instruction in the divine unity (*tawhid*) and in the ultimate truths (*haqa'iq*).<sup>15</sup>

Zaehner concludes, on the basis of the above text, that the man from whom Abu Yazid learnt Hindu doctrines was Abu 'Ali al-Sindi. He accepts Nicholson's view that this famous master of Abu Yazid belonged to Sind, although Arberry and Massignon<sup>16</sup> pointed out after Nicholson that this Sind might be the name of a village in Khurasan as recorded by the geographer Yaqut.<sup>17</sup> In answer to Arberry's argument, Zaehner says, "Theoretically, of course, it might, but it is rather difficult to believe that the Sind referred to is any other than the province of that name."<sup>18</sup> It seems "fairly clear" to Zaehner that Abu 'Ali was a convert from another religion; for, as shown in the text, he "did not even know how to perform the obligatory duties of a Muslim."<sup>19</sup>

Arberry thinks that in translating the phrase "I used to show him how to perform the obligatory duties of Islam," Zaehner seems to

have ignored Ritter's interpretation, which suggests that Abu Yazid "had to teach the K[Q]ur'an verses necessary for prayer."<sup>20</sup> According to Arberry, the crucial words in al-Sarraj's text are perhaps more subtle than Zaehner's translation indicates. The dictionary meaning of the verb *laqqana* is "specifically 'making to understand of a thing that which one had not understood before.' (By Abu Yazid's time the term *mulaqqin* had hardly yet acquired the specific meaning of 'elementary teacher' which later attached to it . . .)." A conflation of al-Sarraj's text with Baqli's version of it, continues Arberry, gives us grounds to speculate that

what Abu Yazid meant was that he instructed ... Abu 'Ali in the exegesis of Sura I and Sura CXII of the Qur'ân; and it is interesting, in view of what is Abu 'Ali said to have taught Abu Yazid in return, to remember that Sura CXII is sometimes known as the Sura of *Tauhid*.<sup>21</sup>

On the basis of this, Arberry presumes in contradistinction to Zaehner's presumption, that Abu 'Ali was a new convert to Islam that:

Abu Yazid took Abu 'Ali, a village Muslim of little or no formal education, through the religious and legalistic meaning of the ritual and common duties of Islam, and to his surprise discovered in his pupil a mastery of the 'real' and mystic apprehension of God. If this guess is right, then Abu 'Ali would belong to a type of simple saint, intuitively privy to the divine secrets, which is by no means uncommon in Sufi biography.<sup>22</sup>

Arberry further points out that, even if the title *al-Sindi* referred to Sind in India, there is no basis for thinking that Abu 'Ali was originally a Hindu. He cites examples to show that this title was applied to many descendants of the original Arab conquerors of Sind. To mention one of these examples, the "traditionist Abu Muhammad Raja' al-Sindi, who died in 221/836, also bore the title al-Nisaburi which takes him a long way from Sind; his son and grandson, who followed the same learned profession, also called themselves al-Sindi."<sup>23</sup> Hence Arberry says that it is hazardous "to conclude that a man of Abu Yazid's period was a native of Sind and a convert from Hinduism because he bore the title al-Sindi."<sup>24</sup>



On the problem of Abu Yazid's teaching Abu 'Ali, al-Samarra'i quotes from *Luma'* and *Risalah* and says that *fard* in Sufi literature came to mean not the observances that are incumbent on all Muslims, as Zaehner suggests, but "the strict observation of the religious and legalistic ritual of Islam" in which a novice is instructed by a Sufi master.<sup>25</sup> As for Abu 'Ali teaching Abu Yazid the doctrine of *tawhid*, al-Samarra'i first points out the discrepancies in Zaehner's translation of *tawhid* as "divine unity" and as "union".<sup>26</sup> Then he observes that the whole view of Zaehner is founded on his assumption that Abu Yazid was an illiterate man. This assumption is based on Zaehner's wrong understanding of al-Sahlagi characterization of Abu Yazid as *ummi*.<sup>27</sup> According to al-Samarra'i, al-Sahlagi means that Abu Yazid was "uninstructed in esoteric doctrine" and not that he was an "uneducated" man as Zaehner suggests.<sup>28</sup>

Regarding Zaehner's contention that Abu 'Ali was an Hindu from Sind, al-Samarra'i adds to Arberry's arguments by saying that since both editions of the *Risalah* and a number of manuscripts of the same work mention the name of Abu 'Ali with the title *al-Suddi*, this title would seem more probable than *al-Sindi* because there was a village by the name of Sudd near Rayy, which is close to Bistam, although two villages near Bistam bearing the name of Sind were known.<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, Al-Bistami was described by al-Sahlagi as being a student of Abu 'Abd Al-Rahim al-Suddj and Abu 'Abd Al-Rahman al-Suddi; of these seem to be one if we come to compare the authorities of their *isnād*. Again, Al-Sahlagi's monograph has no mention whatsoever of Abu 'Ali, which seems rather curious. Furthermore, Jami states that his teacher in Sufism was a certain Kurd but does not reveal his name or identity. Zaehner's presumption that Abu 'Ali came to Abu Yazid as a convert from another religion is no more than a presumption. Are we not at liberty to presume that this Abu 'Ali was a Kurd from *Al-Sudd*, a village in the neighbourhood of Rayy which is, according to Yaqut called "the land of the Daylam". This is also no more than a presumption but has at least tangible historical evidence. He might alternatively have been a native of Al-Sindiyya, a village on the river of 'Isa. This is merely to pile up presumptions.<sup>30</sup>

We agree with Zaehner that, although theoretically it is possible that Abu 'Ali's title, *al-Sindi*, refers to Sind (or Sudd) in Khurasan, "it

is rather difficult to believe that the Sind referred to is any other than the province of that name.” But, again, Arberry seems to be right when he says that it is hazardous “to conclude that a man of Abu Yazid’s period was a native of Sind and a convert from Hinduism because he bore the title al-Sindi.” What seems most probable to us is that Abu ‘Ali was a descendant of one of the early conquerors of Sind, many of whom, as shown by Arberry, used to bear the title *al-Sindi*. There seems to be no ground to believe that Abu ‘Ali was originally a Hindu coming directly from Sind in India.<sup>31</sup>

Although there is no doubt about Abu Yazid teaching Abu ‘Ali, we cannot agree with Arberry and al-Sāmarrā’i that Abu Yazid took Abu ‘Ali as a simple-minded Muslim from a village. Abu Yazid’s expression *sahabtu* strongly suggests that he also considered Abu ‘Ali as his teacher. In his *Shatahiyyāt*, Baqli quotes from Abu Yazid a clear reference to Abu ‘Ali as one of his teachers.<sup>32</sup> On the basis of this evidence, we accept Zaehner’s view that Abu ‘Ali was a teacher of Abu Yazid. The correct position, then, is that Abu Yazid and Abu ‘Ali received teaching from each other.

We have yet another question to answer. This has to do with what Abu ‘Ali and Abu Yazid taught each other. We cannot accept the view of Arberry that Abu Yazid taught Abu ‘Ali the “exegesis of chapters 1 and 112 of the Qur’an, nor can we agree with al-Samarra’i that Abu Yazid instructed Abu ‘Ali on the Strict observance of religious duties. The views of both Arberry and of al-Sāmarrā’i are based on the assumption that Abu Yazid was the master and Abu ‘Ali the disciple. This, as we have seen, does not seem to be correct.

But, on the other hand, we do not have a definite answer of our own to this question. However, the key to the solution of the problem may lie in the meaning of the word ‘*laqqana*’. On the basis of two meanings which, we think, this word had in the time of Abu Yazid, we can think of two answers. We shall examine them one by one.

If by ‘*laqqana*’ Abu Yazid referred to instruction in the ordinary sense, then Abu Yazid taught Abu ‘Ali the obligatory duties of a Muslim, e.g., prayer and fasting, as Zaehner suggests, or chapters 1 and 112 of the Qur’an as is mentioned in *Shatahiyyat*. This would mean that Abu ‘Ali was a newly converted Muslim; for, otherwise, why did he need to be instructed in the way in which a Muslim performs the

obligatory duties or to be taught chapters 1 and 112 of the Qur'an? These things are usually learnt by Muslim children soon after they learn to walk and talk. We cannot accept this interpretation because we have already rejected the suggestion that Abu Ali was a newly converted Muslim.<sup>33</sup>

If, on the other hand, *laqqana* meant imprinting something on the mind, as in imprinting an idea on the mind of a child or as in imprinting *shahadah* on the mind of a dying man,<sup>34</sup> we may offer an interpretation of the situation in which the reciprocal teaching took place. Both Abu Yazid and Abu 'Ali were (Muslim) Sūfi masters. They associated with each other and discussed mystical matters, such as *tawhid* and *haqā'iq*. Abu 'Ali knew more about these subjects than Abu Yazid, so that the latter benefited from his discussion with the former. Hence Abu Yazid recognized Abu 'Ali as his master. But, on the other hand, while discussing the relationship of *Shari'ah* and *haq'iq*, Abu Yazid found that his teacher considered *Shari'ah* unnecessary after one reached *haqa'iq*. Thereupon, Abu Yazid 'imprinted' on Abu 'Ali's mind the necessity of performing obligatory duties as prescribed by *Shari'ah* even after the attainment of *haqa'iq*.

## **II) The Claim of Influence in Doctrines: From Similarity to Sameness**

Some western scholars tried to show Hindu influence on Abu Yazid by taking up some similarities in Abu Yazid's doctrines and sayings with Hindu traditional doctrines and teachings.

### *i) Abu Yazid's Doctrine of Fana' and Buddhist Doctrine of Nirvana*

According to Nicholson, "the method of Sufism so far as it is one of ethical self-culture, ascetic meditation, and intellectual abstraction, own a great deal to Buddhism."<sup>35</sup> As a clear example of this, he refers to Abu Yaz doctrine of *fana'* which "is certainly, I think, of Hindu origin." Nicholson then concludes that although the implications of the concept of *fana'* and those of the Buddhist concept of *Nirvana* differ greatly, "the terms coincide so closely in other ways that we cannot regard them as being altogether unconnected."<sup>36</sup>

Horten divides the development of Abu Yazid's mystical life into three periods and finds an aspect of Hindu thought corresponding to each of these periods. The first period, which, according to Horten, extends from 236/ 850 to 246/860, is the period of negativism. In this period, Abu Yazid said,

I ascended to the field (*maydan*) of nothingness (*laysiyyah*). Then I continued to fly in it for ten years until I passed from nothing in nothing through nothing.

This is the stage of his consciousness of the void, of nothingness. Since, at this stage, Abu Yazid had no consciousness of the Brahman, this was his experience of Buddhistic *Nirvana*.<sup>37</sup>

In the second period (after 246/860), Abu Yazid, according to Horten, passed from the stage of negativism to that of positivism. So he (Abu Yazid) said "Then I ascended to loss (*tadyi*) which is the field of *tawhid*."

Abu Yazid was now conscious of the substance, the Brahman, underlying the phenomena. This period, therefore, represents a passage from the Buddha *Nirvana* to the positivism of Brahmanism.<sup>38</sup>

In the third period (around 256/870) Abu Yazid, says Horten, experienced an identification of the phenomenal ego with the eternal 'I'. This is expressed in his address to God, "Adorn me with Your oneness (*wahdaniyyah*), clothe me with Your I-ness and raise me up to Your unity (*ahadiyyah*) so that when Your creatures see me, they may say, 'We have seen You', and You shall be that, and I shall not be there."

At this stage, Abu Yazid had surpassed the limits of phenomenal existence and become the "I" of God. So, he could say, "Glory be to me! How great is my majesty!" This, according to Horten, is the Hindu *atmtan* doctrine.<sup>39</sup>

The view of Nicholson and Horten that *Nirvana* has only negative implications is no longer considered correct. Other scholars have shown that it also has a positive aspect. According to E. Conze, for example, *Nirvana* is 'unthinkable' or 'inconceivable'; "there is nothing in the world even remotely like it" and "reasoning (*tarka*) cannot get anywhere near it... All conceptions of *Nirvana* are misconceptions."<sup>40</sup> Hence it is not possible to say what thing *Nirvana* is.

But “if one cannot say what a thing is, that does not make it into a nothing if the fault lies not in the thing, but in the words.”<sup>41</sup> What *Nirvana* is can only be tasted; “everyone must experience it personally for himself.”<sup>42</sup>

Another scholar, B.L. Suzuki, shows that although in the Hinayana Sutras, *Nirvana* means a “state of complete extinction in which there is no more greed, no more anger, no more folly, nor all the other evil desires and passions”, in the Mahayana Sutras,

[It] acquires a positive significance; it is no more a negative state but something existing by itself, it is Reality, from which all Buddhas issue. In the *Mahayana Nirvana Sutra* (Fas. VI) we read: “It is not quite right, it is inadequate to state that the Tathagata’s entrance into *Nirvana* is like a fire going out when the fuel is exhausted. It is quite right to state that the Tathagata enters in the Dharma nature itself.”<sup>43</sup>

Suzuki further tells us that, according to Mahayanists, the *Arhat*, having attained individual emancipation, must feel compassion for creatures; he “must become the Bodhisattva, even for his own salvation, because if he is endowed with the Buddha-nature he cannot sit serenely, all alone, at the top of the hill of enlightenment and look down on the suffering multitudes.”<sup>44</sup> He must return to the world to help people achieve emancipation as Buddha himself did.<sup>45</sup>

Thus we find that both *Nirvana* and *fana'* have negative as well as positive implications, and that both the Mahayanists and Sufis say that man, after having achieved the supreme goal, must return to the world for the guidance of his fellow-men. We would note, however, that these similarities are only superficial and, therefore, should not give an occasion to the protagonists of the theory of Hindu influence on Sufism to speculate that *Nirvana* and *fana'* have identical meanings. In its negative aspect, *fana'* implies an obliteration of the consciousness of all other than God — of the world, of the hereafter, of God’s gifts and even of God’s names and attributes. But *Nirvana* cannot refer to the annihilation of the consciousness except of the first, that is, of the world. Buddhism does not have the idea of God and therefore of His reward, punishment, etc. In its positive aspect, *fana'* means *baqa'* in God. Obviously, the *Nirvana* of atheistic Buddhism cannot imply a positive element in this sense.<sup>46</sup>

Regarding the notion of a return to this world, first we should make one point clear. Strictly speaking, the idea of a return to the world is not implied in the concept of *fana'*. *Fana'* refers to an upward journey from creatures to God whereas the return, refers to a downward journey from God to creatures. Having made this point clear, we would say that the Sufi conception of a return has distinct implications. For example, it is God who returns the Sufi to His creatures so that he may guide his fellow-men on their journey to Him. Moreover, in Sufism, one makes a distinction between the functions of a Sūfi (*wali*) after his return and those of a prophet (*nabi*). For example, obedience to a prophet is obligatory on man, whereas obedience to a Sufi is not. It goes without saying that *Nirvana* does not have any such implications. In view of all this, we cannot say that Abu Yazid's conception of *fana'* was derived from Hindu sources.

*ii) Abu Yazid's Use of the Words "Shajarah" (Tree) and "Khud'ah" (Deceit) and the Occurrence of the Words "Svatthas" and "Maya" in Hindu Thought*

While expressing his experience of *mi'raj*, Abu Yazid said, "...I reached the expanse of eternity and in it I saw the tree of oneness." According to al-Sarraj, Abu Yazid "described the soil [in which it grew], its root and branch, its shoots and fruits, and then he said : 'Then I looked, and I knew that all this was deceit.'" <sup>47</sup>

Zaehner picks up from this text two words, "tree" and "deceit", and tries to prove that Abu Yazid borrowed these from the Hindu systems which have words exactly corresponding to these. As for the 'tree', he thinks that it is the tree of the Katha Upanishad and the Bhagavad Gita. Although al-Sarra does not say how Abu Yazid described the soil from which the tree grew, its roots, branches, shoots and fruits, "we can be fairly certain", says Zaehner, that Abu Yazid described these according to the original in the Gita which runs as follows:

With roots above and branches below the imperishable fig-tree has been declared. Its leaves are the Vedic hymns. Whoso knows it knows the Veda. Below and above extend its branches nourished by the qualities (*gunas*), and tile objects of sense are their sprouts. Below are extended the roots from which arise actions in the world of men. <sup>48</sup>

To Zaehner, this is a striking similarity. He further adds that the same tree also appears in the Mundaka and Svetasvatara Upanishads .

Regarding the word ‘deceit’, Zaehner thinks that it is a translation of the Sanskrit *maya*. In fact, he says that the “two words could scarcely correspond more exactly.” To support this, he quotes the dictionary meanings of *khud'ah* and *maya* from Lane and Monier Williams, respectively. He points out, moreover, that to the best of his knowledge, “the world is not described as *khud'ah* in any other Sufi text... When the Sufis speak of the unreality of the world, they speak of it as a dream, or a game, not as deceit.”<sup>49</sup>

In answer to Zaehner’s arguments about the “tree”, Arberry says:

There appears to be at least some ground for supposing it [ tree] to be rather the famous Tree of Life so familiar in Jewish and Muslim literature.<sup>50</sup>

In a Muslim context, this may be “the ‘lote-tree of the Boundary’, farthest point of Muhammad’s *mi'raj*.” Ibn al-'Arabi also made this Lote tree the final point of his *mi'raj*. The commentators of the Qur’ verse 53:14 in which the Lote-tree occurs speak of its root, branch shoots, etc.<sup>51</sup>

In regard to the word *khud'ah*, Arberry points out that it does not occur in the Qur’an exactly in this form, but God is described in the Qur’an as *khadi'* (derived from the same root *khd* ‘) and *makir* to mean that

[He is] a master of guile and cunning in His dealings with men.... It is part of His plan to ‘try’ and ‘test’ His creatures, to prove the true quality of their faith and worship; the term *bala'* occurs frequently enough both in the Qur’an and in Sūfī literature.<sup>52</sup>

Hence, naturally, a Muslim does not have to go to the Gita to borrow the word *khud'ah*. As for Zaehner’s remark that the world is not described as *khud'ah* in any other Sufi text, Arberry points out that the celebrated Sufi al-Junayd attributes the quality of *khud'ah* to God and “establishes the divine *khud'ah* as part of the ‘law’ of *bala'* “. Al-Junayd also speaks of God’s *makr* (guile).<sup>53</sup> Ironically, Zaehner himself has translated in the appendix of his book the passages in which al-

Junayd speaks of *khud'ah* and *makr*. Arberry further indicates that even if we suppose that no one other than Abu Yazid has called "the world precisely a *khud'ah*, one can at any rate cite a verse attributed to 'Umar Khayyam in which the universe is described as 'a sleep and a dream, a deceit and a delusion'."<sup>54</sup> On the basis of this, Arberry concludes:

Abu Yazid's phrase 'and I knew that all this was deceit' . . . is perfectly clear and natural regarded as a mystic's extension of the Qur'anic picture of God as the supreme beguiler.<sup>55</sup>

As far as we are concerned, Arberry's argument concerning Abu Yazid's use of "tree" is correct. As further evidence in support of his argument, we may add that in one account of Abu Yazid's mi'raj, the famous Lote-tree of the Qur'an is positively identified. According to this account, Abu Yazid is reported to have said:

I rode on the mount (*markab*) of sincerity (*sidq*) until I reached the air; then (I rode on the mount of) yearning until I reached the sky; then (I rode on the mount of) love until I reached the Lote-tree (*sedrat al-montaha*). Then I was called, 'Oh Abu Yazid What do you want?' I said, 'I want not to want'.<sup>56</sup>

But what seems more probable is that the 'tree' in Abu Yazid's text may refer to the 'tree' of the famous light verse of the Qur'an which reads as follows:

God is the Light of heavens and earth. The likeness of His light is as if there were a niche and within it a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The lamp is as it were a glittering star. This lamp is kindled from a blessed tree (*shajarah*), an olive which is neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil is well-nigh luminous even if no fire touched it. Light upon light. God guides to His Light whom He will. God sets forth similitudes for men (i.e., He speaks to men in allegories), and He knows all things.<sup>57</sup>

While noting that, because it is pregnant with mystical meanings, this verse has always been a source of inspiration to the Sufis, one may find that the word *shajarah* appears in this verse exactly in the same form in which it appears in Abu Yazid saying. Moreover, the light verse describes *shajarah* as that which is neither of the East nor of the West and is the source of the light of heavens and earth. It is



quite likely, therefore, that Abu Yazid had this 'tree' in mind when he spoke of the tree of oneness.

Regarding Abu Yazid's use of *khud'ah*, Arberry's argument that God, described in the Qur'an as *khadi'* and *makir*, is believed to 'test' and 'try' the believers, and that the idea of *bala'* also occurs in Sūfī literature, is correct. In support of Arberry's view, we may further point out that Ahū Yazid himself spoke of God's testing on many occasions. On one occasion, for example, he advised one of his companions on the eve of the latter's journey to some place, "If any *bala'* of God falls on you, come out of it quickly because it is something which a man with patience cannot bear."<sup>58</sup> This means that one should try to pass the test quickly in order to reap its fruits. In the following tradition, we find Abu Yazid's use of both 'testing' (*imtiḥan*) and *khud'ah*:

I was tested by the offer of a worldly gift, but I refrained from accepting it. Then I was offered a gift relating to the hereafter, and my Self felt inclined to it. Then He (God) warned me that it was a deceit (*khud'ah*) and I refrained from accepting it. When He saw that I was not deceived by created things, He opened for me divine gifts.<sup>59</sup>

It seems to us, however, that both Arberry and Zaehner had failed to understand the real implications of the word *khud'ah* in Abu Yazid teachings. Both of them start with the assumption that *Maya* and *khud'ah* have identical meanings. As a matter of fact, *maya* refers to the material world in which we live, move and have our being, whereas *khud'ah* in Abu Yazid's recitals refers to the angelic world (*malakut*) which includes the Protected Tablet, the Throne, the Chair, etc. This is clear from the very context in which Abu Yazid used the word *khud'ah*, i.e., the context of his spiritual journey (*mi'rāj*) in the angelic world. This is also shown by the repeated theme in the version (or interpretation) of his *mi'rāj* story in *ru'ya'*: "Then He continued to offer me a kingdom such as no tongue can describe, but all the while I knew that He was testing me therewith, and in reverence for the holiness of my Lord I paid no heed to it, saying, 'O my Beloved, my desire is other than what Thou offerest me'."<sup>60</sup> This theme occurs seven times in the *Ru'ya'*, each time referring to God's gifts offered to Abu Yazid in a particular heaven.

We may go even further and say that by *khud'ah* Abu Yazid may have meant his deception by himself and not by God. When in his spiritual journey he saw different things, he saw them as apart from God. That is to say, he failed to view those things as aspects of God. Thus Abu Yazid was himself responsible for his own deception. This view of ours is supported by the fact that the Qur'an describes God as *khadi'* and *mākir* only with reference to those men who are themselves *khadi's* and *mākirs*. For example, the Qur'an says, "The hypocrites deceive (*yukhādī'ūn*) God, and God deceives them,"<sup>61</sup> "They (the unbelievers) tricked (*makaru*) (God) and God tricked (them)."<sup>62</sup> These and many other verses show that God deceives and tricks the unbelievers and hypocrites who have done the same to Him first. Certainly this sense of the word cannot be applied to Abu Yazid; for, he was neither a hypocrite nor an unbeliever who deceived God. If we take *khud'ah*, in the sense in which we have just explained it, Abu Yazid tradition will mean that he considered God's gifts relating to the hereafter as truly divine and thus felt inclined to them; but at once God warned him that he was being deceived by himself. Having realized his error, Abu Yazid turned his attention away from them.

We should further note that *bala'* and *khud'ah* do not mean the same thing. *Bala'* is a favour which God bestows on his worshippers with a view to purifying them. It is like the educational punishment that a father inflicts on his son. As an example of this, we may refer to the Qur'anic story of Abraham's sacrifice of his son. According to God's order, Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son. When the slaughtering was to take place, God replaced his son with a sacrificial animal (*dhibh*).<sup>63</sup> This was not God's deception of Abraham; "obviously this was a trial (*bala'*)"<sup>64</sup> for him for his own spiritual development. Abraham passed the test and received rewards from God. Thus, because *bala'* comes from God for the good of the one on whom it is imposed, Sufis look for and welcome it. It is said, for example, that Abu Yazid wished to receive *bala'* everytime he ate his food.<sup>65</sup> *Khud'ah*, on the other hand, has very different implications. God, as we have seen, deceives only in retaliation. Certainly a Sufi would not want this kind of *khud'ah*.

The above discussion shows that the assumption of both Zaehner and Arberry that *maya* and *khud'ah* have identical meaning

appears incorrect. Although Arberry is right in saying that God, as described in the Qur'an, deceives, tries and tests, it is perhaps incorrect to say that by *khud'ah*, Abu Yazid meant God's deception of him. Whether or not the cause of deception was God or Abu Yazid himself, the fact remains that the objects with reference to which Abu Yazid felt deceived were very much different from those to which *maya* refers. Hence it appears meaningless to draw any parallelism between *maya* and *khud'ah*.

*iii) Abu Yazid's Paradoxical Utterance "Subhani" (Glory Be to me!) and "Mahyam eva Namō Nama, (Homage, Homage to me!) of the Upanishads*

Zaehner thinks that Abu Yazid's famous utterance "Glory be to me!" has also been derived from a Hindu source. He argues that *subhani* "is absolutely blasphemous to Muslim ears, and nothing remotely comparable is recorded of any of the Sufis who preceded Abu Yazid", and that a Sanskrit equivalent of it is found in *mahyam eva namo nama*, "Homage, homage to me!" in the Bra Upanishads.<sup>66</sup>

Arberry does not offer a refutation of Zaehner's view; for, according to him, Massignon has convincingly shown<sup>67</sup> that *subhani* represents Abu Yazid's attempt to experience in the first person what Muhammad had articulated in the Qur'anic verse in an indirect style in the second person by identifying himself with the prominent 'I' of "*ana rabbukwn al-a'la*",<sup>68</sup> meaning "I am your Lord, Most High", the words of Pharaoh. According to Arberry,

"The attempt to find a Hindu source for this celebrated *shath* seems so unlikely as not to call for further discussion."<sup>69</sup>

Arberry, nevertheless, finds it necessary to point out two errors of Zaehner. Zaehner argues that:

It is very possible, however, that Abu Yazid never went further than to say *subhani*, which is all that Sarraj records, while Sahlagi reports no less than three versions of this particular logion, and it is therefore probable that the second phrase is in each case a gloss. Besides 'How great is my glory' we also have 'How great is my sovereignty (*sultani*) and, more striking still, 'I

am the Lord Most High', the last of which is also reported as a separate saying.<sup>70</sup>

This argument, says Arberry, "is some invalidated by the fact that Abu Talib al-Makki who died only eight years after al Sarbj, quotes the saying in its full form."<sup>71</sup> Secondly, Arberry points out that the Arabic text of Zaehner's translation "I am the Lord Most High" is *ana rabbi al-a'lal* the correct translation of which is "I am *my* Lord Most High." There is a significant difference between these two translations. As a result of the mistranslation, Zaehner "has missed the subtle significance of the change made by Abu Yazid from the Qur'anic 'your Lord' to 'my Lord'."<sup>72</sup>

Arberry's criticisms of Zaehner are justified. But how can we explain these errors on Zaehner's part? Zaehner seems to be obsessed with the idea that all that is important in early Sufism in general, and in Abu Yazid in particular, must have been borrowed from Hindu sources. Hence, he seems to choose only that material which supports his already-formed view and to translate texts wrongly to fit them into his arguments. Otherwise, how can we explain his translation of *rabbi* as "the Lord", for example, since we are sure that Zaehner knows the meaning of the Arabic personal pronoun *ya* in the possessive case?

We agree with Massignon (and Arberry who follows Massignon) that *subhani* was formed by a simple twist of a Qur'anic expression. The word *subhan* occurs in the Qur'an forty-one times in three forms: eighteen times followed either by the word *Allah* or *rabb* or the relative pronoun *alladhi* (who) referring to God, nine times in the form of *subbanaka*, and fourteen times in the form of *subhanahu*.<sup>73</sup> In a state of ecstasy, Abu Yaz changed one of these expressions into *subhani*. This, in fact, is the peculiarly Bistami way of expressing a mystical experience. The following examples of Abu Yazid's mystical expressions (*shatahat*) and the corresponding Qur'anic verses from which these expressions were formed will further illustrate our point:

#### *Shatahat*

Ana rabbokum al-a'la.<sup>74</sup>

Inna Batsha rabbeka la shaded.<sup>76</sup>

Anallahu la ilaha illa ana fa'bodni.<sup>78</sup>

#### *Qur'anic verses*

Ana rabbi al-a'la.<sup>75</sup>

Inna Batshi ashadu min batshehi.<sup>77</sup>

Inni ana la ilaha illa ana fa'bodni.<sup>79</sup>

We can also point out that Abu Yazid is so well-known primarily because of his *subhani*. The very mention of his name calls to our mind this famous expression of the Sufi. But why should it be so important? The answer is: because it contradicts the Qur'anic verses, and is thus “blasphemous to Muslim ears.” In fact, it has the meaning that it has only in reference to the corresponding expressions in the Qur'an; but for this reference, *subhani* would be sheer nonsense.

It needed the genius and daring of the rebellious Khurasāni to formulate *shatahat* such as *subhani* either from Qur'anic verses or from some other Islamic sources. On several occasions, *shatahat* flowed from Abu Yazid's tongue when he fell into ecstatic states caused by his hearing the recitation of a Qur'an verse, or the *Allah akbar*, etc. Once some one recited the Qur'an verse “On that Day We shall gather the righteous to the Merciful in groups.”<sup>80</sup> On hearing this, Abu Yazid fell into an ecstatic state and said, “The one who is with Him does not need to be gathered, because he is all the time sitting with Him.”<sup>81</sup> Another time, he made the utterance “There is no God but I. So worship me!” immediately after he had finished his dawn prayer.<sup>82</sup> All this shows that his *subhani* as well as other *shatahat* have reference only to Islamic contexts. Hence, any attempt to find an extra-Islamic source for *subhani* or for any other *shatahat* of Abu Yazid seems meaningless.

*iv) Use of the Expression “Anta Dhdka” (Thou Art That) and the Upanishadic Use of “Tat Tavam Asi” (Thou Art That)*

While describing his experience of *mi'raj*, Abu Yazid said that he addressed God saying,

Adorn me with Your oneness (*wahda niyyah*), clothe me with Your I-ness and raise me up to Your unity (*ahadiyyah*) so that when Your creatures see me, they may say, ‘We have seen You’ and You shall be that, and I shall not be there.<sup>83</sup>

To Zaehner, “Thou art that” is not understandable in the context; for, the pronoun ‘that’ (*dhāka*) is never used in the Arabic language to mean God. The “pronoun ‘that’ (*tat*), however, is regularly used in Sanskrit as a synonym of Brahman.”<sup>84</sup> In fact, according to Zaehner,

the Arabic phrase *takūnu anta dhaka* is a literal translation of the *tat tvam asi* of the Chandogya Upanisad.<sup>85</sup>

Arberry first points out the error in Zaehner's translation of the crucial Arabic phrase in question. In his translation of it as "and thou art that," says Arberry, Zaehner has apparently failed to see the significance of *fa* which indicates causality. As regards Zaehner's view that the pronoun 'that (*dhaka*) is not used in Arabic to mean God and that, in fact, *takūnu anta dhaka* is a literal translation of *tat tvam asi*, Arberry says that the Qur'an uses the pronoun *dha* (that) in many places to refer to God.<sup>86</sup> The additional *ka* of *dhaka* is

Like variant forms, a particle of 'allocation... relating to an object that is distant, or, accord, to general opinion, to that which occupies a middle place between the near and the distant. ...It would appear... that Abu Yazid was intending to say no more than that 'that' which the creatures were seeing (in 'a middle place between the near and the distant') was God, and that Abu Yazid had ceased to exist as a contingent entirely apart from God. If this interpretation is correct, then there is no need to drag the Sanskrit *tat tvam asi* into the arena.<sup>87</sup>

Arberry may be right in his explanation of the pronoun *dhaka*. It is possible that by *dhaka* Abu Yazid was not referring to God, who is far nor near to God, who is omnipresent. But we would say that Arberry's attempt to discover a Qur'anic expression for every important utterance of Abu Yazid does not seem to be justified. Abu Yazid always did not, and did not have to, express his experience in exact Qur'anic terms or in Qur'anic terms at all. But this is certainly no reason to believe that he borrowed his expressions from extra-Islamic sources. The real error of Zaehner seems to be in the fact that he has taken the phrase *tat tvam asi* out of context and then has tried to show its similarity to *takunu anta dhaka*. In the Upanishad Uddalaka Aruni, while advising his son, says,

Now that which is that subtle essence (the root of all), in it all that exists has its self. It is the True. It is the Self, and thou, O Svetaketu, art it.<sup>88</sup>

We should note that this translation differs from the original text. In the Hindu context, the father says to the son: You are not only

you; you are everything. Abu Yazid on the other hand, says to God: I do not want that there be any Abu Yazid whom people could see; I want that there be only You and not me. Moreover, it is obvious that in the Upanishadic text, a man is addressing another man. In Abu Yazid's text, on the other hand, a man is addressing God. This is clearly shown in one of Abu Yazid's prayers:

How long shall this I-ness (*anāniyyali*) exist between me and You? I ask You to annihilate my I-ness from me so that my I-ness will be You, and You alone shall remain and You will see only Yourself, oh my Friend.<sup>89</sup>

For further evidence to show that in *anta dhaka* Abu Yazid was addressing God, we can cite a saying of Abu al-Hasan al-Kharaqani, which is an echo of Abu Yazid's saying. Al-Kharaqani says:

Oh God! On the Day of Judgement the prophets will sit on the pulpits (*minbarha*) of light and the creatures will look at them, and Your friends (*awliya'*) will sit on the thrones (*kursiha*) of light and the creatures will look at them, but Abu al-Hasan will sit on Your unity (*yaganigi*) so that the creatures will look at You.<sup>90</sup>

In the last phrase of this saying we can detect the *anta dhaka* of Abu Yazid. In fact, this whole saying of al-Kharaqani is in spirit the famous tradition of Abu Yazid which is under discussion. We say this not only because of the similarity between the two sayings, but also because al-Kharaqani tried to imitate the master as closely as possible. Many of his sayings contained in *Tadhkirah*, *Nafahat* and in other sources resemble those of Abu Yazid, not only in meaning but also in form.<sup>91</sup>

## Conclusion

To sum up, the above discussion suggests that Abu Yazid's thought could be explained with reference to Islamic contexts. No doubt, there are some minor similarities with Hindu (and also Magi) doctrines in Abu Yazid's thought; but logically speaking, one should not claim that he can identify two doctrines just because of their mere similarities. It is extremely important that Abu Yazid's statements and words be understood in the contexts in which they were made. Taking

some words and expressions of a system of thought out of their contexts and showing their similarity to those of another system hinders rather than helps the understanding of either system. As regards a direct link between Abu Yazid's thought and Hindu systems, there is little evidence to prove it. The connection is neither as simple nor as clear as Zaehner and his colleagues have argued.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Early in 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was Tholuck who wrote about this influence (See: Tholuck, *Sufismus*, pp. 42-3, trans. Arberry, *An Introduction to the History of Sufism*, London: Longmans 1943, p.17); Among others who believe this hypothesis, we may name A. Von Kremer (*Geschichte der herrshenden ideen des islams*, Leipzig: Brockhaus 1868, p.67; R. Dozy (*Essai sur l'histoire de l'Islamisme*, Paris, Maisonneuve 1879); and I. Goldziher (*Vorlesungen über den Islam*, Heidelberg: winter 1910) For abu Yazid Bistami see:

<sup>2</sup> For abu Yazid Bistami see: Fatima Lajvardi, "Bayazid Bistami," *Da'irat al-ma'arif-i buzurg-i islami* (Tehran, 1992), XI: 313-2

<sup>3</sup> Al-Sahlagi A. F. M., *Ketabun Nur min Kalimaat Abi Tayfur*, ed. A. R. Badawi, in *Shatahat al-Sufiyyah*, Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahdat al-Misriyyah, 1949; pp.45 ff (Hereafter: *Nur*)

<sup>4</sup> (*Supra*, p. 54)

<sup>5</sup> Nicholson R.A., "A Historical Enquiry Concerning the origion and development of sufism," *Journal of Royal Asiatic Sociey* (1906), p. 330

<sup>6</sup> (Nicholson, *Mystics of Islam*, London: G. Bell & Son, 1914, p. 17

<sup>7</sup> (Massignon L., *Essai sur les Origines de Lexique Technique de la Mystique Musulmane*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Paris: J.Vrin, 1954, p. 92. (Hereafter: *Essai*)

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 93

*Ibid.*, p. 27<sup>9</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104, Massignon did not exclude the possibility of some Hindu ascetic influence on the Sufi orders of modern times: "It is probable that the critical students of the modern congregations would establish the infiltration of certain methods of Hindu. asceticism." ( *Encyclopedia of Islam.*, IV, 685 Massignon, "*Tasawwuf*").

<sup>11</sup> M. Horten, "Indische Stromungen in der Islamischen Mystik" I, *Matrrialien zur Kunde de Buddhismus*, Heidelberg, 1927, pp. 17-25. (Hereafter: "Indische" )



- <sup>12</sup> Arberry, *An Introduction to the History of Sufism*, London: Longmans 1943; p. 38. (Hereafter: *History of Sufism*)
- <sup>13</sup> See his article: "Abu Yazid of Bistam: A Turning Point in Islamic Mysticism", *Indo-Iranian Journal*, I (1957), 286-301
- <sup>14</sup> Zaehner, *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, London: LUP 1960, pp. 93-110. (Hereafter: *HMM*)
- <sup>15</sup> Al-Sarraj A. N., *Kitab al-Luma' fi al-Tasawwuf*, ed.R.A. Nicholson, Leyden: Brill, 1914, p.177. (Hereafter: *Luma*)
- <sup>16</sup> Massignon, *Essai*, p.98,n.3
- <sup>17</sup> Arberry A.J., *Revelation and Reason in Islam*, London 1957, p.90
- <sup>18</sup> Zaehner, *HMM*, p.93
- <sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, p.94
- <sup>20</sup> Arberry A.J., "Bistamiana," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, XXV (1962), pp.28-37, p.35. (Hereafter: *Bistamiana*)
- <sup>21</sup> Arberry, *Bistamiana*, p.36
- <sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, pp.36-7
- <sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, p.37, n 1
- <sup>24</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>25</sup> al-Sammara'I Q. *The Theme of Ascension in Mystical Writings*, Baghdad: The National Printing and Publishing Co. 1968, p.217 (Hereafter: *Theme*)
- <sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, p.220
- <sup>27</sup> Zaehner, *HMM*, p.100
- <sup>28</sup> al-Sammara'I, *Theme*, p.221
- <sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, pp.218-19
- <sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, 219-220
- <sup>31</sup> See in this matter: Zarrinkub Abdulhossein, *Justuju dar tasawwuf-i Iran* (Tehran: Amir Kabir 1982), where the controversy surrounding the identity of Abu Ali Sindi is discussed on p. 38 and the possible Indian influence on his thought raised on pp. 45-6.
- <sup>32</sup> Baqli R., *Sharh Shatahat*, ed. H. Corbin, Paris: Universite de Paris 1966, pp.35,77 (Hereafter: *Sharh*); also see: Jami A., *Nafahat al-Uns min Hadarat al-Quds*, ed. M. Tawhidipur, Tehran: Ketabforooshi s'adi 1918 (1978) p. 57. (Hereafter: *Nafahat*)
- <sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 208-09
- <sup>34</sup> *Bistamiana*, p.36
- <sup>35</sup> Nicholson, *Mystics*, p.17
- <sup>36</sup> *ibid*
- <sup>37</sup> Horten, "Indische", 1, 17-19
- <sup>38</sup> Horten, "Indische", I, 20-24.
- <sup>39</sup> Horten, "Indische", 1. 24-5
- <sup>40</sup> Conze E, *Buddhist Thought in India*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd 1962, p.57.
- <sup>41</sup> *ibid.* p.76

- <sup>42</sup> *ibid.* p.57
- <sup>43</sup> Suzuki B.L., *Mahayana Buddhism*, third edition, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd 1959, pp. 33.3.
- <sup>44</sup> *ibid.* p. 64
- <sup>45</sup> *ibid.*, p.63
- <sup>46</sup> For an excellent survey of the history of the study of the doctrine of *Nirvana*, see G. R. Welbon, "On Understanding the Buddhist *Nirvana*", *History of Religions*, V (1965), 300-326.
- <sup>47</sup> Al-Sarraj, *Luma'*, p.384
- <sup>48</sup> Zaehner, *HMM*, p.96
- <sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, p.97
- <sup>50</sup> Arberry, *Bistamiana*, p.29
- <sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, n.3
- <sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, 29-30
- <sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, 30
- <sup>54</sup> *ibid.*, 31
- <sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, 31
- <sup>56</sup> Al-Munawi A.R., *Al-Kawakib al-Durriyyah fi Tarajim al-Sadat al-Sufiyyah*, Cairo: al-Anwar 1938, p.250.
- <sup>57</sup> Qur'an, 24:35
- <sup>58</sup> al-Sahlagi, *Nur*, p.103
- <sup>59</sup> *ibid.*, 119
- <sup>60</sup> Nicholson R.A., "An Early Arabic Version of the "*Mi'raj*" of Abu Yazid al-Bistami, *Islamica*, II (1926-1927) pp. 202-215, p. 210.
- <sup>61</sup> Qur'an 4:131
- <sup>62</sup> Qur'an 3:54
- <sup>63</sup> Qur'an, 37:99-107
- <sup>64</sup> Qur'an., 37:106
- <sup>65</sup> al-Sahlagi, *Nur*, pp. 48-9
- <sup>66</sup> Zaehner, *HMM*, p.98
- <sup>67</sup> Essai, pp.98 and 279
- <sup>68</sup> Qur'an, 89:24
- <sup>69</sup> Arberry, *Bistamiana*, p.32
- <sup>70</sup> Zaehner, *HMM*, p.98
- <sup>71</sup> Arberry, *Bistamiana*, p.32, n.2
- <sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, p.32
- <sup>73</sup> al-Baqi, *Sharh*, pp.339-40
- <sup>74</sup> Qur'an., 79:24
- <sup>75</sup> al-Sahlagi, *Nur*, p.68
- <sup>76</sup> Qur'an., 85:12
- <sup>77</sup> *ibid.* p.111
- <sup>78</sup> Qur'an., 21:25

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*, p.122

<sup>80</sup> Qur'an 19:85

<sup>81</sup> al-Sahlagi, *Nur*, p. 137

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*, p.122

<sup>83</sup> Zaehner, *HMM*, p. 94

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*, p. 94

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.*, p. 95

<sup>86</sup> Arberry, *Bistamiana*, p.34

<sup>87</sup> *ibid.*, p. 34

<sup>88</sup> The Upanishads, trans. M.Muller, New York, Dover Publication 1962, I, p. 101.

<sup>89</sup> Al-Sahlagi, *Nur*, p.125

<sup>90</sup> Attar F., *Tadhkerat al-Awlia'*, ed. R.A. Nicholson, 2vols, Leyden: Brill 1911, II, p.227.

<sup>91</sup> See also: M.Abdul Haqq Ansari, "Abu Yazid al-bistami's Description of Mystical Experience," *Hamdard Islamicus*, VI (1983): 25-55; and Michael Sells, "The Infinity of Desire: Love, Mystical Union, and Ethics in Sufism," in G. William Barnard & J. J. Kripal (eds.), *Crossing boundaries : essays on the ethical status of mysticism* (New York, NY: Seven Bridges Press, 2002): 184-229; as well as the same author's translation of some Abu yazid's sayings along with some tremendous footnotes on controversial readings of difficult Arabic passages in *Early Islamic Mysticism* (New York: Paulist Press 1996), ch. 7



## Book Reviews

**Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas on Being*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 2002, pp. x + 212, cloth, £35.**

Anthony Kenny's work on a thinker who has stayed with him all these years since his seminary days is at once an erudite and incisive, analytical critique as well as an infuriatingly unsympathetic analysis of the famous medieval thinker. Ever since his Past Masters' volume on *Aquinas* (Oxford University Press, 1969), Kenny has exhibited a mixed reception of Aquinas, a reception that is entirely consistent with the tastes and concerns of the analytic tradition since the 1960s: an appreciation of the philosophy of the mind culminating in his *Aquinas on Mind* (London: Routledge, 1993), and a wholesale rejection of the metaphysics expressed in this volume in which he charges Aquinas with thorough confusion in face of the problem of existence. It would be quite easy to fault and praise this volume under review solely on the basis of the contrasting methodology of the 'two traditions' of philosophy. There is little doubt that even without the neo-Thomism of Gilson et al, the study of Aquinas and medieval thinkers like him remains a mainstay of the 'continental tradition' of philosophy extending to Catholic philosophers in North America. For these thinkers, the metaphysical concerns and the holistic claims of Thomism are of great interest and consistent with the project of philosophy. Catholic philosophers such as the late Norman Kretzmann have within the analytic tradition also articulated a staunch defence of Thomistic metaphysics, in particular in *The Metaphysics of Theism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997) and *The Metaphysics of Creation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999). If, for Kenny, Aquinas' thinking on being is so muddled, why bother writing a volume on it? Why study the history of philosophy merely to condemn past practitioners?

One virtue of Kenny's work has been the attack on Thomism and much woolly thinking that sometimes goes under that name. However, serious inquiry on the thought of Aquinas has greatly expanded in the past decades and not just from confessional perspectives. Kenny outlines his project in the preface. He begins with an assumption, astonishing perhaps for an analytic philosopher, that 'the subject of being is one of the most important of all philosophical concerns' (p. v). He goes on to say that he will examine one great philosopher's approach to being and from that demonstrate that it is 'thoroughly confused' (p. v), partly to allow for a critical reassessment of Aquinas that seeks to jettison those unacceptable aspects of his metaphysics that are precisely central to theological rehabilitation of Aquinas. Kenny's aim is, therefore, no free inquiry but with a clear agenda and goal. But the foundation of this, as I remarked is peculiar. Is being such a central philosophical concern? Is it a rich concept or a simple and thin concept as many contemporary philosophers see it? Is it even fair to criticise the confused nature of Aquinas' concept of being when it is clear, as Kenny admits, that Aquinas does not have a unified concept of being using both the Latin terms *ens* and *esse* to render the concept and describing at least twelve different senses and contexts in which Aquinas uses the term *esse*?

A study of the systematic failure of an elaborate metaphysics need not be in vain and one learns that Kenny thinks that there is much to be understood from these failures; after all, as he says, 'all great philosophers have engendered great errors... It is no disrespect to the genius of Aquinas to try to dissolve some of the confusions on the nature of being to which he appears to have succumbed. We can gain rewarding insights by exploring even the false trails of a great mind' (p. x).

Kenny sets out on this false trail by assembling a number of passages arranged chronologically in which Aquinas' views on being as expressed. Nine chapters follow on the analysis of being in different works beginning with the early *De Ente et Essentia* and culminating with Aquinas' commentary on the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle. Kenny acknowledges the Avicennan influence on the early text (p. 1) and the Neoplatonic influence on other works but does not adequately contextualise Aquinas' writings. Analytic history of philosophy tends

to approach texts as contemporary interlocutors and has little time of contextualisation, historicism and conventionalism (whether social or linguistic). Further, it tends to read the text of the past purely in the light of its own concerns. Kenny, therefore, writing, thinking and analysing in the aftermath of the linguistic turn, is mainly concerned with how Aquinas talks about being and existence, focusing on the semantics of existential propositions and not the metaphysical concerns of Aquinas himself. One would not wish for an obscurantist opposite extreme that would read Aquinas wholly and solely 'on his own terms' but one would expect some respect for the context and scholarly aims of the philosopher. Ultimately one either accepts, modifies or rejects the philosophical enterprise of the text which one encounters. For those seeking a more sympathetic yet analytic approach to Aquinas, Kretzmann or the work of Gyula Klima would be a better reference point. Perhaps the real question is how one ought to read Aquinas (or indeed any medieval thinker). The fecundity of their work and the constant re-visitation of the same questions and topics would suggest that they were continually changing and adapting the way they approached questions within the contexts in which they were posed. Those different passages therefore ought to be read alongside each other cognisant of their contexts in order to allow a clearer picture and doctrine to emerge. Kenny would have little sympathy with such an approach and does not allow for the conditions to obtain.

The general charge is that Aquinas' views are obscure and confused. Kenny considers the twelve senses of *esse* to be a major obstacle which stops Aquinas from bringing into a consistent whole his insights on being. This leads him to three major critical conclusions (pp. 192-93):

- 1) Aquinas fails to recognise the distinction between being and existence.
- 2) Aquinas surrenders to a Platonic affirmation of pure forms and spiritual substances in the celestial firmament while at once rejecting it in the sublunar level.
- 3) Aquinas' identification of God with subsistent being (Avicenna's necessary of existence) is 'deeply disturbing'.

Are these defects ascribable to Aquinas and are they in fact defects? Are these obscurities due to the language of being or to the

attempt at articulating an ontological separation between this world and the divine? It is not clear what Kenny's alternatives to these three defects are. Consider the first one. Aquinas' main concern is the ontological distinction between divine necessary being and contingent existence. He also articulates a fairly opaque but consistent distinction between the actuality of *esse* (*actus essendi*) and existence. This does not amount to failing to recognise a distinction between being and existence. The significance of these three charges is precisely that some many medieval thinkers would be susceptible to them, not least the 'father' of them all Avicenna. But does that make them mistakes? Can they only signal theological affirmation and not philosophical inquiry and even defence?

Kenny finally tries to explain Aquinas' mistakes in a final act of charity by citing these reasons for his lapses. First, even 'better' philosophers on existence such as Frege, the founding father of the analytic tradition as Michael Dummett puts it, made mistakes, so why not Aquinas? Second, Aquinas was remarkably prolific and one cannot expect such a writer to lack unresolved inconsistencies in his work. Third, Aquinas' inclusive approach and style led him to overlook the errors in others' thought and thus became susceptible to Neoplatonic errors. Each of these excuses can quite easily be set aside; they certainly do not explain Aquinas' 'errors' nor are they a fair assessment of them. One can only assume that Kenny felt some obligation to try to excuse Aquinas of the gross errors of which he accused him.

Nevertheless, *Aquinas on Being* is challenging, captivating and exciting. It is certainly not the last analytic word on the subject, not even, one suspects, from the pen of Kenny. If the reader comes away with the sense that Kenny has not satisfied the problem and thus seeks to inquire further, then the book will have played the ultimate role in philosophical inquiry of asking questions and provoking thought.

Sajjad H. Rizvi  
University of Exeter

\*\*\*



**Christopher Bobonich, *Plato's Utopia Recast: His Later Ethics and Politics*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 2002, pp. xi + 642, cloth, £45.**

This is an exciting time to be working on Platonism and Platonic ethics. From Julia Annas' synoptic *Platonic Ethics, Old and New* (Cornell University Press, 1999) to Dominic O'Meara's *Platonopolis* (Clarendon Press, 2004), the study of (neo)Platonism(s) is enjoying a revival. A most recent expression of this is Lloyd Gerson's challenge to us to reconsider Platonism in Aristotle, or even that Aristotle may well have been a Platonist *malgré lui* (Cornell University Press, 2005). Bobonich's re-assessment and reorientation of Plato's moral psychology and politics is not less significant. It is a challenging and vibrant piece of work that shakes us from our complacency away from the focus on the *Republic* and forces us to re-read works such as *Phædo* and the *Laws*. The full and detailed examination of the later dialogue in particular is one of the joys and strengths of the book. Clear within his approach are two points : first, that Plato's ethical and political thought undergoes a radical shift from the utopia of the philosophers in the *Republic* that presents a pessimistic view of non-philosophers to a more 'realistic' optimism about non-philosophers in the *Laws*; second, his developmental approach requires one to rethink the chronology of the dialogues as Charles Kahn did, in a somewhat different manner with different results, in his *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue* (Cambridge University Press, 1998). Not only this, Bobonich also shows how a full picture of Plato's public ethics can only emerge with further consideration of yet more works such as the *Phædrus* and the *Statesman*. If Bobonich is right, then those rather lazy introductory philosophy classes that fix upon the *Republic* as the final statement of Platonic politics ought to be discontinued.

Let us consider his main claim (I leave aside the Dependency Theory and the moral psychology for brief remarks later). This concerns non-philosophers. Bobonich presents the problem and his answer in the following manner (pp. 7-10). In the *Phædo* and in the *Republic*, Plato denies the following claims that:

- 1) At least some non-philosophers are capable of being genuinely virtuous.

- 2) At least some non-philosophers are capable of valuing virtue for its own sake, that is, are capable of believing that virtue is good for its own sake and of desiring virtue for its own sake.
- 3) At least some non-philosophers are capable of valuing for its own sake the genuine well-being or happiness of others.
- 4) At least some non-philosophers are capable of living happy lives.

In the *Laws* in his accounts of the citizens of Magnesia, Plato does a U-turn and affirms these claims. Thus from the middle dialogues to the later dialogues, he moves from a pessimistic view of non-philosophers to an optimistic one. Alongside this shift, a change occurs in Plato's view of psychology. Even if we do not raise issues to this main claim, one question that does arise is why did Plato's views change, or rather the historian in me would want to pose such a contextual question.

There are certain assumptions that Bobonich makes that may be questionable and raise a few eyebrows. The first is a stylistic and methodological one: he assumes that Plato tells us precisely what he wishes to do and that the dialogues are merely a sounding board for his philosophical ideas. This in some ways is an old problem: is Plato offering us literature or philosophy, a dialogue or a treatise? Kahn and before him Vlastos among others grappled with this; Bobonich does not. Second, another old problem of akrasia seems to rear its ugly head in a different guise. This is what Bobonich in Chapter 2 calls the dependency thesis, simply that happiness depends on wisdom or as Bobonich puts it, virtue and phronesis are innate goods and all other goods such as health and wealth are 'dependent' upon it. He sets aside any instrumentalist view of virtue and opts for a rather foundationalist approach which he argues is located in the discussion in the *Philebus* on the relationship between reason/wisdom and the human good as a causal one. The point is not demonstrated and demands questioning. Third, he asks us to set aside the sophisticated philosophical work, the *Republic*, in favour of a work that on his own account is unphilosophical, the *Laws*, but one which he argues has a sophisticated philosophy behind it. Again, this requires some explanation and defence. Finally, Bobonich in Chapter 3 on the psychology of the *Republic* argues that one ought to set it aside because its tripartite

division of the soul seems to violate the integrity of it and a mode of recovering the account is to argue that the non-rational parts of the soul do not lack rational agency. This claim is not fully demonstrated and is perhaps one point that would be rejected by most specialists. The suggestion that the later dialogues set aside the tripartite account is also refuted by considering the *Timæus*, an uber-text for the neoplatonist and very much a later dialogue. A further possible implication of his reassessment may be because the *Laws* represents the pinnacle of Plato's thinking, then the non-ethical aspects of the *Republic* such as its metaphysics and even its notorious theory of forms (although some might deny it) can be set aside along with its politics. This might amount to an over-ambitious reading of Bobonich but seems worthy of caution.

The real virtue of Bobonich's book is the comforting thought for us non-philosophers (we are surely on the whole historians, are we not?) that we are capable of upright moral agency and can function, contribute and even run a morally good state and society. As such, it has a democratising effect; such a revitalised Plato cannot be said to be an enemy of an 'open society' but rather its friend and mentor. The gaps in the arguments and undemonstrated points can be left to the philosophers to thrash out.

Sajjad H. Rizvi  
University of Exeter

\*\*\*

**John N. Martin, *Themes in Neoplatonic and Aristotelian Logic: Order, Negation and Abstraction*, Burlington: Ashgate, 2004, pp. 228, cloth, £52.50.**

This book is a collection of nine articles by John Martin mainly on ancient logic, seven of them previously published in various journals. The articles are generally concerned with the application of recent methods in formal logic to ancient texts. The last article uses methods developed in the other eight to explain the many-valued logic of Łukasiewicz. The majority of the articles aim to discover formal systems underlying Neoplatonic arguments. The underlying system at

play in almost all the articles is a logic of scalar adjectives and negations suitable for an interpretation of Neoplatonic philosophical arguments.

The first article, "Aristotle's Natural Deduction Reconsidered" provides a more technically elegant formal interpretation of Aristotle's syllogistic than the classic one offered by Corcoran some three decades ago. The author agrees with Corcoran (and generally with scholars of Aristotle's logic) that the formal system presented by Aristotle is not to be construed in terms of conditional sentences, but as a natural deduction system. However, he departs from the interpretation of Corcoran in understanding Barbara and Celarent not as deduction rules, but as basic deductions. He then presents an alternative formal interpretation that is compatible with the texts and that has fewer rules. Henkin-style completeness proofs are also given for all systems presented.

Similarly, the second article, "Ecthesis and Existence in the Syllogistic," offers formal equivalents for Aristotle's proof by "setting out". The arguments in the article are set against the backdrop of a natural deduction theory. They show that Aristotle's proof by setting out functions in the same way as a discharge rule that functions in the syllogistic in much the same way as the disjunction-elimination and existential instantiation function in first-order logic. Perhaps more importantly, the article argues that ecthesis is stronger than the perfect syllogisms and may replace them in a natural deduction system.

The third article, "Existence, Negation, and Abstraction in the Neoplatonic Hierarchy," may be considered the centerpiece of the book. It is an example of the author's important and successful attempts to place the arguments of Neoplatonic philosophy on the firm footing of modern formal logic. The author argues that the modular existential and predicate claims of the Neoplatonists can be presented in terms of a logic of comparative adjectives. He then identifies various Neoplatonic negations with the scalar negations (external, privative, and internal). The hypernegation is appropriate for the highest order of reality. Once the background theory of scalar adjectives and negations has been presented, the author argues that reversion to the One can be explained in terms of a series of hypernegations (close to Wolfson's interpretation)

as opposed to the idea that such reversion occurs by the Aristotelian method of abstraction (as in Whittaker).

The fourth article, “A Tense Logic for Boethius,” offers a model in formal and tense logic for Boethius’ proof for the simultaneous possibility for God’s foreknowledge and human freedom. This is done by restricting God’s knowledge to eternal sentences.

The fifth chapter, “Proclus on the Logic of the Ineffable,” is very similar in its arguments and objectives to the third article. The article is an introduction to the semantic theory in the Neoplatonic system of Proclus. Like the third article, it presents the Neoplatonic philosophical system in terms of scalar adjectives and various negations. The use of these negations points to the grounding of the Neoplatonice system in Aristotelian syllogistic.

Using different texts, the sixth article, “Proclus and the Neoplatonic Syllogistic,” concentrates on Proclus’ logic, showing that he employs interpretations over a linear semantic structure with operators for scalar negations. The article also shows the method of scalar negations used by Proclus to generate the linear hierarchy of Being.

The seventh chapter, “Ammonius on the Canons of Proclus,” builds on the conclusions of the sixth article, namely that a natural deduction system for scalar negations and Corcoran’s interpretation is complete for non-Boolean linear structures. In this article, Martin explains the syllogistic rule of *obversion*, an inference from the *dictum de omni et nullo*: if, as Aristotle says, by “predicated of every” we mean that none of the subject can be taken of which the predicate cannot be said, then if “x is true of all y” then “not x is true of no y”. Similarly, “x is true of some y” is equivalent to “not not-x is true of some y” and “x is true of y” is equivalent to “not not-x is true of y”. Given Proclus’ linear hierarchy, these rules are invalid if the negations are interpreted as Boolean, but valid with reference to the system of negations discussed in the chapters above.

The eighth chapter, “All Brutes are Subhuman: Aristotle and Ockham on Privative Negation,” critically evaluates Ockham’s explanation of “All A is non-P” as “All S is of a type T that is naturally P and no S is P” as an account of privative negation. The author discusses two senses of privative negation. The first is an intensifier

(subhuman) that is the inverse of the hypernegation (superhuman) discussed above. The second is a lexicalized Boolean equivalent of the intensifier (brute). The second sense is Aristotle's.

The ninth chapter, "Łukasiewicz's Many-valued Logic and Neoplatonic Scalar Modality," grapples with some puzzling problems in Łukasiewicz's system. The latter conflates modal and non-modal ideas, for example, in explaining that three-valued logic's 0, 1/2, and 1 represent three seemingly non-equivalent families expressing truth-values and modalities. The values in the interval  $[0,1]$  are also understood by Łukasiewicz as degrees of probability corresponding to various possibilities. But truth and falsity are prior to concepts of modality in standard possible world semantics. So what modal concepts is he using? Using the system of scalar adjectives and privative negations developed in other articles in this book, Martin argues for an  $n$ -valued Łukasiewicz algebra.

The book has a running theme – scalar adjectives and negations in a non-Boolean system to explain mainly ancient philosophical arguments. Some chapters overlap, as Martin himself points out, due to the fact that most were published before as separate and self-contained journal articles. Thus, Chapters 1, 6, 7, 8 and Chapters 3, 5, 6, 8, and 9 intersect with each other on various points. If anything, this is a blessing, as it presents Martin's work from different angles and as applied to various philosophical problems. It gives the book a much appreciated coherence.

Each of the articles is introduced with a very helpful and lucid abstract. The book ends with a bibliography of primary and secondary sources and helpful indices of names and topics.

Asad Q. Ahmed  
Princeton University

\*\*\*

**Paul Thom, *Medieval Modal Systems: Problems and Concepts*, Burlington: Ashgate, 2003, pp. 216, cloth, £55.**

This book studies the modal logic of seven of the most important medieval logicians: Abelard, Avicenna, Averroes, Kilwardby, Campsall, Ockham, and Buridan. The medieval logicians, Thom points out, were driven by two interests: the first was to interpret the apparently inconsistent modal logic of Aristotle; the second was the inherent fascination of modal logic as a field of theoretical inquiry. Two main questions are on the mind of the logicians Thom studies. The first is whether modal propositions should be taken to be amplified (i.e. the propositions as taken to be about the things that possibly fall under the subject terms) or actual (i.e. the propositions as taken to be about the actual things that fall under the subject terms). The second main question concerns the essentialist commitments of the logicians in their modal logic. Thom returns to these two questions throughout the book with reference to the logicians he studies. He concludes that Abelard, Ockham, and Campsall (to some extent) are actualists and that Avicenna and Buridan are ampliationists. He further states that all seven logicians assume essentialist notions in their modal logic.

The book begins with one of the best introductions to Aristotle's modal logic to have been published to date. Extracted from the results of his book *The Logic of Essentialism: an Interpretation of Aristotle's Modal Syllogistic* (Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1996), it is a lucid and concise presentation of some of the most important background ideas, assumptions, problems, and rules of Aristotle's modal logic. It also offers the technical apparatus and formal system that Thom uses throughout the book. It presents in a coherent fashion the Aristotelian intellectual heritage of the medieval logicians he studies in the book.

The second chapter studies some aspects of modal logic as developed by Aristotle's Greek commentators and his Latin translator Boethius. For it is not only through his own texts but also through the perspectives of his commentators that Aristotle was received by the medieval logicians. In this chapter, the author studies the contributions of Theophrastus to modal logic with regard to his famous rejection of Aristotle's conclusions about mixed necessity syllogisms in the first figure and his adoption of the famous *peiores* rule. It presents his

important remarks about various types of necessity-propositions that were later to be taken up by Alexander. It also states that some of Theophrastus' disagreements with Aristotle may be explained with reference to his use of necessity and possibility propositions as opposed to the necessity and contingency propositions used by Aristotle. There is thus only an apparent dispute between the master and his student; they may be reconciled on this point. Thom then mentions briefly Sosigenes' contribution to the notion of conditional necessities before moving on to discuss Alexander at length. Here he concentrates on Alexander's statements about possibility, inseparable accidents (a notion that becomes extremely important for medieval logicians), types of necessity-propositions, necessity syllogisms, and contingency-syllogisms. He then discusses the four types of peculiarities in Porphyry and again the important ideas regarding inseparable accidents. With regard to Ammonius, the author studies his contributions to the idea of the qualified necessity-statements that have already been mentioned with reference to Sosigenes and Alexander. Thom then discusses inseparable accidents in Boethius and his idea of repugnance that is closely associated with the notion of propositional contraries. He also presents the types of necessity-propositions found in Boethius. Finally, the author presents a formal analysis of inseparable accidents and possibility.

The first two chapters thus set the formal ground for the study of the seven medieval logicians that follow. The chapter on Abelard begins by introducing the famous Abelardian *de sensu/de rebus* distinction and provides a useful table for the compounded and divided propositions that fall under these two types. After discussing the implication rules of these propositions and presenting a further distinction of two types of *cum determinatione* propositions, Thom moves on to provide a semantics based on a thing's nature and what is repugnant to a thing (repugnancy was discussed above with reference to Boethius). He then offers a summary of Abelard's equipollence and opposition of modal propositions with singular subjects. Abelard takes possibility propositions as the primary case, drawing a distinction between possibility to be and possibility not to be as *de esse* and *de non esse* propositions. This is followed by a presentation of the square of oppositions of the *de esse* and *de non esse* modals. It is only after



sketching this background that Thom plunges into a discussion of Abelard's modal syllogistic, concentrating on mixed necessity/assertoric syllogisms in the first and third figures.

In the third chapter on Avicenna, Thom discusses his modal syllogistic with a view to three distinctive features. The first is his ampliation of the subjects of modal propositions. This allows him to accept some conversion rules rejected by Abelard and all but one of Aristotle's mixed necessity-syllogisms. The ampliation of the subjects also allows him to accept other syllogisms not accepted by Aristotle. The second is his treatment of assertorics as possibility-propositions. Although this is a gain from a systematic point of view, it forces Avicenna to reject some generally accepted conversion rules and to modify the traditional square of opposition. Perhaps the most important feature of his modal logic (one that will have repercussions in the post-Avicennan tradition of modal logic in Arabic) is his extensive use of special and general assertoric descriptionals, two kinds of propositions that do not occur in Aristotle. They allow for the validity of Barbara XLL.

The fourth chapter is devoted to the study of Averroes, using a late work of his on modal logic known in the Latin tradition as the *Quaesitum*. The chapter begins with a discussion of Averroes' famous distinction between propositions in accordance with the kinds of terms associated with them. The discussion centers on various propositions with *per se* and *per accidens* terms. Thom concludes from his study of Averroes' modal syllogistic that he deploys essentialist notions to classify Aristotle's logic, using a *per se* sense of modal propositions when dealing with LLL moods. The *per se* encompasses both the way things are and the way they are described; it is yet another alternative to Abelard's *de rebus* analysis of modals; and it validates all the Aristotelian modal conversions.

Thom studies the modal logic of Kilwardby in the sixth chapter. With Kilwardby starts a new form of commentary on the Aristotelian logical tradition. Kilwardby is concerned with giving us a literal exposition of Aristotle's modal logic, punctuating this exposition with a series of puzzles that contain the seed of his own modal logic.

Unfortunately, this modal logic is not fully developed in its own right. The chapter tries to extract something of a coherent modal system from Kilwardby's fragmented remarks. Kilwardby seems to have two aims: to show that Aristotle was right in his modal logic and to find a coherent logical theory. This is understandably difficult and the task forces him to adopt various interpretations, including Averroes type *per se* necessity-propositions in his discussion of L/M and Alexander type amplified contingency-propositions in his discussion of Q/Q.

The seventh chapter on Campsall argues that underlying his modal logic is the basic essentialist assumption that some individuals possess some of their properties essentially and therefore necessarily. Campsall also assumes that there are certain properties that can only be possessed necessarily. With regard to *de esse* and *de non esse* modals, he deviates from tradition, shifting to a *de rebus* interpretation in the case of the former and a *de sensu* interpretation in the case of the latter.

The chapter on Ockham discusses his systemization of modals from a minimalist approach. Ockham, who mainly treats propositions in an actualist fashion (i.e. without ampliation) starts off with the essentialist assumption that some properties possessed by individuals are essential, and so necessary. He works with two systems, the first that takes assertories in the traditional fashion and the second that interprets them as *simpliciter*. The former provide the axiomatic base for his modal logic and the latter allows him to elaborate on it.

The ninth chapter, the last in this book, is on Buridan, who expounded the most elegant system of modal logic in the Middle Ages. The main system is based on an ampliationist understanding of modal propositions and the basic essentialist assumptions made by all logicians studied in this book, namely, that some individuals possess some of their properties essentially and so necessarily. Like Ockham, Buridan presents his system along the lines of an ordinary version of assertories and a *simpliciter* version.

Thom ends his book with a synopsis of the systems of the various medieval logicians. The conclusion is followed by a bibliography and a general index. This book offers one of the most

concise and lucid expositions of medieval modal logic available today. In its clarity it can serve as an introduction to medieval modal systems to a beginner and has the advanced technical apparatus and comprehensiveness to satisfy the more advanced scholar.

Asad Ahmed  
Princeton University

\* \* \*

**Wolfgang Künné, *Conceptions of Truth*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. xiii + 493, cloth, £60.**

Wolfgang Künné, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Hamburg, brings together, in this volume, years of study of the myriad problems of defining “truth”. Educated in Gadamer’s Heidelberg and on three Fellowships in Oxford, he combines a respect for the history of philosophy and a command of analytical skills to offer the most comprehensive investigation of the question, “What is Truth?” available in any form. Indeed, if Pilate were alive today, he would have to read this book. Given both its historical ambiance and its analytical precision, it is not easy (indeed, not possible) to summarize this book in one review. I will offer some suggestions about how to read it, say some things about where the author thinks a definition of truth may be found, and conclude with some comments about an analytical approach to truth in the context of Western philosophy.

The overall structure of the book is similar to the medieval *Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate* that includes: (1) an initial set of objections to a thesis that a philosopher holds, (2) a statement of the author’s views with justification; and (3) replies to the objections acknowledged at the outset. Künné shows his appreciation for the dialectical structure of our tradition by presenting in Chapter 1 what he calls a “flow chart” of questions about truth (pp. 3, 13, 15, 21). Although each answer is discussed later, answers marked with an asterisk are the main topics of later chapters in the book.

Here is a review of the questions: Is truth a property? (Qn 1) If you think not, you are a Nihilist, and Chapters 2 is partly devoted to this position. If so, you are a “Propertyist”. Künne marks your answer with an asterisk and explores a sequence of candidates for truth-value bearers. Is truth a relational property? (Qn 2) If you think not, this will be discussed later. If so, you may believe that truth implies a relation to other truth-value bearers. (Qn 3). Künne explores this alternative later. If you think that truth does not point to “other truth-value bearers” (normally, other sentences), you may think that truth points toward objects. (Qn 4) If you agree, you are an “Object-correspondentist” (my term). If not, does truth have an “implied relation” to facts? (Qn 5) If not, you are an “Event-correspondentist” (my term). If so, you are a “Fact-correspondentist” (my term). Then, do you think that truths are identical with facts? (Qn 6) If so, you are an “Identity theorist”. If not, do you believe that there is a one-to-one correspondence between truths and facts? (Qn 7) If you think that there is not such a correspondence, you may be a “Parsimonious Fact-correspondentist” (my term). Or if you answer “yes” to (7), you may be a “Prodigal Fact-correspondentist” (my term). Further, do you think that truth is a property of sentences? (Qn 8) If not, you may be interested in Künne’s account of truth. If you think that truth is a property of sentences, you have the problem of explaining sentential truth. (Qn 9) If you are disposed to stopping the investigation at that point, you are a “Sentential Primitivist” (my term). If you think that sentential truth can be explained, you have the problem of whether it can be stated finitely. (Qn 10) If you think not, you are a “Disquotationalist”, and this position is discussed in Chapter 4. If so, you have a semantical conception of truth. Then, do you think that truth is a property of propositions? (Qn 11). If you answer “no”, Künne offers a host of reasons throughout the book for answering this question in the affirmative. Qn 12: Is truth a stable property of propositions? If you think “no”, you are a “Temporalist” (my term). If “yes”, you are an “Eternalist”, and Künne elaborates on this position in Chapter 5. Can the concept of propositional truth be explained? (Qn 13) If you think “no”, you are a “Propositional Primitivist” (my term). If “yes”, can you state finitely what propositional truth is? (Qn 14) Künne devotes Chapters 5 and 6 to answering this question. If “no”, you are a

“Minimalist”. If “yes”, questions 11-14 are the core of your approach to truth, and you may be disposed to Künne’s “Modest Account” of truth. Two more questions remain if you are inclined to agree with the “Modest Account”: namely, Is truth epistemically constrained? (Qn 15) If you answer “No”, you are a *bona fide* “Alethic Realist” and Chapter 7 gives many reasons that support this position. If you answer “Yes” you are an “Alethic Anti-realist” and along with Brentano, Bradley, Peirce, James, Putnam, Dummett, and C. Wright you will have to say whether truth is an epistemic concept. (Qn 16) If you answer “no”, Künne argues in favor of your position. If you answer “Yes”, you will have to produce some definitions that are essential to Alethic anti-realism, and, as the author shows, that will be for you a very big challenge indeed.

Künne’s questions provide a kind of diagnostic procedure for determining where one’s own approach to truth stands on the landscape of conceptions of truth. The mutually-exclusive, jointly-exhaustive sequence of questions summarizes positions taken on that topic from ancient through modern times. They cover especially the range of issues that a modern philosopher would consider relevant to any account of what it means to say that something is true, e.g., “‘I am sitting at the computer.’ is true.” Or that I am sitting at the computer is true.

The reader left at a loss by this array of questions, or who does not readily follow the problems of Chapter 2, viz. whether “True” is a “bogus predicate”, or Chapter 4 “In and Out of Quotation Marks,” might begin reading at Chapter 3 where Künne traces the history of Correspondence theories of truth. Coherence theories of truth are treated in Chapter 7 where Künne discusses justification and views that regard knowledge as somehow essential to a definition of truth. Finally, if these approaches are not useful, the reader may follow the suggestion of the author and read *in modo brevis* Künne’s conception of truth: Chapter 2, Sections 2.1.3-5, 2.2 Introduction and 2.3 (pp. 42-56, 87-92); Chapter 5, Sections 5.1, 5.3.3 and 5.4 (pp. 249-269, pp. 308-316); Chapter 6 Sections 6.2 (pp. 333-374); Chapter 7, Section 7.3 (pp. 424-453). Broadly, Künne rejects the view held by Tarski, Davidson and

others that truth is a property of sentences, and he argues in Chapter 2 that “truth” is a real but specialized, non-natural property of propositions. (91) In Chapter 5 he argues that propositions are “sayables and thinkables”. They are not the objects but rather the meanings or content of “everyday” sentences. (263 and 333-360, esp. 335-6) Such propositions are tenseless, timeless and “eternal”; they are formed by nominalizing ordinary sentences, e.g. by turning “I am sitting at my computer,” into “That I am sitting at my computer,” which is, then, the subject of the predicate “is true”. Künne give his minimal definition of propositional truth in the formula:

$$(\text{MOD}) \forall x (x \text{ is true} \quad \exists p (x = [p] \ \& \ p))$$

The square brackets around ‘p’ form a singular term from a sentence that expresses a particular proposition. The singular term then designates that proposition. Here is a paraphrase of the formula: “For every x, x is true if and only if for some way things may be said to be, x is the proposition that things are that way, *and* things are that way).” (337)

Künne calls this formula and its defense a “modest account” of propositional truth and in Chapter 6 he argues for its virtues. Inspired by the work of Peter Strawson, Künne acknowledges his theory’s proximity to Frank Ramsey’s “Redundancy theory of truth.” (1927) He states its kinship with views of R. Carnap, W. Kneale and J. Mackie; and he distinguishes it from other “minimalist accounts” such as that of Paul Horwich. He argues for its advantages over Tarski’s and Donald Davidson’s (alethic anti-realist) theories that regard “true” as a property of sentences, i.e. concrete utterances or inscriptions. He addresses seven possible objections to the theory. The first of these concerns the antinomies or paradoxes that have confounded other theories of truth. Künne declares in his “Preface” that he does not address this aspect of the problems of defining truth. (vii), and his lone paragraph on the subject seems to give up the game of defending his “modest” theory “against the risk of occasionally exhibiting paradoxical features.” (p. 350 item [A]) But, in fact, Künne does discuss aspects of the Liar Paradox in several places, and some of his replies to the remaining six

objections are relevant to solving such paradoxes. In view of the long history of realist conceptions of truth and the fact that they have often foundered on the shoals of paradox, Künne's decision not to defend his theory against them is remarkable. We might question how anyone comfortable with the idea that his theory of truth may "occasionally exhibi[t] paradoxical features" may be said to have a theory at all. The characterization of his position as "Modest" is even more surprising. Alethic Realism--whether that of Plato, William of Champeaux, John Duns Scotus, Walter Burleigh, Brentano, Frege, or the early Russell -- has always been an extravagant position and never a "modest" one. Its problems as noted by a host of thinkers from Aristotle, through Peter Abelard, William Ockham and others are well-known: (1) What is the relation of one proposition to a plurality of natural language sentences? Given that propositions are nominalizations of natural language sentences, are there as many realms of propositions as there are natural languages? If so, it is hard to see how a theory that embraced them could qualify as a "finite explanation" of the concept of truth. (2) Künne's definition of truth rests on the peculiarities of the univocal language of modern formal logic with its machinery of quantification including generalization and instantiation. Most natural languages (with the exception of idiolects written and occasionally spoken by formal logicians) do not include those formalities. Yet the theory aims to account for the natural language predicate "is true". (350) At ground zero of language usage the plain man or woman has always found strange what realist theories of truth tell them, namely that propositions, eternal non-individuate sentence-types, hover above the sentences that they actually speak or write and that propositions and not sentences are the bearers of truth and falsity. Künne argues admirably *pro et contra* for every claim and counter-claim throughout his long search for a definition of truth. He is most resourceful in posing examples that support his own claims or confute those of others.

In this, Künne endorses a unified approach to the definition of truth. "[The modest account] is a truth-concept that we need in any case, and I do not think we need any other. No matter which declarative sentence is substituted for the prosentence: if you think or say that things are thus-and-so, and things *are* thus, then what you think

or say is true.” (453) “This formula is, to use Strawson’s words, ‘no less hospitable to moral judgements and mathematical propositions than it is to records of common observation or history or propositions of natural science’, and this is as it should be, for otherwise it would fail to register ‘the coverage of the concept of truth that we actually have’.” (Strawson, *Analysis and Metaphysics*, 90) “True propositions of any one of those diverse types can join forces with true propositions of other types to guarantee the truth of a conclusion. The philosophical endeavor to determine the differences between those diverse kinds of propositions is not served by a fragmentation of our workaday concept of truth.” (453)

Unlike many analytic philosophers Künne does not work in a historical vacuum. For example, he represents faithfully Aristotle’s and Aquinas’s statements about truth. He might have included the theories of Peter of Ailly, Gregory of Rimini as well. Nonetheless, anyone who has worked through Künne’s book will feel that each of the views that he discusses holds something of what we have in mind when we say that some statement is true. Aristotle, I believe, was not exclusively the “Correspondentist” that he is made out to be in this book. Aristotle regarded “truth” much as he regarded “health”, “beauty”, “justice”, “happiness” and a host of other predicates that represent the properties of things. These words are equivocal in meaning; but their meanings do not vary willy-nilly according to accidents of usage. They are in fact equivocals whose meaning is governed systematically by reference to a primary instance that gives them meaning, i.e. equivocals *pros hen*. “Healthy” is a predicate that can be said of a complexion, a walk, a diet, a medicine, and a life-style. Its meaning varies with each of these applications; but there is a theme to it. That theme is defined by Aristotle as the condition of a sound animal in the prime of its existence. In a similar way “beauty” may be defined by reference to the proportion and order of nature or the cosmos, justice” by reference to legal conditions in a democratic *polis*, and so forth. It may be that the primary instance of “truth” or the predicate “...is true” is in the propositions that Künne argues for so diligently. On the other hand, it may be that its meaning is captured in the connection between a sentence and what it is about. But this question is not settled by this



book. Perhaps, the Renaissance Humanist Lorenzo Valla was right when he defined truth as “knowledge of the matter of contraries (i.e. controversy); falsity is ignorance of the same.” (Valla, *Dialectica*, ed. Zippel).

In sum, Künne’s *Conceptions of Truth* will remain essential reading for anyone who wants to learn about contemporary analytic approaches to defining truth in the larger context of Western Philosophy.

Alan R. Perreiah  
University of Kentucky

\* \* \*

**Robert F. Drinan, S.J., *Can God and Caesar Coexist? Balancing Religious Freedom and International Law*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004, pp. 272, paper \$18, cloth \$32.**

Robert F. Drinan writes an introductory survey on the issue of religious freedom from the concern of international law. As the author claims, “the thesis of this book has been that religious freedom has been elevated to the status of customary international law, and therefore its observance should be monitored and supervised like other basic rights of a political nature (p. 185).” In this book, even though with the above thesis in mind, the author still recognises that there are several problems that one needs to ask such as: can there be a world law and organisation regulating religious freedom in a proper way? Can citizens refuse to serve in the army or pay tax for military purpose on the ground of their religious belief or conscience? Should a particular religion receive privileges, pecuniary or non-pecuniary, at the expense of other religions or non-believers? Will the right of religious freedom weaken traditional religious belief and so threaten the morality and well-being of the country? Does Christianity have the right to proselytize in the non-Christian world? The author does not provide theoretical or analytical solutions but a personal description of present situations in different countries and the provisions of international and

regional declarations and covenants on religious freedom in relation to the above questions.

Father Drinan is a Jesuit priest working at Georgetown University Law Center as professor of law, where he teaches courses in international human rights, constitutional law, civil liberties, legislation, advanced legal ethics and professional responsibility. In addition to teaching at the Center, he has served as a visiting professor at four American universities, the Dean of the Boston College Law School and he was also a United States Congressman for five terms as a Representative from Massachusetts and is activist in promoting human rights. He received twenty-two honorary degrees from various universities and numerous awards including 2003 Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute's Freedom of Worship Medal and 2004 ABA Medal, the highest award of the American Bar Association.

The book consists of thirteen chapters, which can be read quite independently. In chapters 1 and 2, the author indicates that there is an on-going recognition of religious freedom as a basic human right like freedom of speech and the ban on torture; their universal acceptance cannot be challenged, but unfortunately the right of religious freedom is not well-protected like them. In discussing the problems and even dilemmas in protecting religious freedom, chapters 3-6 and 10-12 focus on the level of institution, country or religion, they are UN, US, European court, Vatican II, China, Muslim world and Jewish community, while the rest of the chapters (i.e. chapters 7, 8 and 9) is thematic, it includes the rights of dissenters, issue of gender and sexuality and governmental repression and persecution of religion. Chapter 13 works like an overall conclusion of the book. The topics covered in the book are quite wide-ranging on the one hand, but there has no noticeable connection in the structure of the book on the other.

There are several things that raised my concern when I read the book; first, although this is not a book of theory, the author implicitly or unconsciously constructs a dichotomy between the West and China-India-Muslim world; the West, of course, promotes religious freedom while China-India-Muslim world must resist it (p.2). Is this true?

Throughout the book, the author does not mention a word on the ban of wearing Muslim headscarf in the state school in France, followed by Germany, Italy and some other European countries now. The book was published in 2004 and it is unlikely that the author when writing this book does not know the issue of headscarf in relation to religious freedom. The USA, as criticized by the author himself, is xenophobic (p.49) and we do not know whether it promotes religious freedom or unilateralism (p.62 *ff.*) What I want to say is that the West is not by nature equivalent to the promotion of religious freedom; scholars should study the issue on case-by-case basis. The ideology of this simple dichotomy does not help and sustain.

Second, the author prefers to have an international law protecting religious freedom, which carried out by independent tribunal under UN regulation so that religious freedom can be protected on the one hand and it will not be manipulated by some influential countries like the USA on the other. I would agree with the author if this world law can obtain the recognition of each affected community, i.e. it is not a standard imposed by the West but a consensus agreed by the affected parties. In my opinion, it is more pragmatic to hope for some regional or communal declarations or laws with recognition of the affected parties instead of an international one without any.

Finally, as a Chinese student of Islamic studies, I have a special concern about China and Muslim world. After reading relevant chapters, I am not saying that the situation described by the author is not true but I have an impression that the author is using the unchallenged right of religious freedom to camouflage the agenda of intervening in the policy of China and uphold the right of proselytizing in Muslim world. For example, as we all know, the Chinese government adopted one-child-one-family policy for many years; this is primarily a policy of controlling population. I personally dislike this policy, but it does not mean that I will characterize it and propose solution in the name of protecting religious freedom or conscience, but the author tries to do so (p.226 *ff.*)!

Even with different opinions with the author, I would like to say that this book provides a very good descriptive introduction to this particular topic and it also recommends several other books for further reading. I think all in all this book will stimulate readers to think.

Andy C. Yu  
IAIS, University of Exeter, UK

\*\*\*