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Layout & Design

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Transcendent Philosophy is a publication of the London Academy of Iranian Studies and aims to create a dialogue between Eastern, Western and Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism is published in December. Contributions to *Transcendent Philosophy* do not necessarily reflect the views of the editorial board or the London Academy of Iranian Studies.

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

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

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

© London Academy of Iranian Studies
ISSN 1471-3217

Volume 10. December 2009
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An International Journal for
Comparative Philosophy
and Mysticism

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Belief

Alphonso Lingis
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Abstract

The philosophy of mind envisions belief as a mental act, the individual mind taking specific propositions to be true. But we, and scientists, do not really “believe” observation-statements about the perceived, and scientifically observed world. Michel de Certeau envisions belief as a social act, a sort of contract, that has practical effects. De Certeau’s conception of the contractual and practical nature of belief may illuminate religious belief. Anthropologist Clifford Geertz argues that it is in ritual that the conviction that religious conceptions are veridical and that religious directives are sound is somehow generated. De Certeau and Geertz show since the 18th century religious belief came to be understood as the intellectual adherence to certain empirically or logically unverified or unverifiable propositions. They show how this mode of religious belief has lost its credibility.

I find some difficulties in de Certeau’s and Geertz’s conceptions.

There are also forms of belief that isolate one from others, eventually all others, and there is a distinctive and fundamental kind of belief that is belief in oneself.

But the harrowing perplexities that confound common sense understanding and threaten the ability of people to orient themselves and act effectively in the world, and which have led humans to believe in a fundamental reality, in a different sense and a different way from the way the common sense world is real, have not disappeared. They recur, in new forms. I identify three practices pursued today outside of common sense, impractical, practices that are haunted by the intellectual, existential and ethical dilemmas that recur in new forms in our secular, scientific society, our globalized postindustrial society.

Believing Statements

The philosophy of mind envisions belief as a mental act, the individual mind taking specific propositions to be true. But this very general definition of belief has to be limited. We do not “believe” that

the angles of a triangle equal two right angles; we see that the geometric proof establishes that they do. We do not really “believe” that we have hands and legs; we see that we do, and no real doubt arises about that.

Belief should be distinguished from affirming that a statement, given the evidence, is probably true. We loosely say, “I ‘believe’ it is going to rain tomorrow,” but more exactly we are saying, “Seeing the dark clouds gathering and the barometer rising, I conclude that it is most probable that it will rain tomorrow.”

Belief in the narrow and significant sense would be the mental act committing itself to take as true propositions that are empirically and/or logically unverified or unverifiable. To believe something is for the mind to take what is unknown as though it were known.

“Belief” then looks like a suspect mental act. Is there any real difference between belief and taking as settled what is only speculation or wishful thinking? Is belief then a mental act that is destined to be disallowed as scientific methods expand knowledge and determine ever more precisely the limits of what we know?

Affirming the truth of a statement, affirming its probability, and believing an unverified and unverifiable statement are not just a matter of the mind considering those statements. Affirming a statement’s truth or probability involves a mental act of surveying its empirical evidence, and a mental act of insight into the validity of the argument put forth for it. And believing an empirically or logically unverified or unverifiable statement also involves more than just looking at that statement. What else does it involve?

Seeing is not Believing

We do say, “Seeing is believing.” But seeing is not is not judging what we see to be credible; it is taking what we see to be real. Like fish, birds, foxes, and the other primates, we take the world, its objects, and its processes to exist independently of our minds, and as being what they show themselves to be to our perception. Seeing is making contact with reality. The everyday world of common sense is, phenomenologist Alfred Schutz says, the world in which we are solidly rooted, whose inherent actuality we can hardly question, and from whose pressures and requirements we can least escape.¹

I say “we,” because what I perceive does not give itself out as a private image of which I am the only witness. When I see a flowering lilac bush in my back yard, it looks like it can be seen from different viewpoints, viewpoints I can go occupy and which I see others can occupy also. I do not say that I believe that; no real doubt arises about it. I see that I can go over to the garden gate where my neighbour is standing and see the lilac as she sees it from there. There is a kind of virtual relationship with others in our perception of our environment.

Now and again we have occasion to doubt the reality of something we saw or heard. From this already the ancient Greeks argued that our senses are deceptive. But if we doubt that what looks like a puddle of water on the road ahead is really that, it is because in other such cases what looked like a puddle of water when we get closer shimmered like a sheen of light and then dissipated. What we see when we got closer of itself replaces the earlier distant perception. But we have no occasion, and no reason, to doubt the road and the sunny sky we see, doubt the whole field of visible things about us. In the name of what could we doubt it? Because we take the physico-chemical, electromagnetic representation of the physical world to be real? But if all the trees and rocks and clouds we see are deceptive or just subjective images, then so also would be the observations and measurements of the chemists and physicists.

The aesthetic perspective is indifferent to any practical uses of what it views, and indeed indifferent to what things really are. It is absorbed by, fascinated by appearances, distant or focused, oblique or refracted, momentary or rhythmic.² The concern for reality makes us see Yasunari Kawabata’s girlfriend to have unblemished fair skin all across her face whether seen in sunlight, through the amber light of a café, or in moonlight, but Kawabata’s eyes stop with rapt fascination on the small pale yellow glimmers flickering on her face when she is seated at night in his garden where he has hung the cages of Okayama fireflies that he had gone to collect in midsummer on the northern shore of the lake in his mother’s home village.³

Martin Heidegger argued that all perception is intrinsically practical; we look about in order to get somewhere and do something; we perceive things by moving among them and manipulating them. But

that is surely wrong: when we sit on the deck or walk to the store, we see and hear leaves fluttering to the ground, tree branches zigzagging across one another, birds careening in the sky, clouds drifting, wind gusting, crickets chirping, patterns, rhythms, tonalities, reverberations, mists, glows, glimmers, sparkles that we are nowise manipulating or using, nowise looking at them in view of doing something to them or with them. We take all that to be real, but we easily shift into an aesthetic perception where we enjoy the patterns and tonalities without concern about their reality.

Scientific Knowledge is not a Congeries of Beliefs

Scientific observation of the things of the world that perception takes to be real is systematic and maintains the highest standards of accuracy. Its instruments enable researchers to observe far beyond the reach of ordinary perception. And scientific researchers elaborate a technical vocabulary, a formal conceptual apparatus, and mathematical expression and calculation that increasingly diverge from the vocabulary we use in the common sense perspective—which, Ludwig Wittgenstein pointed out, is irreproachable for its common sense uses. In addition, what characterizes the scientific perspective is the suspension of the pragmatic motive in favour of disinterested observation. To be sure, the sociology of knowledge has insisted that pragmatic motives do launch, direct, focus, and shape scientific research. Political, military, and economic competition with the Soviet Union launched the United States space program; diseases are studied only when they are sufficiently common in rich countries and pharmaceutical companies fund the research. However, the scientific perspective as such pursues the research beyond what uses or consequences it may have.

The scientific perspective inserts a deliberate, even contrived, doubt before everything it subjects to observation. Every statement is hypothetical until it is shown to be credible. Every observation statement has to be verified by a representative number of observations made with standardized instruments and repeated a significant number of times. And the reasoning that connects observation-statements and derives from them general laws, and connects the laws and derives

from them theories, has to be shown to be valid according to the laws of logic and mathematics.

Still, verified statements are not just so many “beliefs.” The mental act that takes as verified that water boils when heated and decomposes into hydrogen and oxygen, and that dinosaur fossils are determined by carbon testing to be a hundred million years old should not be called a belief; it is a mental insight acknowledging verification. Astronomers do not “believe” that the average distance from the earth to the sun is $92.58 \pm$ million miles from the earth; they have instruments to calculate that distance, and methods to calculate the margin of possible error.

The Contractual and Practical Nature of Belief

Michel de Certeau, philosopher, sociologist, and psychoanalyst, envisions belief as a social act, a sort of contract, that has practical effects.⁴

The most unmistakable, most concrete, perhaps most fundamental case of belief is in commerce with others. In a commercial exchange, the creditor gives something with the expectation of getting back the equivalent, after a shorter or longer time interval. He trusts the buyer. Trust is taking what is not known of someone as though it were known. The creditor is aware that the buyer may be deceiving or duping him, that the buyer may be concealing his intentions, aware that he does not know the buyer’s mind. The creditor believes that the buyer will make good on his word, because he senses that the buyer has a moral character, or else he sees that he is the son of a respected and honourable family in the community, or else that the buyer respects and obeys the police. Thus belief involves trust in another person, which may be based on trust in several or many other persons.

Since belief is a sort of contract, there can be no beliefs without practical consequences. If I believe that this woman will weave for me the blanket that I need in exchange for this sheep, well, I hand over the sheep to her. If a trader first sizes up the purchaser, and declares that he believes that he is an honest person, but does not hand over the goods, we will think that he does not really believe that the buyer is honest.

De Certeau goes on to argue that there is something of this contract structure in speaking to others. We saw that the philosophy of

mind considers statements and analyzes the kind of mental act of assent that an individual mind gives to them. But de Certeau considers statements as speech acts, utterances that someone addresses to an interlocutor.

From Aristotle to Lévi-Strauss, we have been viewing speech acts as an exchange of messages. But de Certeau points out that the exchanges occur over time, and involve trust that the other will give us the equivalent of what we give him, and further, that there are practical consequences. When we speak, we do not simply attach verbal labels to the things about us that we see; we use language to invoke things that are absent. To speak of them to someone is to expect that they can be present and to expect that our interlocutor can confirm that they are. Coming upon someone on the mountain trek who looks exhausted, I say to her, "I remember from a year ago that there is a spring about a half-mile ahead." For me to believe what I said is to believe that she will find it and confirm what I said. We take the other person's mind, her capacity to perceive and her inclination and intention to affirm what she perceives, which we do not really know, as though it were known. Every time we speak seriously, we enter into a sort of contract with our interlocutor; we trust that she, or that others, will confirm what we put forth. Or, as de Certeau puts it, that she or they will give back to us, after a longer or shorter time interval, the equivalent of what we gave her or them. Even if I am alone and say to myself, "I remember from a year ago that there is a spring about a half-mile ahead," for me to trust my memory is to trust that others can confirm the existence of that spring and affirm it to me.

If a person says he believes in the god of the Jewish Bible or in Jupiter and Neptune, but does not await from others any confirmation, and that assertion has no effect of his actions, then it is not really a belief; it is a statement he entertains and imagines might be true. In the sixties there were lots of people who said they believed in astrology, or in reincarnation, and we didn't try to argue with them because they did not expect anyone to confirm their "belief," and we didn't see that their "beliefs" had any practical consequences. So we did not really take them as beliefs; we took them to be ideas they liked and thought might be true.

Some Questions

De Certeau is taking the exchange structure as the fundamental form of society and of communication. But aren't there other forms of association, perhaps equally fundamental, where there is giving without expectation of return? Or where there is dissolution of individuality and individual agency, for example in dance, festivity, orgasm, and trance?

De Certeau argues that belief is intrinsically contractual. But aren't there forms of belief that isolate one from others, eventually from all others? And isn't there a distinctive and fundamental kind of belief that is belief in oneself? We know people who deeply do not believe in themselves; we see how demoralizing and debilitating that is. Sometimes it makes them give over the conduct of their lives to others; sometimes it makes them unable to believe in others.

Religious Belief

De Certeau's conception of the contractual and practical nature of belief may illuminate religious belief. The distinctive core of religion is belief in a sacred realm that is really real, real in some different sense and different way from the way the common sense world is real.

What makes people turn to this cosmic realm, Clifford Geertz says, are harrowing perplexities that confound common sense understanding and threaten their ability to orient themselves and act effectively in the world.⁵

Geertz identifies three such crises. First, there is the inability to explain things such as the ravages of nature, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and plagues; the origin and place of humans in the world; the portentous visions of dreams. But more widely, the inability to understand or explain certain aspects of nature, self, and society with the explanations of common sense, science, or philosophical speculation does make people chronically uneasy. A quite trivial empirical event may bring us up against the limits of our ability to understand and raise the suspicion that we may be adrift in an absurd world. Geertz recounts that one day in Java a peculiarly shaped and uncommonly big toadstool appeared overnight in a carpenter's house, and people came from miles around to see it and exercised their minds trying to explain it. The religious perspective envisions a wider, cosmic

order beyond the radius of the common sense world, where explanations may lie.

A second existential crisis concerns suffering, and erupts in illness and in mourning those we have lost in death. Geertz rejects the kind of positivist theory espoused by Bronislaw Malinowski, according to which religion is a collection of magical pseudo-remedies and assurances that illness will be cured and the dead reborn. “Over its career religion has probably disturbed men as much as it has cheered them,” Geertz points out, “forced them into a head-on, unblinking confrontation of the fact that they are born to trouble.... With the possible exception of Christian Science, there are few if any religious traditions... in which the proposition that life hurts is not strenuously affirmed...”⁶ The religious perspective envisions a wider, cosmic reality where physical pain, personal loss, worldly defeat, and the helpless contemplation of people’s agony is explainable and thus becomes something that has to be and can be endured. It enables the sufferer to grasp the nature of his distress and relate it to the wider world.⁷ It gives resources for expressing our sentiments, passions, affections, and afflictions—the words but also the tone for lamentation, recollection, and compassion.

The third existential crisis that drives the religious perspective is the fact that we strive to, have to strive to work out some normative guides to govern our actions, but see all too often that ethically correct behaviour results in disaster, while behaviour that we can nowise approve of is rewarded. The religious perspective envisions a wider, cosmic history that accounts for the fallen or corrupt nature of our world that so often thwarts our efforts to live according to sound moral judgments.

Geertz says that religious belief is not first and fundamentally belief in certain non-commonsensical and non-scientific propositions; instead it is an adherence to authority. “In tribal religions authority lies in the persuasive power of traditional imagery; in mystical ones in the apodictic force of supersensible experience; in charismatic ones in the hypnotic attraction of an extraordinary personality.”⁸

But adherence to authority and belief in the cosmic reality and history are, Geertz says, generated by ritual. “It is in ritual . . . that this conviction that religious conceptions are veridical and that religious

directives are sound is somehow generated.”⁹ The rituals themselves persuade. Who can participate in the five-times-daily prayer in the Mosque of Suleiman in Istanbul, or in Solemn High Mass in Rheims cathedral, and think, with Freud, that religion is simply a collective infantile neurosis?

Rituals make one experience extraordinary forces; in rituals the powers represented in the myths are experienced, Geertz says, as *presences*.¹⁰

Then adherence to authority does not precede belief; instead, rituals make one experience the presence of extraordinary forces that are experienced in supersensible states, concentrated in a charismatic personality, or depicted in traditional imagery.¹¹

Rituals engender extraordinary moods—the solemnity and grandeur of Mönlam, the Great Prayer Festival, at the Barkhor in Lhasa in Tibet; the Ragda-Barong ritual in Bali, which I witnessed one night in the *pura dalem*, the temple of death, in Kuta, described by Geertz as a confrontation of the grotesque and the malignant, “in which people of both sexes fall into trance and rush out to stab themselves, wrestle with one another, devour live chicks or excrement, wallow convulsively in the mud, sink into a coma”—an orgy of futile violence and degradation.¹² These moods are the very experience of the presence of extraordinary forces. The rituals articulate and give expression to moods—to grief and mourning, to triumph, to expectation and hope.

Rituals articulate longings into motivations for certain kinds of action outside of the rituals. Plains Indian rituals which stage flamboyant courage set forth motivations to fast in the wilderness, to conduct solitary raids on enemy camps, and to thrill to the thought of battle. Manus rituals that dramatize moral circumspection implant in participants tendencies to honour onerous promises, to confess secret sins, and to feel guilty when vague accusations are being formulated in the community. Javanese meditation séances induce inclinations to maintain one’s poise in awkward or frustrating situations and to experience distaste before emotional outbursts.¹³

These actions extend and intensify belief in the cosmic reality. Every action posits belief in the factors motivating that action. We see the world as troubled by capricious and malignant foes, or we feel the reality of compassion in specific events and in the general benevolence

of nature. We commit ourselves to their reality in our actions; we take their reality to be not hypothetical but fundamental.

Some Questions

This account, showing how religious belief is produced in ritual and in the motivations and actions that ritual participation engenders, concords with Michel de Certeau's conception of the essentially practical nature of belief. And indeed de Certeau, philosopher, sociologist, psychoanalyst, and Jesuit priest, was thinking of religion when he conceived of belief as essentially dependent on exchange with others and having practical consequences.

However, the contractual nature of belief, as de Certeau conceives it—giving something with the expectation of getting back the equivalent—is absent here. The participant in ritual does not put forth a statement about absent powers in the expectation that others will confirm their presence; instead he or she experiences the presence of extraordinary powers.

How then *do* we understand the collective character of religious rituals and religious belief? Anthropologists had given a sociological explanation: since the romantics, anthropologists had especially focused on the function of myths and rituals to consolidate and strengthen a community and its hierarchies. But the myths and rituals also engender heretics, break-off sects, eccentrics, scoffers, charlatans, and profiteers.

In fact ritual is *not* intrinsically collective. In religious cultures of the most rudimentary societies and those of today, rituals are performed by individuals and individuals also go individually to shamans who they think are in touch with the powers. "Traditional religions," Geertz explains, "consist of a multitude of very concretely defined and only loosely ordered sacred entities, an untidy collection of fussy ritual acts and vivid animistic images which are able to involve themselves in an independent, segmental, and immediate manner with almost any sort of actual event They attack them opportunistically as they arise in each particular instance—each death, each crop failure, each untoward natural or social occurrence—employing one or another weapon chosen, on grounds of symbolic appropriateness, from their

cluttered arsenal of myth and magic.”¹⁴ Rituals are selected, remembered, or contrived on an ad hoc basis.

Anthropologists competent in psychoanalysis sought to show how religion and ritual function to satisfy the individual's cognitive and affective demands for a stable, comprehensible, and coercible world. Claude Lévi-Strauss did admit that shamanistic healing rituals do heal, sometimes or often, and showed how their basic methods, stripped of mythical cosmology, are in use in our scientific psychoanalysis.¹⁵ But the cultural symbols, models, and paradigms that present to individuals a stable, comprehensible, and coercible society and world also engender internal conflicts in individuals and conflicts with those about them. They clash with the temperament, compulsions, and ambitions of individuals, or they exclude individuals with certain bodies or heredity from a life integrated in itself and integrated into the community. See the rubbish men in Papuan communities in New Guinea, the dacoits or criminal castes in Aryan India, the homosexuals in Christian societies, Mother Teresa. Clifford Geertz speaks of performers in the Ranga-Barong ritual in Bali becoming permanently deranged by the experience.¹⁶ And individuals resist, neutralize, protect themselves from the visions and forces of collective cultural performances.

In fact religious belief is accompanied by unbelief, even in the same individual. Geertz notes that there are individuals for whom the cosmic forces are vivid for an hour or so during religious rituals or at times of intense distress, but are only intermittent and pale images the rest of the time, and there are individuals solidly rooted in the common sense world and indifferent to and even sceptical about the religious perspective. Belief in religious authorities is always, has always been, accompanied with suspicion of being swindled. Shamans realize that there was something of a Pascal's wager when they interpreted the physiological or psychological crisis they suffered as a calling. Every shaman knows others whom he denounces as charlatans. A shaman knows that it is with prestidigitation that he pulls from a sick person the disease in the form of the bloody organ that he had put there. Still he believes that there is such a thing as shamanist power, and even when he confesses that sometimes or always he was faking, he knows other shamans whose power he fears.

Private Beliefs

This brings us back to our question: aren't there forms of belief that isolate one from others, eventually all others? And isn't there a distinctive and fundamental kind of belief that is belief in oneself?

One day this young man recognized that he is a dancer, that it is on the dance floor that he belongs, that his body, his nervous circuitry, his circadian rhythms belong. A dancer is not simply someone who skilfully makes the movements of traditional dances or those devised by a choreographer; he is someone who dances his own dance, dances with all his sensibility, his sensitivity, his singular musculature, his blissful and agonizing memories, his aspirations and heartbreaks. This young man is not yet a dancer, but unless he believes that a dancer is what he is, is his nature, he will never become a dancer.

Belief in oneself is not belief in some judgments about oneself. Dance is not something he or humans invented; dance exists, has existed from the beginning of the human species, antelopes dance, cranes dance, birds of paradise dance, butterflies dance, the coral fish dance in the sun-splashed oceans. "O Zarathustra,' the animals said, 'to those who think as we do, all things themselves are dancing: they come and offer their hands and laugh and flee--and come back.'"¹⁷ An extraordinary, cosmic force generates dance, this movement that is not going any where, this absolute movement. This young man experiences dance taking possession of him, turning smouldering and small longings, sorrows, passions, exultations in himself into dance. Belief in himself arises in that experience, and consists in adherence to the powers felt in that experience.

This belief is not produced by the confidence others have in him and does not require their confirmation; it is a belief that is individual and individualizing.

Belief in Religious Statements and Disbelief

De Certeau's and Geertz's conception of religious belief contrast with the prevailing concept of religious belief as the intellectual adherence to certain empirically or logically unverified or unverifiable propositions. They show how, since the 18th century, this concept has come to prevail, and also how this mode of religious belief has lost its credibility.

What we recognize as “world religions” did not simply replace but confronted local religions and one another, and later were confronted by secular, scientific culture, and, Max Weber noted, as a result have undertaken a process of rationalization. Religious thinkers sought to make their body of myths coherent and consistent and harmonize all the affirmations in their cosmic representations. The cosmic representations are considered apart from the rituals, the moods they engender and the actions they motivate.

Then, de Certeau says, they become so many assertions about beings: There is but one God. The universe was created by God. Humans have spiritual souls. The just will be rewarded, the unjust punished, if not in this world in the next world. The statements are asserted as truths. They no longer arise out of rituals but must first be assented to in order that rituals can be justified and enjoined.¹⁸

These assertions put forth as truths have been shaken by the irresolvable conflict of world religions. They have also been shaken by scientific rationalism.

Intellectual, Existential, Ethical Crises

But the harrowing perplexities that confound common sense understanding and threaten the ability of people to orient themselves and act effectively in the world have not disappeared. They recur, in new forms.

Biologists estimate that at least 80% of the living species on our planet have not yet been identified. Astrophysicists estimate that 22% of the mass of the universe is “dark matter” and 74% of its energy is “dark energy,” for which they do not possess the instruments to observe. But the progress in observing, identifying, and understanding made in the past century astounds us, and implants in us the conviction that the next decades will extend our understanding into microecosystems and macrospace, into the origin of the universe and its future, into the nature and origin of our organisms and all organisms.

Yet there is something ultimately baffling, incomprehensible about our very understanding. We now take our organisms to have evolved at a late stage of biological evolution, and we take perception, memory, and understanding to serve the survival of species. What we do not understand is the evolution of a species with a capacity to

understand far beyond any biological need, a capacity to understand the whole universe from its origins. And we are dumbfounded by its incomprehensible, unendurable destiny to be destroyed in the final explosion and extinction of our sun.

The use of knowledge closest to our concerns is medical knowledge and practice. Week after week we see major advances in alleviating suffering and curing diseases, in understanding the causes of aging. And our technology continually produces new laboursaving devices and heating and air-conditioning, furnishings, appliances, clothing, to eliminate discomfort. We no longer endure, no longer know how to endure suffering and death; they appear absurd, brutal, irredeemably tragic. Yet we suffer, we die. The absurdity and cruelty of suffering and death casts their shadow the more fatefully over our lives devoted to gratification and comfort.

Eugène Ionesco tells of a man who one day comes upon a radiant city.¹⁹ He wanders its streets marvelling over the beautiful homes, each a different architectural design, surrounded by gardens all flowering in marvellous variety. Great concealed heaters and air-conditioners maintain the city in a perpetual springtime. But as he wanders he sees that no children are playing and laughing in the gardens and parks, no couples are wandering the streets, the doors of all the houses are closed, their windows shuttered. He eventually learns that there is a killer at loose in the city, killing at random, people of any age, any condition, for no discernible reason. In this city where technology has provided for all needs and pleasures, the inhabitants are living in unremitting terror. One day on the street the traveller finally encounters the killer, a puny, masked, individual who comes for him. He argues with the killer: "Why?" "Why me?" He appeals to every principle, of goodness, of humanity, of simple meaning and utility. Each time the killer responds with a snicker or guffaw.

The reader understands that the killer is death itself. Understands that in this future city where science and technology have provided for all needs and pleasures, the inhabitants can no longer distract themselves, with practical concerns and problems, from the inevitability, the incomprehensibility of death.

Today where expanding populations, increasing urbanization in megacities, and instant and world-wide communication bring us into

ever-closer proximity, we do not have confidence in our nature to be able to coexist. The media daily tell of senseless acts of destruction and self-destruction. They tell of serial killers, of parents who rape and murder their own children. Our wars for energy resources, for petroleum, will be followed by conflicts for the control of water. Nine nations have now stockpiled a total of 31,000 nuclear warheads, with a combined explosive yield of approximately 5000 megatons, which is about 200,000 times the explosive yield of the bomb that incinerated Hiroshima. We see that we do not know how to prevent the spread of these weapons to small terrorist groups. We see that the advances of our technology have deteriorated the planet's climate. Our anxiety understands ever more lucidly the urgency of norms for our acts. But we see the failure of our political theorists and diplomats to make our institutions and politics ethical. We see not only the failure of our ethical theorists to persuade the public, but even their failure to agree among themselves as to what ethical principles and methods are valid and can be rationally justified. Our acceptance of blind evolution and of the indifference of the material universe to our ethical ideals makes our necessity to pursue those ideals both more problematical and more urgent.

Exotic Practices

But there also exists among us practices outside of common sense, impractical, practices that are haunted by the existential dilemmas that recur in new forms in our secular, scientific society, our globalized postindustrial society.

1. The Extrahuman, Superhuman Realm

Today 50% of humanity lived in cities; the proportion will continue to increase, the number of megacities, with populations of over ten million, is expected to double in the next 15 years. Ever greater numbers of people live in completely manmade environments, with manmade climates, with virtually all of their contact with wider reality replaced by media images. Yet there persists a compulsion to leave manmade environments and go to nature, to environments unmarked, unconceptualized, unmanaged, unused by the human species.

We go off, to the nearby or far-off forests, to the mountains, the glaciers, the beaches, the oceans. Look at our feet, Bruce Chatwin said, they are long and set parallel; they are made to move on ahead. To go to nature is to leave sedentary and stabilized existence and enter into movement. Moving with the falling leaves in the fall breezes in the mountains under the drifting or gathering clouds. Moving through the savannah and the forest with the winds, ascending the mountains with the mists, drifting down the rivers. Moving with the herds of wildebeests, zebras, and impalas in the Serengeti. Soaring on a paraglider in the thermals with the vultures. Not swimming, only steering with our fins in the ocean surge with the coral fish. To go to nature is greet all the Oryx and cheetahs and hummingbirds and moths with passionate kisses of parting. It is to build nothing, to manipulate nothing, to collect nothing.

We visit excavations and monitor the millions of years from algae to dinosaurs. We make our way across mountains and continents as the continental plates collide and buckle up these mountains that freeze the west winds and dry out these deserts. We descend into the Colca Canyon and the Quebrada de Humahuaca treading the eons that deposited these fifty strata of petrified sediment. In the crystal nights of deserts and mountains our gaze travels the light-years of the stars.

These nomadic departures, like rituals, made us experience of presence of extraordinary forces, in microsystems and macrospace. They give commanding force to certain trancelike states where we lose sight of our ego-gratifications and indeed of our egos, make certain oblivion-seekers hypnotically attractive, give authority to certain captivating imagery in our literature and media.

2. Suffering and Death

Our scientific and technological civilization works to eliminate suffering and even discomfort. We experience suffering as meaningless and death as incomprehensible and absurd.

Yet wars, plagues, epidemics, pandemics, and droughts and famines caused by climate change afflict great numbers of people. And thousands of doctors, nurses, public health specialists, and ordinary people enlist in NGOs, go off to refugee camps, to vast slums to try to prevent preventable deaths, to cure diseases, and to alleviate suffering.

What they find is that great numbers of people instinctually know how to endure suffering. People with generalized AIDs symptoms who do not commit suicide. Orphans in war-ravaged lands who band together and survive. People in the outer zones who have lived in swampy or rocky terrains, in harsh polar or desert climates, who have not anguished over the fatality of suffering. Who have experienced suffering as a dimension of breaking out of infancy, as the force in courage, in honesty, in energy, and even in exhilaration. Who endure the oncoming shadow of death. Who have not viewed death as the fatality that destroys every individual and destroys in advance the significance of every individual; who mourn the dead, the dead infants, the dead elders, the individuals in the fullness of life who have died in resisting the oppressor and in protecting the community.

The thousands of people who go off to work in NGOs typically experience the ambiguity and failure of their mission. They alleviate suffering, cure some diseases, but have no effect on the wars, pandemics, and climate change that continue to produce more slums, diseases, and refugee camps. In fact their work may function as an alibi to engage in more wars, to ignore climate change. During the 2002 US assault on Afghanistan, the military airplanes dropped both bombs and food kits and medicines on the population.

What the thousands of people who have gone to the war zones, refugee camps, and lands devastated by drought have experienced is not so much the satisfaction of the success of their mission to eliminate hunger and disease, but rather experienced the enigmatic ability of people to endure, to know how to endure, suffering, to endure mortality.

3. Ethical Community in an Amoral Universe

Our politics has become subservient to the global expansion of markets for mass-produced commodities. Our global community is ever more explicitly and exclusively based on the exchange of goods and services. Yet thousands of people come upon, and search for experiences of a different humanity.

Such as experiences of collective bravery and generosity in the wake of hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, and technological disasters. People rise with emotions and skills they did not know they had. Everyday concerns and societal strictures vanish. A strange kind of

liberation fills the air. Social alienation seems to vanish. The response to disaster gives us a glimpse of who else we ourselves may be and what else our society could become.

Here we experience human association that does not have the exchange form that Aristotle, Lévi-Struass, and de Certeau take to be the fundamental structure of society. We discover an equally or more fundamental form of association in giving without expectation of return.

We also come upon rituals revealing, consecrating, celebrating, a different humanity. The first time I attended Carnaval in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil was a profound and transformative and also illuminating experience. It was 1991, the First Gulf War had just been launched, and I was profoundly depressed at the realization that after all these centuries of education and culture 34 advanced nations had united in no higher cause than to secure for themselves by force the sources of cheap petroleum. The great wars of the last century enlisted populations in the cause of war to make the world safe for democracy, war to end all wars. This war for black gold was a return to the wars of Cortés and Pizarro.

Carnaval is the people dancing, with anyone, with everyone, in the streets with the neighbourhood bands, in costume and with floats of an *escola de samba* in the Avenida Rio Branco, in the Sambódromo. The *escolas de samba* are located in the favelas and the poorest people put aside a *real* a week for years sometimes, in order to be able to afford a *fantasia* and dance in the Sambódromo. The young, old, transsexual, infirm, the poorest are transfigured with glamour more extravagant than that of yesterday's aristocrats or today's celebrities, casting their *alegria* into the crowds where it spreads and gains momentum. In the great parades the *escolas de samba* present theatrically, with dances and with elaborate floats the Rio Amazonas and Rio Tocantins; the spectacled bears, the golden lion tamarins, and the toucans; the Indians of the Amazon and the outposts of the Inca; the queens of Africa, the *bandeirantes*, the *quilombolas*, the travellers of outer space. Everything—plants, insects, birds, beasts, heroes, knaves—becomes beauty, samba, and *alegria*. The splendour of individuals, groups, and floats, this glorified humanity that is not graded into rich and poor, powerful and impotent, Carioca or foreigner, dazzles the eyes and stuns the mind, and the *alegria* that surges is a

gratuitous and superabundant outpouring of energies that drowns out quotidian needs and concerns for the morrow. It was an ecstatic experience of collective humanity, the most joyous and the most splendid version of humanity, and it quite transformed my thinking.

These impractical practices induce extraordinary moods that are revelations. The everyday life in the consumer civilization, its brief euphorias over new commodities, its contentments and its consumptions, are overtaken by moods that reveal how we are embedded in the reality of inhuman nature, how nature affects us, weighs on us. Finding ourselves in the midst of people who endure, who enigmatically know how to endure suffering and death, gives rise in us to endurance, and to grief and mourning. Participating in collective performances gives us over to collective beauty and joy.

And these practices, these rituals articulate moods and longings into motivations for certain kinds of action outside of the ritual. We are motivated to act to protect the rain forests, the Andes, the Ice continent of Antarctica. We are motivated to give voice to the millions who endure epidemics and famines. We are motivated to resist and combat the conquerors and plunderers of today, the Cortéses and Pizarros, the Guelphs and Ghibellines of global geopolitics.

In these rituals and these motivations and actions, there are beliefs. And there arises belief in oneself when one leaves the city to go to nature, when one goes off to work in slums and refugee camps, when one goes to work in the wake of natural or social disasters or to participate in rituals of collective splendour and joy.

Endnotes

¹ Alfred Schutz, *The Problem of Social Reality* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1962), 226ff.

² Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (NY: Basic Books, 1973), 111.

³ Yasunari Kawabata, *The Lake*, trans. Reiko Tsukimura (Tokyo, Kodansha, 1974).

⁴ Michel de Certeau, "What We Do When We Believe," in Marshall Blonsky, *On Signs* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 192-202.

⁵ Geertz, 100-108.

⁶ *Ibid*, 103.

⁷ Ibid, 105.

⁸ Ibid. 110.

⁹ Ibid, 112.

¹⁰ Ibid, 118.

¹¹ Ibid. 118.

¹² Ibid, 118-19, 181.

¹³ Ibid, 94-5

¹⁴ Geertz, 172.

¹⁵ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf (New York: Basic Books, 1963), 198-204.

¹⁶ Geertz, 115.

¹⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in *The Portable Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Viking Press, 1968), 329.

¹⁸ De Certeau, 196-7.

¹⁹ Eugene Ionesco, *Exit the King and Other Plays*, trans. Donald Watson (New York: Grove Press, 1994),.

Modern Division of Philosophies¹

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Abstract

The primary topics that have been presented to philosophies for solving is the reality of the quadruple relationships, which are the relationship of the human being and her/him Self, of the human being and God, of the human being and the universe of existence and of the human being with other human beings. Different sciences have assumed the responsibility of solving the manifestations and inherent laws of these relationships and have tried their utmost thus far. However, research and study on the nature, general principles, main results and the factors of these relationships is the responsibility of philosophies and is what they have been engaged with and have been researching since time immemorial, both in the East and the West. Therefore, what should be considered is this: in relation to the foresaid relationships, is the issue the subject for consideration for the thinker or not? For example, is time related to our senses or does it have an objective reality? Is this vast universe finite or infinite? What is the cause of movement in history? For if the issue is raised it requires an answer, whether yesterday or today; Eastern or Western; Muslim, Christian or Jew; be it Aristotle, Plato or Sadr al-Muta'allehin (Mulla Sadra), Mirdamad or William James and John Dewey. Philosophies can be divided into four kinds which will be discussed in this paper, these are: 'Temporal Division', 'Religious and Ideological Division', 'Regional Division', and 'Based upon the Philosophical Characters' Way of Thinking'.

We need to consider the significant and important question of universalism versus relativism and of the issues that are at work in cross-cultural dialogues. In other words, is it possible to introduce to contemporary audiences the system of thoughts of previous ages and centuries? Or to put it otherwise, is it possible to introduce the system of thoughts of the West to the people and thinkers of the East and vice versa? Last but not least, we need to inquire whether this approach of cultural exchange would yield any results in terms of cultural enrichment.

With this introduction, we will precisely study philosophical modalities in the following fashion:

First Kind – Temporal Division³

This division is not based upon the definition of time itself, which is mental continuance caused by the continuance of the mentality with inner-natural or outer-natural movement. It means that the variety and the difference of philosophies are not referred to the potential of time itself, but to the positioning of thinkers regarding the world with which they are related. This positioning has two major characteristics, which are as follows:

The First Characteristic - is the particular mental condition of the thinker, which specifies the quality of her/his understandings about the world with which s/he is in relation. This characteristic encompasses all thinkers of all ages, and in any doctrine and region in which they live. This characteristic is not an extrinsic and secondary phenomenon, but rather, is founded on one of the most essential principles of human knowledge. This principle is: the necessity of the relationship of the human being with actualities through the various means of knowledge, such as the senses and the laboratories, constructed by her/his own hands for the advancement, development and deepening of her/his knowledge and advancement. All thinkers of all ages are involved with this positioning and only two matters are exempt from this principle:

A) The self or the essence of the human being becomes known to him by present knowledge, and no external cause or factor from the essence of the percipient and the perceptible in the acquirement of this knowledge.

B) God, who can be comprehended by sound intellects and pure natures without the interference of external factors.

The Second Characteristic - is that the advancement of human knowledge occurs gradually through time. Philosophy faces two types of issues with regards to the gradual advancement of sciences and insights:

A) The first type is issues which occur in the arena of science, whether in human territory or that of the phenomenal world. There is no doubt that the appearance of modern sciences and thoughts causes the advancement and increment of the depth of philosophical issues related to those sciences and thoughts, as mentioned before.

B) The second type is some general definitions and issues which have always been raised to philosophical thinkers and ontologists throughout history, and which will continue to be raised in the future. In Eastern philosophy these definitions and issues are referred to as 'general matters' or 'general origins'. Reality, manifestation, existence, nonexistence, law and order, knowledge, time, place, finiteness, infiniteness and others can be considered to be from this type. Feeling the necessity of discussing and thinking of this type of issues is safe from the theft of the passage of the ages and centuries, and the appearance of modern sciences and thoughts. For example, modern philosophers are involved in discussing and thinking about reality and manifestation, just as the thinkers of ancient India were.

Second Kind – Religious and Ideological Division⁴

The history of human science has witnessed the appearance of various doctrinal, philosophical and ontological ideas, beliefs and systems. Sometimes, there were essential differences between them, and at other times, their differences were unessential, adjustable and co-understandable. There is also an important issue which we need to take into consideration in terms of philosophies and religious and doctrinal systems, namely, the fact that a considerable majority of these various ideas, beliefs, systems and doctrines have appeared with a reality-finding goal. In other words, the belief-systems which lack clarity of ideas and soundness of visions, and which have also lost objective vision of reality due to various subjectivistic modalities are indeed a minority.

Accordingly, study and research should be performed on the causes of natural doctrinal differences, and not about the differences caused by the foresaid inability. Now, we contend that because there is no doctrinal and ontologicistic system that can refer all of its fundamentals, issues and reasons to sensible objective manifestations, then it is natural to build a group of the aforementioned matters based

upon absolute rational principles, basic principles, abstraction and style-orientation. Some of the differences are the results of these principles and of pure mental activity, and we should consider that these kinds of natural and involuntary differences do not cause devastating contradictions and knowledge-corrosive disputes.

These differences are evident in the doctrines which we mentioned as examples in the endnotes, such as the interpretation of free will and determinism which have been introduced in various shapes in the foresaid doctrines. Sometimes however, some principles and perceptions occupy the depths of the mental levels of the thinker, such that s/he involuntarily makes fatalistic justifications for her/his thoughts, the fatalistic nature of which often remains unnoticed by the thinker because of the background assumptions which are, so to speak, implicitly operative in the back of her/his mind.

We assume that Machiavelli or, for example, Hobbes have considered and found the issue that "Human nature is intrinsically evil" to be in accordance to the reality, to the extent that it has occupied the depths of their mental levels and has become an inner active element for them, and their love and belief for the foresaid matter is so powerful that it is as if they have created the human being themselves. Undoubtedly, regardless of the extent of the claim of such a person that s/he is searching for the truth and nothing else, and expresses only the truth, this is contrary to the reality for they cannot but be influenced by their reasonless beloved.

Even if the only people of the world were Abraham the friend of God, Moses the son of Amran, Jesus the son of Mary, Mohammad ibn Abdullah, Ali ibn Abi Talib, Abu Zar Ghaffari, Uwais al-Qarni and Socrates, then the biased thinker would, knowingly or unknowingly, gloss over and falsify their movements, thoughts and expressions. Why? Because s/he is a lover and a lover is capable of seeing nothing but her/his love. According to the opinion of all the thinkers of the East and the West, of both yesterday and tomorrow, there is no pest more deadly than the expression "it is what I say it is", particularly for philosophy and ontology.

Therefore, we say explicitly that: the thinker who thinks about the issues of philosophy and ontology should certainly abstain from love and extremism for the matter which occupies all of her/his deep

mental levels, as it causes the negligence or false justification of all realities and truths. This is because any matter which passes through the mind of a human and enters and occupies the deep mental levels of that person after victimising pure thoughts and senses and trampling on them, not only affects the results and goals of the assumed system, but also, it should be said, that if such a person thinks about anything then s/he is thinking about herself/himself and not about the realities and truths out of her/his nature.

Now, we explain the fundamental principles which play the most essential role in philosophies and doctrinal ontologies. For the generalisation of the studies in this discussion, we name all of these principles as ‘topical principles’. In relation to this type of principles, we make use of a topical principle, the correctness of which has been accepted. Generally, those topical principles which justify and prove the doctrinal systems are divided into two main types:

First - It is interesting to note that issues such as self-realisation and the perfection of the human self, which are of a dynamic and infinite nature, are also considered of dynamic and infinite significance in Islamic philosophy. Accordingly, no philosopher can limit the scope of human perfection and prominence in one or some phenomenon which are of considerable significance for her/him. In other words, the potential of self-actualisation and unlimited ascendancy does exist in human beings, both by considering the ages and by considering the innumerable types of modalities of perfection; the end of self-realisation in Islam is the *attainment of divine attraction*, and in Buddhism, *Nirvana* or *Nibbāna*. In other doctrines like Christianity and Judaism, the final destinations are also interpretable to be that which is mentioned in Islam. In addition, it should be emphasised that, according to the principle of ‘the necessity of truth-recognition’, no system or doctrine should establish principles for itself which are opposed to the foresaid principle.

It is possible to say that if we assume that a doctrinal principle, which has imposed its necessity on the minds of philosophical thinkers for several centuries and was considered as a proven principle, is disproved by science and something is proved against the foresaid philosophical principle, then the ontological system of Islam puts aside

the disproved principle concerning that reality. If this realism is executed in all schools of philosophies then an effective step will be taken in the advancement of knowledge and intellectual enlightenments. By considering the openness of the various paths and methodologies for understanding and accepting the most essential topical principles, which in Islam include 'goal-orientation of the universe of existence', 'self-consistent existence that is called God', 'His supervision and domination over the universe of existence' and 'His legislative will for human perfection and development which has been and is expressed by conscience, inner intellect and great prophets', it seems that not only does the mind of the human being not stop and become stagnant by a simple imposed "it is not other than this"; but rather, it can be said that without the understanding and the acceptance of those principles, no system or doctrine, be it religious or not religious, can save their topical principles from the dead end of "it is what we say it is" in deep analyses.

If we gather all of the contemporary philosophers and ontologists and ask them what the relation is between the variables of the world and the constants, which in the form of laws make up all of our sciences and our ontology, and whether this relation demonstrates a possible contradiction, what would their answer be? For answering this question which is of utmost importance, employing general concepts such as "nature is like this", if not increase our darkness, certainly do not create any light for us. This is the reality that any philosopher whose mind has not been formed by specific fore-structures understands, whether they be Muslim like Avicenna, Christian like Thomas Aquinas or Jewish like Philo of Alexandria.

Second - Those kinds of principles which are topical that can be seen in some of the doctrines of all three of the Ancient, Middle and Modern Ages. Of such principles we can refer to principles of ancient Aristotelian philosophy, absolute abstractive principles of the Middle Ages and the fundamentals of extreme objectivism (positivism) of the Modern Ages, which have had and continue to have effects on different doctrines. It appears that the clearest factor for the openness of topical principles of all philosophical systems, with which it is possible to adjust the philosophical and doctrinal distances and which can be

introduced as a common denominator of all of the types of philosophical and doctrinal systems, is the encompassing factor of science; it means that all systems can equally introduce that group of philosophical issues which are built upon definitive results of sciences, and it is possible to gain generalisations which begin from smaller circles and reach larger circles which are higher generalisations.

As it is possible to start from more general concepts on which there is common consensus among philosophers such as the existing reality, and then move to more specific general concepts like the specified laws which rule different branches of sciences; if these two kinds of movement constantly act as agents of renewal in the minds of doctrinal and philosophical thinkers, then they will, by design, dynamise the philosophies and ontologies and remove the inert topical principles from the path of any philosophical thinker of any period. The truth is that we humans fall into the darkness through solid topical principles or dogmatism more than through the natural limitedness of senses, means and the inherent playfulness of the mind, which may put us at risk in distinguishing forms of reality with aspects of illusions.

It is not farfetched to argue that if doctrinal and philosophical systems approach topical principles according to the abovementioned caveat, then destructive doctrinal/ideological and philosophical contradictions would be converted to constructive intellectual competitions that could even transform the history of human knowledge to self-realisation and perfection.

Third Kind – Regional Division⁵

This division is based upon the geographical division in which the thinker resides. Since the dawn of modernity, some researchers have come to believe that we need to divide the philosophical systems into two broad camps of Eastern and Western philosophy.

Some scholars have taken this division very seriously, as far as contending that the mind of people in these two regions in terms of ‘inner-self’ and ‘outer-self’ are essentially different.

In the past, I believed that I should attempt to compare the philosophical thoughts and worldviews of the people of these two parts of the world as much as possible, but later, I recognised that the basis

upon which this division is founded is incorrect, and thus gave up that avenue of research.

Those who consider this division correct consider the following differences between these two philosophies and worldviews:

1) Eastern philosophy is a chain of thoughts which is saturated by spirituality and supernatural truths, while Western philosophy is mostly naturalistic and moves more objectively than the Eastern philosophy.

2) Eastern philosophy often uses the absolute reasoning concerning the realities of the universe of existence, while Western philosophies, from the time of the Renaissance prefer to connect with the realities by senses, experiments and other such means.

3) Western philosophy does not insist on finding universal rules, definitions and principles for the world of existence; it mostly works with experimental methods for recognition and emphasises using analytical methods. Eastern philosophies and worldviews, however, focus mostly on general principles which interpret the world of existence.

4) In the philosophy of the West, the criticism and revision of general philosophical rules which have remained from previous ages is considered a proper act and is even a necessity in the opinion of some of the thinkers of that region; while scholars in the schools of Eastern philosophy and worldview do respect ancient principles and rules and rarely criticize the received traditions.

5) Philosophies of the West strongly insist on separating the realms of fact and value, or the context of 'Is' and 'Ought-To', except for some of the doctrines which were founded in the nineteenth century. Philosophies of the East do not insist on this separation, but they do consider the perfection of human knowledge to be in the conjunction and coordination of these two territories.

It seems that none of these differences are of a general nature, and thus, cannot be taken as demarcating principles in distinguishing the nature of philosophies in these two regions. Before studying the foresaid differences, we need to take into consideration three important principles:

First Principle - Various situations and circumstances of the thinker in communication with the human and the world render certain issues appropriate to those situations, and because those issues are not separated from the human and the world, then consequently, the same issues will be introduced to a thinker who is in the same situation. For example, today industry is the basis of social living in some countries; evidently, this kind of basis forces the thinkers of those societies to make their livings by considering the phenomenon of industry as the basis of economy in economic thoughts. Therefore, if the same matter occurs in other countries, then they will have the same system of thoughts which the foresaid societies have.

Second Principle - No reality will be clarified for a thinker unless it is surrounded by darkneses and semi-darkneses.

Third Principle - This is contrary to the second principle and holds that there is no dark reality for a thinker unless there are darkneses, lightneses and semi-lightneses surrounding it. According to the second and third principle, it is possible for a thinker to think only about the matter which s/he faces directly and to disagree with another matter. By precisely considering these three principles it is possible to say that if, for example, a specific situation requires that the thinker is forced to think about time, both from a mental perspective and an actual perspective, then the thinker's research and understanding of this phenomenon as their mental need is considered a vital necessity. Further, it is possible that the necessity of solving the problem and the necessity of understanding time has not reached the same level of intensity for another thinker, such that s/he considers it as a part of her/his intellectual life. In this assumption, it should not be said that there is no issue called time simply because the second thinker does not consider it necessary or pay any attention it. The reason for this matter is that the human being, whoever s/he may be and whichever race or territory s/he is assumed to be from, is facing the inner-self and outer-self movement with her/his senses and mind, and certainly, this encounter gives rise to an issue named time in reality, which if each thinker were to recognize and were the conditions which place this issue in the circle of her/his thoughts present, then undoubtedly, s/he would pursue understanding that issue.

Accordingly, most of the philosophers and sages of societies have introduced this issue and have presented a theory concerning it.⁶

Let me explain these issues in some detail. Development of industries, changes in social relations and new interpretations of Epicurean freedom or the modern approaches to the question of liberty, both in an individual sense and in a collective fashion, introduced new issues to the West which caused philosophers and sociologists to rethink the foundations of the 'received tradition' in the occidental context. Needless to mention that if similar intellectual events occurred in the East, we could certainly have witnessed similar trends in the oriental context, which could have transformed the intellectual landscape as it did in the West. Comparable historical events are discernible and one could mention the florescence of sciences and schools of thought in Islamic societies where certain aspects of Greek philosophies were transferred and considered to be important issues, as though these issues were home-grown, while we know that most of the Greek problems were not originally of Islamic origin but that, due to their significance, Muslim thinkers paid due attention to these problematiques regardless of their geographical origins. Again the same process of transplantation of sciences and intellectual problematiques occurred, but this time, from the Islamic context into the Western European context. In other words, issues which were by origin of Greek philosophy in the hands of Eastern philosophers were refined as well as reworked in a deeper fashion and in this profound mode, once again, were introduced to modern philosophers of Europe who incorporated them into the body of their post-Scholastic worldviews and schools of thoughts.

In the third, fourth and a part of the fifth century, the scientific culture of Islamic societies flourished considerably and experimental researches opened the territory of science to scientists. This scientific culture transferred to the West gradually and caused their awakening. Offering these vital services of science by the Islamic East in benefit of the West is clearly evident and certainly, cannot be denied.⁷

As examples, we offer some expressions from Western researchers in the history of science:

1) John Bernal says:

Islam has been the religion of science and knowledge from the very beginning. Furthermore, unlike the Roman Empire, Islamic cities did not isolate themselves from the rest of the East. Islam was where Asian and European sciences met. Thus, inventions were made that were totally unknown - or even unachievable - to Greek or Roman technology, such as steel products, silk paper and enamelled chinaware. Such inventions also led to other advances, bringing about more activity in the West and eventually the 17th and 18th century industrial revolutions.⁸

2) Again, the same researcher says a notable expression about the history of science:

In fact, it would have been more logical to consider the history of science confined to the period between the 7th (1st century *Hijra*) and 14th centuries (7th century *Hijra*), regardless of the difference of languages of Syriac, Persian, Hindi, Arabic or Latin books, as a joint chapter of the advancement of human thoughts and mind.⁹

3) Sigrid Hunke says:

We have inherited science and technology not only from Rome and Greece, but also from the world of Islamic thought. The West undoubtedly owes Islam a great deal.¹⁰

4) Hunke believes:

Using their scientific research and experience, the Muslims changed the raw material they got from the Greek into a new face of science. In fact, it was the Muslims who established the role of experience in scientific endeavour.¹¹

Briefly, by considering all the aspects of the natural, mental and spiritual structure of the human, and by considering the world in which humans live, any issue which is introduced to a nation because of the occurrence of specific factors and conditions will be introduced exactly or similarly to other nations by the occurrence of the same factors and conditions, whether they are related to the industries, sciences or even the worldviews. At most, regional, historical and ethnic characteristics which cause the domination of a specific culture over the society may colour the introduced issues and their answers and give a specific condition and feature to them, whilst preserving the truths of their nature.

Therefore, there is no certain reason for dividing the philosophy as 'Eastern' and 'Western'. Accordingly, by considering that the conditions and parameters of thoughts of the West are of universal significance, there are contemporary people in the East who could be considered as Westernized, and contrarily, certain Western thinkers like Whitehead, Henri Bergson, Goethe and Victor Hugo who could likewise be counted as, so to speak, Easternised or people who have had thoughts infused with the truths of Eastern worldviews and anthropology.

When in the West the dispute between idealism and realism arose¹², it created conditions which rendered the same issue strongly attractive to scholars of the East who then took it into consideration. Accordingly, Muslim scholars studied the same issue, and one would hasten to add that they seem to be more accurate in their analyses in terms of the philosophical differences which are at work in these debates.

Now, we study the differences which have been noted regarding the philosophies of the East and the West:

First Matter - "Eastern philosophy is saturated by spirituality and supernatural truths, while Western philosophy is mostly naturalistic and more objective than Eastern philosophy".

This matter, which has been declared as a demarcating factor between the Eastern and the Western philosophies, is incorrect because:

Firstly – The inclination of Western philosophy to naturalism and methods of objectivism and positivism began in the 16th century by thinkers like Francis Bacon, and it is not possible to confine Western philosophy to that recent movement which has driven some of the thinkers to extreme positions of objectivism. Furthermore, since that time, hundreds of thinkers and intellectuals have been found in the West whose thoughts have had superior supernatural aspects, and the necessity of naturalism had not prevented them from engaging with supernatural realities.

Max Planck and Einstein's absolute scientific method and Bergson and Whitehead, who introduce the issues in all its aspects, are not Eastern, and these thinkers who introduce the principles and

sources of supernaturalism in their worldviews are too innumerable to be mentioned here.

Secondly - Regarding what has been performed by some western thinkers from the 17th century, knowingly or unknowingly, whereby philosophical thoughts have been executed without spirituality and transcendental truths, it can be understood that in fact, they have been active in a specific aspect of the system of existence, which is its natural aspect, and with specific means like the senses and laboratories; until this kind of worldview works with absolute objective matters, it is a scientific method and not a philosophical or universal worldview. The same method, as we will see in the second matter, has moved the caravan of absolute science from the beginning of the 2nd century to the middle of the 5th century Hijra in Islamic societies. I do not think that if they had been asked "Why have you chosen a limited viewpoint in your worldview and why do you limit and confine the realities to the things which senses and laboratories show?", they would have answered that, "Realities are absolutely these matters which we introduce, and the only means of achieving knowledge about the human being and the universe are these laboratories and senses". Besides, if some Western thinkers make such claims, then surely no logical and scientific reason can confirm them.

Thirdly - Naturalists and objectivist thinkers of the West should not deprive themselves of having a universal philosophy and a systematic and general worldview because of the severe indignation which they harbour against scholastics. Today, we have the same regret that Whitehead expressed in regards to the Western thinkers of the Middle Age when he said:

Medieval people's extreme belief in and respect for the two grand pillars of the West, who are Aristotle and Plato, deprives us of the superior thoughts of medieval thinkers. We regret that some of the recent Western thinkers have deprived their societies and other societies from their beneficial thoughts by leaning extremely towards naturalism and objectivism.

As a result, an abyss has been created between issues of transcendental significance and matters of empirical importance by thinkers who have failed in constructing complete systems of intellectual significance. In other words, by failing to create relevant

worldviews which could give man a plausible frame of reference, modern scholars have been content to work upon disparate but interesting issues without having a rounded framework that could induce a sense of meaningfulness in the minds of modern man!

Let us have a look at some passages from *Knowledge from Islamic Thinkers' Point of View* by Dr. Mohamed Ghallab:

Metaphysical knowledge is that superior knowing which consists of all kinds of knowledge, while not placing itself in any of their situations; rather, it recognises all of those types and understands their principles and foundations, and guarantees their unity by this knowledge, understanding and circumambency over them.

Jacque Maritain, one of the proponents of neo-Thomism says:

The truth is that metaphysical knowledge is neither employable for producing experimental sciences nor is proud of discovering and getting involved in matters of innovation in the phenomenal world, and the greatness of metaphysical knowledge lies in this. Aristotle has proved this matter from the ancient times that metaphysical knowledge is employed for nothing, because this knowledge is beyond all the services. This knowledge essentially deserves to be understood, because if it has been made for helping to understand the phenomena then it is useless and is not superior to them. That metaphysical knowledge which does not adapt itself to the secret of what is available, and even starts recognising the contingent realities, is deficient and aberrant like the claim of this expression (the goal of metaphysical knowledge is understanding the phenomena), whether expressed by Descartes or Spinoza.

Metaphysical knowledge is a truth which is circumambient and dominant over its self-evident principles, unlike the sensible world that tries to hide those self-evident matters from metaphysical knowledge.

Metaphysical knowledge considers purification of wisdom and purification of the will necessary, until it makes this ability for the human being to prevent herself/himself from making opportunistic relations between the self and the truth. Nothing is like going beyond opportunism for man, because what we need are not truths which serve us, but it is the truth which we should serve; because it is serving the truth which is the sole sustainer of the soul...

Metaphysical knowledge of Reality gives coherence to all aspects of human existence, as knowing reality is knowing human reality and vice versa. It is this knowledge that specifies natural limits

of different sciences and their solidarity and expresses the limits of their positions. This knowledge is more important to humankind than the most enriched scientific products which are the result of surrendering natural phenomena to mathematical methods; because what is the benefit of gaining all the interests of the world, while you break up the solidity of the intellect.

Is it possible for the East and the West to leave this metaphysical knowledge and still claim that "I have a philosophy!", "I have ontology!", "I have the right to express my opinion about the universe in which I live!" and "I can have the right of criticizing others' worldviews!"?

If such knowledge is introduced to a person, whomsoever s/he may be and whichever environment, region and period in which s/he may live, then by having such knowledge, that person:

1) Will see all of his/her knowledge and understandings like the waves or particles of that knowledge.

2) Will find general principles and sources, as well as goals and extremes of all kinds of recognised things and matters in that knowledge.

The clear reason for these two very important conclusions is the intellectual human being's extreme thirst for gaining an exalted unity in all the different types of her/his knowledge.

Methodology or recognising the methods of sciences was a primary work, which can become the primary steps of a rational and sweeping metaphysical knowledge by continuous pursuance and a type of thinking which yields results.

3) Maritain makes a worthy observation in analysing metaphysical knowledge:

The truth is that metaphysical knowledge is neither employable for producing experimental sciences nor is proud of discovering and getting involved in matters of innovation in the phenomenal world, and the greatness of metaphysical knowledge lies in this.

This matter is because any truth which is discovered and enters from behind the curtain of our points of view expands our relation with the particles of nature and their various relations. In other words, it adds to our knowledge about nature, but does not explain its superior principles, sources, general goal and fundamental telos. For example,

the distance of primitive man's knowledge concerning the most basic elements of nature, known as The Four Elements¹³, and what we know today about the fundamentals of reality thanks to the advancement of science, is very incomprehensible to the mind of primitive man. Feeling the beauty of the scenes of nature and the beauty of the beautiful after all this deep scientific and artistic discussion and research concerning beauty and creation of aesthetic arts is not superior or more extreme than the previous eras, and is not greater than foresaid discussions and researches. Feeling the greatness and glory of freedom, justice and knowledge, and feeling the attraction of perfection is not more superior and stronger than the past, while thousands of books have been written about these matters and hundreds of thousands of articles, speeches and researches have been initiated in this regard.

By the increment of discoveries and innovations, the notion of the existence of a superior goal of life is not advanced, and yet, it has somehow ceased. Relations between these superior feelings, without which we cannot imagine a considerable meaning for human life, and the growth of understanding and the advancement of the ability to exploit nature is not the relation of cause and effect. This means that it is not so that any individual or any society who achieves greater innovations and discoveries than others will of necessity benefit more from the foresaid feelings. The truth is that the feeling of existence and competence of being for existence, which is the subject of metaphysical knowledge, can answer these feelings and give meanings to the discovered truths.

4) Metaphysical meaning cannot be employed by other knowledge because it is beyond all other knowledge and gives meaning to all of them. If we can recall, Avicenna has warned explicitly in the book *Al-Isharat wa al-Tanbihat (Remarks and Admonitions)* that:

A person who considers truth as medium and means is, in a way, pitiful.

This is because all of knowledge and all actions should be for the truth and in the way of the truth, as truth is the goal of all the goals and the ultimate of all ultimates. Metaphysical knowledge cannot be treated instrumentally, as this mode of discernibility is the Alpha and Omega of all pursuits of knowledge, and additionally, it should be

reemphasised that the ultimate peak of metaphysical comprehension is gnosis.

5) Metaphysical knowledge is above being used for the study and recognition of the incidents which are like small and large waves and foam in the ocean of existence, reduced and removed after they occupy some time (passing an instance in actual life) and making a change in the outward aspect of things.

6) Denying metaphysical knowledge will result in denying reality, because it confines the human being in the recognition of phenomena and relations which are all related truths and are not interpretable and justifiable without the recourse to the transcendental realm.

7) If we try to employ all truths for ourselves, then always some truths will employ us for themselves, adding to the impossibility of such desire and the fact that we are not the absolute served ones; there is a superior truth which if we do not recognise and serve, we cannot make any claim concerning real spiritual growth. Is the necessity attributed to this matter in the two territories of the East and the West different because of the people living in these territories?

Second Matter - "Eastern philosophy often uses absolute reasoning with regards to the realities of the universe of existence, while Western philosophies, especially since the time of the Renaissance onwards, prefer to connect with the realities by senses."

There is no doubt that the sensible and laboratorial method has broadly advanced in the West in recent centuries, and based upon these, has established the fundamentals of knowledge about nature and anthropology; however, this phenomenon should be made subject to necessary and sufficient study and research. If in the East there is the need of recognising the characteristics of plants, chemical elements and physical manifestations, then do they build their knowledge based upon the matters related to abstractive principles, like the law of unity: "Nothing proceeds from the One but one"?! Are the founders of sensible and empirical and experimental methods in the sciences in the lands of the East not Muslims? Are the books of *The Canon of Medicine* by Avicenna and *The Compendious Book on Calculation by Completion and Balancing* by Khwarazmi; the researches of Hasan bin Haitham in optics and of Muhammad bin Jabir al-Battani in

trigonometry; the chemical works of Muhammad bin Zakariyaye Razi and the mathematical researches of Ghiyath al-Din Jamshid Kashani - that without which, according to Hunke in *Allah's Sun over the Occident*¹⁴, Logarithm would not have appeared¹⁵ - based upon abstractive imaginations, or on senses and laboratories? However, mathematical research is obliged to use the power of wisdom and rationality for mathematical operations, whether in the East or West, yesterday, today or tomorrow, because it is based upon rational abstraction.

Generally, by considering the subject and the meaning of the matter which relies on sensible realities, truth-finder logic necessitates that we should rely on these matters (senses and laboratories) in achieving this knowledge, and this activity is the same pure scientific endeavour in its normal definition, which is being practiced without exclusiveness to the East or West, yesterday, today or tomorrow. This activity is something other than the philosophical thoughts and worldviews that if a person claims that s/he has no need of, renders her/him as either a very narrow-minded person or someone who does not have the ability of philosophical thinking or constructing a worldview. Moreover, if we remove the necessity of abstraction and rational general thinking from the factors of knowledge, then how can we subtract general laws and principles from the governing view of the world of existence and execute scientific methods?! How is it possible for us to have a premise called 'law and principle' from the reflection of the manifestations and specific movements of two territories of the universe and the human being without rational thinking? On the other hand, what will extremist empiricists say about mathematics?! Should we throw out all mathematical books, which are of the most evident signs of human growth, into the sea? Everyone knows that mathematics is one of intellect's superior abstractive activities!

Third Matter - "Western philosophy does not insist on finding universal concepts, definitions and principles of Reality, and focuses mostly on analytical approaches as well as experimental methods in the construction of conceptual frameworks, while the state of affairs in the Eastern paradigms of thoughts are different; in interpreting the gamut of Reality, they focus on universal principles and synthesis as well as

synoptic methods, rather than solely working with analytical approaches.

This difference which has been noted about the philosophies of the East and West seems not to be accurate either, because the analytical method of some of the thinkers, like Bertrand Russell who says "I have only one label and that is logical atomist", has appeared in the West and is of those exaggerations which cannot answer the needs of recognising general principles of existence, and this mental need does not leave any thinker. Essentially, is it possible to make a doctrine without understanding and recognising universal ideals, general definitions and principles about the entire gamut of reality?! Even those paradigms in the West which intended to endow positivistic leanings on philosophy by distinguishing between science and methodology on the one hand, and philosophy on the other, failed, as the Enlightenment philosophy, based on Positivism, could not bring about what they had promised at the dawn of modernity. By failure we refer to the inability of Kantian Positivism, which seemed to deny any significance or relevancy in the paradigms of intellectuals such as Whitehead, Max Planck and others who rejected reducing the question of reality into terms set by Kantian Positivism.

If we take into consideration the aforementioned caveat, then we would be able to conclude that the *raison d'etre* for the introduction of methodology has to do with the removal of universal as well as abstractive and *a priori* concepts and principles from the scientific context which is objectively researchable. The same motive that was present in both regions and exists in all schools of thoughts in defining that group of issues of knowledge which require observation and experimentation; it is neither exclusive to the West nor to the East, and is not exclusive to yesterday, today or tomorrow.

What is forgotten about this matter is the question of whether or not there are other issues introduced to human beings besides sensible objective realities which are capable of being studied by senses and sensible means of recognition? For example, with weak belief in those objective issues, is this issue raised of whether objective reality is infinite or finite, and if it is finite, then whether it is then limited or unlimited? And is it possible for us to contact the realities "as they are"

or not? Rather, what is possible for us, is contacting the realities through the channels of senses and other means of recognition.

Fourth Matter - "In Western philosophy, criticism and revision of general philosophical rules, which are received from previous ages, is a desirable act and is even deemed necessary; while the philosophers and sages of the East have a different approach to the past by demonstrating a very deep respect for the 'received tradition' and rarely dare to put these received wisdoms under the critical eyes of scrutiny or critique them analytically."

This point also seems to be inaccurate when the paradigms of thoughts in both the East and the West are considered. This critique could be easily falsified by a quick glance at philosophical treatises in the East which are filled with discussions and criticisms of each other, and of critical engagements in their endeavours to unearth the aims and goals of a particular school of philosophy or the worldviews in general. Is Avicenna the pure follower of Aristotle or Farabi's general philosophical principles and rules? Is *The Book of Healing* another issue of Aristotle's *The Study of Nature, On Generation of Corruption and The Theology*?! No, not at all! Have Aristotle or Plato ever thought about the issues which Avicenna introduced in philosophy like 'unity' and 'multiplicity' and their contrasts?! Are Ibn Tufail, Kindi and others like them the followers of the Greeks?! Has Sadr al-Muta'allehin not criticised and discussed tens of principles and laws of previous philosophers and sages?! Have Heraclitus or Westerners after Heraclitus ever thought about the precise issues of 'substantial motion' and 'the unity of the intellect and the intelligible', which Sadr al-Muta'allehin had thought about?! When Farabi begins adjusting the opinions of Aristotle and Plato and conciliates them in a concise book *The Gathering of the Ideas of the Two Philosophers*, is it not the reason for the fact that not only this person was circumambient over the thinking ways of both philosophers and had the ability of judging between them, but also superior meanings have been created in the mind of Farabi in this adjustment and reconciliation with which he has been able to perform such an important task!

What is the meaning of Ghazali's book *The Incoherence of the Philosophers* and what does Ibn Rushd's *The Incoherence of the Incoherence* mean? It means that if the principles, laws and opinions of

predecessors were accepted indisputably in the East, then these books which directly criticise the philosophical opinions and ideas and worldviews were nonsense. Moreover, the progress of philosophy until the time of Agha Ali Zonouzi and Sabzvari, which is a continuation of the path of Sadr al-Muta'allehin, encompasses both aspects.

Fourth Kind - Based upon the Philosophical Characters' Way of Thinking¹⁶

Undoubtedly, the appearance of philosophical thoughts during the history of humanity, whether in the East or the West, has risen from the intellect of thinking human beings; at times other thinkers have continued in their intellectual endeavours by considering those thoughts, and at other times, simultaneously with the manifestation of a type of thinking in one section of the world – for example in a place in the East – or the passage of a period of time, be it short or long, from its manifestation, exactly the same type of thought appears in other parts of the East or West without either of the two having knowledge of the existence of the other. This overlapping and agreement of ideas is called the confluence of thoughts.

The relevancy and dissemination of a philosophy are interdependent on how systematic and universal the thought of a philosopher is. In other words, the universal character of a philosopher's system of ideas has deep correlation with the extent of its influence, as we can see in the philosophies of Aristotle, Plato, Descartes, Kant and Hegel from the West, and in the philosophies of Avicenna, Farabi and Sadr al-Muta'allehin in the East, that have various degrees of similarity with each other and with other philosophical thinkers.

We should also mention the fact that some philosophers and intellectuals admit their respective indebtedness to their predecessors or contemporaries, and this affirmation is nothing but a sign of their humbleness and also demonstrates their professional integrity. For example, Mir Fendereski says:

تاخلاف ناتمامان از میان برخاستی کاش دانایان پیشین باز گفتندی تمام

I wish the past wise men had said it all complete
In order to remove the false expressions of those who are incomplete

Ferdowsi says in *Shahnameh*:

بر باغ دانش همه رفته‌اند سخن هر چه گویم همه گفته‌اند

Whatever I say, others have said
Everyone has gone to the garden of knowledge

The result of Hegelian philosophy is concluded as follows:

So, the novelty of the work of Hegel is not in making a new doctrine in the history of philosophy, but is in arranging the previous Western doctrines in the new system.¹⁷

In this division (of philosophy based upon the thinking ways of philosophical characters), it is possible to derive the unity of generalities of human knowledge concerning quadruple relationships (relationship of the human being with her/him Self, with God, with the universe of existence and with other human beings) with a necessary and sufficient notice.

It is possible to summarize the majority of the common differences of the thoughts of philosophical characters in the following types:

1) Difference as the result of characteristics of positioning is not only common in philosophies but can also be seen in sciences, especially their theoretical aspects. For example, the worldview and anthropology of a philosopher who favours matter over spirit, is certainly imbued by materialism. On the other hand, a philosopher who favours spirit over matter undoubtedly perceives reality from the vector of transcendentalism. If these two philosophers precisely analyse and combine their positions regarding the main subject, then they would perhaps understand the main issue, which may assist them in converging their opinions and, as such, reach unity of opinion.

2) Difference as the result of a variety of perspectives and the concentration of the mental powers of any of philosophers who have disagreement with each other based on a specific type of perspective. Like the differences of views of those who had not seen the elephant and then gathered on a dark night in order to see it, whereby each of them described the elephant according to the condition of the limb or

part which s/he had touched. The person who had touched the elephant's ear said the elephant is a big fan. The one who had touched the elephant's trunk said the elephant is a chute and ...

In this case, gaining information from the thoughts of other philosophers and experts would be useful and enable us to solve the problem.

Some thinkers have noticed this type of difference. We read in the explanation of Hegel's philosophy:

Hegel took the disagreement between philosophers very seriously and this led him to the second principle of his philosophical thought. In his opinion: philosophy is alive and is a complicated matter, such that it is not possible to summarise the truth from its point of view in a weak and simple sentence, and accordingly, it is possible for any of the philosophical doctrines to include a part of the truth or to complement another doctrine.

Therefore, anyone who wants to establish a new doctrine in philosophy and opens a new way to the truth should first understand the previous philosophical doctrines comprehensively, and deeply explore the results of those centuries of work and thinking. Accordingly, this is the advice of Hegel to the innovators and creators of all time: "True innovation needs true education."

Hegel says:

The mistake of great philosophers was that they saw each other as competitors and enemies and did not understand their relation in a useful way, while a proper philosopher should be sea-hearted and open-minded and always open the doors of her/his mind to learning from the knowledge of other people, because the pest of her/his vision is selfishness and dogmatism.

Following the same principle, Hegel rarely insisted on his innovations of opinions and mostly tried to collect and remind of the opinions of previous philosophers. Once, he summarised his method in this expression, "When a person reaches the point which knows nothing better than others do - meaning that the thoughts of others does not make a difference for him, and he is only seeking their arts - then he reaches peace of mind."

3) Difference as the result of verbal velitations, like the disagreement of Zeno with other philosophers. Zeno denies the locomotion but he places continuous stops, which is another term for locomotion!

4) Difference as the result of personal taste, the proof of which to someone else is not possible through reasoning.

5) Difference as the result of prefabricated principles which move the thinker according to themselves. Therefore, it is possible to say that we can achieve more realities in worldviews and we can eradicate the unpleasant results of disagreements of thought through interpretation, research and finding the common aspects of all the various ways of thinking which are called philosophical systems.

Fifth Kind - Based upon their Definition

It is certain that philosophical knowledge has seen this many different definitions for itself. These definitions are so numerous that some thinkers have said: "Each philosopher has a definition exclusively for herself/himself." This expression has some kind of exaggeration, but by considering an important mental principle in philosophical knowledge and human sciences in general, the interference of the personal feelings and tastes of the thinker is a necessary reality, even though the thinker is unaware of their activities. In philosophy and human sciences, there is a direct positive correlation between the level of generality and abstractiveness of the issues at hand, and the possibility of the levels of interference of personal feelings and taste. This principle relies on a more general principle which has been accepted by everyone since the time of the Chinese Lao Tse till now. That principle is:

In the great drama of existence, we are both spectators and actors.

Hitherto, there are some famous definitions available for the followers of the way of philosophy, including:

1) Philosophy is: some general definitions about the human being and the universe.

2) Philosophy is: gaining knowledge about the universe of existence in analytical and syntactical ways.

3) Philosophy is: knowledge about the available truths through intellect as the amount of human capacity.

4) Philosophy is: an inquiry into the quality of human knowledge in relation to the world of existence.

By paying the necessary and sufficient amount of attention to these definitions and others like them, we reach the conclusion that no contradiction exists between these definitions; for this reality that the human being has a strong and serious desire for attaining knowledge of the world of existence - that s/he herself/himself is a part of and also wishes that in this understanding s/he is purified of imagination and delusion and instead gains pure knowledge - is a certain matter which all philosophers and scholars agree on. By considering that all of the foresaid definitions can provide one dimension of the dimensions of this knowledge, the contradiction of those definitions is removed, and if some premises can be found in these definitions or other definitions which are not in harmony and unity, then it still cannot be a reason for the real contradiction of those premises and definitions; as we mentioned in previous divisions, if we consider the positioning of any specific philosopher which has resulted in her/his philosophy or philosophical method to have a specific characteristic, then any other thinker who finds herself/himself in the same position - as happens in discussions and criticisms and results in the refutation of theories - will also result in their philosophy or philosophical method having the same characteristics.

Sixth Kind - Based upon the Goal and the Ultimate

The goal and the ultimate of philosophical knowledge can be considered in several different types, some of which are mentioned here:

1) Becoming familiar with philosophical knowledge itself, which means: the goal of knowing is recognising the principles and issues of philosophy itself.

2) Studying philosophy and researching its issues for benefitting from the pleasure of philosophical knowledge.

3) The ultimate could be gaining a sense of unity by the thinker who is attempting to go beyond the sense-perception.

4) The goal is: the evolution of the nature which is mentioned in the definition of Sadr al-Muta'allehin 'to seek the perfection of human

nature'. It is the goal that converts conversational philosophy to wisdom, the goal that the caravan of prophets, guardians of God and those who are free of selfishness and hedonism have spent their lives seeking and working for the advancement of. We can bravely say that from the time when thinkers neglected this aim of philosophy and settled instead on one of the three foresaid goals, philosophy lost its truth, motive and results and became a profession which it is fitting to term as "chess playing of the brain", and by this conversion, a philosopher gave her/his place to the clerk of philosophy.

It is expressing the matter that Professor Mayer noted in reply to my question, when he came to my home in Tehran in 1984 with a group of companions. I had commented that: "The philosophy of you Germans was a deep philosophy and you had no motive for surrendering to positivism". He answered as such:

Today, we don't have philosophers in Germany, but employees at the department of philosophy.

Also, it is possible to say that when philosophers neglected the fourth goal (seeking the perfection of the self or self-actualisation), the active source of the minds of geniuses was blocked; maybe no issue remains for philosophy and thinking, and we should busy ourselves with verbal velitations or pure technology!! If philosophy becomes active with the goal of seeking the perfection of essence, according to the fact that there is no limit for the positioning of the human in quadruple relationship (relationship of the human being with Self, with God, with the universe of existence and with other human beings) and by considering the advancement of sciences and industries, then philosophy would consider it a necessary and important activity, and the human sciences would also become free of inaction.

In sum, that which is necessary for philosophers is the revision of the question of the goal of philosophical inquiry, not the revival of the previous divisions among the various schools of thoughts, which again, could give birth to more contradictions in the future.

Endnotes

- ¹ This paper was presented in Athena University, Greece, March 1995.
- ² Allamah Muhammad Taqi Ja'fary (1925-1998) was born in Tabriz, Iran. He was one of the greatest contemporary philosophers of the Muslim world. His primary focus was on comparative studies between Islamic philosophy, western philosophy and contemporary issues. He has authored 50 books and tens of articles. His most important books are "Tafsir wa Naqd wa Tahlil-e Mathnawi" (commentary and criticism and analysis of Mathnawi) which is published in 15 volumes and "Tarjome wa Tafsir-e Nahjul Balaqah" (Translation and commentary of the Najul Balaqah [Peak of eloquence which is a collection of the sermons, letters and short sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib]) which is published in 27 volumes.
- ³ In this division, the effect of time itself, which is a mental protraction abstracted from motion, is cancelled.
- ⁴ This division has been made based upon doctrinal differences, like: Peripatetic philosophy, Illumination philosophy, Riwaq, Idealism, Realism, Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Romanticism and Rationalism etc.
- ⁵ Like the philosophy of India, Greece, Rome, Alexandria, Philosophy of the East and the West. Today, this division is very common.
- ⁶ Albeit, we know that Zeno has started a philosophical joke here and intends to deny the truth by reasonable-looking paradoxes and proves his paradoxes by the expression of continuous stops which is another expression for locomotion. For studying the theory of Zeno and the criticism which I have made on that, refer to the book *Communication of Human-Universe* by M. T. Ja'fary.
- ⁷ Refer to the preface of the book *History of Science* by George Sarton and *Science in History* by John Bernal and the book *Allah's Sun over the Occident* by Sigrid Hunke.
- ⁸ *Science in History*, John Bernal, vol. 1, page 206, Persian translation by Asadpour Piranfar and Kamran Fani.
- ⁹ *Science in History*, vol. 2, page 218.
- ¹⁰ *Science and Religion in Rational Life*, M. T. Ja'fary, page 25, 4th edition, Tehran, 2008.
- ¹¹ *Allah's Sun over the Occident*, Sigrid Hunke, page 401.
- ¹² Albeit, historical experience of this discussion is extensive, in the past it was being debated and discussed briefly or in other forms, like the thoughts of Sophists against other philosophers and sages.
- ¹³ The Four Elements: Water, Fire, Earth, Air.
- ¹⁴ His book has been translated into Persian with the title *Islamic Culture in Europe*.
- ¹⁵ Aldo Mili says in the book *Science at the Hands of Arab and Muslims* that the person who created logarithm by consideration and research in Indian arithmetic is Abul Hassan Ali ibn Ahmad Nasavi.
- ¹⁶ Like the philosophy of Aristotle, Plato, Avicenna, Farabi and that of Descartes and Hegel.

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¹⁷ *The Philosophy of Hegel*, W.T. Stace, translated to Persian by Hamid Enayat, page 14 & 15.

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

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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 because 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 physical reality.

An analysis of the 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 of “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 is usually discussed within an ontological frame, i.e., it reveals the ontological contents of both science and philosophy. Thus, a “foundation” of knowledge is not only an epistemological issue, but also an ontological one. The title of Schlick’s famous article was “Uber 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 somewhat 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 a 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 may be 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. 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.¹ 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 are called protocol sentences² by Otto Neurath³ and Carnap.⁴ 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.⁵

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.⁶ 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."⁷ 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."⁸ 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)."⁹ 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.¹⁰ 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 which 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."¹¹

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; 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:¹²

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. Because 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.¹³ 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.¹⁴

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*.”¹⁵

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 deals with 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 there is, 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.

Logical evaluation of the protocol sentences:

The basic statements or protocol sentences in scientific knowledge do not seem to be basic; they are somehow 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.

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 makes 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.¹⁶ 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 may be specifically derived from the reading of the horoscope. 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.

physical realm of reality (world of witness = ' <i>alam al-shahada</i>) A	non-physical realm of reality (world of unseen = ' <i>alam al-ghaib</i>) 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 of religion: "**core statements.**" These are not religious statements; they are just statements from religion. 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. Core statements of B can be true for the physical world (world A) , 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 (core statements of religion) 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 does not have more than 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 a 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.¹⁷

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; if this were the case, then science would 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.¹⁸

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. 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. Discovering the reality of the unseen is a goal that is a personal enterprise. Therefore it 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; 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. As we previously analyzed the basic statement "here now red" under the section of the logical evaluation of protocol sentences.

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 priory 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 statements of religion they are a priori because they cannot be otherwise logically speaking.¹⁹

Endnotes

¹ 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.

- ² See A. J. Ayer, ed. , 1959. *Logical Positivism*. (New York: Free Press, pp. 199–208.
- ³ Otto Neurath, “Protocol Sentences,” trans. George Schick, in A. J. Ayer, ed. 1959. *Logical Positivism* New York: Free Press, p. 199.
- ⁴ R. Carnap, , 1934. *The Unity of Science*, trans. Max Black, London. Also see his book *The Logical Syntax of Language*, trans. Amethe Smeaton, London, 1937.
- ⁵ Neurath, “Protocol Sentences,” in Ayer, *Logical Positivism*, p. 202.
- ⁶ 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 Mind* (London, 1921), 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.
- ⁷ M. Schlick, “The Foundation of Knowledge,” in Ayer, *Logical Positivism*, p. 209.
- ⁸ Schlick, “Foundation,” in Ayer, *Logical Positivism*, p. 213.
- ⁹ Neurath, “Protocol Sentences,” in Ayer, *Logical Positivism*, p. 203.
- ¹⁰ See an important paper by Lorenz B. Puntel, 1999. “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:101–130.
- ¹¹ Schlick, “Foundation,” in Ayer, *Logical Positivism*, p. 215.
- ¹² Schlick, “Foundation,” in Ayer, *Logical Positivism*, pp. 220–221.
- ¹³ Schlick, “Foundation,” in Ayer, *Logical Positivism*, p. 226.
- ¹⁴ Schlick, “Foundation,” in Ayer, *Logical Positivism*, p. 223.
- ¹⁵ Schlick, “Foundation,” in Ayer, *Logical Positivism*, p. 227.
- ¹⁶ K. Popper, 1959. *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*. London. Also see his book *Conjectures and Refutations* 1963, London.

¹⁷ See al-Ghazali in his book *The Deliverance from Error*.

¹⁸ 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.)

¹⁹ According to Kant, there are four kinds 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).

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The Structure and Hermeneutics of Rumi's Mathnawi: Discourse Nine, Book Two

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Abstract

Rumi (1207-1273 CE) is the greatest Persian mystical poet, whose great book of poetry *Mathnawi-e Ma'nawi*, deals with theoretical and practical 'Irfan.

In this paper, for the first time in the history of the study of Rumi's *Mathnawi*, the 'structure', 'hermeneutics' and 'synoptic view' of Discourse Nine of Book Two of Rumi's *Mathnawi* has been presented. This paper is a chapter of my upcoming book on the structure of Book Two of Rumi's *Mathnawi*, which will be published in 2010. This approach to the study of Rumi's *Mathnawi* is based on Dr Seyed Ghahreman Safavi's discovery of the structure of the *Mathnawi* after 700 years of its writing, through a synoptic-hermeneutical reading of the text, which is undoubtedly the most important discovery in relation to the *Mathnawi* to date, and is also of the utmost significance in the study of 'Irfan and Islam in general.

Discourse Nine consists of seven sections and has a narrative-teaching nature. The primary issue in this discourse is the relationship of the Perfect Human and Allah as the unity of the Manifested and the manifestation. Rumi's dominant technique in this discourse is presenting the external journey (*sayr afaqi*) and the spiritual journey (*sayr anfousi*) in the form of allegorical stories; both techniques have been inspired by the Holy Qur'an. Analysis of the Discourse shows both Chiasmus and conceptual parallelism. The overall structure is in the form of ABCDCBA, with emphasis on D as the central section of this Discourse. This form has been presented in a diagram in this paper. This article is divided into the following four sections: 'Thematic and Narrative Summary of the Discourse', 'Commentary of Discourse Nine', 'Diagram of the structure of Discourse Nine', 'Analysis of Discourse Nine'.

Introduction

The ninth discourse of Book Two of Rumi's *Mathnawi* (verses 3027-3175) consists of seven sections. The context of the discourse is centred on the rank of certainty (*yaqin*), the importance of the existence of prophets and Divine saints, the attributes of the *pir* and the rank of seeing Allah. The Hindus are symbolic of those who speak of faults; the *Ghuzz* are the symbol of Divine wrath; the old man is the symbol of those who have spiritual illness; the dark and confined grave is the symbol of the heart and the inner dimension of sinners; and the man who in appearance is well-built and strong, however inwardly is weak and neutral is the symbol of the 'un-man' (*namard*) and Satan-like human being.

This discourse is concerned with the first stage of the rank of *Haqq al-Yaqin*; the Perfect Human is of those who have attained this rank. Comparing the certainty (*yaqin*) of prophets and Divine saints is one of the other themes of this discourse.

In order to understand the importance of the structure and the techniques which have been used in the synoptic reading of the *Mathnawi* and in the discovery of its structure, refer to 'The structure of Rumi's *Mathnawi*'¹ by Dr Seyed G Safavi and 'Rumi's *Mystical Design*'², by Dr Seyed G Safavi and Simon Weightman.

Thematic and Narrative Summary of the Discourse (verses 3027-3175)

Section One, 3027-3045 (19): "Story of the Hindu who quarrelled with his friend over a certain action and was not aware that he too was afflicted with (guilty of) it."³

A2. Four Hindus recited the *takbir*, each with their own inner intention, and stood in prayer filled with fear and humility.

B5. When the *mu'azzin* (the caller to prayer) entered the mosque, one of the Hindus asked him whether it was time for prayer or not. A second remarked to the questioner that now that he had spoken during his prayer, his prayer was void. The third told the second not to be sarcastic and to direct this at himself. The fourth addressed them all and said: thank God that I have not made a mistake like all of you. The

prayer of all of them had become void, for those who mention the faults of others are more misguided than anyone else.

C6. Good for her/him who is aware of their own faults and strives to purge themselves of it, for half of the existential element of the human being is material and half is spiritual. Cure your own faults. Discovering one's own faults is the beginning of the process of being cured. Humility and breaking one's self causes the attraction of Divine benevolence and *rahmah*. Do not be at ease because of the absence of a particular fault, for you may be afflicted by that fault itself. Allah tells the believers not to be fearful (for the whims and desires of the soul constantly threaten the human being), so how can you, who are not a believer and not purged of faults, have ease of mind?

D6. Satan had lived with a good name for eons and was famed in the heavens for his greatness, but he came into disrepute and gained a bad name which became accursed. Until you are completely secure and safe in your spirituality, do not seek fame. The spirit of Satan became impure, and as such, he fell from grace and became an example for everyone. Satan drank the poison of Divine wrath; you have not yet fallen and become a warning example, so drink from the nectar of the compassion of *Haqq*.

Section Two, 3046-3058 (13): "How the Ghuzz set about killing one man in order that another might be terrorised."⁴

A9. The blood-shedding *Ghuzz* Turcomans entered a village, intent on its plunder. They arrested two of the noblemen, and then tied the hands of one the men in order to murder him. The man asked them: O kings, what is the cause of my murder? Is it because of destitution and nakedness? They replied: it is so that your friend becomes fearful and reveals to us where the gold is hidden. The prisoner said: he is poorer than I. The Turk said: he pretends that he is poor but in reality he is wealthy. The prisoner replied: you are suspicious of us both; kill him and I will show you where the gold is.

B4. By the grace of Allah's benevolence, we were born at the end of time. According to a *hadith*, those who came before are superior to those who came after. Prophet Muhammad informed us of the destruction of the tribe of Noah and Hud so that we would learn a lesson; if it was the other way around, what would have befallen us?

Section Three, 3059-3087 (29): “Explaining the state of those who are self-conceited and unthankful for the blessing of the existence of the prophets and saints – peace be upon them!”⁵

A7. Every prophet has spoken to his people of fault and sin, of hearts of stone and the dark spirit of sinners who ignore Divine commands and the Day of Resurrection, of material loves and following the imperative soul, of fleeing from the advice of those who seek good and from seeing the righteous, of choosing estrangement from spiritual seekers, of the deception of kings, of considering those who are content as poor and of having hidden enmity with the righteous and the God-conscious.

B7. Whenever a man of *Haqq* accepts your gift you refer to him as a beggar, and when he refuses it you refer to him as pretentious and insincere. If he interacts with people you refer to him as greedy, and if he chooses seclusion you refer to him as arrogant. Like a hypocrite, you declare that the reason you do not accept the guidance of the prophets is the expenses of your family, and without having any concern for religion, drowsily you say pray for us so that we become of the Divine saints, and then you fall back to sleep. Like a hypocrite, you claim that you make a lawful living for maintaining your family, yet the most lawful task is shedding your blood, for you are astray.

C4. You ignore the religion of *Haqq*, yet you cannot turn away from food and a false deity. How can you, who cannot turn away from the material world and its blessings, have patience in the face of distance from the forgiving God who is the creator? How can you, who have no patience when it comes to the pure and impure, have patience towards their creator?

D5. Where is that un-hypocritical and sincere friend of *Haqq*, who has exited the material world and seeks the true God? I do not look at this world without its creator and owner. How can one eat even one bite without seeing the *Haqq* and the rose garden of His being? Only four-legged animals benefit from this world without the hope of God.

E6. The deception of he who is more foul-scented and lowly than four-legged animals will become destroyed. His days will end quickly and his mind and intellect will become incapacitated. When he claims that he is thinking of Allah and refers to Allah as compassionate

and forgiving, he is under the influence of the deception of the imperative soul. Now, without benefit from material blessing, he is in the state of death from the severity of his sorrow; if he believes in the forgiveness and *rahmah* of Allah, what is he afraid of?

Section Four, 2088-3115 (28): “How an old man complained of his ailments to a doctor, and how the doctor answered him.”⁶

A9. An old man complained to a physician concerning his diminishing mental capability and sight, his back pain, his weakness of stomach and his shortness of breath. The physician's diagnosis was that the cause of all this was old age. The old man rebuked the physician with anger and said: what do you know of medicine? Have you not intellect enough to know that God has given a cure for every pain? You are a stupid animal who because of lack of knowledge and hard work, has become entrenched in this material world, and as such, are useless.

B3. The physician told him that the cause of his anger was also old age, for by the weakening of the body, patience and controlling of one's self also become weakened, and as such, the old man did not have the strength to hear what he had to say.

C7. The old man, drunken by Divine love, has a pure heart like the prophets and Divine saints who appear to be old, but in reality are young, although their reality is not evident to the bad or to the righteous. Why is it that the lowly are jealous of them? When they do not know the reality of their state, why do they seek enmity with them? If they believe in the Day of Resurrection, why do they afflict themselves with Divine punishment? When the Perfect Human smiles at you, do not look at his appearance, for there are a hundred Days of Resurrection within him. Hell and Heaven are parts of him and he is beyond any imagination.

D5. All but Allah is transient. Allah does not fit into the limited thought of human beings. If the lowly know who the owner of this world is, why do they transgress? The fools show respect to the building of the mosque and insult the Divine saints. The mosque is virtual; the reality is the heart of the Perfect Human, which is the place of the prostration of the creations and the place of Allah's manifestation.

E4. God does not disrepute a nation until the heart of Divine human beings has been pained. Those who considered the prophets as ordinary human beings rose to war against them. Are you, who have the same attributes, not afraid that you will become like them? How can you attain salvation by possessing their attributes?

Section Five, 3116-3154 (39): “The story of *Juhi* and the child who cried lamentably beside his father’s bier.”⁷

A6. A child was walking before his father's coffin. Hitting himself on the head, he lamented: Father, where will they take you? Beneath a confined, dark and painful house which has no rugs and carpet? During the night it is without a lamp, and during the day without bread. No scent of food is discerned and it is without sign. There is no door, nor a way out or a neighbour who can be your companion. How can your body, which was the place of people’s kisses, go to a house which is confined and without a refuge and without form, colour or water?

B4. A clown told his father: they will take the corpse to our house. The father denied it. The clown said: listen carefully; without a doubt these are the signs of our house which has no rug, lamp, food, courtyard or roof.

C12. The disobedient also have such signs which they themselves are unaware of. A heart in which the light of *Haqq* does not shine, like the spirit of those who seek enmity with *Haqq*, is confined, dark and devoid of Divine benevolence. The rays of the sun of *Haqq* have not shone on such a heart, and no doors open to it. It is likely that the grave is better than a dark heart. Move past the grave of your own heart. How is it that you do not become depressed in the dark and confined grave?

D6. You are the Joseph of time and the sun of the sky. Exit this well and this prison. Your spirit has perished in the stomach of the fish. Save yourself from destruction with the *dhikr* of *Haqq*. If Yunus had not been saying the *dhikr* of *Haqq* in the fish’s stomach, he would have stayed there for all eternity. The worship and supplication of *Haqq* is a sign of the day of *Alast*. If you have forgotten the worship and supplication of the spirit, listen to the praise and worship of the fish. The Divine human being sees God and the fish sees the sea.

E5. This world is the sea, the body is the fish and the spirit is like Yunus, who was deprived of the light of morning. Yunus was only freed by the glorification of Allah; otherwise, he would have perished in the stomach of the fish. The mystics are the fish of the spirit who are flying around you, yet you do not have the ability to see them. They hit themselves against your body: open your eyes and see them, and even if you do not see them, your ears hear their *dhikr* and praise.

F3. Your patience is your spirit and your essence is your praise of Allah and worship. Be patient. No *dhikr* has the rank of patience. Patience is the key to attaining salvation, for patience is the bridge of *sirat* and Paradise is on the other side of the bridge.

G7. As long as you are fleeing the teacher you will not attain union, for these two accompany each other. You do not know of the joy of having patience with that beautiful face. A courageous person enjoys war, but a lowly thought causes the fall to lowly degrees of him who appears like a man. When he who appears like a man reaches the heavens, do not fear him still, for he has learnt the lesson of lowliness from his loves and moves with speed towards that direction. Do not be fearful of the raised flag of the beggars, for it is raised because of their destitution.

Section Six, 3155-3162: mm the child becoming frightened of the person with the big figure, and the person saying “O child do not be afraid for I am a *namard* (un-man)”⁸

A3. A lone child was afraid of a man with a strong build. The man said: be at ease, for you are dominant over me. Even if I appear with a big figure, consider me neutral, therefore, sit on me like a camel and ride me.

B5. In appearance he is a man, but in reality, he is naught more than one who appears like a man. He appears like a human being, but inwardly he is a beast. Such a person, like the tribe of ‘Ad, is like a drum that the wind smacks a branch into. A fox who loses its prey because of a hollowed drum considers a pig as superior to that drum. Foxes are afraid of the sound of the drum, while those with intellect constantly beat on the drum until it is silenced.

Section Seven, 3163-3175 (13): “The story of an archer and his fear of a horseman who was riding in a forest.”⁹

A6. An armed and frightening man was riding his horse in a forest. A talented archer saw him and for fear of his life aimed at him. The rider shouted: do not look at the big size of my body, for I would even be defeated in battle against old women. The archer said: if you had not said so, I would have struck you with an arrow on account of my fear. Many un-chivalrous men have taken up swords and been killed.

B4. You too will be killed if you take up weapons of war and are not a warrior. Put down the sword and live your life, for whoever sacrifices his life on the path of *Haqq* will gain eternity. Your weapon is a deception against yourself. Let go of your deception and seek Allah, who is the possessor of blessings, so that you gain eternal life. Abstain from unworthy sciences so that you are not afflicted by their despicable plague. Like the angels, say: O Allah, there is no knowledge but that which You have taught us.

Commentary of Discourse Nine

The ninth discourse is comprised of seven sections. The context of the discourse is centred on the rank of certainty, the importance of the existence of prophets and Divine saints, the attributes of the *pir* and the rank of seeing Allah. The Hindus are symbolic of those who speak of faults; the *Ghuzz* are the symbol of Divine wrath; the old man is the symbol of those who have spiritual illness; the dark and confined grave is the symbol of the heart and the inner dimension of sinners; and the well-built man is the symbol of the un-chivalrous and Satan-like human being.

This discourse is concerned with the first stage of the rank of *Haqq al-Yaqin*; Perfect Human is of those who have attained this rank. Comparing the certainty (*Yaqin*) of prophets and Divine saints is one of the other themes of this discourse.

The ninth discourse does not have thematic or narrative unity; rather, it has conceptual unity. Conceptual unity is distinct from thematic unity. Thematic unity is a unity which has been referred to in the evident aspect of the text (*mantuq*). In contrast to the *mantuq*, concept, as it is used in the *Ilma al-Usul*, in is not referred to directly

by the text. Such as the concept of condition in the following sentence: "respect Ali if he performs his acts of worship" the conceptual meaning of which is: "If Ali does not perform his acts of worship do not respect him". Concept has different types such as: limitation (*Hasr*), condition (*Shart*), Final (*ghayat*), description (*wasf*) and numbers ('*Adad*). Some of the *Usulis* are of the opinion that the conceptual meaning of condition (*shart*) and description (*wasf*) are those that are valid.

Those who seek fault are of those who are most astray; for firstly, egoism is one of the greater sins, and secondly, being ignorant of one's self and only seeing the fault of others are among the most grievous of faults. Thus, those who seek fault have lost the way to a far greater extent than those who have faults. The prosperous look for the existence of the faults of others in their own being, and strive to reform those faults. The human being is an amalgamation of sensualities and spiritualities, thus, recognising one's fault and reforming it is a form of breaking one's self and one's ego, which consequently makes the individual deserving of Divine benevolence and *rahmah*. "In no condition does the mystical human being consider himself as safe, and he is constantly in fear. For this reason, he does not seek fame or boast."¹⁰

The human being is constantly at risk from the whims and desires of the soul (*nafs*) and the danger of straying. When even the pious believers are not safe from the danger of slipping up or making mistakes, the masses should not feel secure and have ease of mind concerning the possibility of mistakes. "*Those who say: our Lord is Allah, then continue in the right way, the angels descend upon them, saying: Fear not, nor be grieved, and receive good news of the garden which you were promised.*"¹¹ On account of his arrogance and jealousy, after years of worship Satan was placed in disrepute to all and his greatness found its end in his fall from grace. Satan was close to God and the leader of the angels, yet due to going astray and his disobedience, he became accursed.

Until the spiritual wayfarers have reached spiritual certainty, they will be constantly wandering between hope and fear, and when their belief gains perfection, they will gain certainty and become immune from any form of lapse or mistake; for spiritual peace and certainty is the product of perfect belief. The believers must employ

kindness and good temper in confronting those who speak in vain, and by learning from the sinners, strive in the purification of their souls (*nafs*) and the reformation of their etiquette and behaviour. The spirit of Satan descended and fell because of arrogance and pride, and by drinking from the poison of Divine wrath, he became an example for everyone.

Due to Divine benevolence, Muslims have come at the end of time. “The *Hadith* “we are the last of those who came before”, shows the superiority of the religion of Islam to Judaism, Christianity and the religions of all of the other prophets.”¹² By stating the reasons for the destruction of the disbelievers of previous eras, Prophet Muhammad made the Muslims conscious of the conclusion and result of disbelief and disobedience.

The prophets stated to their nations the results of sin, of love of the material world, of ignoring the Divine commands and of disregarding the Day of Judgment; yet their nations persisted in continuing their proclamation of hatred and enmity for *Haqq* and the Divine saints, even though they knew of the superiority of those whom they belittled and were jealous of. They spitefully stated that the acceptance of gifts was a sign of lowliness and that the refusal of gifts was a sign of deception and hypocrisy; they referred to the Divine guardians’ socialising and companionship with the people as a sign of greed, and their seclusion as a sign of arrogance and pride.

Egoists slander and rebuke the righteous and the Divine saints at every opportunity. Like hypocrites, they use their spouses, children and the expenses of their lives as justifications for not accepting their guidance. By pretending to be the friends of the *Wali al-Haqq*, they hypocritically ask him to pray for them so that they become of the Divine saints. The egoist ignores *Haqq* and the religion of *Haqq*, yet cannot ignore food and false deities. However, the egoists too require Divine favour and do not acquire anything from following Satan, their whims and their desires. How can s/he, who cannot turn a blind eye to this world, have patience in the face of separation from Allah?

The Perfect Human sees the world and its inhabitants as the different manifestations of the Divine names and attributes, and considers every provision and blessing to be the result of Divine benevolence. The lovers and wayfarers of the path of guidance turn

towards the path of worship and knowledge in order to acquire Divine pleasure and union. "The spiritual wayfarer sees all of His names and attributes. For example, s/he does not see the sky, even though it is a manifestation, rather, s/he sees the ever-present Lord; and s/he does not see the established light and the Perfect Human, rather, s/he sees the greatest Divine name. As s/he ascends and reaches the negation of the attributes and names - for the perfection of sincerity is the negation of the attributes - s/he sees the Described and moves from the adoption of Divine traits to their realisation and actualisation."¹³

Becoming hopeless of being blessed with Divine benevolence is specific to animals; however, the inward reality of s/he who acts like four-legged animals and with even more deception than them, becomes revealed by their despicable acts. When the intellect of human beings overcomes the whims of the soul (*nafs*), they become better than the angels, yet by allowing the soul to overcome them, they will become lower than animals. The short-lived opportunities of egoists become void, their power of thinking declines and their days end with emptiness; and like an *alif*, they have nothing of their own, for the *alif* has no dot of its own, nor does it have a vowel or an accent, and at times, it is attributed to a virtual entity that not only has nothing from its own essence, but also does not possess its own virtual existence. The claim of egoists that they contemplate on religion and the next world is among the tricks of the imperative soul, for if their intention was wayfaring on the path and engaging themselves in matters relating to the next world, they would not have delayed. Another of the tricks of the soul is the claim of the attainment of forgiveness based on Allah's attributes of kindness, *rahmah* and benevolence; by deceiving the egoists, Satan makes them consider their despicable acts as righteous, and without them having performed good deeds, he deceives them into having hope of Divine mercy. The sinner egoists accept the claim of the soul concerning hopefulness regarding Allah's forgiveness, yet they do not rely on the benevolence and *rahmah* of Allah for their provision.

The inner dimension of the intoxicated *pirs* is filled with the beautiful life; in appearance they seem old, yet esoterically they are young and are the subjects of God's compassion. The prophets and the Divine saints are the perfect examples of these constantly joyous *pirs*, for the Prophet and the *wali* are spirits that never become old. "The

parts of the two worlds are complete in their pure essence; each bad and good is evident to their eye of wisdom, as is the reality of the fool and that of the wise.”¹⁴

As the possessors of blessings and grace, the prophets and the Divine saints are the subject of the envy of the lowly. The possessors of the whims and desires of the soul, ignorant of the state and prosperity of the Perfect Humans and the recompense of the Day of Resurrection, envy them and demonstrate enmity towards them. Prophets and Divine saints seem weak and devoid of power in appearance, yet inwardly, their power is so great that they can raise tens of Days of Resurrection.

The Day of Resurrection is of two kinds: the exoteric Day of Resurrection and the esoteric Day of Resurrection. The exoteric Day of Resurrection is the resurrection of the corpses and their rising from the graves, and the esoteric Day of Resurrection is the establishment of all creations by *Haqq* and the annihilation of their egoism. Within the Divine saints, thousands of Days of Resurrection are taking place, for they see everything as established and subsistent by *Haqq* and in itself transient. In reality, the Perfect *wali* is the manifestation of Divine identity which is as the heart.

The Sufis consider the Perfect Human to be the main axis of the world. Heaven and Hell are parts of the reality of the Perfect Human, which respectively are the Divine benevolence and wrath. “*Haqq* has two attributes: wrath and benevolence. Prophets are manifestations of both. The believers are the manifestation of Divine benevolence and the disbelievers are the manifestation of Divine wrath. Those who make the proclamation of the Divinity and Lordship of Allah see themselves in the Prophets and hear their song from them and find their scent from them.”¹⁵ The reality and rank of the Perfect Human is far exalted above any thought or imagination and is beyond the intellectual realm of ordinary human beings, for whatever can be limited in the thought of the human being moves towards nothingness and annihilation. As it is only Allah who cannot be comprehended by the mind of human beings, there is naught but Allah in the house of the Perfect Human. As such, neither the reality of the Perfect Human can be comprehended by the thought and intellect of human beings, nor the Essence of Allah. Other than essential necessity, which is specific to Allah, the Perfect Human is the complete manifestation of Allah.

The fools bow down to the mosque, yet attempt to harm the people of heart; whereas the mosque is virtual and the heart of the Divine saints is the real mosque. Of course, respecting the mosque is necessary as it is a place of *dhikr*, the remembrance of Allah and the worshipping of the One God. The true place of Divine light and secrets, however, is the heart of the Divine saints, which is all of creation's place of prostration and the place of God's manifestation. In every age, tormenting the heart of Allah's pure people has resulted in the destruction of the nation of tormentors, for they judge the appearance of the prophets and consider them to be people similar to themselves.

The heart of those who have not had a spiritual birth is disobedient and rebellious towards the Divine commands; it is a grave which is dark and confined and lacking any benefit from Allah's encompassing *rahmah*, whereas the heart of the Divine saints is the house of Allah. "For the mystics, the darkness of ignorance and forgetfulness is greater than the darkness of the grave."¹⁶ For those that are rebellious and disobedient, even when they hear their existential signs, they fail to see them in their own being. There is no path to their hearts, which are hardened and devoid of wisdom; as such, even the grave is superior to their hearts.

The spirit perishes in the prison of the ignorance of the whims of the soul. The only path for the salvation of the spirit from perishing and being destroyed is the *dhikr* (remembrance; invocation) and praise of Allah. Worship and praise of Allah is a sign from the Day of *Alast*. As on the Day of *Azal*, without its body and its bodily effects, the human's being was praising Allah, it must praise Allah in this world also by gaining freedom from the body and materialities, and if it has forgotten the intrinsic covenant of the world of *Alast*, it must listen to the supplication of the people of perfection and true '*Irfan*.

"For the '*Arif*, seeing the *Haqq* signifies attaining union with the *Haqq*. S/he is drowned in the sea of unity."¹⁷

This world, as a simile, is like the sea; the sea is a metaphor of worldly desires and pleasures; the body of the fish and the spirit are Yunus who has become devoid of the rays of the Divine Essence. The Yunus of spirit, through supplication and praise of *Haqq*, reaches safety from calamity, yet if it does not engage in praise, it will perish in the

dark body. “Had he [Yunus] not glorified God, he would have certainly remained inside that fish until the Day of Resurrection.”¹⁸

The world will never become empty of the mystics who have attained union (the fish of the sea of *Haqq*), yet the human being, because of the lack of talent and the decline of desire and striving, is not able to see them. The people of Divinity are flying around the wayfarers; it is worthy for one to listen to their glorification. Open the eye of the heart and by performing the obligations of their path, choose patience in order to see the people of Divinity manifestly; for the patience of the mystic is abstaining from anything other than Allah, and is exactly like the Divine glorification. The glorification of the spiritual wayfarer is patience on the Divine path.

The people of *tahqiq* consider *tasbih* (glorification/praise of Allah) to be of three kinds: the *tasbih* of speech, the *tasbih* of the heart and the *tasbih* of action. The *tasbih* of speech is the *tasbih* of Allah by the tongue and exalting Him above that which is not worthy of His stature. The *tasbih* of the heart is the purification of the heart from unworthy beliefs and the beliefs which are not worthy of Allah. The *tasbih* of action is wayfaring on the path of obedience and preventing the *nafs* from committing sins. Patience in the face of what Allah has ordained is the spirit of *tasbih*. The relation between the *tasbih* of speech and of the heart with patience is like the relation between the body and the spirit. Belief is like the body and patience its head. Patience is the key to the attainment of salvation and is like the bridge of *sirat*, Heaven being positioned on the other side of the bridge. As each beautiful visage is accompanied by an ugly visage, each beloved is also accompanied by some form of hardship and pain. Patience does not become separated from the beloved nor does the beloved become separated from patience; thus, s/he who acquires patience reaches the beloved. “The *tasbihs* are the body and their spirit is patience, steadfastness and purity from the changing of states.”¹⁹

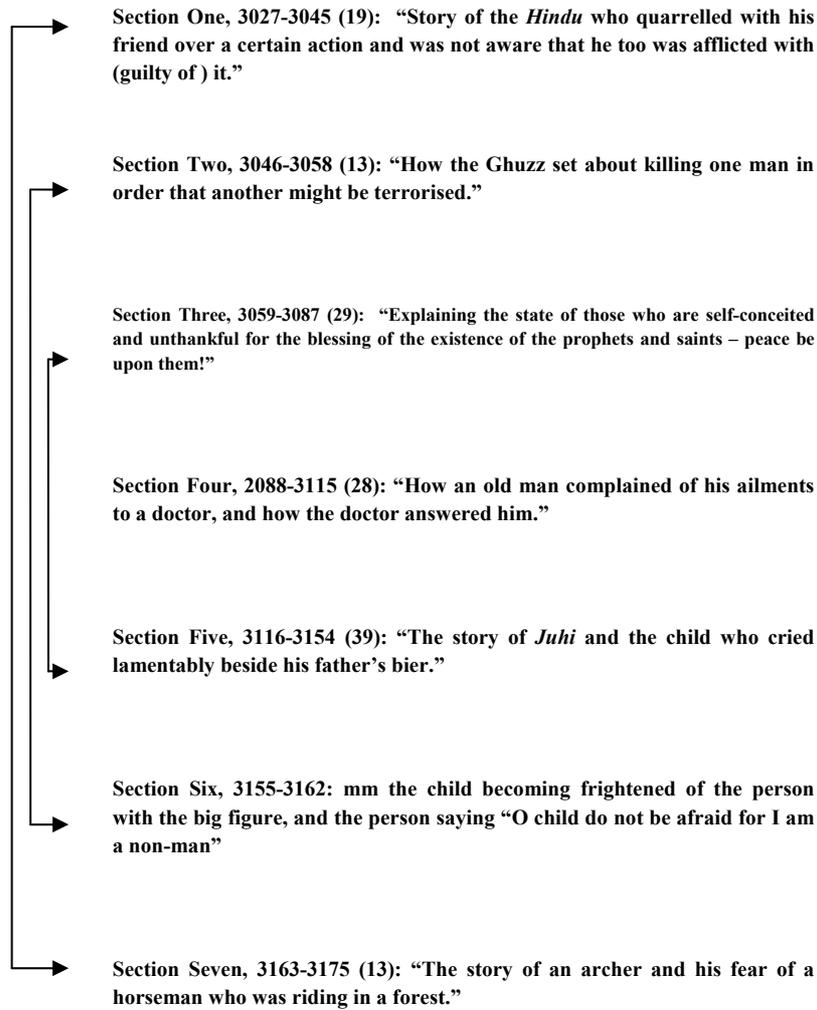
The experience which results from patience is not describable, especially if the patience is inspired by a Divine beloved. The joy of the righteous is in the Greater *Jihad* and that of the lowly is in debased thoughts which make them descend further and further into the ranks of lowliness. Those who in their outward appearance are like human beings, but in their essence are prisoners of the whims and desires of

the soul, appear like human beings yet from within they are devoid of any form of spiritual experience and meaning, and are like monsters; they are akin to the hollow drum which is feared by foxes. Those without wisdom, who are similar to foxes, are fearful of the uproar of these claimers who are devoid of meaning. The people of spiritual wisdom or the intellect of resurrection, however, fight the worshipper of the *nafs* and prevent them from making chaotic noise. That which causes nobility and superiority is not external causes; rather, it is spiritual power and identity. By relying on the outward form, the worshippers of the world call the adversary to war like warriors, even though they themselves surrender with the first strike.

The spiritual wayfarer who, by a spirit filled with sincerity, purity, submission, pleasure and consent, treads on the whims and desires of the soul the wisdoms and secrets from the true King of the world; for those who have negated themselves are safe from the fire of Divine revenge. "Particular knowledge does not deliver the seeker to the truth; rather, it delivers her/him to destruction. Thus, one must leave one's self to God and consider one's own knowledge as naught and look with a good eye at God."²⁰

The human being gains status and fortune by freeing itself of the trickery and deception of the *nafs* which wears down one's spirit, and seeking instead from the true owner of blessings. Particular knowledge, which arises from the particular intellect, not only does not deliver the human being to tranquillity and certainty, but rather, causes chaos and stress for her/him. Thus, by glorifying and praising Allah and by admitting one's lack of wisdom, one must seek *rahmah* from the Divine court.

Diagram of the Structure of Discourse Nine



Analysis of Discourse Nine

The ninth discourse consists of seven sections and has a narrative-teaching nature. The conversations which have been presented are either four-sided, such as the conversation of the four Hindus, or two sided, such as that of the old man and the physician.

The primary issue in the discourse is the relationship of the Perfect Human and Allah as the unity of the Manifested and the manifestation.

In terms of the time and location of the stories, they are situated after Islam; the specific time and location are unknown.

In this discourse, narrative and visual logic are dominant over the time and space aspect. Rumi's dominant technique in this discourse is presenting the external journey (*sayr afaqi*) and the spiritual journey (*sayr anfousi*) in the form of allegorical stories; both techniques have been inspired by the Holy Qur'an. The spiritual wayfarer in the external journey, contemplates the history of past peoples, such as the end of the nations and individuals of eras gone by, and through this contemplation, learns from their example and gains wisdom. "Travel through the land and see how terrible was the end of the criminal ones"²¹; "Travel through the land and see how He has begun the creation and how He will invent the next life."²² Contrary to the external journey, in the spiritual journey the spiritual wayfarer becomes aware of the reality of her/his existence and gains knowledge of *Haqq* through inward contemplation; as Imam Ali said, "He who knows himself knows his Lord."²³

Key words: Mosque, fault, heart and spirit, alienation, patience, *pir*, the righteous life, *Ilm al-Yaqin*, thought, signs, seeing, well and prison, sea and fish and Yunus.

Each section in the ninth discourse is an independent story. However, firstly, the last part of each section is an introduction to the following story, and secondly, through conceptual unity, all seven sections present and follow a common framework and theme. The most important teaching principle has been discussed in section four (central section):

Anything that you think of as annihilable,
That which does not come into mind is Allah.²⁴

Analysis of Discourse nine of the second Book of Mathnawi, as mentioned previously, reveals seven sections; each section is divided into varying numbers of paragraphs, whereby each paragraph is comprised of a number of verses. Further, our analysis reveals both chiasmus and conceptual parallelism being employed by Rumi in this

discourse. The structure follows the pattern ABCDCBA, with D (Section Four) being the central and connective section of this discourse.

Sections one and seven are parallel: in section one, after raising the point that each individual must seek to discover and identify their own faults and not the faults of others, it is stressed that until the stage of spiritual certainty has been reached, the spiritual wayfarers must not seek fame; rather, the spiritual wayfarers must first immunise their spirit from lapsing and then reveal themselves, for otherwise, they will cause their own downfall and destruction. Section seven speaks of the destruction of a large group of people who, without having strengthened their spiritual power, had placed themselves in danger. In this section, the concepts which have been introduced in section one are expanded upon. The individual who is not trained in the arts of warfare, by equipping herself/himself with the tools and weaponry of the brave loses her/his life, for exoteric sciences are without any benefit. By freeing one's self from the captivity of the pure exoteric sciences, one can move towards the Divine sciences.

Sections two and six are parallel: 'fear' is the common theme of these two sections and features as a primary word in the title of both sections, to the extent that its removal would render the meaning of the sentence incomplete. In section two, Turkic warriors attempt to create fear, whereas in section six a child becomes fearful on account of an illusion. In section two, the punishments of nations gone by is stated as a cause of instigating fear for later nations and reminding them to be attentive to the majesty and might of Allah. In section six, by understanding the true nature of affairs which in appearance are fearsome, one can overcome them and the fear caused by them. Therefore, in section two, the issue of fear from Divine majesty has been presented, while section six stresses the fear of the Divine majesty and overcoming the great fearsomeness of material and outward matters by relying upon Allah.

Sections three and five are parallel: section three discusses some aspects of the endeavours of prophets in their mission to guide those who had gone astray from the Divine path and states some of the attributes of these people. In this section, the harm in being alienated from the world of Heart and the people of heart, being deceptive

towards the righteous and the wayfarers of the path of *Haqq*, how those who have gone astray overlook Allah and the people of the heart - all while having strong dependence and attachment to the material world - tyrants and false deities is discussed and clarified. This section ends by asking 'how can you, who cannot overlook this world, have patience for separation from Allah?' Section five is the answer to the question posed in section three, and states the reason why those who have gone astray do not follow the prophets. In section five, the house described in the story has the characteristics of a grave, which in reality is a heart devoid of spiritual life. By denying the prophets and the Divine saints, the disobedient and those who have gone astray are incapable of comprehending their reality, for they are not capable of seeing them. The house of the heart which is not illuminated by the rays of the light of *Haqq* does not benefit from the Divine breaths and the spiritual experience of the King of the world of existence. Further, section five discusses and clarifies the path of salvation and freedom: such a person must at times step above the grave of their heart and, by *tasbih* (glorification of Allah), remember the intrinsic and spiritual covenant of the world of *Alast* and fervently listen to the supplication of the people of perfection and the mystics who have attained union. Section three speaks of love, and in section five, patience has been called the key of salvation and prosperity. In this section it has been stressed that patience is the only path of freedom from having gone astray and for finding salvation on the path; for patience is the spirit and essence of worship and supplications.

Section four is the central section of the ninth discourse and is positioned in the centre of the parallelism and structure of this discourse. This section makes note of the primary topics which are the subject of discussion in the seven sections of this discourse. In section four, the primary emphasis is on the *pir* of the path or the *murshid* (guide) and their reality. The *pir*, *murshid* or Perfect Human, other than the aspect of essential necessity, is the perfect manifestation of Allah. In this section, the relation between the Perfect Human and Allah is as the unity of the Manifested and the manifestation. Like section seven, in section four exoteric sciences and the worshippers of the appearance and the form have been criticised, and by referring to the mosque in section one, it discusses the reality of the meaning of the mosque. After

that, the reason behind why those who have gone astray portray enmity and engage in confrontation and war with the prophets (in section three) is discussed; they do so because they consider the prophets as ordinary human beings like themselves. Later, by referring to section two and the despicable attributes which led to the destruction of that nation, it warns the contemporary human beings and those of the future that the despicable attributes of the people of the past also exists within them, and that they should thus be fearful of a destruction akin to that of the people of the past. The issue of fear amongst nations of the past which has been discussed in sections two and seven with the emphasis that this is also present within contemporary and future nations, is represented in section four:

Listen O friends to this tale,
It is a reality concerning our state.²⁵

This world is the sea and the body the fish, and the spirit
Is Yunus veiled from the light of dawn.
If he is a glorifier (of Allah) he will be freed from the fish
Otherwise he will be digested in it and becomes vanished.²⁶

Through a semiotic approach to the text, seven techniques have been employed in this discourse:

1. The fault-seeking of the four Hindus against each other is the sign which indicates to the state of the majority of people in their relationship with each other (section one). However, Rumi points out that the human being (who is a combination of sensualities and spiritualities) must, in the first place, engage in identifying and removing his or her own faults rather than that of others.

2. The destruction of previous nations is a sign which one can learn from concerning the bitter end which occurs as a result of separation from *Haqq* (section two).

That the destruction of the tribe of Noah and the tribe of Hud
Was presented to our spirits by the proclaimer of (Divine) mercy.²⁷

“Travel through the land and see how terrible the end was for those who rejected the truth.”²⁸

3. The contrast of impatience towards the affair of the material world and patience, turning a blind eye and distancing one's self from Allah, shows the spiritual and inward crisis and downfall of the human being (Section Three).

O you who cannot have patience towards delights and blessings
How can you have patience towards the generous Allah.²⁹

4. The prophets, Divine saints and the people of the heart, are a sign that the Perfect Human is the axis of the world, and as Mulla Hadi Sabzawari says "The perfect being is exactly like the *dhikr* of *Haqq*, and her/his *dhikr* is the *dhikr* of *Haqq*"³⁰.

5. Combining the triangle of "Yusuf, the well and prison" and that of "Yunus, the sea and the fish" is the sign of the possibility and necessity of becoming illuminated by the lights of Divine knowledge through the *tasbih* (glorification) of *Haqq* in the material world (Section Five).

You are the Yusuf of the time and sun of the sky,
Exit this well and prison and show yourself.
Your Yunus became cooked³¹ in the belly of the fish,
He has no means of freedom other than glorification (of Allah).³²

6. The contrast of the esoteric and the exoteric: is the sign of the necessity of not being deceived by the apparent greatness the exoteric sciences (Section Six).

7. The story of the armed and strong horse rider, who in reality was weak, is a sign of the virtual existence of the particular sciences, the denial of which results in the attainment of union with the true Being and *Haqq al-Yaqin*. "Whoever sacrifices the virtual existence and becomes one of the *abdal*, gains a true being."³³ (Section Seven).

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- ²⁵ *Mathnawi-e Ma'nawi*, Book 1, verse 35.
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- ²⁷ *Mathnawi-e Ma'nawi*, Book 2, verse 3057.

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²⁹ *Mathnawi-e Ma'nawi*, Book 2, verse 3075.

³⁰ Sabzewari, Mulla Hadi, 1374, *Sharh-e Mathnawi*, vol I, Tehran, p 394.

³¹ Cooked here means destruction and digestion and is different to gaining perfection.

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The Comparative Study of Self-Knowledge in Soren Kierkegaard and Baba Afdal Kashani

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Abstract

Soren Kierkegaard and Baba Afdal Kashani are two philosophers having axial philosophical arguments on self-knowledge. Kierkegaard's philosophy is learnt through its contrast with Hegel's, as he believes that the truth is subjective. He severely denies learning through objectivity and sees the only path to faith and reaching self-consciousness to be subjectivity in the thinking process, which leads to inwardness. Stages of self-consciousness, after the ecstatic stage, in Kierkegaard' opinion, include stages of rational ethics, religious ethics and faith. Self's perfection in his judgment is attained through trusting in God. In the faith stage, however, an individual reaches beyond "self". The definition of anxiety, despair and sin in his opinion, are causes which lead to a leap to the subsequent or the former stage in the self-consciousness stages.

Baba Afdal Kashani, however, knows the best way to reaching self-consciousness to be through philosophy. In reality, his practice can be explained with the composition of philosophy, mysticism, intellect and deed. He sees a rather important role for intellect and thinks highly of rational thinking, with the difference that the existence of intellect is the knowledge and understanding of self, and objectivity is only accredited when it is reached through subjectivity. This is because the human being consists of all beings and the path towards objectivity passes through self-consciousness. Baba Afdal too, perceives the humans' self-consciousness to fall in three levels of praiseworthy deficient, blameworthy deficient and the utmost level.

Keywords:

Subjectivity, objectivity, self-consciousness, self-knowledge, Kierkegaard, Baba Afdal.

1. Preface

One of the most important and practical types of awareness, in the eyes of most clerics, philosophers and mystics is self-consciousness, thus one of the two main mottoes of Socrates- the well renowned Greek teacher and philosopher- being "know yourself". Despite the importance of this argument, however, there exist different views toward the definition of soul or self and the approach to achieving self-consciousness or self-awareness. Many of the western and eastern philosophers have also- against Socrates' belief who regarded self-consciousness to be the goal of philosophy- discarded this matter and self-awareness has never been their axial concern. For this reason, in this paper, the identity of knowledge of self-consciousness (the essence of cognitive self-consciousness) is studied from the point of view of two philosophers from the east and the west, whose main concern has been the idea of self-consciousness

Although, at first glance, without a doubt, these two philosophers belong to two different philosophical categories, selecting them for the purpose of this study was for the following reasons:

- Self consciousness is an axial topic in both of their views. Kierkegaard is mainly known as the father of existentialism and his main concern was the importance of self to the point that existence in his view is the same as self. Baba Afdal, too, in all his books and literature, knows his goal to be stating the importance of self-consciousness for the prosperity of humanity and he categorizes human beings depending on their level of self-consciousness. (Nasr, 1983)

- Both are theologians. Baba Afdal is an Islamic scholar and Kierkegaard is a Christian, and in their views and theories, they both use divine and holy books and scriptures and are influenced by their own religious views.

- Both of them have apparently experienced self-consciousness. In Kierkegaard's biography, it is apparent that he has undergone difficult experiences that have helped him in documenting and achieving his views on self-consciousness. Baba Afdal has also been regarded as a thinker and an intellectual in his time, and has had many tutees; much evidence of his different experiences have also been reflected in his works.

- Both of them are somewhat considered literate and poets. Kierkegaard has accomplished works and research in the field of literature. Baba Afdal has written a vast collection of quatrains, and uses his poems in a lot of his publications. Therefore, their language is, to some extent, similar to each other.

- To date, no comparative study has been conducted between Baba Afdal and Kierkegaard.

2. Background Work

In recent decades, research over self-consciousness has increased. Studies have been conducted in the field of self-consciousness and its relationship with philosophy. (Ghorbani, Ghara Maleki & Watson, 2005) In psychology, too, investigations have been carried out about self knowledge. (Ghorbani, Watson, 2006)

Moreover, in the field of self knowledge, papers have been published in Kierkegaard's view (Amy, 2000) and the area of the comparison between Kierkegaard's stance and the eastern philosophers, specially mysticism and sophism too, have been studied. (Grøn, 2004), (Bektovic, 1999)

However, regarding Baba Afdal Kashani, most of the topics have been about his biography and historical issues and very little concerning his philosophy. (Zaryab, 1990), (Gharaie)

William Chittick, in a book titled "the heart of Islamic philosophy, the quest for self knowledge in Afdal al din Kashani", after introducing and looking into the views of Baba Afdal, has engaged in translating a considerable part of his bibliography to English. But no work has been done in the area of self-consciousness from his point of view. In the field of comparative studies, too, in an article, feminism in Plato's (270) and Baba Afdal's (1213) view have been examined. (Cooper, 2007)

At the international conference on Mulla Sadra in 1999, William Chittick presented an article titled "The Practice of Philosophy in Baba Afdal and Mulla Sadra"; he also gave a lecture on "everlasting of soul in Baba Afdal" in 2003. Also in the books that were published about poets, Baba Afdal was named as a sophist poet. However, regarding the subject of self-consciousness, little work has been done on Baba Afdal's point of view (Pourjavadi, Wilson, 1987)

To date, no work has been done on the comparative study of self-knowledge from Kierkegaard and Baba Afdal's views. This research pays attention to this area for the first time.

Noticing the little and limited research that was done on Baba Afdal Kashani, viewing self consciousness as he perceives, a greater understanding of this philosopher can be helpful. Moreover, since the comparative study of Baba Afdal and Kierkegaard is taking place for the first time, its results are fruitful in other comparative researches and in deepening the understanding of self-consciousness.

The problems that were discussed here are as follows:

1. What is the meaning of "self" in self-consciousness as described by the two philosophers? And what do they mean by soul and spirit?

2. How does one reach self-consciousness in one's mind?

And through analyzing the answer and the methods of these two philosophers, we arrive at this problem so the relevance between the bases of epistemic, philosophical paradigm and self-consciousness theory is discovered.

First, as a descriptive approach to these two issues, the differences and similarities in the two philosophers' views are studied.

3. Specification

3.1. Study of the meaning of "self"

3.1.1. The reason behind the word "self":

Baba Afdal, takes "self" and "soul" to be the same and knows "self", as essence and reality of a person and sees the word "self" the same as root. He knows root as that from which comes being's provision for everything below it, and that would be God. Therefore, reaching "self" -- i.e. God or complete self -- means reaching root and reality and essence, which in turn means reaching God.(Maraghi Kashani, 1958)

Kierkegaard in the definition of "self", identifies it with a relationship which relates itself to its own "self". (Kierkegaard, 1989) He boldly takes self and spirit to be the same but soul to be in need of body. In Kierkegaard's view, origin and source of self is in God and the relation that relates self to one's self is made by God, for this

relationship to remain, "self" (incomplete) is to be connected with a power that constructed the whole relationship.(Kierkegaard, 1989)

Therefore in both philosophers' view, for "self" (incomplete) to carry on being, needs to reach God and the accomplishment of self-consciousness (complete self) is connecting with God.

3.1.2. Self synthesis:

Baba Afdal knows "self" to include body, anima and intelligence, and intelligence to be the third part which is not included in the body and the potency of body to be all intelligence's eternal radiance.(Maraghi Kashani, 1958) In Kierkegaard's view, "self" is the syntheses of finite and infinite, temporal and eternal, freedom and necessity, ideal and real, body and spirit.

From this point of view, these two intellects are incompatible with each other. Maybe its root can be traced to the fact that the foundation of Kierkegaard's philosophy is dialectic and in dialectic links, two sides are needed. But Baba Afdal does not share such basis and also in his philosophy, in the definition of "self", there's a need for a third person whose existence is eternal and is connected a divine source. Therefore, existence of intelligence provides answers for these needs, as intelligence is God's eternal radiance. It is a radiance that stands through His majesty's endurance!

3.1.3. The relation between body and spirit:

In the end, Baba Afdal fuses the physical existence with the spiritual existence, through knowledge; flesh reaches the level of nature and from that to the level of self and intellect. And in this state of existence, covered bodies arise and join the spiritual bright. Baba Afdal knows the passing from physical levels, even from the solitary body and animalistic and humanistic, to be necessary for reaching the growing soul and animalistic soul and humanistic soul, and after that reaching the rank of intellect.

Therefore, in Baba Afdal's opinion, the path to reaching spiritual existence is through exceeding the physical existence and body and even in the way of self consciousness too, paying attention to body and developing it will cause it to reach intelligence and self consciousness. Therefore, since Baba Afdal is considered an Islamic

philosopher, he does not concern himself with sophism ways. And the finite side of human in the path of growth and self consciousness is deemed necessary. Although in his opinion, even lifeless things and plants and animals, too, knowing or unknowing, enter the path of self awareness but the physical aspect is also of importance for joining the spiritual side and for reaching self-consciousness.

Kierkegaard sees "self" as a synthesis, but the important point is that he, on the contrary to most religious people, does not find the body and the temporal and changeable side of humanity merely necessary for worldly aspects, rather he believes that to have a correct relationship with God, both temporal and eternal aspects in humans should be considered. Kierkegaard persistence on the multi-dimensional aspects of human is because the worldly element is ground for constant change and development and reaching self. And, indeed, it is the finite and mortal and possibility aspects of self that creates the basis for perpetual alterations or repetition in "self".

Therefore, Kierkegaard, contrary to the Christianity of the church finds attending to body and temporal aspects of humanity, necessary. Maybe this can be considered Luther's impact on him.

3.1.4. To be one thing:

Baba Afdal's method in attaining self-consciousness is also being one thing. Duality of body and soul in his view is only through attributes and the way to becoming one thing (or becoming a unified-self) is knowing, and knowledge, too, is recognizing the selfhood of self in reality and certainty and from this, one reaches resurrection which is a world of knowing.(Maraghi Kashani, 1958, p.305) On the theme of certainty, Baba Afdal writes: "certaintyWhat is known in certainty is one through essence."(Maraghi Kashani, 1958, pp. 238- 237) and certainty is a place where there is no conflict and that is the unified-self. And in his opinion, human is in anxiety when observing but himself and not being able to be one thing.

To be one thing or a unified-self is one of Kierkegaard's important recommendations to the point that he published a book with the name "Purity of Heart is To Be One Thing". He declares that to be one thing, man should travel from outside to the inside or from object to subject and the real good is also in "self" and therefore a self, free of

variance can be achieved and subsequent to this stage, one reaches the purity of heart. (Kierkegaard, 1956)

Therefore in the basis of being one thing and unified-self, both philosophers have similar views and researchers can utilize their thinking to better comprehend the unified-self and the paths to reaching it.

3.2. Process of Achieving Self-consciousness

3.2.1. Stages of Self-consciousness:

Baba Afdal categorizes the levels of humans in self consciousness into the three levels of: praiseworthy deficient, unpraiseworthy deficient and the utmost level. Kierkegaard also in his theory groups stages and courses of life into 3 levels of ecstatic, ethical and faith. Although, the level of ecstatic in his view is without self but in his many writings he speaks of this stage because by passing this stage, self-consciousness and higher levels can be reached.(Kierkegaard, 1940)

Perhaps the three stages of Baba Afdal and Kierkegaard can somewhat be considered based on each other. In Kierkegaard's ecstatic level, the main reason for living is pleasure. In Baba Afdal's unpraiseworthy deficient, both animal potencies –the predatory and the beastly- give commands to the human potency too. Kierkegaard's ethical level includes ethical wisdom and religious ethics. In Baba Afdal's praiseworthy deficient, a group of them are under the influence of the practical intellect and the other group use intellect in the ethics of God's rule. In Kierkegaard's faith level, the only important thing is God's will and this is the utmost level of self-consciousness that self connects to God. In Baba Afdal's utmost level, one reaches the end of self-consciousness that is the unification of the intellecter, the intelligible, and intellect and self reaches God's root.

Perhaps the reason for such similarities and comparability of the self knowledge stages from the point of view of these two philosophers is their sheer and deep concern towards self-consciousness, and since both have attempted to pass these stages, they have managed to find shared experiences and stages in this path. Also their references are their holy books and Christianity and Islam are both Ibrahimic religions and therefore have many similarities.

3.2.2. The Method of reaching Self-consciousness:

As previously discussed, one general similarity between the views of Baba Afdal and Kierkegaard exists and that is the blunt view of both toward knowing "self". In fact in both their views, "self" is pertained to knowing. But the difference between these two great philosophers is in the way of knowing in the process of self-consciousness.

From the view of Baba Afdal, intellectual analysis and philosophy are grounds and basis for showing "self" to ourselves. In fact, in his opinion, with the comprehension of universals one can reach disengagement. He clarifies that achieving self-consciousness becomes correct and capable through two things, namely struggle and disengagement.

Struggle is that [the seeker] persevere in affliction so that he may acquire fixity, and through fixity he can find that there is an eternal existence. But in disengagement, he separates things one by one from himself, and will grasp what remains are his own reality and essence, which does not endure by another but by him.

Therefore, Baba Afdal finds two paths of knowledge and practice as functional in reaching self-consciousness and his way is a mixture of practical and theoretical ways. He also believes that all the objects and knowledge and awareness from it can be found in self, and in this regard, finding things in self means awareness from them and since the minor world (self) is equal to the great world, by having objective knowledge of self, in a subjective way we have reached self-consciousness and in this respect, his manner can be known as "objective thinking inside self" or can be known as a mixture of objective and subjective comprehension.

However, Kierkegaard defies the objective ways and considers passion and subjective and inwardness to be the means through which self-consciousness can be reached. In fact, maybe the subjective way of Kierkegaard could not also be considered to be achieved from subjective thinking, rather it should be considered in the order of feeling and becoming. Therefore, the only way possible for reaching self-consciousness is the subjective and intuitive way and paying

attention to reasoning and object and the objective understanding only works to separate one from self and faith.

Kierkegaard knows self reflection to be the first step of self-consciousness. He not only does not see the intellectual reasoning as resultant to self-consciousness, but sees engaging in them as a cause for furthering from faith and self awareness. He persists on the two paths of recalling and repeating, for reaching the self-consciousness and truth. Recalling is of the type of Plato's recalling; it means that the path of returning to the truth is returning to the memories of that truth firmed within us. (Kierkegaard, 1989) The other way is repetition. That means that by perfecting the picture of "self" in one perpetual change, "self" constantly evolves to a new self, and this repetition should never stop.

One of the reasons that Kierkegaard utilizes such a method is to oppose the famous philosophers of his time, Hegel in particular. He defies paying attention to things in whole and only knows truth to be reachable through subjectivity. Also since the faith of Christianity has some paradoxes that are not explainable by intelligence and reasoning, he sincerely denies all basis of faith over reasoning and objective comprehension. But the acceptable religion of Baba Afdal is completely in phase with intelligence and reasoning.

3.2.3. Action and Reaching Self-knowledge:

In general, the existential philosopher on the contrary to common tradition speaks of such a practical knowing in contrast to theoretical knowing. The basic feature of this knowing is action or contribution. We cannot know things only by observing it. For example, in Kierkegaard's opinion, when Abraham at the level of faith, after surrendering himself to will of God and putting himself in front of the sword of acting based on God's will (even this will is opposite from ethic), could bring his "self" close to the utmost manifestation of self-consciousness which means spirit. (Kierkegaard, 1985) He believed that the relation to truth without suffering is impossible. In fact in his opinion, only actions associated with pain, suffering and loneliness can bring us to knowing and self-knowledge. He explained that in any level of life's way, when man will have the consciousness about himself, he is on a huge suffering and loneliness.

Baba Afdal clarifies two ways for achieving self-consciousness; through struggle and disengagement. In struggle, the seeker perseveres in affliction so that he may acquire fixity and attain higher knowledge. Even in disengagement, man by separating things one by one from himself could reach to his real “self”.

Therefore, both of them believe in such a knowledge that is derived through action because their philosophical system is based on their personal experience in reaching self-knowledge. But Baba Afdal, in addition to this, supposes that intellectual and philosophical knowing has an important role in reaching self-consciousness.

3.2.4. Anxiety and Irony:

In Baba Afdal’s opinion, certainty is finding things in “self” and before it reaches self, it is anxious and muddled. This is called doubt (Maraghi Kashani, 1958, pp. 238- 237). And one is in anxiety when observing but him and when he knows his “self”, there is no anxiety and doubt and he is in position of certainty.

In this paper, three concepts in Kierkegaard’s theories –Anxiety, Despair, Sin- are known as irony or agents that is lead to leap in levels of self-consciousness. Kierkegaard supposes that anxiety results from freedom and free will, and the more you experience the state of anxiety, the more you receive the total dimensions of your freedom. But to immunize yourself of total anxiety that means madness, you must have a non-intellectual leap to faith realm. Therefore, man will be saved from mad and inward rupture by his inward connection to God. Also in his opinion, anxiety is useful because it can lead to deeper self-knowledge and a qualification leap for moving to new levels of self-knowledge.

Therefore both of them suppose anxiety as irony or agents that is lead to leap in levels of self-consciousness, but there are some differences. Kierkegaard knows anxiety in a direct relation with self-consciousness and says the more the self, the more the anxiety. And even one of the methods to know the psychology of self and to find the rate of human’s freedom and free will is anxiety. But Baba Afdal knows anxiety as knowledge about outside and other than self.

Maybe the reason for this difference is that Kierkegaard is a phenomenologist and psychology states are important to him, and he

named at least two of his books (Kierkegaard, 1989, 1980) as psychological analysis of self. But Baba Afdal thinks epitomical and philosophical to anxiety and certainty.

4. Explanation

4.1. Background Knowledge of these two Philosophers

Socrates believed that the final aim of philosophy is self-knowledge and “know yourself” was one of his two main mottoes. (Malekian, 2002, p.20) (Kwak, 2001) After him, Plato paid great attention to self-knowledge too. He believed that self’s source is in the past. Gradually, philosophers neglected self-knowledge’s importance in contrary to other philosophical, logical and natural subjects. Aristotle paid attention to humanism and his manifest “About Soul” has explored the subject of soul in detail.

Baba Afdal wrote during a period when several figures were bridging the gaps between philosophy and Sufism. Avicenna (d. 428/1037) had shown some of the directions this movement could take in a few of his works like “Hekayat haye Takhayoli”, “Al-Isharat Wa L-Tanbihat” and “Mabahes e Mashreghiye”. Ghazali had employed philosophical terminology to express concepts derived from Sufi training. (see, for example, Ghazali, *The Niche of lights*, translated by David Bachman (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1998)) And Sufi martyr, Ayn al-Qudat Hamadani (d. 525/1131) had shown a sophisticated mastery of philosophical theory. Among Baba Afdal’s contemporaries, Suhrawardi followed many of Avicenna’s leads and Ibn al-Arbi made full use of philosophical terminology in his theoretical mysticism. (Chittick, 2006, pp. 9-10) Baba Afdal employed the philosophical and logical terminology of Avicenna and for this reason we can call him “mashai”. Among the philosophers, he only notified Aristotle and Hermes by name, and translated some of their books. Given the nature of the works of the Greek authors that baba Afdal chose to translate into Persian, he may deserve the label “Hermtizing” given to him by Henry Corbin. (Corbin, 1960, p.13)

Descartes believed that we have the awareness of self without any medium and before experiencing the object. But Kant believed that inwardness experiences can only be possible through outside experiences. But in his transcendent philosophy in which self does not

have a time-wise identity, one is considered an individual for he is an ethical self-conscious free existence. But in Kant, the transcendent I is always the subject and never the object. In Hegel's philosophy, truth is absolute spirit and this spirit is searching for absolute self-consciousness.

Kierkegaard, who had background knowledge of philosophers such as Descartes, Kant, Hegel, etc., found that the problem of his age has not been solved with those philosophical theories and the human individual has been further forgotten. Therefore he denies all of this philosophical background, and even rises to fight thinking and reasoning and believes that subjective thought and inwardness is only of the category of intuition and becoming.

Of course Kierkegaard could not reach this level without being influenced by the thinkers before him, and one of the great formative influences on Kierkegaard was Martin Luther. (R. Jolivot, Introduction to Kierkegaard) There are many ideas which are common to them both, such as sin as the opposite of faith, and the idea of faith as the 'the leap into the absurd' and also for Luther, religion was not something dependent on external agents and intermediaries, but something altogether spiritual, personal, inward which the behavior first experiences personally as serenity of conscience. (Thomas, 1957, pp. 49-50) Also there was a 'mutual influence' between Kierkegaard and Schelling amongst the foremost in the revolt against Hegelianism. (Encyclopedia Britannica (14th Edition), vol 2, p.833) But the great influence was from John George Hamann (1730-1788). (Lowrie, 1938, p.164) For Hamann faith is something different from Reason and is best thought of as an immediate awareness like sight. (Pfleiderer, The Philosophy of Religion, p.197) Thus philosophy becomes a strange sort of pedagogues to lead us to positive faith. (Thomas, 1957, p. 55) Yet another thinker must be mentioned as a powerful influence on Kierkegaard – he is Lessing and Kierkegaard explained his admiration of Lessing in the PostScript. (Thomas, 1957, p.57)

Anyway Kierkegaard 'shifted the balance from the object to subject, from the objective world of idea to the person who has those ideas. It does not meet Kierkegaard's case to say that it all began with Descartes and was carried further by Kant. Since for both Kant and Descartes the self, the subject, is merely an abstract and empty dynamic

centre, and all the importance is given to the periphery of the objective system. To Kierkegaard the subject is the concrete and entire person.' (Haecker, 1937, p.24)

Therefore, in explanation according to this antecedent, Kierkegaard denied and negated philosophy, he views inwardness and direct knowledge as the only way to reach real knowledge and reality.

In contrast, Baba Afdal did not fight or deny the opinion of his prior philosophers; on the contrary, he, by adjusting these ideas, conducted the Aristotle philosophy to self-knowledge and further more knew philosophy as the way to reach total existence and self-knowledge. Although he has not explained philosophy as the only method, he sees the role of thought and reason irreplaceable (Maraghi Kashani, 1958, p.241) and knows the accomplishment of all things to be attaining the intellect. (Maraghi Kashani, 1958, p.607)

4.2. Their Procedure for Self-Knowledge:

4.2.1. Difference with Common Thinking Tradition:

Both of them had a distinct method compared to their contemporary common thinking tradition. Baba Afdal's philosophy from beginning to end had been based on self-knowledge and this is the reason for his difference, whereas Kierkegaard was renowned for opposing his contemporary thinking tradition, thus being known as the pioneer of the existentialism movement. The movement that was considered a protest to its previous philosophical and mental systems and these protests were often regarding extremist tendency to intellectualism, industry and technology, politics and common religion organizations which have deprived the freedom of thought and action from human and have forced him to go with the stream and coordinate with society. So Kierkegaard with a different definition of knowledge and truth, rose to fight with these systems.

4.2.2. Religion-Independent Viewpoint:

The principles and theories, which have been presented by Baba Afdal, are conformed to Islam and Quran in his view. For example, in self-knowledge and finding object in subjective knowledge, he cited examples from Quran, but generally, when he had introduced the way to reach to self-knowledge in detail; his ideas were on the basis of his

personal and the prior philosophers' ideas. Therefore, he has a religion-independent viewpoint.

Kierkegaard is a philosopher – although, maybe he, himself, does not accept this- so apart from his religious beliefs and belongings, he attends to a philosophical thinking that sees religion from an outside point of view. As a matter of fact, it is his personal and philosophical thoughts that have given direction to his religious reflections and with his philosophical and personal reflections; he comes to a theory that might not have much accordance with Christian teachings. Although he constantly insists that the way he proposes is desired by religion as well.

4.2.3. Addressee's Of Remarks:

Baba Afdal emphasized that his words are not addressed to the complete human who has been given the felicity of the final goal nor is it addressed to who does not have the wont and worthiness to become complete. Rather, his talk is with the folk of the middle level. (Maraghi Kashani, *Madarej al-Kamal*, 1958, p.6)

Kierkegaard did not select the way of intellectual reasoning, because the way could not help the aesthetic people and those who do not have the wont to become complete. Rather the analysis of these psychological states can lead them to a kind of self-reflection and bring them to self-consciousness and other stages of life's way. Therefore, Kierkegaard's addressees are greater than Baba Afdal because willing and intention to reach perfection is the first condition for Baba Afdal's addressees. Because, the philosophical way and intellectual reasoning cannot help one who has no will to reach perfection like an ecstatic being.

4.2.4. Intellect and Intellectual Reasoning:

Baba Afdal assumes an important role for intellect and deems rational thinking wise as well, with the difference that the self's awareness, knowing and finding are the intellect's existence and even the other existents are the things found by the intellect. (Maraghi Kashani, *Madarej al-Kamal*, 1958, p.22) Of course he distinguishes between different people's intellect in terms of quantity, but conceives that the intellect is a radiance that stands through its Endurance-giver _majesty is his majesty! (Maraghi Kashani, *Madarej al-Kamal*, 1958,

p.23). He believes in the genuineness of intellect and wisdom; deems intellect the sole path to salvation; and seeks the utmost perfection in the unification of intellect, intellector and intelligible. In his opinion the merit of the rational reasoning is to know self, which is a feature of intellecting soul, for, the “self” cannot be known except by the “self”. Therefore, in his view, if one wishes to achieve, then proofs and rational reasoning are ways to do so (though other ways are not denied either), whereas they are not functional for those who don’t wish to achieve. On the other hand, Baba Afdal talks about the proof of the soul since he regards the attempt to prove as a feature of intellecting soul, i.e., it’s the soul that attempts to prove the soul and this very attempt is a proof of intellecting soul (Maraghi Kashani, Madarej al-Kamal, 1958, pp.23-24). Thus in some cases, he finds rationalism and proof to be misleading.

Also in Baba Afdal’s view, philosophy is the most direct means of achieving the true Humanity. When people meditate on the philosophy truths, they will be drawn to look into themselves and come to understand that they already possess everything that they seek (Chittick, 2006, pp.10-11) because when generals become mooted in philosophy, man comes to disengagement and from this way will achieve self-consciousness.

Kierkegaard was seriously objecting attempts to rationalize the sense of religiousness and being Christian, and also the idea that every believer must be supported by a reason.(Kierkegaard, 1957) In his opinion, the religious belief is not only unachievable by intellect and the wisdom is unable to perceive it, but it’s essentially nonintellectual. He is basically in disagreement with any kind of intellectual thinking, not just which, but also any type of thinking that is based on the separation of object from the subject. (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.20) But this opinion of Kierkegaard goes back to his personal reflection in existential philosophy that has objected to any objective, intellectual and scientific knowledge because these knowledge that have been prescribed for all, are unacceptable for conducting the human beings and leading them to the truth.

Thus this is one of the situations that these two thinkers clearly disagree on.

4.2.5. Subjectivity is Truth:

Baba Afdal supposes when knowledge is acceptable that the person have found it in his “self”. Therefore the credibility of knowledge can be based on its belonging to the subject. So surely this idea can be believed to be equal with “Subjectivity is Truth”. Also he believed that if we couldn’t find something inside, that thing doesn’t exist, because in his view, self comprises all types of existence and certainty is finding things in “self”.

Subjectivity is an important and basic concept in Kierkegaard’s philosophy. (Hacker, 1997) He thinks that we shouldn’t find truth outside the “self”. (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.20) because only subjectivity is truth.

Therefore both are the same in this idea although the way of reaching subjectivity in them is different. But we might be able to know them as relativist. One of the results of this interpretation of truth is individualism, meaning that any value is dependent on the individual. Of course, Kierkegaard, authorizes man in selecting his way of life, as opposed to individual relativism. For example, when man selects the ethical way, he has accepted that there is one ethical rule that all must obey. So the only difference between Kierkegaard and absolutists is that there is no obligation to select the ethical way, and man is free to choose the way of faith or even the ecstatic way.

4.3. Basics of Knowledge

4.3.1. The Level Worthy of Being Referred to as Existence:

Considering that Baba Afdal is Avicennist in his philosophical basis, in his view “self” could be implied to any soul possessing existent (meaning existents which at least have movement and growth, whether the vegetal, animal or the human soul) (Maraghi Kashani, Rahe Anjam-name, 1958, p.65). Of course, Baba Afdal believed in a level of existence for things. The lowest level in existence is potential being, it is the existence of material things in the matter, such as the existence of the tree in the seed (Maraghi Kashani, 1958, p.58) and elsewhere, he calls it possibility, whose existence has been concealed (Maraghi Kashani, 1958, p.21) However, in cases having neither the life of movement nor the life of sensation, “self” is not implied.

Kierkegaard did not apply self or existence for a man remaining in immediacy until he had the power of reflection for change. Don Juan represents pre-reflective life in its temporal atomism and consequent unceasing change. (Connell, 1985, p.109) When man reflects inside and goes to the irony level, the first level of self existence can be implied to him because after this he could reach self –consciousness.

But Baba Afdal adds an independent and very important theory to the discussion of self-knowledge: he believes that self includes all types of existence and because of that, applies a type of existence for lifeless things, since “self” even includes them.

Kierkegaard, however, did not believe in this idea and he knows self as a relation which relates itself to God, because of which he did not imply self to infant and immediate aesthete.

4.3.2. Object of Knowledge:

The apprehension of many philosophers prior to Baba Afdal except Socrates and Plato, was not the knowledge “self”. The object of knowledge for Aristotle was the knowledge of “soul” and human. Whereas for Baba Afdal, it was that of “self”. And the utmost of self-knowledge is unification of intellect, intellector and intelligible. Therefore, both the subject and object of knowledge, along with the intellect, all become “self”. For Baba Afdal, knowing is being, truly to know is truly to be, and truly to be is to be forever. (Chittick, 2006, p. 44)

In Sartre’s opinion, in “cogito ergo sum”, one knows himself in the presence of another, because in cogito the existence of others is discovered therefore he finds himself between all minds. Also in Kant, the transcendent I, is always a subject and never an object of knowledge. But in Kierkegaard, the subject and the object of knowledge are “self”.

4.3.3. Existence of Outside World:

Although both Baba Afdal and Kierkegaard believed that subjectivity is truth, but they believed in existence of the outside too. But Baba Afdal supposes that the object and the whole world can be found in subject and “self”, because human is a total existence. So their

belief in subjectivity wouldn't refer them to denying the object like Idealists.

4.3.4. Free Will and Intention:

Baba Afdal at the beginning of all his advices and letters encourages men to know themselves and believes that his addressees are not those who have not decided to reach perfection. So man's decision is an important point that is based on his intention and will, and even the way to reach it, is perfectly free. Of course in Islam, it has been emphasized that man has free will to select his life's way and Baba Afdal was not a Fatalistic, so he considers man's free will as an acceptable notion in life's road.

Kierkegaard also believed in man's free will. Of course, sometimes he knows faith as a given one. Leap in his idea is based on will and leap means a decision _a free personal decision_ because Christianity is a selection. But then he continues that God will give the blessing of this selection.

5. Summary

5.1. The Positions of Similarity

- Both of them have an important role in self-consciousness movement.
- Their philosophical method differed from their contemporary common mental tradition.
- Their philosophies are centered and focused on self-consciousness
- The object of knowledge in both of them is "self".
- Both believe that the truth is subjectivity.
- Both believe that there is connection between body and spirit in self-consciousness road.
- Both of them have believed in existence of outward too.
- Both believe that for "self" (incomplete) to carry on being, it needs to reach God, and the utmost level of self-consciousness (complete self) is connecting with God.
- The stages of life's way in Kierkegaard theory are ecstatic, ethical and faith levels. The levels of human in self-

consciousness from Baba Afdal's view are three levels of praiseworthy deficient, unpraiseworthy deficient and the utmost level. These two theories have some similarities.

- Both believe that freedom and free will has an important role in reaching to self-consciousness.
- Both believe that the way to reach unified self and to be one thing is return to self.

5.2. The Positions of Opposite

- Baba Afdal considers soul to be the same as soul but Kierkegaard knows self and spirit the same and soul to be in need of body.
- Baba Afdal knows "self" to include body, anima intelligence and intelligence to be the third part, which is not included in the in body. However, in Kierkegaard's view, "self" is the dialectic syntheses of finite and infinite, temporal and eternal, freedom and necessity, ideal and real, body and spirit.
- Baba Afdal knows anxiety as knowledge about outside and other than self. But Kierkegaard knows anxiety in a positive relation with self-consciousness and says the more the self, the more the anxiety.
- In the points that they differ from their contemporary common mental tradition, they oppose one another. Kierkegaard defies and denies that mental tradition, but Baba Afdal, while preserving the body of intellectualism and philosophical thinking, reforms the content of it in the direction of self-knowledge goal.
- In using philosophical method for reaching self-consciousness, they are in opposite positions. Kierkegaard defies objective thinking and reasoning but Baba Afdal supposes that philosophy is the best way for reaching self-consciousness.
- In the connection between body and spirit, they have some anisotropy in their thinking. Kierkegaard believed that for a true relation to God, both the temporal and eternal aspects of human must be noticed. But Baba Afdal fuses the bodily existence with

the spiritual existence, which is through knowledge; flesh reaches the level of nature and from that to the level of self and intellect. And in this state of existence, covered bodies arise and join the spiritual bright.

6. Conclusion

We can conclude two basic points from this paper. In fact, in comparing their views on self-consciousness, there is a common shared point in their views and an incident of disagreement.

1- They share in subjectivity looking to knowledge category. So, firstly, their philosophies are centered and focused on self-consciousness and the object of knowledge, in their view, is the "self". Secondly, both believe that the truth is subjectivity; therefore the self-consciousness is the true form of knowledge. Since their goal is to reach this truth, they both believe that, in order to achieve self-consciousness, people should follow a set of stages.

2- Despite these fundamental common views, the two philosophers disagree in how to achieve self-consciousness. Kierkegaard's approach to self-consciousness is based on feeling and intuition, and he believes that using intellectual reasoning not only won't reach person, but it is an obstacle through the road of self-consciousness; even more, he believes that they are actually barriers to achieve self-consciousness. In fact, in Kierkegaard's view, self-consciousness is to actively play in the events not just to observe; so it belongs to the category of practical intellect. So in a sense, his definition of subjectivity is not even subjective thought, rather is of the type of emotions and becoming, based on intuition and direct knowledge.

In contrast, while Baba Afdal emphasizes subjectivity, he finds the most direct means to reach the real self to be intellect, intellectual reasoning and even philosophy. So, he, in fact, accepts the objectivity way, provided that we discover the external world in ourselves and precede the objective travel in our internal world. In his opinion, understanding, knowledge and awareness of anything is nothing but finding it inside the "self", because he believes that everything that exists is in man's "self" and the human is the all-encompassing being of all existence universes. So the perfect existence can be found in the

"self". Thus we see that Baba Afdal's centre for human "self" is wisdom such that his ultimate self-consciousness is the unification of the intellect or, the intelligible, and intellect. Of course, he also emphasizes on the practical wisdom and the knowledge obtained in practice as a result of attempts and patience in disasters. Meanwhile, noticing universals and reaching disengagement through theoretical wisdom are also necessary, in Baba Afdal's view, toward achieving self-consciousness.

Thus the difference between the two philosophers lies in the approaches they introduce to reach self-consciousness.

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Perfect Man in Rumi's Perspective¹

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Abstract

This article seeks to clarify the perspective of Rumi (1207-1273), who is one of the greatest Persian and Muslim Sufi poets of all time, on some of the dimensions of 'Perfect Man'. These include: 1) 'his position in existence'; 2) 'his attributes' and; 3) 'the mutual relations between Perfect Man and the spiritual wayfarer'.

One of the most important concepts of Rumi's spiritual thought is that of Perfect Man, which is in relation to God, existence, spiritual wayfarer and guidance.

The Perfect Man is the vicegerent of Allah and is the reflection of His Essence. He is the '*alchemist*', '*elixir*', '*spiritualist*', '*the antidote of separation*', '*the door of Divine mercy*', '*the shadow of God*' and '*the lion of Truth*'.

All of the different dimensions of Perfect Man are in the state of perfection; these dimensions include '*good speech*', '*good acts*', '*good ethics*' and '*unique and exalted intuitive knowledge*'. He has annihilated in Allah and has gained subsistence in Him. He is the symbol of patience, bravery, chivalry, generosity and justice.

Perfect Man is responsible for leading and guiding humanity. The spiritual wayfarer must heed to the commands and teachings of Perfect Man, and must be 'observant of manners'. Five spiritual manners that the spiritual wayfarer must observe in relation to the sheikh or *pir* or Perfect Man are: 1) Purity of intention in relation to the *pir*; 2) Accepting the speech of the *pir* with desire and certainty; 3) Concealing the secrets of the *pir*; 4) Submitting to and having patience towards the commands of the *pir*; 5) Not objecting to the speech, acts and states of the *pir*. The Perfect Man cares about the spiritual wayfarers and guides them to the straight path.

Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, 'Ali, Hassan, Hussain and the Mahdi of Fatima are evident examples of Perfect Man. In each era, one Perfect Man must exist for leading and guiding humanity; the rest of the Divine Saints are his vicegerents in different places and societies.

Introduction:

This article seeks to clarify the perspective of Rumi (1207-1273), who is one of the greatest Persian and Muslim Sufi poets of all time, on some of the dimensions of 'Perfect Man'. These include: 1) 'his position in existence'; 2) 'his attributes' and; 3) 'the mutual relations between Perfect Man and the spiritual wayfarer'. On Rumi bibliography see Franklin Lewis work² and on his thought see Prof William Chittic³ and Dr Safavi⁴ works.

The Position of Perfect Man in Existence

Mystics consider Perfect Man as the main centre of the world⁵. Heaven and Hell are considered as elements of the reality of Perfect Man and are respectively opposite to Divine wrath and mercy. The reality and status of Perfect Man is above any form of thought or imagination, and is beyond the sphere of the thinking of regular human beings.

In the inner home of Divine Saints there is naught but *Haqq* (Allah). Therefore, neither the reality of Perfect Man is known and evident to the understanding and intellect of regular human beings, nor the Essence of Allah. Perfect Man is the complete and perfect manifestation of Allah, apart from Essentia Necessity which is exclusive to Allah. The life of Perfect human beings before becoming manifested in the material world has been present in the infinite sea of Divine existence and generosity, and their spirit before entering this material world has benefited from Divine attention; thus, they have been acquainted with the realities and secrets of existence and, as such, are worthy of being the vicegerents of Allah. The spirits of Divine Saints were present before Allah's consultation with the angels about the creation of human beings. When the angels were attempting to prevent the creation of human beings, the spirit of the mystics discreetly mocked them as the angels did not have the potential to understand the status of the vicegerent of Allah, for the spirits of the mystics were aware of the creations of Allah before their creation and were aware of their quiddity.

The spiritual reality of Perfect human beings is one. In terms of reality they are one, although in terms of their power of influence and their spiritual power, they are varied; just as the waves of the sea

multiply and diversify by the wind, mystics are also diverse in terms of their bodies, although this diversity does not in any way affect their spiritual unity. In reality, the human spirits are a unified light, which after becoming appointed to different bodies, appear diverse and multiple. The one who pays attention to the diversity of bodies becomes afflicted with doubt concerning the reality of spirits, whereas spiritual dispersion and disunity is specific to animal spirits. The spirit that Allah blew into the human being, however, is the spirit of Perfect Man which is united; therefore, the spirits of Prophets and Divine Saints, which are devoid of the desires of the soul, are united.

As Allah has shone His light upon His creations, whoever receives this light goes to the right path and whoever does not receive it goes astray and into darkness. Thus, the whole of existence is a manifestation of the unified existence of Allah.

The heart of Perfect Man is a mirror in which Divine reality is reflected. The Prophets and Divine Saints are aware of the realities of the world and the reality of everyone and everything is evident to them, just as the daylight is a reflection of their inner light and the dark night is a reflection of their state of concealment, which conceals the faults of human beings. The illumination of Prophet Muhammad's heart is to the extent that in the Holy Qur'an Allah has sworn upon the day light, as a manifestation of the spiritual light of Prophet Muhammad, for Allah never swears on anything transient. When Allah swears on the night in the Qur'an, it is also because of Prophet Muhammad's attribute of concealment, and because his body concealed his inner light from people.

In each era there is a Perfect Man and the chain of the *wilayah* of the Prophet will continue till the Day of Resurrection. According to the Shi'a, Imam Mahdi of the children of Imam 'Ali, is alive as the Perfect Man and will rise by the command of Allah for the protection of the Divine religion. Perfect Man, like Divine light and intellect, is the messenger of Allah. Perfect Man transfers the realities and wisdoms to the next *wali* and benefits the next *wali* by his light, for Divine Saints, in terms of their states of spiritual wayfaring and the degrees of discovering the Truth, have ranks which end in the Perfect Man. By reaching the high ranks through asceticism, the spiritual wayfarer, following the removal of the 700 fold veils, will reach a stage where he

is present in the presence of Allah. By passing all the stages of the perfection of the soul and passing all the veils, the spiritual wayfarer becomes like the Sea of Divine Unity.

The world is never denied the presence of the vicegerent of Allah and the Perfect Man. In all eras amongst all nations, a Perfect Man is present as the warner and the giver of glad tidings, who establishes peace and destroys oppression. Perfect Man, by uniting lives, causes the purification of hearts and defeats war and enmity. As such, human beings become compassionate towards each other like a mother, as the Prophet addressed all of the Muslims as one person. Through the *barakah* of the presence of Prophet Muhammad, Muslims became a unified soul, without the presence of which they would have been each others' enemies. For example, the ancient feud between the tribes of Aws and Khazraj was removed by the *barakah* of the being of the Prophet and the light of Islam, and by following the Divine teaching that "the believers are brothers to each other" they became each other's brothers. Further, by destroying their diversities, they became like a unified body, just as the grapes which in appearance are separate from each other, by squeezing become a unified liquid. Perfect Man and imperfect man are opposed to one another, thus, through gaining perfection, imperfect man becomes a worthy companion for Perfect Man.

The degree of discovering the Truth for the Divine Saints is relative to their closeness to Allah; when they are closer to the Divine court, they reach the Divine grace without intermediation, as the world reaches the Divine grace through Perfect Man.

The reality of the Prophets and Divine Saints is the Muhammadan light, which is the symbol of the Divine names and attributes. By benefitting from this light the Prophets reach the state of *fana* (annihilation) and *baqa* (subsistence) and unmediated meeting with Allah, and the mystics, with the aid of the Muhammadan light, come to possess countless ranks and *kiramat* (miracles).

In the state of greatness Perfect Man is like the shining sun, the warmth of whose being warms the heavens and the spiritual wayfarers.

The sun of this world is limited to rising and setting at a specific place, whereas the Sun of *Haqq* is unlimited and infinite. The beings of the world are portrayals of the light of *Haqq*, for the being of *Haqq*

does not have a sunset and sunrise and is constant. Although human beings are like the smallest particles of the Divine ray, in both worlds they are such radiant suns that nothing can place a shadow over them, darkening them. Yet still, Perfect Man rotates around the Sun of Reality and is in need of it.

With the attention that the Sun of Reality (Allah) pays the Perfect Man, He separates Perfect Man from other things and makes him aware of Himself. The Sun of Reality is aware of all the causes; losing hope in Him and cutting off from Him is impossible, as the separation of the human being from the sun and the fish from water is impossible. As such, the spiritual life of Perfect Man is also completely dependent on the Sun of Reality and it is not possible for Perfect Man to sever himself from Him, for the Perfect Man knows that without being aware of *Haqq*, he will reach nowhere.

Allah is always with the Perfect Man. The spirit of Perfect Man, which is in constant connection with and nearness to Allah, is connected to his body, although the two are not of the same genus.

Common sense or sensual perception is a phenomenon which is present in all human beings, regardless of whether they are good or bad. The reason for the spiritual perfection and strength of angels in comparison to regular human beings is that they are above common sense, but the spirit of human beings is stronger and more perfect than that of angels, and this was the reason for the prostration of the angels to Adam, for that which is superior never prostrates to that which is inferior.

All the realities and secrets are congregated within the human being, whereas angels do not possess such comprehensiveness. The spirit and life and realities of all the creations follow the life which surpasses the limits of the intellect and intuition and joins infinity. As such, the fish of the sea become the needle of the clothes of the mystic Ibrahim Adham, just as the string follows the needle. Hence, the grades of beings which have life are animals, human beings, angels and Perfect Man, who is superior and better than all of them. The Perfect *wali*, by relying upon his *wilayah* and influence, places all the beings that are below him under his influence.

The context of the twelfth discourse of the second book of *Mathnawi*⁶ is the stage of *Haqq al-Yaqin* of Perfect Man. The unity of knowledge, knowledgeable and known becomes clear through Divine wisdom, and the best human being reaches unity with *Haqq*. Reaching '*Ayn al-Yaqin* is conditional on belief in the science of *ta'wil* (esoteric interpretation), and moving from the exoteric to the esoteric. The function of this stage is the creation of social and spiritual unity within the society of believers despite having outward differences.

The Attributes of Perfect Man

Perfect human beings do not need the tools of ricalempi thinking, for they are drowned within the sea of Divine *ma'rifah*. They reach salvation and spiritual success through love, asceticism and by intuitive *ma'arifah*. In this way, from the appearance of sensory phenomena the mystics reach beyond sense, whereas this form of sensory perceptions for non-mystics is simply an outward observation, for their thought belongs to the past or the future. However, since Perfect human beings are free from the limits of time and their thinking is not limited to a specific time, the problem of knowing is solved for them and they do not require the tools which are needed by regular human beings. As such, the spirit of the mystics, which is free from the limitations of time, is capable of the observation of the being of objects before their creation. Perfect human beings see all beings in any state, before their appearance in the world of meaning, and know of the good and bad of everything; in reality, their spirit has drunk from the pure Divine drinks before creation. They see the opposite of each thing in its being and are aware of its effects and outcome before its appearance, and have seen existence when it has been non-existent. The heavens revolve lovingly along the axis of Perfect Man and the sun gets its light and illumination from the being of Perfect Man. Perfect Man is the axis of the world and as long as he exists in the world, the world is protected and established.

The Perfect mystic is never separated from Allah, for he considers his own attributes as the Divine Essence and attributes, and his separation from *Haqq* is impossible.

What the seekers of exoteric knowledge and empirical knowledge gain after years of bearing hardship and spending a life time on this path is evident to Perfect human beings from the beginning.

Allah has been exemplified in the Perfect Man and he is the reflection of Divine attributes. As the *Ana al-Haqq* (I am *Haqq*) of Manthur, which was the result of his journey away from the realm of self-seeing and egocentrism, turned to light, the *Ana al-Haqq* (I am *Haqq*) of the Pharaoh, which was out of egocentrism and forgetfulness of *Haqq*, was a lie and a corrupt speech.

As the different parts of the body have different forms and qualities, Perfect human beings also have different forms and qualities, but the mind of regular human beings is unable to understand these different states and qualities. The result of the manifestation of the Divine Essence upon the spirit of human beings is the advent of Perfect Man, who is the ultimate reason of creation. As Lady Maryam became pregnant with Jesus, the life of Perfect Man also benefits from the manifestation of Divine light. Through Perfect Man's life benefitting from Allah and receiving Divine wisdom and knowledge, all the beings of the world gain life, for the Perfect Man enriches and benefits lives, such that even the world benefits from the existence of Perfect Man.

The world of the Perfect Man as a result of receiving Divine wisdom and knowledge is constantly being annihilated and again reappears, till the moment of his final resurrection arrives, which is the separation of the Perfect Man from the material world and his connection to the Divine reality, which is the essence of the one God. The story of the thirsty man who was sitting on a wall which prevented him from reaching the water, and by hearing the sound of the water as the result of a brick of the wall falling into it, losing himself and considering it as the granting of his prayer, is the story of the spirit which is happy for the breaking and destruction of its material desires and wishes, for in reality they prevent reaching and meeting the *Haqq*. In reality, this sound for those who are thirsty for union with the Divine is like the sound of Israfil who resurrects the dead, or like the days of paying the *zakat* for the darwish, or the freedom from poverty for the destitute, or the hearing of the glad tidings of freedom for the prisoner. This sound is like the Divine breath which reached the Prophet from Yemen from one of his companions, or like the scent of Prophets which

causes the intercession of the Prophet for the sinners on the Day of Judgement, or like the scent of Yusuf's which gave Jacob his sight back.

Regular human beings only see the outward form of objects. Perfect Man, however, is a vehicle for the manifestation of the Divine secrets and sees the quiddity of objects.

The highest form of knowledge belongs to the pure Sufis and those free from the chain of sensualities, for this means knowing the *Haqq* by the *Haqq* without the intermediation of other causes; this kind of knowledge belongs to the Prophets and Divine Saints.

In this regards, Imam Sajjad says that: I have known You by Yourself and You guided me towards Yourself and called me towards Yourself, and if You were not, I would not have known who You are⁷.

The mystic who has reached union knows that the phenomena is not essential, rather, it is noumen which is essential, for he knows that there is only one Being and the rest are reflections of Him. Further, he does not see a world unless he sees the relation of causality between the world and its creator, for he only sees the Universal Essence in which he is drowned.

Some of the signs of the spiritual wisdom of Perfect Man have been stated in discourse ten of the second book of the *Mathnawi*⁸, some of which are opening paths, creating positive existential transformation, patience, giving selflessly and chivalry becoming part of the character of the mystics. The mystics are the kings of the world of the hearts, but the temporal kings rule on their thrones. The beginning of the illumination of mystics by the unseen light in the stage of *Haqq al-Yaqin* is because of the freedom of their attention from the chains of the soul; at this stage Divine attributes replace spiritual talents. In the stage of '*Ayn al-Yaqin* the mystic sees clearly the realities; this kind of seeing is firm and is opposite to other forms of knowledge, which are debatable. The reality which is discovered at the stage of '*Ayn al-Yaqin* is a universal issue and is not only an individual experience, as some of the western scholars have stated, for it is experienced by all the Divine Saints and also because they have informed others of it and have stated it for the worthy in a manner understandable to them. Further, the door and path for reaching such a spiritual knowledge is open to everyone; it requires "wanting", "need", "hard-work" and a "master". The reality of the Sheikh and his light does not have an end or limit.

Disbelief (*kufir*) is the symbol of the veil of darkness and deductive belief is the symbol of the veil of light. The disbeliever is covered from the Truth, and also the person who has stopped at the rank of deductive belief and *Ilm al-Yaqin* is also veiled. It is only Perfect Man who has reached the stage of seeing reality and certain knowledge which is the stage of *Haqq al-Yaqin* and, as such, is freed from the veils.

Yahya and Jesus, in discourse twelve of the second book, are the symbol of Perfect Man and Prophet Muhammad is the symbol of the best Perfect human being.

The Mutual Relations of Perfect Man and the Spiritual Wayfarer

The spiritual wayfarer reaches the intention and the destination with the guidance of the guide, thus, if the guide is an imperfect human being he will cause the spiritual wayfarer to deviate and go astray from the path of *Haqq*. The spiritual wayfarer, by making his actions and states compatible to that of the guide, will also become perfect in the end, whereas becoming compatible and socialising with imperfect human beings will lead to the decreasing of the intellect⁹.

Perfect Man distances himself from ignorant people, as the Great Name of Allah which gives Prophets and Divine Saints the power of miracles can cause the destruction of the ignorant. Those who seek to learn the Great Name must have a soul which is more pure than rain and an understanding which is greater than that of the angels, and must have never sinned. Desiring to reach such a stage requires a very long time, so that the soul of the human being becomes pure and his prayers become accepted, and for Allah to consider him as trustworthy in keeping the Divine secrets so that he can reach the stage of being the Divine Trustee. This is portrayed by the cane becoming a serpent in the hand of Moses because of the purity of his spirit and soul, whereas it would have been useless in the hands of a regular person.

The best way of spiritual wayfaring is benefitting from the presence of a spiritual guide, for being present in the presence of the Perfect Man protects the spiritual wayfarer from the temptations of the devil. In reality, the heart of the mystic is a book for accepting Divine inspirations and miracles and is devoid of letters and words. The result

of the work of thinkers is their writings, yet the result of the work of the mystic is the knowledge that, on the one hand, is the result of spiritual wayfaring (acquired knowledge), and on the other hand is the other wisdoms that are revealed to his heart from Allah through revelation (intuitive knowledge). Thus, for reaching reality, the first knowledge is not sufficient; rather, through asceticism with the guidance of Perfect Man, spiritual wayfaring will become complete and the wayfarer will reach the objective.

Intuitive knowledge is superior to acquired knowledge for reaching the stage of Perfect spiritual wayfarer. In the beginning, the spiritual wayfarer is in search of a guide and by finding him and making use of his teachings and guidance, after a while the love of union with Allah creates such a joy in him that he will walk the path till he reaches the stage of *liqa' Allah* (meeting Allah).

When the spiritual wayfarer becomes aware of and grateful for the valuable gift of the Perfect Man as the guide, as a result of this gratitude the Divine blessings and compassion increase, and he will understand the reality without intermediation and will join the ranks of the people of Truth. The wayfarer that walks the path with love is much more exalted than the wayfarer who walks the path by imitation. The heart of the wayfarer becoming familiar with the Divine realities is like the opening of the doors of the Heaven of reality. Such a heart, that is the treasury of Divine secrets, is an open door for seeing Divine attributes and is like a valuable gem for the mystic, whereas for others it is like a stone wall.

The lovers of the world who do not accept the invitation of the people of Truth and consider it as deception, are not aware that the wayfarers of the path of Truth are not in need of their world and are constantly moving towards their original abode, which is the Divine Heaven. The world-worshipers accuse the people of Truth of wanting to throw them out of the kingdom of their beloved, as they said to Musa, and they deny the friendship of the people of Truth with Allah, as they asked the Prophet for the signs of his friendship and closeness to Allah and the power that Allah had given him. This is because they are ignorant that this world and whatever is in it is created because of the sacred being of Perfect Man and the wayfarers of the path of Truth. Perfect human beings and the wayfarers of the path of Truth pass the

stages of spiritual wayfaring one after the other, and free many human beings from the chains of the material world and worldly desires. The purpose of their socialising with world-lovers is in order to guide them and intercede for them with their Lord. The person is prosperous who, as a result of the guidance of Perfect Man is guided towards the path of Truth, and as a result of companionship with him becomes a wayfarer of the path of Truth; for in such a state he will definitely be blessed by the blessings of Allah, and will not be alone and without a helper, and Allah will grant his prayers. Perfect Man follows the Divine Will; by the command of Allah he guides human beings in this world, and whenever Allah calls him towards Himself he gladly moves towards Allah. Perfect Man is the manifestation of Allah, but at the same time is not of the same genus as him. However, he is illuminated by the Divine light and considers himself naught in the presence of Allah. Although Divine Saints are not of the same genus as Allah – as Allah is Eternal and Self-Subsistent, while they are accidental and their existence is dependent upon the Divine Will - because they have annihilated their existence in Allah and because of His Eternal and unlimited existence, they also are subsistent and the signs of Allah are evident in them. Therefore, those who desire such a rank must annihilate within Allah so that they may reach the stage of *liqa' Allah*.

The wayfarers of the path of Truth understand the teachings of Perfect Man based on their spiritual potential. The effect that is created in the heart of spiritual wayfarers as a result of the influence of the *pir* and the Divine wisdom and knowledge will be destroyed if the wayfarer loses the light of guidance, and his heart will become afflicted by disbelief and corruption and the water of life that flows in his being will turn into blood. As a result of the light of *Haqq* being shown to the mountain, the mountain gains life and becomes fragmented, so how is it possible that the effect of *Haqq* is without effect on people? The life of such people will not become illuminated by the Divine light, they will never become of the Men of Allah, they will not reply to the call of Allah with Love, and the purity of Divine love and compassion cannot be seen in their being. However, it is possible for such people that by asceticism and worship and through overcoming the desires of their soul, their hearts can be illuminated by the Divine light and they can be saved.

When the Perfect Man destroys the mountain of egocentrism and humanity in the being of the spiritual wayfarer, the worldly and physical desires of the wayfarer are destroyed. The spiritual revolution that is created in the heart of the wayfarer of the path of Truth by the Perfect Man is far greater in comparison to the Day of Judgement and is like a cure for a wound, for this cure protects the wayfarer from the wound of punishment on the Day of Judgement and even evil-doers become good-doers by witnessing this.

Socialising with the Perfect Man results in happiness and spiritual illumination, even in the hearts of those with a wilted heart. People do not know who resides in the inner house of Divine Saints, so whatever form of rudeness that they commit towards the Divine Saints is due to their ignorance. The mystic who has reached union and is a guide must guide the spiritual wayfarers by his speech and action according to their potential and talent so that they do not believe something false about themselves which will lead to them being led astray.

A person who is ignorant of the belief of Perfect Man and does not himself have such a belief is a disbeliever. A person who is not aware of the life and the spirit of the Perfect Man is dead, for the life and spirit of the Perfect Man is like the manifestation of Allah, and whoever is unaware of that true life has, in reality, died by ignorance and forgetfulness.

The belief of the mystic is the true perception of Divine Unity, and without this vision spiritual life does not exist. The reason for the perfection and superiority of human beings in contrast to animals is their higher degree of awareness and knowledge.

Perfect Man is complete good, and accusation and saying bad things about others, for them, is exactly like having gone astray. Perfect Man is an infinite elixir. The mystic, by the mediation of his elixir of love and knowledge, transforms the copper of the being of spiritual wayfarers to spiritual gold. People who have not been guided cannot in anyway damage the esoteric knowledge of the Perfect Man and decrease from his status.

The fire of lust and desires of the soul is afraid of the guide who is after putting it out, but Perfect Man, who is the source of pure water, has no fear of animalistic attributes and lust and soulful desires. Those

who worship themselves are seeking to find a mistake in the complete moon of the being of Perfect Man. The heart of the spiritual wayfarer is like Heaven, but those who are prisoners of the desires of the soul are seeking to find a thorn in that Heaven, although they will find no thorn other than the thorn of their own being. Those who follow their *nafs* attempt to veil the Sun of the Reality of the *wali* of *Haqq* by denying it and seeking faults in it, but they will fail at this. By appearing in the presence of Perfect human beings and serving and accompanying them, the blessings of Allah will encompass the life of the human being, while jealousy towards the Divine Saints will result in the Divine grace and mercy being cut off from the individual.

In Rumi's *Mathnawi*, The Prophet of Islam said: Allah has removed any form of evil from the Prophets and Divine Saints, and has purified their place of prostration (*sujud*) till the seventh level of Earth¹⁰.

Jealousy of the Prophets of Allah and the Divine Saints results in the human being transformed into the devil in this world. If the mystic benefits from the world, the world will not corrupt his spirit, but if worldly people drown in worldly blessings, they will lose themselves.

For Perfect Man has annihilated his human attributes and has become the manifestation of Divine attributes and lights, and all his actions have become Divine, thus he has become like the Divine grace and the fires of his *nafs* have transformed into the light of knowledge. Further, their power is derived from Divine power, just as the birds of *Ababil* by benefitting from Divine power killed the elephants; however, their power was exclusively from Allah.

People should not be rude towards the Divine Saints, fight them, consider themselves as their equal or abuse their humbleness, for they will be punished.

He who is not a Prophet must follow the path that the Prophet has shown him, and until having reached the stage of becoming a sheikh, must follow the Perfect Man so that he can be freed from the well of egoism and the appetitive soul (*nafs al-ammarah*), and reach an exalted spiritual rank.

Those who are not the kings of the path must follow and obey a pure king, and those who are not captains of the ship must not go towards the Sea of Reality alone; rather, they must follow a person who

is knowledgeable of the knowledge of the path, so that the wind of temptation does not destroy their ship.

The individual who is at the stage of learning and is being guided must accept the speech of *Haqq* by remaining silent, and until he has become the tongue of *Haqq* and has learnt directly from the Absolute Being, he must learn from Perfect human beings who have learned from *Haqq* and are the manifestations of Divine revelation and inspiration. He must speak to the Divine Saints as a beggar and must be humble before the Saints of the Divine path, so that he does not act with arrogance and enmity and is not afflicted by forgetfulness and lust.

In reality, regardless of how much the *wali* reveals of his esoteric knowledge, what he says is like a drop of rain in comparison to the sea.

For Perfect Man who is free from boundaries, even the principle of moderation is relative, for moderation applies to issues which have a beginning and an end. However, Perfect Man who has reached union with the Divine speaks of the Divine secrets and realities which have no beginning or end. They are filled with Divine secrets and knowledge; however, they only bestow parts of those Divine secrets and knowledge based on the state and rank of their followers.

The Perfect mystic and the *pir* open the path for the seekers of *Haqq* and Reality with pure and sacred intentions. Even the wayfarers who have not reached the highest degrees of perfection are not afflicted with mistake, let alone the most perfect of them. The sound of Divine Unity of the men of *Haqq* sets fire to doubt. The spiritual wayfarer who is a beginner but is under the guidance of the Perfect guide is much more superior to a wayfarer who has travelled on the path for years without a guide.

Conclusion

Therefore, according to the teachings of Rumi, in a Semantic methodology Perfect Man is placed in a square/triangle geometrical form. The centre of this form is Allah, the sides of it are the “universe”, “people” and “guidance”, and the perfect man is its “diameter”, which relates the different sides to each other and creates “a light and reflective relation” between the centre, which is Allah, and the sides, and Perfect Man is the “Caliph” and the “representative” of Allah.

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Endnotes

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- ⁵ On perfect man see: M. Ibn Arabi, *Al-Insan al-kamil*, Jami, Tehran, 1386. A. Nasafi, *Al-insan al-kamil*, Tahuri, Tehran, 1362.
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Major Themes of Discussion between Theology and Philosophy in Islam: an Analytical Study

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to analyze the subtle distinction between theology and philosophy in Islam and to study the effect, which the mutual interaction of these two intellectual traditions had on Islamic thought. The major themes of discussion between theology and philosophy in the works of al-Ghazli and Ibn Rushd are examined. It is argued that the significant difference between these two giant theologians, jurists, and philosophers is limited only to their approaches. The essence of the religious phenomenon for al-Ghazli lies beyond philosophy and rational theology. Ibn Rushd's approach is of the philosopher who holds reason supreme.

Introduction

The Islamic religious sciences may be divided into two categories: the transmitted sciences (*al-ulum al-naqliyah*) and the rational sciences (*al-ulum al-'aqliyah*). The first category includes the sciences of the Qur'an, *hadith* (Prophetic tradition), and jurisprudence, and their ancillary branches. The second includes primarily theology and philosophy.¹ Theology is the science of the knowledge of God's existence and attributes, as well as His relationship to the universe in general and humankind in particular. Theology is called *'ilam al-kalam*, meaning the "science of speech" or theological discourse. It is discourse about God, His attributes, and His teleological acts of creation and nurturing of all things. It is also concerned with human free will and predestination, moral and religious obligations (*taklif*), and return to God on the Day of Resurrection for the final judgment. Philosophy (*falsafah*) has a Greek origin. It is concerned with rational

truth, being and non-being, and the nature of things, of God, and of the cosmos.²

Both theologians and philosophers apply and depend on rational thinking as a means for arriving at the truth. The philosophers' rational exercise, however, is liberated from the confines of doctrine and may accidentally lead them to contest certain dogmatic statements established by religion.

This paper attempts to analyze the subtle distinction between theology and philosophy in Islam with a view to elicit the similarities and dissimilarities between these two intellectual traditions. There is a brief discussion on the mutual interaction and encounter of these two disciplines culminating in the Islamic assault on Neoplatonism.³ The paper also attempts to study the major themes of discussion concerning theology and philosophy in the works of Abu Hamid Muhammad bin Muhammad al-Ghazali (d. 505/1111) and Abu al-Walid Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Muhammad Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198).

It is found that the significant difference between al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd is limited only to their approaches. The essence of the religious phenomenon for al-Ghazali lies beyond philosophy and rational theology. Ibn Rushd's approach is of the philosopher who holds reason supreme.

Distinction between Theology and Philosophy

In the early centuries of Islam, theology and philosophy were regarded as two distinct disciplines, following their own assumptions and intellectual traditions. "The science of dialectics" (*ilm al-kalam*) meant Islamic theology, derived only from the revealed Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Philosophy (*al-falsafah*) was a "foreign science" based on natural knowledge and largely inspired by ancient Greek philosophy. As time passed, theology and philosophy interacted increasingly, with varying relations in different parts of the Muslim world.⁴

What is the essential difference between the theologians and the philosophers? Haji Khalifa (d. 1067/1657) makes a clear distinction between them while outlining the two methods of acquiring true knowledge, namely, the method of "reasoning and rational deduction" and the method of "psycho-spiritual experience." Both the theologians

and philosophers, he says, adopt the method of reasoning and rational deduction to arrive at the truth, but whereas the former commit themselves to the religions of the prophets of God, the latter do not. The former are the “*mutakallimun*” (theologians) and the latter are the “*mashshaiun*” (peripatetic⁵ philosophers). Likewise, of those who take the path of psycho-spiritual experience in arriving at the truth, the ones who fully abide by the Divine laws (*Shariah*) are the “*Sufis*” and those who do not commit themselves to the *Shariah* are the “*ishraqiun*” (illuminationists).⁶ For al-Suharwardi (d. 587/1191), well known in the history of Islamic philosophy as the Master of Illumination (*Shaykh al-Ishraq*) and also as *al-Shaykh al-Maqtul* (The Executed Master),⁷ “Plato is the master of the illuminationists, whereas Aristotle is the master of the peripatetics.”⁸

As for the theologians, the Qur’an and the Tradition were their two principal sources. For them, these two sources are revealed by God and inspired by Him to Muhammad (peace be upon him). They are therefore Divine teachings and hence the infallible and absolute truth. Other sources i.e. *ijma’* (consensus of the Muslim community), *qiyas* (juridical analogy) and *ijtihad* (juridical individual interpretation), are all based on the two principal sources by way of their interpretation through the normal understanding of Arabic philology and its conventional figurative usages of the language.⁹ Little emphasis is placed on the application of reason in this process. In fact, before the advent of philosophy proper in Islam, Islamic law and theology were almost fully developed; and thus philosophy “appeared as something unnecessary, to say the least, to the working out of the theology of Islam.”¹⁰ On the other hand, the philosophers’ source of knowledge is the “direct observation of the nature of things, and careful reasoning about them”¹¹ in the light of the principles laid down by their ancient Greek masters, whom they also regard as authoritative sources of truth. Philosophy, however, grew up in a remote age and in a polytheistic environment and was later on influenced by Christianity and its doctrine of trinity, phenomena incompatible with Islam.¹²

Islamic theology (*Kalam*) has no counterpart in the Western tradition. Although its orientation is theological, much of its subject matter is philosophical since it encompasses epistemology, analysis, cosmology, and metaphysics. Furthermore, its approach is rationalist

and, as such, its method is philosophical.¹³ Moreover, Islamic theology confined itself within the Islamic religious community, and it remained separate from the Christian and Jewish theologies that developed in the same cultural context and used Arabic as a linguistic medium. No such separation is observable in the philosophy developed in the Islamic cultural context and written in Arabic: Muslims, Christians, and Jews participated in it and separated themselves according to the philosophic rather than the religious doctrines they held.¹⁴

The origin and inspiration of philosophy in Islam are quite different from those of Islamic theology. Philosophy developed out of and around the nonreligious practical and theoretical sciences. It assumed that the truth found by unaided reason does not disagree with the truth of Islam when both are properly understood. Islamic philosophy was not a handmaid of theology. The two disciplines were related, because both followed the path of rational inquiry and distinguished themselves from traditional religious disciplines and from mysticism, which sought knowledge through practical, spiritual purification.¹⁵

A significant difference between the two paradigm cases of theology and philosophy is that the former begins with God and the latter does not. Theology focuses on God; philosophy constructs a meta-scientific structure about the world of experience and intelligibles. For Muslim theologians, as with other monotheists, specifically Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians, God is the necessary being. He is the creator of the world, and the object of worship. As a totally transcendent unity, God creates the world purely out of His grace without any necessity external to His nature. Philosophy cannot and does not begin with God. Being infinite, God is not material and not a sensible entity. Being simple (*basit*) and without constituents, He has neither genus nor differentia and, therefore, cannot be conceived. Thus, neither the intellect (*'aql*) which receives the intelligibles (*manquaat*) nor the senses (*ihsas*) that receive the sensible moveable matter can directly perceive God. It is in the context of seeking a principle (*asl*) or an explanation (*logos*) for the world that philosophy postulates God as the sustainer, the efficient, or the essential cause of the world.¹⁶

Another point of difference concerns God's production (*huduth*) of the world. Theologians generally preach that God created the world

in time. For philosophers, the world has an atemporal genesis. In the philosopher's cosmogony,¹⁷ God's priority to world is either logical, essential, or due to nature—not temporal. Most Muslim philosophers, not accepting a literal interpretation of temporal creation, resort to some kind of emanational¹⁸ cosmogony. As al-Ghazli observed, such philosophical views of God are not in harmony with the religious doctrine of God.¹⁹ In fact, the issue of createdness in time and eternity has excited acrimonious disputes between the philosophers and the *mutakallimĪn*. The *mutakallimin* say that if a thing is not created in time but eternal—if it has always been and never not been—then that thing has no need of a creator and cause. Therefore, if we suppose that eternal things exist other than the Essence of the Truth, it follows that they will have no need of a creator and so in reality will be necessary beings in their essence, like God; and the demonstrations that show the Necessary Being in Essence to be singular do not permit us to profess more than one such Necessary Being. Accordingly, no more than one Eternal Being exists, and all else is created in time. Therefore, the universe is created in time, including the abstract and the material, principles and phenomena, species and individuals, wholes and parts, matter and form, visible and invisible.²⁰

The philosophers have rebutted the arguments of the *mutakallimin* decisively, saying that all the confusion turns on one point, which consists in supposing that, if a thing has a continuous existence into the indefinite past, it had no need of a cause, whereas this is not so. A thing's need or lack of need for a cause pertains to its essence, which makes it a necessary being or a possible being; it has nothing to do with its createdness in time or eternity. By analogy, the sun's radiance stems from the sun and cannot exist apart from it. Its existence depends on the sun's existence. It issues from the sun whether we suppose there was a time this radiance did not exist or we suppose it has always existed, along with the sun. If we suppose that the sun's radiance has coexisted with the sun itself from pre-eternity to post-eternity, this does not entail its having no need of the sun. Generally, those who disbelieve in God advance the position of the eternity of the universe, but the theistic²¹ philosophers say that the very thing non-believers adduce as a reason for God's non-existence is what in their view implies God's existence. The eternity of the

universe is a hypothesis to non-believers, but it is an established fact to theistic philosophers.²²

The most ancient of philosophical questions is that of cause and effect. The concept of cause and effect appears in every philosophical system. Causation is a kind of relation between two things, one of which we call the cause and the other, the effect. This is the most profound of relations. The relation of cause and effect consists in the cause's giving being to the effect. What the effect realizes from the cause is its whole being, its whole reality; therefore, if the cause were not, the effect would not be. Accordingly, if we could define cause, we must say: "A cause is that thing an effect needs in its essence and being."²³ Philosophers and *mutakallimin* concur that every phenomenon is an effect and needs a cause, but the *mutakallimin* define such a phenomenon as created in time (*hadith*), and the philosophers define it as possible (*mumkin*). That is, the *mutakallimin* say that whatever is created in time is an effect and needs a cause, and the philosophers say that whatever is possible is an effect and needs a cause. These two definitions lead to the different conclusions discussed above.²⁴

On the subject of the God-person relationship, philosophy and theology again differ. Philosophers often reject the notion that God's justice is due only to His mercy. Agreeing with the rationalistic ethics of the Mutazilites, most philosophers and some theologians reason that God's justice is a consequence of His nature. In this context, individuals are free and thus responsible for their acts, and can base moral choices on reason.²⁵

Like the philosophers, the *mutakallimin* rely on rational deduction, but with two differences. First, the principles on which the *mutakallimin* base their reasoning are different from those on which the philosophers base theirs. The most important convention used by the *mutakallimim*, especially by the Mutazilites, is that of beauty and ugliness. They regard the concept of beauty and ugliness as rational and have devised a series of principles and formulae from this principle, such as the formula of grace (*qa'ida yi lutf*) and the incumbency of the optimal (*wujub-i aslah*) upon God Most High. The philosophers, however, regard the principle of beauty and ugliness as a nominal and human principle, like the pragmatic premises and intelligibles

propounded in logic, which are useful only in polemics, not in demonstration. Accordingly, the philosophers call *kalam* “polemic wisdom” as opposed to “demonstrational wisdom.” Second, the *mutakallimin*, unlike the philosophers, regard themselves as committed to the defense of the bounds of Islam. Philosophical discussion is free; that is, the philosopher does not have the predetermined object of defending a particular belief. The *mutakallim* does have such an object.²⁶

The background of philosophic interest in Islam is found in the earlier phases of theology. But its origin is found in the translation of Greek philosophic works. By the middle of the 9th century, there were enough translations of scientific and philosophic works from Greek, Pahlavi, and Sanskrit to show that scientific and philosophic inquiry was something more than a series of disputations based on what the theologians had called sound reason. Moreover, it became evident that there existed a tradition of observation, calculation, and theoretical reflection that had been pursued systematically, refined, and modified for over a millennium.²⁷ The scope of this tradition was broad: it included the study of logic, the sciences of nature, the mathematical sciences, metaphysics, ethics, and politics. Each of these disciplines had a body of literature in which its principles and problems had been investigated by classical authors, whose positions had been, in turn, stated, discussed, criticized, or developed by various commentators. Islamic philosophy emerged from its theological background when Muslim thinkers began to study this foreign tradition, became competent students of the ancient philosophers and scientists, criticized and developed their doctrines, clarified their relevance for the questions raised by the theologians, and showed what light they threw on the fundamental issues of revelation, Prophethood, and the Divine law.²⁸

The philosophers in the Islamic world were rather contemptuous in their philosophical works of the dialectical and so inferior modes of reasoning which the theologians employed. However, the difference between demonstrative and dialectical reasoning is not between a valid and an invalid procedure, but merely between working with premises which have already been established as certain and unchallengeable, in the case of demonstration, and working with premises which are generally accepted but not logically established, in

the case of dialectic. In theology the premises are taken from a religious doctrine, which the philosophers assumed could not be logically proved to be true, and so the consequent reasoning is limited and reduced to a defense of those premises without being in a position to prove them.²⁹

To a large extent, the difference between philosophy (*falsafah*) and theology (*kalim*) is merely a difference in subject matter. Philosophers work with philosophical premises while theologians apply themselves to religious texts. *Kalam* sets out to represent the speculative framework and the rational content and coherence of the principles of Islamic belief. It was necessary to resolve conflicts between revelation and practice, between for instance God's great power and the existence of innocent suffering in this world, and the issues raised are often philosophical, although not explicitly identified as such. Why not? Presumably the reason is that it was thought by many that the theoretical instruments of unbelievers could not explicitly be used to unravel problems in the doctrine of Islam.³⁰

Many of the questions which philosophy applied itself to already had answers provided within the context of Islam. For example, the question of how people ought to live and act had been answered in the Qur'an. Islamic law provided details of personal and property relations, and the sorts of political structures, which are acceptable. The Muslims had only to observe the Qur'án and the Traditions of the Prophet and his companions, and the judgments of the early caliphs. More abstract issues were dealt with by *kalam*, which highlighted certain theoretical analyses of concepts such as power, fate, God and freedom. In addition there existed a well-developed science of language of long standing. The arrival of philosophy on the intellectual scene seemed to challenge many of these traditional Islamic sciences, and threatened those who were expert in such forms of knowledge. After all, philosophy covered a lot of the same ground as *kalam* but claimed greater surety for its methods and conclusions. Furthermore, on a number of important issues philosophy presents a contrary conclusion, which might seem to challenge Islam itself. Aristotle (d. 322 BCE.), often referred to as the "first master," appeared to hold that the world is eternal; that there can be no individual survival of the soul after death and that God is radically removed from connection with His

creation and creatures. The scene was clearly set for a major demarcation dispute between the philosophers and the rest of the Islamic intellectual community, a dispute which alternately raged in the Islamic world from the fourth to the sixth centuries AH/tenth to the twelfth centuries CE.³¹

One principle shared by both Ash'arites and Mu'tazilites is that reason is usefully employed in understanding religion. A principle that both would reject is that religion may be usefully analyzed by the use of concepts derived from Greek, especially Aristotelian philosophy. The use of such philosophical concepts was not regarded as helpful in an understanding of religion. But in rejecting philosophy the theologians were not rejecting reason; on the contrary, they were enthusiastic concerning the value of reason when employed in a suitably domesticated context. The Qur'an does not require that people believe in its teaching blindly. Both believers and unbelievers are invited to ponder, reflect and understand through the use of their reason.³²

Both theology and philosophy use reason in formulating their respective conceptions of God and creation, but they differ in approach and motivation. The starting point of theology is Revelation. Reason is used in defending the revealed word and in interpreting the natural order in conformity with a Qur'anic view of creation. With philosophy, the starting point is reason, the quest after the true nature of things. The philosophers maintain that the quest leads them to a demonstrative proof of the existence of a first cause of the universe, which they claim is identical with the God of the Qur'an. At issue between philosophy and theology is not the question of God's existence; rather, the nature of God.³³

Another difference between them is historical. *Kalam* antedated *falsafah*. Its beginnings are traceable to the period of the *Umayyad* caliphate (661-750 CE). Moreover, it arose out of religious and political conflicts within Islam. Although subject to foreign influences, particularly Greek thought, *kalam's* modes of argument and perspectives remained to a great extent indigenous. *Falsafah* on the other hand, was the direct result of a concerted effort to translate Greek science and philosophy into Arabic beginning early in the ninth century. The first Islamic philosopher, al-Kindi died around 870 CE.³⁴

Yet it would be a mistake to regard philosophy in Islam as starting with the translation of Greek texts. Interestingly, philosophical distinctions arose in Islamic theology without any apparent direct connection with philosophy, but rather through the development of appropriate rules of legal reasoning. When Islam was established in the seventh century the legal norms seemed rather elementary, with the right and wrong paths being determined by reference to the Qur'an and the Traditions (*ahadith*). But the rapid expansion of Islam and its rule over highly sophisticated civilizations made necessary the assimilation of a great number of foreign legal elements, which initially were often subjected to a process of Islamization and identification as Qur'anic.³⁵

Generally, it could be stated that theologians, like philosophers, do support various views with rational thought, and they do examine non-empirical issues that fall outside the scope of science. Nevertheless, philosophy and theology, though comparable, have different goals. In revealed theology, reason functions to interpret and defend dogmas whose truth is taken on faith. Philosophers do not accept inherited beliefs as a matter of faith. Theologians work within a framework that they are already largely committed to. This framework directly or indirectly shapes their thinking. Philosophers, however, ideally begin their investigation from a position of intellectual neutrality, regardless of their personal sympathies or prior commitment to a religious tradition. They are, of course, influenced by the frameworks, within which they work, but in the case of conflict, reason has the final say; every known assumption must be examined.³⁶

Fazlur Rehman aptly sums up the complementary nature of these two disciplines when he says that the function of philosophy is to analyze. The object of Islamic theology is to build a worldview on the basis of the Qur'an with the help of intellectual tools, in other words with the assistance of philosophy. Therefore, philosophy, he declares, is not a rival of theology. He further adds that certain views may create tensions with certain theological doctrines but that is not an excuse for banning philosophy. Difference of opinion, he contends, have to be assigned a highly positive value, for it is only through confrontation of different and opposing views that truth gradually emerges.³⁷

It may be concluded that it is sometimes more the formula than the essence of things, which divides the theologians and the philosophers, for both parties believe in God's ultimate unity.³⁸

Interaction of Theology and Philosophy

The more conservative theologians approached the study of philosophy with grave suspicion, and regarded its dissemination as a genuine threat to orthodoxy. Their frequent accusation to the more liberal or rationalist theologians of the early period was that they had "looked into the books of philosophy."³⁹ Without considering the substance of the teaching of the philosophers, many of the conservative theologians condemned the study of philosophy in its entirety, either on the ground that its protagonists advocated a strictly rationalist approach to truth, which rendered revelation superfluous, or on the ground that it was a foreign importation rooted in paganism and consequently irreconcilable with Islamic doctrine.⁴⁰

The instinctive suspicion of the masses that philosophy, a foreign importation, was inimical to Islam, coupled with the serious but subtle reservations of such eminent litterateurs (*udaba'*; sing. *adib*) and logicians as al-Tawhidi (d. 415/1024), and his teacher al-Sijistani (d. 391/1000), who were not innocent of philosophical culture, reinforced popular belief in the hazards inherent in philosophical discourse. Philosophy and religion, according to them, stemmed from two different sources and were therefore impossible to reconcile. Religious belief was a matter of Divine revelation and required none of the skills of philosophers, logicians or astrologers; otherwise the Qur'an would have exhorted us to cultivate those skills. For, al-Tawhidi, others, more competent than the Brethren of Purity (*Ikhwan al-safa*) have attempted to reconcile philosophy and religion without success, and even Christians and Magians never resort to philosophy in their dispute.⁴¹

The introduction of logic was resented as an invasion of the sacred or semi-sacred territory of linguistic and literary studies centering around the Qur'an. A dramatic example of the confrontation between *kalam* and *falsafah* took place between the leading grammarian and theologian Abu Saeid al-Sirafi (d. 368/979) and the Christian translator and logician, Abu Bishr Matta (d. 329/940) in Baghdad in 331/932 in the presence of the vizier Ibn al-Furat. Abu

Bishr is alternately reproached for his ignorance of Greek, his ignorance of Arabic Grammar or his religious obscurantism for subscribing to the doctrine of Trinity. Echoes of this debate ring in the writings of philosophers, such as al-Farabi (d. 339/950) and theologians, such as Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728/1327). The philosophers find themselves continually compelled to justify the study of this foreign discipline, which to the litterateurs, was quite unnecessary for those who have mastered the rules of Arabic Grammar.⁴²

Until about the middle of the tenth century, there were few systematic attempts to spell out the orthodox grievances against philosophy. Thereafter, the attacks against Greco-Arab Neoplatonism became more sophisticated.

The Islamic Assault on Neoplatonism

It was not very long after the advent of philosophy in Islam that tension between it and theology surfaced. Disagreement on major and minor issues between the Muslim philosophers and the theologians was inevitable because, even though both parties were discussing the same issues: physics and metaphysics, their sources of authoritative knowledge and their educational background are divergent in essence and nature.⁴³ The tension between philosophy and theology sometimes manifested itself in the form of refutation of various theories of the philosophers as parts of works whose main objectives were not directly concerned with philosophy. This refutation was undertaken by leading theologians such as Abu al-hasan al-Ash'ari (d. 324/935), Abu Bakr al-Baqillani (d. 404/1013), Ibn Hazm (d. 457/1064) and Imam al-Haramayn al-Juwaini (d. 478/1085) etc., most of whom were Ash'arites. Systematic philosophers like al-Kindi (d. 260/873), al-Farabi (d. 339/950), and Ibn Sina (d. 429/1037) tried to reconcile the differences or lessen them but they had very limited success in this. In the eleventh century, the conflict reached its peak when al-Ghazali launched an all-out attack on philosophy. It was not before eighty years later that a counter-attack was articulated by Ibn Rushd from al-Andalus, Islamic Spain.⁴⁴

The major themes of discussion between theology and philosophy in Islam came to be represented by al-Ghazali. In *Tahafut al-falasifah* ("The Incoherence of the Philosophers"), completed in

488/1095, he took a direct philosophic line and emphasized that the philosophers had not proved their un-Islamic theses of the eternity of the world, God's ignorance of particulars, and the impossibility of a bodily resurrection, besides other heretical theses. After preparing the ground by undertaking a comprehensive exposition of Neoplatonic metaphysics and cosmology on the one hand and of Aristotelian logic on the other, he launched a direct attack on the leading philosophers of Islam and their major Greek masters. His declared aim was to show the internal "incoherence" (*tahafut*) of the philosophers, rather than to set forth in positive terms the true creed of Islam.⁴⁵ In general, he argues against the Neoplatonic concept of a Supreme Being from whom the world emanates from all eternity. He reasserts the Qur'anic concept of an omnipotent Deity whose decrees are irreversible and inscrutable and who carries out His creative designs freely and imperiously in the world. Mysticism and Ash'arism had enhanced his sense of the ineffable mystery of God, beside whom no genuine reality or agency exists, and had convinced him of man's utter nothingness without God. According to al-Ghazali, the Neoplatonists had seriously jeopardized this mystery and challenged the uniqueness and transcendence of the Supreme Being by subjecting Him to the categories of human thought and interposing between Him and the world a whole series of subordinate agencies called separate intelligences and invested with Divine or semi-divine creative powers. Their emanationist worldview is not only contradictory to Islamic dogma but philosophically untenable. The arguments adduced by them in its support are logically tenuous and inconclusive.⁴⁶

In *Faysal al-tafriqah bayn al-Islam wa'l-zandaqah*⁴⁷ ("The Clear Criterion for Distinguishing between Islam and Godlessness"), written between 490/1096 and 500/1106, he expounded the legal grounds upon which he had condemned the philosophers of infidelity. Finally in his autobiography, *al-Munqidh min al-dhalal*⁴⁸ ("The Deliverance from Error"), al-Ghazali explained in a more personal and popular way how philosophy had failed to provide the cure that his own soul needed. Al-Ghazali's attack had the effect of curtailing the power of rationalism in Islamic philosophy, but it did not bring rational philosophy to an end, as some have thought.⁴⁹ It was not before eighty years later that a counter-attack was articulated by Ibn Rushd in his

three combined works: *Fasl al-maqal wa-taqrir ma bayn al-shari'ah wa'l hikmah min ittisal* ("An Authoritative Treatise and Exposition of the Convergence which Exists Between the Religious Law and Philosophy"), written in 574/1178, *Kitab al-Kashf 'an Manahij al-adillah fi 'aqa'id al-millah wa ta'raf ma waqa'a faha bi sasb al-ta'wal min al-shubhah al-muzayyifah wa'l bida' al mudillah* ("Exposition of the Methods of Demonstration Relative to the Dogmas of Religion and Definition of the Equivocations and Innovations which Appear in them as Methods of Interpretation and which Distort Truth or Lead into Error"), written in 575/1179, and *Tahafut al-tahafut* ("The Incoherence of the Incoherence"), written in 576/1180 from the legal, theological and philosophical standpoints respectively.⁵⁰

Al-Ghazali's Stand

Much has been written about al-Ghazali's sincerity and the significance of his use of the method of doubt. What is of particular significance is the seriousness with which he depicts in his *al-Munqidh* the "states of his own soul" as it was overwhelmed by doubt, recovered faith through Divine light, and how finally he consented to champion publicly the cause of orthodoxy against heresy and deceit.

Of the classes of seekers of truth, he singles out four groups that might be presumed to be in possession of the truth in the eleventh century. These four are the theologians (*mutakallimun*), who claim that they are the exponents of thought and intellectual speculation, the *Ismmailis* (or *Batinis*), who consider that they, as the party of 'authoritative instruction' (*ta'lim*), alone derive truth from the infallible *imam*, the philosophers, who regard themselves as the exponents of logic and demonstration, and the *Sufis* or mystics, who claim that they alone enter into the Divine presence and possess vision and intuitive understanding.⁵¹

For the purpose of our study, our interest here is to comprehend al-Ghazali's views on theology (*Kalam*) and philosophy (*falsafah*). Al-Ghazali divided the Islamic religion into two major teaching components. These two major components are expressed as duties of the heart, and duties of the body. *Kalam*, affirmed al-Ghazali, concerns the duties of the heart, which enjoin one "to conserve the creed of the Orthodox for the Orthodox, and to guard it from confusion introduced

by the innovators.”⁵² The duties of the body govern the actions of all duty-bound Muslims, and these duties make up *fiqh*. For al-Ghazali, the aim of *kalam*, therefore, is to preserve the purity of orthodox belief from heretical innovation. “God Most High raised up the group of the *mutakallimin* and motivated them to champion orthodoxy by a systematic discussion designed to disclose the deceptions introduced by the contriving innovators contrary to the traditional orthodoxy.”⁵³ Al-Ghazali brings out in more detail what is unsatisfactory about *kalam*:

A group of the *mutakallimin* did indeed perform the task assigned to them by God. They ably protected orthodoxy and defended the creed which had been readily accepted from the prophetic preaching and boldly counteracted the heretical innovations. But in so doing they relied on premises which they took over from their adversaries, being compelled to admit them either by uncritical acceptance, or because of the community’s consensus, or by simple acceptance deriving from the Qur’an and the Traditions. Most of their polemic was devoted to bringing out the inconsistencies of their adversaries and criticizing them for the logically absurd consequences of what they conceded. This, however, is of little use in the case of one who admits nothing at all except the primary and self-evident truths.⁵⁴

That what *kalam* desires to establish is also the object of al-Ghazali’s own faith; but its arguments appear to him rather weak, and many of its assertions on that account open to question.⁵⁵ Hence, this branch of learning, though useful, does not lead per se to that unquestionable certainty which al-Ghazali was seeking.⁵⁶ As for engaging with the philosophers, al-Ghazali tells us:

A man cannot grasp what is defective in any of the sciences unless he has so complete a grasp of the science in question that he equals its most learned exponents in the appreciation of its fundamental principles and even goes beyond and surpasses them...⁵⁷.

In all intellectual honesty he refrained from saying a word against the philosophers till he had completely mastered their systems.⁵⁸ Since no one had accomplished this difficult task before him, al-Ghazali felt compelled to grapple with this problem with all his might. He therefore turned to the study of philosophy privately in his spare time, since he was occupied during this period with teaching religious subjects to no fewer than 300 students at the Nizamiyah of

Baghdad. In three years, he was able, according to his own account, “through God’s assistance,” to master the philosophical sciences completely.⁵⁹

Having mastered the philosophical sciences, al-Ghazali contended that philosophy cannot assure the truth because it does not produce certainty; and brought against philosophy the same charge Ibn Rushd brought against theology, namely of yielding to huge compromises about the logical coherence of its arguments.⁶⁰ In *al-Munqidh*, al-Ghazali wrote:

They [the philosophers who apply logic] draw up a list of the conditions to be fulfilled by demonstration which are known without fail to produce certainty. When, however, they come at length to treat of religious questions, not merely are they unable to satisfy these conditions, but they admit an extreme degree of relaxation.⁶¹

Al-Ghazali brought two main charges against philosophy, both of which are interesting. The first is that philosophy offends against its own principles, since it cannot establish its conclusions on the basis of its premises. Second, philosophy is irreconcilable with religion, since the former leaves no room for the latter. That is, however, much the philosophers may talk about God, they treat Him as the name for an empty notion, since they give Him nothing to do.⁶² It may be observed here that Ibn Sina had developed the argument that the universe (apart from God) consists entirely of determined and necessitated events.⁶³ God is the exception; God is the only thing, which is not brought about by something else; and He represents the starting-point of the series of causes and effects, which make up the structure of reality. Now, this sounds compatible with religion; yet, when one looks a bit more closely, one sees that Ibn Sina does not leave God much of a role. God does not know about the world of generation and corruption—our world—since transitory and material events cannot be apprehended by an eternal and perfect consciousness. God cannot change any thing in existence, since whatever happens does so because of something else causing it to happen, and although God is the ultimate cause, He does not really seem to have the power to do anything to interfere with how things will turn out anyway. It is this attitude to the deity that led al-Ghazali to attack philosophy.⁶⁴

Al-Ghazali's motive in writing his *Tahafut* is stated explicitly to be religious. What prompted him to write this work, he tells us, was the way in which a small group of freethinkers had been led to repudiate Islamic beliefs and neglect the ritual basis of worship as unworthy of their intellectual attainments. They were confirmed in this by the widespread praise reserved for the ancient philosophers, from Socrates (d. 399 BCE.) to Aristotle (d. 322 BCE.). He thus has undertaken to write this book, he states, to show "the incoherence of [the philosophers'] beliefs and the contradiction of their metaphysical statements, relating at the same time their doctrine as it actually is, so as to make it clear to those who embrace unbelief in God through imitation that all significant thinkers, past and present, agree in believing in God and the last day; ...that no one has denied these two [beliefs]." ⁶⁵ Differences among them affect only incidentally the substance of their belief. In substantiating the latter claim, al-Ghazali draws a distinction between those philosophical sciences such as mathematics and logic; which are completely harmless from a religious point of view, and those, which like Physics and metaphysics, contain the bulk of the heresies or errors of the philosophers. ⁶⁶

Unlike most of the other '*ulama*' of his time, al-Ghazali had studied the exact sciences and was thus in a position to make an authoritative assessment of their relation to religion. His position on this issue was not one of blind opposition. None of the results of mathematics, he said, are connected with religion. Therefore, mathematics is not a forbidden subject. Nevertheless, al-Ghazali argued, it leads to many dangers and is very often the cause of unbelief:

There are two drawbacks, which arise from mathematics. The first is that every student of mathematics admires its precision and the clarity of its demonstrations. This leads him to believe in the philosophers and to think that all their sciences resemble this one in clarity and demonstrative power. Further, he has already heard the accounts on everybody's lips of their unbelief, their denial of God's attributes, and their contempt for revealed truth; he becomes an unbeliever merely by accepting them as authorities. ⁶⁷

Al-Ghazali also had a high regard for logic, which was regarded as a tool of philosophy rather than a part of it and insisted on the application of logic to organized thought about religion. ⁶⁸ That he is a

passionate advocate of logic is especially evident from his *Al-Qistas al-Mustaqim* (“The Correct Balance”) wherein he claims that Aristotelian syllogisms are already used and recommended in the Qur’an.⁶⁹ However, he was forced to be somewhat equivocal on the subject as he feared being attacked as a follower of Aristotle. Thus he employed ambiguous titles for his books on logic in order to avoid using the term *mantiq*.⁷⁰ Muhammad Ibn Tumlus, who had also written about logic, defended himself by calling upon the authority of al-Ghazali, saying that:

Abu hamid altered the titles of his books as well as the technical terms employed in them. In place of the terms ordinarily used by the representatives of that field, he used technical terms familiar to the *fuqaha*’ (jurists) and frequently used by the *‘ulama*’ of his time. This he did to protect himself and to escape what other scholars had experienced who came forward with strange and unusual things, for which they had to submit to ordeals and suffer humiliation. A merciful God protected him from these.⁷¹

Al-Ghazali’s quarrel is not with the philosophers’ mathematics, astronomical sciences, or logic, but only with those of their theories that contravene the principles of religion. “These [philosophers] challenge the [very] principles of religion. Let us [all] then strive against them.”⁷² Three of those philosophers deserve special mention: Aristotle, who organized and perfected the philosophical sciences; and al-Farabi and Ibn Sina, who are the two most authoritative expositors of Aristotelian philosophy in Islam.⁷³ It was to show the falsity of the views of these two leading Muslim Neoplatonists directly, and Aristotle (their master), indirectly on twenty propositions that have an obvious religious reference and which the unguarded believer must be warned that he composed the *Tahafut*.⁷⁴ In particular, he underscores that philosophers become infidels on three questions: the eternity of the world (a thesis peculiar to Aristotle); the impossibility of God’s knowledge of particulars (a thesis strongly held by Ibn Sina), and the denial of bodily resurrection and mortality of the individual souls, a naturalistic theory which is not exclusively Aristotelian.⁷⁵

Eternity is a highly controversial issue in Islamic philosophy, especially with respect to the creation of the world. Many philosophers within the tradition argued that the world must be eternal, which means

that it is at best co-eternal with God, or that it flows eternally from His being, which means that God does not make decisions about what to do to create the world. Al-Ghazali claims that the arguments for the eternity of the world are unconvincing even if one defines time in terms of motion. If God creates the world at a particular moment, then the world started at that time, and there is no need to claim it is eternal. The time at which the world began was the time that time started, and God existed before that time eternally.⁷⁶ In his *Tahafut*, Al-Ghazali quotes Plato as saying: “The world is generated and originated in time.”⁷⁷ But, then, some among [the philosophers], says al-Ghazali, have interpreted Plato’s language as metaphor, refusing [to maintain] that the world’s temporal origination is a belief of his.⁷⁸ The philosophers’ thesis of the eternity of the world opens the list of the twenty “pernicious” questions of *Tahafut*, because according to al-Ghazali this thesis entails that the world is uncreated and therefore the existence of its creator is indemonstrable. Al-Kindi and the Ash’arite theologians had in fact predicated the existence of God on the existence of a created world; because it is created, the world necessarily requires a creator, as al-Kindi put it. In time, this became the favourite argument of the *mutakallimin*, both Mu’tazilite and Ash’arite, for the existence of God.⁷⁹

As for God’s knowledge of universals but not of particulars, al-Ghazali levelled his attack on Ibn Sina in particular, because Ibn Sina had contended that the knowledge of changing particulars entails change in the essence of the “knower”; so that the only knowledge God can have of the world is universal. For al-Ghazali, however, not only reason but the Qur’an itself affirmed that “not a single atom’s weight in the heavens or on earth is hidden from Him” (34:3). To deny God’s knowledge of particulars, then, reduces God to the status of the ignorant or the dead.⁸⁰

Regarding bodily resurrection, al-Ghazali accused the philosophers of having failed to prove demonstratively the immortality of the soul, let alone the resurrection of the body. Because of this failure, the only recourse open to the believer, he concluded, is the authority of Scripture, wherein both the Qur’an and the *hadith* are explicit that on the Day of Judgment, souls shall be united to the

appropriate bodies, made up of the same matter as the original body or one of a different nature.⁸¹

A fourth major issue is that of the Aristotelian concept of necessary connection between causes and effects. Fire causes burning, lightning causes thunder, winds cause waves, and gravity causes bodies to fall. Such connections between an effect and its cause form the cornerstone of scientific thinking, both modern and classical. But this notion of causality is one which is specifically rejected by Ash'arite doctrine, and the most articulate and effective opponent of physical causality was al-Ghazali.⁸²

Neither experience nor reason, argued al-Ghazali, justifies the assertion of necessary causal connection. Experience simply proves that the alleged effect occurs simultaneously with the cause, not through it. The association between the two creates in the mind the belief that the former is indeed the effect and the latter the cause. Individuals should believe instead, he wrote, that effects in the world are caused directly by God, who is the sole agent in the universe, or through the agency of those angels "charged with the affairs of this world." To assert that effects follow necessarily from their antecedent causes, as Aristotelian physical theory stipulates, concluded al-Ghazali, is in the end incompatible with the universal Muslim belief in God's power for miracle making.⁸³

Al-Ghazali explains that his task is simply to refute the philosophers, to show that, contrary to their claims, their theories contradicting religious principles have not been demonstrated; they have failed to fulfil the conditions for demonstration which they themselves had set down in their logical works. "They [the philosophers] are unable to satisfy the conditions of proof they lay down in logic, and consequently differ much from one another here."⁸⁴ It is somewhat paradoxical that al-Ghazali spearheaded the attack against free-thinkers and the proponents of logic, but in doing so had to use the weapon of his adversaries.⁸⁵

Iyasa A. Bello makes an interesting observation when he refers to al-Ghazali's quote: "Taxing with infidelity is a legal pronouncement."⁸⁶ This statement, according to Bello, shows that al-Ghazali's actual goal in the refutation of the philosophers' theories was

jurisdictional: their condemnation to disbelief; but he used philosophy only as a vehicle to reach that goal.⁸⁷

Al-Ghazali emphasized the inward and practical sides of Islam, while drawing cautiously upon Aristotelian ethics and Neoplatonic mysticism where they seemed in harmony with his religious purposes. The Qur'an as Revelation always remained for him the ultimate source of truth in religion. All these directions of Islamic thought were fused together in his greatest work--*Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* ("The Revival of the Religious Sciences"). Its impact has remained profound among Muslims owing to the sincerity of his thought and the force of his Arabic writing style.⁸⁸

Ibn Rushd's Stand

Ibn Rushd stands out as the greatest advocate since the ninth-century philosopher al-Kindi of the harmony of philosophy and religion, or more specifically of Aristotle and the Qur'an. According to Ibn Rushd, the issues that had pitted the Muslim theologians against the philosophers of Islam were often matters of semantics. Properly interpreted, he believed, the statements of the Qur'an are readily reconcilable with philosophy. The Qur'an distinguishes between those verses that are "sound" and those that are ambiguous. The former constitute the core of the Qur'an or the Mother of the Book. The latter are open to various interpretations. Only God and those "well-grounded in knowledge," know its interpretation. Ibn Rushd was emphatic that only the philosophers or "people of demonstration" were the ones who were "well-grounded in knowledge." The others including the theologians or "people of dialectic" and the masses at large are not competent to engage in this interpretation, which can only lead to dissension and strife among Muslims.⁸⁹

For Ibn Rushd, there are different classes of men who fall roughly into three groups. The highest of these are those whose religious belief is based on demonstration (*burhan*), the result of reasoning from syllogisms which are *a priori* certain; these are the men to whom the philosopher makes his appeal. The lowest layer contains those whose faith is based on the authority of a teacher or on presumptions which cannot be argued out and are not due to the exercise of pure reason. Intermediate between these two levels are

those who have not attained the use of pure reason, but are capable of argument and controversy by means of which their faith can be defended and proved. “Demonstration” proper is not to be laid before the last two groups for it can only cause them doubt and difficulty.⁹⁰

Defending philosophy, especially that of Aristotle, against the attacks of al-Ghazali and others, Ibn Rushd put forward a variety of arguments of general scope such as the following: that Islam allows latitude to qualified scholars to interpret the Qur’an, and that philosophers are the best qualified to do so by their understanding of the truths of science, including philosophy. Revelation and science must agree, for truth is single. But science and philosophy may contradict theology.⁹¹

Ibn Rushd’s reputation rests to a large degree on his many commentaries on Aristotle. For Ibn Rushd, Aristotle was an intellectually flawless man whose philosophical findings are absolute and infallible truth. De Boer tells us that it was upon Aristotle that Ibn Rushd’s activity was concentrated. He paraphrases Aristotle and he interprets him, sometimes with brevity, and other times in detail, both in moderate-sized and in bulky commentaries. He thus merits the name of “the Commentator”. Aristotle for him is the supremely perfect man, the greatest thinker, the philosopher who was in possession of an infallible truth.⁹²

Ibn Rushd had necessarily to attempt a reconciliation of his philosophical ideas with orthodox Islamic theology, as there were many who were ready to accuse him of heresy because of his devotion to a pagan thinker.⁹³ He accordingly attempted this reconciliation by means of the so-called ‘double-truth’ theory. His theory is that one and the same truth is understood clearly in philosophy and expressed allegorically in theology. The scientific formulation of truth is achieved only in philosophy, but the same truth is expressed in theology, only in a different manner.⁹⁴ Such a theory, a form of fideism, was held to be controversial, since it meant that religious truths could not be rationally justified, while philosophical truths are irrefutable.⁹⁵ What Ibn Rushd did was to make theology subordinate to philosophy, to make the latter the judge of the former, so that it belongs to the philosopher to decide what theological doctrines need to be allegorically interpreted and in what way they should be interpreted. It was this view which drew upon

Ibn Rushd, and upon philosophy generally, the hostility of the Islamic theologians.⁹⁶

Ibn Rushd maintained that the task of philosophy was one approved and commanded by religion, for the Qur'an shows that God commands men to search for the truth. It is only the prejudice of the unenlightened which fears freedom of thought, because for those whose knowledge is imperfect the truths of philosophy seem to be contrary to religion. On this topic he composed two theological treatises—*Fasl* and *Kashf*. *Fasl* is a legal retort to al-Ghazali's *Faysal*. In *Fasl*, the core of Ibn Rushd's thesis is that contrary to Al-Ghazali's claim, there can be no conflict between philosophy and revelation. Where apparent conflict occurs, revelation is invariably susceptible of allegorical interpretation agreeable with philosophy. Such interpretation, however, ought to be restricted to the people of interpretation. Although many of the ideas Ibn Rushd presents in it are drawn from his predecessors, *Fasl* stands out as the only book in medieval Islam, whose primary objective is to attempt to harmonize Greco-Arab philosophy with Islam. Ibn Rushd confines himself in this reconciliation to those three theories of the philosophers upon which al-Ghazali taxes them with infidelity.⁹⁷ George F. Hourani summarizes the message of *Fa'îl* in the Introduction to his translation of this work in English.⁹⁸ The author, he says, sets out to show that the Scriptural Law (*shar'*) of Islam does not altogether prohibit the study of philosophy by Muslims but, on the contrary, makes it a duty for a certain class of people, those with the capacity for "demonstrative" or scientific reasoning (*qiyas burhani*). Apparent conflicts between the teachings of Scripture and philosophy can be reconciled by allegorical interpretations of Scripture, though such interpretations must not be taught to the common people.⁹⁹

Kashf is a theological work, the main task of which is to display that the doctrines of all the different Muslim theological schools of thought fail to satisfy the needs of the intellectuals or the community at large; and above all, that these doctrines do not necessarily conform to the injunctions of the Scripture. The last part of this work illustrates further the question of interpretation treated in *Fasl*.¹⁰⁰

In the *Fasl* and the *Kashf*, al-Ghazali had been very severely handled. In the *Tahafut al-tahafut*, the battle against him grows and becomes more definite.¹⁰¹ He opposed the teaching of the *mutakallimin*,

whom he regarded as subverting the pure principles of the Aristotelian philosophy, and of these he considered the worst to be al-Ghazali, “that renegade of philosophy.”¹⁰² But more often than not, Ibn Rushd does not, in fact, defend al-Farabi and Ibn Sina, the two Muslim philosophers who are the main target of al-Ghazali in his *Tahafut*. Instead, he shows to what extent they have departed from the authentic Aristotelian philosophical doctrines, and sometimes joins his voice with that of al-Ghazali in convicting them of heresy.¹⁰³ Arnaldez in his article on Ibn Rushd in *the Encyclopedia of Islam* (New Edition, 1986) indicates that Ibn Rushd’s original philosophical doctrine is to be found in this book.¹⁰⁴

In his *Tahafut al-tahafut*, Ibn Rushd refuted al-Ghazali’s arguments against the philosophers point by point. On the first issue of the eternity of the world, he argued that contrary to al-Ghazali’s contention, the philosophers do not believe the world to be really eternal or really temporal. According to Ibn Rushd, the former thesis entails that like God, the world is uncreated; the latter that it is corruptible. The genuine teaching of the philosophers, he explained, is that the world is generated from eternity. This is so because the claim that it was generated in time simply derogates from God’s power or perfection, because it would entail that God could not have brought the world into being before the specific time He created it and would raise the question why He chose to create it at that specific time and no other.¹⁰⁵

On the second issue, that the philosophers deny God’s knowledge of particulars, Ibn Rushd reported that what the philosophers in fact deny is that God’s knowledge is analogous to that of humans and thus divisible into particular and universal. The two are radically different: human knowledge is an effect of the thing known, whereas God’s knowledge is the cause of the thing known and accordingly is neither universal nor particular but is of its own kind. Moreover, its mode is unknown to us, because, like God’s will, it is part of the mystery of God’s creative power.¹⁰⁶

On the third issue of resurrection, Ibn Rushd explained, the philosophers and the religious creeds of his day are in accord regarding the fact of resurrection, but they differ on its mode. The philosophers, he held, subscribe to spiritual resurrection or immortality and regard the

Qur'anic references to corporeal resurrection and the pleasures and pains of heaven and hell as sensuous representations of spiritual truths, intended to sway or deter the masses, who are unable to understand the subtle, spiritual language of Revelation.¹⁰⁷

Ibn Rushd further censures al-Ghazali's sincerity in denying the necessary correlation between cause and effect, on the ground that this denial is a sophistical trick in which "one denies verbally what is in his heart," that is, without serious conviction or simply out of malice. He then proceeded to ridicule al-Ghazali's notion that the alleged correlation between cause and effect is a matter of habit, born of humankind's observation of the recurrence of cause-effect sequences. By habit, al-Ghazali could only mean God's habit, which the Qur'an (35:45) denies on the ground that God's ways are immutable; that of inanimate objects, which is absurd; or finally, humankind's own habit of judging the correlation of events in the world. This is synonymous with the activity of reason, which is nothing other than the knowledge of the cause underlying any given effect or series of effects.¹⁰⁸

Analysis of the Two Stands

Al-Ghazali's primary aim was simply to prove in his *Tahafut* that, contrary to what the philosophers claimed, they had proved none of their metaphysical theories. At the conclusion of his *Tahafut*, al-Ghazali leveled a legal charge at the philosophers. He charged them with irreligion (*kufir*), punishable by death, for three of the doctrines they upheld.¹⁰⁹ For al-Ghazali, these three theories were both logically impossible and doctrinally false.

For Ibn Rushd, the only valid decision ruling that irreligion (*kufir*) has been committed can be arrived at through *ijma'*, the consensus of the opinion of Muslim scholars. But in practice, he says, such a decision in matters of doctrine can never be arrived at. For the consensus in such matters of doctrine must be definitive. To be definitive all the qualified scholars in the Muslim realm at any one time must be in agreement.¹¹⁰ It must be known that all the qualified scholars had given their opinion and it must be known that they all expressed what they actually believed. But this is impossible. The number of qualified scholars in the wide realm of Islam cannot be ascertained, and it can never be known whether or not the scholars who

give their opinion give what they actually believe. In matters pertaining to doctrine, *ijma'* in the definitive sense can never be obtained. The charges of irreligion leveled by al-Ghazali against the philosophers have no legal validity.¹¹¹

It is within this legal framework that Ibn Rushd defends al-Farabi and Ibn Sina against the charge of irreligion leveled against them by al-Ghazali for the endorsement of the theories of the world's eternity, God's knowledge, and the soul's immortality that denies bodily resurrection. Should the philosophers have committed any errors in these theories their error is possible. However, in the case of the philosophers' theory of God's knowledge, al-Ghazali bases his attack on a misunderstanding of the theory.¹¹² The philosophers do not deny, as al-Ghazali assumes that God knows particulars. They only deny that God's knowledge of the particular is identical with human knowledge. In this they are necessarily correct. For in the case of human knowledge, it is the particular, which is the cause of the knowledge. In the case of God, however, it is God's knowledge, which is the cause of the particular, and hence God knows the particular as a cause that knows its own effect. As for the soul's immortality, again, Ibn Rushd argues, the passages in the Scripture that speak of immortality belong to that class of texts that it is uncertain whether it would be taken literally or allegorically. Thus, if the philosophers did err in not taking those passages literally, their error is permissible.¹¹³

Ibn Rushd maintains that philosophy and religion do not conflict, that as a matter of fact religious law commands the class of people who have the capacity to do philosophy to pursue it, and that the charges of irreligion leveled at the philosophers by al-Ghazali have no legal justification.¹¹⁴ Ibn Rushd writes from the strict Aristotelian position. He not only criticizes al-Ghazali but often subjects the philosophers to severe criticism when they deviate from the true Aristotelian position as Ibn Rushd sees it. But his attack is mainly of al-Ghazali. Although in his defense he sometimes criticizes the philosophers for their non-stringent arguments, he is in the main in agreement with them, shares their metaphysical premises and their conclusions.¹¹⁵

Al-Ghazali's attack on the doctrine of a pre-eternal world is an attack on a metaphysic alien to the Qur'an. His opponents argue from the Aristotelian concept of God. This God acts by necessity. His acts are further determined by the intrinsic nature of things outside Him. He actualizes in ways prescribed by the nature of things. Nor does such a God act directly on the world of generation and corruption. He acts through a series of intermediary essential causes. It is from such premises that the Aristotelians deduce their theory of an eternal world. It is these premises that are irreligious for al-Ghazali.¹¹⁶

Now, in theology, al-Ghazali was an Ash'arite. Yet he explicitly denies in his *Tahafut* that he writes from any specific metaphysical premises. His purpose, he maintains, is simply to refute the philosophers and not to set forth any doctrine. These claims, however, do not stand the test. A scrutiny of al-Ghazali's *Tahafut* reveals that al-Ghazali's work abounds with metaphysical assumptions of his own which when extracted exhibit an identifiable metaphysical view, that of Ash'arite occasionalism.¹¹⁷ It is this occasionalism, that underlies al-Ghazali's attack on the philosophers, and it is this occasionalism that is in conflict with the Aristotelianism of the philosophers and Ibn Rushd. For here, in these metaphysical and logical arguments, al-Ghazali attempts to ward off from Islam that which is alien. He does so by rejecting his opponents' premises and supplanting them with premises taken from a metaphysics designed to preserve the Qur'anic view of God and the world.¹¹⁸

Ibn Rushd attacked Ash'arite occasionalism severely.¹¹⁹ But Ibn Rushd was uncertain whether his arguments would persuade the non-philosopher. Ash'arism was gaining acceptance. Philosophy was on the defensive. To defend philosophy by showing the inconsistencies of Ash'arism might not suffice and we find Ibn Rushd in his *Fasl* resorting to a second line of defense in defending the theory of the world's pre-eternity, resorting, that is, to the art practiced by his fellow philosophers, contemporaries like Maimonides (d. 601/1204), and predecessors like al-Farabi, of concealing the real discrepancies between his views and those of his opponents. Thus in *Fasl*, Ibn Rushd strove to minimize the differences between the Ash'arite view of the world's origin and the Aristotelian. The essential metaphysical differences pertaining to the nature of God and the world, implied in

these different theories, he glossed over.¹²⁰ For Ibn Rushd to maintain that the Aristotelian and the Ash'arites are in agreement here since they both acknowledge the eternity and prime agency of God, is sophistry. Although Ibn Rushd was candid and courageous relative to the religious-political circumstances of his time, he was still practicing the art of concealment.¹²¹

The writings of all the major philosophers—al-Kindi, Ibn Sina, al-Razi, Ibn Rushd, etc., show simultaneous contempt for, and fear of, the ignorant masses. They cheerfully advocated the expediency of one truth for the masses and another for the elect. This was essential for their self-preservation and a calculated application of *taqiyya* (dissimulation) because it was not hard for fanatical mullahs to incite the masses against the philosophers. But they were also convinced that Islam mandated the study of science and philosophy. Although this was a minority viewpoint, it was still significant in the context of that society.¹²²

Conclusion

S. van den Bergh in his introduction to the English translation of *Tahafut al-tahafut* (“Incoherence of the Incoherence”) shows al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd to be separated on a fundamental point: in the tradition of his master, al-Juwayni (d. 478/1085), al-Ghazali does not consider that philosophical reasoning has the strictness of mathematical reasoning, and in his *Maqasid*, he points out that there exists there a source of error which misleads the unthinking supporters of logic. Ibn Rushd on the other hand, believes in the value of demonstration, and shows, as he did for the theologians, that it is the Neoplatonic philosophers who lack strictness, but that sound logic should not be accused of this.¹²³

Emotionally the differences between the two are very deep. Ibn Rushd is a philosopher and a proud believer in reason. He reproaches the theologians for having made God as immortal man but God for him is a dehumanized principle.¹²⁴ Ibn Rushd accuses al-Ghazali of hypocrisy and insincerity by saying that his polemics against the philosophers are merely to win the favor of the orthodox. According to him, al-Ghazali's teachings are sometimes detrimental to religion and sometimes to philosophy and sometimes to both.¹²⁵

While addressing the polemic between Ibn Rushd and al-Ghazali, it is also important to acknowledge areas of agreement between them. For example, in chapter three of the *Fasl*, which is clearly a conciliatory work, Ibn Rushd pays tribute to al-Ghazali for his contribution to the development of the “sciences of asceticism and of the future life.”¹²⁶ Moreover, we find Ibn Rushd in agreement with al-Ghazali on the need to avoid *kalam*. If Ibn Rushd’s criticism lacks the moral condemnation, which is characteristic of al-Ghazali’s position, Ibn Rushd’s polemic disqualifies *kalam* on methodological grounds.¹²⁷ Both agree that *kalam* is not the way to truth. Though they do not agree upon where the way to is to be found, Ibn Rushd does not reject the intuitive knowledge of the *Sufi dhawq* (taste), nor al-Ghazali the rational knowledge of the philosophers. Yet the polemic does take place because both are moving on a rational level and because al-Ghazali, in spite of the critique, makes use of *kalam*.¹²⁸

Van Den Bergh rightly concludes that it is sometimes more the formula than the essence of things, which divides al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd. Both believe that the Qur’an contains the highest truth. Both affirm that God creates or has created the earth. Both apply to God the theory that His will and knowledge differ from human will and knowledge in that they are creative principles and essentially beyond understanding. Both admit that Divine cannot be measured by the standards of man. Both believe in God’s ultimate unity.¹²⁹

Endnotes

¹ Mahmoud M. Ayoub, *Islam: Faith and history*, (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2004), 159.

² *Ibid.*, 160-161 and 168-169.

³ Neoplatonism, one of the most persistent strands of Western philosophy is, as the name suggests, a philosophy which begins from the works of Plato, and interprets him in a special manner. The manner of that interpretation tends to associate God with the principle of unity. As a result, God becomes completely transcendent, and related to the world by means of a series of intermediaries, who (or which) derive from the One by a principle of emanation. In this view, reality is a graded series

from the Divine to the material, and man who has in him some part of the Divine, longs for union with the eternal source of things. The system thus has spiritual as well as intellectual implication. Neoplatonism has been described as the final summation or synthesis of the major currents in Greek philosophy, Pythagoreanism, Stoicism, Platonism and Aristotelianism, into which an oriental religious and mystical spirit was infused. See "Neoplatonism," in the *Dictionary of philosophy and religion*, (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1996), 514-515. See also Fakhry, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, "Greek philosophy: Impact on Islamic philosophy."

⁴ G. F. Hourani "Philosophy and theology, Islamic," in *Dictionary of the middle ages*, editor in chief, Joseph R. Strayer (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1989), 9:567-568.

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

⁶ See Irfan A. H. Fattah, *Al-falsafah al-Islamiyya: Dirasa wa naqd*, (Beirut: Muassasa al-Risala, 1984), 22, wherein this reference is made to Haji Khalifa's, *Kashf al-zunun*, 1:143.

⁷ For an overview of Suharwardi's philosophy of illumination, see Hossein Ziai, "Shihab al-Din Suharwardi: Founder of the Illuminationist School," in *History of Islamic philosophy*, edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr. and Oliver Leaman (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 1:434-464.

⁸ Quoted in Irfan, *Al-falsafah al-Islamiyya...*, 22. See also al-Tahanawi, *Kashshaf Istilahat al-funun*, (Beirut: 1966), 37 referred to by Irfan A. H. Fattah.

⁹ Ibn Rushd. *Kitab fasl al-maqal*, translated by G. F. Hourani with introduction and notes, under the title *Averroes on the harmony of religion and philosophy*, with its appendix (*Damama*) and an extract from *Kitab al-kashf 'an manahij al-adilla*], (London: Luzac & Co., 1976; reprint of 1961), 2-3. See also his "Ibn Rushd's defence of philosophy," in J. Kritzeck & R. Bayly Winder (eds.) *World of Islam: Studies in honour of P. K. Hitti* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd. and New York: St. Martin Press, 1960), 146-7.

¹⁰ Hourani, *Averroes on the harmony of religion and philosophy*, 3.

¹¹ Hourani, "Ibn Rushd's defense of philosophy," 146. Quoted in Iysa A. Bello, *The medieval Islamic controversy between philosophy and orthodoxy*, (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1989), 4.

¹² Bello, *The medieval Islamic controversy ...*, 4.

¹³ Alnoor Dhanani, "Muslim philosophy and the sciences," in *The Muslim almanac*, edited by Azim A. Nanji (Detroit: Gale Research Inc., 1996), 189-204.

¹⁴ Muhsin S. Mahdi, *The Encyclopedia Britannica (Macropedia)*, 15th Edition, "Islamic philosophy."

- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Parviz Morewedge, *Essays in Islamic philosophy, theology, and mysticism*, (Oneonta: The State University of New York at Oneonta, 1995), xvii-xx.
- ¹⁷ Cosmogony is derived from the Greek *kosmos* (“world”) and *gignesthai* (“to be born”). The term refers to accounts of the origins of worlds, and applies equally to the speculative accounts of modern astronomers, and the less sophisticated mythical accounts of ancient peoples. See “Cosmogony” in the *Dictionary of philosophy and religion*, (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1996), 765.
- ¹⁸ Emanation from the Latin *e* (“from”) and *mano* (“flow”) is a doctrine of the production of the world as due to the overflowing superabundance of the Divine; an alternative to the doctrine of the creation. The concept of emanation connects the eternal and temporal orders, usually through intermediate stages. In the West, Gnosticism and Neoplatonism are emanationistic philosophies. See “Emanation” in the *Dictionary of philosophy and religion*, (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1996), 195.
- ¹⁹ Morewedge, *Essays in Islamic philosophy, theology, and mysticism*, xvii-xx. .
- ²⁰ Murtada Mutahhari, *Understanding Islamic sciences*, (London: ICAS Press, 2002), 37.
- ²¹ Theism is the view that all limited or finite things are dependent in some way on one supreme or ultimate reality of which one may also speak in personal terms.
- ²² Ibid., 37-38.
- ²³ Ibid., 43.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Morewedge, *Essays in Islamic philosophy, theology, and mysticism*, xvii-xx.
- ²⁶ Mutahhari, *Understanding Islamic sciences*, 26.
- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁹ Oliver Leaman, *An introduction to classical Islamic philosophy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 9.
- ³⁰ Ibid., 10.
- ³¹ Ibid., 12-13.
- ³² Ibid., 14-15.
- ³³ Michael E. Marmura, “Falsafah,” *The Encyclopedia of Religion*.
- ³⁴ Ibid., 267-268.
- ³⁵ Leaman, *An introduction to classical Islamic philosophy*, 7-8.
- ³⁶ Mark B. Woodhouse, *A preface to philosophy*, (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 4th edn., 1990), 16-18.
- ³⁷ F. Rehman, *Islam and modernity: Transformation of an intellectual tradition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 158.
- ³⁸ Ibn Rushd, *Tahafut al-tahafut* (“The incoherence of the incoherence”), translated from the Arabic with Introduction and Notes by Simon Van Den Bergh (E. J. W. Gibb Memorial, London, 1978), 1:xxxv.

- ³⁹ Fakhry, *Philosophy, dogma and...*, 89-90.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 90.
- ⁴¹ Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi, *al-Imta wa'l-Mu'anasah*, (Cairo: n.p., 1939), 2:9. See also Majid Fakhry, *A short introduction to Islamic philosophy, theology and mysticism*. (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1997), 63-64.
- ⁴² Majid Fakhry, "The liberal arts in the medieval Arabic tradition from the seventh to the twelfth centuries," (Paper XVIII) in Fakhry, *Philosophy, dogma and...*, 94. See also Leaman, *An introduction to classical Islamic philosophy*, 11, where the author refers to D. Margoliouth (trans), "The discussion between Abu Bishr Matta and Abu Sa'id al-Sirafi on the merits of logic and grammar," in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* NS, XXXVII (1905), 79-129: p.112.
- ⁴³ Bello, *The medieval Islamic controversy...*, 3-4.
- ⁴⁴ Majid Fakhry, *A history of Islamic philosophy*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2nd edn., 1983), 203-233. See also Bello, *The medieval Islamic controversy...*, 4.
- ⁴⁵ Fakhry, *Philosophy, dogma and...*, 90.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁷ Al-Ghazali, *Faysal al-Tafriqah Bayn al-Islam wa'l-zandaqah* ("The clear criterion for distinguishing between Islam and godlessness"), trans. R. J. McCarthy under Appendix 1 to his *Freedom and fulfillment*, (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980). Al-Ghazali wrote this work to expound the legal grounds upon which he has condemned the philosophers to infidelity. He states: "Taxing with infidelity is a legal pronouncement." See also al-Ghazali, *Faysal al-tafriqah*, (Cairo, 2nd edn., 1962), 46.
- ⁴⁸ Al-Ghazali, *al-Munqidh min al-dalal* ("The deliverance from error"), trans. R. J. McCarthy, under the title *Freedom and fulfillment*, (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980).
- ⁴⁹ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Islamic Philosophy," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*. In his article, Nasr has given a brief account of the contributions of the galaxy of Muslim philosophers from al-Kindi to Ibn Rushd, followed by philosophers up to contemporary times.
- ⁵⁰ Bello, *The medieval Islamic controversy* ., 1. Ibn Rushd's *Damimat al-'Ilm al-Ilahi* is also stated to be written in the counter-attack of al-Ghazali's *Tahafut* from a theological perspective. This work, as its name suggests is an appendix to *Fasl* and has been translated from Arabic to English by G. F. Hourani in the translated version of the *Fasl* entitled *Averroes on the harmony of religion and philosophy*, (London: Luzac & Co., 1976). See also Majid Fakhry, *Averroes*, (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2001), 3-4.
- ⁵¹ Al-Ghazali, *al-Munqidh* ("Freedom and fulfilment"), 67. See also *al-Munqidh min al-dalal*, trans. W. M. Watt, *The faith and practice of al-Ghazali* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1953), 26.
- ⁵² Al-Ghazali, *al-Munqidh min al-dalal* ("The deliverance from error"), trans. Richard

- Joseph McCarthy, under the title *Freedom and fulfillment* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980), 68.
- ⁵³ Ibid.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., 68-69. See also Leaman, *An introduction to classical Islamic philosophy*, 10-11.
- ⁵⁵ T. J. De Boer, *The history of philosophy in Islam*, trans. Edward R. Jones, B.D., (London: n.p., 1933). See also <http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ip/deboer.htm>. (New York: Islamic Philosophy Online, Inc.), 154-168.
- ⁵⁶ McCarthy, *Freedom and fulfillment*, 68-69.
- ⁵⁷ Al-Ghazali, *al-Munqidh min al-dalal*, trans. W. M. Watt, *The faith and practice of al-Ghazali* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1953), 29. See also preface to his *Maqasid al-falasifah*.
- ⁵⁸ M. M. Sharif, ed. *A history of Muslim philosophy*, 2 vols., (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2004), 1:592.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid.
- ⁶⁰ Massimo Campanini, "Al-Ghazzali," in Nasr and Leaman, eds. *History of Islamic philosophy*, 1: 258.
- ⁶¹ Watt, *The faith and practice of al-Ghazali*, 36.
- ⁶² Oliver Leaman, *A brief introduction to Islamic philosophy*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), 7.
- ⁶³ Shams Inati, "Ibn Sina," in Nasr and Leaman, eds. *History of Islamic philosophy*, 1:231-246.
- ⁶⁴ Campanini, "Al-Ghazzali," 1:258-276. Also see Leaman, *A brief introduction to Islamic philosophy*, 1-12.
- ⁶⁵ Al-Ghazali, *Tahafut al-falasifah*, 3.
- ⁶⁶ Watt, *The faith and practice of al-Ghazali*, 32-43.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid., 33.
- ⁶⁸ Oliver Leaman, "Concept of philosophy in Islam," 8.
- ⁶⁹ See for details *The correct balance*, which forms an Appendix to R. Mc.Carthy's translated work--*Freedom and fulfillment*, 287-332. See also Leaman, *An introduction to classical Islamic philosophy*, 10.
- ⁷⁰ Pervez Hoodbhoy, *Islam and science: Religious orthodoxy and the battle for rationality*, (London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1991), 106.
- ⁷¹ Quoted in Ibid., 106. Hoodbhoy refers this quote to Ignaz Goldziher's *Studies on Islam*, translated and edited by Merlin L. Swartz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 201.
- ⁷² Al-Ghazali, *Tahafut al-falasifah*, 8.
- ⁷³ Ibid., 4.
- ⁷⁴ Ibid., 10-11.
- ⁷⁵ See Watt, *The faith and practice of al-Ghazali*, 37-38; McCarthy, *Freedom and fulfillment*, 76-77 and Campanini, "Al-Ghazzali," 258.
- ⁷⁶ See Oliver Leaman, *Key concepts in eastern philosophy*, (London and New York:

Routledge, 1999), 110.

⁷⁷ Al-Ghazali, *Tahafut al-falasifah* ("The incoherence of the philosophers"), translated, introduced, and annotated by Michael E. Marmura (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2nd edn., 2000), 12.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Majid Fakhry, "Philosophy and theology: From the eighth century C.E. to the present" in John L. Esposito, ed. *The Oxford history of Islam*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 269-303.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 283.

⁸¹ Ibid., 284.

⁸² Hoodbhoy, *Islam and science: Religious orthodoxy and the battle for rationality*, 105.

⁸³ Ibid., 284.

⁸⁴ Watt, *The faith and practice of al-Ghazali*, 37; McCarthy, *Freedom and fulfillment*, 76.

⁸⁵ Hoodbhoy, *Islam and science: Religious orthodoxy and the battle for rationality*, 106.

⁸⁶ Al-Ghazali, *Fayaa al-Tafriqah Bayn al-Islam Wa'l Zandaqah*, (Cairo, 1961), 197. trans. R.J. McCarthy, *Freedom and fulfillment*, (Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1980), 164. Quoted in Bello, *The medieval Islamic controversy ...*, 1.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ G. F. Hourani, "Philosophy and theology, Islamic," 9:570.

⁸⁹ Fakhry, "Philosophy and theology: From the..." 287-288. The verse under reference is 3:7

⁹⁰ DE Lacy. O'Leary, *Arabic thought and its place in history*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 255.

⁹¹ Hourani, "Philosophy and theology, Islamic," 9:571.

⁹² De Boer, *The history of philosophy in Islam*, 187-189.

⁹³ Fredrick Copleston, S. J., *History of philosophy*, 9 vols. (London: Search Press Limited, 1950), 2:198-200.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 198-200.

⁹⁵ Leaman, *An introduction to classical Islamic philosophy*, 29.

⁹⁶ Copleston, *History of philosophy*, 199.

⁹⁷ Bello, *The medieval Islamic controversy...*, 14. See also R. Arnaldez, *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, "Ibn Rushd."

⁹⁸ Hourani, *Averroes: On the harmony of religion and philosophy*, 1.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Arnaldez, *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, "Ibn Rushd." See also Bello, *The medieval Islamic controversy...*, 14-15.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² DE Lacy. O'Leary, *Arabic thought...*, 255.

¹⁰³ Bello, *The medieval Islamic controversy ...*, 15.

- ¹⁰⁴ Arnaldez, *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, "Ibn Rushd."
- ¹⁰⁵ Fakhry, "Philosophy and theology: From the..." 288.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 288.
- ¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 288-289.
- ¹⁰⁹ Michael E. Marmura, *The conflict over the world's pre-eternity in the Tahafuts of al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd*, Ph. D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1959 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilm International, 1987), vi.
- ¹¹⁰ In theory, orthodoxy was defined in terms of the acceptance of the Islamic community, whose consensus (*ijma'*) cannot err. In practice *ijma'* came to mean the consensus of the Muslim scholars and in the early period, the Muslim scholars of Madina. See Hourani, *Averroes on the harmony of religion and philosophy*, 28-29. and Joseph Schacht, *The origins of Muhammmaden jurisprudence*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950), 82-97.
- ¹¹¹ Marmura, *The conflict over the world's pre-eternity...*, 167.
- ¹¹² *Ibid.*, 168.
- ¹¹³ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁵ Marmura, *The conflict over the world's pre-eternity...*, vii.
- ¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, viii.
- ¹¹⁷ Occasionalism can be defined as the belief in the exclusive efficacy of God, of whose direct intervention the events of nature are alleged to be the overt manifestation or "occasion." It implies the vindication of the absolute omnipotence and sovereignty of God and the utter powerlessness of the creature without Him. See Majid Fakhry, *Islamic occasionalism and its critique by Averroes and Aquinas*, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1958), 9.
- ¹¹⁸ Marmura, *The conflict over the world's pre-eternity...*, ix..
- ¹¹⁹ See Fakhry, *Islamic occasionalism and its critique...*, 15-16.
- ¹²⁰ Marmura, *The conflict over the world's pre-eternity...*, x.
- ¹²¹ See Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the art of writing*, (Chicago: The Chicago University Press, 1988), 7-21, wherein this art as practiced by al-Farabi and others has been discussed. Indeed, philosophy, according to Ibn Rushd, should be confined to philosophers. Its contents should not be revealed and discussed by the non-philosophers.
- ¹²² Hoodbhoy, *Islam and science: Religious orthodoxy and the battle for rationality*, 94.
- ¹²³ Arnaldez, *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, "Ibn Rushd."
- ¹²⁴ Ibn Rushd, *Tahafut al-tahafut*, ed. Van Den Bergh, xxxvi.
- ¹²⁵ F. Rehman, *Prophecy in Islam*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979), 112. See also Kausar Parveen, "Al-Ghazali's attack on the philosophers and Ibn-i-Rushd's response," in *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, vol., 20, no.1., 1999, 88.
- ¹²⁶ Ibn Rushd. *Kitab fasl al-maqal*, translated by G. F. Hourani with introduction and

notes, under the title *Averroes on the harmony of religion and philosophy*, with its appendix (*Damima*) and an extract from *Kitab al-kashf 'an manahij al-adilla*, (London: Luzac & Co., 1976; reprint of 1961), 63.

¹²⁷ Josep Puig Montada, "Ibn Rushd versus al-Ghazali: Reconsideration of a polemic," in *The Muslim World*, vol. 82, no. 1-2., January-April 1992, 121.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*,

¹²⁹ Ibn Rushd, *Tahafut al-tahafut*, ed. Van Den Bergh, xxxv.

Relocating Sadrian Perspective

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Abstract

In this paper we have attempted to illustrate the significance of Sadr's thought in relation to social theory discourses. The author is of the view that we can construct a position based on Sadrian system of thought which could be utilized within broader context of social critique. In order to achieve such a goal the author has come to locate the Sadrian Perspective within the broad global debates on social theory. It should be admitted that the question of cultural critique based on Sadrian point of departure is in its rudimentary stage and fundamentally undertheorized. Of course, this question needs to be elaborated further but here we have settled for an introduction which could assist the students of philosophy, social theory and sociology to get a glimpse of comparative sociological theories.

Introduction

If one asked Montesquieu what name he would like to bestow upon his intellectual activity definitely he would not know that historians would have classified him as a sociologist. But successors of Montesquieu chose him as one of the early precursors of sociological theory without worrying about the nominal absence of sociology as a concept in the 17th century. The same applies to Ibn Khaludun who approached human society and the vicissitudes of communal life in a sociological fashion without adhering to positivism or nominalism of post-Enlightenment sociological discourses of modernity. In other words, the sheer non-compliance to modernist models of sociological theories did not disqualify him as a sociologist even he did not share any metatheoretical commonality with positivism, empiricism, rationalism or nominalism (not mentioning ontological positions such as Atheism or Deism or even ideological perspectives of Evolutionism

or alike. To put it differently; the very suggestion that Marx is one of the founders of sociology would have been interpreted as an insult by Marx himself who considered sociology as a bourgeoisie discourse of repression but this did not deter sociologists of later-day to extract the sociological aspects of Marx which could be appropriated once the ideological dusts, so to speak, cleared off. This practice of finding sociologicality or sociological impulse in the works of this author and that philosopher is not a novel suggestion as C Wright Mills has been among the pioneers who coined the phrase of Sociological Imagination. Once the problem is viewed in this light then question of who is a sociologist takes a broader dimension which surely is not restricted to Eurocentric vision of both society and imagination as these two could be viewed in a different vista in different civilizations while not denying the possibilities of cultural commonalities across human cultures. There are many voices in cotemporary world who may object in engaging with thinkers such as Imam Musa Sadr in sociological terms by arguing that he was a cleric and as a minister there is nothing sociological to be found in his works. But those who argue as such fail to see that a great tradition has been born in Latin America by Christian priests who did not fail to see the relevance of religiosity in the midst of society, on the one hand, and at the same time did not shy away to face up to the challenges of temporal exigencies, on the other hand. Those who choose to balance between religious wisdom and temporal exigencies came to be known as the leaders of Liberation Theology which are of grand significance for anybody who is interested in the dynamics of religion and society. Imam Musa Sadr belongs to those social thinkers who are adamant about the temporal exigency as well as unwavering about the revelational necessity in the constitution of self and society. This is how and where the secular social theory parts way from primordial social theorizing but mainstream sociology has chosen to interpret this departure as the failure of the latter to become a full-fledged sociological partner along many competing paradigms which are present within the context of contemporary multifarious social theory in the world of Academia.

To discuss about Imam Musa Sadr is problematical on many grounds and for different reasons in different parts of the globe on various conflicting bases. In the context of Academia, for instance, the

very presentation of a non-academic is in and by itself a problematic issue which needs to be justified on scientific grounds as otherwise there could be heavy critiques about the very problematization of a character that has been perceived by academics as a strident outsider. [1] In the context of contemporary anti-terrorist mode constructed by corporate media, for example, the very mentioning of a cleric from an Islamic Tradition who happens to be affiliated with the Shia Tradition and coincidentally connected to Iran (and Islamic Revolution in Iran) and by chance or grace related to a liberation movement in Lebanon are all good enough reasons to disqualify Sadr as an intellectual by disciplinary sociologists who exclude from the sociological pantheon a thinker such as the one depicted above. Besides there are other issues which make the case at hand very complex and that is the lack of disciplinarity in Sadrian discourse as sociological theory is considered by those in the craft as a rational discourse due to its disciplinarity and the absence of the latter is interpreted as the presence of irrationality which is so badly decried by proponents of Enlightenment Tradition. Sadrian discourse is a non-disciplinary discourse which has been less debated within the parameters of global sociology and we have attempted elsewhere (Miri, 2009. p 23) to deconstruct these problems in relation to Morteza Muttahari and Seyed M. H. Beheshti but what we have stated in relation to these two social theorists similarly and forcefully apply to Sadr as all three are parts of the primordial school of social theory along with many others.

I am certain that there are many of my sociological colleagues who would object to me in presenting as well as insisting on reconstructing Sadr as a social theorist while he himself seems not being bothered with this issue and never claimed to be a sociologist either. Then why should sociologists bother to reconstruct his universe of thought in sociological terms? Why is it so important to undertake such a task when there are many other sociologists who have been neglected in western context by western historians of sociological theories? I think the questions are valid and, indeed, in need of engagement by anybody who is interested in the destiny of humanity as a family on this planet but these questions and their probable future answers don't conflict with the task at hand as there are issues which

have not been problematized or even conceptualized by disciplinary school of social theory.

Debates within contemporary philosophy of sciences

In the context of academia, the philosophies of social sciences have been dominated with two grand positions of Collectivism and Individualism for the past few decades and any perspective that does not fit within the parameters of these two paradigmatic perspectives automatically gets disqualified. By Collectivism within social sciences I refer to the theory and practice that makes some sort of group rather than the individual the fundamental unit of political, social, and economic concern. In theory, collectivists insist that the claims of groups, associations, or the state must normally supersede the claims of individuals. This is how Stephen Grabill and Gregory M. A. Gronbacher view the problematique. [2] The term Individualism, on the other hand, has a great variety of meanings in social and political philosophy. There are at least three types that can be distinguished: (1) ontological individualism, (2) methodological individualism, and (3) moral or political individualism. Ontological individualism is the doctrine that social reality consists, ultimately, only of persons who choose and act. Collectives, such as a social class, state, or a group, cannot act so they are not considered to have a reality independent of the actions of persons. Methodological individualists hold that the only genuinely scientific propositions in social science are those that can be reduced to the actions, dispositions, and decisions of individuals. Political or moral individualism is the theory that individuals should be left, as far as possible, to determine their own futures in economic and moral matters. Key thinkers include Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman, Robert Nozick, John Locke, and Herbert Spencer. (Ibid)

The conflicting issues between individualists and collectivists are parts and parcels of central problematiques within political philosophy which could be, as proposed by Fred Miller, divided into the following five areas:

- What is the relationship between the individual and society?
- Can the existence of government or the state be justified?

- What abstract principles should guide the operation of government, regarding its aims and the limits of its authority?
- What sort of constitution, political institutions, and legal system should a given government have?
- What practical public policies should apply to specific areas such as police, defense and international relations, economics, public finance, and welfare? [3]

The fundamental issue in political philosophy concerns the relationship of the individual to society. Individualism holds that the individual is prior to society, because the mind belongs to the individual as such, and acts of thought must be performed by individuals. Although men learn from their predecessors and are interdependent in various ways, they still have to exercise their rational capacities as individuals. This position, known as individualism, is opposed to collectivism, which regards society as a super-organism existing over and above its individual members, and which takes the collective in some form (e.g., tribe, race, or state) to be the primary unit of reality and standard of value. For Individualism, in contrast, the moral principles of politics are an extension of the ethical code of rational self-interest. Because there are no conflicts of rational interests among individuals, the proper society is one in which individuals cooperate for mutual advantage, exchanging value for value.

Both positions have come under severe critiques by various thinkers and social theorists. Ayn Rand explores, for instance, the issue of individualism versus collectivism in her novel *The Fountainhead*, and in "What is Capitalism?" (in *Capitalism: the Unknown Ideal*). Collectivist political theories from Plato to Hegel and Marx are, for example, criticized in Karl Popper's *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. Individualism has too been criticized for promoting an erroneous view of humans which ignores the more important notion of people as *social animals*. Gergen (1973) suggests that the very terminology used in describing people helps to perpetuate false value preferences, e.g., the use of *high self-esteem* rather than *egotism* or *internal control* rather than *egocentricity*. Sampson (1978) and Wallach and Wallach (1983) argue that such an orientation in the social sciences perpetuates a view of people which is destructive of social interdependence and

relationships. Such psychological approaches as offered by Maslow, Rogers, Branden, and Kohlberg are believed to encourage -- to the detriment of society -- such individualistic ideals. In other words, Individualism has been criticized on three grounds; the primary ground is that individualism results in unscrupulous competition; the secondary basis is that it means one should be a self-contained and self-sufficient person, and thirdly that it must result in alienation from self and society. (Waterman, 1981)

To put it differently; both positions of Individualism and Collectivism are seen by various researchers as cultural aberrations which are incompatible with fully satisfying interpersonal relationships and sane communal lives and healthy societies as both fail to see the significance of Primordial Nature of human being which is championed by Imam Musa Sadr.

Sadr and contemporary debates in philosophy

To sum up; Sadr rejects both positions of Individualism and Collectivism and instead embraces the position of Primordialism which has been less debated within the context of academic social sciences. But this is not to suggest that this perspective is a nascent viewpoint in the history of ideas as its antecedents stretch to antiquity and best represented in its contemporary philosophical fashion by Mulla Sadra at the outset of modernity. [4] Sadr as a social theorist approaches all relevant questions which lie at the heart of interactions between the individual and society in the context of human existence and within the matrix of reality (the World, the Cosmos, or/and the Nature) through the prism of Primordial School of Social Theory.

For those who are not familiar with Sadr and his written works and also have not come across the works done on Sadr (Miri, 2007; 2007a) the very proposal that Sadr is a social theorist may sound oxymoronic as we are not only suggesting that he is a social theorist but we are contending that the intellectual universe of Sadr is of a capacity which could render itself to be reconstructed as a paradigm. In other words, we are proposing that Sadrian Paradigm is of great relevance in the context of sociological theory and we are also arguing that this significance has been unduly for a long time neglected and we, as sociologists, are in need of a revisiting our approach towards non-

disciplinary social theorists whose conceptual apparatuses may come handy in analyzing global problems and solving human predicaments. But before going any further it is of importance to dwell upon the very concept of paradigm and explain what this concept means in general and how we are employing it in relation to Sadrian discourse.

The very term 'Paradigm' in an etymological sense is consisted of two parts of 'Para' and 'Digma' which could together be roughly translated as the word 'Example' in modern English. The term up to 1960 has been employed solely by Linguists such as Ferdinand de Saussure who used the term *paradigm* to refer to a class of elements with similarities but since 60s and thanks to an American philosopher and historian of science i.e. Thomas Samuel Kuhn the word has come to refer to thought pattern in any scientific discipline or other epistemological context. Kuhn identified paradigm as a set of practices that define a scientific discipline during a particular period of time. In his book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* Kuhn defines a scientific paradigm as:

- *what* is to be observed and scrutinized
- the kind of *questions* that are supposed to be asked and probed for answers in relation to this subject
- *how* these questions are to be structured
- *how* the results of scientific investigations should be interpreted
- *how* is an experiment to be conducted, and *what* equipment is available to conduct the experiment

But what is of importance to state is the fact that Kuhn himself did not approve of the application of this paradigmatic model on any branches of knowledge that lie without the parameters of Natural Sciences.

In other words, he did not consider the concept of paradigm as appropriate for the social and human sciences. He explains in his preface to *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* that he concocted the concept of paradigm precisely in order to distinguish the social from the natural sciences (Kuhn, 1996. p x). It may be of interest to note that Kuhn wrote *The Structure of Scientific Revolution* at the Palo Alto

Center for Scholars, surrounded by social scientists, when he observed that they were never in agreement on theories or concepts. He explains that he wrote this book precisely to show that there are no, nor can be, any paradigms in the social sciences. This idea was later on developed by Mattei Dogan, a French sociologist, in his article *Paradigms in the Social Sciences*, where he argues that there are no paradigms at all in the social sciences since the concepts are polysemic (i.e. with multiple and related meanings), the deliberate mutual ignorance between scholars and the proliferation of schools in these disciplines. Dogan provides many examples of the inexistence of paradigms in the social sciences in this classical essay, particularly in sociology, political science and political anthropology. But Dogan's radicalism came under heavy criticisms by co-sociologists and what was presented as sociology's Achilles' heel came to be reinterpreted as the social science's strong point. In other words, the table was turned around by the advance of sociology of science-models which aimed at demonstrating the chink in natural sciences' armor. For instance, Ritzer proposed the idea of multiparadigmality in social sciences and McLennan in the Ritzerian spirit argued the lack of multiparadigmality within natural sciences as a transitory problem which shall be solved by the shift towards complexity theories a la Prigogine in *The End of Certainty*.

However what is of relevance for us in this context is the postdisciplinary use of the term paradigm which is not sharing either the Kuhnian-Doganian approach or their opponents who attempt to celebrate the incommensurability as the only way forward. Within the postdisciplinary approach the concept of 'Paradigm' seems to refer to a pattern, model or an episteme which is very close to what Germans used to term as Weltanschauung. It is in this fashion that one is permitted to apply the term 'Paradigm' to the Sadrian Discourse.

But the main question is still left unproblematized and that is what kind of paradigm the Sadrian Discourse is or how different the Sadrian Weltanschauung is from other competing worldviews of Left and Right which have been in academia since the disciplinarization of social sciences at universities around the globe. To understand the character of Sadrian Paradigm one should look at three concepts of

'Praxis', 'Religious Action' and 'Social Praxis' as these concepts seem to denote different meanings within different discourses.

Religion versus the 'Social'

Within the parameters of modernism it is a well-celebrated mantra chanted by proponents of secularizing logos that there is a deep-seated distinction between the realm of 'Religion' and the domain of the 'Social', on the one hand, and the concept of praxis should solely be employed for explaining secular processes in contrast to religious activities which have only relevance in ecclesiastical fields. This is another way to describe the arduous debates on the distinction between sacred and profane within sociological discourses of disciplinary nature which depicts an abyss between the realm of religion and the social. Now the question is how does Sadr define or redefine these problematiques? Or does Sadr propose anything of significance in these regards? In other words, is there any sociological significance in terms of Praxis in Sadrian Paradigm?

Comte argued that the human mentalité has gone through three grand epochs of mythical, metaphysical and scientific era and the last one is the one, if we are to believe Weber's account of rationalization as an Iron Cage, which has entrapped us detrimentally. Durkheim believed that human societies are moving from the stage of mechanical organization towards organic social organization and the modern societies are examples of the latter unlike the former which lacked organic interrelationships such as professional associations. These interpretations which indirectly paved the way for a secularizing conceptualization of human history, on the one hand, and gave birth to modern society where sacred canopy was deemed a residual entity from the past. Thanks to Marxist interpretations of agency and structure the questions of social organization came to be conceptualized in terms which lacked any sacral connotations. In other words, the question of praxis came to be wholly fathomed in irreligious terms as there was no idea of providence which could make eschatology permissible.

To put it differently; in the absence of telos any allusion to eschatology would seem anachronistic within the context of citizenry as its sustenance was deemed to be possible as long as there is no policy/organizational/management role assigned to revelational

interpretations of the World, Humanity, Destiny, Meaning Policy, and Society. This gave rise to a particular approach to solidarity which was a direct offshoot of social praxis. Within secular mode of conceptualization social praxis is interpreted in contrast to religiosity as in the Christian tradition there seems to be a deep distinction between the affairs of this-world and the issues of the other-world. For instance, within the European traditions it is argued that Religions have been always manipulated by powers and ruling classes for their own economic gains use it to try to persuade poor people to control their rages until the next life as there they can experience true happiness. Again there are others within European Traditions who argue that religion is abused by political establishment in mobilizing the masses under the banner of patriotism. Furthermore there are still other groups within European intellectual traditions who consider religion as a private affair and see a correlation between this private religiosity and education.

On the other hand, we have American sociologists who adopt a human rights perspective such as Judith Blau who argues that:

... religion is always local, like language or culture, or traditions. Religion lacks the universality as does, for example, "decent jobs" or "housing" or "women's rights." Religion is local, extremely varied in practice, just like cuisines and dialects are ... Islam is, for instance, interpreted by each and every believer in a unique way, just as Judaism is. Reification, or essentializing, is something that we cannot do, must not do. It is contrary to a human rights perspective. That is, human rights embody universal entitlements because we are equal (e.g., education) and the rights to our identity and conscience (a personality, culture, religion). There may be Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism as major faith traditions, but we -- as social scientists -- know there are infinite varieties of religious practices and traditions within each of them. [5]

There are still other researchers who argue that when critically examining religion, the literature on the sociology of religion makes clear that one must distinguish the teachings from the institution. Milner's *Status and Sacredness* is a good place to start, where the author argues that religion (in this case Hinduism) is a form of elite stratification that categorizes people like any other form of authoritarianism. Of course it should be emphasized that Romanienko

doesn't want to bash religious ideology or authentic spirituality (which can indeed be universal and emancipatory and liberating as religious thinkers suggest). But she believes that the institutions that have sprung up to advance these ideologies are global, powerful, not at all local, and very dangerous. What she is trying to argue is that these religious institutions instil fear in the unknown *Other*, and in this regard the Jewish leaders have managed to acculturate their believers more effectively than other world religions in instilling fear of the unknown other in the hearts of their followers. In addition, she contends that the extent to which such socialization is effective also differs by gender. Women are especially taught to fear outsiders, in all the major religious traditions. [6]

But this position is not unchallenged either as there are others who argue against this approach based on their readings of liberation theology or black theology. For instance, one could mention the position taken by R. D. Coates who believes that Romanienko has not looked at liberation theology, black theology, and civil rights theology as there are institutions which are controlled by the dominant interests and there are also institutions dominated by the oppressed such as the black community, in the United States of America. But it should be mentioned that there has historically been a counter-institutional bias vis-à-vis the black theology. Further Coates contends that in the United States of America, there is a great difference between the theology of a Malcolm X, Rev. Adam Clayton Powell, Martin Luther King, Jr., and of late Jeremiah Wright and that of Jerry Falwell, Billy Graham, and even the Pope. Another example which is quoted by Coates is Latin America. In Latin America, argues Coates, the Jesuits have produced liberation theology for the oppressed natives, which is in direct opposition to the statist religions even of the Catholics. Therefore, religion has never been monolithically aligned with the state and state interests. For the oppressed, we can identify a religion of the oppressed. That is well documented, and vibrant. But religion is more than top down as slaves, oppressed peoples; distressed peoples have historically crafted a different form of religion than those of the oppressors. All too often we fail to see that the religion of Frederick Douglass was not the same as George Washington, or that of Mahatma Gandhi was not the same as the Queen of England. Religions of

liberation, as espoused by Abraham, Jesus and Muhammad, were in opposition to the slavocracies and totalitarian regimes which were in power. Hence, we hear from Jesus that it would be easier for a elephant to go through the eye of an needle than for a rich man to gain entrance into heaven, or if you would follow Me, then sell all that you have and distribute it to the poor. The early church we see this in actuality. Thus we must distinguish between a people's religion of liberation and the cooptation of religion by the powers that be. Religion even Marx recognized depending upon in whose hands may serve either an empowering or a disempowering function. [7]

During 60s and 70s when Imam Musa Sadr was intellectually as well as politically active there seemed to be a global consensus that social and political activities are solely conceptualizable and realizable whenever one adopts either of ruling ideologies of Liberalism or Socialism. In other words, without the frameworks of each of these ideologies there would not be permissible to talk about politics, social activism, or resistance as these notions were parts and parcels of Left and the critiques of such ideas belonged exclusively to the camp of liberals. In other words, to propose praxis within the parameters of religion and to argue for resistance based on religious identity which could bring about political emancipation were entirely unheard of. It is within these parameters that Sadr embarks upon his sociopolitical endeavors which were based on an intellectual vision of reality. To understand this vision is one of the most significant tasks of students of social theory who value the importance of sacred canopy in the constitution of self and society.

Man and Reality in Sadrian perspective

Sadrian view on reality and the position human being occupied within the matrix of existence are of great significance in unlocking the question of praxis, religion and social action as these three seemed to be separated issues from the vantage point of disciplinary social theory that viewed religion, a la Freud, as an *illusion*. Sadr believed that human nature (and by extension human society) is composed of two inseparable poles of permanent and contingent dimensions and religion should be understood in relation to these two aspects of reality that Man is one of the most distinguished manifestations of. In other words,

Sadr argued for a balanced reading of temporal exigencies and permanent necessities in terms of individual human life and social human life. Once the question of human life is conceptualized in terms of permanent and impermanent exigencies then the conflicts which are proposed by disciplinary social thinkers and considered as hurdles before religiously-oriented thinkers would surely disappear as praxis is a notion which cannot be divorced from the very matrix of primordial school of social theory. Sadrian paradigm is a grand example that religious action and social praxis are not at odds with each other but synonymous concepts which together make the eschatology of human being as a vicegerent possible.

One of the most important features of modernist philosophy is its alleged interdependence on Humanism which is considered as the *fontes vitae* of modern worldview. The disciplinary social theory is argued to be a sociological instrument in furthering the humanist *weltanschauung* globally as the most suitable framework for Cosmopolitanism. But the question is what does Humanism mean? In other words, is there any definition on Humanism? Frederick Edwords Executive Director of American Humanist Association in *What is Humanism?* argues that there are various many definitions for this question as the sort of answer you will get to that question depends on what sort of humanist you ask. Edwords argues that we can divide various different positions in regard to humanism in the following fashion:

1. **Literary Humanism** is a devotion to the humanities or literary culture.
2. **Renaissance Humanism** is the spirit of learning that developed at the end of the middle ages with the revival of classical letters and a renewed confidence in the ability of human beings to determine for themselves truth and falsehood.
3. **Cultural Humanism** is the rational and empirical tradition that originated largely in ancient Greece and Rome, evolved throughout European history, and now constitutes a basic part of the Western approach to science, political theory, ethics, and law.

4. **Philosophical Humanism** is any outlook or way of life centered on human need and interest. Sub-categories of this type include Christian Humanism and Modern Humanism.

5. **Christian Humanism** is defined by Webster's Third New International Dictionary as "a philosophy advocating the self-fulfillment of man within the framework of Christian principles." This more human-oriented faith is largely a product of the Renaissance and is a part of what made up Renaissance humanism.

6. **Modern Humanism**, also called Naturalistic Humanism, Scientific Humanism, Ethical Humanism and Democratic Humanism is defined by one of its leading proponents, Corliss Lamont, as "a naturalistic philosophy that rejects all supernaturalism and relies primarily upon reason and science, democracy and human compassion." Modern Humanism has a dual origin, both secular and religious, and these constitute its sub-categories.

7. **Secular Humanism** is an outgrowth of 18th century enlightenment rationalism and 19th century freethought. Many secular groups, such as the Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism and the American Rationalist Federation, and many otherwise unaffiliated academic philosophers and scientists, advocate this philosophy.

8. **Religious Humanism** emerged out of Ethical Culture, Unitarianism, and Universalism. Today, many Unitarian-Universalist congregations and all Ethical Culture societies describe themselves as humanist in the modern sense. [8]

In sum, one could argue that humanism is a philosophy or approach to existence that is inspiring, socially conscious, and personally meaningful. In this regard there seems to be similarities between Sadrian approach to humanity and its relation to religion and Humanism as a philosophy of life as both are attempting to emancipate Man from deterministic interpretations of Reality. Needless to argue that while Humanism views the interdependence of Man on the Holy as an obstacle the Sadrian Paradigm, on the other hand, regards this interdependency in a dialogical fashion which enriches the reality of

human being qua an existential ontic reality. Also it should be stated that humanism lacks any transcendental concern while Sadrian paradigm is a concern about human existence which is intertwined with a transcendental spark. Humanists as elaborated above are of different opinions but it seems the mainstream of humanist philosophy is aiming to portray a vision of religion which is at odds with human interests and it is here that we can see the contributions of Imam Musa Sadr too. For him the essence of religion is not against humanity as religion should be at the service of humanity and for serving humanity one does not need to adhere solely to the school of secularism.

In other words, Sadr shares the view of humanists that religion could be inspiring, socially conscious and personally meaningful provided we realize that religions are of one and the same origin, namely

... the beginning of all religions is one, i.e. the source of transcendence is God and the goal of all religions is one, i.e. Man and moreover the context of their respective unfolding is again one and the same, i.e. the world of existence ... (Sadr, 1384. p 15)

Of course it is undeniable that Sadr viewed religion and its function as well as functionaries in a critical fashion by arguing that the distinctions among religions need to be differentiated from the question of *Pluralité* in religious matters. In other words, religion is an expression of reality in its ontic fashion and as such cannot be diversified as the *fontes vitae* of veracity is one and religion in this ontic *modalité* expresses solely one single goal and that is service to humanity. If we see differences in any sense or scope this is due to the fact that we have distanced from this unique goal of being at the disposal of humanity by alleviating mankind's pains and sufferings.

By having this perspective in mind in approaching religion one may wonder how Sadr would appraise the post-revolutionary context of Islamic Republic of Iran. In other words, one of the most important issues which need to be conceptualized is the problematique of *republicity of religion*. This is a significant question within sociological contexts as religion used to be considered as a peripheral residue within the modernizing theories of Enlightenment and its resurgence caught sociologists by surprise. They got accustomed to believe that religion is

an irrational residue of premodern nature and gradually it would disappear from the conscious life of modern mentalité as it has lost its institutions in the fabric of rationalized society. In other words, one of the most urgent questions for social theorists who were concerned about the role of religion in the fabric of modern society has come to be private or public nature of religiosity.

The Enlightenment Paradigm produced two grand myths which have been incorporated within the body of disciplinary social theory, which has been termed as two great myths of Western Secularism. The first myth is that the *religious passions* are particularly prone to violence and therefore dangerous for politics. Supposedly, this was the dramatic lesson from the catastrophic experience of the long, brutish, and nasty religious wars of early modern Europe which left European societies in ruin; and the second myth is that the *Great Separation* of religion and politics, namely the secularization of the state and of politics and the privatization of religion, was the felicitous response of Western societies to this catastrophic experience. Hobbes is here the great hero who opened the way for purely secular political philosophy and offered the formula for a secular Leviathan that would tame the religious passions. [9]

To put it differently; according to the diagnosis that José Casanova [10] gave in 1994, religion 'went public' during the 1980s in different forms from Iran to Poland and South-America, thereby illustrating the disputability of the sociological and political theories about the essential dominance of the secular tendencies within modern societies. During the last decade this public 'visibility' of religion has posed more and more of a challenge to scholarship and public opinion alike. It seems that the question of religion has become a central constituent of contemporary social and political discourse. As a result, many theorists even talk of the advent of a post-secular age.

However, these post-secular developments include many divergent and conflicting phenomena. Thus one can take an optimistic stance towards the allegedly post-secular character of our times by adopting Habermas's views on the 'secularized meaning-potential' to be gained from a public dialogue with religion. One's outlook may turn out to be less rosy, however, when one takes stock, for example, of the political consequences of the Palestinian elections in January 2006. In

any case, not only Western experience of a 'desecularized world' but also daily happenings all throughout the world force us to study the role religion plays in spheres of human life *beyond* personal devotion.

These issues have reached unprecedented prominence in connection with the Danish cartoon controversy by those who appeal to the notion of 'religious sensitivity'. One should seek to go beyond the undoubtedly critical discussion in the legal arena addressing broader philosophical, sociological, cultural and anthropological issues as well: Is our contemporary public idiom and theoretical apparatus still adequate for approaching what is seen by many as a post-secular state of affairs? Can the distinction between 'private' and 'public' be drawn in a uniform fashion everywhere while also respecting widely divergent inter-cultural attitudes? Should different religious and cultural traditions be accommodated in one way or another by the political domain? Can the revival of religion as a public phenomenon reinvigorate inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue?

Conclusion

In other words, by having thirty years of *republicity of religion* in the Iranian context since 1979 how would the Sadrian approach look like vis-à-vis religionization of Iranian social fabric? [11] These and many questions such as this one are of great importance and need to be asked and posed by students of social sciences who are concerned about the goal of religion in Sadrian terms which is to be at the service of humanity for alleviating sufferings and pains of human beings qua human person in the society where questions such as poverty, unemployment and corruption play critical role in keeping down the emergence of 'well-functioning society'. [12]

Although sociology was meant to be a comparative project but we have not embarked upon this path very seriously yet as those who have spoken on comparative sociological studies mainly have focused on comparisons of social processes between nation-states or across different types of society, for example, former capitalist and ex-socialist contexts. It has been argued that there are two main approaches to comparative sociology: some seek similarity across different countries and cultures whereas others seek variance. For example, structural Marxists have attempted to use comparative

methods to discover the general processes that underlie apparently different social orderings in different societies. The danger of this approach is that the different social contexts are overlooked in the search for supposed universal structures. One sociologist who employed comparative methods to understand variance was Max Weber, whose studies attempted to show how differences between cultures explained the different social orderings that had emerged. (Miri, 2009)

There is some debate within sociology regarding whether the label of 'comparative' is suitable. Emile Durkheim argued in The Rules of Sociological Method (1895) that all sociological research was in fact comparative since social phenomenon are always held to be typical, representative or unique, all of which imply some sort of comparison. In this sense, all sociological analysis is comparative and it has been suggested that what is normally referred to as comparative research, may be more appropriately called cross-national research.

In other words, disciplinary sociologists have either paid scant or no attention to the question of comparative sociology in the sense that how societies have been conceptualized by different social thinkers in distinct civilizations. This is an aspect which has truly been neglected and we have very little literature in this regard. Of course we can find out many studies on the possible differences between Marx and Weber or probable similarities between Small and Durkheim but we have either none or very few works on the similarities or dissimilarities between Tagore and Jaspers or Iqbal and Goffman and Shariati and Giddens. What we need today is a kind of comparative social theory where the theories and approaches or visions of social problems by thinkers from different societies are debated and conceptualized as in the contemporary context of our globalized humanity what lacks most is imagination without the parameters of disciplinary paradigm. It is in this sense that Sadr as a social thinker could play a significant role as his vision of society and the way he imagined forces of great significance in the constitution of self and society seem different than modernist discourses of sociological import.

Sadr's approach to a 'well-functioning society' is an apt example of such a different kind of imagination in sociological sense which could be compared to two contemporary German and Russian thinkers

of 20th century, namely Erich Seligmann Fromm and Abraham Harold Maslow. [13] Fromm's concept of 'Sane Society' and Maslow's concept of 'Good Society' or 'Eupsychia' are of great sociological significance which could be compared with Sadr's concept of 'Well-Functioning Society'. Such a project has not been undertaken yet and unfortunately both of Fromm and Maslow have been neglected by mainstream sociological community which has lost touch with the questions of 'human nature' and 'good society' as though these issues are of unsociological origins. Maslow's vision of 'Eupsychia' is based on the notion of 'self-actualization' as it is Fromm's view on 'Sane Society' which questions the sanity of a society that covets property over humanity and adheres to idolatrous theologies of submission and domination rather than 'self-actualization'. In Sadrian vision of efficient society we can discern both of these concerns that could be utilized in a systematic comparative sociological theory which is attentive to the questions of universal human nature and good society. The city which was established in the Southern Lebanon by Sadr i.e. 'al-Janub' is a great example of Sadrian Paradigm (not only in the theory, but) in practice. As a sociologist we need to dissect the Sadrian City in terms of 'self-actualization' and 'Good Society' as these are issues which primordial sociologists should take into consideration. Otherwise to expect a Giddens or a Habermas to conceptualize primordial concerns would be a futile expectation.

Habermas, Myrdal, Horkheimer, Adorno, Giddens, Parsons, Pareto, McLennan, Small, Durkheim, Weber, Marx, Hegel, Kant, Goffman and Bourdieu have been, in one way or the other, attempting to interpret the constitutive elements of self and society in terms of Enlightenment vision which views the Good Society as a community where God is Dead. But Sadr does not view the questions of human existence in community within the parameters of 'death of God' or even 'God is Undead-paradigm'. On the contrary, Sadr conceptualizes significantly vital questions of human existence in terms of 'Living and Loving God' which would entail distinct ontic notions of 'God', 'Society', 'Humanity' and 'Existence'. These background assumptions would surely make a huge difference in terms of 'vision of society' or 'sociological theorizing

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Endnotes

1. For the record, it should be mentioned that Sadr studied at the department of Law and Jurisprudence at Tehran University in Tehran and graduated with an Honor by having French as his foreign language instead of English. In other words, his clerical mantle was not used as a source of income but as a source of inspiration as he did not choose ministry of God as a career but vocation. To put it otherwise; there are great many existential differences between a career and a vocation which is best understood when we compare between profane and sacred orientations towards life or when secularism in metaphysical term is compared with transcendentalism.
2. See for instance the following site for more information:
<http://freedomkeys.com/collectivism.htm>
3. See the following site for more on this issue:
<http://www.objectivistcenter.org/showcontent.aspx?ct=51&h=44>
4. I consider Mulla Sadra a contemporary due to the relevance of *Sadrian Philosophy* in contemporary life in Iran and globe as his significance is not confined to geography of Iran.

5. Private discussion on 4th of March 2009 at Sociologists Without Borders Mailing List.
6. Private discussion by Lisiunia A. Romanienko on 5th of March 2009 at Sociologists Without Borders Mailing List.
7. Private discussion with Rodney D. Coates on 5th of March 2009 at Sociologists Without Borders Mailing List.
8. See the following link for further information: <http://www.jcn.com/humanism.html>
9. Both of these positions are incorrect. Beginning first with the second premise, Hobbes may well have inaugurated the tradition of modern secular political philosophy, but as a historical narrative of the actual transformation of political institutions in early modern Europe, this is simply a historical myth. The religious wars of early modern Europe and particularly the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) did not ensue, at least not immediately, into the secular state but rather into the confessional one. The principle *cuius regio eius religio*, established first at the Peace of Augsburg and reiterated at the Treaty of Westphalia, is not the formative principle of the modern secular democratic state, but rather that of the modern confessional territorial absolutist state. Nowhere in continental Europe did religious conflict lead to secularization, but rather to the confessionalization of the state and to the territorialization of religions and peoples. This was the formula of the continental European Leviathan. Moreover, this early modern dual pattern of confessionalization and territorialization was already well established before the religious wars and even before the Protestant Reformation. The Spanish Catholic state under the Catholic Kings serves as the first paradigmatic model of state confessionalization and religious territorialization. The expulsion of Spanish Jews and Muslims who refused to convert to Catholicism is the logical consequence of such a dynamic of state formation. Ethno-religious cleansing, in this respect, stands at the very origin of the early modern European state. Religious minorities caught in the wrong confessional territory were offered not secular toleration, much less freedom of religion, but the "freedom" to emigrate. For almost three hundred years, European societies continued exporting all their "sects" and religious minorities overseas, while the confessional territorial boundaries between Catholic and Protestant and between Lutheran and Calvinist throughout Europe remained basically frozen until the drastic secularization of post-World War II European societies made those confessional boundaries seemingly irrelevant. As to the second assumption driving Lilla's argument, that the religious impulse is an apocalyptic one, imposing God's justice by violence, it is indeed astounding to observe how widespread is the view throughout Europe that religion is intolerant and creates conflict. Mark Lilla simply offers an erudite version of this secularist "doxa." According to the 1998 ISSP public opinion survey, the overwhelming majority of Europeans, practically over two thirds of the population in every Western European country, holds the view that religion is "intolerant." Since people are unlikely to expressly recognize their own intolerance, one can assume that in expressing such an opinion Europeans are thinking of somebody else's "religion" or, alternatively, present a selective retrospective memory of their own

past religion, which fortunately they consider to have outgrown. It is even more telling that a majority of the population in every Western European country, with the significant exception of Norway and Sweden, shares the view that “religion creates conflict.” Such a widespread negative view of “religion” cannot possibly be grounded empirically in the collective historical experience of European societies in the 20th century or in the actual personal experience of most contemporary Europeans. It can plausibly be explained, however, as a secular construct that has the function of positively differentiating modern secular Europeans from “the religious other,” either from pre-modern religious Europeans or from contemporary non-European religious people, particularly from Muslims. Most striking is the view of “religion” in the abstract as the source of violent conflict, given the actual historical experience of most European societies in the 20th century. “The European short century,” from 1914 to 1989, using Eric Hobsbawm’s apt characterization, was indeed one of the most violent, bloody, and genocidal centuries in the history of humanity. But none of the horrible massacres—neither the senseless slaughter of millions of young Europeans in the trenches of World War I, nor the countless millions of victims of Bolshevik and communist terror, nor the most unfathomable of all, the Nazi Holocaust and the global conflagration of World War II, culminating in the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki—none of those terrible conflicts can be said to have been caused by religious fanaticism and intolerance. All of them were rather the product of modern secular ideologies and of very secular “passions.” Yet contemporary Europeans, and Lilla with them, prefer to selectively forget the more inconvenient recent memories of secular ideological conflict and retrieve instead the long forgotten memories of the religious wars of early modern Europe to make sense of the religious conflicts they see today proliferating around the world and increasingly threatening them. Rather than seeing the common structural contexts of modern state formation, inter-state geopolitical conflicts, modern nationalism and the political mobilization of ethno-cultural and religious identities, processes central to modern European history that became globalized through the European colonial expansion, Europeans prefer seemingly to attribute those conflicts to “religion,” that is, to religious fundamentalism and to the fanaticism and intolerance that is supposedly intrinsic to “pre-modern” religion, an atavistic residue which modern secular enlightened Europeans have fortunately left behind. One may suspect that the function of such a selective historical memory is to safeguard the perception of the progressive achievements of Western secular modernity, offering a self-validating justification of the secular separation of religion and politics as the condition for modern liberal democratic politics. Indeed, what I find most disturbing in Lilla’s genealogical reconstruction, presented as a straightforward history of ideas, is the attempt to attribute the violent impulses of modern secular totalitarianism to the rebirth of religious politico-theological messianism as a reaction to the “stillborn God” of liberal German Kulturprotestantismus. Barth and Rosenzweig are surreptitiously presented as “guilty by association” with Gogarten and Bloch, fellow travelers

respectively of Nazism and Communism, who, one must infer from Lilla's narrative, opened the gates to the religious apocalyptic demons who had been kept in check by secular political philosophy since Hobbes. One could easily reconstruct a more direct and less contorted genealogy from Hobbes' Leviathan to the totalitarian state. Ferdinand Toennies and Carl Schmitt, two Hobbesian secular political thinkers, could easily be linked to an anti-liberal secular (not religious) politico-theological discourse which not only prepared the ground but offered explicit political philosophies more akin to the totalitarian Leviathan. But such an attempt would offer a no less distorted and problematic genealogical history of ideas. The point is that "religion" has no monopoly on the "passions" and taming "religious passions" offers no security from secular political violence. At least the discourse of "the end of ideology" of the 1960's, just before the counterculture and the worldwide student rebellions, knew that "secular ideologies" could be as dangerous and as deadly as "religious" ones. Lilla's construction of the "great separation" is based on a paradigmatic contrast between theocratic political theology and secular political philosophy, a pure analytic construct, which is however then superimposed upon real history as a real separation which actually happened supposedly in the 17th century with Hobbes. Even as a pure analytic history of ideas, such a construction would be highly problematic. But certainly a history of ideas that disregards altogether social history, institutional political history, and the history of mentalities, is not in a serious position to offer a credible interpretation of Western developments, much less to present "the actual choice contemporary societies face...between two grand traditions of thought, two ways of envisaging the human condition." The great separation, if there was one, was not a radical break that happened in the 17th century but rather had a long medieval history. The process of Western secularization must either remain unintelligible or be simply the projection of a secularist philosophy of history, unless one begins with the premise that the very category of the saeculum was a particular Western medieval theological and legal-canonical category, which is not to be found in earlier forms of Eastern Christianity, nor for that matter in other axial civilizations. Sociologically speaking at least, the "great separation" was a long-term historical process that began with the Papal Revolution and the Investitures conflicts of the 11th-12th centuries and attained its modern institutionalization first with the American and French revolutions. Crucial, however, in challenging Lilla's account is not just the fact that the separation began de facto much earlier in the Middle Ages, but that when it actually happened institutionally for the first time in the constitutional separation of church and state in the United States, it owed a lot to the influence of religious "fanatics" and "enthusiasts," namely to radical "sectarians." Dissenting Baptists played a crucial role in guaranteeing the passage of the Virginia Statute on Religious Liberty, which served as the model for the First Amendment. The arguments of the Deist Jefferson owed much, no doubt, to the tradition of secular political philosophy inaugurated by Hobbes, most particularly to Locke's defense of "toleration." But the argument for "religious freedom," so brilliantly elaborated by

the anti-establishmentarian Madison in “Memorial and Remonstrance,” has a different intellectual pedigree, namely the theological argument of dissenting sects and religious enthusiasts claiming the individual right to religious freedom and to freedom of conscience sheltered from both absolutist state and ecclesiastical institutions. The dual clause of the First Amendment had certainly the function of protecting the secular state from religious entanglements, but even more importantly, and this is what distinguishes the American separation from the French secularist one, to protect the free exercise of religion in society from both secular state and hegemonic church. Moreover, the separation of church and state in the United States did not entail the great separation of religion and politics that Lilla seems to presuppose. The entanglement of religion and politics has been a constant in American history and many of the movements for social and political reform, from abolition to civil rights, from temperance to women suffrage, used as much the discourse of Christian political theology as that of secular political philosophy. American secularism and American liberalism owe more to the political commitment and the civil disobedience of religious “fanatics” and “enthusiasts” than liberal secularists like Lilla are apparently willing to recognize. One should be suspicious of any argument that presents the multiple alternatives facing contemporary societies around the world today as a simple binary choice between theocratic political theology (i.e., religious fanaticism) and secular political philosophy (i.e., liberal toleration). To present such a dichotomous alternative, as “the two ways of envisaging the human condition,” not only ignores the many other complex ways in which Western and non-Western societies have envisaged the human condition, but it views societies as individual actors facing existential choices, a rhetorically dramatic but rather problematic conception of human history and of the human condition. (Casanova, 2009)

10. In a sweeping reconsideration of the relation between religion and modernity, Jose Casanova surveyed the roles that religions may play in the public sphere of modern societies. During the 1980s, religious traditions around the world, from Islamic Revivalism to Catholic liberation theology, began making their way, often forcefully, out of the private sphere and into public life, causing the *deprivatization* of religion in contemporary life. No longer content merely to administer pastoral care to individual souls, religious institutions are challenging dominant political and social forces, raising questions about the claims of entities such as nations and markets to be *value neutral*, and straining the traditional connections of private and public morality. Casanova in his seminal work entitled *Public Religions in the Modern World* (1994) looked at five cases from two religious traditions (Catholicism and Protestantism) in four countries (Spain, Poland, Brazil, and the United States). These cases challenged postwar—and indeed post-Enlightenment—assumptions about the role of modernity and secularization in religious movements throughout the world.
11. There are two questions which have become urgent since the establishment of Islamic System in Iran. The first question is how to balance between private realm and public sphere and the second issue is the idea of Guidance. In other words,

what kind of mechanisms are in need to keep the public content while not violating the sacraments of religion and also what kind of social institutions are needed to carry up the onus of guidance which is deeply related to the eschatology of human self. To put it differently; is it possible to establish public institutions for the guidance of the inner most aspects of human life which is by nature private and inaccessible to the public gaze? I guess these are important questions and the Sadrian perspective could shed some light in these regards.

12. This is a concept employed by Sadr himself in a book entitled as 'Well-Functioning Society'.
13. Most of people consider Maslow as an American but he was from a Russian origin and his surname demonstrates clear evidence in this regard which in Russian the word Masla means 'Butter'.

Logical reasoning and intuitive experience of ‘Existence’: The evolving of Mulla Sadra’s transcendental approach to reality

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Abstract

Mulla Sadra's al-Hikmat al-Muta'aliyah (Transcendental Wisdom) is characterized by eclecticism in the sense that this is an attempt of reconciliation of and, at the same time, reaction against his predecessors like Aristotle, Ibn Sina, Ibn-'Arabi, the Illuminationists and etc. Our thinker has an intellectual approach though he rejects rational conceptual process as a sole way of approaching to reality. Instead, he focuses on two ways to unveil reality: intuitive experience and logical reasoning.

In this paper, I will further compare Mulla Sadra's ideas in relation to later Western philosophers, Martin Heidegger and Edmund Husserl. In particular, I will examine and compare his concept of traveling the gulf between the Reality of One Existence and the other beings, as well as his concept of trans-existentialism as an attempt to translate mystical and intuitive experience (obtained through knowledge by presence) into the language of reason or empirical evidence.

Key words: existence (wujud), essence (mahiyya), reality, transcendence, intuition, Mulla Sadra, Husserl, Heidegger

Mulla Sadra is a philosopher with respect to partly his own character and partly his affiliation with a domain of thought namely Muslim philosophy and Sufism. In addition, he also incorporates the Muslim theological elements in his thought. Drawing from Mulla Sadra's view on philosophy, this study will explore the meaning of transcendence as manifested in his thought. Furthermore, it will delineate how their concepts of philosophy and transcendence lead towards the notion of existence and its relationship with essence. In his transcendental philosophy, the notion of existence plays a vital role but

its relationship to essence “*mahiyyah*” will be the focal point of this paper. I would like here to explore the notion of existence as expounded by Mulla Sadra. For Mulla Sadra, the ultimate reality is the “One Existence” (*al-Wujud al-Wahid*) which is absolutely objective and transcendent and so cognizable through the intuitive experience and logical reasoning. The One Existent is to impart existence to the individuals to make them accidental existences as the sun, being a source of light, is to impart light to other objects in order to illuminate them as they appear to us. Whereas the essence (*mahiyyah*) of an existent is a secondary reality, that is unified (*muttahid*) with existence which is a primordial reality that can be known by conceptual mind and intuitive experience.

Mulla Sadra’s philosophy in its entirety is a solid conceptual construction which is a result of philosophizing based upon a profound intuition of Reality. As a Hakim, Mulla Sadra was able by the most intimate and personal kind of experience to penetrate into the very depth of the so-called Ocean of Being and witness the secrets of Being with his own spiritual eye (*basirah*). His metaphysics, in short, is a peculiar type of philosophy based upon a personal intuition of Reality. For our particular purposes, the formal structure of the Hikmat-type of thinking may conveniently be analyzed from two angles: as pure philosophy, and as something based on experience of the ultimate Reality.

With regard to this intuitive experience underlying the whole structure of the *hikmat* type of philosophy, we may begin by remarking that it is not the outcome of mere intellectual lab or on the level of reason. It is rather an original product of the activity of a keen analytic reason combined with, and backed by, a profound intuitive grasp of reality, or even of something beyond that kind of reality which is accessible to human consciousness. In this respect *Hikmat* philosophy is faithful to the spirit of Suhrawardi (1155-1191). A perfect fusion of mystical experience and analytic thinking into a conceptual structure was achieved in a consistent and systematic fashion by Suhrawardi. He himself formulated this reciprocal essential relationship between mystical experience and logical reasoning. One would commit a grave mistake, he argued (Suhrawardi 1945), if one thought that one could become a philosopher by dint of studying books only, without treading

the path of Sanctity and without having the immediate experience of the spiritual Lights. Just as a walker of the path of Sanctity, who lacks the power of analytic thinking is but an imperfect mystic, so is a researcher of the Truth, lacking the immediate experience of the divine mysteries but an imperfect and insignificant philosopher.

Mulla Sadra's views on philosophy are very significant in order to expound his notion of existence, for this notion is deeply rooted in what he understands and how he interprets philosophy. In the first book of the *Asfar*, Mulla Sadra discusses extensively the various definitions of *hikmah*, emphasizing not only theoretical knowledge and "becoming an intelligible world reflecting the objective intelligible world" but also detachment from passions and purification of the soul from its material defilements or what the Islamic philosophers call *tajarrud* or catharsis.

In one of his famous definitions, he considers *hikmah* as the vehicle through which "man becomes an intelligible world resembling the objective world and similar to the order of universal existence" (Nasr 1973; Nasr 1996; Mulla Sadra 1967). In a more extensive definition of *falsafah* in the *Asfar*, he echoes views all the way from Plato to Suhrawardi, stating, "*Falsafah* is the perfecting of the human soul to the extent of human possibility through knowledge of the essential realities of things as they are in themselves and through judgment concerning their existence established upon demonstrations and not derived from opinion or through imitation. Or if thou likest thou canst say, it is to give intelligible order to the world to the extent of human possibility in order to gain 'resemblance' to the Divine".¹

Mulla Sadra in the above definitions insisted on this point that through the act of perfecting, man becomes god like, through speculation and spiritual practices. The aim of this preamble is to locate metaphysics as a practice within a wider framework of Prophetic knowledge and to shift the emphasis from the more Aristotelian features of methodology and proof. At the beginning of the *Asfar* he writes, "*falsafah* is the perfecting of the human soul to the extent of human ability through the knowledge of the essential reality of things as they are in themselves and through judgment concerning their existence established upon demonstration and not derived from opinion or through imitation (Mulla Sadra 1981). And in *al-Shawahid al-rububiyyah* he adds, "[through *hikmah*] man becomes an intelligible

world resembling the objective world and similar to the order of universal existence"(Mulla Sadra 1967).

1. Meaning of transcendence

If the definitions of *hikmah* given by Mulla Sadra are analyzed, it will be discovered that the concept of *hikmah* which in fact is none other than *al-hikmat al-muta'aliyah*, is identified with a wisdom or theosophy which is based on a purely metaphysical foundation reached through intellectual intuition and at the same time presented in a rational but not rationalistic form and making use of rational arguments. They also show that this philosophy related to realization, to the transformation of the being of the recipient of this knowledge. Furthermore, as we delve more fully into the writings of Mulla Sadra, we discover that the methods proposed for the realization of this knowledge are related to religion and cannot become accessible except by means of revelation.²

These views reflect that Mulla Sadra is not only a Sufi whose objective is to have the religious experience par excellence characterized by becoming one with God. He designs a grand intellectual scheme for perfecting his soul by accumulating the Divine Wisdom (*al-hikmat al-ilahiyyah*) that encompasses all domain of knowledge including the knowledge of God, the angels and the Divine Scriptures. Owing to the mind/body dualism of human existence, Sadra divides philosophy into two types of *hikma* (wisdom) namely the theoretical wisdom and the practical wisdom corresponding to the abstract thinking and the relational action of man respectively (Mulla Sadra 1981). The task of the former is to cognize, with perfection, the reality of the extraneous phenomena as things in themselves. Whereas the objective of the later is to engage with the good actions in order to reach to the moral height. So far he tends to amalgamate the intellectual grasping of the things in themselves with the experience of becoming one with the Divine. In case of the theoretical wisdom he quotes a *hadith* in which the Prophet Mohammed is reported to ask Allah to make him see the things as they are in themselves.

Like Husserl, Mulla Sadra believes in transcending in order to cognize the realities of the things in themselves where he defines philosophy. But his concept of transcendence is entirely different from

that of Husserl's. In order to comprehend the realities of the things in themselves, according to Mulla Sadra, there is no need to deny their existence independent of the human mind. Instead, without such denial one can have a Gnostic experience (*'irfan*) of the existence (*wujud*) as such.

Mulla Sadra and Husserl focus on transcendence to grasp the reality but their meanings of transcendence are entirely different from each other. For Husserl, Ego's break with factualness leads to the pure transcendental consciousness which is free of all beliefs and position takings regarding the spatio-temporal existence. So transcendence, being absolutely devoid of any touch of religiosity, is merely an epistemic or cognitive attempt of the Ego to see the phenomena differently. That is to say, rather than cognizing the world with the pre-given beliefs and ideas Transcendental Ego grasps the same in terms of eidos perception which it intrinsically constitutes through its own process of imaginableness or fantasiableness. For Sadra, on the other hand, it is not enough to break with actuality to experience the transcendence in the exact sense of the term. Instead, one should attempt to have the Gnostic experience of becoming one with the Divine in order to find oneself transcendent. So transcendence is not merely a cognitive attempt rather it is a cognitive-existential experience of the human soul through which the soul not only becomes like the Divine, but simultaneously grasps the reality as well.

Husserl's transcendental philosophy, far more well known as phenomenology, is claimed to be a radical way of philosophizing which rejects every presupposition whatsoever pre-given by past philosophies, religion, culture and tradition. Drawing upon Descartes' Meditations, he tends to begin with new meditation subjected to a Cartesian overthrow the immense philosophical literature with its medley of great traditions. That is to say, Husserl's transcendental phenomenology begins with absolute poverty of knowledge being devoid of any philosophical presupposition or pre-judgment (Husserl 1967).

This beginning of philosophical investigations with absolute poverty of knowledge to cognize the phenomena is the first step of Husserl's phenomenological method which he calls *epoche*. The *epoche* is not the denial or doubt (as in case of the Cartesian method) concerning the existence of world. Instead, it is a bracketing or

suspension which completely bars the beginners of philosophy from using any judgment that concerns spatio-temporal existence (Husserl 1931). At this moment of complete disconnexion through the phenomenological epoche the only thing that remains unaffected is the consciousness in itself. That is to say, at the moment of epoche there happens a reduction leading back to pure consciousness which is the only phenomenological residuum after the complete suspension of the world (Husserl 1931). The philosophical investigations proceed through the experiences of pure transcendental consciousness which is a pure intuition whereby philosophy takes shape of the pure phenomenology of the experiences of thinking and knowing.

Whatever appears to pure intuition is the thing in itself or phenomenon which intuition cognizes in terms of its essence. So phenomenology, according to Husserl, must bring to pure expression, must describe in terms of their essential concepts and their governing formulas of essence, the essences which directly make themselves known in intuition, and the connections which have their roots purely in such essences. Each such statement of essence is an a priori statement in the highest sense of the word (Husserl 1970). This Husserlian notion seems to be an echo of Mulla Sadra's concept of the theoretical wisdom which leads him to the things in themselves in terms of the Gnostic experience of transcendence. But the difference between them lies in the states of knowledge attained through the intuitive experience. In case of Mulla Sadra, man becomes like the Divine having the knowledge of the things in themselves. Whereas in Husserl's case, through intuitive experiences man, in terms of the essences of the things in themselves, constitute the life-world, the world in which we are always already living and which furnishes the ground for all cognitive performance and all scientific determinations (Husserl 1973).

Both philosophers believed in rational self-responsibility fulfilling his role as a functionary of humankind in his struggle for reason. Modern science, despite its claims of objectivity, cannot transgress the boundary of naturalism. Mulla Sadra holds that the philosopher must see all humanity included in a comprehensive version of the journey towards perfected humanity. Realization of each person occurs in the struggle and pain entailed by seeking transcendence in his search for

his vision of the Truth. Mulla Sadra's efforts to renew the attitudes of legalistic religion mirrored Husserl's attempts to criticize the pseudo-certainty and lack of foundations of modern science. Just as religion can stifle the presence of God, science and technology do so, too. May we of different cultures come to hear the call to Transcendence beyond prevailing materialism and legalism as we, functionaries of humankind all, speak with each other.

It is to be pointed out that before referring to Mulla Sadra's view about existence, it is necessary to cite certain principles of the Transcendent Philosophy concerning knowledge such as: knowledge possesses external reality, it is like being and is graded, it has immaterial being, the acquisition of knowledge is in such a way that the knower moves towards knowledge not vice versa, and moving towards knowledge takes place through the trans-substantial motion of the soul. According to Mulla Sadra there is trans-substantial motion in the very substance of the soul rather than in the forms of the essence. That is, the motion of the stage of sensibility to the stage of intelligibility depends on the motion of the essence of the soul from the level of sensation to the level of intellection, concerning intellection Mulla Sadra refers to three apparently different views as follows: Contemplation of the archetypes and union with them, Union between the soul and the active intellect and Creativity of the soul concerning the intelligible and rational forms.

In Mulla Sadra's view intellection means the presence of the existence of thing in a knower, a pure existence which is pure from non existence. Therefore, intellection is only the subject of non-material being. According to this theory the very thing will be the subject of intellection and without losing its existential state can contemplate intellectual forms and intellectual luminous beings in the world of the intellects and unites with them. It is to be pointed out that Mulla Sadra has accepted the possibility of knowledge, so his discussions is rather focused on the nature and sources of knowledge. Knowledge in man is the acquisition of the pure form of reality and the essences of things by reason. In this regard the issue of reason and its relationship with the "actual intellect" and the way of acquiring real knowledge in Ibn Sina's view becomes very important. Mulla Sadra has synthesized Ibn Sina's "actual intellect" with Suhrawardi's "knowledge by presence" and on

the basis of his Transcendent Philosophy has posed a new definition of the nature of knowledge. It can be said that issues such as "the union of the intellect and the intelligibles", "the unity of being" and knowledge constitute the basis of Mulla Sadra's theory of knowledge. According to Mulla Sadra trans-substantial motion is inherent in the inner most part of being on the basis of which the development of knowledge can be justified.

There are, therefore, three basic principles upon which the "Transcendent Theosophy" stands: intellectual Intuition or illumination (*kashf* or *dhawq* or *ishraq*); reason and rational demonstration (*'aql* or *istidlal*); and religion or revelation (*shar'*, or *wahy*). It is by combining the knowledge derived from these sources that the synthesis of Mulla Sadra was brought about. Mulla Sadra seeks to present a more systematic metaphysical exposition, to provide logical proofs and to explain aspects which the earlier Sufi masters had passed over in silence or simply stated in brief form as a gift of heaven and the result of their spiritual visions.

It is to be remarked that this illuminative experience was taken by Mulla Sadra himself to be a sudden revelation of the pure "light" as well as pure "existence." And it directly led him to the most important thesis in his metaphysics, namely the thesis of *asalat al-wujud* "the principality or ontological fundamentality of existence," or the primacy of "existence" over "quiddity," and as the highest principle dominating the whole structure of metaphysics which he established as the central principle of metaphysics in opposition to the thesis of *asalat al-mahiyah* "the principality or ontological fundamentality of quiddity" that had been advocated by his teacher, *Mir Damad* (d. 1631/32).

When we come to more particular points of difference between Mulla Sadra and Suhrawardi, we realize that, although closely related, the "Transcendent philosophy" departs on many points from *ishraqi* philosophy, of which some of the most basic will be mentioned. The most important difference is that Suhrawardi made use of Qur'anic verses and the sayings of the Prophet, while Mulla Sadra had recourse to the sayings of the *Shi'ite* Imams, such as the *Nahj al-balaghah* of Ali and the traditions assembled in Kulayni's *Usul al-kafi*, in addition to the Qur'an and prophetic *hadith*. Moreover, Mulla Sadra must be considered a major Qur'anic commentator in his own right, ranking

with the foremost commentators in Islamic history, a unique distinction among Islamic philosophers.

Another important difference is of course Mulla Sadra's assertion of the principiality of existence (*asalat al-wujud*) in contrast to Suhrawardi's attitude toward quiddity as the Fundamental reality, a difference which Corbin has called the basis of the "revolution" brought about by Mulla Sadra in Islamic philosophy (Nasr 1966; Nasr 1969; Mulla Sadra 1963)

. This difference leads in turn to a difference in view concerning the question of change and transformation, the gradation of beings, eschatology, etc., which a close comparison of Mulla Sadra's teachings with those of Suhrawardi reveals (Nasr 1972; Nasr 1976).

Another difference between Mulla Sadra and Suhrawardi concerns the world of imagination (*'alam alkhayal*) with which we hope to deal fully in the subsequent volume. Here suffice it to say that Suhrawardi was the first Islamic philosopher to assert that this faculty within the human soul was independent of the body (*tajarrud*), and hence that it continued to exist after corporeal death. But he did not assert the existence of the objective and cosmic counterpart of this microcosmic imagination, whereas Mulla Sadra believes in a macrocosmic world of imagination (*khayal al-munfasil*) as well as a microcosmic one (*khayal al-muttasil*) with profound consequences for problems of the posthumous becoming of man and eschatology in general.

Finally, in his philosophy Mulla Sadra departs from the views of Suhrawardi and Ibn-Sina and interprets his doctrines in the light of the principle of trans-substantial motion (*al-harakat al-jawhariyyah*) which is one of the basic features of the "Transcendent philosophy". This principle leads Mulla Sadra to an interpretation of many aspects of natural philosophy and also eschatology that is different from *ishraqi* theosophy, although here as in other domains the debt which Mulla Sadra owes to Suhrawardi is clear. Mulla Sadra conceives of being as a graded reality which remains one despite its gradation, while Ibn Sina, although conceding the principiality of existence in each existent, believes the existence of each existent to be different from that of other existents.

The denial of trans-substantial motion as well as of the grada-

tion of being led Ibn Sina to the denial of the Platonic "ideas" and the horizontal and vertical hierarchy of archetypes and intelligences which form such an important part of the teachings of both Suhrawardi and Mulla Sadra. Likewise, Ibn Sina denies the possibility of the union between the intellect and the intelligible (*ittihad al-aqil walma'qul*) again because of his denial of the possibility of trans-substantial motion. This denial of the principle of substantial motion by Ibn Sina and its assertion by Mulla Sadra has also led the two masters to treat completely differently the problems of the "eternity" of the heavens and the *hyle*, the whole problem of the "newness" or "eternity" of the world. It has led to a whole series of differences between them in questions pertaining to cosmology and natural philosophy. Likewise in psychology, there are basic differences perhaps more evident than in all other branches of traditional philosophy. Ibn Sina deals with psychology as a branch of natural philosophy (*tabi'iyat*) and Mulla Sadra, on the contrary, deals with psychology as a branch of metaphysics (*ilahiyat*). In the field of the religious sciences the "Transcendent philosophy" accepts them fully. For example, in his Qur'anic commentaries, and in the field of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and the study of the Divine Law (*Shari'ah*), Mulla Sadra reasserts the previous principles, to which he adds his interpretation.

We also see in the birth-process of this school the application of the perennial truths through veritable creativity to new needs and conditions at a particular moment in the life of a living tradition. This process caused the genesis of a school which is at once new and continuous with the tradition from which it issued. We can summarize by saying that the "Transcendent philosophy" is a new perspective in Islamic intellectual life based on the synthesis and harmonization of nearly all the earlier schools of Islamic thought. It is also a school in which the tenets of revelation, the verities received through spiritual vision and illumination and the rigorous demands of logic and rational demonstration are harmonized into a unity. It came into being in order to guarantee the continuation of the intellectual life of the tradition in the new cycle of its historical existence and to be one more expression late in human history of that philosophy or wisdom which is at once perennial and universal, the *sophia perennis* which the Islamic sages have referred to as *al-Hikmat al-khalidah* or, in its Persian version, as

jawidan khirad.

This type of philosophy thus established by Mulla Sadra produced a long chain of outstanding thinkers. Metaphysical problems that had been raised long ago in the Middle Ages were still being hotly discussed and seriously considered. This is not a matter to be lightly dismissed as something old-fashioned or anachronistic. It possesses a degree of refinement not found in Western scholasticism, whose life was cut short by the rise of modern philosophy. In the twentieth century, the scholastic way of thinking has been revived in the West in a somewhat modernized form by Jacques Maritain and other so-called neo-Thomists (Barrett 1962).

The modern Existentialist is almost exclusively concerned, as Jacques Maritain puts it (Maritain 1966), with the existential spot of actuality, thus totally phenomenizing the concrete existent. There *is*, according to them, a certain respect in which the philosopher has to stand face to face with existence pure and simple in complete isolation from all existents, and in which the latter must be totally phenomenized. It is also true that this most basic metaphysical truth can be realized only in and through the innermost heart of human existence, that is, existence as actualized in its pure subjectivity. This is true on condition that we understand the subjective existence in the sense of supra-consciousness, which a thinker like Sartre, however, would never accept.

For Husserl, phenomenology is a radical way of philosophizing which sounds the Cartesian radicalism in working out a philosophical method. His notion of transcendental subjectivity can be grasped in relation to the Cartesian view of the ego cogito. Husserl's fundamental phenomenological method is that of transcendental epoche which bars Ego or I-myself completely from the world of space and time and all of its scientific ideation. The gateway to the phenomenological investigations is the method of transcendental epoche which leads one to an absolute poverty of knowledge. Thereby the whole concrete surrounding life-world is transformed into only a phenomenon of being. In epoche, the surrounding life-world does not remain as something existing rather it is something that claims being (Husserl 1967).

Husserl relates his pure transcendental consciousness to Descartes ego cogito, as it experiences the objective world, perceives it,

remembers it, thinks of it, judges about it, values it, desires it, or the like which Descartes, according to Husserl, indicated by the name *cogito* (Husserl 1967). But Husserl's pure Ego tends to remain above all life-world and refrains from doing any believing that takes the world straight-forwardly as existing. Instead, the pure Ego enters the world that gets its sense and acceptance or status in and from the Ego itself not independent of it. The transcendental epoche, as it leads Ego back to the rich realm of its experience, is also called the transcendental-phenomenological reduction. In case of the Cartesian method, the ego sum is found as certainly existing by doubting the existence of the whole world around. Thanks to his notion of transcendence, Husserl rejects the extrinsic and objective existence of life-world without denying the status of the same as a domain of experience for pure transcendental consciousness. Ultimately, this life-world is constituted by the consciousness through the eidetic method of cognizing.

Mulla Sadra uses the metaphor of journey (*safar*) to elaborate his view of transcendence. His *al-hikmat al-muta'aliyah* is not simply the work of a philosopher who attempts to understand everything by his reason or abstract thinking. But rather it is a sort of intellectual movement that perfects the human soul by the completion of the four journeys (*al-asfar al-arba'ah*). He describes these four journeys in his magnum opus, *al-hikmat al-muta'aliyah fi 'al-asfar al-'aqliyat al-arba'ah* (The Transcendental Wisdom in the Four Intellectual Journeys). The four journeys are as follows: from the creatures (*khalq*) to the Truth (*al-haqq*), Continues in the Truth with the Truth, From the Truth to the creatures with the Truth, and The fourth journey: Continues with the Truth in the creatures (Mulla Sadra 1981).

The first journey is from the creature (*khalq*) to the Truth or Creator (*haqq*) through the tearing of the veils of darkness and light that exist between the initiate (*salik*) and his spiritual reality, which resides eternally with him. If the initiate becomes annihilated in the Divine, the first journey comes to an end and his being becomes a true being. Upon ending the first journey the initiate begins the second journey, which is the journey from the Truth to the Truth by the Truth (*min al-haqq ila'l-haqq bi'l-haqq*). This takes place "by the Truth" because the initiate has become a saint (*wali*) and his being has become real being. He begins this journey from the station of the Essence and

goes to the Perfections one after another until he contemplates all the Divine Perfections and knows all the Divine Names except that over which he has no dominance.

The third journey is the journey from the Truth to the creature with the Truth (*min al-haqq ila'l-khalq bi'l-haqq*). The initiate annihilation comes to an end and he attains complete sobriety. He subsists through the subsistence (*baqa'*) of God. He journeys through the worlds of *jabarut*, *malakut* and *nasut* and "sees" all these worlds in their essence and exigencies. He gains a taste of "prophecy" and gains knowledge of the divine sciences from the Divine Essence, Attributes and Actions. But he does *not* possess the prophetic function in the sense of bringing a sacred law. The fourth journey is the journey from the creature to the creature with the Truth (*min al-khalq ila'l-khalq bi'l-haqq*). He observes creatures, and their effects and exigencies. He knows their benefits and their evils, temporally and spiritually, that is, in this world and the next. He knows of their return to God, the manner of their return. He becomes a prophet in the sense of a law-giving prophet and is called prophet (*nabi*).

Mulla Sadra's intellectual scheme implies that transcendence is a movement or journey from the creatures, the things in the surrounding world, to the Divine in order to become like the Divine as indicated as the first journey above. This journey is not merely a mystic experience in which the human soul is lost in the Divine, rather it is an intellectual movement of a Gnostic ('arif) to become like the Divine reflecting on the nature of existence and its accidents (*awarid*) (Mulla Sadra 1981). This is the character of his thought that demarcates him from the Sufi order of Islamic tradition which he himself is a part of. He attempts to establish a necessary relationship between the *al-hikmah* and the existence (Mulla Sadra 1981). The *hikmah*, for him, is the Divine Knowledge (*al-'Ilm al-Ilhiyyah*) whose main topic is the Absolute Being (*al-Mawjud al-Mutlaq*). Moreover, 'as every being is an effect of some other being this sphere of learning focuses on the First Cause (*al-Sabab al-Awwal*) of all beings (Mulla Sadra 1981).

The philosophers and sages meditate upon the horizons and their own being and see His portents manifested therein. They prove from the effects of His Power the necessity of His Being and His Essence. They see all existence and all Perfection drowned in His

Being and His Perfection. Or rather, they see all existence and perfection as a spark of His Light and a theophany from the theophanies of His Manifestation. Then they look at Being and meditate upon Its very reality. It becomes clear to them that It is necessary (*wajib*) in Itself and for Itself and they argue from Its essential necessity to prove that It is without parts, has Unity and possesses Knowledge, Power, Life, Will, Hearing, Sight, Speech and other attributes of Its perfection.

Then they meditate upon His Being, Providence and Unity and the unity of His Act and the process of the effusion of multiplicity from Him - Exalted be He - and its order until the chains of the celestial intellects (*'uqul*) and the souls (*nufus*) as ordered become revealed to them. They contemplate the worlds of *jabarut* and *malakut* from the highest to the lowest stages until they end with the world of *mulk* and *nasut*. Then they meditate upon the creation of the heavens and the earth. They know of their return to God and possess the science concerning their harms and their benefits, of what is of joy or misery to them in this world and the next. They know of their life and their resurrection. They interdict that which corrupts and order that which is beneficial. They meditate upon the problem of the other world and know what exists therein of heaven and hell, reward and punishment, the path, the account, the balance.

Philosophy as a closed system of thought is as unattractive to Husserl as it is to Mulla Sadra. For Husserl, philosophy is an "infinite task" required by the search for truth. Both thinkers recognize that the dialectic between experience and expression necessitates continual efforts at self-evident verification; whereas fundamentalism, no less than rationalism, positivism, idealism and scientism, rests on its assumption of the truth of metaphysics of naturalism.

Both Mulla Sadra and Husserl challenge this starting for philosophy, since if all real being is natural being, there can be no space for the discoveries of metaphysics. There can be no possibility for Transcendence. All being is immanent being. Yet, both thinkers reason that genuine philosophizing cannot ignore our experiences of transcendence, in self-evident intuitions of its presence. Overcoming the prejudice of naturalism and materialism, according to the dictates of phenomenological method, involves suspending belief in the independent existence of the world that we ordinarily assume, to show

its relation to Being and to reflection. Husserl famously "reduces" all experience to phenomenal experience. Husserl removes the chains of naturalism from Being so that its meanings can be awakened in the phenomenologist. In Husserl's earlier Logical Investigations, he had not yet made the discovery of the reduction. Logical entities, however, are already under the reduction.

Mulla Sadra's figure of the reduction is a hermeneutical discussion that dislodges the ordinary referent from its position of privilege since he holds that language serves as a vector to point to various being. Literal language provides a vehicle for the expression of analogies and allusions. Mulla Sadra knew the function and dignity of the knower, which Husserl learned from Emmanuel Kant. Mulla Sadra also recognized that "knower" does not fully describe the human person. As Husserl and Edith Stein, Husserl's first assistant, would show, lived bodily experience founds human being's communal life. The life of the community will always include beliefs that are not necessary, but specific to the group or perhaps the individual. Suspension of belief in reality as constructed by a particular culture provides an occasion for opening the borders of transcendence. For both Mulla Sadra and Husserl, the dominant culture of their time impedes the soul's journey towards the universal, towards essences, towards Truth that brings quiet peace.

Phenomenology deals with knowledge and is a kind of new knowledge of cognition. When phenomenology speaks about the expression "Putting existence in brackets" it means to suspend history or culture in order to transcend conceptual knowledge, and with full comprehension of each science to have an immediate knowledge of an object, and through intuition and experience comprehend living facts with their living qualities.

Phenomenology proceeds to solve those philosophical problems which are traceable to the initial philosophical discussions such as the relationship between the knower and the known, inward, spiritual matter and corporeal matter etc. That all of them stem from man's approach towards the issue of epistemology, that is, from the manner of relationship between the intellect and the intelligible, the agent of perception and the subject of perception. Dichotomy between subject and object constitutes the basis of all other dichotomies and there is an

inter relationship among them. At any rate, the relationship between two issues which are not commensurate with each other and the study of the nature of human knowledge constitute the basis of epistemology which sometimes give rise to certain problematic matter in epistemology. According to Husserl phenomena is not an independent and self-existent matter, but it results from the confrontation of subject and object. Accordingly phenomenology transcends both idealism and realism and while cutting through the independence of fact or mind, holds that phenomena is the effect of the mind and fact.

Concerning the comparison of phenomenology with Islamic philosophy we can refer to this point that the advocates of phenomenology instead of appealing to the initial and a priori definition in humanities try to see various manifestations or phenomena and always review whatever is there. They hold that there is a perpetual relationship between phenomena and reality. Similarly Islamic mystics too hold that various theophanies are emanated from eternal reality and there is a reality beyond all phenomena and theophanies. If they are recognized by the same trait, must have some intellectual resemblance though there might be certain differences, whether major or minor, between them. Both of our thinkers reject rational conceptual process as an appropriate way of approaching to reality. Instead, both focus on intuitive experience to unveil reality.

2. The Unity of Existence

For Mulla Sadra, the ultimate reality is the “One Existence” (*al-Wujud al-Wahid*) which is absolutely objective and transcendent and so cognizable through the intuitive experience and logical reasoning. A central feature of Mulla Sadra's approach is that the most primary concept of philosophical explanation is the category of existence. This perspective has led, through many variations, to a central insight of Western existentialism that there is a gulf between the seriousness with which each individual pursues his or her own life subjectively, from the first-person perspective, and the lack of importance of each individual's life and actions when viewed objectively, from the second-person perspective.

The views of Mulla Sadra on existence include a precise and masterly system based on the principle of ‘primacy of existence over

quiddity' (*asalat al-wujûd*) or the issue of the 'principlality of existence'. The issue of the Principlality of existence is a firm philosophical idea that has deep roots in the metaphysical experience of 'existence'. Mulla Sadra utilizes this background to unite rational analytical thought with our direct experience of truth. He presents this unity in a clear, systematic manner to transform his own metaphysics from an Aristotelian philosophy to a philosophy which is essentially non-Aristotelian. Mulla Sadra believes if one disregards being, he would remain ignorant of the basis and principles of sciences. For everything is known in the context of being and if being is not known, everything else will remain unknown. Mulla Sadra considers being as the basis of all philosophical rules and divine issues. In his view, although other factors, particularly the knowledge of the soul play an important role in knowing the divine sciences, the basis of all sciences is one principle and that is being (Mulla Sadra 1981).

On the basis of the Primacy of 'Existence' over 'Quiddity', Mulla Sadra designates the 'reality of existence' as the axis of his philosophical discussions. Undoubtedly, a true understanding of his philosophy requires understanding the 'reality of existence', its levels and degrees. The distinction between the 'reality of existence' and the 'concept of existence' is of such importance that one cannot truly and properly understand the metaphysics of *Mulla Sadra* without understanding this distinction. Mulla Sadra believes that although other fields of study, especially the knowledge of soul, are important in understanding the Divine Knowledge, and the basis of all teachings is the "reality of existence"³ (*haqîqat-i wujûd*) (Rahman 1975; Rizvi 2000).

Mulla Sadra, who bases his metaphysics on the principlality of existence and alters the course of traditional concerns in philosophy into a discussion of 'existence' (*wujûd*), finds it necessary to differentiate between the two meanings of existence. First he defines the meaning of 'the existent' (*mawjud*) as the secondary intelligibility in philosophy. The existent, Mulla Sadra believes, can be understood through comparison and rational endeavor. Second to him is the issue of 'the concrete and external reality of existence' (*haqîqat ayni wa khariji-e wujûd*), which can be understood through knowledge by presence (*ilm-e huduri*) (Rahman 1975).

The above-mentioned distinction is an important point in Transcendent Theosophy. Preoccupation with the concept of 'existence' (*wujud*) or the act of existence characterizes Mulla Sadra's point of view, and this unique characteristic of his methodology revolutionized the study of metaphysics in Islam. By shifting the emphasis from 'the existent' (*mawjud*) to 'existence' (*wujûd*), *Sadr al-muta'allihin* no longer categorizes the synthesis of 'existence' (*wujûd*) and 'quiddity' (*mahiyyah*) as contingent (*mumkin*) or as dependent on the necessary (*wajib*). Transfer from 'existent' to 'existence' is a characteristic of Mulla Sadra's existential thought. He considers the principality of being as the basis of his metaphysical system. He accordingly changed the conceptual issue of past philosophies into the existential discussion and, thereby, placed 'existence' at the center of his philosophical discussions.

Mulla Sadra, by shifting from 'existent' to 'existence', does not consider the combination of 'existence' and 'quiddity' as a ground for the dependence of contingency and its distinction from necessity anymore. He, rather, propounds existential possibility instead of essential possibility, and the distinction between the grades of the reality of existence instead of the difference between the referents of necessity and necessary being which is applicable to both 'existents'.⁴ The distinction between 'existent' and "existence" is understood properly when a clear distinction between two the modes of existence, namely, 'existent' (that which exists in the present) and the present form of existence, that is, 'to be' or 'to exist', is taken into consideration as a significant point in transcendent theosophy. The mind's preoccupation with 'existence', meaning the act of existing, constitutes Mulla Sadra's thought and distinguishes his school of philosophy from others. It is to be noted that the fundamental revolution that Mulla Sadra has brought about in the realm of metaphysics in Islam is indebted to this principle.

According to Mulla Sadra, 'existence' is conceptually evident, that is, it is primary and a priori. What is concluded without the mediation of any deductive process is precisely the concept of 'existence' rather than 'existent'. The concept of existence represents the reality of existence which holds the most comprehensive absolute unity and comprises all stages of multiple things and external realities.

The concept of 'existence' is the very being and becoming, objectively and subjectively. And this evident and universal concept is a subject to the simple and luminous truth. This concept is simpler than any concept. It is the first of all concepts and it is a manifestation to its own essence. Therefore, defining existence through one of its own manifestation is impossible, due to its intense appearance and definition (Mulla Sadra 1975).

Mulla Sadra, in his book, *al-Mashair* (Mulla Sadra 1963) argues that 'the reality of being encompasses and embraces particular stages of existents including their manifestation and appearance in the mind. Mulla Sadra does not consider any concept as being more extensive than the concept of being and more inclusive than 'the external reality of being'. The extension and inclusiveness of the concept of being is different from that of the reality of being. The encompassment of the reality of being means its manifestation and extension in various grades, both externally and mentally. The reality of being as a non-conditioned reality and the source of all ontological divisions will never appear to mind or follow the intellectual rules; because its external nature is identical with its essence.

To admit the very reality which is explained by 'existent' is an evident matter which is common to all schools of philosophy. Mulla Sadra not only considers the reality of being as the subject of philosophy, but also stresses that the subject of philosophy should be evident in itself. Thus, we face the question of how is it possible for the reality of being to be evident in itself. Consequently, what appear to the mind as quiddities are, in fact, the manifestations of the absolute reality of being which do not require any other concept in their transfer to the mind from the external world and in their appearance and manifestation (Lahiji 1933). Therefore, according to Mulla Sadra, being or ultimate reality is like light that manifests in itself and is the cause of the manifestation of objects, and is comprehended through something entirely different from thinking and reasoning. His view in this regard is similar to Suhrawardi's. It is to be noted that being, despite its self-evident nature in comprehension as an objective reality, is beyond any theoretical and conceptual analysis. Strictly speaking, being is something which neither has quiddity nor is quiddity itself. It therefore should be understood by presence (Mulla Sadra 1963).

If someone were bestowed with intuition and knowledge by presence, he would be able to achieve a unity that is the very unity of multitudes (*kisrat*) and the diversification of multitudes (*tashakkkhusat-e kathirah*). This unity is neither a conceptual unity (*wahdat-e mafhûmi*), nor a generic unity (*wahdat-e jinsi*), nor is it a specific unity (*wahdat-e no'eî*). It is unity in an absolute sense (*wahdat-e itlaqi*), that no one except Gnostics will be able to comprehend its reality. These acquired concepts are the signifiers of truth; however, a gnostic like a philosopher may exemplify his intuitive findings through the acquired concepts. These concepts can indicate the existence of certain realities to some extent which are limited to a narrow conceptual scope. For example, based on our knowledge of our self, we formulate the concept of "I". The definition of this 'I' is a narrow concept as compared to the real and presidential truth of I. The same analogy can be applied to 'existence' (*wujûd*).

In the opinion of Ibn-e Arabi and his followers, since the different stages of existence are nothing but diverse manifestations of the 'absolute being' (*wujûd-e mutlaq*), all the things in the universe (from heavenly secrets to corporeal bodies) are one metaphysical entity. This is the same concept as the "unity of existence" (*wahdat-e wujûd*). Although the 'unity of existence' (*wahdat-e wujûd*) is different from the theory of Mulla Sadra, the 'unity of the reality of existence', it has strongly influenced his opinion about existence. It is an important criterion for understanding his philosophy and metaphysics.

Theologically speaking, they are those who are able to see God in the creature and the creature in God. The one selfsame "existence" is seen at once to be God and the creature, or Absolute Reality and the phenomenal world, Unity and Multiplicity. The sight of the Multiplicity of phenomenal things does not obstruct the sight of the pure Unity of ultimate Reality. Nor does the sight of Unity stand in the way of the appearance of Multiplicity (Mulla Sadra 1963). On the contrary; the two complement each other in disclosing the pure structure of Reality. For they are the two essential aspects of Reality, Unity representing the aspect of absoluteness (*itlaq*) or comprehensive contraction (*ijmal*), and Multiplicity the aspect of determination (*taqyid*) or concrete expansion (*tafsil*). Philosophically this is the position generally known as oneness

of existence (*wahdat al-wujud*), which is an idea of central importance going back to Ibn 'Arabi.

The particular type of metaphysics based on this kind of existential intuition begins with the statement that the Absolute only is real, that the Absolute is the sole reality, and that, consequently, nothing else is real. The differentiated world of Multiplicity is therefore essentially non-existent (*'adam*). To this initial statement, however, is immediately added another; namely, that it does not in any way imply that the differentiated world is a void, an illusion, or sheer nothing. The ontological status of the phenomenal things is rather that of relations, that is, "the various and variegated relational forms of the Absolute itself. In this sense, and in this sense only, they are all real.

The rise of the phenomenal world as we actually observe it is due primarily to two seemingly different causes which are in reality perfectly coordinated with each other: one metaphysical, another epistemological. Metaphysically or ontologically, the phenomenal world arises before our eyes because the Absolute has in itself essential, internal articulations that are called *shu'un* (affairs), i.e. internal modes of being. These internal articulations naturally call for their own externalization. As a consequence, "existence" spreads itself out in myriads of self-determinations.

However, even at the stage of self-manifestation, the structure of Reality as seen through the eyes of a real mystic-philosopher looks diametrically opposed to the same Reality as it appears to the relative consciousness of an ordinary man. For in the eyes of an ordinary man representing the common-sense view of things, the phenomena are the visible and manifest while the Absolute is the hidden. But in the unconditioned consciousness of a real mystic-philosopher, it is always and everywhere the Absolute that is manifest while the phenomena remain in the background.

This peculiar structure of Reality in its *tajalli-aspect* is due to this issue that the differentiated world of phenomena is not self-subsistently real. No phenomenal thing has in itself a real ontological core. In this sense, the philosophical standpoint of the school of the "oneness" of existence" (*wahdat al-wujud*) is most obviously anti-essentialism. All so-called "essences" or "quiddities" are reduced to the position of the fictitious. The utmost degree of reality recognized to

them is that of "borrowed existence". That is to say, the "quiddities" exist because they happen to be so many intrinsic modifications and determinations of the Absolute which alone can be said to exist in the fullest sense of the word.

Parallel to the development of Heidegger's engagement with the question of Being opens a new horizon for ontological discourse. In the West this philosophical engagement of Heidegger is reminiscent of that of Mulla Sadra whose pre-occupation with the primacy of Existence marked a decisive turning point in Islamic thought. For Mulla Sadra, the doctrine of the primacy of essence leads to the concealment of the truth. It neglected the fundamental philosophical questions concerning the meaning of Being in favor of investigating the nature of something less fundamental.

It is the abandonment of Being or nihilism for Heidegger: a philosophical position undertaken by Western philosophers from Plato to Nietzsche. It represents the history of continuous negligence of the question of Being (Heidegger 1987; Emad and Maly 1999). In both cases, in Western philosophical tradition as well as Suhrawardi's metaphysics what is abandoned is the Being of beings as a whole, and this has led to disintegration of truth, or the forgotten-ness of Being and thinking of Being as essence. This process of the concealment of truth in Heidegger's view is like the process in which the light of a star that has been extinguished for millennia will gleam but its gleaming nonetheless remains a mere appearance? The state of untruth or darkness of illusion as described by Mulla Sadra is the abandonment of Being.

The turn from the primacy of essence to the primacy of Being belonged to Mulla Sadra's period of solitude and his teaching in Shiraz. During that time the question of Being rather than essence proved to be the foundation of the principles of philosophy (Mulla Sadra 1963). The primacy of Being became fundamental in the sense that Being and not essence was seen to be the only reality on which the multiplicity of beings and all essences could stand. The question of the possibility of an overcoming of this type of metaphysics or the darkness of illusion and disintegration of truth is a serious philosophical enterprise for Mulla Sadra.

Mulla Sadra's metaphysics asserts the realm of the principle of unity beyond the domain of the categories. For this reason, Being remains indefinable ((Mulla Sadra 1981). It is neither a genus for another entity, differentia, or species, nor a common or specific accident. Understanding the meaning of Being cannot be based on anything more prevalent than itself (Mulla Sadra 1963). This negative approach in light of Aristotle's logic, however, does not hinder philosophers such as Mulla Sadra and Heidegger in their investigations into the meaning of Being. Heidegger, in interpreting the history of metaphysics, thinks that the abandonment of Being is rooted in Platonism, whereas for Mulla Sadra it is inherited from Suhrawardi and Ibn Arabi's thought. Both of them meanwhile share the view that Aristotle's logic is incapable of revealing the meaning of Being. Reliance on the Aristotelian system of logic brings obstacles into our ontological inquiry. According to Heidegger, for instance, this reliance has led post-Aristotelian thinkers to neglect Being and to turn towards studying ontic entities instead.

Heidegger, in *Being and Time*, makes similar claim. He argues that the post-Aristotelian thinkers accepted the dogma of negligence, and withdrew themselves from the genuine philosophical question of the meaning of Being, for three reasons. First, they thought that Being was the most universal concept, and that its universality transcended any universality of genus. Second, since Being is the most universal concept, and is not an entity, it is therefore indefinable and escapes all attempts to define it in accordance with the rules of definition provided in Aristotelian logic. Third, Being is self-evident (Heidegger 1992). Heidegger also attacks the post-Aristotelian philosophers for having neglected this fundamental question in their philosophical inquiries in favor of investigating the meaning of beings (Heidegger 1992). Heidegger rejects the three presuppositions, which support the dogma of negligence. Against them he argues that the universality of the concept of Being does not guarantee the clarity of its meaning and that the meaning of this concept is still the darkest of all.

3. The multiplicity of Essences (*Mahiyat*)

Mulla Sadra, who came to be known as the chief advocate of the doctrine (principality of existence), was at one time a proponent of the other camp, that is, principality of quiddity. He later praises God

for illuminating his heart and allowing him to reach the truth and later says: In the past, I held the opinion⁵ that “quiddity” (*mâhiyyah*) is real and “existence” (*wujûd*) is non-factual, until the Creator guided me and demonstrated His truth to me. Suddenly, my spiritual eyes opened and I fully realized that the truth is contrary to what most philosophers believe. All praise is to God whose Spiritual Light emancipated me from darkness and made me believe in a lasting doctrine which will never change in this world or in the hereafter. That is why I now believe that “existences” (*wujûdat*) are essentially and fundamentally real and that “quiddities” (*mâhiyyat*) are “immutable essences” (*a'yan-e sabit*), which have never been existent. “Existences” (*wujûdat*) are nothing but illumination and radiation from the true light -which is self-subsistence- that is everlasting. They (existences) are manifestations of God's essence and attributes, the quality of each has been determined, and which have come to be wrongly known as “quiddity” (*mâhiyyah*) (Mulla Sadra 1981).

The last section of the above passage clearly specifies Mulla Sadra's view on the relation between ‘quiddity’ (*mâhiyyah*) and ‘existence’ (*wujûd*). ‘Quiddities’ have been described as ‘intelligible qualities’ (*kayfiyyât-e ma'qûl*), meaning those mental qualities that intellect grasps in certain ‘existences’ (*wujûdat*) and serves to separate quiddities from these existences. These existences are nothing but “the reality of existence” (*haqîqat-e wujûd*) which essentially and internally determined. And thus they can abandon the absolute stage and become particular. The main thrust of Mulla Sadra's philosophy is the ontological underpinning of his transcendental philosophy, the focal point of the first journey in his grand intellectual scheme whose task is to cognize the nature of existence with all other notions related to it. This study focuses on the notion of *mâhiyyah* (essence) as Mulla Sadra expounds it in relation to existence.

Mulla Sadra states that there is a kind of relation between the existence of each object and its quiddity, and this relation is not at all accidental. Yet, essence does not necessitate existence. Being is actually prior and quiddity is considered to be its subordinate in its being. The subordination of quiddity to being is not similar to the subordination of an existent to another existent. It is rather like the subordination of shadow to the actual entity. Evidently, the existence-

quiddity relation is not like the relation of influence and being influenced, because being is existent by itself and quiddity is subordinated to it. Mulla Sadra deems the unity of being and quiddity as the union between the significant and signification, on the one hand, and the mirror and object of vision on the other hand. Meanwhile, each quiddity is the rational representation and mental image of existence, and existence, although its forms are different with respect to its quiddities, and although its categories and kinds are distinct with regard to essence and definition, is self-subsistent. Existence has a single entity with different stages of higher and lower degrees.

Mulla Sadra has clearly explained this idea in various parts of his works. For example: "Know that the existence of quiddity (*mâhiyyah*) is not dependent on the existence of a "characteristic" (*sifat*). It is, however, dependent on the intellect's grasp of quiddity in certain existences that are externally united with quiddity. The thing that can be understood by intuition (*shuhûd*) is existence and the thing that can be understood in the form of intelligible qualities (*kayfiyyât ma'qul*), is quiddity, that I have referred to in the past" (Mulla Sadra 1981). When existences are diffused with God's will and take a distinct reality in various forms, with each is a united quiddity that is seemingly independent from existence, but it united to its illuminated spirit. The distinct relation of quiddity to existence is of this case and as a result quiddity does not precede existence in any of its levels. A quiddity relates to existence and its certainty is dependent on the certainty of existence (Mulla Sadra 1981).

Mulla Sadra believes that all essences (*mahiyyat*) are the accidents of existence which become characteristically related to it first of all other accidents of it (Mulla Sadra 1981). He considers existence as an unconceivable or undeterminable term, as it is beyond the known methods of conceiving namely the definition (*al-hadd*) and the description (*al-rasm*). Therefore, it will be an absolute mistake to interpret existence by the help of some other entities considered as more meaningful than existence. So existence, for Mulla Sadra, is beyond all demonstration and conception of the human mind (Mulla Sadra 1981). That is to say, existence is absolutely extrinsic and objective being entirely independent of not only the human mind but anything extraneous to it (Mulla Sadra 1981). It is the only reality that

is real in itself whereas all other entities including essence, as they are, are accidents of existence.

Mulla Sadra demarcates the Existence (*al-Wujud*) that is a Being-in-Itself (*Mawjud bi nafsih*) from the accidental existence that is a being which depends on other to exist (Mulla Sadra 1981). This distinction is grounded on his notion of hierarchy of attribution of the meaning of the existence to different beings with respect to their essences. The meaning of existence is common among all beings that attribute it. However, all of the beings are essentially different in the attribution of the meaning of existence due to various respects. He defines essence (*mahiyyah*) as what something is as it is or in other words it is an answer to the question about a thing-What is it?

The opinion of Mulla Sadra on the relation of quiddity (*mâhiyyah*) to existence (*wujûd*) is different from that of Ibn-Sina. Ibn-Sina does not mean that a quiddity is firstly established and fixed somewhere in the external world as a possible, and being subsequently comes upon it through its cause. Ibn-Sina explicitly demonstrates that finite existent which is a compound of quiddity and being cannot be the cause of its own being. Its being should be bestowed by another source that is the Creator and the Giver of being. In this way he proves the distinction between quiddity and being. The quiddity of any thing differs from its being (This-ness), since to be human is not the same as to be existent (Ibn-Sina 1983). Moreover, anything which owns quiddity, is the effect and the being is a meaning which occurs in it from outside externally (Ibn-Sina 1983) and accidentally.

It is to be noted that according to this theory, being, in addition to matter and form, is not a component of objects; it is rather a relation with God. Ibn-Sina calls this relative aspect "accident" (*arad*) and states that "being is an accident" (Ibn-Sina 1983). The accidental aspect of being is an important issue that Ibn-Sina has bequeathed to his successors. Ibn Rushd interprets Ibn-Sina's idea of the accidental aspect of "being" as being an ordinary accident. Consequently, he not only criticizes Ibn-Sina for this idea (Ibn Rushd 1998), but also considers such an interpretation of Ibn-Sina's idea as a kind of misunderstanding; for in Ibn-Sina's opinion, "being" and "quiddity" is identical outside. Ibn-Sina himself in his *Ta'liqat* (Ibn-Sina 1983) has distinguished two

types of accident and has demonstrated that by “accident” he does not mean an accident like whiteness which is immanent in a subject.

Mulla Sadra, who believes in the principiality of existence (*asâlat-e wujûd*), maintains that this analysis of being is unnecessary. He, however, does not accept the qualification (*ittisâf*) of quiddity and its relation with existence outside the mind. He is not, however, completely against the qualification of existence outside the mind and believes that in the external world qualification (*ittisâf*) can apply to existence. Nonetheless, he adds that qualification (*ittisâf*) in the external world occurs in a reversed form: instead of quiddity (*mâhiyyah*) becoming endowed with existence (*wujûd*), existence (*wujûd*) becomes endowed with quiddity (*mâhiyyah*).

In a few of his works, Mulla Sadra compares the relation between the reality of existence (*haqîqat-e wujûd*) and its limitations (*mahdûdiyyat*) to a shadow (*dhil*) and the actual shadow (*dhi-dhil*) or an image (*shabah*) and the actual thing (*dhi-shabah*). He says: “The truth about quiddity and existence is that existence precedes quiddity, but that quiddity is not active in existence, because, as we said, quiddity is not fabricated. Existence is the actual principle and quiddity is dependent upon it. This relation is not analogous to the dependence of a creature upon another creature, but it is rather similar to the dependence of a shadow upon a person or that of an image upon the actual thing. It is worth noting that in this example a person or a thing does not create a shadow or an image, nor can it interfere with it. It should therefore be said that existence is in reality and in its own essence existent, while quiddity is existent through its relation with existence. Thus are existence and quiddity united (Mulla Sadra 1967).

This underlying reality of all beings is the existence that carries essences with it which can be cognized by the conception of the human mind while existence is beyond all methods of cognition except the Gnostic experience as discussed earlier. Meanings of essences always remain on the epistemic or cognitive plan and so they cannot guarantee the manifestations (*tashakkkhus*) to beings as they are. Instead, the manifestations of beings as they are in themselves is determined through their existential relationship to the Real Existence (*al-Wujud al-haqiqi*) that is the Origin (*al-Mabda'*) of all beings (Mulla Sadra 1981). The distinction between cognitive and the existential plan of the

things in themselves is essential in Sadra's philosophy to draw the significant difference between essence and existence. The essence of the thing in itself, although it is one with existence, belongs to the cognitive side of being of that thing. Whereas existence is not and cannot be a matter of cognition, rather it is absolutely existential or antic which relates everything to its cause, the Necessary Existence or the Divine. For all beings are shadows (*zilal*) and illuminations (*ishraqat*) of the Divine. So the only way to reach the existential realities of the things in themselves is the Gnostic experience of becoming one with the Divine, the Origin or Source of all existence.

Husserl may agree with Mulla Sadra on the view that essence is something what is as it is and also on the view that reality cannot be graspable through traditional empirical and rational methods of cognition. However, he would intensely disagree with Sadra on drawing a distinction between essence as something cognizable being an accident of the existence that is an absolutely objective and extrinsic reality. On the contrary, Husserl emphasizes on the constitution of all reality by an absolutely pure transcendental subjective consciousness as we have already seen above. This huge difference between the two transcendental philosophers is due to the distinction between their intellectual commitments and methods of philosophizing.

The above arguments are based on the gradation of existence and the participation of quiddity in existence. Mulla Sadra considers the simultaneous unity and plurality of existence as one of the most important principles of his metaphysics. Regarding the question of unity and multiplicity, Mulla Sadra as one of the most important grounds of his metaphysics, presents the idea that being is one and at the same time many. There is, however, another interpretation regarding the personal unity of existence (*wahdat-i shakhsî wujûd*) and the non-participation of quiddity (Mulla Sadra 1936).

This paradox can be best understood in his explanation of the gradation of existence (*tashkik-e wujûd*). Mulla Sadra proves that existents (*mawjudat*) are what they are due to their illuminated relation with the "absolute true existence" (*haqîqat-e mutlaq-e wujûd*). We should not consider them as separate entities that are self-subsistent. This understanding of the ontological status of "specific existents" leads us to think that "existence" (*wujud*) is a unique reality which

possesses different levels and degrees of intensity based on degrees of intensity, weakness or strength, on perfection and deficiency, on priority and order, etc. These differences are consistent with the reality of existence, for their differences are exactly similar to their unity.

To support this theory, Mulla Sadra uses light (*nur*) as a suitable example in describing the unity and gradation of existence (Mulla Sadra 1967). He praises those illuminationists who believe in this. Quite clearly he owes the concept of "light" as "metaphysical reality" to the founder of the illuminationist school of Philosophy, *Shihâb al-Din Suhrawardî*. It was Suhrawardî who believes in the identity of "existence" and "light" (*nur*) and considers light as a metaphysical reality. The result of this analysis is that existence (*wujûd*) or the ultimate reality is a luminous reality which manifests itself in various levels and degrees and shines upon other things and, as something that transcends the faculties of mind or logic; it can only be understood and proven through Inner illumination and intuitive knowledge (Mulla Sadra 1967).

Thus, as this principle comprises the reality of existence, it, likewise, encompasses its lower grades which associate with quiddity. In the latter category, according to this principle, the external correspondent as compared to mental compounds of "quiddity" and "existence" is nothing but "existence" in various forms of manifestations. These forms that intellect observes as independent quiddities are in fact nothing but essential determinations or manifestations of existence. The Reality of Existence is found everywhere, appearing in various forms. Yet, since these forms are the transformations or modes of a unique reality called Existence, and the significant differences among them are the difference of stages and degrees, they are ultimately the same. This viewpoint is known as the unity of the reality of existence.⁶ Mulla Sadra's theory of being is, to some extent, indebted to the tradition of Ibn Arabi, who considers existence as the fundamental category of his gnostic thought.⁷

The origin of Mulla Sadra's intellectual development is, therefore, intuition of the principality of being. According to rational analyses of the principality of being, "the reality of being is not accessible to mind. Instead, what is attained within the intellectual domain is a prospect of reality. He, who like Suhrawardi, considers the

knowledge of the soul as the principle of any knowledge, initiated from the intuition of the reality of spirit during his asceticism and purification of the soul. He observed the reality of his soul through the knowledge by presence. Furthermore, through the intuitions of his reality he found out that what is actual is existence and not quiddity. And through the extension of that intuition, he observed its simplicity, unity, and gradation. This intellectual development was not, merely, a change in his rational design and standpoint; it was rather a solid philosophical belief derived from personal experience which, itself, was based on a rational stage as distinguished from the previous stage of belief. This was a philosophical theory with deep roots in the gnostic experience of the reality of existence. Henceforth, the question of the principality of being turned into an issue on the basis of which, the whole system of his philosophy was shaped and found a new form.

Mulla Sadra is an eclectic-revivalist of Muslim traditions both of philosophy and Sufism. So he has never been able to deviate from his absolute commitment to the Gnostic experience of oneness of being to unveil all reality. While Husserl, being absolutely committed to suspend all traditions of Western intellectualism, is to work out a new method of unfolding the reality which he calls the eidetic method or the method of eidetic description (Husserl 1967). The first step in this method, is the transcendental reduction which leads one to one's transcendental ego when one parenthesizes all given-ness of actuality. This is not simply a transcendental phenomenological reduction; rather it is an eidetic reduction in which ego, though situated in 'the empirical factualness entirely breaks with the same. This ego, in the next step, selects a fact of perception to change it into a pure possibility by abstaining from acceptance of its being.

This shift of the actual perception into the realm of non-actualities takes place on the plan of mere fantasy or imagination. Along with the shift of a fact into an a priori universal the ego is also transformed from an empirically situated subject into an intuitive and epodictic consciousness of something universal (Husserl 1967). Through this imaginative procedure of selecting facts to transform them into the pure eidos perceptions, the transcendental subjective consciousness constitutes whole of the life-world in terms of eide. One should not equate Husserl's method of fantasizing fact into the pure

eidōs to Mulla Sadra's way of the Gnostic experience to become like the Divine though it can also be interpreted as a highly imaginative and intuitive experience. Husserl's eidetic ego does break with actuality like Sadra's transcendental Gnostic but in order not to become one with the Divine. Instead, his transcendental ego becomes free of all factualness to constitute the same life-world.

Conclusion

In this paper, I examined Mulla Sadra's concept of trans-existentialism as an attempt to translate mystical experience obtained through knowledge by presence into the language of reason or empirical evidence. His philosophy is identified with a wisdom or theosophy which is based on a purely metaphysical foundation reached through intellectual intuition and at the same time presented in a rational but not rationalistic form and making use of rational arguments. Like Husserl, Mulla Sadra believes in transcending in order to cognize the realities of the things in themselves where he defines philosophy. But his concept of transcendence is entirely different from that of Husserl's. In order to comprehend the realities of the things in themselves, according to Mulla Sadra, there is no need to deny their existence independent of the human mind. Instead, without such denial one can have a Gnostic experience (*'irfan*) of the existence (*wujud*) as such.

Although Mulla Sadra and Husserl both are transcendental philosophers having certain commonalities between them, they differ from each other as well with various respects. Both are deeply interested in cognizing the realities of the things in themselves but begin to attain this task very differently. The later is to reject the whole tradition of his academic culture to find out a radical way of philosophizing. Whereas the former is to show an extremely accommodative attitude towards the past philosophies in order to reconcile the various intellectual currents of Muslim tradition in terms of his *al-hikmat al-Muta'aliyah*. Mulla Sadra and Husserl focus on transcendence to grasp the reality but their meanings of transcendence are entirely different from each other. This is so as Mulla Sadra demarcates between existence and essence very significantly. Essence, for him, is something cognizable through the traditional methods of

conceiving the objects like defining and describing etc. while existence is universally common underlying reality that cannot be determined or conceived through those methods. Therefore, the only way to know existence is to transcend this world to become one with the Absolute Existent, the Origin of all existence. On the contrary, Husserl, though he is also interested in grasping the reality of the things in themselves, is to believe that reality is not beyond the human mind. Rather it can be graspable by the human mind if the mind is reduced to the eidetic Ego that can transform all fact into the pure eidos through the extraordinary procedure of fantasizing or imagining.

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Endnotes

- ¹ Burhan as understood in Islamic philosophy is not exactly demonstration as currently understood in the parlance of logic in the West. There is an element of intellectual certainty and illumination of the mind connected with burhan which is lacking in the term "demonstration" by which is it usually translated.
- ² In his introduction to the *Asfar* as well as in numerous instances in *the Sih asl* and *Kasr asnam al-jahiliyyah*, Mulla Sadra refers to *al-riyadat al-shar'iyyah* (ascetic practices derived from the *Shari'ah*) and the spiritual discipline learned from the saints (*awliya'*) and going back to the Prophet. He makes clear the necessity of possessing religious faith (*iman*) and of practicing the spiritual disciplines contained within the Islamic revelation in order to be able to gain access to the *hikmah* which is for him a divine science, a *scientia sacra*, hidden within both revelation and substance of the human soul.
- ³ The distinction between the concept and reality of existence is related to the analytic distinction between the essence and the existence of a thing

⁴ The concept of "existent" in Ibn-Sina's philosophy comprises necessary and possible including existing quiddities of predication, while in transcendent theosophy, the reality of existence is under consideration. The reality of existence does not encompass anything but the gradation of existence and the Most high grade. Refer to Mulla Sadra, *al-shawahid al-Rububiyah*, pp. 16-17.

⁵ Mulla Sadra has the same interpretation about other issues such as: the detailed knowledge of the Truth of objects, before their existence (*'ilm tafsili Haq bi haqiq ashya'*), as well as the issue of (*jismaniyyat al-huduth wa ruhaniyyat al-baqa*), See Mulla Sadra, *al-Asfar*, vol. 6, p. 249, and vol. 8, pp. 391-93.

⁶ Mulla Sadra's view on the unity of existence is different from that of Gnostics. Although both of them are concerned with the objective reality of existence, Mulla Sadra deems the objective reality as the unique reality of existence that is graded, while Gnostics believe in the unity of the existence of the Truth, which leaves no place for anything else.

⁷ In the works of Ibn Arabi and his students, the principality of being, simplicity, and its real unity have been emphasized. Qaisari, *Fusus al-hikam*, 1st edition, Qum, Budar edition, p. 93.

Farāhī's Objectivist-Canonical Qur'ānic Hermeneutics and its Thematic Relevance with Classical Western Hermeneutics

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Abstract

Focusing the notion of *Nazm al- Qur'ān*, this paper deals with Farāhī's canonical approach towards Qur'ānic hermeneutics. In order to consolidate the objectivist orientation of Farāhī's Qur'ānic hermeneutics, the paper finds its thematic relevance with certain notions of classical Western hermeneutics mainly the notion of hermeneutical circle. The paper reviews the major writings both of Farāhī and Iṣlāhī focusing the Farāhī-Iṣlāhī notion of *Nazm al- Qur'ān* that every *surah* has a central theme and all of its verses are so integrally and meaningfully interlinked with one another that they as a whole reveal the theme of the *sūrah*, and again all of the *surahs* are interconnected to reveal the meaning of the Qur'ān as an organic whole. Furthermore, it argues to establish a relationship between the Farāhī's conception of *Nazm al- Qur'ān* and the Western notion of hermeneutical circle. From amongst the classical Western hermeneuticians, it incorporates, in order to explore the meaning of hermeneutical circle, two thinkers namely Ast and Schleiermacher.

Ḥamīd al-dīn Farāhī was the pioneering figure in the twentieth century Qur'ānic hermeneutics in the Subcontinent. He initially and originally laid the theoretical foundations of his Qur'ānic hermeneutics then his disciple Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāhī further developed its superstructure with its comprehensive application in expounding a full-fledged exegesis of the Qur'ān titled *Tadabbur-e-Qur'ān* comprising of nine volumes.¹ The Farāhī-Iṣlāhī mutual contribution to Qur'ānic hermeneutics is known as the Farāhīan School of Qur'ānic hermeneutics. This paper is to deal, on the one hand, with the

construing of the Farāhīan School owing to the Farāhī-Iṣlāhī mutuality of contribution, and on the other, it establishes the thematic relevance of this school with classical Western hermeneutics.

There are two major parts of this paper. Part I elaborates the theoretical foundation of the Farāhīan School of Qur'ānic hermeneutics along with Iṣlāhī's additional contribution to erecting the applicatory superstructure in terms of his Qur'ān exegesis, *Tadabbur-e-Qur'ān*. Part II shows how this scheme of Qur'ānic hermeneutics is relevant with certain notions of classical Western hermeneutics mainly the notion of hermeneutical circle.

I. Farāhī's Objectivist Canonical Approach to Qur'ānic Hermeneutics

In the perspectives of Muslim intellectual currents of the Subcontinent in the early twentieth century, Farāhī's objectivist hermeneutic approach to the Qur'ān seems to be highly mature and distinct in terms of its theoretical depth and originality. Unlike his contemporaries, he neither contends to excavate a new *'ilm al-Kalām* owing to interpreting Islamic faith by the handmaid of modernism nor he comes into the line of fundamentalist approach to the revival of traditional ways of Islamic learning. He instead puts the foundation stone of Neo-Qur'ānic hermeneutics as a primary Islamic study. For, he opines that the Qur'ān is originally to complete the knowledge of religion (*'ilm al-Dīn*) so 'it becomes requisite (*al-wājib*) to found principles (*uṣūl*) for the interpretation (*tā'wīl*) of the Qur'ān in order that it becomes a universal knowledge (*'ilm^{an} 'āmm^{an}*) being applicable to whatever is derived from the Qur'ān.'² *Al-Dīn* (Islam), for Farāhī, is a threefold structure of the uplifting of human selves (*tarqīyyat al-nufūs*), the refinement of the intellects (*tarbīyyat al-'uqūl*) and the mending of manners (*iṣlāḥ al-a'māl al-zāhirah*) namely the morals (*al-akhlāq*), the beliefs (*al-'aqā'id*) and the laws (*al-sharā'i'*) respectively. In the threefoldness of Islam, the elements are not atomistically dispersed rather integrally related to each other to give rise to the purification (*al-tazkīyah*) of self which is the purpose of Islam. And the Qur'ān is to guarantee the attainment of this task very appropriately.³ As regards the attainment of the threefold task of Islam, there arose, according to Farāhī, three different sciences namely *'ilm al-*

akhlāq (ethics), *'ilm al-kalām* (the science of dialectic or scholasticism) and *'ilm al-fiqh* (jurisprudence). It is only the latter most in which one can find certain traces of *'ilm al-tā'wīl* (hermeneutics) otherwise in case of the remaining two there had hardly been any hermeneutical element throughout their development. Ethics was broadened on the illusive ground of *al-ḥikmat al-'amalīyyah* (the practical reason) of the philosophers, the personal experiences of individuals and the inauthentic religious remnants. Whenever the ethicists, though very rarely, drew from the Qur'ān they accorded it with their poor interpretations (*tā'wīlātihim al-rakīkah*), as they thought that there was no need to authenticate their argument regarding the arousal of a desire to adopt the good and to abandon the evil.⁴ In this regard, Farāhī also condemns the group of Sufīs (*tā'fah min al-mutaṣawwifah*) who express their beliefs by 'interpreting the Qur'ān as per their mere imagination (*zunūnihim*) and their ignorance of Arabic language and the reality of Islam.' In the face of it, 'they pretend that they better know the Qur'ān and its secrets. The examples of such attitudes can be found in the works of Ibn 'Arabī'.⁵ The scholastics, according to Farāhī, had also been no less incautious as regards their hermeneutic approach to the Qur'ān. Owing to their being engaged in the intellectual controversies with the apostates (*mulāḥidah*), they inevitably overlooked the tradition (*al-naql*) advancing their arguments rationally in order that their adversaries might convince of them. Drawing from the inappropriate meaning, they contingently interpreted the Qur'ān in order to cope with the adverse arguments. When they were unable to arrive at the appropriate interpretation of the Qur'ān or at the convincing 'implementation of the rational on traditional (*taṭbīq al-ma'qūl bi 'l-manqūl*),' they cited from the Qur'ān distortionally. For, they found that they could not defend their claims by an undistorted meaning. Some of them, like Rāzī, even used to say that one could not rely, in one's interpretation, upon 'a clear and obvious meaning of the Qur'ān (*zāhir al-Qur'ān*), as it might be from the allegorical meanings (*la'allah yakūn min al-mutashābihāt*).' It is what made the Qur'ān obscure. It would not be like that if there were foundations of the general hermeneutical principles (*uṣūl al-tā'wīl al-'āmmah*). For, in that case one would always rely upon the general rules of interpretation in one's drawing out the meanings from the Qur'ān irrespective of the

specificity of the *sharā'i* (laws), the *akhlāq* (morals) and the *'aqā'id* (beliefs).⁶ This is to be noted here that Farāhī's notion of general hermeneutics is much different from that of Schleiermacher's which will be discussed below. Schleiermacher extended the amplitude of biblical hermeneutics to the boundaries of general hermeneutics in the sense that his hermeneutical theory was applicable on not only the Bible but on a general text as well like a piece of literature, a work of art or a social issue. On the contrary, Farāhī's general hermeneutics is not "general" in the sense that one can apply it to *any* text but it is "general" in the sense that the different spheres of learning derived from the Qur'ān can be appropriately developed through the instrumentality of the general hermeneutical principles he construes as we shall discuss them in what follows.

I.1. Farāhī's Defense of *Tafsīr bi 'l-Rā'y*: the Opinion-Interpretation Necessity

Drawing from the traditional misconception of *tafsīr bi 'l-rā'y*, Farāhī explores his own conception of interpretation (*tā'wīl*). He points out the confusion of traditional Muslim scholars in defining their conception of *tafsīr bi 'l-rā'y*. On the one hand, they sing Ṭabarī's praises whose *Tafsīr*, being mainly a collection of exegetical remnants delivered by certain early exegetes to their successors regarding the Qur'ānic verses, is a model of *tafsīr bi 'l-mā'thūr*. On the other hand, they, as Farāhī mentions, openheartedly receive certain versions of *tafsīr bi 'l-rā'y* like Rāzī's *Tafsīr Kabīr*, which he construed owing to his Ash'arite commitments and deviating from the exegetical remnants in general. In the face of traditional scholars' serious reservations against *tafsīr bi 'l-rā'y*, their acceptance of Rāzī's *tafsīr* seems to be questionable. From this questionability, there emerges one important issue that these scholars do not consider every version of *tafsīr bi 'l-rā'y* unacceptable, as the Qur'ān, according to Farāhī, 'itself inspires its addressees with reflection (*tadabbur*) on it and unfolds (*tabayyan*) the obscure cognitions (*ma'ārif ghāmiḍah*) to the wise people (*aṣḥāb al-'uqūl*).'⁷ Moreover, the reflection on the Qur'ān, which the Qur'ān itself invites to, gives rise to the plausibility of interpretation of the Qur'ānic verses: "Do they not reflect on the Qur'ān or are their hearts locked up by them" (*Muḥammad* 47:24).⁸

The reflection on a Qur'ānic verse inspires one with the interpretation which leads one to having one's own opinion (*rā'y*) regarding the meaning of the verse. The Prophet not only led his life through this inspiration but he also made his companions lead their life the same way. This hermeneutic aspect of their life was the most significant characteristic of the early Islamic society. In that hermeneutic culture each individual was free to interpret the Qur'ānic text by his own, as it is common place to find the differences in their interpretations of the same text. Had they, according to Farāhī, derived their interpretations solely and wholly from the Prophet, they would not have had differences in their interpretations. However, the freedom of interpreting the Qur'ān did not lead one to deriving the subjectivist meaning of the verse concerned. For, the freedom of interpretation was coupled with the responsibility of following certain hermeneutical principles 'based upon the Book, the *Sunnah* and Arabic language (*lisān al-'Arab*)' which made the interpretation objectivist. Thereby Farāhī construes a general principle that if one's interpretation of the Qur'ān turns to be unmatched with the three authorities mentioned above then one's opinion so formed will be objectionable (*madhmūm*).⁹ It implies that Farāhī does not favor every form of *tafsīr bi 'l-rā'y* rather he is much cautious of what form of it is acceptable and what is not. The acceptability of *tafsīr bi 'l-rā'y* depends upon the nature of *rā'y* which one attains through one's interpretation of the Qur'ān, In this regard, Farāhī seems to distinguish the acceptable opinion from the objectionable opinion (*al-rā'y al-madhmūm*). He does obviously neither totally reject the plausibility of interpreting the Qur'ān by the help of exegetical remnants handed down to one by one's predecessor nor he favors such interpretations that are entirely grounded upon one's mere opinion (*al-rā'y al-mahḍ*) and subjective prejudice (*hawā 'l-nafs*). Drawing upon the divine imperative of reflecting on the Qur'ān (*Muḥammad* 47:24) and the culture of the Prophetic hermeneutics, Farāhī nevertheless necessitates the formation of opinion through the process of interpretation. An opinion concerning the meaning of some Qur'ānic text cannot be acceptable or objectionable simply due to its traditional givenness or extratraditional novelty respectively. If one attempts to understand the Qur'ān through exegetical remnants it will be essential for one, according to Farāhī, to interpret 'with certain

criticism (*al-tanqīd*) in order to attain the opinion which is true (*ṣaḥīḥ*) and authentic (*thābit*).’ Such an opinion should not be obtained by ‘overlooking the guidance of the Qur’ān (*dalālat al- Qur’ān*) and the integration of a verse with its analogues (*naẓā’ir*).’ Moreover, it should not merely be based upon ‘the plain tradition (*al-manqūl al-maḥḍ*) without differentiating between what is valid (*ṣaḥīḥ*) and what is invalid (*ṣaqīm*). For, the major part of the exegetical remnants comprises of ‘the inauthentic *aḥādīth* which are not only contradictory (*mutanāqid*) to each other but also to the apparent meaning of the Qur’ān (*zāhir al- Qur’ān*).’ So it is inevitable for one to see whether the given remnant is contradictory to or compatible with the Qur’ān by interpreting it to the extent that one ultimately gets satisfied regarding its acceptability or objectionability. Thereby the Qur’ān exegetes, according to Farāhī, believe that ‘the best Qur’ān exegesis is one which is by the Qur’ān itself (*aḥsan al-tafsīr mā kān bi ’l-Qur’ān*).’¹⁰ It reflects that Farāhī’s idea of *tafsīr bi ’l-rā’i* necessitates to arriving at an objectivist opinion as regards the meaning of the Qur’ān by rejecting every possibility of subjectivist attempt of interpreting the Qur’ān whether traditionally or extratraditionally. The objectivist opinion cannot in any way be objectionable, and the only way to make the opinion devoid of being subjectivist is the way of interpretation. In what follows we shall discuss the hermeneutical canons as primarily expounded by Farāhī and extensively concretized by Iṣlāḥī in order to guarantee the objectivism in Qur’ānic hermeneutics.

I.2. Farāhī’s Canons of Objectivist Interpretation

Farāhī’s grand scheme of objectivist Qur’ānic hermeneutics is canonical. He expounds several principles of interpreting the Qur’ān to single the meaning. He divides the hermeneutical canons into three categories namely (i) ‘fundamental canons (*uṣūl al-awwalīyyah*),’ (ii) ‘canons of preference (*uṣūl marjihah*)’ and (iii) ‘canons of fallacy (*uṣūl kādhībah*).’ One is to take into account the foremost ones when there is no possibility (*iḥtimāl*) of acquainting with multiple meanings (*ma’ān shattā*) of the text while in case of multiple meanings one adheres to the canons of preference in order that one can construe the singular meaning preferable (*rājah*) to the rest of the meanings. Unlike the former ones, the canon of fallacy is construed negatively in the sense

that one is not to stick to but deviate from it in order to avoid misinterpretation of the text.¹¹

I.2.i. Fundamental Canons

The category of fundamental hermeneutical canons comprises of four canons namely 'canon of *Naẓm* of the Qur'ān and its context (*siyāq*),' 'canon of negligibility of the anomalous meaning (*al-ma'nā 'l-shādhah*),' 'canon of interpreting the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān (*tā'wīl al-Qur'ān bi 'l-Qur'ān*)' and 'canon of focusing the addressee (*mukhātab*).'¹² Now let us see the details of these canons one by one as follows:

I.2.i.a. Canon of *Naẓm* of the Qur'ān and its Context

Farāhī begins with the fundament of 'canon of *Naẓm* of the Qur'ān and its context,' as 'the Qur'ānic discourse cannot engage meaning in variance with its *Naẓm*.' Even in case of a common literary work, the incoherence of expression is rare, it is therefore unlikely to find it in the Book of God.¹³ The *Naẓm* is an essential feature of expression. It is an additional reality (*zā'id ḥaqīqat*) in the expression as a whole, which is lost if one acquaints with the particular parts of the whole in isolation.¹⁴ He criticizes those scholars who deny the finding of *Naẓm* in the Qur'ān and substantiate their view by certain *aḥādīth* engineered in their favour.¹⁵ One should note here that the notion of *Naẓm* of the Qur'ān is not only one of the several canons of Farāhī's Qur'ānic hermeneutics but it is also the major thrust of his hermeneutical thought, as the latter is identified by the former and the vice versa. Farāhī's notion of *Naẓm* of the Qur'ān states that the whole structure of the Qur'ān is thematic and that thematic structure is absolutely coherent. That is to say, all of the verses of a *sūrah* of the Qur'ān are integrally related to each other to give rise to the major theme of the *sūrah* and again all of the *sūrahs* are interconnected with each other to constitute the major theme(s) of the Qur'ān. This view is entirely different from the older conception of the *Munāsabah* (proportionality) of immediate verses or *sūrahs* of the Qur'ān as expounded by Rāzī and Suyūṭī (d. 1505/911) etc.¹⁶ According to Farāhī, '*Munāsabah* is a part of *Naẓm* or *Niẓām* in the sense that the *Munāsabah* is to relate one verse or *sūrah* to the preceding and

following verse(s) or *sūrah(s)* while *Naẓm* makes the whole *sūrah* ‘a perfect unity’ (*kāmil^{an} wāḥid^{an}*). Moreover, the part-whole relationship between *Munāsabah* and *Naẓm* is to establish the Qur’ān as a unit-word (*Kalām^{an} Wāḥid^{an}*).¹⁷ The *Niẓām* of a *sūrah* depends upon its specific major theme which both Farāhī and Islāhī call ‘*Amūd* (pillar). The ‘*Amūd* of a *sūrah* is its purport (*maḥṣūl*) and purpose (*maqṣūd*) that dynamically effects the entirety of the *sūrah*. That is to say, one can never find the ‘*Amūd* of a *sūrah* in the elementary order of the verses rather it is a living spirit (*rūḥ*) of the *sūrah* that manifests intrinsically in the *kalām* as an explanation (*sharḥ*) and detail (*tafṣīl*) and as an output (*intāj*) and justification (*ta’līl*) of the *sūrah* as a whole. And the only way to decipher the ‘*Amūd* is to reflect (*Tadabbur*) deeply on the *sūrah* in its totality.¹⁸

As the verses are integrally related to each other to give rise to the ‘*Amūd* of a *sūrah* all of the *sūrahs* are interconnected to constitute the coherent structure of the Qur’ān as an organic whole. According to Islāhī, the whole of the Qur’ān comprising of 114 *sūrahs* is structurally divided into seven groups each of which starts with one or more *Makkī sūrah(s)* (*sūrahs* revealed at Mecca) and ends with one or more *Madanī sūrah(s)* (*sūrahs* revealed at *Madīnah*). The whole scheme of Islāhī’s in this regard is as follows:

- 1st Group: From *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah* (1) to *Sūrat al-Mā’idah* (5): The first is *Makkī* and the remaining *Madanī*.
- 2nd Group: From *Sūrat al-An‘ām* (6) to *Sūrat al-Tawbah* (9): The first two are *Makkī* and the remaining two are *Madanī*.
- 3rd Group: From *Sūrah Yūnus* (10) to *Sūrat al-Nūr* (24): All are *Makkī* except the last one.
- 4th Group: From *Sūrat al-Furqān* (25) to *Sūrat al-Aḥzāb* (33): Only *al-Aḥzāb* is *Madanī*.
- 5th Group: From *Sūrah Sabā* (34) to *Sūrah Ḥujurāt* (49): The last three are *Madanī*.
- 6th Group: From *Sūrah Qāf* (50) to *Sūrat al-Taḥrīm* (66): The last ten are *Madanī*.
- 7th Group: From *Sūrat al-Mulk* (67) to *Sūrat al-Nās* (114): The first forty-two are *Makkī* and the last five *Madanī*.¹⁹

Iṣlāhī claims that his theory of the structural and thematic division of the Qur'ān into seven major groups is not something extraneously imposed by him to the *Qur'ān*. Instead, this division is 'taken from the Qur'ānic text' (*manṣūṣ min al-Qur'ān*). In this regard, he refers to the verse 87 of *Sūrat al-Ḥijr* (15) as a textual evidence to support his theory:

“And We have bestowed upon thee the seven [groups of the *sūrahs* in] couples (*sab^{am} min al-mathānī*) and the great *Qur'ān*” (*Hijr* 15:87)

Iṣlāhī's interpretation of the phrase “*sab^{am} min al-mathānī*” as the seven thematic groups in which the Qur'ān, according to him, is divided is unique. Usually this phrase is understood by the Qur'ān exegetes to be '*Sūrat al-Fātiḥah*, the opening *sūrah* of the Qur'ān, as this *sūrah* comprises of seven verses including “*bismillāh*” (In the name of *Allāh*, Most Gracious, Most Merciful) and it is repeated again and again in the prayers five times a day.' Iṣlāhī rejects this idea on account of two reasons. First, *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah* is actually comprised of six verses and 'it can be taken as being comprised of seven verses if “*bismillāh*” is supposed to be as its part.' But “*bismillāh*”, according to Iṣlāhī, comes in the beginning of this *sūrah* as it comes in the beginning of all other *sūrahs* of the Qur'ān. 'There is no reason to consider it as a part of this *sūrah*.' Second, the word “*mathānī*” is interpreted as 'something that is repeated again and again' which Iṣlāhī rejects, as for him it means 'something that is in pairs.' Therefore, the phrase *sab^{am} min al-mathānī*, according to Iṣlāhī, refers to the whole of the Qur'ān being comprised of the seven groups of pairs of the *Makkī* and *Madanī* *sūrahs* in which every *sūrah* has got its *zawj* (spouse) *sūrah* as a complementary part of it.²⁰ In order to support his view he again refers to the Qur'ān:

Allāh has revealed the best discourse in the form of Book [being comprised of the absolutely] coherent (*mutashābih^{am}*) pairs (*mathānī*) [of the *sūrahs*]. (*Zumar* 39:23)

Iṣlāhī calls the seven group scheme 'the apparent or outer aspect' of the coherent structure of the Qur'ān while the 'inner aspect' is characterized by *Naẓm* of the Qur'ān. As there is a specific '*Amūd* of

sūrah which thematically binds all of its verses to make it a unit likewise each of the seven groups of the *Makkī* and *Madanī sūrahs* has a comprehensive theme (*Jāme‘ ‘Amūd*) which interconnects all of the *sūrahs* of that group to make it a thematic unit. For Iṣlāhī, in each group, every *sūrah* is to have its spouse (*zawj*) *sūrah* and this coupling of *sūrahs* is like the relationship between husband and wife,²¹ i.e. one of the two is to complement the other in the sense that if an issue is ambiguous or veiled in one *sūrah*, then in its spouse *sūrah*, the same issue will become extremely clarified and unveiled.²²

This whole scheme of the thematic- and structural-coherence of the Qur’ān as established by Farāhī and Iṣlāhī is to reflect the notion of hermeneutical circle that seems to be very close to that of the classical hermeneuticians particularly Friedrich Ast (1778-1841) and Schleiermacher. The thematic- and structural-coherence of the Qur’ān is established by the revealed parts it is comprised of, and the meaning of every verse, as both Farāhī and Iṣlāhī opine, is determined by the major theme (*‘Amūd*) of the *sūrah* the verse is the part of, as the *‘Amūd*, as we have shown above, is to effect the whole thematic structure of the *sūrah* dynamically. So for Farāhī and Iṣlāhī, the interpretation of the Qur’ān is always circular. But this is not a vicious circle of logic rather a hermeneutical circle that has always been a principle of understanding and interpretation of a text throughout the Western tradition of hermeneutics. In Part II of the paper we shall see the hermeneutical circularity of the notion of *Naẓm* in detail.

The notion of hermeneutical circle as explored by Farāhī and Iṣlāhī is further strengthened by the principle of *Tafsīr al-Āyāt bi ‘l-Āyāt* (interpretation of the verses by the verses) or *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān bi ‘l-Qur’ān* (interpretation of the Qur’ān by the Qur’ān). Although we shall discuss this issue in what follows as a separate canon, here we shall briefly take it in its relation to the notion of *Naẓm*. As we have seen in the particular case of the spouse *sūrahs* where if the meaning of a verse appears ‘darkened’ in one *sūrah*, it can be ‘enlightened’ in its spouse *sūrah*. The same is taken as a general principle to interpret the whole of the Qur’ān by Farāhī and Iṣlāhī. According to them, in order to interpret a verse of the Qur’ān one should not primarily refer to some external authorities like *ḥadīth*, tradition or other exegetes, instead one

should refer to some other parts of the Qur'ān where one may find the meaning of the same verse in a satisfactorily clarified form. Although they do not absolutely abandon the external sources as reference for interpreting the Qur'ān, they consider them as secondary sources in this regard.²³ That is to say, one may refer to the external sources if one is to authenticate one's interpretation of a verse by the support of some external source but one cannot interpret the verse by incorporating from outside.

One can better understand the comprehensive notion of the thematic coherence of the Qur'ān as expounded both by Farāhī and Iṣlāhī if one goes through an example of their interpretation of a particular *sūrah* in the light of that notion. We have chosen *Sūrat al-Tīn* as such an example. This *sūrah* belongs to the seventh and the final group of the Qur'ān which is comprised of 58 *sūrahs* from *Sūrat al-Mulk* (67) to *Sūrat al-Nās* (114) as shown above. Owing to his theory of the thematic division of the Qur'ān into seven groups, Iṣlāhī believes that the major theme (*Jāmi' 'Amūd*) of the seventh and the final group of the Qur'ānic *sūrahs*, to which the chosen *Sūrat al-Tīn* belongs, is *Indhār* (forewarning) in addition to all of the three fundamentals of the Qur'ānic invitation namely *tawhīd*, *risālat* and *ma'ād*.²⁴ So the theme (*'Amūd*) of *Sūrat al-Tīn*, being a part of the seventh group, is the 'confirmation of reward and punishment in the life-hereafter.' And the next *sūrah* of that group, *Sūrat al-'Alaq* is its *zawj sūrah*, as there is no major difference between their themes. In *Sūrat al-Tīn*, as we shall see below, the salvation is guaranteed for man, through certain historical evidences, if he believes in God and His Prophet and so he becomes willing to do good deeds. In the light of these teachings, the *Quraysh* and particularly their leaders are threatened in *Sūrat al-'Alaq* to be punished in the life-hereafter if they are not willing to change their attitude toward the Prophet.²⁵ The similar thematic elements can be observed in the previous *sūrahs* as well like *Sūrat al-Layl* and *Sūrah Alam-Nashrah*.²⁶ *Sūrat al-Tīn* says:

“By the mounts, the *Tīn* and the *Zaytūn*, and by the mount of *Sīnīn* and the peaceful land [that] We have created man in the best of moulds (*fī aḥsani taqwīm*). Then We have abased him to be the lowest of the low (*asfala sāfilīn*) except those who believe and do righteous deeds. [So] they will have a reward everlasting. Now what will, after this, make you deny the judgment

to come? Is not *Allāh* the Judge par-excellence (*Aḥkam al-Ḥākimīn*)?" (*Tīn* 95:1-8)

Usually, the words, *al-Tīn* and *al-Zaytūn* are translated as the names of two fruits, Fig and Olive respectively. But both Farāhī and Iṣlāhī, owing to the theme (*‘Amūd*) of the *sūrah*- the ‘confirmation of the retribution’ in the life-hereafter, emphasize that these are the names of two mounts where the most significant events of the divine retribution (*jazā’*) took place in the history of the revealed religions. The two mounts are named as *Tīn* and *Zaytūn* because fig and olive were produced on that mounts. And it is the normal course of Arab culture that they name certain places with respect to the main product of those areas. In order to establish the *Tīn* and the *Zaytūn* as the names of two mounts Farāhī cites a pre-Islamic poet Al-Nābighah Al-Dhubyānī who used the word ‘tīn’ as a name of a mount of Northern Arab:

*Ṣuḥb al-zilāl²⁷ atayn al-Tīn ‘an ‘urūḍ
Yuzjīn ḡhaym^{an} qalīl^{an} mā’uh shabim^{an}*
(Reddishness [of the sky] in the night came to the *Tīn* from [the northern] sides
driving some clouds and water to cool)

Farāhī also quotes from the Book of Luke of the New Testament which states that:

“Each day Jesus was teaching at the temple, and each evening he went out to spend the night on the hill called the Mount of Olives.” (Luke 21:37)

Furthermore it states that before his crucifixion:

“Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him.” (Luke 22:39)

The *sūrah* starts with the swearing on four places namely the three mounts-*Tīn*, *Zaytūn* and *Sīnīn* along with Mecca-the city of peace (*al-balad al-amīn*). According to both the exegetes, when the Qur’ān swears on something, ‘it does not mean to give honour (*ta’zīm*) to that thing.’ Instead, ‘it means to cite that thing, on which the Qur’an swears,

as a testimony for that thing which the Qur'ān has to prove.²⁸ The Mount of *Tīn* which is, according to both the exegetes, also called by the Qur'ān the Mount of *Jūdī* (*Hūd* 11: 44) is a place where two most important events of divine retribution took place. First, both Adam and Eve were punished by God to leave the heaven and to go to the earth. The particular place where they first arrived on the earth was the Mount of *Tīn*. Second, it is the Mount of *Tīn* where Noah survived the Flood which drowned the whole world except Noah, his companions and the couples of various creatures. The Mount of *Sīnīn* is the place where the Children of Israel were blessed by God for their patience against the suppression of Pharaoh who was drowned retributively by God in the Nile. The Mount of *Zaytūn* (Olive) is the place that observed the great event of retribution, the crucifixion of Jesus for which the Crucifiers were retributively deprived of the blessing of prophet-hood forever. Finally, Mecca is the place where Abraham, for his great sacrifice, was blessed a son by God as well as He promised Abraham to send prophets in both of his sons' generations namely the Children of Israel and the Children of Ishmael.²⁹

The next section of the *sūrah* comprises of that issue for which the Qur'ān swears on the four places as mentioned above. The issue is the confirmation of reward and punishment in the life-hereafter. The Qur'ān argues, according to Farāhī, that man is created in *aḥsani taqwīm* and so he is bestowed with an innate character of demarcating good from evil. Since man is to lead his life between these two options of good and evil, therefore there is always a possibility that he may go astray due to the attraction he feels toward evil. In order to safeguard man from going astray, God has sent prophets with the divine invitation of good against the evil. If man accepts the invitation to have a belief (*īmān*) in God and His prophets, he will adopt the right path. If he does not do so, then he should be punished for deviating from *aḥsani taqwīm* to *asfala sāfilīn*. Furthermore, man has no reason to deny the divine judgment or retribution after the evidence of four great events of reward and punishment. Finally the *sūrah* confirms that God is the Judge par-excellence (*Aḥkam al-Ḥākimīn*), so He will never allow human beings to escape from the divine judgment concerning their good and bad deeds.³⁰

I.2.i.b. Canon of Negligibility of Anomalous Meaning

‘The word,’ says Farāhī, ‘is the shielded beauty (*al-ḥusn al-maṣūn*).’ At times it may anomalously be used in terms of the apparent shield rather than the inner beauty characterized as its meaning culturally and conventionally established in the society. Drawing upon the verses of the Qur’ān (*Nahl* 16:103; *Shu‘arā’* 26:195), Farāhī advises Qur’ān exegetes to interpret Qur’ānic words in terms of their clear and pure meanings as they are used in Arabic language. As regards ‘the higher themes (*al-maṭālib al-‘ālīyyah*)’ concerning the Qur’ānic words, they should also not be interpreted in terms of their anomalous meanings being ‘opposite (*muḍadd*)’ and ‘incompatible (*munāqid*)’ to their established meanings. Exemplifying the interpretation of Qur’ānic words in terms of their anomalous meanings, Farāhī puts foreword the verse 4 of *Sūrat al-Taḥrīm*: “*in tatūbā’ ilā Allāh faqad ṣaghat qulūbukumā* (If you two turn in repentance to Allāh, your hearts have already been so inclined)” (*Taḥrīm* 66:4). Ṭabarī, interpreting the word, *ṣagḥā* or *al-ṣagḥwu* appearing in the verse, cites two exegetical remnants (34403 & 34405) with reference to Ibn ‘Abbās and Ibn Mas‘ūd respectively. According to the former, the phrase, *ṣaghat qulūbukumā* means *zāghat qulūbukumā* (your hearts were to deviate from) or *qad athimat qulūbukumā* (your hearts have committed sin) while the latter shows the same connotation but with different recital (*qir’ah*) which reads the verse: “*faqad zāghat qulūbukumā*” instead of “*faqad ṣaghat qulūbukumā*”.³¹ According to Farāhī, this is an absolutely wrong approach toward the interpretation of the word, *ṣaghat*, as it draws from an anomalous meaning of the word. The real meaning of *ṣaghat qulūbukumā* is “*anābat qulūbukumā wa mālat ilā Allāh wa rasūlih* (your hearts turned and inclined to Allāh and His Prophet), for, ‘*al-ṣagḥwu* means *al-mayl ilā al-shay’ lā ‘an al-shay’ wa minh* (the inclination to something not from something).”³² Moreover, the recital referred to Ibn Mas‘ūd is also wrong being grounded upon a *ḥadīth* which does not prove to be *mutawātir* (recurrent).³³

I.2.i.c. Canon of *Tā’wīl al-Qur’ān bi ‘l-Qur’ān*

There are, according to Farāhī, a lot of places where the Qur’ān leaves the statement ‘abridged (*mujmal*) which is elaborated at some other place.’ That is, a statement of the Qur’ān appears to be an

interpreted version of some other statement appearing at some other place. He gives example of the verses 72 and 73 of *Sūrat al-Anfāl*. The former says:

“Those who believed and emigrated and fought with their assets and their selves in the way of Allāh...” (*Anfāl* 8:72)

The latter says:

“Those who believed and emigrated and fought in the way of Allāh...” (*Anfāl* 8:73)

In the latter, the phrase, with their assets and their selves (*bi amwālihim wa anfusihim*) is not mentioned, though, according to Farāhī, its sense is there. Moreover, the verse 75 of the same *sūrah* says:

“And those who believed subsequently and emigrated and fought (being) with you...” (*Anfāl* 8:75)

Here there is no mention either of *fī sabīl Allāh* (in the way of Allah) or of *bi amwālihim wa anfusihim*, but both the senses are there as shown by the addition of *ma 'akum* (with you).³⁴

Farāhī also makes an attempt to interrelate the canon of *tā'wīl al-Qur'ān bi 'l-Qur'ān* and the canon of *Naẓm al-Qur'ān*. In fact, he suggests a method of applying the former by grounding it upon the latter. As per this method, an interpreter has to bring into light both the abridged statement of the Qur'ān and the statement implicitly detailed version of it by the process of interpretation focusing the *Naẓm* of the discourse. This enlightening of the statements substantiates the conformability (*muṭābaqah*) between the statements. After having enlightened the conformability between the statements, the interpreter is supposed to focus the preceding (*al-sābiq*) and the following (*al-lāḥiq*) parts of each of the two statements, as the *Naẓm* is not only found between the two but everywhere in the discourse.³⁵

Iṣlāḥī further elaborates this issue with reference to the verse 23 of *Sūrat al-Zumar*:

“*Allāhu nazzala aḥsan al-ḥadīth kitāb^{an} mutashābih^{an} mathānī* (Allāh has revealed the best discourse in the form of Book [being comprised of the absolutely] coherent (*mutashābih^{an}*) pairs (*mathānī*) [of the *sūrahs*]).” (*Zumar* 39:23)

If one reads the Qur’ān, according to him, one can realize that ‘a single theme recurs repeatedly in different forms.’ It is not merely a repetition of the single theme rather at each place the theme is understandable differently owing to its placement with other clearly understandable themes. ‘It may be that at one place an aspect of the theme concerned is latent (*makhfi*) but at some other place it becomes completely clarified.’ It means that all of the abridged themes and statements of the Qur’ān can further be elaborated by the Qur’ān itself. That is, in interpreting the Qur’ān there is no need to refer to anything external to it rather it is perfectly autonomous in giving rise to its themes with their meanings and realities. Even in case of interpreting the rhetorical and grammatical issues of it, the Qur’ān is highly autonomous in making those issues perfectly understandable.³⁶

The Farāhīan-Iṣlāḥīan concept of the autonomy of Qur’ānic discourse seems to be comparable with that of Paul Ricoeur’s notion of the autonomy of text. Ricoeur defines text as a ‘discourse’ which is fixed in meaning being discarded from all of its ‘outer references’ including the world in which it was fixed by its author and the author himself. The concern of author is obviously irrelevant in case of the Qur’ān as a divinely revealed discourse. Yet Ricoeur’s objectivist view of text as a linguistic structure of ‘interplay of oppositions and combinations of signs’ being discarded from worldly references is no less comparable with the Farāhīan-Iṣlāḥīan objectivist notion of the autonomy of Qur’ānic discourse as a thematically coherent structure divinely revealed for this world. Drawing from the French structuralists particularly Claude Levi-Strauss, Ricoeur considers text as a ‘bundle of relations’ and ‘[i]t is only in the form of a combinations of such bundles that constitutive unities acquire a meaning-function.’³⁷ The meaning-function, for him, is not the meaning of unities of a text but the arrangement and the disposition of unities, that is, the structure of the text. The Farāhīan-Iṣlāḥīan notion of *Nazm* of the Qur’ān is to have more or less the same approach to the Qur’ān wherein all the parts

acquire meaning in relation to the other parts through a major theme of the whole structural discourse.

I.2.i.d. Canon of Focusing the Addressee

Although the Qur'ān is all-in-all a divine discourse which God revealed onto the Prophet through Gabriel, it is not necessary that in every part of this discourse the addresser is God Himself. For instance, in the verse 4 of *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah*: “*‘iyyāka na‘budu wa ‘iyyāka nasta‘īn* (Thee do we worship and Thine help we do beg to seek).” ‘It is obvious,’ according to Farāhī, ‘that the address is from man to God.’³⁸ The fixation of addressee (*mukhātab*) and addresser (*mukhātib*) is very significant with hermeneutic point of view, as the mix up of addressee and addresser in a discourse may lead one to an inappropriate meaning of the discourse. As regards the Qur'ānic discourse, ‘an address,’ says Farāhī:

“has one origin (*maṣḍar*) and one terminus (*muntahā*). The origin may be Allāh, Gabriel, the prophet or the people. Similarly, the terminus may be Allāh, the prophet or the people. The sphere of people is not also fixed, it may include Muslims, hypocrites (*munāfiqīn*), people of the book, Children of Ishmael, two of them, three of them or all of them. Out of the people of the book, an address may refer to Jews, Christians or both.”³⁹

Owing to the above citation, one can realize that there is a huge possibility of mixing up both between the various origins and termini regarding one single address. As far as the origin of an address is concerned, one may be confused in referring clearly to Allāh, Gabriel and the prophet, as all of these origins with their variable appearances are so intimately overlapped that nothing can help in deciphering them clearly except the context of the discourse. However, Farāhī introduces a rule regarding God's being addresser, as in that case the address shall be ‘loaded with the apparent Grandeur (*Jalāl*) and Dignity (*Haybah*) as well as Power (*Quwwah*) and Authority (*Saṭwah*).’⁴⁰ For instance, ‘from its very beginning *Sūrat al-‘Alaq* (96) is,’ according to Farāhī, ‘narrated as if it is an address of Gabriel but when it tends to express anger in the verse 15, it clearly reflects that it is the address from God:

“*Kallā la'in lam yantahi lanasfa^{an} bi 'l-nāsiya* (It is nothing if he desists not, We will drag him by the forelock).” (‘*Alaq* 96:15)

In case of terminus, the confusion may arise due to the mix up between the Prophet and the Muslims. At times the address seems to be directed to the Prophet but due to his being leader and representative of the Muslims the real addressee is a group of Muslims or all of them in general. At times the address is directed to an individual but it is meant to apply on the Muslims in general without the intermediacy of the Prophet.⁴¹ In case of the former, the example Farāhī gives is of *Sūrat al-An'ām*. In the verses 66 and 67, the addressee is the singular one and he is the Prophet:

“But the people reject this, though it is the Truth. Say: ‘Not mine is the responsibility for arranging your affairs; for every message is a limit of time and soon shall ye know it.’” (*An'ām* 6:66-67)

Thereafter in the verse 68, addressee is again the Prophet but it is applied to the *Ummah*:

“Then thou seest men engaged in vain discourse about Our Signs, turn away from them unless they turn to a different theme. If Satan ever makes thee forget, then after recollection, sit not thou in the company of the ungodly.” (*An'ām* 6:68)

I.2.ii. Canons of Preference

As their name implies canons of preference are applicable when one acquaints with multiple meanings of a singular word or issue, and when one has to prefer one on the rest of the meanings. All of the canons of this category are language oriented in the sense that they can be used as an instrumental when one is to arrive at a singular meaning out of many through the process of interpretation. In this regard, Farāhī and Iṣlāhī refer to the historical-conventional facet of Arabic language as a source of interpretation. Both reject the rules of grammar as instrumental of Qur'ān exegesis, as the sphere of grammatical rules is extremely narrow regarding the derivation of meaning of a divine discourse. In this regard, the significance of grammatical rules is secondary, as they were drawn mainly from the ancient Arabic

literature. As Farāhī opines, 'the art of rhetoric (*'ilm al-balāghah*) was derived mainly from the Arabic poetry, and the sphere of poetry is obviously limited to the delicacies of words, the characteristics of perfect expression and the technicalities of good style.' But the style of Qur'ānic discourse cannot, according to Farāhī, be justifiably appreciated by the help of limited rhetorical features of Arabic poetry. Regarding such failure of rhetorical appreciation of the Qur'ān, he poses the example of Bāqillānī.⁴² Overlooking the technicalities of linguistics, Farāhī refers to a relatively larger sphere of language rooted as a whole in the soil of a cultural-historical life-form. That is, the language of the Arabs, shared between the Prophet and his addressees, whose characteristics are objectivated not only in the prose and poetry of that era but above all in the Qur'ān itself. Farāhī counts ten distinct characteristics of that language including

"the variety of demonstrativeness, the different ways of connotative relationship, the variety of proverbial styles, the various modes of deterrence through narratives, the ascending of discourse to its central idea, prevention & admonition, the manifestation of the intensity of belief of the addresser, the supercilious expositions, the exhortative expression of sorrow etc. whose examples can only be found in either the literature of oratory or the divine speeches of the prophets."⁴³

Iṣlāhī also emphasizes on the life-language necessity as an instrument of Qur'ān exegesis. For, the cognition of various cultural and conventional symbols of the Arab life-world during the Prophetic era are, according to him, essential in the true understanding of the Quran, and the symbols are objectivated in the literary language of that era.⁴⁴

Canons of preference, as mentioned above, are language oriented. Therefore the applicability of these canons, as we shall discuss them in what follows, presupposes the life-language necessity along with *Nazm* of the Qur'ān.

I.2.ii.a. Variety of Senses and Singularity of Meaning

According to the first canon of preference, 'in case of variety of senses (*wujūh*) and significances (*i'tibār*) of a word only that one shall be adopted which is closest (*awfaq*) to its contextual position and the

major theme of the discourse (*'amūd al-kalām*).⁴⁵ One should interpret the words and the issues by reflecting on their meaning derived with reference to their contextual position. For instance, the words and the phrases, which connote the attributes of the perfect monism (*al-aḥadīyyat al-kāmilah*), are specially used for God and they vary in accordance with their contextual positions where they appear like *'Rabb al-nās, Malik al-nās, Ilah al-nās* (which are different in connotation from others) like *Rabb al-'ālamīn, al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm, Mālik Yawm al-Dīn (or) like al-'Azīz, al-Ghaḥḥār (or) like al-Malik, al-Quddus, al-Salām, al-Mu'min, al-Muḥaymin, al-'Azīz, al-Jabbār, al-Mutakabbir*.⁴⁶

One cannot, according to Farāhī, take into account the contextual position of the words and be diligent for the understanding of their various dimensions unless one reflects on the Qur'ān. This canon although belongs to the second category, it appears to be an extension of the very first canon of the first category namely the canon of *Nazm al-Qur'ān*. The contextual position of words and phrases of the Qur'ān is determined by the major theme(s) of the discourse while the major theme makes the *Nazm* flow like a current throughout the discourse. So there are several connotations bound together by the single meaning of a word and the reflection on *Nazm al-Qur'ān* gives rise to the interpretation as an appropriation of the closest connotation of the word as per its contextual position in the discourse.

II.2.ii.b. Derivation of Meaning as per its Similar Appearance at the Various Places

The first canon of preference is coupled with the second one according to which if 'there are several connotations then one shall take one which is as per the rest of its appearances throughout in the Qur'ān.' That is, all of those connotations will be abandoned which are not in accordance with the rest of the Qur'ān. Again in order to see the word-Qur'ān accord one should inevitably refer to *Nazm al-Qur'ān*. Regarding the application of this canon, Farāhī gives example of the verse 24 of *Sūrat al-Anfāl* (8): "*Wa 'lamū' anna Allāh yaḥūlu bayna 'l-mar' wa qalbihi wa annahu ilayhi tuḥsharūn* (And know that Allah cometh in between a man and his heart, and that it He to whom ye shall (all) be gathered)." There are, according to Farāhī, two different

interpretations for this verse. According to the first, the statement-“Allāh cometh in between a man and his heart” means that ‘God knows better than you your conscience,’ and according to the second, it means that ‘Allāh hinders the man from his will (*irādah*).’ There is a match in the Qur’ān,’ says Farāhī, ‘for the former as well as it is also consistent with the *Nazm*.’ In the Qur’ān, there are a lot of examples that the phrase-‘*tuḥsharūn* (ye shall be gathered) comes with the piety (*taqwā*), and the piety comes with God’s knowledge (*‘ilm Allāh*) as it is said: *ittaqu Allāh fa innahu a‘lam bi sarā’irikum wa innakum tuḥsharūn ilayhi* (Be afraid of Allāh, He indeed knows thy secrets and ye shall be gathered to Him).’⁴⁷ This interpretation of the verse is with respect both to the connotative similitude (*tashābuh al-ma’nā*) and the *Nazm* whereas the second interpretation of the same verse as mentioned above ‘is based upon the literal similitude (*tashābuh al-lafẓī*) which is prohibited by the Qur’ān: “*wa ḥīla baynahum wa bayna mā yashtahūn* (And between them and their desires is placed a barrier)” (*Sabā* 34:54).’

I.2.ii.c. Canon of the Least Preferable Connotation

The third canon of preference may be called canon of the least preferable connotation. According to this canon, if the connotation is necessarily required to be interpreted through an expression external to the discourse, then such connotation shall be ‘least preferable (*marjūh*).’⁴⁸

I.2.ii.d. Canon of the Best Signification

According to the fourth canon of preference, the meaning shall be adopted owing to ‘the best signification (*aḥsan al-wujūh*).’ This canon is concerned with an interpreter’s acquaintance with several exegetical remnants and his adoption of one out of many. In such an acquaintance, the interpreter is not supposed by Farāhī to be led by his subjectivist drive towards the adoption of a particular meaning. Instead, the interpreter in such an acquaintance should refer to some objectively given context for the best signification of the text concerned. That is to say, ‘the adoption of meaning owing to the best signification (*al-akhdh bi aḥsan al-wujūh*) is not simply an interpretation by one’s personal opinion rather it is conformed with the fundamental canons of

interpretation' as discussed above. For, the best signification is not to be subjectively imposed on the text by the interpreter rather it is objectively derived 'owing to the excellence of affairs (*ma'ālī 'l-umūr*), the nobility of morals (*makārim al-akhlāq*), the clarity of mind (*awḍaḥ ilā 'l-qulūb*), the conformity to the categorical meanings of the Qur'ān (*awḥāq bi muḥkamāt al-Qur'ān*), the firmness of belief in God and His Prophet (*aḥsan ḥann^{an} bi Allāh wa rasūlih*) and the elucidation of expression with respect to the modality of Arabic language (*aḥḥar bayān^{an} min jihat al-'Arabīyyah*).'⁴⁹

I.2.ii.e. The Modality of Arabic Language

The concern of the modality of Arabic language in the adoption of the best signification of the discourse leads Farāhī to the fifth canon of preference. According to this canon, one shall adopt the meaning 'owing to the established instead of anomalous signification (of words) regarding language (*al-akhdh bi athbat al-wujūh lughah*).' In this regard, one should not give up the meaning which was abundantly used in the everyday discourse of the Arabs except there is a strong reason behind abandonment of such meaning. 'It is necessary,' says Farāhī, 'to adopt the prevalent meaning (*al-ma'nā al-shā'i*)' instead of anomalous one if it is 'as per the *Nazm al-Qur'ān* and explicitly matchable with the beliefs.' He gives example of the word, *al-shawā* which, according to him, means 'flesh of leg (*lahm al-sāq*) as it is used in the everyday discourse of the Arabs.' Interpreting the verses 15-16 of *Sūrat al-Ma'ārij*: "*kallā innahā laḥā, nazzā'at^{an} li al-shawā* (Not at all! It will be the fire plucking out (the skin) out of flesh)," 'Allāmah 'Abd al-Qādir of Dehli had committed a mistake, according to Farāhī, in his translation of the word *al-shawā*. 'Allāmah thought,' says Farāhī, 'that it meant the liver' instead of the flesh in the sense that the fire was so strong that it could pluck out the inner organs of the human body like liver and heart. But according to Farāhī, this interpretation is not only inconsistent with the common usage of the word, *al-shawā* but it is also not in accordance with the modality of Qur'ānic diction, as if it were to show the intensity of fire, it would say that the fire would be penetrating into the liver and heart rather than plucking them out.'⁵⁰

I.2.iii. Canon of Fallacy

Finally, Farāhī construes the canon of fallacy which is concerned with the instrumentality of *aḥādīth* or exegetical remnants in interpreting the Qur'ān. In the beginning of this debate, Farāhī poses the question: "Does the *ḥadīth* interpret the Qur'ān or the vice versa?"⁵¹ To the first part of the question his reply is absolutely negative. However, he does not reject every possibility of interpreting the Qur'ān benefiting from *aḥādīth*. He emphasizes on the reflection both on the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth* in order to draw from the latter to interpret the former. In any case, the Qur'ān must be given priority over *ḥadīth*, as the hermeneutical stature of the Qur'ān is characterized as a root (*aṣl*) source while the *ḥadīth* is a branch (*far'*) or secondary source.⁵²

As regards the second part of the question, he is absolutely positive, as he is the great proponent of the interpretation of history, culture, the Prophetic life-world and whatever external to the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān itself. He, therefore, considers the canon of interpreting the Qur'ān by the *ḥadīth* as the canon of fallacy. Iṣlāḥī as usual agrees with Farāhī on the issue of the root-branch relationship between the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth* respectively. Although the stature of *ḥadīth* is secondary, it becomes for Iṣlāḥī the major source of Qur'ānic wisdom. He does, therefore, not only focus those *aḥādīth* which are related to any of the verses of the Qur'ān, but he claims to benefit from the entire source of *aḥādīth* in general.⁵³

II. Farāhī's Relevance with Classical Western Hermeneutics

The notion of *Nazm al-Qur'ān*, which is one of Farāhī's ten hermeneutical canons, appears to be the major thrust of the whole scheme of the Farāhī-Iṣlāḥī Qur'ānic hermeneutics. That is, the notion is although the subject matter of the first canon, it is found echoic throughout the process of theoretical and applicatory development of the Farāhīan School of Qur'ānic hermeneutics. Thereby the Farāhīan School is identified by the notion of *Nazm* and the vice versa, while Iṣlāḥī's Qur'ān exegesis, *Tadabbur* is identified as an applicatory form of the notion. In what follows we shall see how their Qur'ānic hermeneutics is to have relevance with classical Western hermeneutics.

II.1. *Nazm al-Qur'ān* and Hermeneutical Circle: the Basic Principle of Objectivist Interpretation

The notion of hermeneutical circle that the overall meaning of a text is determined by the integral relationship between the meanings of its parts and vice versa has been a living thrust throughout the history of Western hermeneutics. This notion has been so significant that one can write a whole history of hermeneutics in terms of the development of this notion through the ages. In relation to the concept of hermeneutical circle, *Nazm al-Qur'ān* can be stated as the notion that all of the verses of a *sūrah* are integrally related to each other to give rise to the major theme of the *sūrah* and the vice versa, and again all of the *sūrahs* of the Qur'ān are integrally connected with each other to constitute the major theme(s) of the Qur'ān and the vice versa. This part of the paper is to explore the Farāhīan-Islāhīan notion of *Nazm al-Qur'ān* in relation to the conception of hermeneutical circle as developed in the tradition of Western hermeneutics. Thereby this is to establish that the notion of *Nazm* as a Muslim version of hermeneutical circle is a principle of objectivist interpretation. In addition, it is also to be established that the notion is absolutely devoid of any viciousness of logical circularity.

As far as the notion of *Nazm al-Qur'ān* is concerned it is absolutely purely rooted in the tradition of Qur'ān exegesis, and both Farāhī and Islāhī have developed it with some novel connotation in the twentieth century, but in case of the concept of hermeneutical circle, one may trace its roots back to the Renaissance in the West. The most initial form of the notion of hermeneutical circle was the argument which the Protestant reformers developed questioning the Church authority as a sole interpreter of the divine Scriptures. Rejecting the subjective imposition of meaning by the Church on the Scriptures, they argued that there was no need to impose external meaning on the Scripture rather it 'contained an internal coherence and continuity', which is to say, 'an individual passage [of a Scripture] must be interpreted in terms of the aim and composition of the whole work.'⁵⁴ That is, the notion of hermeneutical circle, though in a very crude form, was conceived by the Protestants as a principle of objectivist interpretation of the divine Scriptures, and they put it in opposition to the subjectivist imposition of meaning by the Church on the Scriptures.

The development of hermeneutics from specifically biblical to a general academic sphere owes much to the works of Frederick

Schleiermacher ⁵⁵ (1768- 1834), a romanticist theologian and philosopher. It is Schleiermacher who expounded the notion of hermeneutical circle in full-blown. However, his attempt of expounding the notion seems to be drawn upon the philological underpinning construed by Friedrich Ast (1778-1841), one of his contemporary thinkers. ⁵⁶ Ast was basically a philologist whose major work *Grundlinien der Grammatik, Hermeneutik und kritik* (*Basic Elements of Grammar, Hermeneutics and Criticism*)⁵⁷ was used by Schleiermacher as a reference in establishing his own views concerning hermeneutics. There are various conceptions in Schleiermacher's general hermeneutics which were already excavated by Ast in his philology, and the most significant one is the notion of hermeneutical circle. The main thrust of Ast's philological-hermeneutical views is his concept of *Geist*. Philology, for him, is not only a grammatical style of a work rather its 'basic aim is grasping the spirit (*Geist*)' of the age, which is revealed in the work. Philology attempts to 'grasp the outer and inner context of a work as a unity'. The inner unity is the harmonious relation of various parts of a work while the outer unity, which is the source of the inner unity, is the unity of the spirit of the age. Here arises the crucial role of language as a prime medium to transmit the spirit of the age in a text. When a reader confronts a piece of literature, he not only understands the meaning of the words but he grasps the spirit of a genius (the author) as well as the spirit of the age in which the text was written. So hermeneutics, for Ast, 'is the theory of extracting the *geistige* (spiritual) meaning of the text'. And the understanding of this *geistige* meaning of 'unknown view points, feelings and ideas' of antiquity can never be possible until and unless all of them were, in some primordial way, bound up in the *Geist* of the antiquity.

In the light of the concept of *Geist* one can understand Ast's conception of hermeneutical circle. According to him, if one confronts a text of antiquity, one can understand it in terms of twofold function of hermeneutical circle. On the one hand, hermeneutical circularity functions within the text through the mutual relationship of its various parts to give rise to the theme of the whole text and the vice versa. On the other hand, the text is related to the social order in which it is emerged as a document of the objectivation of the spirit of that historical era. So the task of hermeneutics is to clarify 'the relationship

of [text's] inner parts to each other and to the larger spirit of the age'. As we have discussed in the previous section Farāhī and Iṣlāhī both were aware of the twofold function of hermeneutical circle in their own way. Firstly, their notion of *Naẓm al-Qur'ān* reminds us of the concept of hermeneutical circle as applicable to the interrelation between the inner parts of the text as expounded by Ast, for it is focused on the verse-to-verse relationship extending to *sūrah-to-sūrah* interconnection to reconstruct the meaning of the Qur'ān as an organic whole. Secondly, their emphasis on the in-depth grasping of the pre-Islamic literature as a background of the most appropriate interpretation of the meanings of the words used in the Qur'ān is the reminiscence of Ast's idea of relating the text to the spirit of the age through the medium of language.

Drawing upon Ast's conception of hermeneutical circle with the duality of its function, Schleiermacher develops his own version of the notion. His method of interpreting a text involves the two moments of grammar and psychology. Although he does not take one moment separated from the other in the applicatory process of understanding a text, one may consider either moment in isolation at the theoretical level. As regards the notion of hermeneutical circle, it is basically concerned with the grammatical dimension of interpreting a text, as for him the meanings of its parts are always discovered only from the whole context and vice versa. That is to say, apart from the psychological understanding of a text its grammatical interpretation is appropriated in terms of its setting in the context of the whole text or even in the context of the speech community wherein the language is commonly shared among the utterers. The binary function of hermeneutical circle in the contexts of text as an organic unit and language as a whole is expounded by Schleiermacher in terms of the first two canons of grammatical interpretation as follows:

First Canon: "A more precise determination of any point in a given text must be decided on the basis of the use of language common to the author and his original public..."

Second Canon: "The meaning of each word of a passage must be determined by the context in which it occurs."⁵⁸

Elaborating the first canon, Schleiermacher makes a distinction between meaning (*Bedeutung*) and sense (*Sinn*) of a word. *Bedeutung*, for Schleiermacher, is something 'what a word is thought to mean "in and of itself"' while *Sinn* is something 'what the word is thought to mean in a given context'. So having a single meaning a word could acquire a range (*Cyclus*) of the various senses, and it becomes a matter of preference for an interpreter to select one of the senses as the most appropriate meaning of the word. This preference of one sense of the word over the rest of the senses is not a random selection rather, in Schleiermacher's view, it is determined, on the one hand, by the 'purport (*Verstand*)' of the text as a whole, '[f]or with reference to the purport of a text, meaning and sense are identical.'⁵⁹ On the other hand, it is determined by the context of the language shared between the author and his original public in a spatio-temporal unity. Here Schleiermacher gives an example of the Latin word, *hostis* which 'originally meant "stranger," but it later came to mean "enemy."' Originally all strangers were enemies. Later it became possible to be friendly with foreigners, and people instinctively decided that the word had referred more to a difference of disposition than to a distance of space. One could therefore speak of certain fellow citizens as *hostes* (enemies), perhaps only those who had been exiled.'⁶⁰ So in interpretation of a text the meaning of a word should be determined by the sense in which the author used the word in the language shared by him with his original public. In order to achieve the task of the grammatical interpretation the interpreter should be very well equipped with the comprehensive knowledge of the language shared by the author and his public. This kind of knowledge can be obtained if an interpreter grasps an author's linguistic 'sphere' which is constituted by the various factors of the author's life and his age like 'his development, his involvements, his way of speaking.'⁶¹

According to the second canon, a passage in which a word occurs constitutes a 'determinative linguistic sphere' as a context within which the meaning of the word is to be determined. Likewise, the whole of the text is a context in which a passage of it can be understood. It may be that one moves, in order to decipher an appropriate meaning of a word, from the second canon to the first. When the context of a passage is not sufficient to explain the meaning

of a word, ‘one must turn to other passages where these same words occur, and under certain conditions, to other works of the author or even to works written by others in which these words appear. But one must always remain within the same linguistic sphere.’⁶² These two canons of grammatical interpretation reminds us of Farāhī’s canons of preference (*uṣūl marjihah*) which are applicable when one acquaints with multiple meanings of a singular word or issue, and when one has to prefer one on the rest of the meanings as discussed in the previous section. According to Farāhī’s first canon of preference, ‘in case of variety of senses (*wujūh*) and significances (*i’tibār*) of a word only that one’ is adoptable ‘which is closest (*awfaq*) to its contextual position and the major theme of the discourse (*‘amūd al-kalām*).’⁶³ One should interpret the words and the issues as appeared in the Qur’ān by reflecting on their meaning derived with reference to their contextual position as well as with respect to the modality of Arabic language. In his fifth canon of preference, Farāhī elaborates the modality of Arabic language as a larger context of meaning of the Qur’ānic words and issues. According to this canon, one should adopt the meaning ‘owing to the established instead of anomalous signification (of words) regarding language (*al-akhdh bi athbat al-wujūh lughah*).’ In this regard, one should not give up the meaning which was abundantly used in the everyday discourse of the Arabs except there is a strong reason behind abandonment of such meaning. ‘It is necessary,’ says Farāhī, ‘to adopt the prevalent meaning (*al-ma’nā al-shā’i*)’ instead of anomalous one if it is ‘as per the *Nazm al-Qur’ān*.’⁶⁴

The similarity between the Schleiermacherian and the Farāhīan canons concerning the binary function of hermeneutical circle in terms of the relationship of a word to the whole text and the language guarantees objectivism in interpretation. For Schleiermacher, the interpretation of a statement as a ‘reconstruction’ of its meaning ‘in its relation to the language as a whole’ is ‘objective-historical’ in character, as ‘[t]he vocabulary and the history of an author’s age together form a whole from which his writings must be understood as a part, and vice versa.’⁶⁵ Besides, both Schleiermacher and Farāhī reject all traits of subjective interpretation construed by the deliberate imposition of one’s bias to the meaning of the text. The former calls such imposition as

'active misunderstanding'⁶⁶ of the text while the latter calls it '*tahrīf* (distortion)' of the text.⁶⁷

The most significant aspect of the interpretational movement from the parts to the whole and vice versa is that it does not lead one to the viciousness of logical circularity. Hermeneuticians never consider hermeneutical circle as a vicious circle as it may imply logically, for the movement from whole to its parts and vice versa is not circular which is barren with respect to giving any new knowledge. Instead, hermeneutical circle is characterized by repeated movements from the whole to the parts and the vice versa which guarantees to expand the sphere of meaning to the infinite boundaries. In this circularity, the interpreter acquaints new meaning in every movement to gradually revise and so to clarify the meaning as a unity of the text concerned. Gadamer defends the significance of hermeneutical circle in general and rejects all objections to it which may regard it as a vicious circle. Referring to Schleiermacher's general hermeneutics, he says:

"Fundamentally, understanding is always a movement in this kind of circle, which is why the repeated return from the whole to the parts, and vice versa, is essential. Moreover, this cycle is constantly expanding, in that the concept of the whole is relative, and when it is placed in ever larger context the understanding of the individual element is always affected. Schleiermacher applies to hermeneutics his recurrent procedure of a polar dialectical description and thus takes account of the inner provisional and infinite nature of understanding, by developing it on the basis of the old hermeneutical principle of the whole and the parts."⁶⁸

Conclusion

The Farāhī-Iṣlāhī hermeneutical approach to the Qur'ān, in my view, is objectivist in nature. Farāhī's canonical-hermeneutical underpinnings and Iṣlāhī's *Tadabbur*, being an applicatory form of Farāhī's theory, are a mutual contribution to the development of objectivist Qur'ānic hermeneutics. Although the notion of *Nazm al-Qur'ān* is the major thrust of this mutual contribution, there are certain other concepts as well including the notions of *tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi 'l-Qur'ān* and of life-language necessity etc. that consolidate objectivism lessening the possibilities of subjectivist imposition of meanings on the Qur'ānic discourse. The Farāhī-Iṣlāhī hermeneutical approach to the Qur'ān may be established as objectivist in its orientation by different

ways. I have attempted to attain this task with reference to certain notions of classical Western hermeneutics. I have established the notional intimacy between the issue of *Nazm al-Qur'ān* as expounded by Farāhī and Iṣlāhī and the concept of hermeneutical circle as construed by certain biblical hermeneuticians and the classical romanticist thinkers like Ast and Schleiermacher. The concept of hermeneutical circle that the overall meaning of a text is determined by the integral relationship between its parts and the vice versa guarantees the objectivist interpretation of the text, for in that case the meaning is construed by the inner coherence of the text rather than imposing certain external elements on it. The *Nazm* of the Qur'ān leads the exegetes to conceiving it as an organic thematic whole wherein all the verses are thematically and integrally related to each other to give rise to the major theme(s) of the Qur'ān, and again the major themes of the Qur'ān determine the meaning of the parts. Owing to the notional intimacy between the two concepts, I consider *Nazm al-Qur'ān* as a Muslim version of hermeneutical circle, and so as a principle of the objectivist interpretation of the Qur'ān.

Endnotes

- ¹ Farāhī was born in a small village, Pharīhah near the city of A'zamgarh in the province of Uttar Pradesh, India six years after the Hindu-Muslim uprising against the British Imperialism in 1857. After the unsuccessful uprising, there arose two distinct currents of Muslim intellectualism in the Subcontinent. The first was characterized by a conservative approach to the accumulation of traditional Islamic sciences including *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, *fiqh* and *tārīkh* etc. It excluded everything from the academic curriculum external to the fold of Muslim tradition of intellectualism except certain small traces of Aristotelian logic and Euclidian geometry. The second was the so called Islamic modernism. It was not just opposite to the first instead an attempt of reconsideration of Islamic tradition under the yoke of Western modernism. The Seminary of Deoband and Muḥammaden Anglo-Oriental College of 'Alīgarh were to represent at that time the two intellectual currents respectively. Farāhī's academic life reflects both of these currents as his educational curricula. In the first phase of his educational life, he as a beginner memorized the Qur'ān and learned both Persian and Arabic languages. Then he as a grownup student went through the advanced level Persian as well as Arabic with especial emphasis on *al-adab al-jāhili* (the pre-Islamic literature) along with *'ilm al-ḥadīth* and *fiqh*. In the second phase, he learned English language and took

admission in Muḥammaden Anglo-Oriental College, 'Alīgarh in order to pursue modern Western sciences including philosophy.

After having completed his formal education, Farāhī started his professional career by joining Sindh Madarsat al-Islam, Karachi as a teacher of Arabic language. He remained on this post for about ten years (1897-1906), though the post did not match his intellectual stature. It is those days when his idea of *Nizām al-Qur'ān* had started to take shape as a new method of Qur'ān exegesis. It is also those days (1903) when he was selected to go as an interpreter on the Gulf tour accompanying the vice regal party headed by Lord Curzon, the then Indian Viceroy of the British Government. In February 1907, he joined M.A.O. College, 'Alīgarh as an Assistant Professor of Arabic while Dr. Joseph Horovitz, the then famous German orientalist, was the full Professor of Arabic whom Farāhī taught Arabic and in return learned Hebrew. After two years or so (in December 1908) he moved to Ilahabad to join Muir Central College (the same institution which was later developed into Ilahabad University) as a Professor of Arabic. In 1914, he accepted an offer for the post of Principle of the newly upgraded Dār al-'Ulūm College or Oriental College, Ḥayderābād Deccan which later took shape as 'Uthmāniyyah University. This university has been famous all over India as an Urdu medium university of modern sciences. But in fact it was a partial realization of Farāhī's and Shiblī's grand educational scheme for the Indian Muslims. Just after the establishment of 'Uthmāniyyah University (1919), Farāhī resigned from his office to go back to his home, A'zamgarh where he remained till his death in 1930. Farāhī seems not to agree with the idea that if both traditional Islamic and modern Western sciences are taught in students' mother tongue, Urdu, then they can reach the highest level of those academic disciplines, and so it will guarantee the development of Muslim society in the modern world. This idea might be the ultimate alternative after the unexpected failure both of the traditionism of Deoband Seminary and the modernism of 'Alīgarh College in attaining the same result.

When he was back home he, instead of secluding himself, reestablished in A'zamgarh an institution named *Madarsat al-Iṣlāḥ* whose main focus was to prepare the students who could interpret the Qur'ān in the light of his notion of *Naẓm al-Qur'ān*. Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī was one of the students at the same institution whom he gave privilege of being a co-worker of his grand project of accomplishing an exegesis on the basis of the notion of *Naẓm al-Qur'ān*. As regards his day's currents of Muslim intellectualism namely the traditionism, the modernism and the idea of accumulation both of modern and traditional knowledge through one's mother tongue, Farāhī was to transcend all of these notions and their failures. This transcendence was not a reduction which might lead his *self* to the depth of its subjectivity instead a revitalization which made his *self* find the way to attain the objectivity of the meaning of the Word of God. As far as his position as a Qur'ān exegete is concerned, he identifies himself as an exponent of the old tradition of *tafsīr bi 'l-rā'y* yet along with a novel trait of *Naẓm al-Qur'ān*. In this paper, we

shall see the different facets of this unique identification which later gave rise to the Farāhīan School of Qur'ānic hermeneutics through Iṣlāḥī's complementary contribution to the trait. For the details concerning Farāhī's biography see Dr. Sharaf al-Dīn Iṣlāḥī, *Dhikr-e-Farāhī (Reminiscing Farāhī)*, Lahore, Dār al-Tadhkīr, 2002 and also see the Preface of Ḥamīd al-Dīn Farāhī, *Majmū'ah Tafāsīr-e-Farāhī*, Urdu trans. Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī, Lahore, Fārān, 1991/1412

² Ḥamīd al-Dīn Farāhī, *Rasā'il al-Imām al-Farāhī fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, 3rd Reprint, A'zamgarh, Al-Dā'irat al-Ḥamīdiyyah (Madarsat al-Iṣlāḥ), 2005, p. 214

³ *Ibid.*, 213

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 213-14

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 214

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Rasā'il* (2005), p. 215

⁸ There are several other verses wherein one can find this invitation from the Qur'ān to the reflection on it. For instance, *al-Nisā'* 4:82; *al-Mū'minūn* 23:68; *Ṣā'd* 38:24 etc.

⁹ *Rasā'il* (2005), p.216

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 217

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 262

¹² *Rasā'il* (2005), pp. 262-7

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Majmū'ah* (1991), p. 30

¹⁵ *Rasā'il* (2005), p. 262

¹⁶ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, Tehran, Dārul Dhavil-Qurbā, 2001/1422. In the sixty-second chapter titled "*fī Munāsabāt al-Āyāt wa 'l-Suwar* (On the Proportionality between the Verses and the *Sūrah*s), Suyūṭī mentions the names of Abū Ja'far ibn al-Zubayr and Burhān al-Dīn al-Biqā'ī, along with himself, who wrote full-fledged exegeses on the ground of the notion of *Munāsabah* and *Naẓm*. See pp.211-223

¹⁷ After explaining the difference and relationship between *Munāsabah* and *Naẓm*, Farāhī says: "...and upon this basis you can see or understand the whole Qur'ān as a unit-word." (*Rasā'il* (2005), pp. 86-87) Also see Mustansir Mīr, *Thematic and Structural Coherence in the Qur'ān: A Study of Iṣlāḥī's Conception of Naẓm*. This is Mīr's dissertation which he submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Near Eastern Studies) in the University of Michigan, 1983, pp.51-56. The dissertation was later published as a book, Mustansir Mīr, *Coherence in the Qur'ān: A Study of Iṣlāḥī's Concept of Naẓm in Tadabbur-e-Qur'ān*, Indianapolis, American Trust Publication, 1986. Also

see Mustansir Mīr, *The Sūrah as a Unity: A Twentieth Century Development in Qur'ān Exegesis*, in G. R. Hawting and 'Abdul-Kāder A. Shareef (Eds.), *Approaches to the Qur'ān*, London, Routledge, 1993, pp.211-224

¹⁸ *Rasā'il* (2005), p. 85

¹⁹ Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlahī, *Tadabbur-e-Qur'ān (Reflection on the Qur'ān)*, Volume I, 7th Reprint, Lahore, Fārān, 1997/1417, p. 25

²⁰ *Ibid.*, Volume IV, pp.376-378 & Volume VIII, pp.479-481

²¹ Iṣlahī's notion of spouse sūrah seems to be applicable universally on all 114 sūrahs of the Qur'ān, but there are certain exceptions whose spousal relationship with the other sūrahs remains unexplained in *Tadabbur*. Dr. Mustansir Mir has critically discussed this issue of discrepancy in the workability of Iṣlahī's notion of spouse sūrahs. He mentions several cases where a sūrah is found without any spousal relationship with the other sūrah. For example, the case of spousal relationship between *Sūrat al-Aḥqāf* (46), *Sūrah Muḥammad* (47) and *Sūrat al-Fath* (48) remains 'unresolved,' as the two preceding sūrahs namely *Sūrat al-Dukhān* (44) and *Sūrat al-Jāthiyah* (45) are considered by Iṣlahī to be spouse of each other, and *Sūrat al-Hujurāt* (49) as supplementary to *Sūrat al-Fath* (48). Now the question arises that which one of the three (46, 47 & 48) is a spouse of one of the remaining two. For the details of this issue see Mustansir Mīr, *Coherence in the Qur'ān: A Study of Iṣlahī's Concept of Naẓm in Tadabbur-i-Qur'ān*, Indianapolis, American Trust Publication, 1986/1406, pp.75-84

²² *Tadabbur* (1997), Volume I, pp. 24-27

²³ *Tadabbur* (1997), Volume I, pp. 7-28 & *Majmū'ah*, pp. 33-34

²⁴ *Tadabbur* (1997), Volume VIII, p. 479

²⁵ *Tadabbur* (1997), Volume IX, p. 449

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 433

²⁷ Ibn Manzūr, citing the same verse of Nābighah, puts *al-shimāl* instead of *al-zīlal* see Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-'Arab (Language of the Arabs)*, Volume II, corrected by Amīn Muḥammad 'Abd al-Wahāb & Muḥammad al-Sādiq al-'Ubaydī, Beirut, Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1999/1419, p.72 whereas in *Tadabbur* (1997), Volume IX, p.436 and in Ḥamīd al-Dīn Farāhī, *Tafsīr Sūrat al-Tīn min Nizām al-Qur'ān Tā'wīl al-Furqān bi 'l-Furqān*, 'Alīgarh (India), Faiḍ-e-'Āmm, 1908/1326, p.6 there appears *al-zīlal* in place of *al-shimāl*.

²⁸ *Tafsīr Sūrat al-Tīn* (1908), p.1 and also see *Tadabbur*, Volume IX, p. 436

²⁹ *Tafsīr Sūrat al-Tīn* (1908), p. 7-17

- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-25 and also see *Majmū'ah* (1991), pp.328-332
- ³¹ Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī al-Musammā Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Tā'wil al-Qur'ān* (Ṭabarī's Exegesis Named as the Comprehensive Communiqué concerning the Interpretation of the Qur'ān), Volume XII, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub 'Ilmīyyah, 1999/1419, p. 158
- ³² Ḥamīd al-Dīn Farāhī, *Tafsīr Sūrat al-Taḥrīm min Niẓām al-Qur'ān wa Tā'wil al-Furqān bi 'l-Furqān*, 'Aligarh, Maṭba'ah Fayḍ 'Āmm, 1908/1326, p. 18 and also see *Majmū'ah* (1991), p.177
- ³³ This is a term used in *Ḥadīth* literature which is applied on those *aḥādīth* which are handed down to one through that much number of *isnād* that there remains no possibility of its being false. See Dr. Ṣubḥī Ṣālih, *'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth wa Muṣṭalaḥuhu*, 5th Reprint, Beirut, Dār al-'Ilm li'l-Malāyīn, 1969/1388, pp. 146-151
- ³⁴ *Rasā'il* (2005), p. 263
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 265
- ³⁶ Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī, *Mubādī-e-Tadabbur-e-Qur'ān*, Lahore, Fārān, 1991/1412, pp. 59-61
- ³⁷ Paul Ricoeur, What is a Text? Explanation and Interpretation, trans. David M. Rasmussen, in D. M. Rasmussen, *Mythic-Symbolic Language and Philosophical Anthropology: A Constructive Interpretation of the Thought of Paul Ricoeur*, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1971, p. 141
- ³⁸ *Majmū'ah* (1991), p.60
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.61
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.62
- ⁴¹ *Rasā'il* (2005), pp. 160-1
- ⁴² Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Tayyib al-Bāqillānī (d. 1012/403) is an Ash'arite scholar famous for his work, *I'jāz al-Qur'ān* (*Inimitability of the Qur'ān*) in which he, owing to the rules of rhetoric, tried to establish the Qur'ān as a literary miracle in terms of its quality of inimitability. The recent edition of this work of Bāqillānī is published by Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyyah (Beirut) in 2001/1421
- ⁴³ *Majmū'ah* (1991), pp. 39-42
- ⁴⁴ *Tadabbur* (1997), *Volume I*, pp. 14-17
- ⁴⁵ *Rasā'il* (2005), p.267
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 268-9
- ⁴⁸ Farāhī was unable to explain this canon further. In fact, *Rasā'il* (2005) is a posthumously published collection of his three different works namely

Dalā'il al-Nizām, Asālib al-Qur'ān and *Al-Takmīl fī uṣūl al-Tā'wīl*. All of the three works were incomplete and their reader finds many a time the debate left unfinished.

⁴⁹ *Rasā'il* (2005), p.270

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 272-3

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 275

⁵² *Majmū'ah* (1991), p.37

⁵³ *Tadabbur* (1997), *Volume I*, p.30

⁵⁴ Wilhelm Dilthey, *Wilhelm Dilthey: Selected Writings*, ed., trans. & Intr. H.P. Rickman, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976, p. 254 and Kurt M-Vollmer, *The Hermeneutics Reader: Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present*, New York, Continuum, 1985, p. 2

⁵⁵ Abdul Rahim Afaki, From Biblical to General Hermeneutics: A Historical-Thematic Development, *Renaissance* 10:11 (November 2000), 14-33

⁵⁶ Two of the Romantic thinkers are reported to have an impact on Schleiermacher namely Ast and Wolf. Joseph Bleicher and Richard Palmer both are of this view. But, as compared to Wolf, Ast had a far more deep impact on Schleiermacher. See Josef Bleicher, *Contemporary Hermeneutics: Hermeneutics as Method, Philosophy and Critique*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980 and Richard Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger & Gadamer*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1969

⁵⁷ This whole discussion concerning Ast's contribution to hermeneutics is based upon Palmer's analysis of Ast's work "*Grundlinien der Grammatik, Hermeneutik und Kritik*". See R. Palmer (1969), pp. 75-81

⁵⁸ M-Vollmer (1985), pp. 86-90

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 87

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 89

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 87

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 90

⁶³ *Rasā'il* (2005), p.267

⁶⁴ *Rasā'il* (2005), p.272

⁶⁵ M-Vollmer (1985), pp. 83-4

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 83

⁶⁷ *Rasā'il* (2005), p.227

⁶⁸ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode (Truth and Method)* trans. G. Barden and W.G. Doerpel, New York, Crossroad, 1975, p. 167 also see pp. 235-6

Al-Kindi: An Aristotelian Philosopher or a Napoleonic Theologian?

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Abstract:

Al-Kindi's theology can be said to have positioned him as one of the most prominent of the Islamic Neoplatonism philosophers, who emphasises on the First Truth in His transcendent position, not His Creative aspect. Nevertheless, it can be said that his philosophy has been influenced mainly by the Aristotelian school. According to Al-Kindi, the 'True One' is neither soul nor intellect, because the unity of the True One is one neither through form nor genus. It is responsible for the unity which exists in all beings together with multiplicity. As the cause of the unity of all being, the True One is responsible for the continuing process of the universe. Al-Kindi's theology is based on the impossibility of any sort of infinity other than the First Truth, emphasising the accidental nature of all entities, which is opposed to essential unity. Al-Kindi, being influenced by Neoplatonism, ignores the world of intelligible entities and shifts his focus from the world of caused unity to the unified Being, such that the relation of God to the world revolves around the words 'unity', 'being', 'emanation', *wahdah*, *huwiyah* and *fayd*. The fact is that by instilling a new ground of doubt between the philosophers and theologians, Al-Kindi has acquired a unique position in the history of Islamic philosophy.

Al-Kindi, otherwise known as Yaqub Ibn Ishaq Abu Sabah Al-Kindi Abu Yusuf or Alkindus (801-873), has been known as a 'committed philosopher' in his attempts to define the commitment of the philosopher in 'attaining the truth'. As a philosopher who believes that philosophy can answer the question of religion, he is, according to some literature, the first 'Islamic philosopher'.

By making a causal relationship between existence and truth, Al-Kindi states that "the First Truth is the cause of all truth"¹

The impact of Neoplatonic thought on Al-kindī's philosophical tradition, especially in his terminology, can be explicitly seen in his works. Some traces of Neoplatonic theology can be found in his opinions regarding the Creator. Certainly, on account of his theology, Al-Kindī can be introduced as one of the foremost Islamic Neoplatonism philosophers, emphasising on the First Truth in His transcendent position, not in His Creative aspect.

Nevertheless, it can be said that his philosophy has been mainly influenced by the Aristotelian school; as Ivry writes: "In Al-Kindī's philosophical framework, the knowledge of First Truth is the First Philosophy. In Al-Kindī's theology 'all we can know about the First Truth, i.e., God, is that our knowledge of all else is not applicable to Him; or more positively put, He is what the world is not'"² Al-Kindī's method for the illustration of the 'First Philosophy' focuses not on a theological movement, but a philosophical one, from the finite and contingent nature of the universe towards the existence of the First Cause. He writes: "Knowledge of the First cause has truthfully been called 'First Philosophy', since all the rest of philosophy is contained in its knowledge. The First cause is, therefore, the first in nobility, the first in genus, the first in rank with respect to that knowledge of which is most certain, and the first in time since it is the cause of time."³

For Al-Kindī, the 'First Philosophy' is the knowledge of the First Truth as the cause of all truth. His definition of philosophy is also based on the position of truth; as such, he believes that: "Philosophy is the knowledge of the reality of things within man's possibility, because the philosopher's end in his theoretical knowledge is to gain truth, and his end in practical knowledge is to behave in accordance with truth."⁴

Indeed, by 'First Philosophy' Al-Kindī means "the rest of philosophy is contained in its knowledge."⁵ In other words, First Truth is First, and time and the passage of time has never had an impact on its knowledge. The First True is the 'True One', of whom nothing is predicated. According to Al-Kindī, the 'True One' is neither soul nor intellect, because the unity of the True One is one neither through form nor genus. It is responsible for the unity which exists in all beings together with multiplicity. As the cause of the unity of all being, the True One is responsible for the continuing process of the universe.

Al-Kindi's method for discussing the 'First Philosophy' is based on his argumentation on the contingent nature of the world. According to Al-Kindi, everything is subject to quantification and limitation. He argues that on the one hand, time, motion and body as, 'mutually dependent entities', are confined to finitude. On the other hand, his argumentation is focused on "the necessary existence of unity and plurality in all things and in all concepts".⁶ However, his theology is based on the impossibility of any sort of infinity for anything other than the First Truth, emphasising the accidental nature of all entities, which is opposed to essential unity. In the words of Ivry, "the accidental theory of being is for him a theoretical truth that is significant for the ultimate question of creation and God's existence; for knowledge of the world as it is 'otherwise', it is irrelevant".⁷ For Al-Kindi, the First Truth is the efficient, as well as the final, cause of the world, as can be seen in Aristotelian viewpoints and *Mutazilah* theology. Al-Kindi believes that philosophy is not able to indicate the origin of matter; nonetheless, he attempts to use non-physical reasons for solving the physical questions. His attempts to describe the First True in a physical relation with the world of matter can be seen in his terminology using the 'Creator' as a non-philosophical term.

Based on this point of view, Al-Kindi emphasises that everything in the world is accidental and not essential. He concludes that an essential being is therefore necessary for an accidental one. However, despite the *Mutazilah's* standpoint that everything is divided into atoms and accidents, Al-Kindi, concurrently with the Neoplatonic school, believes that all beings are accidental, in addition to being multiple and divisible. Being influenced by Neoplatonism, Al-Kindi ignores the world of intelligible entities and shifts his focus from the world of caused unity to the unified Being, such that the relation of God to the world revolves around the words 'unity', 'being', and 'emanation', *wahdah*, *huwiyah*, and *fayd*. It is, Al-Kindi contends, by some emanative process that qualifiedly 'unified' things 'come to be' from the absolutely unified Being"⁸.

As it has been argued in First Philosophy, 'unity together with multiplicity' is an essential agent in the composition of all beings. Al-Kindi uses the theory of accidental beings for the question of God. According to Al-him, God is an active agent who is responsible for the

creation of all beings and every contrary “which comes to be, in one sense at least, from its state of non-being”⁹.

Al-Kindi’s description of the world, in which it is presented as a finite world, requires a first non-finite cause. Nevertheless, since he rejects the possibility of separate and independent eternal existences, he neither presents such a cause in the context of Aristotelian philosophy, nor indicates the relation of such a unique cause to the world of contingents. This concept of his argument seems to be due to his description of the First Truth or God; that is to say, He is what the world is not. The dominance of the idea of a non-numeric ‘one’ in Al-Kindi’s thought can be evidently seen. For Al-Kindi, one is “the device whereby enumeration, quantification, in short, knowledge of this world becomes possible. So too with the First Cause, the ‘True One’: while viewed as the source and guarantor of all being and becoming, it is explicitly divorced from them: while certainly not unrelated to the world, neither is the ‘True One’ related in any demonstrable sense”¹⁰.

The fact is that by having created a new ground of doubt between the philosophers and theologians, Al-Kindi holds a unique position in the history of Islamic philosophy.

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² Ibid, p. 17

³ Al-Kindi. On the First Philosophy, pp 101-115

⁴ Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. *The Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, edited by William C. Chittick, World Wisdom (2007)

⁵ Ivry, 1994, p. 17

⁶ Ibid, p. 18

⁷ Ivry, 1994, p. 32

⁸ Ivry, *Al-Kindi's Metaphysics*, 1974, p.15

⁹ Ivry, *Al-Kindi's Metaphysics*, 1974

¹⁰ Ivry, *Al-Kindi's Metaphysics*, 1974, p. 14

The Structure and Hermeneutics of *Seraj al-Salikin* of Mulla Muhsin Faidh Kashani

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Abstract

In this article through using a synoptic approach, and analysing the text by two philosophical methodologies, namely structural analysis and hermeneutics, we have tried to offer a new deeper understanding of the *Seraj al-Salekin* of *Mulla Muhsen Feiz Kashani*, revealing its hidden and esoteric dimensions.

Seraj al-Salekin is a collection of poems from the *Mathnawi* of Rumi which have been selected by Muhsen Feiz Kashani. The poems have been selected based on their theme and have been set in a new order and design. This work alongside Kashefi's *lobo lobab Mathnawi* is the best works on the *Mathnawi* revealing its thematic harmony. However its greatest methodological disadvantage is taking the verses out of their context, which has a great effect on the manner of understanding the *Mathnawi*.

Seraj al-Salekin alongside the commentary of Mulla Hadi Sabzevari is one of the most important works in revealing the continuation of Rumi's thought in the school of Transcendent philosophy.

Seraj al-Salekin begins and ends by Love, this, through a synoptic approach, reveals the central role of Love from an ontological and mystical aspect in the thought of Mullah Muhsen Feiz Kashani. *Seraj al-Salekin* is not simply a selection of Rumi's *Mathnawi* but it is a deep and systematic hermeneutic interpretation of the Sufism bible or Persian Qur'an (the *Mathnawi*).

Key concepts: Structure, Hermeneutics, Synoptic, Context, Love, Theoretical and Practical Gnosicism.

Introduction:

Siraj al-Salikin is a thematic selection from the *Mathnawi* of Rumi, by Mulla Muhsin Faidh Kashani (1006-1091). Faidh is a great scholar of the intellectual, religious and mystical (*'Irfan*) sciences. By

the assistance of his Divine spirit, and his numerous scientific books such as *al-Kalamat al-Maknunah*, '*Ayn al-Yaqin, al-Haqayiq, al-Mahjat al-Baydha' fi Ihaya' al-Ahya'*, *Mafatih al-Sharayi'* and *Wafi wa al-Safi*, he has become one of the most exalted and most influential figures in the intellectual world. 'Allamah Amini has referred to him as "The most knowledgeable in *Fiqh*, the flag of *Hadith*, the pillar of philosophy, the mine of 'Irfan and the symbol of ethics."¹ *Faidh* is one of the most distinguished students of Mulla Sadra. This Article analyses *Siraj al-Salikin* on four main axis.

The aim of *Siraj al-Salikin*

Faidh begins *Siraj al-Salikin* by the following poem:

Based on insight I followed the six books of *Mathnawi*
 I gained from those seas full of pearls, I gained the essence of *Farayid* and
Qurar
 I gathered for the (spiritual) wayfarers, so that they can take the provisions of
 the way from it²

In the beginning, *Faidh* says that the objective of *Siraj al-Salikin* is preparing spiritual provision for the spiritual wayfaring of the wayfarers of the path of the Beloved. In reality he has prepared a theoretical and practical manual book, for the wayfarers of the Path. A book which clarifies the principles of mystical ('*Irfan*) world perspective, and the principles of practical '*Irfan* for wayfarers, and aims at clarifying how the transition is made from the state of ignorance to annihilation. In this regards *Faidh* has also written the short but valuable treatise titled *Zad al-Salik* in Persian, which concentrates on practical '*Irfan*; choosing this objective, has had a direct effect on the research methodology and writing of *Siraj al-Salikin*, which will be analysed in the next axis.

The Methodology of *Siraj al-Salikin*: New Structure, Synoptic Approach, Hermeneutic Method: New Structure

The foundation of the methodology used in *Siraj al-Salikin* initially has been the clarification of the objective of the book, which is

a portrayal of the systematic character of Faidh, who has used an innovative and new approach in analysing the *Mathnawi*

Faidh's commentary on the Qur'an titled *al-Safi* is testimony to Faidh's extensive knowledge of the Qur'an and the Qur'anic sciences. In the same way his encyclopaedia of *Hadith* titled *Wafi* which is one of the seven Shi'a books of *Hadith*, portrays his mastery on *Hadith* and his extraordinary knowledge and understanding of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (peace and blessings be upon them). *Al-Haqayiq, Ahya' al-Ahya'*, *'Ayn al-Yaqi*, and *al-Kalamat al-Maknunah* portray his mastery of the sciences of Ethics, Mysticism (*'Irfan*), Theology and Philosophy.

In the beginning of *Siraj al-Salikin* Faidh writes the following poetic verse:

I gave it a new order and arrangement, so that it is Beautiful and well famed.³

Based on a thematic and mystical methodology Faidh has given a new order and structure to the six books of *Mathnawi*, and has created new sections and titles for his reconstructed *Mathnawi*; to the extent that in his work, he has given the title "On Love" to the first famous eighteen verses of the *Mathnawi* famously known as *Nay Namih*.

Siraj Al-Salikin starts by love and ends by love, whereby the first chapter is titled "on Love"⁴, and the last chapter is titled "On Love, and it is the remedy"⁵. Between the aforementioned two sections issues related to practical and theoretical *'Irfan*, and the themes of the Human being, God, the world, the form of spiritual wayfaring, the barriers of spiritual wayfaring, the states and stations of spiritual wayfaring, mystical ethics, and exalted and lowly ethics have been discussed. Through the synoptic approach this reveals the central role of love from an ontological and spiritual perspective in the understanding and perspective of Faidh Kashani.

Siraj al-Salikin has a thematic structure as opposed to the appearance of the *Mathnawi* which is story centred. In reality Faidh has extracted the principles and ideals of theoretical and practical *'Irfan* from the twenty six thousand verses of the *Mathnawi*, and has structured and titled them in an innovative way.

For example the introduction to the *Mathnawi* is untitled and has thirty five verses which starts and ends as follows:

Listen to the reed how it tells, complaining of separations.
O my friends, hearken to this tale: in truth it is the very marrow of our inward state.

(*Mathnawi*, book1, v.1, 35)

بشنو از نی چون حکایت می کند از جداییها شکایت می کند

.....

بشنوید ای دوستان این داستان خود حکایت نقد حال ماست آن

(مثنوی، بیت 35 و 1)

While *Siraj al-Salikin* after the poetic and prose introduction of Faidh, begins by twenty seven of the thirty five introductory verses of the *Mathnawi* under the title of "On Love". With this beginning and end:

بشنو از نی چون حکایت می کند از جداییها شکایت می کند

.....

چون نباشد عشق را پروای او او چو مرغ ماند بی پر، وای او

(مثنوی، د1، بیت 1 و 27)

After the poetic introduction of the *Mathnawi*, Rumi has placed the first story of the *Mathnawi* titled "the story of a king falling in love with a handmaiden", however in *Siraj al-Salikin* after the first title, eleven verses from the story of the handmaiden under the title "ایضا فیه" which is in continuation of the discussion on love have been brought also six other verses have been brought under the title "فی ان الباقي انما هو العشق الحقيقي" which begin and end as such:

Being in love is made manifest by soreness of heart: there is no sickness like heart-sickness.

The description of this severance and this heart's blood do , thou at present leave over till another time.

(*Mathnawi*, B1, v. 109, 131).

Those loves which are far from the sake of a colour, are not love: in the end they are a disgrace.

Do not say, "we have no admission to that King". Dealings with the generous are not difficult.

(*Mathnawi*, B1, V. 205, 221).

identifying and scientifically organising the mystical teachings of the *Mathnawi*.

Hermeneutic method

Mulla Hadi Sabziwari has carried out a hermeneutic interpretation of the difficult verses of the *Mathnawi* in his book *Sharhi Asrar*; in reality in the commentary of Mulla Hadi the parts of the *Mathnawi* have under gone hermeneutic interpretation, while there is no sign of the synoptic hermeneutic interpretation of the *Mathnawi*, where as contrary to Mulla Hadi, Faidh in the Hermeneutic interpretation of the *Mathnawi* in *Siraj al-Salikin* has seen the whole and the part together. In reality he has used the Hermeneutic circle in *Siraj al-Salikin*, years before Friedrich Schleriermacher (1768-1834) and Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) who are the theorists of the hermeneutic cycle. The choosing of verses and the new arrangement and order used for each selection of verses which have been brought in a section, reflect Faidh's mystical and hermeneutic interpretation of the *Mathnawi* in *Siraj al-Salikin*. For example the title:

"في الخطاب مع المقربين ثم مع الحق" which Faidh has given to a selection of verses from the "story of the merchant and the parrot", is neither a literal commentary nor a sequential or verse by verse commentary, but is a precise and short hermeneutic interpretation of a selection of verses.

In some cases he has appointed the titles of the sections by referring to the Qur'an and this is a form of Qur'anic hermeneutic interpretation of the *Mathnawi*, such as "في انه تعالى يفعل ما يشاء"⁷ which is a selection of the verses of the second book of *Mathnawi* with the title "How reverence for the message of Solomon,...."⁸ And "اربعه من " في تفسير قوله تعالى: سنزيهم آياتنا في الافاق و في انفسهم"^{9,10} and "الطير".

In some sections of *Siraj al-Salikin* Faidh clearly uses the term hermeneutic interpretation (تاويل), such as "في تاويل افعال الصلوه"¹¹ which is a selection of verses from the third book by the title "How the company followed the leadership of Daquqi"¹², and "في الرجوع الى تاويل", and "في تاويل فلينظر الانسان مم خلق"¹⁴ and "قصه يوسف"¹³.

The Importance of *Siraj al-Salikin*

One of the most important aspects of *Siraj al-Salikin* is that it shows the continuation of Rumi's thought in the school of Mulla Sadra. After Mulla Sadra by establishing Transcendent philosophy became successful at creating a synthesis and composite system of theology, mysticism (*Irfan*), Peripatetic philosophy and Illuminationist philosophy, his thought dominated the Iranian intellectual circles, and dominated the aforementioned fields from the *Qajar* period onwards. Faidh who is one of the most exalted students of Mulla Sadra, was the initiator of the continuation of the life of Rumi's *Mathnawi* in Sadrean intellectual circles. This path was continued by the *Sharhi Asrar* of Mulla Hadi Sabziwari, the great commentator of Transcendent philosophy, Mulla Ahmad Naraqī, Ustad Hadi Ha'iri (*Nokhbah al-'irfan min ayat al-Qur'an wa Tafsiriha*) Ustad Jalal al-Din Humayi (*Mulawai namih, Tafsir-i Mathnawi Mawlawi – Dastan-i Qal'ayah Dhat al-Suwar ya Dij Hush Roba*) and 'Allamah Muhammad Taqi Ja'afari (*Tafsir wa Naqd wa Tahlil-i Mathnawi*). On the other hand the intellectual and social character of Mulla Muhsin Faidh Kashani as the Friday prayer leader of Isfahan during the rule of Shah Abbas II and as the distinguished teacher of the religious seminary of *Kashan* which was one of the credible and distinguished seminaries of that era, had an important role in the spiritual life of Rumi in the Iranian society in which from the cultural promoting government of Safavis to the appearance of the Pahlavids, religion and government had a close relationship.

Criticism of *Siraj al-Salikin*:

Overlooking the esoteric structure of the *Mathnawi*

The *Mathnawi* is comprised of six books, the esoteric structure of which for the past seven hundred years had not been discovered by the commentators of the *Mathnawi*. Faidh was also one of the people who was not able to discover its structure and therefore tried to create a new ordered structure.

For the first time the Structure of books one, two, three and six of the *Mathnawi* was discovered by Dr Safavi and Mahvash al-Sadat Alavi with the assistance of Simon Weightman (books one and two), from the university of London, during the years 1997-2007 CE; this discovery was welcomed by numerous international scholars and

experts of the Mathnawi such as Professor Nasr, Chittick, James Morris, Yahaqi, Isti'lami and Tofiq Subhani.

For understanding the structure of the Mathnawi you can refer to the following sources:

The Structure of Rumi's Mathnawi, Seyed G Safavi, London, 2006.

Rumi's Mystical Design, Safavi & Weightman, SUNY Press, 2009.

Lack of attention to the role of the context

The six books of Mathnawi have six primary themes which in order are: Soul (*Nafs*), Iblis (certainty (*yaqin*) friendship), Intellect (wisdom (*Hikmat*)), Knowledge ('Ilm), *Faqr* (spiritual destitution) and *Tawhid* (Divine unity), which act as the main context of each book.¹⁵ On the other hand each discourse or story has its own main story and context, which plays a fundamental role in the understanding of the meaning and concepts of the verses of each story. Because of his lack of understanding of the role of context, Faidh has cut the verses into peaces, and has placed different verses from different books with different contexts next to one another; this method gives a different meaning to the primary concept and meaning in relation to the context..

For example in pages 110-124, 144-152, 153-165 of *Siraj al-Salikin* which include verses from the first book of the Mathnawi, the main theme of the first book, which is the different degrees of the soul (*Nafs*) such as imperative soul, blaming soul and tranquil soul are not present.¹⁶

Conclusion

By emphasising on the clear teaching aspects of the Mathnawi and hermeneutic interpretation Faidh has been able to present a great work in the study of Mathnawi, and in general in Mystical studies. His method has been the thematic selection of the verses of Rumi's *Mathnawi* with a new design and order. *Siraj al-Salikin* and *Lub al-Lubab Mathnawi* of Mulla Muhsin Wa'dh Kashifi, are the best thematic selections of *Mathnawi*. *Siraj al-Salikin* is not simply a selected collection of the *Mathnawi*, but it is a deep systematic hermeneutic interpretation of the *Mathnawi*.

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Endnotes

- ¹ Introduction, *Siraj al-Salikin*, p 46, narrated from, *al-Muhjat al-Baydha* 22/1 and 23
- ² *Siraj al-Salikin*, p 109
- ³ *ibid*, p 109
- ⁴ *ibid*, p 112
- ⁵ *ibid*, p 440
- ⁶ See Safavi, London, 2006
- ⁷ *ibid*, p 137
- ⁸ Mathnawi, verses 1601-1632, Selection is Siraj verses: 1619-1627, 1629, 1631, 1632.
- ⁹ *Siraj al-Salikin*, p 243
- ¹⁰ *Siraj al-Salikin*, p 301, Mathnawi book six, verses 3134-3163
- ¹¹ *Siraj al-Salikin*, p 170-171
- ¹² Mathnawi, third book, verses 2140-2166, selection in Siraj: 2143-2166
- ¹³ *Siraj al-Salikin*, p 194

¹⁴ *ibid*, p 297

¹⁵ Safavi, London, 2006

¹⁶ *ibid*

Nietzsche and the Problem of Nihilism: Some Reflections from the Eastern Perspective

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Abstract

Post-Nietzschean nihilism and absurdism and the various modern responses suggested for overcoming crisis that follows collapse of transcendence need to be scrutinized from the perspective of Eastern metaphysics and mysticism. Mysticism overcomes nihilism by avoiding what Nietzsche calls Christian-moral interpretation of the world and has a notion of deity that resists Nietzschean critiques. In this paper Nietzsche's claim of the death of God is appropriated and scrutinized from the mystical/metaphysical perspective.

The figure of Nietzsche, rightly or wrongly, marks the epochal event of history in the Western world – the event of God's death. He expressed the voice of the age that found God dead. Nietzsche's problem is given the death of God how can man continue to live and survive this nihilistic assault on the holiest, the mightiest symbol. Nietzsche came up with a response which, paradoxically, is essentially similar to mystical response that not only Christianity but all traditional religions had nurtured. It is also to be noted that for traditional man untouched by desacralizing modern modes of thought God has not died. He remains as relevant, as important, as active, as He has previously been. Traditional understanding of God has never been tied to any secular inquiry as if it could change with the change of times. For traditions only the fools could say in their hearts that there is no God. God is the Alpha and the Omega, the Hidden and the Manifest, our ultimate concern, our very subjectivity, Life, Existence, Bliss and Consciousness in traditional civilizations. Nothing is more important and holier than the word of God. Now if modern man claims to find

God dead in whom he can no longer believe even if His existence were proved to him how is one to understand the statement? It may express the condition of modernity which has cut itself off from the vital wellsprings of the sacred, which chooses to ignore transcendence in its fullest sense. Modern man lives with an impoverished sense of reality. He takes the most external or superficial aspect of life or existence to be the whole reality. He is unable to find meaning in his life and he declares universe to be gratuitous and life futile passion. He lives life at its most alienating and superficial level. There is a sense in which he finds God dead or that God has become inaccessible reality to him. What does this enormous claim that modern man can live without God mean? How does one respond to nihilistic challenge? In this paper Nietzsche's claim and his suggested method of responding to nihilism or overcoming it are scrutinized from and compared with the mystical/metaphysical perspective.

With Nietzsche modern man became conscious of enormity of his "sin" or "crime" and equally enormous punishment that men must be ready for because of this transgression against himself. Modernity had made God incredible and He had to vacate for he had no acceptable role now. He fitted nowhere in the picture of the world that modern man had made for himself. But people continued to be indifferent as if they had lost nothing. Greatness of Nietzsche lies in announcing with prophetic voice that modern man had killed God. Camus and Beckett take seriously disappearance of sacred or absence of God and wish to bring home the implications of this historical event. Writers are the conscience of the age. They express our failures and jolt us out of complacency. Beckett presents the failure of modern man to be himself after the death of God. So does Camus show how difficult it is to live without God. In this chapter we discuss Nietzsche's claim and refutation of its secularist appropriation and critique certain Nietzsche inspired responses for overcoming nihilism vis-à-vis religious response to the same.

For Nietzsche, most of philosophy is also part of the Christian-moral interpretation of the world which had posited a true world beyond this world and negated or devalued this world and consequently heralded world-denying and life-denying attitude. His claim is metaphysical – he asserts there is no beyond or transcendent world with

reference to which this world needs grounding or justification. It follows this model by positing a "true world," a metaphysical world that lies behind this physical world of mere appearances. This "metaphysical" interpretation is claimed to be nihilistic because it devalues *this* world, drains truth from this world by understanding it as only having value in relation to another, *better* world. This form of nihilism is called "religious nihilism." This claim regarding Christianity and Plato's view of this world is highly misleading and simply not true. It presupposes binary of *samsara* and nirvana, earth and heaven, essence and existence, truth and falsehood, Infinite and finite all of which are transcended in Unitarian "monistic" vision, in the One, the Absolute or Godhead and these are merely provisional distinctions made from our fragmentary conceptual relative viewpoint. Mysticism ultimately rejects these absolutizations all binary thinking in no uncertain terms and this fact can be demonstrated from all traditional mystical authorities. Nietzsche focuses his reading of religion, as do his followers such as Camus and Beckett, on exoteric dualistic theological approach which presents only a surface view of religion. Modern man's disaster results from his superficial nonmetaphysical and nonesoteric reading of religion. Nietzsche is brilliant enough a student of religion as is evidenced by his reading of Jesus. Two fundamental problems that Nietzsche and modern man have with religion are moralism or moralistic legalism and positing of the supernatural or otherworld which is to be sought beyond this world, by denying this world. However Nietzsche's interpretation of Jesus shows both these things are not endorsed by Jesus. Instead of attempting deeper understanding of exoteric religion to reach its esoteric core as is done by perennialists he attacked religion as such and even Jesus. He failed to understand Buddhist "denial" of life and saw his realism as pessimism. He had no intuition that religions are united at metaphysical or transcendental plane. The problems that modern man has raised regarding the meaning of life or justification of existence and God's existence or attributes have already been raised and solved by religions. Nietzsche has nothing new to say and no new challenge to religion. Nihilism is as old as man, as old as religion. Religion has long ago recognized it and in fact it is precisely there to provide a solution. It is very interesting and in fact

not unexpected that Nietzsche the mystic though disguised as an enemy of everything smacking of religion, has come to essentially similar conclusions regarding the solution to the problem of nihilism.

Nietzsche refuses to acknowledge his sin or guilt and being capable of utter loneliness, superhuman endurance, willing eternal recurrence, he has no need of being saved. In Nietzsche we see this position being argued which is close to Nagarjuna's view of identity of *samsara* and nirvana. There is no enlightenment, no saviour really and no need for salvation. We may recall Osho's views, previously quoted, on the same who echoes Buddha and especially Zen Buddhism.

According to Nietzsche, it would require a sincere *amor fati* (Love of Fate) not simply to endure, but to wish for, the eternal recurrence of all events exactly as they occurred — all the pain and joy, the embarrassment and glory. This sincere love, this unconditional surrender, this superhuman faculty of attention, this absolute trust comes by practicing the ascetic discipline that Nietzsche, borrowing from mystics, advocated. If we are to look for concrete cases who exemplify these virtues of Nietzsche's heroes we need to turn to the history of mysticism.

According to Nietzsche, rebellion, in any form, is always based on a slave morality. What Nietzsche proposes is a master morality based on the Will to Power, which simply means we become Masters of ourselves. Rebellion is outlawed in Nietzsche as well as in religion. We can transcend our circumstances and we need not rebel against them which would be reacting and not the response of the master. Love of fate make us masters of fate. Rebellion doesn't lead to transcendence but interminable game of reaction and resentment. It is not consistent with unconditional affirmation of the world. Camus oscillates between the poles of revolt and acceptance of the world. Camus can't reconcile these antagonistic currents. There can be no *amor fati* when rebellion instead of submission is applauded. We can't transcend our circumstances through rebellion and transcendence is essential prerequisite to love of the circumstances. Camus, of course, thinks Nietzsche's ideas about being able to overcome slavery and suffering are romantic and so dismisses them as "hope." But as Solomon points out in an article circulated through internet:

Nietzsche's Eternal Recurrence just means that if we knew we were going to have to live our life over and over and over again, we'd make better choices. We'd be master of our existence rather than a slave to it. Therefore we should live our lives "AS IF" there is Eternal Recurrence. It's very similar to Sisyphus continually rolling that rock up the mountain, but the difference is – Sisyphus is a slave to his fate.

According to mysticism we have to accept the absurd. But we don't have to maintain it because we have the ability to transcend it. "This is not about expecting something 'better' or 'getting rid' of what it is we don't like about ourselves or about life, it's simply a shift in perception."

It is ultimately the question of temperament as Nietzsche also said that one feels homely in this world and one doesn't experience nihilistic despair. Becket lacks temperament so does modern man. But traditional man still exists. Not only is his philosophy but his temperament are leading modern man away from the wellsprings of life and love to the abyss of despair and absurdism.

Nietzsche is very uncharitable in considering the value of Christianity. He misreads it, distorts it and attributes such things to it which the great doctors of Christianity will have no difficulty in refuting. Christianity is centred on incarnated God rather than transcendent God and Paul is one of the all time greats in the history of mysticism. The great architects of Christian thought have included great mystics and philosophers of the highest caliber. What he condemns as slave morality is, on closer reading, based on the soundest metaphysics that even Nietzsche was in dire need of appropriating for propounding his alternative. Perennialists have no difficulty in apposing or reconciling the Laws of Manu and Christian morality. In fact both are based on similar experience of the transcendent principle and both have produced similar results and Christian morality is based on recognizing that self is a delusion and self will has to be submitted to the divine will. Nietzsche too doesn't believe in the self. His superman is Buddhist *arhat* as Coomaraswamy has convincingly though very briefly argued in his insightful essay "Cosmopolitan View of Nietzsche." Championing the fundamental factor of will he unleashes diabolical forces which destroy the world. The tradition

which Jesus founds and which inspired countless mystics who have all the important virtues that Nietzsche would imagine needs to be carefully read. Priests are supposed to be channels of grace and they have been successfully fulfilling this mission though they may and do sometimes betray Jesus by their literalism and moralism and selfishness.

Though mysticism talks of the higher world in comparison to the world ordinarily perceived it is not beyond the world but within it though at the same time transcending it. Whitehead best described the relationship between transcendence and this world in traditional religion and mysticism. To quote him:

Religion is the vision of something which stands beyond, behind and within, the passing flux of immediate things; something which is real, and yet waiting to be realized; something which is a remote possibility, and yet the greatest of the present facts; something which gives meaning to all that passes, and yet eludes apprehension; something whose possession is the final good, and yet is beyond all reach; something which is the ultimate ideal, and the hopeless quest (Whitehead, 1925).

The true world is posited only to light up, to truly affirm, to sanctify, to celebrate, this world of appearances. See how the mystics describe this world of senses. What religion does is to provide additional senses to appreciate deeper and brighter colours of this world. Visions of the beyond are not esteemed. Even heaven is constructed on the model of this world. The better world is this world not the other world according to mysticism when seen with keen senses. Religion cleanses perception. Nietzsche's charge is based on unwarranted reading. Asceticism and burden theory which Krishnamurti attributed to religions are not in traditional religion. Mysticism talks of (and the practice of religion is a means to the vision of) the "nearest reality, that which is around us and inside of us, little by little starts to display colour and beauty and enigma and a wealth of meaning – things which earlier men never dreamed of" (Nietzsche 1982) though Nietzsche least suspected that Christianity instead of devaluing the world of appearances shows how it displays beauty, colour and wealth of meaning. Mystics or saints who alone practice the given religion in its true sense bathe in this ocean of meaning.

It was, incidentally, Aristotle the realist and rationalist who better formulated mystical conception of relationship between the world of forms and the world of manifestation by seeing forms immanent in things which could be deciphered by contemplation of things. Mystics see the beyond, the world of Forms or essences through phenomenal things. Symbolist view that perennialists defend implies that transcendent world is not in some remote abstract realm out there but available for contemplation in the world of things through symbolist vision. The world is charged with the grandeur of God and everything reflects the One as God is the essence of everything. That essences are discoverable is the key claim of traditional philosophies and religions. It means that with respect to which the world has meaning and significance is accessible. Thus Nietzsche's interpretation of this world/ other world binary that he imputes to Christianity and traditional Greek philosophy is true of neither Greek nor Christian worldview. Even Plato who seemed to have focused his eyes on the heavens more than on earth saw the world of beauty as leading straightway to God. For Plato time is the moving image of eternity. The world is reflection of the One. God is ever reflected in the world of manifestation. He alone deserves our concern.

For Vattimo, once the highest values have been devalued, we cannot pose new values that would in any sense be more *authentic* than the ones we have deposed. Similarly, after losing the "true" world, *this* world cannot simply take its place with an equal sense of reality. Without any foundations truth itself is groundless. "For Vattimo's Nietzsche, then, there is no simple overcoming of nihilism as a revaluation of values resting on secure foundations. In so far as nihilism is the radical lack of foundation, *complete nihilism cannot be overcome* (in the sense of going beyond). Rather, what the overcoming of nihilism consists in, for Vattimo's Nietzsche, is the overcoming of the *desire* to overcome nihilism itself." (Vattimo, 2000).

Religion overcomes nihilism by overcoming the seeking self which desires to overcome it. With the disappearance of desiring self nothing remains to be overcome. Nothing is to be saved from the wreckage of the self and the world. Even nihilism grants supraindividual principle of Life and its values, in whatever guise are

associated because life is affirmed, the universe is affirmed by even nihilists. The doctrine regarding the Spirit, the uncreated part in us that is detached from everything and has nothing to possess in the world of manifestation remains unchallenged by any nihilistic rhetoric. Buddhist doctrine of *anata* is perhaps the most sophisticated and thoroughgoing critiques of the idea of self or soul but it too leaves the Spirit untouched as traditionalist interpreters of Buddhism have argued. All problems that nihilistic philosophies face could be avoided if one could indeed hold that there remains nothing to be worried about. Thoroughgoing nihilism reduces everything to nothing, all problems to pseudoproblems. All values to fictions and all need to affirm anything, to deny anything, to be anything, to do anything, to worry about justifying or critiquing anything because nothing is really. There is no such nihilist in sight however as nihilism destroys itself. As long as one affirms anything one affirms with the associated value dimension. It may be noted that nihilism can deny what is, what exists, what one believes, what one could either affirm or deny. But the conception of nonbeing, of Nothing, of the Spirit that transcends existence, that ever remains unmanifest, undiminished, unchanged outside time and space resists nihilistic strictures. Nothing that pertains to the world of phenomena, birth or death is affecting the world of unmanifest Spirit. Everything is destroyed save the Face of God, declares the Quran. It implies destruction of everything in the world with all its dreams, aspirations, values and what counts, what persists is the face of God, the supraformal Essence, Life as abstracted from all phenomenal concretizations. And one may further note that God is Destroyer, Shiva in traditional context who brings to nought every existent, who restores every thing to its original nothingness. The doctrine of apocalactastasis is too hard for even contemplation by a diehard nihilist. Religions, metaphysically viewed, have long gone farther than any nihilist could go in negating but there is Nothing that can't be negated without self contradiction. God is this Nothing, Shunyata, who can't be imagined away do what one may. Religion demands that man consent to be nothing, to be decreed. Nihilists are far from consenting to be nothing. Nihilism is too much a part of religion for modern nihilists to challenge it. Nihilists can't teach believers to destroy all earthly foundations. All creaturely good, all merely human values because all these things are

already transcended when one negates every thing that is not Self, that is not Nothing, that belongs to the world.

One wonders how belief in transcendence of God is nihilistic as Nietzsche would have us believe. Transcendence alone allows creative activity and affirmation of mystery of existence. Dance and music are two ways of experiencing transcendence which Nietzsche passionately advocates. Immanentism is idolatry and nothing in the phenomenal world can be man's ideal as Beckett shows. God or Truth is in freedom from the known, thought, representable, imaginable, conceivable. Dionysian qualities are possible by affirming transcendence. Transcendence is relationship of mystery and mystery is the holiest word. The Sacred is mysterious. God is Mystery/ mystery of things. Vetoing transcendence is surrender to finitude and that is death. To be human is to oriented to that what transcends man. Without transcendence, without God man ceases to be man. He is lost or becomes subhuman. God as positivity of manifestation is what sustains the world. If God didn't manifest as beauty men will refuse to live and even Camus would not resist suicide. Artistic impulse which sustains both Camus and Beckett derives from our intimation with the world beyond. Art for traditional man is a mode of worship of God. One needs to see the magisterial work of such perennialist art critics and art historians as Coomaraswamy and Burckhardt we see how it is transcendence that has inspired artists throughout the ages and that speaks through the great works of art. When Nietzsche mourned through the character of madman and what perhaps contributed to his own madness was the painful realization that the apparent world disappears with the disappearance of the true world. The world loses its beauty, its meaning, its justification, and all values in the absence of that which grounds them and let it be made clear that the world continues to be and man continues to live and beauty continues to manifest. It is not for man to murder God and continue to live. Man can erase (or, more precisely, imagine to have erased) some aspect of image of God, choose to be blind or oblivious of certain aspect of the reality that God represents and impoverish himself and all life to that extent. Man can't think God away because that is death. All things, including man exist by only participation otherwise they are nothing. It

is from God that everything is derived. God is nothing less than Reality. He is not an abstraction. He is not a being among other beings. He is not synonymous with the world of Forms alone. He is also the world of appearances and one can go from appearances to reality, to Forms by symbolical vision that is in principle available to everyone. God is existence, the totality of it and nothing can subtract anything from it and it precedes man and man is only a bubble in the great ocean of Life called God. It is indeed a fool only who could imagine there is no God. It is greater foolishness to imagine that man has killed God and continues to live.

Attempts to establish values on alternative foundations, on examination, prove to be parasitic on the "discredited" traditional foundation. One can't have a cake and eat it also. One has to repudiate all values and not merely transvaluate them to be true to the claim that one has killed or repudiated God.

It needs to be made clear what does the slogan the death of God mean. Does modern man think or certain philosophers think that something that has been really discovered now that we need to rethink all traditional philosophy, religion and mysticism. Has modern science really shown God exit? What a great claim to make that the world so far with its prophets, mystics, the generality of premodern philosophers and common men have been living under a delusion that certain discovery in the phenomenal world could point out. Metaphysics concerns itself with the other world and no discovery pertaining to this world can in principle dethrone the other world, the supraphenomeal world. However one can also show that the death of God has been necessary feature of religions. Whatever truth is there in the assertion that God has really died and should have died is appropriated already in the religious and mystical traditions. There have been readings of the slogan "death of God" that are not fundamentally against the mystical view of God. Coomaraswamy has little difficulty in bringing Nietzsche into the fold of mysticism.

There is nothing new in Nietzsche's declaration according to some theologians. This is why in "The Madman," the madman goes to the churches to point out the death of God is an oft-forgotten part of the Christian creed, that Holy Saturday comes between the cross and Easter, that the experience of God's absence is essential to Christian life. The

death of God theology does make a point that could be granted. Simone Weil has argued how absent God is key to Christian experience. This point is argued further in the chapter on Weil.

Modern man has chosen to cut himself off from the vital wellsprings of the sacred. Nietzsche is indeed the conscience of modern Europe. And what the notion of death of God as a historical event presents is a reality. In that sense the death of God claim is not rhetorical or assertive but descriptive of modern experience. However we need to note that it is not possible to live outside God though one can choose to be deprived of certain dimension of what may be called as divine. One may fancy that one no longer needs transcendent God. This is true to only a certain extent that one ignores divine transcendence and continues to live as man but there soon comes a breaking point at which the cord of disbelief no longer sustains the great weight of despair or gravity that is implied in such disbelief. Choosing to be blind to the reality of divine transcendence implies one is content with things as things and has no need of soaring higher or apprehending symbols. It means one divests cosmos of mystery. And is it possible to live without mystery? Speaking of human collectivities one can assert that man has never lived without mystery. Faith is translatable as respectful response to inherent mystery of things, of life. Is it a factual claim that modern science and philosophy have comprehended the universe so that no residuum of mystery remains now? One hardly needs to argue that such is the case. Nothing has been finally or fully comprehended. The universe refuses to give its secret. The deeper and the farther the science has penetrated, the deeper the mystery has grown. Science now describes things better but that doesn't mean it has explained them or shown even how of different modes of reality not to speak of their why. Reality not only of consciousness but also of atom or electron eludes man and will elude him till eternity because it can't be completely objectified and as long as the duality of subject and object, knower and known remains. Essences, to use now "outdated" medieval metaphysical terminology, can't be known as long as one chooses to see them from outside and doesn't become one with them. Experience of beauty is experience of transcendence as far as transcendence can be experienced. A beautiful

object is elusive; it points to unknown and opens to mysterious. We can never claim to have possessed the beautiful object; there is something in it that transcends us, our cognitive faculties. There is such thing as sublime and nothing can subject it to tribunal of reason. There is good which transcends us as Plato and his modern admirer Weil say. Man is ever in a state of outreaching himself, of seeking that which is not, which transcends him. It is only by virtue of transcendence that Nothing can be worthy of man's adoration or worship or contemplation that doesn't transcend him. God has been such a hallowed name only because he symbolizes transcendence. Remove God from human discourse and everything is gone. God is the *rasa*, the juice of existence. All beautiful things are gone. Among the moderns no one knew this better than Nietzsche though he was resigned to his death because he was truly modern man who like Camus wished to go with him with all his blindness, arrogance, intemperance, despair and unbelief. What is God in mysticism? For Nietzsche God is holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned. And His death could only lead to the death of man. It is too horrible a thing to be even contemplated. Man can't live a moment without God. God is the very life which propels everything and keeps man longing for it. Foregoing God can't but culminate in suicide or madness. The suicide and mental derangement of some of the most brilliant minds who took this claim seriously substantiates my statement. When one contemplates in all its details what it means to lose God one can no longer consent to live more. The death of God implies, from the mystical metaphysical viewpoint which focuses on transpersonal divine rather than the personal God of theism, the absence of all sweetness, all joy, all virtues, all beauty, all creativity, all wonder, all mystery, all holiness, all meaning, all reason, all clarity, all radiance and dalliance. Camus smuggled in transcendence under different guises as did others who imagined to have severed all ties with transcendence. What sustained Camus was a vision of art illumined by transcendence and aesthetic instinct which feeds on God or transcendence for its operation. He fought gods in the name of justice and truth. And justice and truths are not of this world. They are dear because God is dear. Our very search for meaning presupposes God because the demand for clarity, comprehension, significance, order, reason is the demand for the ideal called God and

only God could have implanted such a longing in our heart. Camus deceives himself when he asserts that life would be lived better if it had no meaning because he continued to believe till the end that man has a meaning, that he is not an atheist pure and simple, that man must fight injustice and evil in the name of truth or goodness. He admired the figure of a saint though his problem was how to be saint without God. He continued to hold love and compassion sacred and had faith in human relationships.

Regarding Nietzsche it is easy to see how he continued to worship God, the God of life and dalliance, music and festivity. To be utterly alone is to be close to God. To love fate is to love God. To celebrate life with all its contradictions is to celebrate creativity of God. To be a yes sayer is to love God according to Eastern traditions. To transcend the plane of duality of good and evil is the prerogative of sages. Nietzsche is a protest against ugliness, decadence, untruth, sham ideals, weakness, and all that is corruption of the great ideal and values that truly noble and aristocratic spirit has ever loved. He stands for the grandeur and greatness of human destiny. He soars high, lives on the mountains, detachedly watches the masses lost in worshipping fictive idols, is full of compassion and has the most vibrant sense of beauty. He worships the God of power and strength, God as Almighty, the Strong, the Living. He is a devotee of the God of Joy or God in the aspect of *ananda*. He may have a truncated view of divinity and limited perception of God in all his transcendent glory but nevertheless transcendence he did worship in the modes where it penetrates most evidently in the world of phenomena.

He pointed out how unholy the act of murdering God is and what man has lost in the process. The idea is stated by "The Madman" in *The Gay Science* as follows:

God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it?

One can't block encounter with transcendence because every experience has an element of this experience of transcendence in it. We experience God in art, in music, in watching or contemplating nature, in eating and sipping tea. If we don't experience God we experience nothing- no wonder, no mystery, no beauty, no serenity, no sweetness, no dalliance of spirit, no joy in any experience. We love and love is God as far as it is experienced with all one's heart and mind. Few remarks at certain responses to collapse of transcendence are in order. It will be evident that they also take transcendence into account and proceed on the assumption that transcendence is there to stay. Man can't live outside God or without God. He has never lived and modern man continues to belong, in spite of his "coming of age," progress and scientific temper, to genus *Homo sapiens* and he continues to be a metaphysical animal.

The fact that man has spiritual hunger and seeks meaning can't be disputed. In the hierarchy of needs spiritual need is the most important. Man can live on vegetative plane but that doesn't mean he has no more spiritual needs. The Spirit feeds on heavenly bread. It can't be nourished on anything earthly or phenomenal. When it seems to take delight in things phenomenal it is only because it perceives certain reflection of heaven in them. Despite veiling in things phenomenal transcendence breaks through and it is given to everyone to contemplate it, to "perceive" it. For the gnostic everything proclaims glory of God though for the masses it is primarily in beauty and such things that God is really present. Who is not moved by music? Music appeals because it transports one beyond our habitual self. The great appeal of sex, alcohol, drugs and various kinds of entertainments is in the last analysis, attributable to their simulating or partaking pleasures of transcendence.

In responding to this collapse in transcendence Van Buren and Hamilton offered secular people the option of Jesus as the model human who acted in love. All love is divine according to traditions. To posit love as a source of value is to talk of traditional God or transcendence. Altizer conceived of theology as a form of poetry in which the immanence (presence) of God could be encountered in faith communities. However, he no longer accepted the possibility of affirming belief in a transcendent God. Altizer concluded that God had

incarnated in Christ and imparted his immanent spirit which remained in the world even though Jesus was dead. God is both immanent and transcendent. If one wishes to leave or ignore transcendent God one leaves immanent God also. If one affirms love and compassion as Altizer does one affirms transcendence. Love doesn't belong to this world. Love and charity are supernatural virtues and thus open to the transcendent world. It is wrong view of transcendence shared by certain Christians and Nietzsche that leads one to believe that one can live without it or ignore it when one speaks of religion. Rubenstein represented that radical edge of Jewish thought working through the impact of the Holocaust. In a technical sense he maintained, based on the Kabala, that God had "died" in creating the world.

What is intended by listing these various responses to collapse of transcendence is to point out that there is no way to totally escape from God or transcendence. It creeps in do what one may. Whatever one's experience or belief transcendence could be and in fact is affirmed. God is a precept and not concept. We see everything in God as Melebranche would argue. God is the Manifest Truth. 'The more they blaspheme against God the more they glorify Him in reality' as Eckhart said. God is the Seeing, the Hearing. Making sense of some important statements about God in different scriptures involves radical shift in our perception of what is called divine. Theological disputes are easily resolvable by turning to metaphysical exegesis of them. For mystics no distinction counts and theological quibbles count for nothing. The death of God has a different meaning for mystics. Nietzsche can't have any revelation about the same that countless generations have confirmed.

Osho is right when he says in *Zarathustra: a god that dances* that it was Buddha who relieved man of god without saying, like Nietzsche, that God is dead and man is now free to live. For Osho Nietzsche's statement is just a reaction created by Christianity with its personal God who threatened man's freedom and man had only choice to murder Him. Buddhism does not give one such ugly alternative. It simply says that God is not the problem. The problem is man. God is an escape from the problem to be solved. Man himself is God because existence is divine. Theology becomes anthropology with Buddha,

according to Osho. There is no self, there is no you, you are not separate from existence. God is the totality and existence is included.

Freedom is valued above everything by Nietzsche and modern man. And from the Eastern perspective this implicitly leads to affirmation of transcendence. Freedom is really freedom only if we can transcend the given, the imposed pattern of things. This is possible by means of what is referred to as transcendental as distinguished from empirical freedom. For the mystics this is possible for only those who don't identify themselves with body or mind and live in Spirit. The watching self, the witnessing consciousness is the ground of freedom. Detachment, disinterest, attention, are almost universally advocated as the means of living in freedom. If one values freedom and values it in its authentic sense one needs to take transcendence in account. Divine transcendence means there is an element in man which transcends mechanism, which can stand apart from the mind, which never manifests in the world, which is not touched by the vagaries of time. There is not man here and God there but man in two orders or realms simultaneously. He is an efficient self which lives in time and is influenced by the environment or grows with it. He is also an appreciative self which lives in eternity. Man lives both in body and in spirit. There is an uncreated element in him. This uncreated element is the locus or principle of unification with God. Affirming transcendence is to affirm this principle of freedom and unification. One can be really free only in and through God, not outside God. Our consciousness of freedom is important proof of divine transcendence for an Easterner who doesn't know God as essentially separate from man, as a being among other beings. God is precisely this. It is incomprehensible for an Easterner to make sense of Nietzsche's claim that he killed God so that man may be free or Sartre's similar claim. Man can be truly free only if God is there because God is the Principle of Freedom. There is a divine element in man and freedom is possible by means of that elements. The faculty which watches ego is affirmed by Sartre also. The faculty which lives outside time is affirmed by Beckett. Nietzsche's philosophy is centred around will which is not reducible to earthly elements. He is the philosopher of freedom. Thus transcendence sneaks in even the most uncompromisingly atheistic or transcendence-denying philosophies.

Eastern understanding of God can't entertain any claim to the effect that God is dead. Nothing will be more absurd to assert in the Eastern context. God is Existence. He symbolizes Truth, Beauty. He is Life. He is the sweetness, the *rasa*, the music and grandeur of life. Understood in mystical terms God can't die without the simultaneous death of man. East has a different understanding of God vis-à-vis meaning of life. For it God created the world out of the sheer joy of creating. The world is God's play or *liela*. Life divine is thus celebration and expression of life as joy and play. Meaning of life is more life, deeper life, more beautiful life, the sheer joy of it. Nothing is to be done for salvation. Just one needs to flow with the whole, to exchange limited separative ego for the divine personality. To let life dance is to let life realize its meaning. If God is conceived to be synonymous with Life, with *Ananda* of Pure Consciousness, any thesis that seeks to contest God impoverishes life. Nietzsche and absurdists are unanimous in siding with life instead of its absence. They are for living life at its highest pitch. Thus denying transcendence is simply impossible for such life affirmatory thought.

The following observations on the notion of God from mystical/metaphysical perspective will show how absurd is the claim of his death. In fact Christian understanding of God is essentially similar and it is equally absurd to claim that he has died. The death of meaning is equally fantastical from this perspective. Absurdism and God are peculiarly Western problems. The East has solved them long back. What modern Western man needs is simply to understand what has been thought or rather revealed to the sages of traditional civilizations.

To be a mystic is to know the beauty, the majesty, the divinity, the splendour, of the living World of Becoming. It is to participate in the "great life of the All." It is attitude of gratitude to Life Principle (which traditions call as Spirit), acceptance of All or Totality or Existence and appropriating this Cosmic Will. Mysticism finds and celebrates the revelations of the Transcendent Life not in some remote plane of being, in metaphysical abstractions, in ecstatic states, but "in the normal acts of our diurnal experience, suddenly made significant to us. Not in the backwaters of existence, not amongst subtle arguments and occult doctrines, but in all those places where the direct and simple

life of earth goes on” (Underhill, 1961, 449-50). God is three pounds of flex or a cup of tea for the Zen mystics and in fact for all mystics who enjoy all things in God. Both philosophy (in the traditional civilizations such as ancient Greek to which Plato was a heir) and mysticism spring from the same source and lead to the same goal which is wonder at and contemplation of the immense grandeur, the mystery and the beauty of existence. (Both Plato and Aristotle traced the origin of philosophy to wonder and by philosophy they meant the “contemplation (*theoria*) of the manifested cosmic order, or of the truth and beauty of the divine principles (be they visible stars or invisible noetic archetypes)” (Algis Uzdavinys, 2005: xvii). Science too originates in wonder and ultimately it deepens our sense of mystery rather than demystifies as Einstein said. Even art or literature amounts to the same thing if it is understood with the formalists, as defamiliarization of the objects, representations of objects that give delight. For mystics the “story of man’s spirit ends in a garden: in a place of birth and fruitfulness, of beautiful and natural things. Divine Fecundity is its secret” (Underhill, 1961, 450). It begins there as well. For them the “winter is over: the time of the singing of birds is come. From the deeps of the dewy garden, Life – new, unquenchable, and ever lovely- comes to meet with them with the dawn” (Underhill, 1961, 450-51). “To be a mystic is simply to participate here and now in that real and eternal life; in the fullest, deepest sense which is possible for man. It is to share, as free and conscious agent – not as a servant, but a son – in the joyous travail of the Universe... He is the pioneer of Life on its age long voyage to the One: and shows us, in his attainment, the meaning and value of that life (Underhill, 1961, 447).

Mysticism has traditionally been a celebration of life as a carnival of joy though sometimes this dimension couldn’t be foregrounded. Reality, all mystics come to realize, is made of the substance of Joy. It is *ananda*, bliss. In fact all earthly joys are a reflection of this heavenly Joy. That is why Dante, initiated into Reality as Paradise, sees the whole universe laugh with delight as it glorifies God and the awful countenance of Perfect Love adorned with smiles. The souls of the great theologians dance to music and laughter in the Heaven of the Sun; the loving seraphs, in their ecstatic joy whirl about the Being of God. Love and joy are perceived as the final attributes of

the Triune God. St. Francis illustrates quite eloquently with his life and works the fruits of contemplative life as playful rejoicing in Absolute. The mystic dwells high in heavens and thus with gods who are ever happy. They run, rejoice and make merry joining “the eager dance of the Universe about the One.” Osho in his celebration of dalliance, song and dance only echoes Patmore who said, “If we may credit certain hints in the lives of the saints, love raises the spirit above the sphere of reverence and worship into one of laughter and dalliance: a sphere in which the soul says: Shall I, a gnat which dances in Thy ray/ Dare to be reverent.” (Qtd by Underhill, 1961, 438).

Richard Rolle has also expressed in *The Fire of Love* this “spirit of dalliance” saying about the lover of God that “a heavenly privity inshed he feels, that no man can know but he that has received it, and in himself bears the electuary that anoints and makes happy all joyful lovers in Jesu; so that they cease not to hie in heavenly seats to sit, endlessly their Maker to enjoy.” That the state of burning love is “the state of Sweetness and Song” is eloquently demonstrated in the lives of dancing dervishes, the haunting music and great passion of Sufi songs. Music, life without which is a mistake as Nietzsche remarked, which expresses the joy peculiar to transcendary vision, is an elements of ritual worship in almost all religions. The mystic’s whole life is in a way a life of art; mysticism is aestheticization of life. Ananda Coomaraswamy has made the same point in his great works on traditional art. The music of the spheres, spoken about in traditional cosmologies, is all about the “secret child” of the Transcendent Order. The most delightful paintings and pieces of architecture with which traditional civilizations abound are derived from this spirit of beauty and dalliance that the Absolute which grounds their aesthetic expressions, is. Creative activity is a playful activity. The world is an expression of *liela* of God. God, and like Him the liberated soul, express themselves in play. The world is a work of art; God witnessing His beauty in the mirror of attributes. There could be no utilitarian end applicable to the work of God. His is an art for the pure joy of art. The Good essentially wants to be radiated by its very nature and for some end or purpose humanly conceived. Existence as such can’t be but purposeless, it only celebrates itself. One can’t ask what is the purpose

of heaven or God – They are their own ends; Life only glorifies Life. This is the meaning of the verses of scriptures where God glorifies himself or asks man to glorify His name or bless His prophets. There is a plane of being that dares not to be reverent but simply dance, dance and dance in the Divine Ray.

Underhill has referred to the romantic quality of the Unitive Life – its gaiety, freedom and joy. Many mystics have expressed themselves in verse. This is only because the superabundant joy that wells within them needs such a medium to express. I will not refer to the Sufis' love songs which are well known but to the songs of Christian mystics who have the reputation of life-denying asceticism. My examples are again from Underhill. St. John of the Cross wrote love songs to his Love. St. Rose of Lima sang deus with the birds. St. Teresa wrote rustic hymns and carols. In St. Catherine of Genoa, sang, in a spirit of childlike happiness, gay songs about her Love.

Osho forcefully exemplifies the joyous streak in mysticism. Nietzsche can't have any problem with such a conception of God. Osho brings fresh life to ancient mystical traditions. He finds eternity here and now, in living moment to moment, in dying to the past and being open and vulnerable to future, and experiencing life with fresh and innocent eyes. Just to live for a single moment with authenticity, totality, integrity, is to live in eternity. To quote him: "A single moment of total experience is far bigger than the whole of eternity." (Osho, 2001: 72). Having found God he has transcended all the worries and cares and only seeks a space "to dance, to sing, to celebrate" (Osho, 2001: 72). For him this whole existence is the Garden of Eden (Osho, 2001: 53). "This very body the Buddha. And this very place the lotus paradise" (Osho, 2001: 53). "There is no other buddhahood and there is no other lotus paradise" (Osho, 2001: 53). We have not been thrown out of the Garden, but miss it because we are not aware, we have fallen in a dream-like trance state. The dream consists of one's desire to reach somewhere else (Osho, 2001: 54). Seeking for metaphysical abstractions, airy nothings, heavens out there is despised by him. He makes finding heaven look such an easy thing. He says: "Just sit silently and look around, sit silently and look within. You have never been anywhere else! *Aes Dhammo Sanantano* – this is the nature of things – you can't be anywhere else" (Osho, 2001:54). For him, in true

Zen spirit, there is no ultimate goal; “there is no goal as such, hence there is no question of being an ultimate goal....There is nothing ultimate anywhere; the immediacy itself is the goal. Each step is the goal, each moment is the goal.” (Osho, 2001:56). Referring approvingly to Zen he declares: “all is as it should be, nothing is missing. This very moment everything is perfect... This very moment is the only reality. Hence, in Zen there is no distinction between methods and goals, means and goals” (Osho, 2001: 56). Nothing could be more acceptable to Nietzsche. But Zen and Christianity are oriented towards the same God. If Zen has no such problem as the problem of meaning neither has any other religion affirming essentially similar notion of transcendent reality. A playful joyous loving spirit has no questions, no problems such as the problem of meaning of life. The following lines from Goraknath, a great Indian mystic, show how mystics have perfected the art of love and making merry to dissolve the question of meaning. “Laughing, playing, singing a song/ Keeping consciousness well centred.” And further “Again he quotes him “There is nothing else except words of love/ This world is a garden path.”

The following passage could not be excelled by any Nietzsche in expressing affirmation of life. This is Dionysian exultation at its climax. Yet it perfectly expresses the essence of mystical and religious vision.

God is found only in the heart of one who is utterly in praise of existence because it is so incredibly beautiful, so utterly valuable. We have not earned it, we are not worthy of it. To be is a gift. Life is a gift, love is a gift, and all that is, is a sheer gift from god. All that we can do is to praise him

That very praising is enough, because that praise becomes prayer – prayer is nothing else. Prayer is the heart in tremendous rejoicing, thankfulness, saying the existence is good (Osho, 2001: 71)

Commenting on the famous statement from a traditional authority “God is juice” – *raso vai sah*” Osho sums up in a sentence the message or content of religion with which Nietzsche can’t afford to disagree. “Religion is the art of singing life. Religion is music; religion is dance” (Osho, 1981: 10).

Only God is in traditional perspectives. Man counts really only when he subsists in God by appropriating divine attributes. In Unitarian perspective even the distinction between immanent and transcendent,

here and hereafter, time and eternity is transcended. Whatever is is God. God is what is. And what is yet to be expressed or manifested and remains invisible to senses and inconceivable to thought is also God. The Supersensual or supernatural doesn't cancel out the natural. This distinction too is ultimately transcended in mystical experience. What is natural is only the visible face of the supernatural. What is supernatural or supersensual ceases to be so for the eyes of the heart. One can experience or connect to transcendence. One hardly needs to argue that one's vision is not limited to senses or what thought can appropriate. Nietzsche and absurdists clearly acknowledge limitations of such an epistemology or worldview based on senses and thought only.

For Easterners the meaning of life lies in life itself, in the quality of life, in creativity, joy and vitality. Life can only be justified by itself. God too symbolizes life. The purpose of life consists in living in accordance with reason to contemplate God. Contemplating God is contemplating Life, contemplating the Highest Good, and contemplating what is, contemplating life in all its multifarious forms to discern the One, the Life that expresses itself in all manifestations and yet is not exhausted by any particular manifestation.

The idea of the death of God seems to reject transcendent God and not what has been called the immanentist conception of divine. However if we seriously explore the notion of denial of transcendent ground of meaning or transcendent God amounts to from an Eastern viewpoint we see that it is simply absurd or impossible to consistently deny the transcendent idea of God. The Self which grounds all individuality, the awareness of oneself or self consciousness or our subjectivity or that faculty called witnessing consciousness is said to be transcendent and affirming transcendence of God is to affirm this faculty. And it is almost universally affirmed. Transcendence also involves the idea that Life transcends its own particular or individual manifestation or expression and the idea that the world of space and time is contingent. Affirming the principle of thought or consciousness in the universe, the primacy of the subject not reducible to a quantifiable object is implied in our affirmation of transcendence. It is God or the Self which really sees, hears and wills as God is the Reality, the Only Reality that is, the only Doer. When we say I see or I will it is

really the Spirit in me, the God within to whom the East attributes these activities. And affirming these activities – it is impossible or absurd to deny them as everybody will grant – is, in a way, indirectly affirming the activity of transcendent principle. God is a percept according to Ibn Arabi. He is Totality. He is the Manifest Truth that can't be doubted. The Hidden God is the Manifest God and the Manifest God is the Hidden God. Phenomena half reveal and half conceal God. Beauty is manifest transcendence. All these things imply that it is impossible to wholly deny the principle of transcendence. Transcendence smuggles in and man can't escape it. In all experiences God is experienced. God is the sweetness of every sweet things. Nothing is loved for its own sake but really for the sake of the Self as the Upanishad tell us.

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

They have no problem if everything recurred eternally. They have transcended every attachment and have no interest in wishing to alter the flow of events, to resent becoming. They have experienced God in their own selves and do nothing what. They are yes-sayers of everything, and have great praise of the Prince of Darkness. They know no sin, no guilt. Joy, gaiety, self-abandon, music, unconditional

affirmation (love), innocence, no condemnation or judgment - these are the attributes of the twice born man, the man of God. The man of God evaluates not, judges not, resists not, resents not. This is the ideal character that Nietzschean Superman would wish to appropriate. Needing nothing, desiring nothing they are lords of everything. Truth has set them free – free from all desires, attachments, obsessions, pleasure-pain principle, hope and despair, this world and the other world, earth and heaven. They are *jivan-mukta*. Once free they are truly liberated from all bondage and can do everything because they love God. They are their own laws. The law is for them and they are not for the law.

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Book Reviews

***The Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, ed. By William Chittick. Bloomington, In: World Wisdom, 2007. 250 pages.**

The Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr offers a considerably elucidating account of the essence of Nasr's corpus. In its 21 edited and abridged essays, William Chittick has demonstrated extraordinary carefulness and great discernment of Nasr's overall wisdom. The book is divided into three major parts, through which the reader is gradually acquainted with the traditionalist position on a wide range of topics under three main headings: Religion, Islam and Tradition.

In the first part, Nasr reestablishes the importance of the traditionalist view of religion today. He highlights three 'realities,' the grasp of which is inevitable to any attempt at approaching other religions. First is art, the visible expression of religion. Second is '*aqidah*, its doctrine encoded in sacred texts. Third are its members of spiritual and saintly character. All three 'realities' have to be taken seriously, and the failure to realize any one of them will lead to the negation of religion as a whole. According to Nasr, the disarray and inadequacy that mounts modern Western scholars' conception of other religions have roots in two historical experiences. The first is due to a systematic isolation by which Christian Europe had scarce contact with other religions until the 19th century. The second is related to the emergence of the secular approaches to religion, including the historical, evolutionary and positivist. The phenomenological turn in the 20th century also had a direct influence on the way religion is perceived as a mere phenomenon devoid of spirit. Traditionalists object to this view and consider all religions equal; yet their equality is to be assessed through "metaphysical discernment."

The school of Tradition, or *philosophia perennis*, is founded on three major metaphysical principles: Reality, Tradition and Unity. The doctrine of Reality refers to the Ultimate Reality which is always absolute, infinite and immune to all attempts of categorization. Traditionalists understand the universe to be hierarchically consisted of “many levels of existence and states of consciousness from the Supreme Principle to earthly man and his terrestrial ambience” (21). The doctrine of Tradition speaks of a “Primordial Tradition” which is the source of all existing traditions, while Unity denotes a “transcendental unity” which underlies the diversity of all religions. Consequently, religions cannot be reduced to their socioeconomic or psychological aspects since they all mark a vertical descent from the “Divine Origin.” This particular perspective is echoed in almost every chapter of the book, and forms the core of the teachings of Tradition.

The second part of the book applies Nasr’s reading of *philosophia perennis* on key subjects in Islam. The first chapter concentrates on a classical question in Tradition, namely *tawhid* (the testimony to the oneness of God). It elaborates the different ways in which *tawhid* is not only a form of belief for Muslims but also the centre around which everything in their life, thus everything called Islamic, revolves. The chapters entitled “The Nature of Man” and “The Integration of the Soul” are the most elucidative of the traditionalist view on the human being’s cosmological position. Nasr provides a fascinating discussion of the doctrine of the Universal/Perfect Man (*al-insan al-kamil*) and how and who can attain this position. The Universal Man is one whose soul is unified and integrated with his body and mind. Nasr, unlike other traditionalists, believes that to achieve the integration of the soul one has first to accept the *shari’a* law (Islamic jurisprudence). In addition, he formulates a sophisticated illustration of the central role of philosophy in Islam. Special focus is dedicated to Suhrawardi’s *madrasat al-ishraq* (school of Illumination) and to Mula Sadra’s metaphysics of synthesis.

The third part introduces central themes in the contemporary discourse of the traditional school. Although the topics covered range from metaphysics to cosmology and pre-modern science, all of the nine essays echo similar reactions to modern science. Nasr’s main concern, while demonstrating the shortcomings of modern science, aims also at

restoring the connection between human beings and God, the phenomenal and the metaphysical. According to him, the birth of individualism and rationalism with Renaissance humanism held the beginning of the decay of the human being as human. Nietzsche's cry for the "death of God" simply marked the beginning of the death of Man—which can be seen in the contemporary decline of ethics and the environmental crisis to unprecedented tragic levels. Nasr rejects modern science's claim that life began with matter and instead emphasizes the priority of consciousness. Modern science's materialistic worldview, as he put it, "has destroyed the harmonious relation not only between man and God and the spiritual world, but also between man and nature" (226).

The Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr should be riveting both for specialized and non-specialized readers. It is illuminating both through Chittick's careful selection and edition of Nasr's work, and through Nasr's sound philosophical arguments. While very few have represented Tradition with the same scrupulous integrity as Nasr, perhaps none has introduced Nasr's encompassing oeuvre with the same degree of accuracy and fidelity as William Chittick does in this book. Students of religion especially should find it engaging, for it raises a central question in contemporary (esp. sociological and anthropological) studies of religion: What is religion and how does one approach it? The book might also be of interest to students of cultural studies who are in the pursuit of a different approach (other than the phenomenological) to questions of the body and performativity.

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**Bede Rundle, *Why There Is Something Rather Than Nothing*,
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004, pp. 204, £46, cloth.**

In search of a philosophical explanation for the existence of our universe, Oxford philosopher Bede Rundle builds his thesis on the view that no sense can be made of nothing. If we de-populate our world of all things then we still have empty space not nothing. We cannot will away that empty space because our minds fail to grasp a state of nothing. Where imagination fails, so too does language. In saying 'There is nothing' the 'there' refers to something (or somewhere) and in the same breadth paradoxically denies its existence. In saying 'Nothing exists' the 'nothing' quantifies over everything saying of everything that it does not exist. 'Nothing' does not directly refer to any thing and only gives the impression of being an independent concept which it is not. It originates in local contexts such as 'There is nothing in the kitchen cupboard' where the 'there' refers to cupboard space and the 'nothing' ranges over crockery, cutlery, etc. In a universal context, 'nothing' has no meaning of its own but rather borrows meaning from words such as 'everything' and 'something'.

With nothing ruled out as unthinkable and thus impossible, Rundle concludes that there has to be something. If the main aim of the book is to give an answer to why there is anything at all, this conclusion already fulfils that aim. Does Rundle rest his case here, as the title of the book suggests? In fact, the title is misleading and Rundle's actual aim, as given in the opening words of this review, is far more ambitious, and, of course, this makes his book far more interesting especially for metaphysicians and philosophers of religion and physics. Success eludes Rundle in the pursuit of this wider aim. In explaining the existence of our universe, he has to explain the existence of matter. He has to leap from 'there has to be something' to 'there has to be matter' and this proves an insurmountable gulf. If there has to be something then economy lies in postulating empty space. If we assume that the something that has to be is matter then we have both matter and the space it occupies which is already unnecessarily extravagant. The only respectable move from Rundle's starting point of 'there has to be something' is to say that there has to be at least empty space. There is

no reason to postulate matter and so Rundle may consider choosing a different starting point for his wider project.

I focus on the virtue of economy in a theory because it is a weapon Rundle wields against God. God heads the list of extravagant hypotheses for explaining the universe. But Rundle needs to have a deeper appreciation of the fact that God gets the job done. A sudden storm would explain why the oak tree has fallen while a light breeze cannot explain that fact. While a light breeze has economy on its side it lacks the necessary explanatory power and so it is not a theory at all. Of theories having the requisite explanatory power, we may be under some obligation to choose the most economical. But Rundle's argument from nothing lacks the requisite explanatory power. If there has to be something, then that only means that there has to be at least empty space. There is no reason to postulate even a single sub-atomic particle let alone enough matter for the entire universe. And even if we postulate matter, why not then postulate a single imperishable particle? That there has to be something doesn't even get us into the ball park for an explanation to the universe.

While Rundle is not successful in offering an explanation for the universe, he does not go quietly into the night. He does permanent damage to the traditional conception of an immaterial God – a God with no basis in matter-energy. He is able to do this by offering a convincing analysis of causation as physical and interactive (contra Hume's view of causation as merely a constant conjunction of events). I can kick a football because I am a material agent who interacts with material objects such as the ball. What sense can we possibly make of an immaterial agent having an effect on the material world? Even theists must agree that no sense is to be made of causation by an immaterial agent. Thus, divine causation is nonsense. God as immaterial is not even like the light breeze that was offered as a hopelessly inadequate explanation for the fallen oak. He is no breeze at all. Immaterial God has no causal explanatory power whatsoever.

The standard theist response is that the human mind is immaterial but still has causal power, as when I *decide* to kick a football and mobilize my body to that end. The immaterial mind causes the material body to act so why cannot immaterial God have causal

power. This line actually works *against* the theist. We have never discovered a mind without a basis in matter-energy and it is impossible even to imagine one. Consciousness always has a material basis in the brain and so the theist's proposed solution becomes an additional burden for him. First, he could not explain causation by an immaterial agent. Now, he cannot explain consciousness in an immaterial being. Rundle's challenge seems fatal to an immaterial God.

In making this case, Rundle does not foresee a possible shifting of ground by the theist. Immaterial God is a traditional conception from the times when matter was seen to be the rock, the tree, and cow dung. But for the modern theist, matter is neither solid nor disgusting. At the quantum level, matter is finer and purer than could ever have been imagined and so it is hardly a problem these days for God to be material. What the traditional theist may have meant by an immaterial God was a being purer and finer than he could imagine. With the new physics, even a material God can answer to this demand. By allowing for a material God the modern theist answers both of Rundle's challenges. Both divine causation and divine consciousness are now possible. In emphasizing the priority of matter-energy, Rundle draws attention to the conservation of matter-energy and observes that matter-energy is imperishable for it endures through all its transformations. The modern theist should see the discovery of the imperishability of matter-energy as a discovery about the imperishability of a material God.

In fact, we could arrive at precisely the result that Rundle's whole book is aimed against. Rundle wants to show that arguments from nothing do not show that there is a God but only that there is something and economy demands that that something is matter. (The observation, contra Rundle, that economy demands empty space is not relevant for the point I am now making.) Surely this is not the right way to approach the argument from nothing. We know that there has to be a substantial amount of matter to explain the current state of the universe but to simply postulate the existence of this matter is arbitrary in a reckless way. Rundle's problem is that there is no independent reason for there to be any specific amount of matter. Economy demands one sub-atomic particle and its anti-particle if necessary. Thus, for Rundle's project to work economy must be thrown out the window. Without

economy, the first thing that suggests itself as non-arbitrary is the following. There has to be something. The only non-arbitrary something there could be is everything. In other words, there has to be all the matter-energy one can possibly dream of, so an infinite amount. Moreover, the only non-arbitrary way in which this matter-energy could be ordered would be the perfect order. Thus, everything exists in perfect order, in other words, there is God.

Let me say these things in another way. Nothing, because it is simply nothing, it cannot explain anything. It has neither the power to dictate what there is nor to determine the way things are. It is by far our most economical option for the way things should be, had we not ruled it out as impossible. Should we then be asking what the next most economical option is (in this case, empty space)? I contend that we are approaching the issue from the wrong direction. Economy cannot be our first consideration. There has to be something and it is this something that has the power to explain and determine things. It must explain both why nothing is impossible and whether economy matters in the universal context. In other words, we must explore what this something is before we can even know whether economy matters. So we break free of the demand for economy. Now the problem with postulating any old quantity of matter is that there is a demand for explaining that quantity and the way it is ordered. But there is a way out. If we postulate everything in all its perfection then we have God and this fulfils the demand for explanation. It does so because God is the ground of reason and explanation. Without Him there is no reason and explanation because He is the one who makes reason and explanation possible. Before Him, or beyond Him, the very concept of explanation does not exist and so there can be no demand for an independent explanation of His existence.

We now also know why nothing is impossible. It is impossible because God is a necessary being and there is always God. Does this mean that God is eternal in the sense of being timeless? Rundle correctly raises the problem of causation for a timeless being. Any cause must span over some duration no matter how small and so only a material and time-bound agent can be a cause. The theist may reply that God is neither immaterial nor timeless but rather ever-lasting in time

and the imperishability of matter-energy is a testament to this everlasting nature. But I believe that the theist does not even have to go that far in placing God in time. God as agent could be time-bound while God as conscious being could still be timeless. I develop this idea elsewhere (PhD thesis forthcoming).

Another point of interest in the book is Rundle's attempt to neutralize one of the most convincing modern day arguments for God's existence, namely, the argument from fine-tuning. Here again, Rundle's attempt is not successful. The slightest difference of value in any of a range of physical constants would have made life impossible in the universe. How is it that these constants have the precise life-giving values that they do despite astronomical odds? Rundle's response is that even if the universe had been different (and not teeming with life) that would not mean that it would be any less distinctive. It would simply be distinctive in some other way. Life may be special to us but it need not be special, say, from an impartial non-human point of view. Thus, there is no need to be amazed at astronomical odds because a universe with life is not special at all. From a set of non-special meaningless possible universes, one had to obtain, and our universe is simply the one that did. This is a mistake on Rundle's part because the people calculating the probability of a universe with life are the people for whom life is so special. Universes, suns, and asteroids do not make probability calculations and so there is no impartial perspective from which the calculation can be made. Life is special to us (nothing can be done to change that fact) and the odds against such a special outcome were astronomical. Rundle's own example can be used against him. A thoroughly shuffled pack of cards that deals all the suits in order gives us a very special result despite astronomical odds. Contra Rundle, we do not have to intimate this result beforehand for it to be a special result. The beauty of the result speaks for itself. Similarly, the utter beauty of life speaks for its being special and there is no way around that fact. The result is special and the odds against it were astronomical.

Rundle's book gives the impression of being an attempt by an atheist to offer a naturalistic explanation of the universe. It is a rigorous attempt that provokes deep thought. It challenges us to offer better reasons. However, its orientation is reminiscent of days when philosophy, science, and religion did not work together to discover

truth. For the sake of the future, I believe that a more balanced orientation will do more service to the cause of truth.

Baber Ahmed
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Transliteration Table

Arabic Characters

Consonants

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

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

Long Vowels

اى	و	ي
ā	ū	ī

Short Vowels

َ	ُ	ِ
a	u	i

Diphthongs

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

Persian Letters

پ	چ	ژ	گ
p	ch	zh	g

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