

# Islamic Perspective

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## **Contents**

### **Articles**

The Concept of Projection in Rumi's Works and Its Social Implications

Seyed Buik Mohammadi / 1

Relational Epistemology for Science and Religion: Reflection for Alternate Sociologies in the Middle East and North Africa

Tanveer Azmat / 15

Muslim and Non-Muslim Relationship: An Analysis of Qur'anic Provision

Israr Ahmad Khan / 31

Sociology in Turkey: The Historical and Social Processes Influencing the Emergence, Development and Institutionalization of Sociology in Turkey

Mohamed Tavakol & Nasim Torabnejad / 49

The Theory of Substantial Motion in Translation: Hermeneutical Pluralism Challenged

Esmat Shahmoradi & Mohammad-Javad Javid / 67

Possibilities of Non-Eurocentric Forms of Cognitions and Poetic-Philosophy

Seyed Javad Miri / 85

### **Book Reviews**

The Fakir

Yoginder Sikand / 103

L'inconscient de l'islam

Brian Welter / 107



# **The Concept of Projection in Rumi's Works and Its Social Implications**

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## **Abstract**

This paper is to deal with the concept of Projection in Molana Jalaeddin Rumi's works and its social implications. To do the paper consists of four parts: first a brief discussion of Rumi's life, thoughts and works, second an explanation of the concept of projection in psychology, third an exposition of some main stories in Rumi that portrays the concept well, and forth, a discussion of the social importance of the concept in the contemporary world.

**Key Words:** Rumi, Literary Thought, Social Theory, Sufism, Disciplinary Fashion

## **Introduction**

### **Rumi, Molana Jalal-eddin**

He is known as **Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī**, and more popularly in the English-speaking world simply as Rumi (30 September 1207 – 17 December 1273), was a 13th-century Persian (bausani, 2007) (Lewis, 2008, 9). poet, jurist, theologian, and Sufi mystic (Schimmel, 1994, 51). Iranians, Turks, Afghans, Tajiks, and other Central Asian Muslims as well as the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent have greatly appreciated his spiritual legacy in the past seven centuries. Rumi's importance transcends national and ethnic borders. His poems have been widely translated into many of the world's languages and transposed into various formats. In 2007, he was described as the most popular poet in America.

## 2 The Concept of Projection in Rumi's Works and Its Social Implications

Rumi's works are written in Persian and his *Mathnawi* remains one of the purest literary glories of Persia, (Gardet, 1997, 586) and one of the crowning glories of the Persian language. A Persian literary renaissance (in the 8th/9th century), alongside the development of Sufism, (Lewis, 2008, 139) started in regions of Sistan, Khorāsān and Transoxiana (Gilbert, 1995, 597) and by the 10th/11th century, it reinforced the Persian language as the preferred literary and cultural language in the Persian world. His original works are widely read today in their original language across the Persian-speaking world (Iran, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and parts Central Asia) Translations of his works are very popular in other countries. His poetry has influenced Persian literature as well as Urdu, Punjabi, Turkish and some other Iranian, Turkic and Indic languages.

Life: Rumi was born to native Persian speaking parents, (Lewis, 2007), (1207–1273), probably in the village of Wakhsh, a small town located at the river Wakhsh in Persia (in what is now Tajikistan).

Greater Balkh was at that time a major center of a Persian culture and Khorasani Sufism had developed there for several centuries. Indeed, the most important influences upon Rumi, besides his father, are said to be the Persian poets Attar and Sanai. (Jafri, 2003, 238) Rumi in one poem express his appreciation: "Attar was the spirit, Sanai his eyes twain, And in time thereafter, Came we in their train" (Arberry, 2001, 141) and mentions in another poem: "Attar has traversed the seven cities of Love, We are still at the turn of one street".

هفت شهر عشق را عطار گشت      ما هنوز اندر خم یک کوچه ایم

He lived most of his life under the Persianate Seljuq Sultanate of Rum, where he produced his works and died in 1273 AD (Coleman, 2005, xxv). He was buried in Konya and his shrine became a place of pilgrimage. Following his death, his followers and his son Sultan Walad founded the Mevlevi Order, also known as the Order of the Whirling Dervishes, famous for its Sufi dance known as the Sama ceremony. He was laid to rest beside his father, and over his remains a splendid shrine was erected. A hagiographical account of him is described in Shams ud-Din Ahmad Aflāki's *Manāqib ul-Ārifīn* (written between 1318 and 1353).

When the Mongols invaded Central Asia sometime between 1215 and 1220, Baha ud-Din Walad, with his whole family and a group of disciples, set out westwards. According to hagiographical account which is not agreed upon by all Rumi scholars, Rumi encountered one of the most famous mystic Persian poets, Attar, in the Iranian city of Nishapur, located in the province of Khorāsān. Attar

immediately recognized Rumi's spiritual eminence. This meeting had a deep impact on the eighteen-year-old Rumi and later on became the inspiration for his works.

From Nishapur, Walad and his entourage set out for Baghdad, meeting many of the scholars and Sufis of the city. (Nazeer, 2000) From Baghdad they went to Hejaz and performed the pilgrimage at Mecca. The migrating caravan then passed through many places. They finally settled in Karaman for seven years; On 1 May 1228, most likely as a result of the insistent invitation of 'Alā' ud-Dīn Key-Qobād, ruler of Anatolia, Baha' ud-Din came and finally settled in Konya in Anatolia within the westernmost territories of the Seljuk Sultanate of Rūm.

During this period, Rumi also traveled to Damascus and is said to have spent four years there. It was his meeting with the dervish Shams-e Tabrizi on 15 November 1244 that completely changed his life. From an accomplished teacher and jurist, Rumi was transformed into an ascetic.

Shams had traveled throughout the Middle East searching and praying for someone who could "endure my company". A voice said to him, "What will you give in return?" Shams replied, "My head!" The voice then said, "The one you seek is Jalal ud-Din." On the night of 5 December 1248, as Rumi and Shams were talking, Shams was called to the back door. He went out, never to be seen again. Rumi's love for, and his bereavement at the death of, Shams found their expression in an outpouring lyric poems, *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi*. He himself went out searching for Shams and journeyed again to Damascus.

Molana had been spontaneously composing *ghazals* (Persian poems), and these had been collected in the *Divan-i Kabir* or Diwan Shams Tabrizi. They would fill their hearts from your work and compose music to accompany it." Rumi smiled and took out a piece of paper on which were written the opening eighteen lines of his *Masnavi*, beginning with:

Listen to the reed and the tale it tells, how it sings of separation...

بشنو از نی چون حکایت می کند    از جدایی‌ها شکایت می کند

Hussam implored Rumi to write more. Rumi spent the next twelve years of his life in Anatolia dictating the six volumes of this masterwork, the *Masnavi*, to Hussam.

Rumi died on 17 December 1273 in Konya. When we are dead, seek not our tomb in the earth, but find it in the hearts of men.

## Psychological projection

Projection as a defense mechanism where a person subconsciously denies his or her own negative attributes by ascribing them to objects or persons in the outside world instead. Thus, projection involves imagining or *projecting* faults onto others. (Tavris, 2000) The original idea was that projection would allow for reduced anxiety by allowing the expression of the unwanted unconscious impulses or desires without letting the conscious mind recognize them.

The theory was developed by Freud in his letters to Wilhelm Fliess - "'Draft H" deals with projection as a mechanism of defense' (Quinodoz, 2005, 24) - and further refined by his daughter Anna Freud, which is why it is sometimes referred to as Freudian projection (Simmon, 2008).

According to Sigmund Freud, *projection* is a psychological defense mechanism whereby one "projects" one's own undesirable thoughts, motivations, desires, and feelings onto someone else. 'Emotions or excitations which the ego tries to ward off are "split out" and then felt as being outside the ego... perceived in another person'. (Fenichel, 1946, 146) It is a common process. The related defense of 'projective identification' differs from projection in that the impulse projected onto an external object does not appear as something alien and distant from the ego because the connection of the self with that projected impulse continues (Krenberg, 1990, 56).

In one example of the process, a person might have thoughts of infidelity with respect to a spouse or other partner. Instead of dealing with these undesirable thoughts consciously, the subject unconsciously projects these feelings onto the other person, and begins to think that *the other* has thoughts of infidelity and that *the other* may be having an affair. In this way, the subject may obtain 'acquittal by his conscience - if he projects his own impulses to faithlessness on to the partner to whom he owes faith'. (Freud, 1987, 198). In this sense, projection is related to denial, arguably the only more primitive defense mechanism than projection, which, like all defense mechanisms, provides a function whereby a person can protect the conscious mind from a feeling that is otherwise repulsive.

Projection can also be established as a means of obtaining or justifying certain actions that would normally be found atrocious or heinous. This often means projecting false accusations, information, etc., onto an individual for the sole purpose of maintaining a self-created illusion. One of the many problems with the process whereby 'something dangerous that is felt inside can be moved outside - a process of "projection"' - is that as a result 'the projector may become somewhat



depleted and rendered limp in character, as he loses part of his personality' (Appinganesi, 2006, 126).

Compartmentalization, splitting, and projection are argued to be ways that the ego maintains the illusion that it is completely in control at all times. Further, while engaged in projection, individuals can be unable to access truthful memories, intentions, and experiences, even about their own nature, as is common in deep trauma.

In psychopathology, projection is an especially commonly used defense mechanism in people with certain personality disorders: 'Patients with paranoid personalities, for example, use projection as a primary defense because it allows them to disavow unpleasant feelings and attribute them to others' (Gabbard, 2010, 330).

According to Kernberg (1990), all 'the primitive defenses, such as splitting, projection and projective identification, are commonly connected with primitively organized personalities, such as, Borderline personality disorder, Narcissistic personality disorder, Antisocial personality disorder, and Psychopathy.

Criticism: Later studies were critical of Freud's theory. Research supports the existence of a false consensus effect whereby humans have a broad tendency to believe that others are similar to themselves, and thus *project* their personal traits onto others, but this applies to good traits as well as bad traits and is not a defense mechanism for denying the existence of the trait within the self. (Dale, 2013, 0-12)

Instead, Newman, Duff, and Baumeister (1997) proposed a new model of defensive projection. In this view, people try to suppress thoughts of their undesirable traits, and these efforts make those trait categories highly accessible - so that they are then used all the more often when forming impressions of others. The projection is then only a by-product of the real defensive mechanism.

## **Projection in Rumi's Works**

In Molana's works there is ample evidence for the presence of concept of projection very similar to what is presented in modern psychology. As we saw above projection for the most part in an unconscious process, that is men use it without recognizing what they are doing. (Ketabi, 1383) What Molana is doing is to reveal the self-deception involved. In doing so he shows what the real motivation of the individuals could be. Molana's work in this matter brings awareness in general and also warns people of dangers of doing so.

The instances in which Molana presents the stories and fables in which projection involved are plenty, here are some samples just enough to make the case.

### **The evidences**

*The story of elephant:* In one of Molana's prose works, *Fih-maqfih*, there is a metaphor concerning an elephant that goes to a spring for drinking water. The elephant does not know what he himself looks like. He is shocked of seeing the strange animal in the water and in afraid of that frightening animal so starts escaping. In Molana's words, "he was running away from another being but did not know that he was running away from himself (Rumi, 1389, p 23).

In other places he explains how the world is like a mirror that people see themselves in it and unknowingly they start judging about others. "If you see a fault in your brother that fault is in you that you see it in them. Get rid of that fault, for that which you are resenting in them is what you are resenting of what is in yourself (ibid, 23)."

Obviously most of Moloana's work is in poetic form, in which lengthy stories are told. Here are some noteworthy samples in which projection is presented in metaphorical as well as poetic language.

*The story of lion and rabbit:* In brief the story as follows: in the woods there lived many animals in peace except the presence of a lion that every once on while attached and caught an animal hence disturbing them. Insecurity was too much for the animals so they made a plan and decided that to give the lion an animal to eat selected by lottery and the lion promised not to attack them. Once a rabbit was chosen to be presented to the lion, rabbit knew what will happen to him, so he decided to deceive the lion. The rabbit tried to be late then went to the lion that was hungry and angry. The lion questioned the rabbit and he said that: it is not my fault; today they were sending you tow rabbit, the other one that was three times the size of me. On the way a bad lion captured us and ate the big rabbit and I escaped so you won't go hungry. The lion was furious and wanted to see that bad lion. The rabbit took him to a well while holding the rabbit in his jaws. Lion took a look at the well and like the people who unconsciously see their own faults in others, saw the bad lion holding a big rabbit in his mouth. So the lion put the rabbit aside and jumped in the water trying to destroy that bad lion. In Molana's words: the lion did not distinguish difference between himself and the enemy. He perceived his own picture as the enemy and pulled sword on him. Then Molana tries to give his own wise

words that is the many cruelty that you see in others in essence they are yours. If you look at the bottom of your own habits, you will know that you were the source of those faults. Out of simplicity you attach yourself like the lion who attached himself.

خوی تو باشد در ایشان ای فلان	ای بسی ظلمی که بینی در کسان
از نفاق و ظلم و بد مستی تو	اندر ایشان تافته هستی تو
همچو آن شیری که بر خود حمله کرد	حمله بر خود می کنی ای ساده مرد
پس بدانی کز تو بود آن ناکسی	چون به قعر خوی خود اندر رسی

(Rumi, 1356, P. 44, couplet: 1319-1330)

*The story of black Indian and mirror:* In the second book of Masnavi, Molana brings up a story that is very similar to the story of the elephant that escapes from himself. A black Indian who sees his own face in the mirror and gets upset and angry that mirror is showing him dark and undesirable. So he burns the mirror because it presents the men with bad looks. The mirror tells him that: it is not my fault but the one who polished me; he made me the way that I can show people as they are.

می شد از شباکه برهر دو عیان	چون گناه و فسق خلقان جهان
لیک عیب خو ندیدندی به چشم	دست خائیدن گرفتندی ز خشم
رو بگردانید از آن و خشم کرد	خویش را در آینه دید آن زشت مرد
آتشی در وی دو دوزخ شد پدید	خویش بین چون از کسی جرمی بدید

(Ibid, P. 165, couplet: 3347-3344)

The gist of these lies is that: seeing the sinful acts they go furious but did not see their own faults. That ugly man who saw himself in the mirror turned face. When the selfish man seen sins around him, out of anger, he is furious like hell inside.

In the related defense of 'projective identification', as it was discussed above, impulse projected onto an external object does not appear as something different and distant from the ego because of the connection between self and the projected impulse. In this regard the metaphor of mirror plays an important role in some of Molana's stories. The point is that the person who does projecting his own fault onto others is subconsciously aware that something is wrong (the reality like mirror tells the truth, but the truth is unpleasant enough that requires denying).

*The story of four men praying:* four men went to the mosque to pray. While they were praying the call-man entered the mosque. One of those men complained that why he is calling for the prayer untimely. Another man of those four said to his friend: don't you know that speaking in the middle of the prayer is forbidden. The third man complaining to the second man said: why are you forbidding others doing what you yourself are doing? The fourth man said: thanks God I did not commit your mistakes and did not speak in the middle of the praying.

آن سوم گفت آن دوم را ای عمو      چه زنی طعنه به او؟ خود را بگو  
آن چهارم گفت حمد الله که من      در نیفتادم به چه چون آن سه تن

(Ibid, Sec. 2, P. 343, couplet: 3031-3032)

In doing so all four men made the same mistake and had their prayer become worthless. In the end of this story Molana praises those who see their own faults and are fair enough to be open to the criticisms; as in the following line:

ای خنک جانی که عیب خویش دید      هر عیبی گفت آن بر خود خرید

(Ibid, Sec. 2, P. 343, couplet: 3034-3038)

## Social Importance of the Rumi's Idea of Projection

When projections occur in large scales they turn into mass problems like racism, victim blaming, xenophobia and mass hysteria and the like. Some mass lay judgments as in jokes the same way that stereotypes seem to operate. Rumi's insights can help us to understand these social problems not only in psychological but also in social level as well.

*Justification* is a crude way of Projecting and those who try to do so often blame the fate or destiny for their own shortcomings. Molana is explicit about them. In the story about the Gaznavid prince jealousy towards Ayaz in the midst of the story telling he prevents men from projecting their shortcoming onto fate. In his words:

بر قضا کم نه بهانه ای جوان      جرم خود را چون نهی بر دیگران  
گرد خود بر گرد و جرم خود ببین      جنبش از خود بین و از سایه مبین

(Ibid, Sec. 6, P. 1063, couplet: 413-415)

In these lines he is saying that by blaming others don't use fate as excuse; turn around and see your own faults, and see that the movements belong to you, not to the shadow. In another story an individual blames the Satan showing that anything or anybody can be used as excuse. The storey say that a 90 year old woman wishes to go to a party. Trying to do makes up and turn beautiful. Because of old age she fails to do so, therefore, she blames and curses the Satan. Then Satan comes and tells her that; you are an old ugly whore that I have ever seen. You have many Satan buried in you, leave me alone.

گفت: صد لعنت بر آن ابلیس باد	چون بسی می کرد فن وامی افتاد
گفت: ای قحبه قدید بی ورود	شد مصور در زمان ابلیس زود
ترک من گوی ای عجزوه در بیس	صد ابلیس تو خمیس اندر خمیس

(Ibid, Sec. 6, couplet: 1276)

Molana At last, recommend one has to seek the true reason of pains and problems in his own actions and not in the fate or bad omen. In other places he speaks ill of determinism and sees it as an excuse to do away with responsibilities. At the end Molana considers that as a source of weakness which leads to death.

او همانی داند که گیرد پای جبر	هر که ماند از کاهلی بی شکر و صبر
تا همان رنجوریش در گور کرد	هر که جبر آورد، خود رنجور کرد

(Ibid, Sec. 6, couplet: 1069)

Sociopolitical implication of this view is very prevalent, where some blame foreign interferences and do nothing for the betterment of their own situation or country. It is an easy way out that one rid himself of his social responsibilities.

In the similar way another sociopolitical interpretation of Molana's idea of projection is to attribute undesirable personality characteristics, especially being unethical to the supposed enemies. It makes one feel good about oneself. Projection does lower one's anxieties but never remedies the problems. The stronger the xenophobia the more pure one sees him.

Extending the implications of Molana's teaching in this subject to social level it can be seen how the mass beliefs concerning the others who do wrongs effects people's perceptions of social events. For instance xenophobia is to accuse other, the real or imagined enemy of all kinds of heinous or atrocious actions which is in a way to maintain illusions that give them a sense of comfort. This is very prevalent in the political realm. In accordance with that kind of accusation are the "ethnic

jokes” that does the same accusation in different manner. Unfortunately, the joke that in essence are the projection of false attitudes to the other, seem real to those that make and relate them to people around them. Projection as psychological defense mechanism explains just this kind of subtle racism which is portrayed so well in Molana's fables and stories.

*Victim blaming* is one of the variation of projection which is a very and familiar phenomenon. One of the areas that victim blaming takes place is in the area of rape and illicit sexual indulgences. Men who do that often accuse women of the very problem that themselves are guilty of, or wish for; it is because projection is attributing a *repressed desire* to another person (Lindzy, 1975; 418). It is like the infidelity of a person who attributes it to his/her spouse, as Freud discussed. The common saying that states, ‘oh sisters please cover yourself so I won't commit sin’ expresses just that kind of mentality. Molana expresses this idea very explicitly when he says: if you don't have bad intention why do you suspect your brother of it?

از چه داری بر برادر ظن همان؟	گر نداری از نفاق و بد امان
نامه خواند اندر حق یار	بد گمان باشد همیشه زشت کار

(Ibid, Sec. 6, P. 922, couplet: 1276)

*Mass hysteria* is another kind of social phenomenon that is related to lack of tolerance and projecting bad intentions to others. Mass hysteria — other names include collective hysteria, group hysteria— in sociology and psychology refers to collective delusions of threats to society that spread rapidly through rumors and fear. Imagined enemy is perceived to be the cause of social ills.

Projection is an especially commonly used defense mechanism in people with certain personality disorders: 'Patients with paranoid personalities, for example, use projection as a primary defense because it allows them to disavow unpleasant feelings and attribute them to others'(Gabbard,2010,330). When social problems become acute they attribute them to other. When it spreads rapidly and becomes a mass phenomenon, it turns into a collective delusion and hence to mass hysteria.

*Over-generalization*: A subtle way of projecting is overgeneralization. Stereotyping is an example of overgeneralization based on personal characteristics of a single person or small groups. Racism often feeds on this mechanism; as in the common sayings like “all jews, or moslems are so and so”. Molana's fable on parrot points to that problem.

A grocer is to have had a parrot that he liked. Once when the grocer was away, the parrot made lots of movements and spilled the oil on the floor causing lots of loss. On coming back when the grocer learned what has happened in his absence, hit the parrot hard on the head. As a result the parrot lost his hair on the head. Since then the parrot stopped talking. The grocer was sad and tried to be nice to the parrot so he may speak again. Yet the parrot kept silent, until once he saw a bald dervish and began to speak and said to that man: why are you bald, is it because you have spilled oil too. People laughed at the comparison the parrot had made, assuming the other being like him. In Molana' eloquent words:

جولیقی سر برهنه می گذشت	با سر بی مو پشت طاس و طشت
طوطی اندر گفت آمد آن زمان	بانگ بر درویش زد که هی فلان
از چه ای کل با کلان آمیختی	تو مگر از شیشه روغن ریختی؟
از قیاسش خنده آمد خلق را	کو چو خود پنداشت صاحب دلق را

(Ibid, Sec. 6, couplet: 262)

*Overgeneralization* has been used to ward off criticisms in an attempt to associate themselves with more mainstream groups. It is often used to portray the entire fringe group as "victims" of the attack, in order to motivate a larger group to respond in their defense. A good example is that Stormfront and other neo-nazi groups often try to portray attacks against their hate as an attack against all Caucasians or all Christians.

## Conclusions

Projection is an imported concept in psychoanalysis. It means that people see in others what is hidden within themselves (which of course may be accurate). Yet regardless of them being accurate or not, projections are a way of handling conflicts. They can be a devious way of satisfying the repressed drives. For example a person who is unconsciously hostile toward someone, projects hostility onto the others and feel completely justified about it. It is an elaborate, unconscious deception. Nations as well as individuals use projection to justify their aggressive acts. As we saw above Molana has some important point to say about this defense mechanism.

We do not claim that Molana is a psychoanalyst in a disciplinary fashion, but surely, about seven hundred years ago he has entertained ideas that are so fresh even in the present today. Phenomena that he is talking about can be the source of many social ills. Hence understanding him and his thought will eventually help us understand the problems which may help to remedy them. The idea of projection that is portrayed in Molana's works specifies the manner in which blaming others may take place. His ways of expression in that colorful poetic form is very impressive and influential. His doctrine, in general, advocates unlimited tolerance, positive reasoning, goodness, charity and awareness through love. To him and to his disciples all religions are more or less truth. Looking with the same eye on Muslim, Jew and Christian alike, his peaceful and tolerant teaching has appealed to people of all sects and creeds. Such teaching can be not only helpful but also healing to many problems of present time that cause suffering and antagonisms among people.



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## **Relational Epistemology for Science and Religion**

### **Reflection for Alternate Sociologies in The Middle East and North Africa**

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“[Science] follows those stars which alone are able to give meaning and direction to its labors.”  
(Koshul, 2005, 133)

#### **Abstract**

One of the main characteristic of contemporary knowledge creation is the generation of operational knowledge - knowledge in the service of consumerism with its final goal to maximize financial profits. This has meant an ‘increasing alienation from the self and others, and the triumph of low culture over high culture.’ In this regard, Fazlur Rahman’s (d. 1988) attempt to formulate an integrative methodology is a step in the right direction. However, we do not find in him a philosophical and sociological basis for such a methodology, though his historical approach is appreciative. Basit Bilal Koshul’s postmodern reading of Max Weber suggests one such solution. Following Michael Welker, this paper terms such an integrative approach ‘relational epistemology’(Welker, 1997) - an epistemology that discovers relations among different ‘islands of knowledge’ seeing both commonalities and differences among the islands resulting in elimination of dichotomy - an important consideration for emerging alternative sociologies in the Middle East and North Africa.

**Keywords:** Relational Epistemology, Rational, Suprational, Supernatural, Fact and Value Dichotomy, Science and Religion Divide, Salvation.

## **Introduction**

This paper will present a ‘relational epistemology’ where science and religion dichotomy in the social production, distribution and application of knowledge vanishes. It has been suggested, “Thou shalt not mix religion and science.”<sup>1</sup> This paper affirms this proposition.<sup>2</sup> However, it attempts to demonstrate that the two ‘islands of knowledge’ are co-dependent such that they result in integration of two disciplines without mixing them. Further, it proposes a methodology, at a theoretical level, for its application to address twenty first century real life human problems. In other words, the paper proposes to eliminate ‘fact/value’ dichotomy that divides knowledge and humanity. It achieves this by fixing definition and scope of science and religion that in turn points to their co-dependence.

## **Framework and Sociological Approach**

The need for alternate regional sociologies is self evident, though their dangers are not self evident. When regional sociologies start from a regional basis and consciously or unconsciously espier to become universal, they lose their focus and function and remain neither regional nor universal. International Sociological Association recognizes the importance of “regional associations which are important in their own right, but also as a supportive umbrella for weaker national sociologies.”<sup>3</sup> Current President of the association, Michael Burawoy, foresees that the regional sociology of the Middle East [and North Africa] due to its ‘political regimes’ and ‘historic cultures’ may put current “global sociology on trial.” However, he welcomes this as long as it “does not turn a particular sociology into a universal one, but emerges from a conversation into among multiple sociologies, grounded in different nations and regions.”<sup>4</sup> We hear same advice from Ali Shari’ati (d. 1976) who advocates “a dialog with modern secular thought from a religious point of view.” (Manoochehri, 2013) On the one hand, Shari’ati critiques modernity and on the other hand he critiques tradition.<sup>5</sup> Critique of both modernity and tradition at the same time allows us to discover alternate sociologies from a universal point of view in which particularities find their space. This paper supports Burawoy’s point of view. Hence forth it proposes a universal sociological epistemology where each particularity may work out its details within a negotiated universal framework.

One may ask as to what is this universal frame work? For Shari’ati the heart of sociological problem is the struggle between land ownership or ownership of the

means of production by few and masses without such ownership or means. He explains this struggle through the ‘myth’ of Abel and Cain:

Abel represents the age of a pasture-based economy, of the primitive socialism that preceded ownership; and Cain represents the system of agriculture and individual ownership. When Abel the pastoral was killed by Cain the landowner, the period of common ownership of the sources of production ... [and] the spirit of brotherhood and true faith, came to an end and was replaced by ... religious trickery and transgression against the rights of others ... (Ibid, 23)

According to Shari’ati, social domination through means of production has taken different forms in human history, [including but not limited to] ‘slavery, serfdom, feudalism, and capitalism.’ This paper agrees with Shari’ati’s view that the heart of sociological problem is the [unjust] ownership of the sources of production and proposes to take it as one of basis of any universal sociological framework in which alternate sociologies may emerge. In our age the mastery of nature and its application through technology has turned science into a new tool of domination over the other. It is in this framework I will explore relational epistemology between science and religion without any compromise to their particular domains.

## **Science**

For Koshul, Max Weber (d. 1920) provided important insights into nature, function and scope of science. According to him, “for Weber objective scientific knowledge is neither a copy nor a reproduction of empirical reality... rather [it is] a conceptual ordering of empirical reality in a valid manner.”(Koshul, 2005, 102) Logic establishes the valid manner. This definition implies that science is abstraction or intellectualization of physical reality in natural sciences and cultural reality in social sciences. It is based on observation, collection of quantitative data, analysis of such data, derivation of conclusions from the data, and repeatable verification of such conclusions through quantitative means by other observers. In this respect for science, physical reality is no different from cultural reality as both are based on quantitative measurement of behavior – behavior of physical objects vs. behavior of biological beings in their individual or collective capacity. Hence, we can conclude that if empirical measurement of behavior is the scope of science then its methodology is a special way of knowing through the interpretation and verification of empirical data.

When we say science is rational or is based on rationality, according to Weber, what we mean is “an increasing theoretical mastery of reality by means of increasingly precise and abstract concepts.”(*Ibid*, p. 11) Unfortunately, this is not the whole story. Weber also believes that science has hidden ‘suprarational elements’ [i.e. beliefs] (PSW, 1). These beliefs consist of ‘presuppositions’ and value judgments of science (PSW, 44). He seems to agree with Nietzsche’s evaluation about the discipline of science:

*To make possible this discipline to begin*, must there not be some prior conviction – even one that is so commanding and unconditional that it sacrifices all other convictions to itself? We see that science also rests on faith; there is simply no science ‘without presuppositions.’(*Ibid*, p. 45)

This allows us to see science in a different perspective. A perspective generally overlooked that science rests on faith. To Weber suprarational prepositions or values have no empirical basis but are possible within a natural reality as opposed to ‘supernatural’ prepositions or values that have no empirical basis as they are beyond natural reality. Suprarational values are value judgments human beings put on life to answer the most fundamental question: Is death meaningful? (*Ibid*, p. 41)

Koshul following Weber lists three suprarational values of science: “(a) Scientific truth about empirical reality is real; (b) Scientific truth about empirical reality can be known; (c) Scientific truth about empirical reality is worth knowing.”(*Ibid*, p. 45) In short, there are two layers that constitute science. First layer is a rational layer that requires empirical data for scientific analysis and second layer is its suprarational layer that is the hidden foundation of science upon which it exists. The hidden foundation consists of faith prepositions that exist only as a possibility in natural reality without any empirical data to support or verify them scientifically.

For Weber “a hair-line separates science from faith” due to suprarational faith based prepositions of science (PSW, 43). He reminds us that “the belief in the value of scientific truth is the product of certain cultures and is not a product of man’s original nature.” (Weber, 1949, 111) Specifically, he identifies enlightenment notions of ‘progress’ and ‘objectivity’ that makes us believe that science has no suprarational element. Following Tolstoy Weber informs, “Science is meaningless because it gives no answer to our question, the only question important for us: ‘What shall we do and how shall we live?’” (Koshul, 2005, 41) However, Weber does acknowledge that science has meaning for “purely practical and technical” (PSW, 41). To which I may add that this ‘purely practical and technical’ benefit is

in the service of unsustainable consumerism that has brought humanity at the footsteps of destroying its own habitat in the natural world and disenchantment<sup>6</sup> in our cultural world.

## What, How, and Why of Science

Weber, according to Koshul, asks if “science can neither produce value nor pass judgment on values,” due to its empirical nature, then “What contribution can the scientific study of facts make to the understanding of values? Furthermore, What is the value of science itself as a fact of human culture?” (Koshul, 2005, 4) For Weber science is a very valuable tool “to gain uniquely valuable knowledge about the values that human beings find meaningful.” (*Ibid*, p. 4) Why is science such a valuable tool? Koshul sums up Weber’s argument: at ‘practical rationalization’ it “can provide clarity regarding the range of options available for a course of action, given a particular goal/value;” at ‘theoretical rationalization’ it “can provide clarity regarding the internal, logical consistency of a particular world image and logical validity of claims made with reference to a particular worldview;” and at ‘significance of meaning’ level, particularly, in social sciences, it “shows meaning to be categorically indispensable in order for the very possibility of real scientific inquiry.” (*Ibid*, pp. 86-7)

If scientific inquiry is so critical for finding meaning or answering the most important question: “What shall we do and how shall we live,” then Koshul explains Weber’s question, “[h]ow does science arrive at an objectively valid description of reality” (*Ibid*, p. 4) when the actor of finding this answer has her/his own subjectivity that cannot be escaped? The short answer is that for Weber, any conclusion of a scientific inquiry is neither “purely ‘objective’ nor purely ‘subjective.’... [Rather, it is an ‘imputation’] ... “a causal interpretation that provides the scientific account for empirical phenomenon. [This is so because] Subjective and objective factors are intimately intertwined in both the empirical phenomena being investigated and in the processes of the investigation itself. [In short for Weber,] ... “scientific inquiry is no less a means of gaining self-knowledge by the inquiring subject as it is about gaining knowledge of objects.” (*Ibid*, p. 5) There is no pure subjectivity or objectivity in scientific conclusions as the two are intimately tied together and cannot be separated.

Regarding the ‘why of science,’ Koshul uses the question: “Why does a scientist undertake a scientific investigation of culture [/physical reality]” to demonstrate Weber’s conclusion that “The ‘why’ of scientific inquiry has an

irreducible religious element in it in the form of a desire to transform ‘what is’ into ‘what ought to be’ [‘the heart of all religious rationalism’] ... [that] bridges religious/scientific dichotomy.” (*Ibid*, p. 5) In Weber’s case, ‘what is’ was identified by him as disenchantment in culture; ‘how’ was to emancipate modern culture from this ill; ‘why’ was to expose the hidden prepositions of science and to show that abstraction of reality through concepts cannot be considered actual reality. It is only “a *conceptual ordering of empirical reality* in a valid manner.” (*Ibid*, p. 102) However, this ‘conceptual ordering of empirical reality’ leads us to unconsciously believe in ‘physical laws’ that are taken to exist in nature and are responsible for the existence of physical reality. When our ‘what’ is only a conceptual tool to know and control nature we incorrectly and unconsciously believe that our increased capacity to know and control nature or cultural reality would one day magically lead us to answer our most important question, “What shall we do and how shall we live?” Hence, the ‘why of scientific inquiry’ exposes hidden [religious] belief of science that it can provide us answer to our most important question when it has no such resources.

## Religion

Religion deals with questions of ‘ultimate and final values.’ These values give meaning to our existence in which we are rooted. Values are not abstract but are concretely expressed in human culture. As a matter of fact for Weber culture by definition “is a finite segment of the meaningless infinity of the world process, a segment on which human beings confer meaning and significance.” (*Ibid*, p. 50) However, these meanings and significances are based on suprarational presumptions. Koshul sums up Weber’s notion of religion’s suprarational affirmations as: “(a) The cosmos and human existence in the cosmos is meaningful; (b) Salvation from suffering [meaninglessness] can be had; (c) Salvation from suffering is worth having.” (*Ibid*, p. 53) Since these suprarational values are expressed concretely in the form of individual behavior and social behavior in a society, and the fact that behavior is scientifically measurable, Weber concludes that religion has an empirical element in it. (*Ibid*, pp. 53-4)

As far as supernatural element of religion is concerned, it is beyond natural phenomenon. Since it is beyond natural world it is not empirical and hence beyond scientific domain. Supernatural element of religion is a key element of religion without which religion remains incomplete. It is this element that gives meaning to life. According to Koshul, “Weber’s corpus provides evidence for the reality of



suprational [in] religion, but not the supernatural.” (*Ibid*, p. 153) This paper suggests including it in any discussion of religion and science that Weber avoided. In order to accommodate the supernatural element of religion in the discussion of science and religion, its inclusion should be left to an individual’s free choice to define it, believe in it or not believe in it. This voluntary supernatural inclusion in the discussion of science and religion allows legitimate conversation of science and religion at the common ground of their suprational elements without sacrificing religion’s supernatural element.

Let us look at suprational element of religion in religious language to further clarify it. For religion human salvation is an important issue. Religion is interested in the salvation of humans in this world and after death. However, some humans may come to the conclusion that the only salvation possible is the salvation in this world as life after death is not possible. Irrespective of belief in other worldly salvation, it is clear that ‘salvation in this world’ is an issue of interest to all humans. However, the use of term ‘salvation in this world’ can itself be regarded as a religious ideal by some due to its religious connotation. This need not be the case if we try to understand what does it mean to have salvation in the world and replace it with a non-religious term such as ‘success’ in this world. Is it possible for humanity to agree on one definition of ‘success?’ It may or may not be possible. However, one thing is clear that there must exist certain conditions in human culture that are agreeable to all to allow actualization of different notions of ‘successes’ in this world. Let us explore such conditions.

Our characterization of one aspect of religion as common among all humans and termed as ‘success in this world’ transforms worldly success essentially to a sociological problem. As discussed earlier, according to Shari’ati, sociological problem is [unjust] domination of owners or means of production over non-owners. Without the resolution of this fundamental sociological problem, one may argue, no notion of ‘success’ can be achieved in this world, as domination of powerful may unjustly tilt the balance of success in her/his direction. In order to suppress this tendency all humans can agree on certain cherished values that may become the basis of pursuing different notions of success. Let us tentatively agree to three such fundamental values that must be honored by all humanity as life, liberty, and equality. All humans have a right to life, freedom to choose their way of life, and equal human dignity. These values may be further negotiated in future but for the purposes of this paper they may suffice. In other words, religion (**R**) = **religion (m)** + **religion (r)**, where ‘**R**’ stands for religion encompassing both worldly and other worldly ‘success’ if one desires to believe in life after death;<sup>7</sup> ‘**m**’ stands for

minimum values necessary to make ‘success’ in this world possible; and ‘r’ stands for other worldly success.

Based on above schema, if religion (m) is a social value assigning system, then science can be considered as a fact generating enterprise as empirical analysis is not value generating but only value evaluating. To assign values, facts must exist. However, there are infinite number and priorities of finding facts. Who must decide what facts should be discovered and in what order of priority? In other words, who must assign responsibility to scientist what to work on? No doubt scientists must be left alone to their scientific workings but they need to be informed as to what to work on.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, facts do not exist in the vacuum of values. Values mean not much if not tested in the facts of concrete reality of human life. Facts and values form a hermeneutic circle which progresses the meaning of social existence. Relational epistemology is one such theoretical resource that runs integrated engine of facts and values.

### **Relational Epistemology: Dynamic Co-dependence of Religion (m) and Science**

Relational epistemology discovers relations among different ‘islands of knowledge.’ The relations among different islands of knowledge consist of seeing both commonalities and differences among the islands. It does not try to capture all islands with one common perspective. Rather, it accommodates differences and takes them seriously, as such it is integrative but not dichotomist. According to Koshul, when Weber is read with the ideals of enlightenment, science and religion are seen as two different islands of knowledge that can never be bridged. This results in fragmentation of knowledge into two mutually exclusive domains. However, when Koshul reads Weber with the postmodern significance of Weber, a relationship between the two islands of knowledge is discovered. (Koshul, 2005, 2)

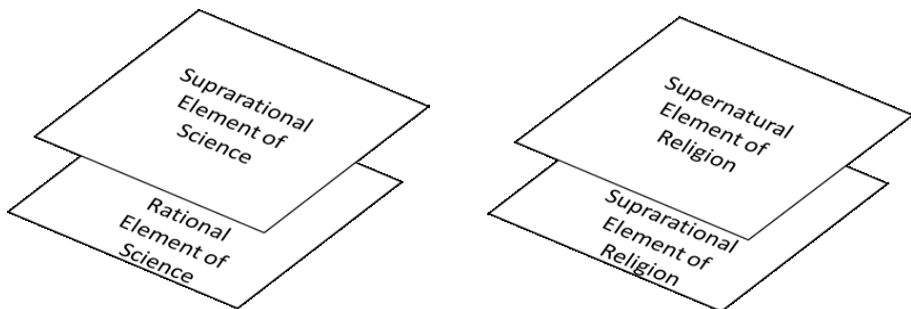
Following Weber’s analysis of science and religion, Koshul’s reading of Weber as a postmodern scholar, and this paper’s proposals, we have pursued following argument:

1. Science has hidden suprarational element: the belief that science can provide human salvation/success in this world. Hence, scientific endeavor in its present form should continue till that salvation/success is achieved.
2. “[T]he belief in the value of scientific truth is the product of certain cultures and is not a product of man’s original nature.” (*Ibid*, pp. 44-5) It was the

enlightenment notions of ‘progress’ and ‘objectivity,’ a particular cultural phenomenon made universal, that makes us believe that science has no suprarational element.

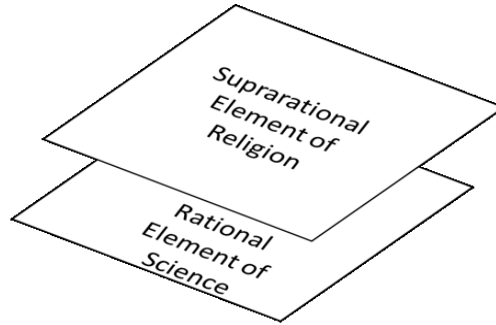
3. Religion has a suprarational element equivalent to suprarational element of science in terms of its scientific evaluation. Suprarational element of religion (m) may tentatively consist of three fundamental values: life, liberty and equality. These values may make actualization of particular notions of success in this world possible, and success in life after death if one chooses to believe in it.
4. This paper proposes to replace suprarational hidden values of science with suprarational values of religion (m).
5. Science cannot deal with the supernatural element of religion as it is beyond the scope of science. Therefore, supernatural element of religion (r) should be left to the personal choice of individuals or a society as long as such beliefs do not violate minimum agreed upon values.
6. For sociology the implication of above schema is that social reality does not necessarily require supernatural element of religion (r) for its scope and proper function, whereas science needs religion (m)’s values for its functioning.
7. Above becomes possible through the perspective of integrative relational epistemology instead of dichotomist epistemologies of science and religion.

Please see Figure 1 & 2 for a graphic representation of above schema.



**Science and Religion With Their Associated Components  
And as Two Separate Islands of Knowledge**

**Fig. 1**



**Science and Religion: Integrative Relational Epistemology  
One Interactive Islands of Knowledge**

**Fig. 2**

## **Dynamics of Religion (m) and Science**

Above schema allows science to continue its scientific work without the intrusion of supernatural vales of religion (r) where religion (m) only drives the fact analysis machine of science. Once this dynamic process is put in motion scientific results may require modification and fine tuning of religion (m) values and may also modify its associated world view. Further, exposed values of religion (m) change the direction of science from ‘study of order’ to ‘significance of meaning.’ In other words, recognizing human beings as “*cultural beings*, endowed with the capacity and will to take a deliberate attitude towards the world and to lend it *significance*” (*Ibid*, p. 81) runs the machinery of science. “Whatever this significance maybe, it leads us to judge certain phenomenon of human existence in its light and to respond to it as being (positively or negatively) meaningful. Whatever may be the content of this attitude – these phenomena have cultural significance and on this significance alone rest its scientific interest.” (*Ibid*, pp. 81-2) Koshul sums up the implications of above schema as follow:

- (a) Natural/mechanistic casualty as science’s explanatory device is replaced by casual interpretation (i.e. imputation).
- (b) Preexistent rational/mechanical order of the world as the object of scientific inquiry is replaced by scientific exploration of humanly constructed meaning and significance in the world.

(c) Rational certainty as goal and characteristic of scientific inquiry is replaced by objectively possible, suprarational affirmation of the presuppositions and value-ideas on which science is based. (*Ibid*, p.142)

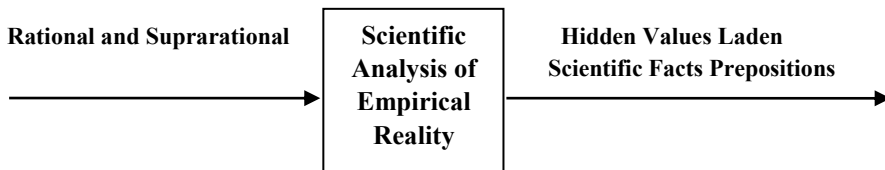
Please see Figure 3, 4, & 5 below for graphic representation of above schema.

### **Science and Religion Dichotomy Existing Paradigm**

Current Cultural Condition with Fact/Value Dichotomy

**Science:**

#### **Fact Generating System**



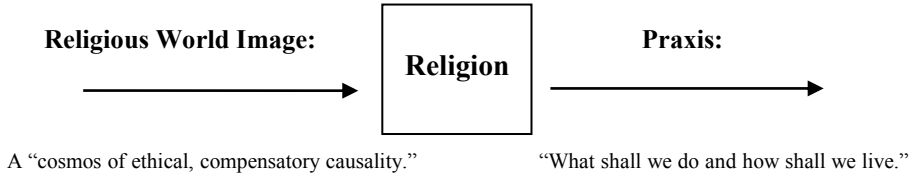
#### **Hidden Unscientific Values of Science:**

1. “Scientific truth about empirical reality is real.” [Empirical reality & its abstraction in concepts are equivalent].
2. “Scientific truth about empirical reality can be known.”
3. “Scientific truth about empirical reality is worth knowing.”

**Figure 3**

**Religion**

**Value Generating System**



In the above paradigm, we have empirical reality studied under quantitative facts and hidden suprarational beliefs of science while our value system is based on suprarational and supernatural beliefs. This creates two mutually exclusive islands of knowledge. This fact/value dichotomy generates guidance for life [‘What shall we do and how shall we live life’] that reduces morality to utility and truth to pragmatism.

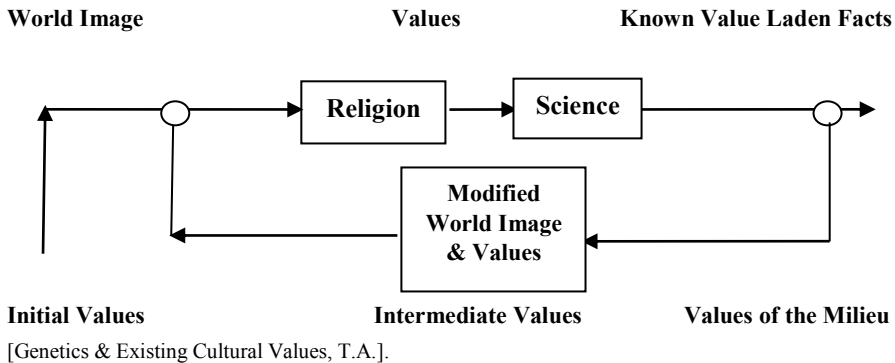
**Figure 4**

**Science and Religion Integration  
Proposed Paradigm**

Cultural Condition without Fact/Value Dichotomy

**Science & Religion**

**Value and Fact Generating System**



**Figure 5**

## Implications of Proposed Paradigm:

“(a) Natural/mechanistic casualty as science’s explanatory device is replaced by casual interpretation (i.e. imputation).

(b) Preexistent rational/mechanical order of the world as the object of scientific inquiry is replaced by scientific exploration of humanly constructed meaning and significance in the world.

(c) Rational certainty as goal and characteristic of scientific inquiry is replaced by objectively possible, suprarational affirmation of the presuppositions and value-ideas on which science is based.” (*Ibid*, p. 142)

## Conclusion

Religion and science consist of master and slave relationship. Suprarational values of religion (m) drive the machine of science. Scientific results thus obtained provide a feedback loop to suprarational values of religion (m) and thus may require modification of suprarational values. Modified values of religion (m) then drive scientific analysis once again. This results in a perpetual, dynamic and self correcting process in the forward movement of sociological reflection and its application to real life problems. The end result may be that we correctly determine if we should first go to starts or address poverty, health, and education on the earth. In doing so we may also respond positively to Ahmad Faraz (d. 2008), a Pakistani poet’s complaint:

*Bastiyan Chand Sitaron Ki Basane Walo  
Kuraharz Pe Bujte Chale Jate Hain Charag<sup>9</sup>*

[We may ask] those who are building dwellings on the moon and the stars, [Please know that the] dwellers on the earth are dying out, [so, can we pay some attention to them also].

It can also imply as to who will live on the dwellings being built on the moon and the stars? When people on the earth, who may live there, are already dying [and there may be no one left to dwell these outer space dwellings].<sup>10</sup>

## Note

1. S. Nomanul Haq, review of *Rocks of Ages: Science and Religion in the Fullness of Life* by Stephen Jay Gould, *Nature* 400, 830-831 (26 August 1999).
2. *Rocks of Ages* ... is a good source of arguments demonstrating exclusive domains of science and religion.
3. Iranian Sociological Association, "Building a Regional Sociology in the Middle East," <http://en.isa.org.ir/content/building-regional-sociology-middle-east> [accessed Nov. 27, 2014].
4. *Ibid.* Burawoy is encouraged by the example of one such regional sociology, the Latin American Sociological Association (ALAS), that for "five tumultuous decades ... has been at the center of pioneering, geographical rooted vision of sociology that have circulated the globe" (Building Regional Sociology in the Middle East).
5. "Shari'ati conceives of tradition as a way of relating to human problems and considers it to be authentic only when it has something for us and not because of what it is, or claims to be, in-itself," (Manoochehri, 2013).
6. Disenchantment, according to Weber, is a cultural condition when "all empirical phenomena to be completely devoid of charismatic or supernatural powers" leading humans to a meaningless existence (PSW, 9). Disenchantment's impact on 'practical rationalization (i.e. methodical attainment)' results in 'value fragmentation.' Its impact on 'theoretical rationalization (theoretical mastery of reality by means of ... concepts)' is the loss of meaning (PSW, 11). It endangers the viability of 'compassion, ethical action, and reflective individualism' in the world (PSW, 146).
7. If one does not desire to believe in other worldly success, then for her/him religion  $R = r$  (m) only [plus any other values that give meaning to life].
8. Certainly scientists are free to work on what interest them and cannot be forced to work on certain issues and not others as long as they can get funding for the projects of their interest. In other words, it is values that decide and control flow of funding and hence the scientific effort.
9. <http://hijars.blogspot.com/2013/05/tere-hote-howe-mefil-mein-jalate-hain.html> [accessed Nov. 29, 2014].
10. Both English translation of the verse are mine.



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## **Muslim and Non-Muslim Relationship: An Analysis of Qur'anic Provision**

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### **Abstract**

There is a gross misunderstanding on the part of both Muslims and non-Muslims the world over concerning the nature of Muslims' attitude towards non-Muslims as expressly commanded by the Qur'an. It is claimed by the international media that the Qur'an inspires its followers to terrorize and kill others on the earth. This claim is based on misinterpretation of the Qur'anic statements on *jihad* and relationship with non-Muslims. Muslim scholars seem to have half-heartedly made effort to reinterpret such verses in the Qur'an. The Qur'an categorically states that it stands for peace, harmony, and justice on earth. How could it, then, be possible for the Qur'an to be the cause of chaos, mischief, and injustice in human relations? If the Qur'an seeks to establish justice and peace on earth, the claim that it commands its adherents to do away with non-Muslims is for sure untenable. Interpretation of the Qur'an requires application of valid principles. Two such principles are (1) "the Qur'an interprets the Qur'an", and (2) "the sayings and doings of the Prophet (s.a.w.) constitute the key to understand the Qur'an". The author will endeavor to put the Qur'anic statements on Muslim and non-Muslim relationship in their original context and analyze in the light of the overall message of the Qur'an and the Sunnah and Hadith of the Prophet (s.a.w.) with a view to reconfirming the Qur'anic command for the believers to have harmonious relationship with others.

**Keywords:** The Qur'an, Hadith, Muslim, Non-Muslim, Peace.

## **Introduction**

The Qur'an is a comprehensive manual for human life. It advances principles to govern all gamut of human interaction, be it with Allah the Creator, the society, the self, the environment, the other creatures including animals, and the followers of other faiths. There are many verses in the Qur'an that directly or indirectly deal with Muslim and non-Muslim relationship. Some of these verses appear, as claimed by both print and electronic international media, inciting hatred among Muslims and non-Muslims. It is a universally established rule that a text is to be understood in the light of the related context. A statement interpreted out of context may lead to spreading an essentially different message never meant by the original speaker. Muslim scholars have developed many principles to interpret the Qur'an. Two of them are (1) "the Qur'an interprets the Qur'an", and (2) "the sayings and doings of the Prophet (s.a.w.) constitute the key to understand the Qur'an". This paper represents a humble attempt to understand and analyze the Qur'anic verses dealing with Muslim and non-Muslim relationship and reassert that the Qur'an seeks to establish peace and justice on earth hence harmony among Muslims and non-Muslims.

## **Qur'anic Verses on Muslim and Non-Muslim Relationship**

The first addressees of the Qur'an were pagan Arabs, followers of the Prophet (s.a.w.), hypocrites, the Jews, the Christians, and the people in general. Thus, all the verses of the Qur'an could be classified from the angle of addressees into six categories. As for the verses addressing non-Muslims (pagan Arabs, hypocrites, Jews, Christians, and people in general), they invite them to submit to the will of their Creator, the Sustainer, the Provider, and the Controller of the universe, eschewing their baseless beliefs, and immoral practices and behavior. The verses addressing believers tell them what to do and what not to do in their devotional, individual, and social matters. Among these verses are those that guide Muslims on the nature of relationship with non-Muslims. These verses are quoted here below.

- 1) "And slay them wherever you may come upon them, and drive them away from wherever they drove you away—for oppression is even worse than killing". (2:191)
- 2) "Let not the believers take those who deny the truth for their allies in preference to the believers". (3:28)

- 3) “They would love to see you deny the truth, as they have denied it, so that you would be like them. Do not, therefore, take them for your allies until they forsake the domain of evil for the sake of Allah; and if they revert to enmity, seize them and slay them wherever you may find them”. (4:89)
- 4) “As for those who take the deniers of the truth for their allies in preference to the believers, do they hope to be honored by them when, behold, all honor belongs to Allah”. 4:139)
- 5) “O you who have attained to faith! Do not take the Jews and the Christians for your allies: they are but allies of one another—and whoever of you allies himself with them becomes, verily, one of them; behold Allah does not guide such evildoers”. (5:51)
- 6) “O you who have attained to faith! Do not take for your allies those who mock at your faith and make jest of it—be they from among those who have been vouchsafed revelation before your time, or from among those who deny the truth—but remain conscious of Allah, if you are believers”. (5:57)
- 7) “O you who have attained to faith! Do not take your fathers and your brothers for allies if they prefer denial of the truth to the true faith: for those of you who ally themselves with them—it is they, they who are evildoers”. (9:23)

“O you who have attained to faith! Do not take My enemies—who are your enemies as well—for your friends, showing them affection even though they are bent on denying whatever truth has come unto you...” (60:1)

### **Interpretation of These Verses**

One may not disagree to the idea that three early commentaries of the Qur’an, *Jami’ al-Bayan* by al-Tabari (d.310 A.H.), *Al-Kashshaf* by al-Zamakhshari (d.538 A.H.), and *Mafatih al-Ghayb* by al-Razi (d.606 A.H.) set the trends for the Qur’anic interpretation. All the other *tafsir* works seem to have adopted in one way or another two things from these early *tafsir* works, style and information. If any *mufassir* differed on any issue from the three trend-setters, it was slight and not essential. It might suffice to quote the views from the three earlier sources of the Qur’anic interpretation on any matter including the Muslim non-Muslim

relationships as dealt with in the Qur'an. Interpretation of the above eight verses quoted above as advanced by commentators along with its analysis will bring in focus the original message of the Revelation.

## Principle of Islamic War

*“And slay them wherever you may come upon them, and drive them away from wherever they drove you away—for oppression is even worse than killing”* (2:191). It is this verse which has been highlighted by the western media as the motivational source of the so called Muslim terrorism against non-Muslims. The chief reason for reading such message therefrom is to treat the verse (2:191) in isolation of its context. The verse in view (2:191) if read in full brings in focus the situation concerned. The verse in full is: *“And slay them wherever you may come upon them, and drive them away from wherever they drove you away—for oppression is even worse than killing. And fight then not at the Sacred Mosque unless they fight you there; but if they fight you, kill them. Such is the reward of those who deny the Truth”*. It is now crystal clear that this verse refers to an imaginary situation of war to be initiated by the non-believers in Makkah who had oppressed the Prophet (s.a.w.) and his followers to the extreme point where the Prophet (s.a.w.) and his followers had no other option but to say good bye to their hearth and home in order to at least save their faith and new identity. As the history bears witness, Makkah non-believers did not sit in peace and did not allow those who left Makkah to remain in peace and invaded Madinah several times with a view to wiping out the Truth from the soil of Arabian Peninsula.

1. The background of the revelation of the above verse is related to the Prophet's (s.a.w.) armed march to Makkah (8 A.H.) (Al-Zamakhshari, 1995, Vol. 1, 234) due to the Quraysh having broken the treaty they signed with the Prophet (s.a.w.) at Hudaibiyyah in 6 A.H. The revelation permitted the Prophet (s.a.w.) to fight the Quraysh if they initiated the fighting. It means that if the enemy did not resist and put up fighting, there should not be war. This is exactly what happened on the occasion of the Prophet's (s.a.w.) entry into Makkah. Makkans surrendered without any resistance. And almost all of them accepted not only the political authority of the Last Prophet (s.a.w.) but also Islam as their faith. (Al-Tabari, 1997a, Vol. 2, 152-165)
2. Al-Tabari (d.310 A.H.) is very emphatic on the fact that the believers were allowed in the above verse to be ready to respond to the non-believers' armed demonstration with a view to waging war. The followers of the Prophet (s.a.w.)

were advised here not to show any kind of weakness while meeting the enemy in the battlefield. (Al-Tabari, 1997b, Vol. 2, 197) Al-Zamakhshari (d.538 A.H.) and al-Razi (d.606 A.H.) both make it clear that the permission to Muslims for fighting the enemy was conditioned to the combative initiative taken by the enemy. (Al-Zamakhshari, 1995, Vol. 2, 233; Al-Razi, 1997, Vol. 2, 289) Syed Mawdudi explains that the permission to fight is not to quench the thirst of vengeance against the enemy but only to pave the way for the domination of the Rule of Allah.(Syed Mawdudi, 1997, 150-151)

It appears that the above verse (2:191) constitutes a principle of Islamic war, that is, Muslim cannot kill any enemy unless they are attacked by them.

### **Friendship between Muslim and Non-Muslim**

“*Let not the believers take those who deny the truth for their allies in preference to the believers*” (3:28). This verse apparently prohibits Muslims to accept sponsorship of non-Muslims in preference to that of Muslims. The original word occurred in the verse in Arabic is *awliya'* (plural of *wali*), which connotes several meanings: guardian, curator, caretaker, custodian, keeper, patron, sponsor, supporter, protector, defender, friend, companion, and associate. (Dr. Rohi Baalbaki, 2009, 1248) It seems what has been banned between Muslim and non-Muslim is the friendship which is wider than any other relationship denoted above through different English words. It is because friendship entails deeper relationship between the persons concerned whereby they share with one another information about their person, family, relatives, and other secrets. It is hard to keep the friendship confined to certain particular limit. Man has been created with such emotions and feelings towards fellow beings that the friend cannot hold any information from another one. This attitude is generally spontaneous.

Psychologically, all the people on the earth prefer close relationship among themselves and adopt very careful approach towards others. This kind of relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim may lead to espionage against other people and nation which in turn may prove fatal or at least very detrimental for a particular nation. In today's world people of a nation are required to keep away from establishing such a close relationship with the individuals or groups in other nation/s as to harm the nation. It may be born in mind that the address in the above verse (3:28) is not to the individual believer but to the Muslim society and nation. Members of Muslim society and nation have to always remain extraordinarily careful while befriending people or individuals of other nation. They have to think

whether this or that kind of relationship with others, that is, non-Muslims is going to harm their faith, their loyalty to Allah and the Prophet (s.a.w.). Absolutely free and unconditional relationship of Muslims with non-Muslims will certainly jeopardize the peace Islam seeks to establish on the surface on the earth.

Al-Tabari and al-Razi have both reported the background of revelation of the verse (3:28). Some Muslims from *ansar* group in Madinah remained in close connection with the Jews who in turn tried to exploit the situation to their favor. The Jewish exploitation of this friendship with Muslim was going to harm the Islamic state, on the one hand, and jeopardize the faith of Muslims concerned, on the other. In order to control this situation the above instruction came down, advising the believers to be careful in their friendship with the Jews. (Al-Tabari, 1997b, vol. 3, 227; Al-Razi, 1997, vol. 3, 192) This Qur'anic ban on Muslim and non-Muslim friendship is to prevent the Islamic family, society, and state from any sort of looming harm. If it is argued that Allah has prohibited Muslims from all kinds of relationship including sponsorship, guardianship, support and protection from non-Muslims, how could then the Prophet's (s.a.w.) own approach in Makkah be justified where he took the protection and guardianship of his uncles, Abu Talib and 'Abbas (Al-Tabari, 1997a, Vol. 1, 545) who were both non-believers except that the latter accepted Islam later? After the painful return from Ta'if, the Prophet (s.a.w.) sought the protection of al-Mut'im ibn 'Adi, a Qurayshite leader. (Al-Tabari, 1997a, Vo. 1, 555) In the agreement signed by both the Prophet (s.a.w.) and the Jews of Madinah there was a provision that the Jews would support the Prophet (s.a.w.) and his followers in the time of war. (Ibn Hisham, 1997, Vol. 2, 215-218)

It could be asserted here that these examples of the Prophet (s.a.w.) do not denote the friendship between the Prophet (s.a.w.) and his supporters/guardians. It is the free for all friendship that has been discouraged in this verse.

### **Muslims' Attitude toward Hypocrites**

*“They would love to see you deny the truth, as they have denied it, so that you would be like them. Do not, therefore, take them for your allies until they forsake the domain of evil for the sake of Allah; and if they revert to enmity, seize them and slay them wherever you may find them, and take no friends or helpers from their rank” (4:89).*

In this verse two commands have been given to Muslims: (1) do not take non-believers as their friends (*awliya*'), and (2) kill the non-believers no matter where



they are. Al-Tabari suggests that the command to Muslims to keep away from establishing friendship with non-Muslims and to kill them wherever they can lay their hands upon them is general and applicable to all situations. (Al-Tabari, 1997b, Vol. 4, PP. 198-199) Al-Zamakhshari and Al-Razi explain that Muslims in Madinah were commanded by Allah that if the hypocrites from outside Madinah did not emigrate to Madinah, they should kill them wherever they find them. (Al-Zamakhshari, Vol. 1, 535; Al-Razi, 1997, Vol. 4, 170-171)

This verse deals with those believers who stayed back in the domain of disbelief (places other than Madinah), preferred not to leave their hearth and home to join the Muslims in Madinah, and, at times, helped the non-believers, in one way or another, in their activities against Islamic state. Muslims in Madinah were commanded to sever their link with those hypocrites unless they migrated to Madinah. Syed Mawdudi decrees that believers in the domain of disbelief (*dar al-kufr*) who despite capability to emigrate to the domain of peace (*dar al-Islam*) prefer to stay back are hypocrites with whom the relationship of friendship must be severed. (Syed Nawdudi, 1997, Vol. 1, 379-381)

This verse is related to a particular situation in which there is apparent conflict between Islamic state and non-Islamic state. In this state of conflict between the two, believers have to be extra careful in establishing relationship with those so called Muslims in other states, who appear to be supporting the cause against Islamic state. There is no right thinking person on the earth who could raise any objection to this kind of ban on Muslims to set up relationship with those who claim to be Muslims but practically refrain from proving their sincerity to Islam and its state. Such Muslims also form enemies of Islam who must be abandoned by sincere Muslims by eschewing their previous social and psychological relationships with them.

## **Friendship with Non-Muslim and Honor**

*“As for those who take the deniers of the truth for their allies in preference to the believers, do they hope to be honored by them when, behold, all honor belongs to Allah”* (4:139). Al-Razi says that commentators of the Qur’an are unanimous that those mentioned in the verse (4:139) are hypocrites and the Jews. (Al-Razi, 1997, Vol. 4, 246)

Allah emphasizes in this verse that those who are sincere in their Islamic faith should take only sincere believers as their friends. In this command the style is

inquisitive. Why do the hypocrites befriend the Jews, ignoring sincere believers? Do they think that they would be honored by Jews? Have they forgotten that the real strength and honor is with Allah? Here the verse is not unfolding the principle of relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim in general. It is rather to tell the believers to be cautious against the elements of hypocrites in Islamic society. From here it may also be derived that those Muslims who join the forces of evil and disbelief in a bid to receive honor and political power are to be considered in the rank of disbelievers; and sincere Muslims should cut off their link with them in its entirety.

In every society there are two categories of people as to their sincerity. First, there are those who think, choose, and act sincerely, doing nothing that could harm the society they belong to. Second, there are those who appear to be sincere but are inwardly insincere, caring not what could be harmful for their own people; they invariably concentrate on their own interests even at the cost of their own faith and identity. Islamic society is not an exception to this universal phenomenon. Majority of its people are very sincere to it but some individuals dwindle between belief and disbelief. This minority is always in wait for the right time to show their allegiance either to Islam or non-Islam. In Madinah there were Muslims who wanted to make sure that they were not losers in any situation. They maintained their friendship with the Jews in the hope that if Islam failed to deliver, they would not fall to disgrace.

Such elements in a society are undoubtedly in the modern terminology opportunists. The Qur'an warns its sincere followers to keep away from opportunists whose attitude is in no uncertain terms misleading and hypocrisy.

## **Muslims' Relationship with Jews and Christians**

*“O you who have attained to faith! Do not take the Jews and the Christians for your allies: they are but allies of one another—and whoever of you allies himself with them becomes, verily, one of them; behold Allah does not guide such evildoers”* (5:51).

According to Al-Tabari, al-Zamakhshari, and al-Razi, this verse came down in connection with some Muslims' friendship with the Jews in Madinah, advising the believers to not trust Jews and Christians. (Al-Tabari, 1997b, Vol. 4, 615-618; Al-Zamakhshari, 1995, Vol. 1, 629-630; Al-Razi, 1997, Vol. 4, 375)

Allah has described the psyche of both Jews and Christians that they would never feel happy with Muslims unless Muslims opt for Judaism or Christianity:

*“Never will the Jews or the Christians be satisfied with you unless you follow their form of religion”* (2:120). There is no need of Muslims to be apologetic or to feel shy over this command of Allah. The history has proved the validity of this command of Allah. Ever since the Last Prophet was raised to invite the humanity to submit to the Last Message of Allah, both Jews and Christians stand as enemies of Allah (SWT), the Last Prophet (s.a.w.), the Qur’an, the Islam, the sincere Muslims, and the Muslim states.

According to the Madinah Document signed by both Muslims and Jews, the signatories were required to help each other in the time of emergency particularly in the time of enemy’s invasion of Madinah. (Ibn Hisham, 1997, Vol. 2, 215-218) But the Jews preferred to ignore the Agreement, and antagonized the Prophet (s.a.w.) by helping directly or indirectly the non-believing Arabs, the enemies. The Qur’an exposes the Jews for their inimical attitude toward Gabriel the Noble Spirit who served as medium of revelation to all the Prophets including the Last Prophet (s.a.w.). (2: 97) As a corollary, the Jews hated and still hate everything related to the Prophet (s.a.w.), the Qur’an, and the Islamic society. History shows that the Jews opposed not only the Last Prophet (s.a.w.) but also their own Prophets. (3: 181) The people who were never sincere to Allah and His Prophets must be kept away from Muslims.

It is a universally established rule that friendship with the enemies invariably proves detrimental. The Jews and Christians consider Muslims as their enemies hence Muslims are not supposed to fall prey to tactics of Jews and Christians.

### **Relationship with Those Who Mock at Islam**

*“O you who have attained to faith! Do not take for your allies those who mock at your faith and make jest of it—be they from among those who have been vouchsafed revelation before your time, or from among those who deny the truth—but remain conscious of Allah, if you are believers”* (5:57).

Commentators including al-Tabari, al-Zamakhshari, and al-Razi agree that the verse (5:57) was revealed in response to the hypocrites who befriended Jews and others. And the believers in general were advised not to befriend Jews and other non-believers because they make fun of Islamic faith and principles of life. (Al-Tbari, 1997b, Vol. 4, 629-630; Al-Zamakhshari, 1995, Vol. 1, 636-537; Al-Razi, 1997, Vol. 4, 387-388)

Allah is the Most Honorable (*al-majid*) (11: 73) and hence the Qur'an is the most respectable (*majid*) (85: 21); if the non-believers make fun of the Qur'an and Islam, they not only undermine the sanctity of the Qur'an and Islam, but also dishonor the Glory of Allah. This is not then appropriate for any believers to be with those who mock at the message of Islam. If they remain associated with them as friends and ratify even though indirectly the funny remarks against Islam, they could no longer be considered sincere in their claim of solidarity with Islam. Psychologically, if a person remains in a company of certain people for a long time, he ultimately becomes one of them.

In the today's world there are those who in the name of freedom of speech disrespect the Prophet (s.a.w.) and make fun of Islamic teachings in their speeches and writings; and also there are those who support such non-sense acts and attitude. In the light of this verse (5:57) Muslims must sever all kinds of relationships with such people. If not, they must be referred to as hypocrites and non-believers.

### **Insignificance of Blood-Relationship**

*“O you who have attained to faith! Do not take your fathers and your brothers for allies if they prefer denial of the truth to the true faith: for those of you who ally themselves with them—it is they, they who are evildoers”* (9:23). This verse makes it crystal clear that what counts in Islamic relationship is the sincerity of faith, and not the blood-relationship. The loyalty to Allah and His Prophet (s.a.w.) is greater than anything else. If son is Muslim and others in his family including his parents and brothers are still non-believers, he should not remain connected with them except for the sake of calling them to the right path. Al-Tabari is of the view that association among believing son and the unbelieving family may end up in disclosing the secrets of Islamic state by the son to his family members. (Al-Tabari, 1997b, Vol. 6, 338-339)

Remaining associated with the non-believing family may ultimately weaken the Islamic faith of the person. This link with the family is consequent upon love or any other material considerations. A Muslim is required to love Allah and the Prophet (s.a.w.) more than anything else. (5: 54) His love for his parents and family should not be so strong that he prefers to ignore his Islamic link. If he wants to remain associated with his non-believing family out of economic consideration, he should know that Allah is the best of providers. (62: 11)

## **Warning to Muslims against Enemies of Islam**

*“O you who have attained to faith! Do not take My enemies—who are your enemies as well—for your friends, showing them affection even though they are bent on denying whatever truth has come unto you...”* (60:1). This verse has a particular historical background. A sincere believer namely Hatib ibn Abi Balta‘ah, who was an immigrant from Makkah, wrote a letter to Quraysh, informing them about the secret plan of the Prophet (s.a.w.) concerning his military march to Makkah. The letter could not reach its destination as it had been taken away by the Prophet’s (s.a.w.) emissaries from its bearer, a Makkan lady. (Al-Tabari, 1997b, Vol. 12, 56-58) The information recorded in the letter might have reversed the result of the Prophet’s (s.a.w.) plan. Hatib wrote the letter out of his concern about the safety of his family in Makkah, and not out of his insincerity to Islam. (Al-Tabari, 1997b, Vol. 12, 56-58) This event necessitated to tell the believers that nothing was more important than Allah and His Mission.

This verse provides a very clear provision on espionage for the enemy. Any kind of correspondence between any Muslim individual/ group and another individual/ group in the enemy’s country affecting the Islamic country’s integrity is cognizable. (Syed Mawdudi, 1997, Vol. 5, 425) The verse highlights the words *“‘aduwwi wa ‘aduwwakum”* (My enemy and your enemy). Enemies of Islam are the enemies of each and every single individual Muslim. Any kind of leniency towards the enemy at the cost of Islamic security is out of question in the life of Muslims who are only loyal to Allah and none else.

## **Qur’anic Instructions concerning Non-Believers in General**

Nature of interaction between Muslim individuals and non-Muslim individuals as well as between Muslim society and non-Muslim society could clearly be seen in two categories of verses other than those identified and explained above. First, the Qur’an describes meaning, purpose and direction of Islamic message in a number of verses. Second, certain verses crystalize the scope and limits of Muslim’s interaction with non-Muslims. Examples of these two kinds of verses will explain the Qur’anic rules in regard to relationship between Muslim and non-Muslims. Each verse will be dealt with under relevant caption, representing the message therein.

## **Inevitability of Social Justice**

The Qur'an makes it incumbent upon its followers to uphold justice when settling the controversial matters of the people in general, be they Muslim or non-Muslim. The relevant verse (4:58) reads: *“Behold, Allah commands you to deliver all that you have been entrusted with unto those who are entitled thereto, and whenever you judge between people, to judge with justice. Verily, most excellent is what Allah exhorts you to do: Allah is indeed All-Hearing, All-Seeing!”* In this verse it has been emphasized that it is obligatory for believers to stand for justice irrespective of the people, the time and place. The word *“bayn al-nas”* (between people) bears testimony for that.

## **Permission of Deep Social Interaction between Muslims and People of Scriptures**

The Qur'an seeks to motivate believers to establish deeper connection with the Jews and Christians, allowing them to eat the meal prepared by Jews and Christians, and also to marry their free women (5:5)—*“Today, all the good things of life have been made lawful to you. And the food of those who have been vouchsafed revelation aforetime is lawful to you. And your food is lawful to them. And lawful to you are, in wedlock, free believing women, as well as the free women from among those who have been vouchsafed revelation before your time—provided that you give them their dowers, taking them in honest wedlock, not in fornication, nor as secret love-companions...”*

Sharing food and tying knot are two essentially significant social interactions which if established sincerely guarantee peaceful co-existence of the different elements in a multi-religious setting. Food of Jews and Christians are permitted for Muslims mainly because the Torah and the Gospel stress the same rules for food as the Qur'an. (Muhammad Asad, 1980, 142)

## **Total Ban on Injustice to Others**

It seems quite justified from worldly angle that injustice is responded with injustice. Islam adopts an entirely different approach. It does not allow its followers to mete out injustice to those who are bent upon doing injustice in their dealings with them. It rather suggests believers to treat others justly even though others hate them (5:8)—*“O you who have attained to faith! Be ever steadfast in your devotion to*

*Allah, bearing witness to the truth in all equity; and never let hatred of any people lead you into deviating from justice. Do justice: this is closest to piety. And remain conscious of Allah: verily, Allah is aware of all that you do”.*

The word “*qawm*” in the original text signifies any people of any race, region, and religion. Muslims are obligated here in this verse to always show justice and fairness in their dealings with non-Muslims. It is interesting to note here that Muslim’s piety (*taqwa*) is conditioned with justice with others. If a Muslim metes out injustice to a non-Muslim and yet he claims to be pious, it is indeed a false claim.

### **Inviolability of Humanity in its Entirety**

The entire universe in all its manifestations including mankind is the creation of Allah (50:16; 38). The mankind is servant (*‘abd*) of Allah (4:118). That is why, none is authorized to harm or injure any of the servants of Allah. Any human can be punished only either by Allah directly or by His command (2: 284). Killing a human is violation of human dignity. The Qur’an reminds its followers that Allah had already ordained the previous people particularly the children of Israel not to kill any human unjustly as its repercussion is colossal. The Qur’an says: “*Because of this did We ordain unto the children of Israel that if anyone slays a human being—unless it be for murder or for spreading corruption on earth—it shall be as though he had slain all mankind; whereas if anyone saves a life, it shall be as though he had saved the lives of all mankind*” (5:32).

The verse does not refer to any particular race, creed, or region of the people; it is rather about the entire humanity, be they Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, Christians, Muslims. Here in this Qur’anic statement the gravity of killing a man unjustly irrespective of his/her denomination is too much. Muslims are hence required to keep away from committing this serious crime to humanity. The message derived from this verse may be put in this way: “killing any human unjustly is an unforgivable sin”.

### **Ban on Offensive Remarks Hurting Non-Muslims**

The Qur’an treats hurting the feelings of others very sensitively. It does not want any kind of conflict among the inmates of the earth, except for the cause of justice. It advises Muslims to not revile the idols and other objects non-Muslims revere and worship. It is because non-Muslims are psychologically attached with their objects

of reverence. If someone uses abusive words against those objects, the people concerned would feel very much offended. The words of the Qur'an in this regard are: *"But do not revile those beings whom they invoke instead of Allah, lest they revile Allah out of spite, and in ignorance: for goodly indeed have We made their own doings appear unto every community"* (6:108).

What is prohibited here is reviling non-Muslims' objects of worship, and not arguing against idol-worship and polytheism with a view to convincing people about logical invalidity of associating partners with Allah.

### **Allah's Command of Justice and Generosity**

The single Qur'anic statement which is repeatedly announced publicly in the second sermon each Friday all over the world by Muslims serves as a clarion call to all believers that the general principles of their social interaction are justice (*'adl*), and generosity (*ihsan*): *"Behold, Allah commands justice and the doing of good, and generosity towards fellow men; and He forbids all that is shameful, and all that runs counter to reason, as well as envy; He exhorts you so that you may bear it in mind"* (16: 90).

One may clearly see here that the believers are exhorted to interact with others in the society including non-Muslims on the basis of justice and generosity; and that they are warned against having any interaction that could cause moral degeneration. Muslims are required to support a good cause and not to support an evil cause: *"And help one another in furthering virtue and piety, and do not help one another in furthering evil and enmity..."* (5:2).

### **Command to do Good to Non-Muslim Parents, Kinsfolk, the Needy and Companions**

The Qur'an recognizes special status and human rights of every individual in the society. Parents constitute family, very basic unit of society. Human society stands to protect and develop its individuals. Parents' role in this respect is highly crucial. It is they who take care of the individuals in their infancy, childhood, and adolescence periods from all angles with a view to grooming them as valuable persons for the society. It is then quite logical to place the parents at the highest stratum of the society. The Qur'an seeks to develop a society based on peace and harmony among its members. And for that matter, it enjoins upon its followers to



embrace “excellence” (*ihsan*) in their interaction with others in the society. When suggesting “excellence” as the principle of interaction, the Qur’an mentions parents first, underscoring their significance as the pillars of society. In this regard, the Qur’an does not differentiate between Muslim and non-Muslim parents. It says: *“And submit to Allah, and join not any partners with Him; and interact excellently with parents, kinsfolk, , orphans, the needy, neighbors who are strangers and neighbors who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer, and what your right hands possess: for Allah loves not the arrogant, the vainglorious”* (4:36).

This verse stresses on the principle of “excellence” in social interaction with everyone in the society, parents, kinsfolk, orphans, the needy, neighbors, companions, the subordinates etc. None can claim that this verse relates only to those who are Muslims. Because the people mentioned in the verse could be from any race, religion, and region. Another verse in the Qur’an while emphasizing “excellence” with parents draws a line of limit between the Muslim children and their non-Muslim parents: *“And We have enjoined on man concerning his parents: in travail upon travail did his mother bear him, and in years twain was his weaning: show gratitude to Me and to your parents. To Me is the ultimate destiny. But if they strive to compel you to associate gods with Me about which you have no knowledge, do not obey them, yet bear them company in this life with justice...”* (31: 14-15).

Here it has very clearly been mentioned that parents deserve the company of their children in accordance with what is right and just (*ma‘ruf*). It signifies that the children have the responsibility of providing sustenance, shelter, and other necessary comforts of life, speaking to them nicely, making them smile; but when it comes to the religion, Muslim children should reject the parents’ advice to commit *shirk* (polytheism). Even though the verse sheds light only on the interaction with parents, it may be derived from here that attitude of Muslims towards non-Muslim kinsfolk and others should be governed by the principle of *ma‘ruf* (justice and generosity).

After the battle of Hunayn, a woman from the tribe of Hawazin claimed that she was foster sister of the Prophet (s.a.w.) who after having recognized her spread his own sheet for her to sit and talked to her nicely, treated her excellently and upon her request equipped her with necessary provisions including a male slave for her service, and sent her back to her own people with honor. (Ibn Hisham, 1997, Vol. 4, 109)

## Justice as the Goal of Islam

Human society is always in need of its further development, which requires peace and harmony among members of society. And peace entails justice. Injustice causes chaos on the earth and consequently individuals and societies suffer from crises: moral, political, intellectual, and economic etc. All the Prophets (peace be upon all of them!) were raised to achieve the goal of justice in human relations: *“We have indeed raised Our prophets with clear proofs, and revealed to them the Book and the Balance so that the people might stand in justice”* (57:25).

The justice referred to in the above verse through the word *“qist”* is wider in its scope and deeper in its impact than the word *“’adl”*. *Qist* covers all the dimensions of life, whereas *“’adl”* may be applicable generally to the controversial issues, and mutual disputes and cases that are brought to authority concerned for solution and final verdict. What has been stated in the verses is that people might taste justice. The word “people” (*al-nas*) encompasses entire humanity living anywhere on the earth. As a matter of fact, the Last Prophet was also assigned the task of establishing justice in human life and relations regardless of their regional, racial, and religious identity. The Qur’an expresses the same goal of all the Prophets as “establish *al-din*”. Establishing justice and establishing *al-din* are two expressions for the same fact. According to the Qur’an, *al-din* is Islam; and Islam signifies peace, which entails justice. In other words, under Islamic rule and system of life everyone enjoys justice.

The Prophet (s.a.w.) explained the significance of justice in a statement which mentions that seven categories of people will be the most privileged on the Day of Judgment, the first being just ruler. (Al-Bukhari, 1400 A.H. Hadith No. 1423)

## Non-Believers in General Deserve Kind and Fair Treatment

The Qur’an exhorts believers to show kindness towards non-Muslims: *“Allah does not forbid you to show kindness and deal justly with those unbelievers who do not fight against you on account of your faith, and neither drive you forth from your homelands. Allah loves those who act justly”* (60: 8).

One of the wives of Abu Bakr was Qutaylah bint ‘Abd al-‘Uzza who did not accept Islam and stayed back in Makkah. After the truce of Hudaibiyyah between the Prophet (s.a.w.) and the Quraysh, she visited her daughter, Asma’ who hesitated to treat her mother kindly as she was unaware of Islamic ruling in such case. She consulted on this matter the Prophet (s.a.w.) who advised her to treat her kindly and

humanly. (Al-Bukhari, 1400 A.H, Vol. 4, Hadith No. 5978-5979) Before his Islam Abu Sufyan was once in Syria and was invited by the Roman emperor to his palace to enquire about the Prophet (s.a.w.). When the king enquired about the message of the Prophet (s.a.w.), Abu Sufyan answered: "He commands us for prayer, charity, safeguarding chastity, and doing good to others". (Ibid, Hadith No. 5980) Once the Prophet (s.a.w.) presented a very nice dress to 'Umar ibn al-Khattab who accepted the gift and sent it to Makkah for his non-Muslim brother. (Ibid, Hadith No. 5981) Once someone asked the Prophet (s.a.w.) to advise him something by doing which he could get entry into the paradise; the answer given by the Prophet (s.a.w.) was: "Worship Allah and associate no partners with Him, establish prayer, pay charity due, and show kindness to your kinsfolk". (Ibid, Hadith No. 5983)

## Conclusion

The Qur'an prescribes for its followers two different sets of commands concerning non-Muslims, one for the enemies who are bent upon eliminating Muslims, and the other for the non-combatants from among the non-believers who do not do anything wrong to Muslims. As for the enemies, the Qur'an prohibits Muslims to befriend them as it could harm their own faith and jeopardize the very security of Islamic state and society. The basic Qur'anic principles of interaction with non-Muslims in general are justice, equity, kindness, and generosity. The prohibition of making *awliya'* from among the enemies does not signify guardian, protector, and supporter. It is because the Prophet (s.a.w.) himself took the support of his unbelieving relatives in the cause of his mission; and also advised his followers to take protection of the Abyssinian king, Negus. What is prohibited is the friendship between the believers and the non-believers particularly the enemies. Such friendship is detrimental for both Muslim individuals as well as Muslim society.

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## **Sociology in Turkey**

### **The Historical and Social Processes Influencing the Emergence, Development and Institutionalization of Sociology in Turkey**

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#### **Abstract**

With the advent of Modernity in the Ottoman realm, which was for years the center of Islamic civilization, the cultural, political and social life of Muslims was drastically transformed. Following these transformations, the ground was prepared for issues arising from the conflict between Tradition and Modernity as well as the conditions for the emergence of sociology as a discipline. Sociology in Turkey developed as a result of attempts to account for the crises in the Ottoman Empire's intellectual, military and political existence. Some of the most important questions at this time are: Why is the Ottoman Empire disintegrating? And what solutions can be found to save it? The intellectual endeavors of the thinkers at this period to answer these questions resulted in the emergence of three main trends: Westernism, Turkism and Islamism. Therefore, the emergence of sociology in Turkey is intertwined with the formation of the intellectual movements of Westernism, Turkism and Islamism that followed the failure of the policy of Ottomanism. Employing descriptive-analytical methods, this article discusses the social and historical processes influencing the formation of sociology as a discipline in Turkey and the problems Turkish sociology has faced in the past and the present.

**Key Words:** Sociology, Islamism, Turkism, Ottomanism, Ziya Gökalp, Niyazi Berkes.

## **Introduction**

A few years after it was first introduced into the scientific world, sociology was received in Turkey as a body of knowledge. Perhaps this interest in sociology bears a direct relationship to an interest in intellectualism, and even beyond that, to individuals' political tendencies. The end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries are the period of concentration on sociology in Turkey. In these years, sociology had become a significant discipline for those who aimed to bring about changes and transformations in society (Çelebi, 2013: 60). Since in Turkey political events gave rise to social activities and social activities gave rise to sociological challenges (Kaçmazoğlu, 2013:97), it is impossible to imagine a straight line of development for the discipline of sociology in Turkey. Consequently, the formation process of sociology as an academic discipline in Turkey ought to be explained on a number of levels by taking into account the major turning points, discontinuities and transformations it has experienced in the process of its genesis. Reviewing Turkish sources, this article aims to describe the historical and intellectual movements influencing the emergence and institutionalization of sociology in Turkey as an academic discipline as well as the issues it has encountered since its emergence.

## **Research Questions**

1. How can the formation of sociology in Turkey be accounted for from its inception to the present?
2. What historical, social and political processes have influenced the formation of sociology in Turkey?
3. What issues has sociology in Turkey encountered?

## **Research Method and Technique**

The methods employed are descriptive-analytical. Based on this method, the materials relating to the topic were summarized, noted and classified. Then, with a view to the research questions, answers were extracted from these materials, and were further described and analyzed. The methods of accumulating information are mostly documentary and library-based.

## **A Review of Modernization Processes as the Precondition for the Emergence of Sociology in 19th-Century Turkey**

At the time of the emergence of industrialism in Europe, the Ottoman Empire encompassed a wide variety of religious and racial groups. It also had a theocratic monarchy inherited and managed by Ottoman descendants. The dominant philosophy among the Ottoman Turkish thinkers originated in Aristotelian ideas that had been translated into Arabic and moderated by the theological beliefs of the Muslims, neo-Platonists, Arabic sciences, and some Hellenistic ideas (Berkes, 1936). From 18th century onward, in contrast to European states that had created new conditions of living in economic, scientific, educational and military spheres, the Ottoman state not only did not have any progress or development in such spheres, but had also been economically affected by constant wars and conflicts. The Ottoman state, opposed by Western states, lost a considerable portion of its territory for the first time as a result of the Treaty of Karlowitz at the beginning of 1699. This feeling of defeat became the main point of departure for modernizing movements. After the signing of this treaty, some Ottoman statesmen, believing the West to be militarily, technologically and educationally superior, emphasized the necessity of modernizing the military techniques of the Ottoman army (Ülken, 1966: 16). Some state-related officials as well as persons not related to the state (mostly including persons sent to Europe to further their studies), had, in opposition to the Ottoman rule, arrived at the conclusion that they should imitate the scientific, educational, military, technological and economic advancements of the West. At the beginning of the 19th century, insignificant moves toward Westernization and modernization had become substantial intellectual movements advocating the aim of following the West. The most important Westernist intellectuals of this period are Namik Kemal, Ziya Pasha, and Ibrahim Shinasi, all of whom had Westernism and nationalistic beliefs. Ahmet Cevdet Pasha, as a compromising and lenient thinker, and Ali Suavi, as a revolutionary thinker, are also two of the most important modernists during this period. At this time, rationalism, materialism, and positivism were the most significant Western intellectual movements that gradually proved to be influential on the neo-Ottomans' thoughts. The most crucial issue for such intellectuals was Ottoman backwardness in comparison to Western progress. In this period, the central question that preoccupied the minds was 'Why are the Muslims, Ottomans and Turks backward?' (Ülken, 1966: 316). There are important stages for the entrance of Ottomans into modernization, among which the *Tanzimat* and Constitutional eras are the most remarkable. Both periods are times of

fundamental transformations, which challenge thoughts and intellectual movements. The intellectual processes of the Second Constitutional Era arose from concerns over preventing the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. In this period, attempt was made to discover and strengthen the strong ties that kept Ottoman society together. In the 19th century, the Ottoman state was, on the one hand, involved in the renovation and modernization of its own organizations, while in Europe, on the other hand, concepts such as economic development, democracy and liberty were spreading out to the whole of the world. These concepts proved to be most influential among the nations and minorities under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. Re-solidification and reconstruction of the Ottoman state in the form of the *Tanzimat*, which secured more rights and freedom for the minorities in the Empire, along with global changes resulted in the possibility for the gestation of autonomist movements within the Empire. Following these events, the attempts of the intelligentsia to find solutions led to the genesis of intellectual movements such as Ottomanism, Islamism and Turkism. The first proposition for the establishment of political unity was the unification of all the Muslim and non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman state. This unity denotes Ottomanism or Ottoman unity (Atasoy, 2013: 20-23). In 1908, Ottomanism policies did not succeed in safeguarding Ottoman territorial integrity and this led to political conflicts. It was in this period that sociological foundations for the re-establishment of a unified nation were studied (ibid.: 136). Moreover, Islamism, as a political ideology, had not shown any specific utility in preserving the Islamic *umma* within the Ottoman Empire and could not, thus, prevent the Arab sheikhs from entering a game that imperialism had begun. Due to these problems as well as the Balkan wars in the years 1912-1913, Ottomanism policies were completely given up and Islamism, too, was weakened by the Albanian independence in 1912 and Arab rebellions in 1916. Therefore, the only route open to the Turks was the awakening of national consciousness and supporting Turkish nationalism. In the mean time, Ziya Gökalp presented a middle way and a synthesis among the three tendencies of Islamism, Turkism and Modernism and added a sociological dimension to Turkism. Gökalp's intellectual attempt is the beginning of the formation of sociology in Turkey.

## **Emergence, Development and Institutionalization of Sociology in Turkey**

Similar to France at the beginning of the 20th century, two distinct and different sociological approaches can be identified in Turkish sociological thought:



Durkheim's sociology and le Play's sociology. Another similarity exists in the preference and selection of Durkheimian sociology over le Play's due to the political situations in both countries. In this period, the general inclination of the Turkish intellectuals to solve the problems by aiding the state is similar to sociology in France (Ilyasöglü, 1985: 2165). Even though in Turkey the main issue was less the reconstruction of society than the establishment of a modern national state following the Ottoman Empire's disintegration, sociology in Turkey, too, was, since its emergence, first accepted as the ideology of the Committee of Unity and Progress and then the ideology of the republican system. Two important names in the intellectual life of sociology in Turkey are Ziya Gökalp and Prens Sabahattin, the first representing the Durkheimian school and the second la Play's (1806-1882). Both Gökalp and Sabahattin were seeking answers to the question 'what is to be done?' at a time when the Ottoman Empire was about to lose its order and power under the pressure of internal mutinies and foreign states. Prens Sabahattin could not publish his ideas at that time because they were in opposition to the Durkheimian sociology Gökalp had concentrated on; moreover, their level of analysis was individuals. Sabahattin advocated le Play's thoughts that emphasized individual freedom and independence. Towards the end of the Ottoman period, when the state was losing its former order vis-à-vis the separatist moves of religious and ethnic minorities within the Empire as well as the pressure of Western states, the sociological approach that concentrates on social issues and problems and whose unit of analysis is the society in its totality was given priority against the more individualistic approaches, and was adopted by Ziya Gökalp and his fellow-thinkers as the discipline that will save the Ottoman Empire from disintegration. The beginning of sociology in Turkey is tied to Ziya Gökalp's intellectual attempts; indeed, he is known as the father of Turkish sociology. Ziya Gökalp was an intellectual in the final years of the Ottoman Empire in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Preventing the collapse and disintegration of the Empire and the establishment of a new and modern state were his ideals. At this time, racial minorities' autonomist movements and uprisings, influenced by the idea of nationalism, had begun to decompose the Ottoman territory. Gökalp was a thinker who systematically studied all the conditions, specificities, problems and issues of Turkey by adopting the Durkheimian approach of sociology (Çelebi, 2002: 256). He borrowed the Durkheimian concept of solidarity, but unlike Durkheim who employed the concepts of 'mechanical solidarity' and 'organic solidarity' within the framework of the concept of society, Gökalp used them within the concept of nation because what existed in Turkey were only religious and ethno-racial oppositions.

Therefore, in such circumstances, creating national solidarity is one of the main conditions (Ülken, 2007: 120). The distinction between culture/civilization provides the basis and foundation of Gökalp's social and political views. At the beginning, he explains the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in terms of the relation between culture and civilization, and then identifies the way to the revival of a new nation, which consists of the ideal of Turkism, Islamism and Modernism by distinguishing between culture and civilization. In fact, his definition of Turkism is equal to his understanding of culture (Berkes, 1965: 37).

As well as introducing sociology into Turkey, Ziya Gökalp played an important role in its institutionalization. The first textbook on sociology was written by him. This book comprises the seminars given by Gökalp at the Faculty of Literature, University of Istanbul (which was at that time the School of Literature at the Istanbul *Darülfünûn*<sup>1</sup>). Moreover, in 1917 a monthly entitled *Journal of Sociology* started to be published by the Faculty of Literature at Istanbul University, which is still being published today. Gökalp was also the first editor of this journal. Between the years 1915-1919 he further offered seminars on "Sociology and Analogies", "Sociology of Law", and "The Family and Totemism". He also established the first chair for sociology in the Department of Philosophy at the Faculty of Literature, University of Istanbul, in 1914. Founded in 1913 in Istanbul, *Türk Bilgi derneği*, the first association of sociology was, furthermore, instrumental in the institutionalization of sociology in Turkey, despite the fact that it did not bear 'sociology' in its name (Çelebi, 2002:256). Gökalp was among the founders of this association.

From its establishment to the first years of the Turkish Republic, sociology was much favored by the state due to the fact that it formed the official state ideology. It can be claimed that the French school of sociology was more influential than its counterparts in other countries in forming the scientific outlook of sociologists. The dominant sociological approach was, indeed, Gökalp's Durkheimian approach which also had nationalistic inclinations (Berkes, 1936). Sociological researches and studies at this time, i.e., since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1924 up to the beginning of the 1940s, mainly dealt with subjects such as revolution, Turkey's underdevelopment in comparison to the West, and investigations into its causes by adopting different theoretical approaches. The majority of these studies were undertaken at the University of Istanbul which was the vanguard of sociological studies during this period. At this time, the Istanbul *Darülfünûn*, which changed its name to Istanbul University after the revolution, monopolized sociology in Turkey. It bears emphasis that the researches carried out

in this period were solely theoretical-conceptual and were by no means quantitative, statistical or field studies (Akpolat, 2013: 76).

In the 1940s a new sociological approach emerged in Turkey. The second important chair for sociology in Turkey was established in 1939. This association undermined the unique authority of Istanbul University in sociological studies because the founding sociologists of this association influenced the processes of sociology presented up to that point. Niyazi Berkes and Behice Boran, two of the founders who had accomplished their graduate studies in the U.S. began a new phase. Both of these professors had American sociology as their frame of reference. As a result of their attempts, Turkish sociology developed its theoretical literature. American sociological sources were used by sociologists along with French intellectual and theoretical sources. At this time, two significant transformations occurred: first, new areas of research had entered Ankara University, i.e., there was an increase in studies on the city and the country mainly adopting field-oriented approaches; second, many attempts were made to open up a space for empirical studies in sociology. Berkes's book, *Studies on some Ankara Villages*<sup>2</sup>, and Boran's book, *Studies on Social Structure*<sup>3</sup>, both written in 1940, embody and manifest field-oriented methods, applied sociology and new empirical studies. A new sociological approach, based on concrete social realities emerged as a substitute for the Durkheim-Gökalp tradition. This new method was completely within the framework of applied sociology and, in this way, displayed its differences (Akpolat, 2013: 85-87). After the 1940s, and unlike its beginning years, sociology abandoned the function of legitimizing the state and adopted a more critical approach (Kaçmazoğlu, 1999).

For the first time in 1950, Turkey witnessed single-stage elections. As a result of the elections, the center of authority was completely transferred from the Republican Party to the Democratic Party. On the other hand, important transformations in foreign policy were under way. As a consequence of World War II, Turkey, led by the U.S., was being integrated into the economic, military and political systems of the liberal West, within the framework of bilateral pacts. Due to the beginning of this new phase since 1950, a new conception of sociology and, consequently, a new conception of sociological activities, ensued. The sociologists of this era praised democracy and liberalism and criticized communism, socialism and leftist moves. In this period, the three important fields of sociological studies are, first, westernization, second, the characteristics of a social individualistic structure and, third, socialism and communism. In the years 1950-51, many changes were made to the Turkish penal code. These changes banned any idea or thought

that followed the Left at the universities. Some leftist moves, i.e., socialism and communism, were prohibited by the state and a number of sociologists were also participating in such prohibitions. Some sociologists demanded a decrease in the economic responsibilities and prerogatives of the state and, through their own attempts and researches, emphasized the necessity of liberalism (Kaçmazoğlu, 2008: 146). In the 1950s, sociologists whose sociological and, in particular, methodological approach came to the fore were those such as Prens Sabahattin. At this time, Gökalp's Comte-Durkhemian approach was completely abandoned and Prens Sabahattin's individualistic approach was proposed. Influenced by the Anglo-Saxon school of social sciences, sociologists investigated social issues through empirical sociology and field researches and undertook considerable field studies (ibid: 100-102).

Unlike the years prior to 1960, when socialism was not discussed, after 1960 the majority of sociological studies concentrated on socialism. In the years 1960-80 significant transformations occur in Turkey's social structure, migration becomes the most important issue in Turkey and immigrants to the cities begin the process of living on the outskirts. This is not just a population translocation from the countries to the cities; the immigration of labor force from Turkey to European countries starts as well. In addition to these issues, from 1960 on, Turkish society moves toward consumerism. Once again in Turkey, as a result of policies for the industrialization of industrial activities, increase in educational opportunities, drastic changes in class structure, family structure, values, interests and consumerist habits, immigration from the countries to the cities and foreign countries and the new appearance of cities all undergo transformations. All of these changes and transformations in the years 1960-80 influenced the course of sociological researches and studies and directed sociologists to the investigation and exploration of issues arising from these changes (Kaçmazoğlu, 2013: 118). In this period, a significant change arises in the tendencies of the dominant sociology. Along with the prioritization of American sociology in Turkey, sociological tendencies favoring historical studies emerge. In the 1960s, two different sociological conceptions, in total opposition to one another, were on the rise: the first approach is the American structural-functionalist, and the second approach is one that valued more and put emphasis on historical studies. In the years 1960-80, sociologists influenced by American sociology, focused on positivistic approaches, social determination, and empiricism in their studies, whereas a great number of sociologists adopted historical sociology as the approach for their work. This latter group studied and challenged the characteristics of historical change in Turkey. In this regard, the

general tendencies of sociologists concerning Turkey's social history can be divided into two sections: the first section does not observe any differences between the evolutionary and developmental courses in Turkey and the West, while the second section considers Turkish and Western societies to be distinct and different. Sociologists who believe in the necessity of understanding Ottoman and pre-Ottoman social structures in order to understand the present and the future, study the constant and continual process of the ancient Turks, and, in particular, the final phases of the Ottomans up until the years of the establishment of the Turkish Republic and beyond to the 1960. Such an approach undermines claims to the lack of relation and continuity between Ottoman society and post-Republic Turkey and puts forward the theory that there exist continuity and interconnectedness in social and institutional terms between Ottoman society and modern Turkey (Kaçmazoğlu, 2013: 120). After the 1960s, among sociologists who studied the characteristics of Ottoman social and intellectual structures, and, particularly, its final phase, Niyazi Berkes and Şerif Mardin occupy a special place.

### **The Present Status of Sociology in Turkey**

From the 1980s onward, Turkey enters a new phase of political, economic and social changes, which first occur in political and economic realms and will, later, be noticeable in the field of culture. In post-1980 Turkey, with the blowing of neo-liberal winds, and, particularly, with the formation of Western institutions such as the World Monetary Fund and the World Bank, interventional policies in the realm of economy, implemented under the supervision of the state elite, lost their validity rapidly. Economic policies that advertised free market economy were in a way imposed on Turkey and other countries that were similarly completing the process of industrialization. Undoubtedly, the failure of the representatives of the concentrated economy model, i.e., the eastern bloc countries, had a great impact on this change. Thus, from mid-1980s, after the military state loses power in Turkey, a more civil state comes to power, and policies aiming at a civil society gain more force. In this new period, when the pioneering role of the state in the economic realm is undermined, before long the state loses its exclusive control over all areas of social life (family, culture, industry, religion, education, health, etc.) so that in a short time the ground is prepared for the establishment of a civil society (Özcan, 2013:145). Due to political and social transformations, the 1980s also witness some fundamental changes in the field of social theory. Most prominent among these changes was the fact that Marxist arguments and theories had lost their impact in

sociology. With the disappearance of the value and validity of Marxist social theories, any outlook and terminology that had a political-economical basis was put aside. Analyses of social classification and structure were replaced by analyses of suburbs, poverty and social change, development and growth, social welfare, equality and distribution of income. The generation of sociologists who did research on the economic aspects of Modernity in the 1970s and partly to mid 1980s, later abandoned economic issues and, rather, concentrated on cultural issues and subjects. Those sociologists who in 1960s-70s dealt with Ottoman history as well as Ottoman economy and social structure, dismissed historicism and directed their attention wholly to the present moment and its issues. Projects such as communism, revolution, etc., which are concerned with the future, were totally banished from sociology. Capitalism's victory over socialism at the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall played an important role in these changes. The total marginalization of hard and uncompromising ideologies about the arrival of the end of history and the strengthening of tendencies based on the invalidity of future predictions, had opened up the way to the idea of living at the moment and an increase in consumerist tendencies caused by capitalism.

Another subject that had started to emerge at the beginning of the 1980s is concerned with epistemology and methodology in social science. In this framework, many critiques were leveled at positivism for the determinism it has borrowed from natural sciences, and the criteria of objectivity and lawfulness. In scientific fields whose aim or subject is the society (such as sociology), a torrent of questions about and criticisms against the meaning of disinterestedness in positivism had begun to flow. In this period, ideas proposing that scientific methods are not absolute and are the outcome of social processes gained currency. Turkish sociology at this time was not dependant on a comprehensive sociological paradigm. The years 1980-2000 witness the coming to prominence of native approaches and original and native conceptualization. Positivistic sciences, social engineering, and sciences with claims to lawfulness and universalism (generalizing and legislative sciences) came under wide critical study. With the marginalization of transhistorical, evolutionary, generalizational, wholistic, positivistic and regulatory sociological paradigms, the center stage was gradually occupied by historical, indigenous, particularist and hermeneutic paradigms. Interpretation is also visible in methodological priorities. Instead of functionalism, structuralism and symbolic interactionism that are positivistic in methodological terms and were popular with sociologists in previous periods, it is now hermeneutic and postpositivistic methodologies, discourse analysis and linguistic roles that exact attention. In this period, the move from

quantitative, data-oriented and case-oriented studies toward qualitative studies has accelerated. Transferring scientific products out of the universities is another noticeable change in sociological studies during this phase. Since mid-1980s, large and well-known publishing houses, strategic institutes, associations, the municipalities of larger cities and other institutes involved in scientific-cultural activities have given a share to educated people in their activities. The beginning of the 1990s witnesses an explosion in Turkey of the publication and selling of translated books by domestic and foreign publishers. On the other hand, sociologists were recruited by general organizations and endowed foundations to carry out social projects and the analysis of social text. In the political realm too, after the 1980s, when concepts such as integration in the world gained validity, the national state heritage was challenged in Turkey. In order to sustain coordination with the European Union and as a result of the direct impact of globalization, in the political and sociological areas the concept of nation has been removed from the agenda in Turkey and subcategories of the nation such as racial and religious populations and minorities have been emphasized. In post-Republic Turkey, the axes of nationalism, national state and citizenship were quite important in the current and dominant sociological understanding; however, later, and particularly after the 1990s, these axes disintegrated and, rather, started to investigate their own sub-layers. In the 1990s, one of the concepts that become quite prominent is the concept of non-western Modernity, the idea that there is not one type of Modernity only and that it is possible for Modernity to be implemented in different and various forms. This approach is quite contrary to those which propose only one type of Modernity, especially that of the classic Western one. In other words, based on their own needs and conditions, non-western countries are now searching ways to move from Westernization toward a unique Modernity. Studies and attempts by Şerif Mardin and Nilüfer Göle in this period have put discussions of globalization and postmodernism on the academic agenda. At this time, some authors have also started to resurface. In fact, the ideas of these authors have been severed from their former contexts and, due to their original and native content, have been studied and interpreted in the spirit of the new era. For instance, the image readers had of Cemil Meriç in the 1970s is not similar to that they had of him in the 1980s (Özcan, 2013: 157-159).

## Conclusion

Sociology in Turkey developed as a reply to the questions that dealt with the crises in the intellectual, military and political life of the Ottoman Empire. The important questions at this time are: Why is the Ottoman Empire disintegrating? What solutions can be found to save the state? (Berkes, 1936). The intellectual attempts of thinkers in this period to answer these questions led to the emergence of three important trends: Westernism, Turkism and Islamism. Each of these trends proposed a different exit from the crises and each had its own particular intellectual representatives. Later, these intellectual trends turned into the mainstream tendencies in Turkish sociology. Therefore, the emergence of sociology in Turkey is intertwined with the genesis of the Westernism, Turkism and Islamism trends following the decline of Ottomanism policies. An important and interesting point about the abovementioned tendencies is that the three trends of Ottomanism, Islamism and Turkism have, in one way or another, Western sources and were developed so as to find a solution for the crises that had afflicted the Empire. All three have somehow had an eye to the West and ignored the West: the Islamists aim to acquire Western technology while preserving Islamic values, and Ottomanists and Turkists were also seeking more political relations with the West. The main trends of sociology in Turkey came into existence after the establishment of political relations with the West and Westernism became the first subject in Turkish sociology. In Turkey, especially in the years after the establishment of the Republic, sociology has functioned to legitimize the state and the interests and inclinations of statesmen, so much so that for a long time it was influenced by political movements and this caused any intellectual school to last only for a short period of time and to rapidly alter with any change in politics. The subjects and main tendencies in Turkish sociology changed in different periods but these changes were neither due to changes in the nature of society itself nor an outcome of its internal dynamism; on the contrary, the process of sociology in Turkey and its main characteristics and tendencies overlap with political turning points (Hançer, 2004). Like many other countries in the world, the state plays an important role in Turkish universities, in a way that one can say that the political government determines sociology. The more the institutionalization of this field of study in universities increases, the more the rate of state determination grows. In relation to this, it can be said that some factors have influenced sociology in Turkey:



The discipline of sociology itself and its nature, the dependence of universities as an institution on political power, Turkey's political and social characteristics as well as its changing essence (Hançer, 2004) and, the last factor, the power hierarchy in the world and the division of labor in the production of knowledge. To explain the last factor, it can be said that the relation between sociology in Turkey and Western sociology is a center-periphery relation (Akşit,1986). Power hierarchy in the world and labor division in the production of knowledge have caused the emergence of the center and periphery division in the production of science. This means that the societies at the center produce knowledge and the other peripheral countries provide data in relation to that knowledge, theory or research subject. Academics and social scientists in Turkey are under double pressure: on the one hand, the pressures of Western-central sciences and, on the other, bureaucratic organizations and educational regulations at higher levels. Many of the changing relations and characteristics in Turkish sociology have been presented in terms of the hegemonic center-periphery relations. For instance, many of the changes emerging in the fields of theory and methodology in the West have shown their impact on sociology in Turkey in a way that the adoption and application of Western theories have overtaken the tendencies of Turkish sociologists in the discovery of methodologies and theories appropriate for national and local studies. Hegemonic center-periphery relations in Turkey are quite visible in the realms of theory, methodology, and the priority of type as well as place of publication of works to the extent that many of the sociological studies in Turkey are generalizations of Western sociology. In such circumstances, Western sociology is regarded as a quite legitimate axis and Western sciences are quite valid. In Turkey, the most usual inclination among students is that they undertake studies on Turkey by applying Western theories and this is another sign of the center-periphery relation in Turkish sociology (Akşit, 1986).

## Note

1. House of Sciences
2. Bazı Ankara Köyleri Üzerinde Bir Araştırma
3. Toplumsal Yapı Araştırmaları

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## **The Theory of Substantial Motion in Translation**

### ***Hermeneutical Pluralism Challenged***

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#### **Abstract**

This study aims to examine the applicability of Mulla Sadra's theory of substantial motion in translation of religious and literary texts. It will be in search for meaning and the shifting intensities of the reality of the source text, on the one hand, and the cognitive and intellectual motions in the translator on the other. The study further explains translation as a gradual process of permanent motion while keeping the faith to the unity and single truth of the source text. Accordingly, it will divide texts into eternal and temporal texts based on which multiplicity of interpretations can be explained.

**Keywords:** Mulla Sadra, substantial motion, pluralism, unity.

## Introduction

This study relies on Mulla Sadra's theory of Substantial Motion to explain the stable essence of the holy texts and their interpretable substance. The aim is to challenge pluralism as against polysemy and interpretability of divine texts.

Pluralism which relies on the instability of the essence of the text will be the competing idea of the theory of substantial motion in this study. It will be discussed that the belief in pluralism inevitably leads to contradictory meanings which cannot hold true at the same time. The theory of substantial motion will treat the source text not as a rigid text but as a being with a stable origin yet graded substance which permits motion along the hierarchies of meanings all permissible at the same time.

To achieve the above purpose:

- The study begins with an overview of Mulla Sadra's theory of Substantial Motion.
- It goes on to examine the applicability of the above theory in the hermeneutics of divine and human texts with particular focus on translation.
- It offers certain key concepts and a definition of text with a view to substantial motion.
- It investigates motion in the three categories of text, translator and translation process.
- It offers the concept of *tashkeek* (gradation) in the ontology of the text;
- And most importantly, it examines the concept of time in the human and divine text based on which two text types will be defined.
- Finally, the study will examine the concepts of pre-understanding as well as plurality of meaning vs. polysemy to present a new theory in the translation and hermeneutics of divine texts.

## Mulla Sadra's theory of Substantial Motion

One of the key properties of existence for Mulla Sadra is its transubstantiality, effected through what he termed substantial motion (*al-haraka al-jawhariyya*). The Peripatetics had held that substance only changes suddenly, i.e. from one substance to another or from one instant to another, in generation and corruption, and that gradual motion is confined to the accidents (quantity, quality, and place). Sadra



completely rejected this, on the grounds that the reality of substance, its being, must itself be in motion, for the net result of the Peripatetic view is merely a static conglomeration of spatio-temporal events. The movement from potentiality to actuality of a thing is in fact the abstract notion in the mind, while material being itself is in a constant state of flux perpetually undergoing substantial change. (Cooper, 1998)

## An Explanation of Key Concepts

This section explores the concepts necessary for the development of the theory of substantial motion in the understanding and translation of religious texts. It begins with the philosophical underpinnings of substantial motion, and their relation with the source/target texts, the translator and the translation process. It investigates, among other things, the concept of truth and essence in Sadra's hermeneutics, the gradation of meaning (*tashkeek*), and esoteric meanings as the ontological levels of the source text. It concludes with presenting the theory.

- **Essence:** the unchanging reality of the being. In our textual analysis of divine/human texts, essence can be stable or in motion depending on the text type. Divine texts possess a stable essence while human texts may behave differently.
- **Substance** (*Jawhar*): substance is that which subsists by itself contrary to accident which subsists by other than itself; accident can be compared with 'attribute' and substance to 'that which takes on an attribute'. Texts, in our study, possess a hierarchical substance which permits polysemy.
- **Gradation** (*Tashkeek*): To the extent the gradation of meaning is concerned in translation, the strata of meaning make possible a kind of motion in the source and translated texts which can be unveiled through the willful move of the translator along the ontological levels of his interpretive existence.
- **Text:** For the purpose of this study, we define 'text' not as a combination of orthographic words but a 'being' with ontological levels which permit motion through interpretation and translation. We consider the text as the *underlying reality* which remains the same in translation no matter what the target language is.
- **Motion:** Motion is defined as the gradual movement of an object from potency to act (Aquinas, 2014). In this study, gradation of the source text is

considered as a cause of motion in translation as it causes the translator's move from a state of potency in the ST to an equivalent state of actuality in the TT.

## **Motion in Text and the Translator's Move**

### ***Motion in Text***

'Text', in our definition, refers to a single entity possessed of a hierarchical order at whose levels, existence or being of the text is one thing but whose images have fallen in several mirrors (multiplicity of meaning); however, the text is classified into different degrees or levels with respect to the validity, strength and weakness of its types.

Revelation (the Book) is the same as the Divine Speech; but it finds different forms corresponding to the world it is sent to. For example, in this world, it finds the form of the words of the Qur'an. In its Truth, it had been in another form; it was then sent to the heart of the Prophet in the form of Divine Speech: all-at-once.

### ***Translator's Move***

Meaning, which the translator attributes to the source text, can be different in different moments. Individuals are in constant flow and change every moment; then the way they look at life, and in a smaller scale, at a text differs every time they read it.

From one perspective, meaning is not 'in' the source text but is formed by the interaction of the source text with the translator's own horizon of perceptual and social experience—the translator's interpretive contribution. The role of the translator, then, is to interact with the source text and put the ST's potencies into motion in the target language.

The human factor, the translator and his mind in motion, which acts as a mover, is itself in potency because every moment it is in a state of being and in a state of development. The translator's moving the ST (source text) is concurrent to the ST (the mobile) being moved, and the translator's rest is concurrent with the rest of the ST (the mobile). Here's how meaning is generated differently by different people and how a single ST is translated into different TTs (translated texts).

While possessing stability and an external real entity, 'meaning' is continually in motion, and new meanings render new translations. Translations similarly

experience substantial motion. Every time the ST discloses itself to the translator, he adds something to his 'self' and experiences substantial motion. Then, the next time he reads the same text, or renders a new translation of the same text, his 'self' is not the previous self; this is one aspect of substantial motion in the translator. Hence the creation of meaning is not an invention of meaning, but the translator's substantial motion opens a new horizon to the text.

Then all translators are right in their assertions concerning the meaning of the text with the precondition that they observe the criteria: moving in the right path which is connected to the ST's essence. This right path is hierarchical (vertically connected to the macro-essence of the text) only. That is to say, if the viewer's move (i.e. the translator's ontological motion) at every horizon is conducted horizontally, this will be a circular move at that horizon only, which means that he will move not towards the core-essence of the text but in a circle and hence will never reach the truth of the source text. This is not the substantial motion which we speak of; such a circular motion is nothing but stopping at an ontological level; it will never render the stages intended by the Author.

In this transcendent manner, our mind possesses a definite intentionality that fulfills itself in apprehending purified essences and in surpassing these to reach the being. Therefore, the translator's mind fulfills itself at one ontological level in understanding the purified essence (belonging to a particular ontological level of the source text) and in surpassing these two reach the being of the text (its core essence).

In the translation process, accidental motions are those originally caused by the translator; accidental motions are those which do not subsist by themselves; they are imposed to the source text and are not attached to the substance of the text. Therefore, for motions coming into existence unilaterally by the translator, if the source text refuses to bear such a motion, then the meaning and, as a result, the translation is accidental. Substantial motion, on the other hand, may refer to the essential meanings of the ST unveiled by the translator through rendering a new translation. Meanwhile, substantial motion can refer to the ST's being rendered in the target language and initiating a new motion in that language and the TL (target language) literature; from the TL's point of view, every translation can be considered a new cause of motion.

### Gradation in Translation: *Tashkeek*

The idea of *tashkeek al-wujud*, of the equivocality or gradations of being explains why there is a differentiation of things in a world in which there is really only one absolutely real thing. As we improve our understanding of reality we come closer to appreciating the unity of everything, and we can do this at the same time as understanding how this basic unity is nonetheless diversified in the world of experience in a variety of different directions. (Leaman, n.d.)

In substantial motion, according to Mulla Sadra, there is no need to an external subject since the very object itself, in every moment, is different from the same object in one moment before or one moment after (Akbarian, 2001). Accordingly, it is not the translator who originally makes the motion in the source text, though it is him who discovers the source text's motion, and creates a new motion in the target language. That is to say, from the source text's view point, it is not the translator who acts as an agent of motion (the mover); the text itself is in motion because it is gradable (=interpretable; and in *tashkeek*, to borrow Mulla Sadra's terminology). However, from the target language's perspective, the translator is the first cause of the motion, as without the translated text, the source text in the target language is absolute potency with no motion.

Gradation of meanings and *tashkeek* in translation means that meanings belong to the source text as its ontological levels and with respect to the gradability (*tashkeek*) of the existence of the text, and in fusion with the interpreter's horizon, will produce a variety of translations, all possible depending on the richness of the source text and the translator's ontological level. Therefore, in the case of a highly gradable text, such as the Qur'an, the viewer's horizon, which is by itself gradable, will have to mix and such a fusion of horizons will cause a dual motion with the text serving both as an object of motion and a limit to control the motion.

The reason why the Qur'an has been sent down in a symbolic language is that such a language allows multiplicity of meaning to be captured according to the ontological levels of the people who read it. It is potentiality for multiple meanings, and people who read it experience an ontological motion every time they capture one of those potencies and make an actuality. The meanings the interpreter infers are according to his level of existence; as he is in constant motion, he is constantly moving to a new level of existence, therefore, every meaning is new.

Tirmidhi tried to prove that the interpreter travels from the surface layer to different significations of the word and prefers one meaning considering the context of the

word and his personal status. Therefore, his journey is from surface to essence and vice versa. (Musharraf, 2013, pp. 39-40)

In terms of essence, 'superficial' changes do not change what the thing is, and so the changes are merely "accidental" rather than "essential." (Ross, 2006) This is very important in the present study of substantial motion in translation. The pluralistic, i.e. contradictory meanings make changes which are in contradiction with the essence, but the hierarchical (vertical) meanings (each of which complement each other) show the gradual motion in substance not in essence; thus, the essence of the text is fixed while the substance is in motion depending on a variety of factors; therefore, words which comprise the substance of the text allow for motion, but the essence puts the limits (*hadd*). Contradictory meanings are in contradiction with the essence of the text, which is not acceptable taking substantial motion into account. Accordingly, essential changes in translation are regarded as those which fundamentally change the source text's identity. While substantial motion is caused by the gradual hierarchical motion of the translations along the source text's essence without making any changes to its essence.

### **Time in Hermeneutics of Divine Text**

Time is the measure of motion. If motion were not eternal, then time would not have always existed; but, according to Aristotle, no one would be willing to say that time has not always been in existence. Nor can motion cease, since to do so something must cause it to cease, but then the thing that caused motion to cease would require something to cause its cessation and the process would continue *ad infinitum*. Aristotle concludes, "that there never was a time when there was not motion, and never will be a time when there will not be motion" (Aristotle, 2007, p. 146); hence infinite understandings are possible because time is going on, every moment a new understanding develops.

When the context (of time, place, etc.) changes, the text becomes the source of change: it becomes a text in a new context; a moving text in a new context. Such a moving text will have a new behavior (motion) which is controlled by its essence; substance of this text (let's say substance of the translated text for instance) may be in motion in the new language and the new culture.

Time can be used to develop two texts types; time-accepting (temporal) texts, i.e. time is a dimension of those texts, and eternal texts, which are the opposite type, to be explained in the coming sections.

### Text Types by Substantial Motion: Temporal vs. eternal texts

In terms of essence, texts can be divided into temporal and eternal:

Eternal texts (such as the Qur'an) have a fixed essence (because their essence is in absolute perfection with no need to move towards further perfection); motion exists where there is no perfection. Divine texts, therefore, possess a fixed essence as they are in their absolute perfection.

Human (temporal) texts, however, may have a fixed or an unstable essence. The former refers to texts whose author meant it to have a single clear meaning. The latter refers to texts whose author meant it to be ambiguous all of whose meanings were intended by the author at the same time (rarely this happens; mostly it may be found in poetry; this is pluralism rather than polysemy). But if the author created a polysemous text but only meant one of the several meanings in time of his creation, this is polysemy.

Concerning the Holy Quran which is an eternal text, substance of the text can be temporal (permitting motion) but the essence can't; however, as for the human texts this may be different. Therefore, we may divide texts into a range starting from temporal to eternal texts: texts with an eternal essence (such as the Quran), and texts with a time-accepting essence. Then the behavior of the two types of texts will be different in terms of motion: Eternal texts have a fixed essence, and a hierarchical substance (which makes motion possible and the move towards perfection). It may also happen that the substance of an eternal text is also fixed, and that leads to monosemy. The monosemy of the ST's substance, however, does not necessarily lead to lack of motion in the TT. Indeed, even a text with a fixed essence and substance starts a motion in the translation process, where the TT is no more fixed like the ST.

Temporal texts may have a fixed essence and a fixed substance when at the time of their creation, they possess a single meaning, and at another time in history they find a different meaning (which is not in line with the previous meaning and not in the gradational existence of the text). As we see in Sadra's concept of 'dressing after dressing' (*labs ba'd labs*), substantial motion lies in eternal growth. The competing argument, i.e. the Peripatetics, however, hold that there is dressing after undressing (*labs ba'd khal'*), or generation and corruption. Therefore, in the latter case, to find a new meaning, the previous meanings have to be vitiated, while according to Sadra's concept of dressing after dressing all the preceding and succeeding meanings are along a continuum attached to the essence of the source text, hence

they all hold true as they are part of the truth of the text. Naturally, the competing argument encompasses discontinuities, thus contradictory meanings and translation, no two of which can hold true at the same time.

Temporal texts may also have an unstable essence as well as a hierarchical substance. The case can be a single text in which the author meant it to be ambiguous the moment he created it. It has to be noted that in terms of ambiguous texts, we hold the author's intention to be the essence of the text. If from among the possible meanings of an ambiguous text, the author means only one, then that single meaning is the fixed essence of the text and the rest are neither the essence nor the substance of the text, and are only accidental meanings which are imposed to the text by the mind of the reader. If, however, the author means all of them at the same time, i.e. the author means the ST to convey all discontinued meanings (this is pluralism rather than polysemy), then the essence is also unstable and in motion. This, of course, is a rare possibility.

With the above in mind, the theory of substantial motion divides texts/translations into two kinds. The first is a kind of text/translation which is constant and lacks a temporal dimension which is not measurable with temporal criteria and hence, is not subject to change and transformation. This may refer, as an example, to translation of specific genre such as mathematics and some limited types of scientific texts. The second one is a moved being that possesses a temporal dimension which extends in the stretch of time and its being is the same as its becoming. This can refer to a wide range of literary texts and a variety of translation methods for rendering the richness and motion inherent in the source text. Thirdly, we can investigate motion in the 'translation process'. Like any process, translation or 'transfer' involves motion. The source text, as a hierarchical being, which comprises polysemy and layered meanings permits motion in the process of translation. At any reading and accordingly any act of translation, the translator has access to one or a number of the ontological levels of the source text and transfers them only partially, rather than wholly to the target language. Translations are, therefore, reflective of some of the aspects of the source text and each translation can make some of the potentialities of the source text into an actuality in the target text, TTs which by themselves are a combination of potency and actuality. Every retranslation of a previously translated text can therefore change some potency of the source text into the actuality of the translated text. Yet, any translated text is still a mere potential, without full actual existence.

***Multiplicity in translation***

In this study, we consider polysemy as a series of ‘substantial meanings’ (linked to the essence of the text) which exists along a continuum and can be adopted based on the context of the word and the translator’s personal taste and temperamental state and ontological perspective. However, concerning the homonyms, i.e. each of two or more words having the same spelling but different meanings and origins (e.g., pole and pole), i.e. a homograph, we believe that the essence of the text cannot hold two different (contradictory) meanings at the same time. Therefore, we call them ‘accidental meanings’ which cannot subsist like substance, and which rely on the changing context and on the personal preference of the translator. A single word taken as a homonym (or homograph) at the same time leads to different translations which do not stand along a continuum linked to the essence of the source text. Taking the ‘law of non-contradiction’ into consideration, substantial motion does not exist in such an approach, and such a motion is not gradual for accidental (contextual) meanings but is disconnected, as the Peripatetic philosophers hold motion in accidents, such a motion is like ‘dressing after undressing’, because to hold one of them, the translator has to renounce the other. But in Sadra’s substantial motion, the theory is ‘dressing after dressing’, which means that meanings are in a hierarchy, and to hold one of the substantial meanings, the translator does not need to renounce the other one.

The law of non-contradiction is an explicitly modal claim about the incompatibility of opposed meanings applying to the same text. It is impossible that the same thing can at the same time both belong and not belong to the same object and in the same respect. For Aristotle “The opinion that opposite assertions are not simultaneously true is the firmest of all” (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, cited in Gottlieb, 2013). Similarly, opposite assertions concerning an ST, i.e. no two opposite TTs of a single ST are simultaneously true.

Sadra’s doctrine of the gradual perfection of being is in terms of plurality-in-unity and unity-in-process. His version of pluralism takes care of unity; i.e. unlike the postmodern pluralism which ignores origin and unity, this method maintains both plurality and unity, in which intensification means progressive perfection. Therefore, an understanding of a text, and a translation, is not necessarily intensification towards perfection; it can also be diminution toward destruction. Hence, a text’s understanding is not necessarily towards the deeper; it depends on knowledge of the reader and other factors.



Divine time is a time in which the entire flow of time is present to God. Events occurred in unfathomable past or those to take place in infinite future are ever present to God as present in an instant. Thus Divine time is unitive without accepting multiplicity. Ushnuhi (1989) mentions that no atom of the created is far from the Divine time. Therefore, all atoms of the created have *a kind* of relationship with Divine time which is unitive, but at the same time, has an aspect of potential multiplicity with the created. (Kamada, 1999) Based on the above categories of time, there is no motion in divine time; hence no plural meanings for the Qur'an can be imagined in its divine origin.

All multilayered meanings become one in the eye of the Creator and this is *unity of meaning* and this is how we prove unity of meaning along with multiplicity of meaning, because they have different *playing grounds*.

### ***Pre-understanding***

Gadamer's theory which is based on the existence of shared presuppositions, traditions, historical background and contexts of both the interpreter and the addressee is an effort to introduce the interference of the interpreter's horizon as inevitable (and scientific). This theory, taken to be correct, renders the free translator into a compelled existent with no free choice. However, we believe that man, through his knowledge and free will, can overcome a great part of nature's determinism, which naturally dominates his existence to a great extent, and refute his own experiences and even presuppositions. While it is generally acceptable that pre-understandings naturally interfere, what we contend here is that through his free will and determination one can decide to put them aside and travel the journey, the path to perfection. Rather than surrendering to his presuppositions or social contexts and traditions, the translator tries to discover the intended meaning of the speaker and the portrait of the writer in the mirror of the text in order to interpret it. Even the motivation of the readers of Gadamer's books is the perception of the ultimate meaning of the author, rather than posing a series of questions and seeking the answers in the text.

As a precondition, the radical beginning or 'suspension' of pre-understandings and presuppositions is done intentionally by the translator; he is not like a mechanical entity enchanted by the formula set for him so that he cannot suspend them. He does so to be able to move through the text and to complete his genuine unaffected understanding and this is a journey, a movement necessary for transcendence; otherwise, there will be no motion and no transcendence because the translator will

be stopped in the middle of his previous knowledge or at the surface level of the source text, and will not add to himself and will not move to be able to have an intellectual experience of the hierarchical orders of reality of the text.

By its very nature, each ontological level of the source text discloses itself only to the translators standing at a corresponding ontological level. Therefore, the translator as a truth seeker can have access to the ontological levels of the source text to the extent he has progressed ontologically corresponding to the ontological level of the text. Pre-understanding and prejudice will only disturb this ontological order. This is not to say that pre-understandings are all false; what we hold here is that any pre-understanding should be tested from the new outlook which is the sum total of the ontological being of the translator and that of the text.

Transcendence is thus a movement; the translator has to move in the process of translation and retranslation. He has to start a radical beginning from himself; he is not supposed to add to the text but to himself. Thus, he temporarily puts his pre-understanding in a state of suspension to let the source text disclose itself.

### **Substantial Motion in Translation Defined**

In our textual analysis of substantial motion in translation, we arrived at a twofold picture of the source text in which ‘material substances’ or ‘bodily natures’ of the text are aptly regarded as the proper locus of two interrelated dimensions of physical entities: transience and perpetuity. The source text’s two dimensions in translation are both to change into the TL form and to remain stable in meaning; both transience and perpetuity at the same time. And this is another indicator of substantial motion in translation: the ST both remains the same (in terms of meaning) and changes (in terms of form). There is no doubt that in the process of translation, every material substance, i.e. the form of the source text, has a continuously changing nature on the one hand, and an enduring and unchanging reality, on the other. The relationship between the two aspects is similar to the relationship between body and soul. While the body is in constant change and flow, the soul endures because it preserves its identity by the passing of essential forms in an uninterrupted continuous process of constant interpretations and further translations.

As far as translation is concerned, any text which is more symbolic has in itself the potentiality for multiple meanings to flourish, and therefore allows for more motion; the more symbolic the text, the more substantial motion in the translation process,

the further possibilities and complexity of translation. We discussed in our study that every text has two aspects one of which is humanistic and multiple and the other by means of which the being has a relationship with the divine time which is unitive; so, the Qur'an is both fluid and fixed at the same time.

Mulla Sadra devised and expanded the rule of "*the truth in its simplicity contains all things*," and the inclusion of multiplicity in the universal and simple unity which contains all the perfections of multiple things. By comparison, in translation, we can consider the text in its simplicity contains all meanings (unity in multiplicity). It is the discussion of simpleness and compositeness; we consider the source text as a simple unit which contains all its multiple meanings, based on which many translations can be rendered. Thus, in translation we need to consider the unity of the source text despite the multiplicity of meanings. The existence of the Simple Truth means the existence of all things. Similarly, the existence of the 'simple' source text means the existence of all meanings. Text as a simple truth apprehends all meanings.

This is a realm where multiple meanings exist through the existence of the simple text, and it is this very station which fully reflects all meanings like a mirror. On the basis of the development of Sadra's ontological ideas concerning unity and multiplicity (transmission from gradational unity to individual unity), we consider the cause (source text) and effect (translated text) as two separate though related beings. Substantial motion in translation involves moving from the source text as a being with gradational unity to the target text as a being with equivalent gradational unity. It involves translating the ST's gradational variables (all variables translated in degrees towards equivalent degrees of the ST). Contradictory meanings are considered as two separate disconnected meanings, while gradational meanings are not; they are considered as a single gradational unity.

The translator is in equivocal degrees of an essential self-consciousness permeating the source text. The source text is in equivocal degrees of an essential self. This differs from text seen as to comprise numbered, discretely distinguished and ranked horizontal meanings.

We take texts to be substances (we don't mean material substances as our definition of text is more comprehensive than words and matter of the text); the Qur'an as a text has a substance. At the surface it is a composite substance composed of potency (words, matter) and actuality (meaning). At the inner levels of existence of the text (inner ontological levels) the text becomes less composite and more simple as it moves from potency to actuality, from matter (words, signs) to pure meaning:

simple (rather than single) meaning, i.e. the truth of the text. Therefore, the perfection of the text is its becoming simple (not composite), i.e. moving from compositeness to simpleness; the simple text (simple as the opposite of composite) comprises all the gradation in it but all-at-once. Therefore, deep inside, the Qur'an embraces all the legitimate meanings rather than merely a single correct meaning.

The composite text of the Qur'an (in surface) becomes the simple (irreducible) Qur'an in the innermost world of intellect, where the Qur'an is pure act, pure meaning independent of its surface. Yet, because both surface and other levels are connected through the same core, there is no contradiction between its surface level meaning which is meaning of a composite text (combination of potency and actuality) and its innermost truth which is pure act. This is another indicator of substantial motion.

The advantage of such a theory of substantial motion concerning the meaning of the text (any text) is that it can embrace multiplicity both at the surface and deep inside a text. Meanings differ in their grade of perfection, in accordance with their being farther away from potentiality and being closer to pure actuality. Meanings differ at different ontological levels this way, and this is the cause of substantial motion.

Polysemous texts have more potentiality than actuality. Therefore, the more they are deciphered, the higher they stand in terms of actuality. The moment they reach the maximum actuality is when the best translation is rendered. A surface literal translation cannot permit the polysemous text to reach its perfection; nor can a second level intermediate interpretation of a highly rich (divine) text. It is only by a third level experience of the text (through Gnostic experience) that the divine text can reach its maximum perfection (actuality= deciphering).

Simple substances (unity) are more genuine than composite (multiplicity) substances, as they are the cause of composite (multiplicity) ones. Therefore, we try to divide substances (signs) into the simplest (rather than plural) meanings. Accordingly, better translations are more coherently comprehensive of the source text's variables.

The being is gradual and hierarchical in reality, i.e. every portion of the text and all the vertical meanings are parts of the reality (not imaginative). Therefore, from the latter perspective, the three worlds (of matter, cognition, and intellect) together with their corresponding meanings are all real. From the former perspective, only the truth (the innermost) is real and others are multiplicities which will be rejected when the truth is revealed.

We can raise a question at this juncture: If we put the contradictory meanings aside, what can we decide about the layered meanings? Should we consider each level of the text as a mode of existence, and part of the truth? That is, should we consider each true meaning as part of the ST's truth and accept it? This is the discussion of equivocally or ambiguous applicable (*kulli mushakkak-tashkeek*) and univocally applicable (*kulli mutawati*). If we consider the truth as *kulli mutawati*, then it is inaccessible, then the postmodern ideas are right in believing in the inaccessibility of the truth; this will result in ambiguity, multiplicity, even equality of reason, chain of signifiers, and acceptability of all vertical, horizontal and even contradictory meanings (this is more in conformity with the world of matter).

When a text as an existence becomes further and further diversified into modes (diverse ontological levels of the text), these modal existences generate diverse essences. Therefore, *nahw al-wujud*, i.e. modes of existence of the text generate essences which emanate from the truth of the text (its existence).

With a view to motion in translation as not only accidental (*araḍi*), but also substantial (in *jawhar*), interpretability becomes the very essence of the text. The substance of the text is accordingly interpretable, and in motion, by its nature. Hence, motion is not an accidental attribute attached to the source text by the translator. As said earlier, any translation is a snapshot of the moving text; that snapshot is a mode of being of the source text which is made through the fusion of the translator's perception processes and the horizon of the text in a specific moment and a specific context.

As time is not fixed—it is in motion—and all beings are in permanent motion, also because translators, as beings in motion, are in permanent cognitive flow and renewal, such a fusion cannot lead to the same meanings attributable to a text. Therefore, the source text is in the process of renewal every time it is retranslated.

Now, between meaning and text, which one is prior? If we agree that meaning is first formed in the mind of the author, and then it is manifested in the text, then the meaning intended by an author might be something, but the author may fail to convey it the way he intends. Even, the text itself may show other meanings as most of the texts are gradable because of the interpretability of the words and their polysemic features. As a result, for human texts, a text may show (not disclose) more or less than the author intended; here, we can admit that the notion of “authorial intent” may fail to be a sufficient factor in determining textual meaning. But for the divine words, this does not apply; as we know God is Omnipotent and Wise. He is capable of sending his words in the most perfect form and he sends

them gradable and symbolic so that every viewer can view it in proportion to his standing point and his capacities; and this is fusion of horizons. Such a view to fusion of horizons, from substantial motion's point of view, controls the legitimate readings a viewer can declare to present because there is a reliability criterion and that is called "essence". From this perspective, we can hold that Gadamer's fusion of horizons may speak of motion alone, while Sadra's substantial motion links the motion to the substance. Therefore, as long as motion is in substance, i.e. as long as meanings are in connection with the substance of the text, or rather as long as meanings are the hierarchical levels of the being of the text (*nahw al-wujud*) they are legitimate and yet in motion. The moment the motion loses its connection to the substance of the text, it becomes accidental, and may fail or fade sometime somewhere in some other context.

Sadra offers a theory which integrates the difference of the three domains by presenting the idea of existence as a unifying factor in such a way that he grasps God as pure existence in the highest intensity and the others as compound existents in various degrees of intensity of existence. In a similar manner, we deal with the source text, in particular, and any text, in general as a unifying factor; its truth as pure existence of the text is in the highest intensity, and other layers compound existents in various degrees of intensity of existence of the text.

## **Conclusion**

Here, a fourth dimension has to be added to the above tripartite division; the 'authorial intent' which is mostly ignored in literary criticism and in many of the post-modern literary theories of translation. It is an essential necessity for the translator to look for the author's intention from a variety of sources including, but not limited to, the text. In other words, the translator has to prefer his loyalty to the author's intention over all other categories. It is not only the matter of maintaining the faith to the original (source) text, but also the loyalty to the author. Even in terms of contradictory meanings apparently applicable to a single text, it is the author's intention which is the criterion. Failure to maintain the loyalty to the meanings intended by the creator of the text to be translated leads to a movement in the process of translation which does not constitute substantial motion, but stands in a range of motion beginning from accidental and ending in deviant or aberrant motion.

In this study, we examined the hermeneutics of unity and plurality in the Western and Islamic philosophical systems. We reached Mulla Sadra's theory of substantial

motion and his principles of hermeneutics which led us to the theory of substantial motion in translation.

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## **Possibilities of Non-Eurocentric Forms of Cognitions and Poetic-Philosophy**

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### **Abstract**

The question of poetic-philosophy in the context of the Iranian multiple forms of cognitions has been rarely discussed within mainstream social theory. Although distinguished thinkers such as Emerson or Goethe have written on the importance of the Iranian poetic-philosophy but this has not changed the dominant approaches to the significance of poetic-philosophy as an epistemological question in the context of disciplinary social sciences and humanities. One reason may be that thinkers such as Emerson and Goethe were not taken seriously within natural science-oriented science of society and there is no secret that the romantic tradition within European streams of ideologies was deeply suppressed. In other words, the suppression of romanticism would surely lead to the depreciation of anything which the proponents of the romantic tradition held dear and consequently the works of scholars and social thinkers who aspired to promote the ideas of the Iranian poet-philosophers in the context of social theory failed dramatically. Today, it is very hard to find any textbook on any field related to social science and humanities where the epistemological significance of thinkers such as Hafez, Rudaki, Khayyam, Rumi or Jami is discussed or problematized but this does not mean that there is no epistemic significance in this genre of cognition. Allama Jafari is one of those contemporary social thinkers who have paid attention to the epistemological importance of poetic-philosophy for the formation of an alternative social theory which could assist us in overcoming the pitfalls of eurocentric vision of reality. Of course, it is legitimate to ask about the possibilities of non-eurocentric forms of cognitions. In other words,

how could one overcome the pitfalls of eurocentrism in a world which is deeply dominated by western forms of modernity? In this chapter, I shall try to elaborate the ways in which we can employ the poetic-philosophy as a novel form of cognition that could have relevance for interdisciplinary forms of social theory.

**Key Words:** Forms of cognitions, Hafez, Universal culture of humanity, Heptafold realms of knowledge, Eurocentrism

## Introduction

In the western literature on social theory and philosophy we have got accustomed to focus on occidental thinkers and theorists and we rarely engage with reestern social thinkers and philosophers in a systematic fashion. Admitting that this is a serious problem for those who are aspiring to improve the feasibility of sociological theories both in global and universal sense, I have attempted in my intellectual endeavors for the past two decades (Miri, 2007; 2010; 2012; 2012a; 2013; 2013a; 2013b; 2014; 2014a) to work on reestern social thinkers such as Shariati, Iqbal, Muttahari, Beheshti, Imam Musa Sadr and Allama Jafari. In this chapter, I have focused on the epistemological significance of Jafari's outlook for developing a primordial/alternative perspective within the context of non-eurocentric social theory. Of course, I am aware that few may have heard of Allama Jafari in western circles thus I think a biographical note would assist the readers to get a rounded picture of the man before learning about his ideas. Allama Mohammad Taqi Jafari was born in Tabriz that is the capital of Eastern Azerbaijan which is located in the Northwestern part of Iran. Tabriz has been known for being the Mecca of great Sufis, mystics, poets and philosophers since time immemorial. For instance, the Pir of Jalal al-Deen Rumi who revolutionized the mindset of Rumi and all the mystic-poets of coming centuries, i.e. Shams Tabrizi came from the city of Tabriz. Allama Jafari was born in 1923 and passed away in 1998 in England and buried in Mashhad in the northeastern province of Iran close to Turkmenistan borders. His main works are dedicated to comparative philosophy and social theory but he has tried to look at Rumi's legacy through a critical point of vantage by not only considering Rumi's poetry as a poetical discourse. On the contrary, for Allama Jafari, Rumi and all other Iranian poets who used poetry as their form of expressions should not be treated solely as poets for poetry for them was only an instrument for formulating their philosophical and theoretical visions of reality. In other words, the distinction between 'form' and 'substance' is a serious problematique which should be taken into consideration when engaging with poets in the *cultural continent of Iran*. (Miri,

2014b. 4) Very little has been written on Allama Jafari but since 2010, I have published 6 works on him and attempted to look at sociological significance of his discourse within the parameters of global sociology. Of course, it is certain that these attempts will not yield into any paradigmatic shift unless we are able to establish schools of sociology which are authentically alternative and offer forms of understanding social reality in primordial fashions and also change our academic curriculums. In other words, a more

*... multicultural approach to the teaching of sociology is ... in order. For example, courses on sociological theory generally do not attempt to correct the Eurocentric bias by introducing non-western thinkers ... (Alatas, 2014)*

### **Poetic-Philosophy in the Context of Iran**

The question of poetic-philosophy in the context of the Iranian multiple forms of cognitions has been rarely discussed within mainstream social theory. Although distinguished thinkers such as Emerson or Goethe have written on the importance of the Iranian poetic-philosophy but this has not changed the dominant approaches to the significance of poetic-philosophy as an epistemological question in the context of disciplinary social sciences and humanities. One reason may be that thinkers such as Emerson and Goethe were not taken seriously within natural science-oriented *science of society* and there is no secret that the *romantic tradition* within European streams of ideologies was deeply suppressed. In other words, the suppression of romanticism would surely lead to the depreciation of anything which the proponents of the romantic tradition held dear and consequently the works of scholars and social thinkers who aspired to promote the ideas of the Iranian poet-philosophers in the context of social theory failed dramatically. Today, it is very hard to find any textbook on any field related to social science and humanities where the epistemological significance of thinkers such as Hafez, Rudaki, Khayyam, Rumi or Jami is discussed or problematized but this does not mean that there is no epistemic significance in this genre of cognition. Allama Jafari is one of those contemporary social thinkers who have paid attention to the epistemological importance of poetic-philosophy for the formation of an alternative social theory which could assist us in overcoming the pitfalls of eurocentric vision of reality. Of course, it is legitimate to ask about the possibilities of non-eurocentric forms of cognitions. In other words, how could one overcome the pitfalls of eurocentrism in a world which is deeply dominated by western forms of modernity? In this chapter, I shall try to elaborate the ways in which we can employ the poetic-philosophy as a

novel form of cognition that could have relevance for undisciplinary forms of social theory.

### **Hafez and the Question of Knowledge**

In every culture, one can find different forms of intellectual traditions which create distinct styles of expressions for their ideas and ideals. In Iran, poetry is a very strong medium and has been employed for expressing magnificent ideals and complex ideas since time immemorial. Most researches done by eurocentric scholars on poetry in Iran have not taken into consideration the philosophical significance of poetic discourses of poets such as Rumi, Ferdowsi, Rudaki, Khayyam, Nasimi, Fuzuli, Shah Ismael (Khatay), Hafez, Saadi, and many other thinkers who were not solely poets but used poetry as a medium of expressing their worldview, thought and ideas. For instance, the ideas of tolerance and mindfulness toward all sentient beings have been incessantly emphasized and conceptually reworked by thinkers who are conventionally treated as poets rather than philosophers. Of course, it is important to realize that the relation between poesy and philosophy is a very intriguing relationship which belies many widespread conceptions which we may have today as far as this relationship is concerned. One of the most pivotal ideas within the Iranian poetic-philosophical tradition is the concept of totality which cannot solely be grasped through empiricism or rationalism as totality is another name of life in its whole. In other words, thinkers such as Hafez or Rumi argued that if we reduce the totality of reality into its details we may surely find very important results but we miss the point which makes up the very foundation of being. By being, these poet-philosophers referred to complexity of life which is not totally reducible into the conceptual frame of understanding and this mode of realization has enabled them to argue that we need to have an integral approach to reality. The *Integral Approach* by the Iranian poet-philosophers could be conceived as an attempt in developing a comprehensive map that identifies the relationship between and among all forms of human knowledge and experience. I have not seen many studies in this regard and whenever one talks about these poets the epistemological significance of their discourses seems to be disregarded and instead people tend to emphasize the aesthetic dimensions of their poetry. Of course, it is undeniable that Iranian poetical traditions in all languages which are used in the Greater Iran such as Persian, Turkish, Kurdish, and Arabic have aesthetical values but this should not be at the expense of epistemological imports which lie in their respective discourses. For instance, one of the most crucial

obstacles of self-actualization is the human tendency toward hypocrisy which has been institutionalized in societies where there is a division between the public and private domains. Said differently, in societies where there are strong tendencies to push people to conform to certain rules without giving them sufficient freedom to choose between different ethical systems one can discern an implicit inclination toward hypocritical technologies of self. This is to argue people may act or speak in a manner which does not reflect what they are in their private spheres. To put it differently, in societies where there are official rules of conducts one can witness unofficial expressions of self in private domains and wherever there is no trace of panoptican gaze. This has created a peculiar form of social modality which could be conceptualized as hypocrisy or multiple-facedness and this is a social problem which has been ceaselessly discussed by Iranian poet-philosophers who have regarded it as a serious problem both for society and the individual. For instance, Hafez argues that self-actualization cannot occur if one has not overcome hypocritical tendencies within one's self and a society which is ruled by hypocritical policies shall never reach sanity. Of course, for understanding Hafez and other poet-philosophers we need to have a synoptic approach as without synoptic approach we may lose sight of many important dimensions which are central to their respective discourses. In one of his poems, Hafez states that you may take wine and set fire on a pulpit but never embark upon the path of mistreatment of others in oppressive fashions. The epistemological importance of this poem could not be appreciated if one is not aware of cultural, social and religious dimensions of Iranian societies where wine and pulpit symbolize prohibition and sacred respectively. In other words, Hafez is drawing our attention toward the sanctity of human person by arguing that although wine is prohibited by religion and pulpit is a sign of sacred which should be revered but if you are to choose between these three options you should not, as a human being, violate the right of others under any circumstances. If we could conceptualize this distinction between ephemeral and real within our political philosophy then surely we would have had different social fabric today which puts great emphasis upon *appearance* at the expense of *real*.

To put it differently, if we are serious about going beyond the eurocentric vision of reality then we should engage in intellectual fashion with western thinkers and philosophers who do not work within the parameters of occidentalist ontology, epistemology, worldview, praxis and ethos. Allama Jafari has realized this issue and by engaging with poet-philosophers such as Hafez and Khayyam he has enriched our conceptual frame of references which could be instrumental in inventing novel alternative concepts and ideas. In other words, in the alternative/undisciplinary

epistemological paradigm, one cannot talk about knowledge unless one has achieved a type of *integral configuration* which consists of seven interconnected realms of cognition. When one states that I have achieved

... *knowledge about an aspect of reality* ... [it should be borne in mind that] ... [this] ... *knowledge* [should be based upon] ... *seven realms of reality* ... [otherwise, we shall fall into a disciplinary frame of analysis which would lead us to reproduce disciplinary/one-dimensional epistemic configurations] ... (Jafari, 2013. 365).

In disciplinary epistemological systems, due to dominance of reductionism, it seems that there is no room for 'love' or 'emotion' as far as epistemic configuration is concerned. Because love or emotion is considered to be equivalent to sentimentalité and within the context of knowledge there is no room for a feeling or type of behaviour that is rooted in the soil of passion rather than cold reason. However it seems Allama Jafari's epistemological vision does not fit within the epistemological parameters of disciplinary paradigm as love and creative faculty of emotion/affection/sympathy occupy crucial positions in the primordial frame of Allama Jafari's epistemological paradigm. For instance, Allama Jafari's approach to reality in its totality is of teleological nature and he seems to argue that one cannot perceive this totality if s/he relies solely on rationalistic or empiric approaches in conceptualizing being as such. In other words, he takes the Iranian classical poet-philosopher, i.e. Hafez as his point of reference where he states that one cannot fathom the telos of this gigantic leben if s/he does not employ the creative faculty of sympathy/affection/emotion at her/his disposal. It may be of interest to note that 'telos' or 'what that is intended' requires some kind of agency which is at odds with the evolutionary thought. In other words, we cannot assume any kind of 'intention' for being qua being within the evolutionary paradigm which is premised upon 'accident' rather than 'purpose'. However, it seems Allama Jafari is not inclined towards evolutionary discourses which disregard 'cosmic intentionality'. On the contrary, he has posited his work along Hafez's intellectual tradition and in doing so Allama Jafari's ontological perspective falls outside the contemporary disciplinary visions of science. In other words,

... *if the authentic dimension of love in relation to life is not actualized ... within the being of a human self ... .. regardless of how much a person is capable of knowing conceptually ... about the world ... and its dimensions ... as well as relations of these complex realities as expressed in the realm of her/his mind ... still one should rest assured that s/he will not realize the true identity ... as well as authentic meaning of this colossal reality which is called being ...* [as it is love

which makes life vivid and without this vividness we are not in a position to fathom reality of being. In other words, neither words in their literal form nor numbers can exhaust the horizons of knowledge. It is love which could set the limits of our cognition of reality in its entirety] ... (2013. 362-3).

## **Integral Knowledge and Scientific Reductionism**

Allama Jafari is of the view that scientific reductionism has even deprived humanity from acquiring substantially and not formally the principles of 'integral knowledge'. He refers to this disciplinary deprivation in an episode in his celebrated work on *Islamic Mysticism* by arguing that

*... this weakness ... i.e. not being able to obtain the principles of integral knowledge ... would pull a dark curtain over all human knowledge ... by depriving us from authentic knowledge. In other words, if you approach reality in a reductionist fashion then you will not be able to reach the nub of truth in its depth ... and your share from reality would be nothing ... but shallow layers ... of being/reality/world/existence/life/leben ... (2013. 363).*

Needless to state that knowledge in Allama Jafari's view is premised upon the general concept of 'being' and this *wholeness* cannot be perceived through reductionist visions of reality. In other words, for organization of epistemic configuration we need to realize the multiple realms as well as multilayered modalité of being as negligence towards these complexities would, not only, deprive the human self from actualization/realization but reduce and limit our knowledge into a particular dimension of reality. This is to argue that one would lose the possibility of fathoming reality in a complete fashion and instead grab an incomplete picture of reality as the basis of one's epistemological endeavors (and one's encounter with life). (Jafari, 2013. 363)

## **Compartmentalization of Knowledge**

One of the key critiques leveled at disciplinary social sciences within eurocentric frame of reference is the question of *compartmentalization* of science and knowledge. Now what could be done to rectify this colossal problem? In other words, does Allama Jafari provide a practical solution within the parameters of 'alternative discourse'? It seems he is of the opinion that the compartmentalized vision on human problems is incapable of managing complexities of human

existence. He argues that human knowledge is composed of seven different realms which, provided they are understood accurately, could facilitate the growth of human society. One of the questions which have created division between different cultures is community of scholars' vision of *knowledge*, i.e. what is knowledge and non-knowledge? In other words, how could we distinguish between knowledge and a-knowledge? In any intellectual system, there is a possibility that one or few aspects are emphasized at the expense of some other dimensions. For instance, one may put emphasis on *philosophical vision* and others could accentuate the importance of *scientific view* and by extension reduce the complex gamut of reality into strict parameters of *scientific interpretation*, i.e. disregard all other crucial indices under the pretext that realms of ontology, epistemology, ethics, metaphysics, illumination and revelation are unrelated to each other in an epistemic sense. Of course, there are still many others who consider *gnostic vision* or *ethical approach* as the sole perspective which would exclusively enable us to understand reality as such. However, it seems that the *disciplinary vision* of reality which is a crucial aspect of the scientific paradigm is not shared by Allama Jafari in a wholehearted fashion. In order to overcome current eurocentric views on knowledge, Allama Jafari puts forward an integral vision of knowledge which refutes both *disciplinary epistemologies* and *literalist religious visions*.

In other words, in Allama Jafari's view, any jurisprudential interpretation could not be qualified as religious vision as a religious view is a type of knowledge which incorporates within itself all the seven realms or it is composed of seven angles as a heptagon. This is to state that, religious vision looks like a heptagon which, one of its angles is revelational knowledge and the other six sides are consisted of the scientific, philosophic, intuitional, ethical, hekmatic, and gnostic knowledge. To put it otherwise, it is inaccurate to consider solely the religious vision within the parameters of *narrated sources* as the scope of religious insight is broader than *narrated sources* as culturally determined by tradition. On the other hand, it is also erroneous to reduce the vast scope of human knowledge into one single angle of *science* and based on the *scientific vision* rule out all other *forms of knowledge* as irrelevant.

In other words, scientific epistemology has imposed a *myopic vision* on human self and the ways by which humanity conceptualizes complexities of self and the world at large and it seems Allama Jafari believes that the only way out of this epistemic quagmire is to refute the disciplinary vision of reality. Needless to emphasize that when we speak of refuting the disciplinary vision of knowledge this does not mean that outside the disciplinary paradigms there is no discipline in



relation to epistemic endeavors. This is an erroneous impression as each of these seven realms of knowledge has its own specific logic which could be systematized in the hands of an integralist thinker who is able to do a synoptic synthesis of these diverse forms of epistemes and the integration of these synoptic syntheses is what Allama Jafari conceptualizes as *religious knowledge*.

## Religious Knowledge and Universal Culture

The religious knowledge is based upon seven realms and the outcome of such an approach would result in the *intelligible life*. Needless to argue that this perspective would enable us to build up the *universal culture of humanity* based upon *intelligible episteme* as it is this heptagonal form of knowledge which could make the common grounds between different world cultures. In other words, the Euro-Atlantic civilization by relying on the scientific vision of reality has suppressed other forms of being (at all levels i.e. personal, social, cultural, political, sacral, transcendental and civilizational) due to its disciplinary form of knowledge which disregarded other styles of episteme. On the other hand, the jurisprudential approach to reality is not endorsed by Allama Jafari due to the fact that he considers the scope of religion larger than jurisprudential interpretations. To put it differently, none of these approaches could lead us toward the intelligible life and those –such as globalists or fundamentalists- who think that we can create the universal culture of humanity outside the parameters of the ‘intelligible life’ are pushing toward wrong directions as we cannot create a common future for humanity based on myopic epistemic conceptions of reality. This is to argue that when Allama Jafari talks about the intelligible life as a universal paradigm, that is due to the fact that this paradigm is based upon a heptagonal episteme which takes into consideration all possible realms of knowledge and this, in his view, is equivalent to *religious knowledge*.

One of the most crucial questions in human sciences is the problem of eurocentrism today. In other words, the burning question is whether one could overcome the eurocentric project within human sciences? Is this really possible or is this solely the concern of few romantics in non-western countries who are deluded enough to believe that they can *deeurocentrize* social sciences? Needless to emphasize that these kinds of concerns are not only confined to easterners and resterners or non-western scholars but this is a project that has preoccupied many contemporary intellectuals, social theorists, sociologists and scholars from all walks of life who are interested in alternative discourses.

To put it differently, the main question is not whether disciplinary/eurocentric social sciences are influenced by ethnocentrism as this is taken for granted and critics talk, instead, about how and in what ways could we go beyond ethnocentrism within the paradigms of eurocentric social sciences? Because there is always a possibility that we may fall in ethnocentric traps of some kind and alternative ethnocentrism of one form should not be considered as desirable over against other forms of ethnocentrism. One of the key points which has enabled the eurocentric vision of social sciences to be reproduced is the question of knowledge or cognition. In other words, what is knowledge? Within the parameters of the eurocentric sociology, the term *knowledge* does not include all kinds of epistemic pursuits but specific *form* or *type* of knowing is considered as *knowledge* and that *particular form* within 'sociological vision' –in contrast to theologique and philosophique vision- is *sociologique perspective*.

### **Discipline as a Classificatory Marker**

In other words, when we speak of *discipline* in the context of modern rationality it should be realized that it is not tantamount to a branch of knowledge as such. This is to argue that the disciplinary thought is a *conceptual instrument* for intellectual configuration of reality in a specific domain –the social- which is different from other forms of categorizations of knowledge. Now, one could pose a challenging question by asking whether there are other forms of categorizations of knowledge which could replace the contemporary disciplinary form of epistemic classification. Could we create other forms of categorizations of knowledge? To put it otherwise, could we, based on *restern traditions*, reconstruct in feasible fashions other alternative forms of epistemic categorizations? It seems that Allama Jafari -along with many other intellectuals such as Allama Tabatabai, Ali Shariati, Morteza Muttahari, Beheshti, Taleghani, Sadr, Imam Musa Sadr, and Syed Hussain Alatas- has embarked upon such a novel approach in terms of categorization of knowledge. Of course, this claim should be critically appraised whether reconceptualization of knowledge without the parameters of disciplinary vision would not lead to *epistemic disorderliness* in the context of human sciences. The question of disciplinary has been debated in western sociology during the past four decades since the collapse of Logical Positivism in academia. One of the most interesting critiques belongs to Immanuel Wallerstein who has engagingly reflected upon the nature of knowledge within the disciplinary paradigm. By questioning the dominant theory of modernity which was based on a stage theory of history as though the

world has gone through Primitive Communism, Ancient Slavery, Feudalism and Capitalism in a linear fashion he paved the way for others who were interested in other forms of restructuration of knowledge. The main epistemological ideas of Wallerstein appeared in his *Unthinking Social Science: The Limits of Nineteenth Century Paradigms* (1991) where he took issue head-on with the very concept of discipline as a classificatory marker. Of course, it would be a mistake to assume that Allama Jafari's reconstructive model of epistemology is similar to Wallerstein's unthinking approach which has led to various research programmes in contemporary social sciences. Nevertheless it is interesting to study de-disciplinization attempts which have been ongoing in different parts of the world based on diverse forms of knowledge. Before going any further we need to elaborate briefly on Wallerstein and what he means by unthinking social sciences as well as how he perceives the limits of the 19<sup>th</sup> century *Geisteswissenschaften*. In the beginning of his analysis of social changes in modern times Wallerstein started with the colonial context of social changes and from there he moved on to modernization theory and its limits. Then he realized that we cannot go forward in the 20<sup>th</sup> century unless we go backwards. And then he decided that probably the long 16<sup>th</sup> century is the beginning of a new phase of human societies and experiences. Therefore sociology must reconceptualize the historical events in a novel fashion rather than repeat the received wisdom. And in the process Wallerstein realized that sociology itself is rather weak unless it gets into a broader frame. And he told about the need to have a new approach what will be not only interdisciplinary but undisciplinary, a new kind of social science. When he spoke about these issues academic sociologists started treating him as a historical sociologist. What Wallerstein came to realize some fifty years ago was that all modern social sciences in the last 150 years has had explicitly or at least implicitly a unit which was in fact the state and this led us to assume wrongly that social action occurred within the framework of the states. By looking at the complexity of the world, Wallerstein came to realize that this narrative does not make sense because that is not where a social action occurs. On the contrary, it occurs within the framework of larger historical systems which he called world-systems. In addition, he seems to agree with Weberian exceptionality thesis as Wallerstein seems to suggest that the modern world-system was a break, a significant break from previous kinds of world-systems and that it took the form of a capitalist world-economy. In other words, if we agree that the capitalist world-system is a different saga then we need to understand the modern world and its operation as a developing historical process of the creation of, a functioning of, and the expansion of a capitalist world-economy. Although this new order did not

encompass all over the globe initially but one of the characteristics of the capitalist world-economy is that over seven centuries it expanded to incorporate the entire globe by the nineteenth century. Once he could prove that the state cannot be the center of sociological analysis then it was easier for him to shift his emphasis to a different unit of analysis, i.e. the modern world-system which is a capitalist world-economy. This theoretical shift caused great mayhem in academia as many disciplinary scholars started to criticize Wallerstein for not conforming to various epistemological norms which, in fact, demonstrate the oppressive legacy of the 19<sup>th</sup> century social sciences. The criticisms did not discourage Wallerstein but it forced him to turn his attention to the questions of what is the discipline, what are the boundaries of a discipline, what's the logic of a discipline and more importantly what are the structures of knowledge that we have constructed to frame the ways in which we think and ways in which we teach others to think, which is the university system, and whether they are adequate. His tireless research led him to believe that they are inadequate, they are incorrect and finally they are breaking down and the breakdown of these structures does not mean the end of intellectual engagements. On the contrary, here I see the possibility of what we, in the restern discourse, have come to conceptualize as the Alternative Discourses. (Miri, 2012) I guess it is here that the epistemological attempts of social theorists and philosophers such as Allama Jafari, Beheshti, (Miri, 2009) Shariati, (Miri, 2007), Imam Musa Sadr, (Miri, 2007a) Morteza Muttahari, (Miri, 2009) and Allama Tabatabai could be highlighted as they realized that the disciplinarization of knowledge has inhibited them from engaging with complexities of life as such. In other words, they grew within intellectual traditions where knowledge was categorized on undisciplinary parameters but the climate of ideas did not allow them to be heard properly. However, today we are in different climates and the discourses initiated by thinkers such as Wallerstein (Wallerstein, 1991) and Syed Farid Alatas (Alatas, 2006) have made possible that we can talk about restern strategies of knowledge without being shunned from academia. These strategies have surely consequences for the ways we conceptualize the boundaries of knowledge as we have come to realize the limits of the disciplinary classifications which have been constructed within the boundaries of eurocentric visions of the knowledge. For instance, Durkheim struggled very seriously to distinguish between the realms of philosophy and sociology based on the assumption that disciplines have different objects of studies. Surely he would tremble in his grave if we talk about knowledge in an undisciplinary fashion as Durkheim worked very hard to demarcate the boundaries between knowledge (as a science) and other forms of cognitions. However Allama Jafari seems to disagree as

far as the divorce between realms of knowledge is concerned as he thinks it is impossible to disconnect between the realms of Truth, aesthetic, Good and other dimensions of reality in the same fashion designed by disciplinary thinkers within eurocentric paradigms.

## Epilogue

Allama Jafari talks about knowledge in terms of seven realms which are deeply interrelated to each other. The heptafold realms of knowledge are 1) Scientific Realm; 2) Philosophical Realm; 3) Intuitional Realm; 4) Ethical Realm; 5) Hekmatic Realm; 6) Mystic Realm; and 7) Religious Realm. It seems that while Allama Jafari is critical against eurocentric epistemological systems but this does not mean that he is in favor of ethnocentric trends within contemporary Iranian epistemological schools which divide and categorize human knowledge into religious versus secular or Islamic versus un-Islamic and so on and so forth. He argues that

*... this view that these heptafold realms of knowledge are independent from each other and ... each should be considered alone as ... each realm has its own particular identity ... .. it is a eurocentric vision of knowledge ... . In other words, by considering the gamut of human episteme in a disciplinary fashion one falls in an epistemological trap ... which could create colossal damages for humanity at large. Because ... by disregarding the necessary factors of the seven realms of knowledge the disciplinary rationality has broken the unity of knowledge which is the basis of authentic engagement of human self with reality in its totality ... (Jafari, 2013. 342).*

One may wonder what does religious knowledge has to do with epistemological debates as the concept of religion within disciplinary human sciences has nothing to do with epistemology in its disciplinary sense. Nonetheless it would be a mistake to assume that Allama Jafari shares the same view on these issues as disciplinary thinkers due to the fact that he has incessantly attempted to critique discursive forms of knowledge in all its manifestations within or even without academia. However, it may be of interest to note that by talking about ‘religious knowledge’ Allama Jafari seems to conceptualize three forms of religion which could assist us in understanding the ways in which he conceptualizes religion as an epistemic category. He argues that we have three different kinds of religion; 1) true religion,

2) professional religion, and 3) fictional religion. (Jafari, 2013. 347) In other words, Allama Jafari is clearly thinking of the essence of religious knowledge which could possibly be generated if, and only if, it is conceived within the parameters of a coherent seven-realm configuration. To put it differently, within Allama Jafari's point of reference, the disciplinary forms of knowledge could not lead us to an integrated vision of reality as the offshoots of disciplinarization of epistemology has always led to compartmentalization of human mind and human episteme. This is to argue that if our epistemological configuration is not consisted of seven different but interconnected realms of knowledge then one cannot talk of 'religious vision'. Said differently, if one approaches reality outside the parameters of heptafold configuration then one should rest assured that this is an incomplete approach to the complex gamut of reality which, in Allama Jafari's view, is considered as *clerkish viewpoint* in human sciences. (2013. 343)

Now the question is, on what grounds should one accept that these seven epistemic realms are of complimentary and not contradictory significance? Does Allama Jafari have any adequate answer for this question? In Allama Jafari's metatheoretical frame of reference the notion of *shakhsiyat* plays a vital role. It seems this concept could not be simply translated into English as *personality*. Although as far as lexical translation goes there is no problem by equating *shakhsiyat* with *personality* but the referential point of meaning of these two terms are diametrically different. In other words, the ways in which Allama Jafari has employed the idea of *shakhsiyat* seem to suggest that lexical similarities should not lead us to minimize the importance of the referential point of meanings. To put it differently, the term *personality* refers to surreal dimension of human life while the term *shakhsiyat* within Allama Jafari's parlance seems to refer to an achieved particularity which has its roots in the soil of innate idiosyncrasy of a living being. On what grounds do we claim this? In other words, how does this concept play such a crucial role within Allama Jafari's epistemological edifice? He states that

*... it is undeniable that ... in each and every one of us as a human being there is a reality which I would like to conceptualize it as ... personality, self, ego ... or agency [which plays a coordinating role by] managing the human self. [In other words, one should not neglect the fact that it is human personality which interconnects the seven realms of knowledge into a unified framework] ... . This is to argue that we should not look for the cord which ... weaves [these realms] ... outside the self ... as the authentic cord which holds these seven realms of knowledge ... does not lie outside personality's configuration ... (Jafari, 2013. 346-7).*

To put it differently, it seems that the seven realms which Allama Jafari talks about are different dimensions of human *leben* that based on each of these dimensions human being can establish feasible relationship with a specific corner of reality. Therefore, one of the significant problems with disciplinary epistemologies is that different levels of knowledge are reduced into a single dimension of scientific realm and by doing so the human subject is deprived of multifaceted possibilities of acquiring knowledge. In other words, the disciplinary *cogito* has mistakenly generalized the scientific realm as the *sole dimension of reality* as such. Said differently, if one agrees that the connecting cord lies within the bosom of *shakhsiyat* then one can realize that this concept is not equivalent to personality as conceptualized within disciplinary fields of inquiry. Needless to emphasize that these seemingly different realms are of complementary nature which are united through the unifying principle of ego but the reason which I think the Persian concept of *shakhsiyat* is not equivalent to *personality* is Allama Jafari's notion of episteme. When Allama Jafari employs the term *shakhsiyat* or human self, the concept contains clearly within its gamut multilayered dimensions which are not synonymous with *personality* as conceptualized in a linear frame of reference. One may wonder whether this is my interpretation of Allama Jafari or he himself agrees that being is consisted of different dimensions with a multilayered nature which has a profound connection with epistemic configuration. It seems that he is of this opinion too because in one of his works, i.e. *Islamic Gnosticism* he touches upon this question by arguing that

*... if we realize that there are higher realms of being then surely we shall feel a sense of unfulfillment as our personality shall not rest in peace. Because... by achieving ... one of the heptafold dimensions ... the yearning within human person shall not be extinguished ... and one feels that other realms should be appropriated within one's scope of being. For instance, if you shall view reality or approach the world ... solely ... through a philosophical point of departure ... [but neglect] ... intellectual developments ... in the world of science ... undoubtedly ... you would feel incomplete ... as a thinker ... and unfulfilled as a human individual ... . In other words, the sense of awe which one may feel before the awesome gamut of reality ... shall not be satiated unless you expand your view to other fields and domains ... by incorporating scientific sense of inquiry next to ... your philosophical sense of inquiry ... (Jafari, 2013. 347-8).*

Now one may pose a serious question and ask if the interconnectivity of these different realms is so obvious and profound then why have many thinkers neglected this issue? In other words, what factors do contribute to this kind of negligence among thinkers, intellectuals and scholars of different walks of life? Has Allama Jafari found any solution for this problematique? Has he worked on this question in a philosophical fashion? In his book on *Islamic Mysticism* it seems Allama Jafari has pondered upon this question by conceptualizing this problematique in a very appropriate fashion. He argues that

*... there is a common and ... widespread mistake ... which impedes thinkers ... from ... realizing the scope of this erroneous view ... . ... this epistemic oversight is consisted of ... lack of distinction between mental acting and intelligible observation of realities .... These types of disciplinary thinkers, intellectuals or scholars who cannot distinguish between the aforementioned domains may ... fall into a deep trap of absoluteizing their own limited/partial knowledge ... . What are the factors which contribute to such an epistemological scenario? The answer is related to the concept of self, i.e. how we view the question of I-ness ... . In other words, disciplinary thinkers magnify the finites and in so doing they reduce the magnitude of their own being ... by confining the infinite scope of reality into narrow strictures of disciplinary episteme ... (Jafari, 2013. 348).*

To put it differently, if the difference between different realms of knowledge are made due to a tactical methodology in that case it may be defensible but if this epistemological distinction is justified as an ontological principle then Allama Jafari rejects it altogether. Because, the disciplinary approach would not lead us to an essential understanding of reality in its totality and in so doing then the outcome shall not be anything but one-dimensional human being (and by extension one-dimensional civilization) –as eloquently conceptualized by Herbert Marcuse.

One may argue that it seems Allama Jafari has not engaged deeply with classics of disciplinary social sciences and humanities and his critiques are mainly posited in an external fashion. Although this may be the general impression but the truth of the matter seems to be different than what one may assume at the first glance. In refuting the *disciplinary vision* in the context of epistemology, Allama Jafari refers to two giants of disciplinary social sciences, i.e. Emile Durkheim and Sigmund Freud which attests to his depth of attention as far as disciplinary rationality is concerned. Although Allama Jafari kept engaging open-mindedness vis-à-vis disciplinary thinkers nevertheless he was critical of various forms of *formal*



*rationalité*. For instance, he held Durkheimian *sociologism* and Freudian *psychologism* accountable for modern *compartmentalization* of contemporary human being. (2013. 343) Of course, it could be argued that both of these renowned social thinkers had primarily embarked upon differentiation of reality's realms with a methodological justification but the offshoots of the disciplinary vision of reality have transformed all domains of epistemic configuration. In other words, methodological justifications have seemingly been turned into ontological necessities and this sea-change is what Allama Jafari considers as destructive both for knowledge and humanity as the result is not only detrimental in epistemological sense but it does lead to 'disintegration of human personality'. In other words,

... *the compartmentalization of human personality ... leads to extinction of integral epistemic yearning ... within the heart and mind of a thinker ...* (2013. 34).

In understanding Allama Jafari's epistemological theory we need to appreciate the pivotal position of personality within his conceptual frame of reference. The key in understanding the Jafarian epistemological theory is the unity of personality as he believes that the distinction of epistemic realms

... *from the nineteenth century onward ... [has resulted in] ... [the disintegration of] ... human existence ... by jeopardizing the unity of human self ... in an incurable fashion. [In other words, ...] ... in the context of humanities and social sciences, ... any subject for research ... needs to take into [consideration both realms of fact and value or human being as it is and human being as ought to be] ... [if anyone claims that one could conceptualize fundamental problems within humanities without recourse to these two domains then it should be realized that this is a very] ... optimistically shallow claim. [Because ... issues within humanities are hinged upon interconnection between these two domains of is-ness and ought-ness in a fundamental fashion] ...* (2013. 352-55).

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## **Book Review**

***The Fakir*, Sunil Gangopadhyay, Translated from Bengali by Monabi Mitra, Harper Perennial, New Delhi, 2010, 186 pages, ISBN 978-81-7223-929-9.**

### **Review by: Yoginder Sikand**

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Indian history is replete with stories of fiercely iconoclastic rebels who, refusing to be bound by the strictures and prejudices of religious orthodoxy, bravely denounced social convention in their quest for spiritual transcendence and social equality. One such figure was the late nineteenth century Bengali poet-rebel Lalan Fakir. Defying the logic of the conservative society in which he was born by insisting that he was neither Hindu nor Muslim and announcing that he cared nothing whatsoever for hierarchies of caste and class, Lalan Fakir was, by all counts, an amazingly charismatic revolutionary who sought to preach a human-centric understanding of the transcendent, one that was rooted in the struggles of the poor and oppressed for their true humanisation.

Little is known about Lalan outside Bengal, for all the vast numbers of poems he penned were in Bengali. This thoroughly inspiring book, a translation from the Bengali original, provides a gripping account of Lalan Fakir's life, presenting him not as a world-renouncing mystic or a champion of religious syncretism, as some accounts of the man indeed do, but, rather, as a deeply-committed social critic and a crusader against injustice. Although in the form of a novel, with sections that are clearly fictionalised—historical accounts of Lalan being scanty and still heavily contested—it details significant aspects of Lalan's eventful career in a powerfully moving manner.

Born in a poor Hindu family, Lalan, named Lal Mohan Kar at birth, experiences a sudden transformation in his life when he accompanies a landlord on a pilgrimage to the Ganga. Falling ill, he is given up for dead by his travelling companions. A symbolic cremation is arranged for him and his body is thrown into the river.

Unknown to the landlord and Lalan's own family, Lalan somehow survives, being rescued by a poverty-stricken Muslim woman, who nurses him back to health. In her house he meets a wandering dervish, whose enigmatic presence has a powerful impact on him. Although born in a Muslim family, the dervish is neither a Hindu nor a Muslim, and preaches an ethical spiritualism that transcends communal boundaries. His chance meeting with this man has a powerful influence on Lalan, who later goes on to tread on the same path as the dervish in seeking to bring Hindus and Muslims to realise their common humanity and the futility of communal strife that is legitimised by their understandings of god.

A major turning path in Lalan's life occurs when he returns to his home after his recovery. Hoping to be accepted by his family, he is treated as an outcaste by them for having eaten food cooked by the Muslim woman who had rescued him from his near-death experience. That constitutes the final break for Lalan with his society and with conventional religion, which he gives up for good. Thereupon, he realises the utter inhumanity of religious supremacism that follows from how he sees Hindus and Muslims—the two communities that inhabit his world of rural Bengal—understanding and practicing their respective faiths. Witnessing Hindus and Muslims squabbling about the proclaimed merits of their religions and religious heroes, Lalan realises how an utterly dehumanising obsession with rituals and beliefs, with little or no concern for ethics and compassion for others, underpins what he regards as the fake religiosity of conventional society. He realises that he can no longer identify himself with either Hindus or Muslims, for he cannot agree with either in the ways they understand religion and relate to the rest of humanity. Lalan expresses his torment at this, born from a painful realisation, in an evocative poem thus:

People ask, what is Lalan's faith?  
 Lalan thinks, 'I've not seen the face of faith with my eyes!'  
 Some sport a garland, and some the rosary,  
 And with that they slice themselves apart.  
 But when it is time to be born or die  
 What tells them apart?  
 If circumcision marks a Muslim man,  
 Is the body a token of one's faith?  
 A Brahmin has a holy thread;

But what about the Brahmin woman?  
 The world is alive with talk of faith  
 Men find salvation and faith in it  
 Lalan has torn such faith into shreds  
 And left it by the old trodden paths!

Hounded out from his home for having transgressed the law of caste, Lalan bids farewell to home and hearth and wanders off into a forest, desirous of abandoning the world in search for truth. But, like the Buddha, he soon discovers that stern austerities and shunning the world are not the answer to the painful predicament he is confronted with. Unfamiliar with the scriptures of the orthodox Hindus and Muslims -for he is illiterate- he spends his days reflecting on life, the universal reality of suffering and the tyrannical uses to which conventional religion is put to dehumanise the poor, to further enrich the powerful and to set communities against each other, all in the name of god.

Soon, Lalan, who is now a fakir-that is to say, neither Hindu nor a Muslim, but, rather, one who has transcended all communal labels-gathers around him a sizeable number of comrades. These are men and women, of 'low' and 'high' caste, of Hindu as well as Muslim background, who have fled to the forest where he has taken up residence, seeking refuge from domestic abuse and the oppression of dreaded priests and landlords. Together, they form a little commune, leading a simple yet spiritually rich life, with Lalan as their source of inspiration, and sharing their few resources together like one large family. Central to Lalan's inspiring charisma is his deeply evocative poetry, which he and his comrades often gather together to sing. (Lalan's poems are still hugely popular in West Bengal and Bangladesh, being regarded as among the masterpieces of the immensely rich Bengali literary tradition. Sadly, the book contains only a few snatches of his verses.)

Refusing to turn into a cultic hero for his comrades, Lalan insists that he and they are equals, and that their little settlement must be run on egalitarian lines, the model of an ideal society. The vision of such a society draws on Lalan's this-worldly spirituality that places human beings, not religious dogmas, rituals and practices, at its centre, for, as Lalan believes, religion ought to exist to serve humans, rather than the other way round. Lalan's spirituality is a powerful critique of escapism as well as fatalism in the name of religion, for, he seems to say, one's fate is not divinely decreed but can be changed through one's own efforts. He decries the use of religion to seek to legitimise poverty and degradation in its name.

True religion, he insists, must necessarily speak out for, and on the side of, the oppressed. Thus, he cries out:

Worked to death  
With empty purse,  
Fruitless days  
From bad to worse,  
I shrink and fade  
While they grow fat,  
What kind of ghostly life is that?

Content in the little world of their own that they set up in the forest, escaping the society that regards them as heretics and rebels, Lalan and his comrades are suddenly confronted by the agents of a local landlord who demand that they should vacate their huts. The forest, they are told, now belongs to the landlord, and Lalan's insistence that the forest belongs to all is rudely rebuked. The society that Lalan and his friends have rebelled against and fled from, it seems, is hell-bent on taking its revenge. Lalan is whisked off to meet the landlord. However, on hearing his poetry, the landlord is so overcome and driven to contrition that he befriends him. The power of Lalan's love conquers the man, and the commune is thus saved.

The Faqir, and the related Baul, tradition now struggles to survive in Bengal, mainly among some 'low' caste Muslims and Hindus, having to contend with charges of both 'superstition' and 'heresy', and being targeted both by 'modernists' and orthodox religious revivalists, both of which regard it as a challenge to their hegemonic claims. But Lalan's message of universal love, his human-centric understanding of religion, and his thundering criticism of communal hatred and supremacism in the name of god, which this book so strikingly recounts, remain as relevant today as they were in his time—which makes this book delightful and immensely rewarding reading.

***L'inconscient de l'islam*, Malek Chebel, Paris: CNRS Editions, 2015, 121 pages, ISBN 978-2-271-08586-3.**

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In *Knowledge and the Sacred*, Seyyed Hossein Nasr observes that even an irenic treatment of religion by phenomenology and *Religionswissenschaft* does a certain harm to those creeds by advancing relativism and by failing to provide a faithful description of those belief systems (95). Reflecting this in some way, Malek Chebel works between two worlds, that of the religious and that of the social scientist. Algerian-born and French-educated, the psychoanalyst Chebel seems to reject a transcendent worldview. *L'inconscient de l'islam* exemplifies the false friendship psychoanalysis offers religion.

Translator of the Qur'an and author of numerous books on Islam, including *L'Islam et la Raison*, Chebel reflects the estrangement between the social sciences and the traditionalist religion of René Guénon, Frithjof Schuon, and Hossein Nasr. Chebel adheres to the vision of Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, and Margaret Mead by regarding religion as the problem and his own anthropological-psychoanalytical viewpoint as normative and healing of Islam's supposed inadequacies. He fulfills the promise to readers he makes in his Introduction to carry out the now-tiresome cultural studies investigation into "fault and transgression" (7), as if intellectuals have nothing else to do but pick apart whatever cultural and religious artifices still exist. This is familiar terrain to readers who have read the exuberant Marxist-Lacanian Slavoj Žižek, though the latter's work on Christianity, *The Fragile Absolute: Or Why Is the Christian Legacy Worth Fighting For?*, seems at times much more accepting of Christianity than Chebel seems to be of Islam.

Instead of offering a psychoanalytically-oriented overview of Islam or the religion's inner harmony and network of practices and beliefs knitted together over the centuries, Chebel deconstructs its history, mentality, and practices with the same anecdotal storytelling one finds in Foucault's writing, lifting past events and people out of their historical milieu and inserting them into the middle of today's religious-secular *Kulturkampf*. The short book's long first chapter psychoanalyzes the harem of all things, and while the author admits that this institution does not uniquely

inhere to Islam or its cultures, he does argue that the religion of the Prophet changed the nature of the harem.

Outlining an Islamic *jouissance sexuelle*, Chebel argues that past Islamic wars aimed above all at bringing more women, especially the Byzantine Empire's white ones, under the ruler's control and enjoyment (9). Religious war came to reflect an emir's pride of place, as the rulers' hierarchy depended on the number of mistresses one had. Chebel argues he is coming down hard not on Islam here, but on those who, claiming to be its followers, have in fact negated Islam by pursuing this policy of harem expansion. (9) He goes further, sounding like a nervous European politician after a spate of ISIS violence: "Killing or dying in the name of Allah is to deny Islam once again" (10). In preoccupying himself with power rather than with transcendence, the author takes a western stance on religion and fundamentally misrepresents it.

Like many who try to fit something complex into a Freudian scheme, Chebel frequently reduces things to sex, though he does mention Selim II, "the Drunkard," who "felt the need to conquer Cyprus for its good wine" (40). Why mention harems at all in such a study? Given how few Muslim men have had access to a harem through the centuries, does this discussion really represent the religion? Is the author implying that the harem points to something else in Islam, such as the oft-mentioned oppression of women and male domination? This does at times seem to be the case, as the judgment of the harem sometimes leads to a wider analysis of the Islamic world's treatment of females, including the accusation that the Qur'an evokes women only to encase them in a world of "fault and transgression" (20): their "sexuality is thus fenced in, controlled, and imposed on, whether free women, concubines, those captured from war" (27).

Again, Chebel seems to be following the most common secular-western approach to these things nowadays, pitying women as passive, subjugated victims of the supposedly terrible, patriarchal, and violent Islam: "Women's jealousy of each other, their rivalry, but also treason, the murderous thoughts, the passage à l'acte, isolation, and hysteria are likewise symptoms that remind one that the harem is not neutral, but cultural and above all ideological" (29). Even while leaving the reader wondering what most of this jargon means, one thing is clear: Chebel never holds women morally responsible for their own actions. Thus we get the familiar hermeneutics of suspicion, the Marxist-Leninist "Who whom?", with women as a class serving as the perpetual victim of the violent system.



Curiously, even while Chebel himself reduces the Islamic world down to the harem and its sexuality, he judges western authors as guilty of Orientalism in their eroticization of the Arab and Islamic world, noting that the *sérail*, the antechamber to the harem, represented the “vibrant heart of the city, the nervous center of masculine power, the place where the oriental quintessence became a divine elixir” (31) in the western imagination. What precisely these poetic words mean is, once again, left to the reader. When accusing western scholars of Orientalist bias, he inadvertently describes his own viewpoint: “Many westerners have magnified the Orient, in particular its idleness, its sexuality, and its amorous intrigues” (43).

Many of Chebel's historical observations, quirky and ill-placed as they sometimes are, provide a fascinating insight into a certain world, even if the discussion never convinces the reader that such images are truly representative of the Arab or Islamic psyche. He notes, tantalizingly, that the seventeenth-century French writer Du Vigneau “demonstrated that the walls of the *sérail* were porous rather than impermeable” (31), without providing much more than that.

Chapter 2 deals with suicide and immolation in the Islamic world, with reference to 9/11 and other acts of terrorism. Like any good psychoanalyst, the author reduces religious things down to a simple matter of the psyche: “The holy horror that we feel for each suicidal action rises from the fact that the suicide refuses our universal morale and egotistically distances himself from us” (58). While much of this discussion is interesting, it is often too broad to be of much use to understanding Islamic terrorism and can apply to any violent situation, suicidal or otherwise, Islamic or otherwise.

The somewhat comic-book image of Islam then moves on in the next chapter to the mother-son relationship, which for Chebel replaces the husband-wife connection at the center of the family and the source of greatest intimacy. Again, the book is not faithful to its title, for it does not psychoanalyze Islam so much as randomly selected parts. Chebel conflates Arab culture with Islamic culture, making Arab Muslims the representatives of the religion even though the majority of Muslims are not Arab. Non-Arab Muslim readers might feel left out of this psychoanalytic process.

Chebel argues that the importance of sons leads to an inversion, as the male offspring is the one granting personhood, making the woman into mother and years later into grandmother. The more sons the better. Chebel seems to hang this preference for male offspring on Islam, even though other cultures, such as Confucianism, hold sons in similar high esteem and must deal with acute over-

mothering. The observation, "In many respects, the Arab man remains the locus of the mother's projection of her desires, a dream place, a paradise" (11), equally applies to the traditional Chinese upbringing. In his feminist stance, the author likewise fails to entertain the fact that the Muslim preoccupation with female chastity could be an expression of the high regard for which Islam holds women, for the protection of their sexuality implies that women are more than their sexuality.

Some of the psychoanalysis does bring up serious issues, such as the pre-Islamic versus Islamic Arab mindset, with Chebel assuming that remnants of the polytheistic, perhaps more matriarchal culture still exist, particularly within the psyche of the modern Arab Muslim. Psychoanalysis, in its search for paradox and the repressed, does its best work in unearthing long-silenced voices and impulses, and the author does not disappoint here. He spends some interesting time examining the Biblical and Qur'anic story of Ismael as the father of the Arabs, though he invokes his western reductionism by calling Ismael a *myth* instead of reading it more flexibly and respectful of a traditional religious imagination. Such exegesis would turn off a traditionally-minded reader. One is reminded here of Gilbert Durand's lamentation of the western inability to read the symbolic.

Chebel notes that the "passage" from pre-Islamic to Arab monotheism would have been felt as a "seismic" shock, "provoking a large number of resistances," lived through as "a sort of liberating collective trauma, the tremors having for immediate effect the deconstruction of the ancient scheme, including the parental, substituting for it a new patrilinear order" (60). His description of basic Islamic spirituality curiously leaves out the sharia and basic rules of Islam, though it does offer interesting insights into the Muslim psyche: "The Muslim is oriented towards the higher, to the items of verticalization," including universal community and a view of eternal life (61), in comparison to the pre-Islamic Arab whose horizons ended with his tribe. "The Muslim," Chebel notes, "is the eschatological projection of the Arab" (62).

These lines reflect Chebel preoccupation with anthropology and, more specifically, with culture, particularly Arab religious culture throughout the centuries. Once again, this gives the discussion a different perspective than the title promises, though he does mention in the Introduction that this will be his focus. One would never know from the reading that Muslims pray five times daily, offer alms to the poor, go on pilgrimage, follow a religious law, and so on. What are the psychological ramifications of these spiritual exercises? Islam apparently rests instead on an enduring Bedouin Arab cultural foundation.

*L'inconscient de l'islam* often seems defined more by what the author leaves out than by what he writes. As mentioned, he laments the lot of the Muslim woman, and her definition as a person, which is to say as a mother, via the numbers of sons she has, which is interesting enough, but, it bears repeating, why not include something positive, such as the esteem with which Muslims hold Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet, or the value of female education in many Islamic countries such as Iran, where the majority of post-secondary students are female?

Chebel's psychoanalysis of the mother-son relationship seems to aim for the construction of an Islam similar to contemporary milquetoast, therapeutic Christianity, which currently, at least in the West, has become a shadow of its former self. Reflective of the works of other psychoanalysts (such as Carl Jung and his follower Marie Louise von Franz) on religion, in *L'inconscient de l'islam*, the psychoanalytic deconstruction of religion privileges the individual, who is no longer envisioned as a person in relationship to others, such as mother to son and son to mother. We are left with the neurotic individual, unhinged from her family and wider community, for Chebel implies that the Arab mother-son relationship victimizes the woman, and this in turn calls for her freedom from this. The mother "only exists via delegation," with all legitimacy lying with the masculine. (71) Yet don't we all exist "via delegation"? Aren't we all contingent, dependent beings?

Chebel's feminist deconstruction isolates the woman from Muslim society, much as the western woman stands stubbornly alone and even aloof, a sad isolation that the author seems to anticipate for his own Arab Islamic people: "It will take 60 years for the individual woman to become a political subject wholly apart" from society and the family. (71) This amounts to the same psychoanalytical war that Freud, Jung, *et. al.* successfully waged on western Christianity in the twentieth century, leaving that religion in a heap of empty sentimentality. The reduction of faith to emotions and other aspects of the human psyche as well as to the baser needs and wants of the single man or woman, amounts to a war on the transcendent life. Chebel brings up physical, emotional, and human exhaustion (72), but in our age of technology and bourgeois comfort, this results not from the physical demands of life, but the lack of transcendence which modernity brings, as exemplified by his own psychoanalyzing. It is exhaustion from spiritual emptiness.

The fourth chapter, no less eccentric and lacking in charity towards the religion, examines censorship within Islam. Chebel goes so far as to describe the believing masses as religiously illiterate and therefore susceptible to manipulation (75). He

does, however, make some interesting points about the importance of *The Arabian Nights* to Arabs, but again this renders their culture normative for Islam.

So where does all this leave us? Nasr in *Knowledge and the Sacred* notes, “Although modern psychoanalysis is a veritable parody of traditional psychology and psychotherapy connected with the spiritual transformation of the soul, one observes increasingly in recent years attempts to break away from the mold Freud and also Jung have cast upon this discipline and to rediscover traditional techniques of curing the ills of the soul” (118). While the first half of this sentence grasps the nature of psychoanalysis, Nasr's hopeful conclusion seems to have missed the mark if *L'inconscient de l'islam* is any indication. By psychoanalysing arbitrary bits and pieces of Islam -- or of cultural practices that the western imagination has embedded within Islam -- via all-too-familiar psychoanalytic skepticism and irony / paradox, Chebel aims to westernize the religion.

Yet perhaps one is being too hard here, for part of psychoanalytic discourse, mirroring much of western thought, is to find subtleties and inconsistencies, something at which Žižek, for one, excels, as when he observes in *The Fragile Absolute* how the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affronts the Ten Commandments instead of fulfilling them.

Chebel does succeed at staying faithful to his Introduction, where he criticizes “prohibition in religion,” and how at the moment “no place is left for nuance nor for the principle of uncertainty” (12). The book's entire discussion centers around this lack, and for this *L'inconscient de l'islam* is a rewarding reading. If the author seeks nuance within the religion, then his task holds some promise, for he writes, “The questions brought up by this study are also as important as the answers” (15). Unfortunately, westernized Islam, echoing contemporary Christianity's subservience to the social sciences, seems to be the central goal of this book instead.