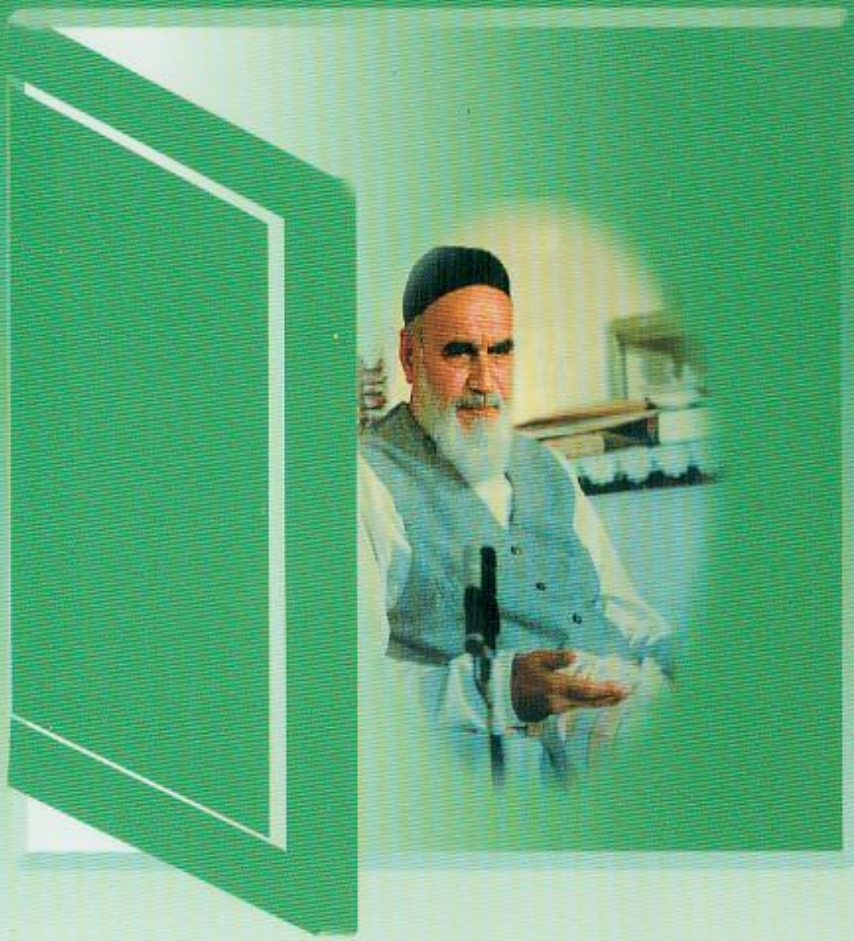
On the occasion of the 19th Anniversary of the passing away of Imam Khomeini(R.H.) the grand leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran



Collection of Speeches and Lectures

"HUMANISM AND THEOCENTRISM IN ISLAMIC AND WESTERN THOUGHT"

On the occasion of the 19th Anniversary
of the passing away of Imam Khomeini(R.H.)
the grand leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran
Collection of Speeches and Lectures delivered on

"HUMANISM AND THEOCENTRISM IN ISLAMIC AND WESTERN THOUGHT"

U.P. Centennial Symposium held by

The Cultural Office
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran- Manila

in cooperation with

The U.P. Institute of Islamic Studies
The U.P. College of Social Sciences and Philosophy

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

FOREWORD

I take great joy and pride in writing this foreword, for the initial steps in launching symposium on " Humanism and Theocentrism in Islamic and Western Thought" was not without deep apprehensions. I may have misjudged the signs of the times. But it seems that most of the scholastics of today seem to be fascinated more with the cyber wonders of science than with epistemological or metaphysical disciplines. This may be seen from the decline in number of purely philosophical programs in our educational centers, indicating a lessening of interest in purely speculative discourses on the part of the students. Today, our bookstores have only a sprinkling of books in philosophy whereas some decades ago, philosophical treatises where the flair on display. And many where the magazines, journals, and schools organs and other publications that catered to articles on philosophy. This contrast of the past with the present gave me cause to worry.

However, the spontaneous and enthusiastic response of not a few to our invitation to submit a philosophical and scholarly paper for the symposium was beyond our expectation. And this came from philosophers in their own right, from professors, and from students, whose scholarly papers we are now privileged to publish in this book for all to enjoy and admire. Beyond their pen and paper are the hours of research and thinking, the time and effort sacrificed, and the magnanimity of spirit. It is to them, therefore, that we owe our joy and pride.

I feel doubly overjoyed because I see that the spirit and interest in intellectual disciplines are still very much alive

in the campuses and academe. And given the opportunity for research and expression, these scholars and thinkers could definitely do justice to their institutions. Likewise, they could serve not only as the inspiration to many in their milieu but perhaps even to the acknowledge thinkers of their generation. The wisdom and knowledge of their scholarly papers will definitely help enhance further our knowledge of the meaning of human existence and of God.

These scholarly papers, as summarized herein, which where presented during the Symposium held on the occasion of the 19th Anniversary of the passing away of Imam Khomeini (R.H.), the great and late leader of the Islamic revolution in Iran and which likewise coincides with the UP Centennial, will definitely be of immense help for those in search for Truth.

Shahaboddin Daraei
Cultural Counselor
Cultural Office
Embassy of the I.R. of Iran-Manila

Table of Content

Messages

WELCOME REMARKS

Hon. Ali Mojtaba Rouzbehani
Ambassador: Islamic Republic of Iran-Manila

In the Name of God
The Merciful, the Beneficent

The Hon. Cultural Counselor
Dr. Shahaboddin Daraei
The Hon. Members of the Cultural Counselor Office
Dr. Hamidreza Ayatollahy
The Distinguished scholars and lecturers
Honored Guests
Ladies and gentlemen:

Good morning!

Truth to tell, I am not only extremely happy to welcome you to this academic affair. But even more so am I profoundly grateful for your having come, in as much as your very presence tells us that intellectual disciplines in the campuses of the Philippine centers of learning are still alive and vibrant. The department of philosophy in the University of the Philippines is a living testimony to this. No one can just dismiss

lightly this notable facet of your culture. For throughout world history, it was the philosophical pursuits that sustained world civilization, enhanced cultures, opened doors to new sciences, and improved the socio-religious-economic state of mankind

I am further pleased to inform you that the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran is fully aware of our gathering here this morning. It is highly appreciative of this scholarly undertaking whose intellectual significance can stand on its own in international academic fora. We are indeed proud to have such highly recognized Filipino scholars and thinkers in the forefront of our efforts in strengthening the bonds of friendship and understanding between our countries.

Nowadays, most centers of learning in Asia are swamped with diverse high-tech course-programs in the field of observable science. And intellectual disciplines appear to have taken the back seat. Little perhaps do these centers of learning realize that the present mind-boggling advancements in the empirical sciences were built upon philosophical principles—the principle of causality, to mention just one—long articulated by Aristotle and company centuries before the Birth of Christ, and by scores of great minds of the 18th to the 20th centuries given to epistemological pursuits.

Rational disciplines cannot just be ignored. And a course in philosophy is no "idle talk". Intellectual or objective truths valid before, are valid today, and will be valid tomorrow, for the simple reason that they are anchored on Eternal Truth.

Again, truth to tell, it is the unspoken desire of our Islamic government in Iran to have Asian centers of learning serve as the hub of intellectual activity in this part of the world. You, as a nation, are proficient in the English language —

which is now the international medium of cultural and scientific discourse—you are recognized as a patient and industrious people; and above all, you are acknowledged as a brilliant and intelligent race the world over . You are in a very ideal position to jumpstart this movement and lead the way towards establishing centers of learning and knowledge in this Asian-Pacific region. And proof of this sincere desire on the part of our government is this very symposium our Cultural Office has gone out of its way to sponsor. For we do believe you have the knack for profound and speculative pursuits. These are your birthrights that can propel your academes and campuses to take centerstage in the Asian sphere of knowledge and learning. They could be the identity-badges you would be proud to wear. And our office and the office of the Cultural Counselor will always be there, with doors open, to help you in whatever way we can.

To all of you who, on the occasion of this 19th Anniversary of the passing away of Imam Khomeini ,(R.H.) our great and late leader of the Islamic revolution in Iran, and which now coincides with the UP Centennial, organized this scholarly affair; to all the speakers and writers, without whose scholarly papers this symposium would not have pushed through; to all participants, and to those who, in one way or another, helped to make this symposium a reality, I wish to extend my most sincere thanks and deep appreciation, as well as the sentiments of abiding gratitude of our Embassy and that of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Thank you, one and all.

Welcome Remarks

Dr. Ciriaco M. Sayson,Jr.
Chair: Department of Philosophy
University of the Philippines

Your Excellency, Ambassador Rouzbehani, Dean Jundam, Dr. Daraei, Dr. Samadi, Mr. Khaksari, distinguished guests, colleagues, friends, and students, on behalf of Dean Zosimo Lee of the College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, my greetings to all of you.

We are gathered here on this wonderful occasion to reflect on philosophical issues that connect the religious life with the ethical life. The two issues of humanism and theocentrism are in tangles, both in themselves and with each other. We need carefully to look at the strands that make them up, and understand each by itself, to better understand how each strand makes up the whole. This is a task of clarification and understanding.

The task of understanding and clarifying these connections is a philosophical one, both in the professional sense of the word philosophy, and in its ordinary, streetwise sense. In the professional sense, philosophers are people with highly specialized training in the analysis and interpretation of

concepts. They are usually academics. In the streetwise sense, everyone is a philosopher. Or, everyone *could be* a philosopher if they wished to. From my own background I often used to hear of philosophizing described simply as "thinking hard about something". And when I was younger I remember having once read a book in which the author defined Philosophy as "the art of concerned thinking". It is in these two latter senses that everyone can be a philosopher. Anyone can think hard about something, that is, think with discipline, seriousness, and exactitude. And anyone can think out of deep concern. Anyone can engage in earnest conversation with other human beings on a subject of mutual, urgent concern.

I am sure that it is out of a deep concern for the future of humanity that our friends from Iran have come here to engage us in this conversation. The times we live in are unique in mankind's history. We are now in possession of more knowledge about our world and this universe than the Greeks ever dreamed possible. And yet human beings have remained capable of the most startling cruelty and the most profound indifference to the sufferings of others. Religions as we have known them have but multiplied the divisions between us. It is hardly necessary to argue that mankind is right now at a crossroads: he must either find himself, discover his true nature and spiritual destiny, or he will destroy the earth and himself with it. At no other time in history has the future of mankind been so uncertain. Never have so few held in their hands the fates of so many.

In facing up to the necessity of re-orienting humanity to himself, the task of academics and philosophers alike, and of all concerned human beings, is to participate in the *conversation of mankind*, in the British political philosopher Michael Oakeshott's now famous phrase. Here I would like to quote Oakeshott's description:

> As civilized human beings, we are the inheritors, neither of an inquiry about ourselves and the world, nor of an accumulating body of information, but of a conversation, begun in the primeval forests and extended and made more articulate in the course of centuries. It is a conversation which goes on both in public and within each of ourselves. Of course there is argument and inquiry and information, but wherever these are profitable they are to be recognized as passages in this conversation, and perhaps they are not the most captivating of the passages. It is the ability to participate in this conversation, and not the ability to reason cogently, to make discoveries about the world, or to contrive a better world, which distinguishes the human being from the animal and the civilized man from the barbarian. ... Education, properly speaking, is an initiation into the skill and partnership of this conversation in which we learn to recognize the voices, to distinguish the proper occasions of utterance, and in which we acquire the intellectual and moral habits appropriate to conversation. And it is this conversation which, in the end, gives place and character to every human activity and utterance.*

Note carefully: in the conversation of mankind, Oakeshott says, "of course there is argument and inquiry and information," but that these are mere "passages," and "not the most captivating" ones. For, it is the very *participation* in the conversation that counts. It is what counts because it is through participation that we learn to recognize ourselves as human in the simultaneous process of recognizing and acknowledging the humanity of others.

This brings us to a different modality of human attention and concern. Conversation, I suggest, is but a single modality. A higher modality, the one that orients us not only to each other but to a higher and more inclusive, dare I say *spiritual*, reality, is *communion*. To hold converse with another being is not yet to be in communion with that being. For, conversation is consistent with irony, distance, skepticism. Communion breaches all irony and distance and creates an unconditional solidarity out of which the human becomes something else, an emergent and deeper and wider totalization. Perhaps this leads us to what the Greeks called *ho theos*, the divine. Perhaps that is what it means to say that human beings are spiritual beings—that they are capable of finding this higher totalization whenever there is communion among them. But perhaps I had better leave this topic to our theologian friends.

I have been honored to play a small part in organizing this symposium. To get to know our friends from the Islamic Republic of Iran was a great privilege for me. Having trained in Philosophy in America, and having been back here for close to a decade now, I have been struck by how little I understand philosophers from Asia, the Middle East, Africa and other places. Then, one day, Dr. Daraei knocked on my office door. Literally. And now, finally, here we are, ready to begin a conversation on religion and philosophy.

I thank you all, and again, I welcome you to this conversation.

(Footnotes)

* "The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind" in *Rationalism in Politics*, p. 199.

Welcome Remarks

Dr. Shahaboddin Daraei
Hon. Cultural Counselor

In the Name of God

Your Excellency Ambassador.
Ali Mojtaba Rouzbehani

Dr. Sergio Cao, Chancellor of the University of the Phil.
Dr. Mashur Bin – Ghalib Jundam, Dean of UP IIS
Dr. Ciriaco M. Sayson Jr., Chair of the UP
Department Philosophy
Distinguish guests
Ladies and gentlemen:

I would like to render heartily my best thanks and appreciation to those who cooperate and those who presented in symposium **on "Humanism and Theocentrism in Islamic and Western Thought"** at, the same time I render my sincerest thanks to the UP University in general and to **Dr. Sergio Cao, UP Diliman Chancellor**, in particular and his respected colleagues **Dr. Mashur Bin-Ghalib Jundam, Dr. Ciriaco M. Sayson Jr.,** and the rest of the UP officials, as well as staff

of the different departments of the University of the Philippines. I also render heartily my best thanks to **His Excellency Ali Mojtaba Rouzbehani, Ambassador of Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran,** through whose generosity **and** help the symposium is now a reality. I also hope that this symposium could highlight the Centennial of an illustrious and honored university.

In the eyes of many critics, human society is like a sea that is calm, whose waters are devoid of any movement. Given long periods of inactivity, the waters could stagnate and eventually dry up – and the life it sustained could be totally annihilated. The only force that could cause movement of the waters is the wind. At times it appears in the form of typhoons, and at other times in the form of a gentle breeze. The wind thus can determine the destiny of ships.

Within this context, some waves may be violent and thus prove fatal for the ships. Others may simply be the undulating kind and enable ships to reach their destination safely.

The same may be said of many great leaders and historical figures, some of whose works and treatises dealt mankind a fatal blow, while others endowed man with dignity, provided prosperity and tranquility. And undoubtedly, there were many contemporary masters who produced waves that rescued nations form the mailed fist of world plunder and despotic colonialism.

The most important of these leaders are those who generated waves that engendered wisdom, awareness, and responsibility which saved the troubled ships of human society. It was by nurturing these virtues of awareness and active

responsibility that strengthened man's willpower and self-reliance.

Now, we are commemorating the 19th Anniversary of the passing away of a pious and immaculate leader man, easily available to everyone, most knowledgeable in the affairs of man and the state, a man of great intellect, and who is the illustrious founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran: The Venerable Imam Khomeini (R.H.). He it is who has restored dignity, awareness, and responsibility to Iran as a nation. His influence in awakening the peoples of the world to eschew tyranny and injustice has commanded international respect which no nation of today can negate. Even despots or tyrants would be hard-pressed to destroy the awareness and desire of people to be free as implanted by Imam Khomeini (R.H).

We organized this scholarly symposium. We were blessed with the invaluable research papers of the learned men and women which will be read during these two days of the symposium. They are intellectuals, dedicated researchers, professors and students who constitute the hub of science and research in the university. And the core of this symposium will be the scientific and scholarly discussion about one of the most important philosophical subjects in recent years, especially after the Renaissance.

The subject matter we chose has extensively influenced the thinking, the culture and the behavior of contemporary western intellectuals. This subject matter is Humanism. While the Humanism of the Renaissance period was not a complete philosophical doctrine, by the passing of time, it gradually developed into a body of thought, reinforced by Brunner, Bacon, Barkley, Spinoza, to mention a few. In the 17th & 18th century, Humanism became a full-blown philosophical body of thought expressed in the writings and discourses of men of

letters, philosophers, and thinkers like Voltaire, Montesquieu, D'Lambert, Locke, and scores of others. Their general perception was based on such issue on the essence and existence of human being, tranquility of the individual and society. The issue was purely based on human wisdom and not on the love and worship of God who promised heaven. They believed that accomplishing all human designs that are good for this world originates from wisdom. We can say that contemporary humanism places a high value on human beings. It was a movement of cultural courage that widely influenced the various facets of ethics, of art, drawing, painting, politics, education, economics, law, and theology.

However, as learned men and scholars and researchers, you are aware of the extensive meaning of humanism. Because of the different views concerning man, many schools of thought sprung up. There is the need to classify them, one by one, to differentiate between moderate humanism and radical humanism. However, nobody can deny that the bulk of progress in today's world of science, industry, welfare, law, and even to a certain extent, politics, can be attributed to humanism, as one of schools of thought. Nonetheless, many critics, whether during the initial stages of humanism or within these contemporary times, believe that such school of thought is like a coin with two sides. These critics believe that by giving so much and endless attention to the dignity and state of human being, with no without considering man's shortcomings and limited wisdom, too much chaos would envelop the individual and human society.

A glance at this fanatical concern for humanism will cause the believer in humanism to discard everything which is not based on his own concept of value, even if others were to expound on such issues.

The humanists of the modern age who styled themselves as pro-human rights and freedom, ultimately praise despots like Friederich II, Bonaparte, Bismark, and Stalin, who all ignored the rights of women and children, the dignity of religions, the language, and even the rights of colored people. Likewise so many intellectuals assert that the destruction of ecological balance is the end-result of radical humanism which considers human dignity as the center of everything and the human being as the absolute ruler.

Now the question is: in focusing attention on the historical and radical humanist thought, what happens then to such conceptual values as philanthropy, wisdom, love, kindness, helping mankind, human rights, and the rights of nature itself without the support of religion and divine precepts, either in theory or in practice, and how can this type of humanism effect unity in human society and prevent crime against man?

Heaven and religion place the human being on a high pedestal and consider him the master of creation, capable of conquering space and the universe, and will not leave him on the vast plain of existence with no responsibility, nor his own thinking.

The important fact in Islamic thought is that the dignity of the human being arises not only from human affairs but also is inextricably linked to the very beginning and the very end of creation, meaning, God.

In other words, Islam relates to humanism only in so far as human values, ethics, divine precepts will not be negated. And Islam affirms human dignity and human values such as kindness, love, helping each other, respect of freedom, non discrimination, human rights, condemnation of injustice, and

the destroying of the structures that promote injustice, and finally, belief in God.

In closing, I would like to render my best thanks to Dr. Hamidreza Ayatollahy, our distinguished guest who came all the way from Iran to pay his respects to the scholars of the University of the Philippines whose academe he highly values. I do hope this initial relationship between this learned professor from Iran and the scholars of the Philippines will prosper and endure.

I also wish to sincerely thank all the writers, and participants who generously gave time for this symposium.

For all of you, I ask and pray for prosperity, success, and peace.

God bless you all!

Brief Remarks

Gholamreza Khaksari
Secretary of Scientific Committee
Cultural Section
Embassy of the I.R. of Iran–
Manila

In the Name of God
The Merciful, the Beneficent

Swear to the pen and what the pen writes.

Holy Qur'an (68:01)

Intellectuals, researchers, science adherents, dear guests, ladies and gentlemen.

I welcome you all, to this symposium. Based on the blessed verse of Holy Qur'an which I recited, the Creator of the Universe swears to the pen and what the pen writes; in other words, God almighty swears to science and knowledge; this means that the Creator has a high regard for science and knowledge.

Undoubtedly, all the problems and miseries of man are due to ignorance, lack of knowledge and to being far from real science. Real science means that the type of science which not only facilitates technology as the means for the material progress of man, but also ushers him toward the spiritual, and helps him to be a perfect human being with all the specifications as described in Holy Qur'an, so that he deserves to be divine Kalif on Earth. Thus science and spirituality serve as the two wings meant to help human beings fly upward to their salvation.

This symposium on "Humanism and Theocentrism in Islamic and Western Thought" the first of its kind in the Philippines, is due to the efforts of the Cultural Counsellorship, Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Manila, in cooperation with the U.P College of Social Sciences and Philosophy as well as U.P Institute of Islamic Studies, on the occasion of the passing away of Imam Khomeini (R.H), the great and late leader of the Islamic revolution in Iran. Generous efforts were made over a long period of time, and various meetings were held during the holidays even late into the night in order to make this symposium a success.

This scholarly symposium fortunately coincides with the Centennial of U.P as the biggest state university in the Philippines, which I congratulate. I also take this opportunity to render my best thanks to the university authorities and to the U.P College of Social Sciences and Philosophy as well as the U.P Institute of Islamic Studies for their valued cooperation which brought about the success of this symposium.

The aim of this symposium is to provide an opportunity for Iranians and Filipinos to exchange their philosophical views, thereby giving them an opportunity for recognition, while enhancing and nurturing the brilliant potentials.

Holding such a scholarly symposium in this part of Asia which continues to immerse itself in spirituality and to achieve real self-reliance in science, serves as a pioneering effort which the Islamic Republic of Iran deeply appreciates. I do hope that the presentation of this symposium in the Philippines will provide a common opportunity for cultural and scientific meetings in the future, so that the scholars of both nations could be familiar with each other's points of view.

Lastly, I would like to state that, among the articles received by the scientific symposium committee, eight articles were chosen after a series of evaluations. I take this opportunity to thank all the members of the scientific committee, as well as the researchers and writers who gave time and effort to produce articles and enrich this symposium. Meanwhile a certificate of attendance will be given to those who completed the two days of this ongoing symposium.

Thank you.

Gholamreza Khaksari
Secretary of Scientific Committee
Cultural Section
Embassy of the I.R. of Iran - Manila

Lectures

The Decline of Dominant Humanism

Hamidreza Ayatollahy
Professor of Philosophy
Department
Allameh Tabatabaii University

Summary:

There were some historical, cultural and philosophical situations after the renaissance that made humanism dominant in Western thought. Humanism is different from atheism. Most humanist thinkers believe in God but his *divinity* is denied by them. I am going to define the reasons for the upsurge of humanism from the sixteenth century until the second half of the twentieth century. Some Christian doctrines made humanism more natural and then they simplified secularism as the main idea for a developed country.

I am going to point out the differences between Islam and Christianity in the fact that there are serious challenges between Islam and humanism and secularism. It was the Islamic revolution in Iran, led by Imam Khomeini that caused the decline of humanism as the spirit of secularism and materialism. Imam Khomeini's

rejection of the traditional meaning of theocentrism and his new idea of theocentrism brought about what may be called the decline of humanism. I am going to state the new situation of divine presence in our social and individual life nowadays and the challenges that humanism faces for imposing its values.

Man has been the central issue in Western philosophical thought. But there were two approaches in this regard before and after the renaissance. In the middle ages, it was called anthropocentricism. Man in anthropocentric thought was the core of the universe and all other things were created for his benefit. There are varieties of beings in the world but man's value is above them. The centricity of the earth among all other stars, which was the previous account of cosmology, along with the view of the servitude of all animals and plants to him, supported the idea of anthropocentricism.

The rejection of the centricity of the earth by some astronomers and scientists of the renaissance, like Kepler, Copernicus and Galileo, paved the way for another kind of thinking about the situation of man in the universe. The earth became a small planet in a great solar system, which in turn is a very small part of a small galaxy. He is alone in the universe and the centricity of the earth is meaningless and has no significance in the vastness of the entire universe.

On the other hand, the previous assumption of man neglected man's capacity to harness technology for his use and convenience. Newton's discovery of the laws of nature and Francis Bacon's method in using those discoveries only for man's service gave man another role in the universe. Although he is alone and is a very, very small part of the world, he can dominate all other things in the world by his own

activities, independent of other things. He could have an active role in the universe instead of being a passive spectator.

All of these matters brought about a new viewpoint about man and his position in the universe in the modern age. He became the criterion for other beings in the world. Therefore the anthropocentric view was replaced by a humanistic approach to the world.

Descartes is considered by many as the founder of modern philosophy. His philosophy introduced the most important base of humanism. He, in his famous starting point, namely "*Cogito ergo sum*" (I think therefore I exist) gave priority to the human mind; and the existence and validity of our knowledge of the outward world must be proven through and after that "I". The world must not be considered as being that which contains man. The real world is based on our cognition of it. It is I who gave the validity of other beings. Epistemology is prior to ontology. The world in itself changed to the world for me. The human subject gives meaning to the objects. Truth from my own point of view now takes precedence over objective truth as a constant value. Subjectivism became the essential character of modern philosophy; and it brought humanism as a philosophical and practical attitude of modern age.

Humanism means that man is the criterion of the truthfulness of other things and he does not need any other thing, not even God, for this validity. In humanistic approach, God is not the absolute truth of all things but He must be proven by my own reason and then He will be a truth but on my assumption. Descartes tried to prove God after proving his own existence through his mind, and afterward through his mind and God, the existence of the outward objects. He

needed God for validating the existence of things based on his cognition of them.

On the other hand, the protestant movement questioned the right of the church to intervene in politics, economy and social laws. There were a lot of evidences proving the prevention of scientific development by the church. Therefore, Western man believed in the advantages of separation of the state and the church. It was humanism that theoretically personalized Divine presence in man's life.

The major thinkers in the early modern period did believe in God and they tried to prove God through their developments in science and philosophy; but they neglected the role of God in their social and political life. That is, the existence and presence of God in individual man were acknowledged, but the and the divinity of God in guiding man in all parts of his life was denied.

As this separated God had little room for attendance, atheistic attacks on this God were easier. Therefore, in the nineteenth century, we encountered some serious attacks, questioning not only the divinity of God but also His existence at all. God moved to temples among some so-called undeveloped religious peoples, so that, in the 1960s, the famous journal, *Times*, printed on its cover: "God has no room to present". Although humanists do not necessarily believe in atheism, their movement led to ignorance of God. Humanists could only believe in a personalized God. All these increasingly made humanism a dominant attitude among the Western people. Man supposed that he could understand truths in the world by means of his scientific progress. Science was the replacement of God. Technology, also, gave man his own power. He supposed that he was the main source of knowledge and power. This was the peak of humanism.

Some Signs of the Insufficiency of Humanism

1- In the second half of the twentieth century, philosophical researches showed that science cannot be the criteria of truth, because the truthfulness of science was under serious question. Science, just by that view which gave subjectivity to God, viewed subjectively and his objective truth denied. This is our (scientists') mind that in some circumstances accepts one scientific law and in other circumstances denies it. The acceptance and denial of a scientific law is not based on reality but on human choice. This deep understanding of science posed the suspicion of realness of science which was the most important criteria for sufficiency of man's knowledge.

2- On other hand, the independent power of man brought about by technology was another side of humanism. While the twentieth century was one that saw the advance and development in science and technology as man made use of these to serve his purpose, the twenty-first century cast a wary and suspicious eye on all activity geared toward technological development because of all the disasters that such a development brought upon mankind. Thus, the twenty- first century is known as the century of environment. This new approach brings bioethics into the core of scientific and technological circles. Because of the insufficiency of secular bioethics, the need for religion has become more and more important in this century for removing environmental pollutions that have been caused by human vanity. Professor Nasr has analyzed the matter and the role of religion in helping humanity look for the best solution in his book *Religion and the Order of Nature*. He emphasizes in this book

that the most capacity in this respect can be found in Abrahamic religions especially in Islam. The problem and dangers of pollution made by a secular science and technology based on human interference with nature, and the emergence of a solution have been at the center of scientific and technological circles. Therefore the necessity of solution has shown the weakness of humanistic solutions which brought about those huge troubles and the need for a sacred science in the first place. It could be a time for religions to introduce themselves as savior of humanity.

3- The secular humanistic thought that defends the separation of religion and the state has tried to introduce some alternatives to the religious state, such as socialism, democracy and liberal democracy and so on. However, these of political systems have had a lot of problems that are pointed out by political philosophers. Marxism was also one of those models of modernity that for a long period of time in the twentieth century attracted and convinced a huge number of people all over the world as being the best kind of political state possible. However, its collapse showed the deficiency of such secular solutions. In an examination of liberal democracy by contemporary scholars the consequences of those liberal democracies in the future may be more problematic than Marxism. American militarism in recent years made liberal democracy as the enemy of human kind. The existence of Israel and its huge governmental crimes, as well as the imperialistic militarism of the United States are all supported by the liberal democracy of Western countries[1].

4- In reality, the humanistic achievements of western modern political thought brought the biggest disasters in human history, namely, world wars one and two. Although modern western people reject political systems like fascism, racism and Nazism, they cannot ignore the secular humanistic basis of those systems. The secular solution of the state may cause those tragedies that may be the result of its secularity and it is not rational to rely unconsciously on those treatments.

The Second Phase of the Decline of Humanism

These signs were the first phase of the decline of humanism. The unique discourse of the world, until the middle of the twentieth century, was a humanistic one either in Marxism or in liberalism or in other models of the ruling world. Religion was given the least importance, and the dominant discourse of human social activities did not pay any attention to theocentrism.

It was Imam Khomeini who brought religion to the core of social discourse. Humanism had some challenges in itself without any one outward. But humanism as a whole encountered a powerful new challenge in theocentrism which was quite different from the one in the Middle Ages. All kinds of divine presence, increasingly, begun to appear in human life. The great movement of Iranian revolution, led by Imam Khomeini, changed all the criteria of humanism which had been dominant for more than three centuries. This huge shock was the most important phase of the decline of humanism. Although a lot of religious movements were not in the direction of Imam Khomeini's path, they had similarly rejected secular humanism. They emphasized the need for the presence of religious teachings in all dimensions of human life.

This was because the increasing tendency and inclination to religion specially in recent decades have made religious discourse the core of human life,[2] while religions in the middle of the twentieth century was on the margin. This is not restricted to a personally religious activity but will penetrate all dimensions of human life; it will require a need for social and political attendance of religions.

The other challenge of Imam Khomeini to the humanistic approach of the West was the challenge of the best way of life. While in Western culture the best way of life depends on welfare and humanistic freedom, this is not so in the Islamic system of value. The importance of the spiritual progress of man, and of defining him as one who must think of himself as a spiritual animal which will be possible in his worshipping God, brought about a religious worldview quite different from any Western concept. The emphasis on religious teachings as the heavenly essence of man; the emphasis on the duty of the prophets to purify him toward training that essence (*Tazkiah*) as well as the emphasis on mundane matters, stand in stark contrast against the totally different system of values of the West, in which the definition of the best way of life is restricted to the best material life as manifested in material welfare and freedom. For example, homosexuality is rejected in all its forms in Islam because it makes man very different from his true self, while in the Western system of value it is in the direction of human enjoyment and part of his welfare and freedom. Homosexuality in an Islamic system of value is just like terrorism in a Western one. The judgment about one action due to two systems of value is quite different because of the difference in the definitions of mankind.

The decision about a successful and fruitful political system is hardly based on the system of values and the definition of man and his ideals which we are going to judge about.

Therefore, we may not judge about development absolutely in a Western manner of life; perhaps what is considered as a development by the West, may be viewed by others as being more of a decline than an improvement.

This is the sovereignty of mass media ruled by Western secular humanistic regimes that try to impose a system of value that is made for the benefit of Western companies.

In closing I must add another important point. The theocentrism that was offered by Imam Khomeini was very different from that of the Middle Ages. Imam Khomeini's theocentrism is not the intervention of religion and religious leaders in all political and social deeds. It respects all rational solutions of man but they must be in the direction of the religious teachings. Every political and social attitude emphasize on some boundaries that define it as that attitude. These boundaries in Imam Khomeini's view must be defined by religious teachings, but in those boundaries humankind must think and give the solution on his own rationality. This is also a religious teaching. Religion must protect human values based on divine guidance. The characteristic of this kind of theocentrism must be explored in another paper.

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(Endnotes)

[1] - Ayatollahy, Hamidreza "The Relation between Religion and the State: an Islamic Point of View" in *Journal of Sh'a Islamic Studies*, Volume 1, Number 2, April 2008.

[2] - Voll believes that Islam will be as an active solution of the political presence in its territory. See:Voll, John O., *Islam Continuity and Change in the Modern World*. p357.

A.D.-D.E.E.N. VIS-À-VIS AL-AD'L UMMAH [A 1429 After Hegira (AH) Asabiyyah's Rebirth Among Moro Youth]

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Summary:

Bismillah!

The great Muslim thinker and leader of the Iranian Revolution nineteen years past, in the person of Imam Ayatollah Khomeini (R.H.) bequeathed to the youth of the modern era (including the Bangsamoro) and those still unborn – as well those in the wombs of time, his *Jihad-an-Nafz* advocacy as first and foremost the best path to success where he stated:

> *"... the real victory ... is no way attainable except through the greatest struggle and combat with self." (2005)*

Imam Khomeini's food-for-thought/for man's body and soul is in conjunction with Ayat 17, of Surah 3 in the Holy Qur'an:

"(They are those who are patient, those who are true (in faith, words, and deeds), and obedient with sincere devotion in worship to Allah."

Religion (*ad-Deen*) is what fashions and enhances human dignity during the process of enculturation, where the Qur'an and Sunnah have inked the "oughts" and "ought nots" in order for man to abide as a prelude to the establishment of an *ad'l ummah* (trustworthy/just community).

Religion is always with a group (Boquet:1933:23), hence, the growing awareness and the desire to know more about it (i.e. religion, culture change and religious acculturation) has served as a stimulus to researchers and philosophers, both Muslim and non-Muslims alike.

Hence, while .... Religion is the road or path, leading from clay to God ... (Shariati, 1979:74), such a path is full of hindrances, thus, patience is a must.

In fact, Islam highly upholds Imam Khomeini's view that doubts the possibility that nurture or caring can spring from the satanic insinuations ... (2003).

In cognizance of the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.), as well as the modern era wisdom of Imam Khomeini, the 1429 AH Bangsamoro Youth is now on the threshold of change towards the realization of a just *kauman*, to wit:

A.L. – A.D.' L. U.M.M.A.H.

A llah's ad-Deen Adherence
U nconquered Jihadist Race
L aw Abider Moroland
M uhsinun Adam's Trailblazers
A manat Achiever Kauman
M uhammad (S.A.W.) Moro Murids
D iscipline Oriented Mankind
A sabiyyah-Patient Adovcates
L ettered – B.E.S.T. Academicians
H umility (in thoughts, words, and deeds)

AD-DEEN VIS-À-VIS AL-ADL UMMAH*
(A 1429 After Hegira (AH) Moro Assabiyyah's Rebirth Among Moro Youth)

Bismillah!

"So set thou thy face
Truly to the religion being upright
The nature in which Allah has made mankind;
No change (there is) in the work (wrought)
By Allah! That is the true religion
But most among mankind know not."
(Surah XXX, Ar-Rum: Ayat 30)

Religion (*ad-Deen*) is what fashions and enhances human dignity, hence, it ultimately serves as the right path towards vitalizing individual, familial and communally accepted good moral conduct as a prelude to the establishment of an

ad'l (just or trustworthy) *ummah* (abode of Islam). Such a revitalized *al-ad'l ummah's* by 1440 after hegira (AH), Insha-Allah, shall be populated by the brave and beautiful *ad'l* adherence to Islam – as a religion and as a way of life.

Within the realm of social science and anthropological jargon, the "oughts" and "ought nots" as well as the enculturation of an individual debouched from the trifold agents: home, church, (mosque) and community (*kaum*).

This paper focuses on just one agent, the *masjid* (mosque or house of worship) where religion (*ad-deen*) caters to inculcate an *ad'l* (ideal, just or trustworthy) *Asabiyyah* (solidarity group) of *Muhmin* (pious Muslims), hence, an *ad'l ummah* (abode of Islam) beginning 1429 after Hegira (AH), (hopefully to bear fruit by 1440 AH – onward).

Growing awareness in the study of religion, culture change and religious acculturation caught the attention of many interested thinkers, scholars, local and foreign Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Says Bouquet (1933:23), "…religion is always with a human group. It is experienced in every moment of life – in the innermost of beings with the great or minor event."

In the words of Ali Shariati (1979:94):

> *"Religion is therefore a road or a path, leading from clay to God and conveying man from vileness, stagnation, and ignorance, from the lowly life of clay and satanic character, towards exaltation, motion, vision, the life of the spirit and divine character. If it succeeds*

in doing so, then it is religion in truth. But if it does not, then either you have chosen the wrong path, or you are making wrong use of the right path."

The study of religious acculturation involves not merely an investigation of whether religious ideas are true. As Kingsley (1951:12) puts it, whether or not religious ideas are true, is probably the least important question for social science. What the sociologist of religion does is to bring out certain aspects of religious beliefs and practices which might have been unconsciously overlooked or not fully appreciated. Vernon (1962:24) puts it simply:

"If man had no culture, he would likewise have no religion."

Among Muslim thinkers, Al-Farabi may have been the first *ilm* seeker/sharer who believed that the differences among men were due to many factors, such as food, living environment and climate, which could be very hot, very cold, or moderate. According to Al-Farabi, those factors had much influence in shaping character, pattern of thinking, behavior, orientation or inclination and habit. Therefore, unlike Plato, Al-Farabi gave up hope of there being equality, unity and uniformity among mankind.

Ibn Abi Rabi concurred with Plato's idea that individually it is impossible for a human being to meet his natural requirements without outside help and therefore, men need each other. Relative to *Adam-Hawa* (man-woman) relationship, the famous poet, Henry Wordsworth Longfellow wrote:

"As unto the bow the chord is,

So unto man is woman
Though she bends him –
She obeys him;
Though she draws him –
Yet she follows:
Useless each without the other."

Al-Mawardi's hope for survival advocacy emphasizes a close bond between generation and generation where the present generation is the inheritor of the previous ones who prepared the young - including those unborn, as well as those in the womb of time – for the future. Other Muslim thinkers like Ibn Taymiyyah and Al-Mawardi share the advocacy that *amanah* (trust) is a primordial factor that can enhance positive leader–follower relationship for the betterment of the *ummah*.

Apropos of Ghazali's *ad'l* leadership ideology where an *ameer* (leader) is duty-bound to help prepare and improve both the temporal and the hereafter of the *ummah*, Ibn Khaldun endeavored to give an important role to an arbiter in a *kaum* who acts as conflict pacifier. Henceforth, Ibn Khaldun launched the *Asabiyyah* theory (group solidarity).

Studies have shown that a cultural system changes through a number of ways. It may change as a result of an encounter with other cultures. Ford (1959:372) notes that the change may invoke the accommodation of one or few elements introduced from outside without any conspicuous plan of action ... or it may include the adaptation of the culture.

On the principle of the human ability to undertake change, the great leader of the Iranian revolution – Imam Ayatollah Khomeini has this to say:

"All habits (malikat) and psychic dispositions are capable of change.

As long as the soul remains in this world of change and transition, it is subject to time and renewal; and as long as it is associated with matter (hayula) and potentiality (quwwah), the human being can change all his dispositions and transform them into their opposites. This claim is affirmed, besides metaphysical proof (burhan), by experience, as well as by the summons of the prophets ('a) and the true religions to noble dispositions and their restraining people from the opposite qualities."
(in SH Islami, 2003:13)

Islam, therefore, with all profound due respect, highly supports the Imam's vantage point doubting the possibility that nurture or caring can spring from the satanic insinuations (*wasawis*; sing. *Waswasah*) and guiles of the carnal self (*an nafs al-ammarah*). These two are the brigands along the path of human perfection who, by bringing excuses such as, "Our time has already passed," deter man from reforming the self (ibid.).

In the midst of these satanic hindrances, therefore, there is an ample need for man to persevere against all odds as a prelude to success. The Holy Qur'an emphasized in Surah 3, Ayat 17:

Al-Qur'an 1

"(They are) those who are patient, those who are true (in Faith, words,

and deeds), and obedient with sincere devotion in worship to Allah."

In a nutshell, given all the various agents of socialization and character building institutions that guide man to the right path for change, the greatest armory is self-discipline. Imam Khomeini humbly preached, *"... the real victory ... is no way attainable except through the greatest struggle and combat with the self."* (2005)

Asabiyyah: The 1429 AH Moro Trailblazers for Al-Ad'l Ummah

Verily, Allah enjoins Al-Ad'l (i.e. justice and worshipping none but Allah Alone – Islamic Monotheism) and Al-Ihsan (i.e. patience in performing your duties to Allah, totally for Allah's sake and in accordance with the Sunnah (legal ways) of the Prophet in a perfect manner), and giving (help) to kith and kin (i.e. all that Allah has ordered you to give them e.g., wealth, visiting, looking after them, or any other kind of help; forbidding Al-Fahsha' (i.e. all evil deeds, e.g. illegal sexual acts, disobedience of parents, polytheism, telling lies, giving false witness, taking a life without right), and Al-Munkar (i.e. all that is prohibited by Islamic law; polytheism of every kind, disbelief and every kind of evil deeds), and Al-Baghy (i.e. all kinds of oppression). He

admonishes you, that you make take heed.

INQUIRY

Questions?

The challenge now faced by the Islamic kauman (community) is how to retain its Muslim identity while in the process of gradually accepting certain western concepts of development.

What is Modernity?

In the words of Dr. Keith David Watenpaugh (2006:264):

> "*Modernity is a general term for the political and cultural process set in motion by integrating new ideas, economic systems and education into society.*" In the process of becoming modern (westernized) Moro Muslims were in a dilemma considering the fact that modernization floated in an environment already besieged with its century-old unresolved Jihad Fiy-Sabilillah (Struggle to self-determination and decolonization).

This is because as Dr. Watenpaugh emphasized:

"Becoming modern implies at least two things: becoming is a process of change – moving from one condition to another – and modern is a description that is set against something previously existing, i.e. non-modern, traditional or, pejoratively backward. To move from one stage to the other is often difficult and can cause tensions in a traditional society as it faces challenges posed either by the outside world or by attempts to modernize from within. From the outside world, globally these days, has come modernization in the form of communications and technology."

What is Development?

According to Majul (1978:81), various descriptions of what characterizes development have been given, however, they all agree on common elements. Among these are the following:

1. Society is production-minded, and its production rate is high. This means that in manufacturing and agriculture, per capita production is high. Industrialization and the use of modern technology are widespread, with agriculture being mechanized. In time, it is believed, there will be a similarity in the mechanical skills needed by both factory and agricultural worker. In society, too,

there is a ready access to the finished products of industry, and there is normally a surplus for export.

2. There is a high standard of living with high commodity consumption. A high standard of living here implies a life style that includes accessibility to machines which reduces household chores and offers, as radios and TV sets do, a form of leisure. Among the working classes, an increased standard of living involves sanitary, safe, and better working conditions, reasonable working hours, medical and social services, retirement benefits and wages that give accessibility to time-saving machines in the home as well as leisure for cultural enjoyment.

3. There is a high degree of state involvement in the economic life in society. The state sees to it that No. 1 is rationalized, and No. 2 is made operative.

4. A fairly high degree of the people's involvement in the political life of the country is found. Although, the people's participation in the political process may vary in different political systems, common to all of them is general consent to the government and its laws.

All the above characteristics reveal the important role that government plays in development. In effect, it is the government that normally provides the leadership as well as the direction of development.

Sub-Questions:

- Must Islamic Kauman allow change to take place in response to modernity/ development (along Western lines)?
- Does the Qur'an speak of development, or at least mention the "know-how" towards development?

Answer:

Al-Qur'an 2

God al-Quddos (The Holy) emphasizes:

1. "Allah will not change" the (good) condition of a people as long as they do not change (of goodness) themselves. …."

Al-Qur'an 3

God al-Azeez (The Almighty) remarks:

2. "The revelation of the Book is from God, the Exalter in power, full of wisdom."(Surah 39, Az-Zumar: Ayat 1-2)

Al-Qur'an 4

God al-Musawwer (The Musawwir) states:

3. "… Nothing we have committed from the book (al-Qur'an) (Surah al-An'am: Ayat 38)

In cognizance of the said Qur'anic injunction and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), the Bangsamoro

Muslims, for centuries, have been patiently opting to change their present environment towards an *ad'l kaum* based on *ad-deen* known as *Ad'l Ummah* (Just Muslim Community), to wit:

A.L.-AD.'L. U.M.M.A.H

A llah's Ad-deen Adherence
Unconquered Jihadist Race
L aw Abider Moroland
M uhsinun Adam's Trailblazers
A manat Achiever Kauman
M uhammad (s.a.w) Moro Murids
D iscipline Oriented Mankind
A sabiyyah - Patient Advocates
L ettered – B.E.S.T.-Academicians
H umility (in thoughts, words, deeds).

Allah's Ad-Deen Adherence

Al-Qur'an 5

"Truly, the religion with Allah is Islam. Those who were given the Scripture (Jews and Christians) did not differ except, out of mutual jealousy, after knowledge had come to them." Surah 3, Al-Imran: Ayat 19)

Hadith 1

Chapter 38. The statement of the Prophet: "Religion is An-Nasiha [(to be sincere and true) to Allah, to His Messenger, to the Muslim rulers, and to all the Muslims].

Narrated Jarir bin 'Abdullah: I gave the Bai'a (pledge) to Allah's Messenger for the following:

1. Iqamat-as-Salat [The offering of Salat (prayers) perfectly].
2. To pay the Zakat.
3. And to be sincere and true to every Muslim (i.e. to order them for Al-Ma'ruf (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do) and to forbid them from Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism and all that Islam has forbidden).

Law Abider Moroland

Al-Qur'an 6

Verily, those who believe [in the Oneness of Allah, and in His Messenger Muhammad including all obligations ordered by Islam] and do righteous good deeds, they are the best of creatures. (Surah 99: Ayat 7)

Chapter 15. Whoever says that faith is action (good deeds).

Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah's Messenger was asked, "What is the best deed?" He replied, "To believe in Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad)." The questioner then asked, "What is the next (in goodness)?" He replied, "To participate in Jihad (holy war – religious fighting) in Allah's Cause." The questioner again asked, "What is the next (in goodness)?" He replied, "To perform Hajj (pilgrimage to Makka) Mabrur (which is accepted by Allah and is performed with the intention of seeking Allah's Pleasure only and not to show off and

without committing any sin, and in accordance with the legal ways of the Prophet).

- Amanat Achiever Kauman

Al-Qur'an 7

> *"O you who believe! Betray not Allah and His Messenger, nor betray knowingly your Amanat (things entrusted to you, and all the duties which Allah has ordained for you).*
> (Surah 8, Al-Anfal: Ayat 27)

Hadith 2

Narrated Abu Huraira: While the Prophet was saying something in a gathering, a Bedouin came and asked him, "When would the Hour (Doomsday) take place?" Allah's Messenger continued his talk, so some people said that Allah's Messenger had heard the question, but did not like what that Bedouin had asked. Some of them said that Allah's Messenger had not heard it. When the Prophet finished his speech, he said, "Where is the questioner, who enquired about the Hour (Doomsday)?" The Bedouin said, "I am here, O Allah's Messenger." Then the Prophet said, "When Al-Amanah [i.e. the trust for moral responsibility or honesty and all the duties which Allah has ordained] is lost, then wait for the Hour (Doomsday)." The Bedouin said, "How will that be lost?" The Prophet said, "When the power or authority comes in the hands of unfit persons, then wait for the Hour (Doomsday)."

- Discipline Oriented Mankind

Al-Qur'an 8

"This is the Book (the Qur'an), whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to those who are Al-Muttaqun [the pious believers of Islamic Monotheism who fear Allah much (abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which He has forbidden) and love Allah much (perform all kinds of good deeds which He has ordained)]." (Surah 2, Ayat 2)

Hadith 3

Chapter 14. Enjoining all that is Al-Ma'ruf (i.e. Islamic Monotheism, and all that Islam has ordained) is considered as a *Sadaqa* (charitable gift).

Narrated Jabir bin 'Abdullah: The Prophet said, "Enjoining, all that is Al-Ma'ruf (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do) is a *Sadaqa*."

Chapter 15. To be kind and lenient in all matters.

Narrated 'Aisha: "Allah's Messenger said, "Be calm. O 'Aisha! Allah loves that, one should be kind and lenient in all matters."

Al-Qur'an 9

Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created (all that exists).

He has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood).

Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous.

Who has taught (the writing) by the pen.

He has taught man that which he knew not. (Surat Al-'Alaq (The Clot), Ayat 1-5)

Hadith 4

Narrated 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud: The Prophet said, "Do not wish to be like anyone except in two cases. The first is a person, whom Allah has given wealth and he spends it righteously (according to what Allah has ordained in a just and right way); (the second is) the one whom Allah has given Al-Hikmah [wisdom i.e. the knowledge of the Qur'an and the Sunna (legal ways) of the Prophet] and he acts according to it and teaches it to others." (See Fath Al-Bari, Vol. 1, page 177)

Unconquered Jihadist Race

Al-Qur'an 10

Jihad (holy fighting in Allah's cause) is ordained for you (Muslims) though you dislike it, and it may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you and that you like a thing which is bad for you. Allah knows but you do not know.

Hadith 5

Chapter 23. Al-Jihad (holy war – fighting in Allah's Cause) is a part of faith.

Narrated (Abu Huraira): The Prophet said, "Allah assigns for a person who participates (in holy battles) in Allah's Cause, and nothing causes him to do so except belief in Allah and in His Messengers, that he will be recompensed by Allah either with a reward, or booty (if he survives) or will be admitted to Paradise (if he is killed in the battle as a martyr)." (The Prophet added, "Had I not found it difficult for my followers, then I would not remain behind any Sariya (an army-unit) going for Jihad and I would have loved to be martyred in Allah's Cause and then made alive, and then martyred and then made alive, and then again martyred in His Cause.

Muhsinun Adam's Trailblazers

Al-Qur'an 11

> *"And who can be better in religion than one who submits his face (himself) to Allah (i.e. follows Allah's religion of Islamic Monotheism); and he is a Muhsin (a good-doer)."*
> (Surah 4, An-Nisa, Ayat 25)

Hadith 6

Narrated Ibn Abbas (RAA): The Prophet (s.a.w.) said, "The most hated persons to Allah are three: (1) A person who deviates from the right conduct, i.e., an evil doer in the Haram … (2) a person who wants that the traditions of the pre-Islamic

period of ignorance should remain in Islam, and (3) a person who seeks to shed somebody's blood without any right. (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 9, Hadith No. 21)

· Muhammad (s.a.w.) Moro Murids

Al-Qur'an 12

He who obeys the Messenger (Muhammad), has indeed obeyed Allah, but he who turns Hawai, then we have not sent you (O Muhammad) as a watcher over them. (Surah 4, An-Nisa, Ayat 80)

Hadith 7

In the Sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.)

"Knowledge of God is my Capital:
Reason is the Root of my Faith;
Love is my Foundation;
Enthusiasm is my Horse;
Remembrance of God is my Friend;
Firmness is my Treasure;
Sorrow is my Companion;
Science is my Weapon;
Patience is my Mantle;
Contentment is my Booty;
Poverty is my Pride;
Devotion is my Art;
Conviction is my Poet;

Truth is my Redeemer;
Obedience is my Sufficiency;
Struggle is my Manner; and
My Pleasure is in my Prayer.

Asabiyyah Patient-Advocates

Al-Qur'an 13

"And those who disbelieve are allies of one another, and if you Muslims (the whole world collectively) do not do so ***[i.e. become allies, as one united block under one Khalifah*** *(a chief Muslim ruler for the whole Muslim world) to make victorious Allah's religion of Islamic Monotheism], there will be Fitnah (wars, battles, polytheism) and oppression on the earth, and a great mischief and corruption (appearance of polytheism).* (Surah 8, Al-Anfal: Ayat 73)

Hadith 8

Chapter 16. The co-operation between the believers.

Narrated Abu Musa: The Prophet said, "A believer to another believer is like a building whose different parts enforce each other." The Prophet then clasped his hands with the fingers interlaced. (At that time) the Prophet was sitting and a man came and begged or asked for something. The Prophet faced us and said, "Help and recommend him and

you will receive the reward for it, and Allah will bring about what He wills through His Prophet's tongue.

- **H**umility (in thoughts/words/deeds)

Al-Qur'an 14

"Swell not thy cheek (for pride) at men, nor walk in insolence through the earth; for God loves not an arrogant boaster." (Surah XXXI, Ayat 18)

Hadith 9

Chapter 2. (What is said) regarding the deeds of faith.

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet said, "Faith (belief) consists of more than sixty subdivisions or branches (i.e. parts). And Al-Haya (this term Al-Haya covers a large number of concepts which are to be taken together; amongst them are self-respect, modesty, bashfulness and honour, etc.) is a part of faith.

EPILOGUE

Question:

With **Ad-Deen** as the guiding torch towards an **AL-ADL UMMAH**, what institution can help facilitate the inculcation of Islam, as a religion and as a way of life?

Answer:

B.E.S.T. – A.

Bangsamoro
Excellent
Student &
Teachers
Academy

-(Footnotes)

*Paper presented during the UP Centennial symposium on "Humanism and Theocentrism in Islamic and Western Thought," on the occasion of the 19th anniversary of the passing away of Imam Khomeini (R.H.), sponsored by the Cultural Section, Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran – Manila in cooperation with the UP Institute of Islamic Studies and UP College of Social Science & Philosophy held at the Institute of Small Scale and Industry, UP Diliman, Quezon City on June 17-18, 2008 AH.

THE EARTHLY SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHURCH'S DIVINE MISSION: AS REVEALED BY CHRIST'S MINISTRY CULMINATING IN HOLY WEEK

Prof. Emmanuel Q. Fernando

Jesus Christ dedicated his life to preaching the message of salvation. During his three-year ministry and by the example of his life, he ceaselessly and untiringly communicated this message, proclaiming a truth of liberation and fulfillment, one that would set men free. After his death on the cross, the responsibility for spreading this message devolved upon his disciples, who were instructed during Holy Week to form a church for that very purpose.

I intend, in this paper, to explain Christ's divine message and mission as well as to elaborate upon its significance to present-day Philippine political events. The paper divides into five parts: (i.) the earthly and the divine realms; (ii.) the primacy of the divine; (iii.) the inward virtues; (iv.) the outward virtues; and (v.) the application and significance of Christ's message and mission to the present Philippine political situation.

I. THE EARTHLY AND THE DIVINE REALMS

Throughout Christ's three-year ministry, there have recurred prevalent themes of moral, political and divine or spiritual significance, whose essence has been captured in microcosm with focused and sharpened intensity during the culminating stages of his life—that fated period between his triumphant entry into Jerusalem and his ignominious exit at the cross—the meaning of which was fully clarified by his glorious resurrection. This period is now celebrated by us as Holy Week.

These prevalent themes extol: (i.) the inward self-realizing virtues of solitude, contemplation, purification, surrender, and peace; and (ii.) the outward social and political virtues of wisdom, humility, honesty, justice, and compassion.

By no means am I suggesting that the outward virtues do not lead to salvation or are not as spiritual as the inward ones of the hermit, the holy man or the yogi, because they do and are. It is simply that the two point at opposite directions: the former project outwardly at one's dealings with one's fellow man and the latter focus inwardly on the self.

Both are transcendent virtues; they represent two distinct but interrelated and integral components in the journey from the earthly to the divine realm.

In that regard, my classification of the virtues is similar to that of Eastern philosophy and religion and is different from Aristotelian or most of Western philosophy, whose analysis of the virtues has an earthly and not a divine emphasis where the end of the enterprise is earthly happiness, not heavenly bliss.

According to Aristotle, man is a social and political animal. He "who is unable to live in or who, because he is sufficient for himself, has no need of society must either be a beast or a god." The latter reference was in all likelihood to a stoic, whose philosophy is more eastern than western.

In Hinduism, there exist four stages of a spiritual life, the bramacharya, the grihastra, the vanapastrha and the sannyasa stages, the first two of which are outwardly-directed and the latter inwardly so. The goal is liberation or union with the Divine. The sannyasi lives without possessions, practices yoga meditation, detaches himself from material life, renounces all worldly thoughts and desires, and spends the rest of his life in spiritual contemplation.

In Buddhism, there are two ways of escaping the cycle of birth and rebirth and achieving nirvana or perfect bliss. The Boddhissatva, already considerably enlightened, uses his wisdom to assist others in liberating themselves. The arhat opts not to try and save each and every other living being before proceeding to nirvana.

The contrast between and the bifurcation of the earthly and the divine realms is best captured by two questions asked of Jesus at the temple during Holy Week. The first was posed by agents of the Pharisees, the authorized teachers of Moses' Law, as to whether it was against said law to pay taxes to the Roman emperor. Jesus, aware of the trick question, astutely answered: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's; and unto God the things which be God's." (Luke 20.25: see also Matthew 22.21 and Mark 12.17)

He had, early in his ministry, imparted a similar message. "No one can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the

one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve both God and mammon." (Matthew 6.24; see also Luke 16.13)

The second, posed by a Pharisee himself, asked him the trick question of what the greatest and most important commandment is. He replied: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matthew 22.37-40; see also Mark 12.29-31 and Luke 10.25-28)

He had earlier clarified the meaning of "neighbor" by narrating the Parable of the Good Samaritan in an identical answer he provided to the same question presented to him prior to his entry into Jerusalem. (Luke 10.30-37)

The two commandments stress not only that man's primary concern should be the attainment of spirituality but that it could be attained in two distinct ways, i.e. by the cultivation of inward and of outward virtues. Since "the kingdom of God is within" (Luke 17.20), love of God is realized inwardly. Moreover, he preached, during the Sermon on the Mount, that "(b)lessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5.8). On the other hand, love for one's fellow man is expressed outwardly.

II. THE PRIMACY OF THE DIVINE

Holy Week teems with the theme of the primacy of the divine or spiritual. While preaching at the Jerusalem temple, Jesus used the metaphor of the holy temple and its treasure of earthly gold: "Ye fools and blind (men): for whether is greater,

the gold or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?" (Matthew 23.17)

Then came the perplexing and, to some, deeply disturbing account of how Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, took a pound of ointment of very costly spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped it with her hair so that her house was filled with the ointment's aroma. Judas Iscariot admonished her: "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor." (John 12.5; see also Matthew 26.8-9 and Mark 14.4-5.)

Jesus was quick to her defense: "Why trouble ye this woman? For she has wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she has poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial." (Matthew 26.10-12; see also Mark 14.6-8 and John 12.7-8)

Some have claimed that this behavior of Jesus reeked of selfishness and arrogance. On the contrary, it showed only that his divine mission was of greater importance than the alleviation of poverty.

His firm resolve to submit to God's will—followed by his arrest and the concomitant debasements, humiliation and ignominy which he patiently endured until his death by crucifixion—was his living testament to the truth of the spirit's primacy. At the garden he agonized over surrendering to it, well aware that "the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26.41; see also Mark 14.38). Eventually his spirit triumphed.

John the Baptist prepared the way for his coming. He warned: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"

(Matthew 3.2; see also Mark 1.3, Luke 3.4, and John 1.23).

Acutely aware of resistance to the message of the spirit's primacy because "men loved darkness rather than light" (John 3.19), Jesus likewise resolutely preached: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of heaven is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1.15; see also Matthew 4.17).

He advised them: "Lay up not for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matthew 6.19-20; see also Luke 12.33). "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat, which endureth for everlasting life" (John 6.27).

He cautioned them: "Be not afraid of them who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him." (Luke 12.5-6; see also Matthew 10.28).

He continued: "Take heed and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12.15). "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8.36; see also Matthew 16.26 and Luke 9.25). "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life" (John 6.63).

He enlightened them: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he

had, and bought it" (Matthew 13.45-46). "(T)hat which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16.15).

III. THE INWARD VIRTUES

In preparation for his ultimate sacrifice, Jesus sought the silence and solitude of the garden. In solitude, he battled his demons to conquer them. He needed to rid himself off all negative emotions and all earthly desires.

This was not the first time that he did so. While traveling all over Israel to impart his message, he often left his disciples at night and for days to seek the stillness of solitude.

The events of his life—from the age of 12, when he was precocious enough to lecture to the teachers at the Temple, to the age of 30, when he emerged from his seclusion—still remain a mystery. He must have spent that period preparing for his ministry: in study, contemplation and purification which can only be achieved in solitude.

The most elaborate account of his experience in solitude involved the forty days and forty nights he spent in the desert without food, just immediately after John baptized him. Aware of his hunger, the devil tempted him: "If thou be the son of God, command that these stones be made bread" (Matthew 4.3; see also Luke 4.3). He replied: "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matthew 4.4; see also Luke 4.4)

The devil next showed him all the kingdoms of the world and all their glory, tempting him with wealth, power and ambition. "All these I will give you, if you kneel down

and worship me" (Matthew 4.9; see also Luke 4.6-7). He answered: "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve'" (Matthew 4.10; see also Luke 4.8).

At the garden, he battled against fear—fear of the humiliation and the suffering he would have to endure to fulfill his mission. He nearly faltered. "Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me" Mark 14.36; see also Matthew 26.42 and Luke 22.42).

In the end, he triumphed: "Nevertheless not what I wilt but what thou wilt. (Mark 14.36; see also Matthew 26.42 and Luke 22.42)

He recruited disciples and demanded no less complete a surrender: "If anyone will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 16.24; see also Mark 8.34-35 and Luke 9.23-24).

"If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me" (Matthew 19.21; see also Mark 10.21 and Luke 18.22).

"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and follow after me, is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10.37-40; see also Luke 14.26-27).

He told his disciples not to worry about the food they needed to stay alive or about the clothes they needed for their

body. He reassured them: "Therefore, take no thought saying: 'What shall we eat? Or what shall we drink? Or, wherewithal shall we be clothed?' . . . For your heavenly father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6.31-33; see also Luke 12.29-31).

"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you, 'That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these'" (Matthew 6.28; see also Luke 12.27).

Even at death's door on the cross, he wavered before surrendering: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" (Matthew 27.46; see also Mark 15.34) He steeled himself: "It is finished!" (John 19.30) and cried out: "Father, into thy hands, I commend my spirit!" (Luke 23.46) Having said this, he breathed his last.

Just as in the garden, this bittersweet surrender brought with it inner tranquility and blissful peace.

IV. THE OUTWARD VIRTUES

In Section I, I previously classified the outward virtues into wisdom, humility, honesty, justice and compassion. Each of these virtues Jesus preached by word and manifested by deed.

1.Wisdom

There are three varieties of wisdom: clever wisdom, also known as intelligence; practical or worldly wisdom,

otherwise known as prudence; and deep wisdom. Jesus possessed all three.

In Jerusalem, the Pharisees or their followers continually confronted him with trick questions, in the hope that he expose himself as a fraud or commit blasphemy. Jesus, with his razor-sharp mind, cleverly avoided both. In the end, charges were trumped up against him so as to warrant his arrest and execution.

In his civil trial, Pilate failed to detect anything from his carefully crafted answers to establish guilt. His punishment was meted out contrary to justice but in conformity with the wishes of an irate mob.

His wisdom surpassed all understanding. He showed practical and deep or profound wisdom in availing of maxims and parables, both of which he concisely and effectively formulated to communicate deep and abiding truths.

He distinguished between his disciples and the multitude in preaching these truths. To his disciples, he intimated: "Therefore speak I to them in parables, because they seeing see not; and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand" (Matthew 13.13, Mark 4.11-12, Luke 8.9).

"And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it. But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples" (Mark 4.33-34).

"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." (Matthew 7.6)

This practical knowledge required the discernment of deep wisdom, since he needed the ability to understand human nature so as to see into the hearts of men in deciding how to communicate his message. According to his apostle John, "Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men. And needed not that anyone should testify of man: for he knew what was in man" (John 2.24).

His worldly wisdom, thus, not only allowed him to evade capture until the proper time but also to choose a suitable manner with which to imaginatively communicate his message.

Finally, deep wisdom is insightful wisdom, the ability to see beyond strict observance of the law or rituals.

When he allowed his hungry disciples to pluck the ears of corn and to eat, the Pharisees rebuked him for not observing the Sabbath. He retorted: "Have ye not read what David did. How he entered the house of God, and did eat the showbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests. Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests on the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?" (Matthew 12.4-5).

Later that day, he was warned that it was wrong to heal a man on the sabbath. He explained: "What man shall there be among you who shall have one sheep and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it and lift it out? How much then is a man more valuable than sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days" (Matthew 12.11-12). Upon instructing the man, who had a withered hand, to stretch his hand, Jesus then restored the whole hand, like as his other hand.

Wisdom allowed him to spot not only false observance of the law but hypocrisy. The Pharisees chastised him: "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said to them, 'Why do ye also transgress the kingdom of God by your tradition?'" (Matthew 15.2-3, Mark 7.3-4).

He continued: "Ye, hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you saying. 'The people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. . . .

Do not ye yet understand that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart, and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man." (Matthew, 16.17-20).'"

2. Humility

To attain salvation, one must accept one's lowly status before the Almighty. This is the only way to be rid of harmful emotions such as pride and earthly desires such as adulation or popularity, which stand in the way of enlightenment.

Humility was so graphically portrayed when Jesus washed the feet of every one of his disciples, including Judas, during the Last Supper. Because he possessed it in abundance, he was able to endure the most abject humiliation, without which his divine mission of absorbing the sins of humanity would not have been fulfilled.

He consistently taught its importance: "Blessed are the meek (or humble) for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5.5). "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18.4; see also Luke 9.48). "But whosoever will be great among you, let him be your servant. But whosoever wants to be chief among you, let him be your slave: Even as the Son of man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20.26-27, Mark 10.43-45).

Humility involves the absence of hypocrisy, which is associated with self-righteousness and pride. This is depicted in The Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, through which Jesus admonished those who are sure of their own goodness and despise everyone else.

"Two men went up to the temple to pray: the one a Pharisee and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are: extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.'

And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, 'God be merciful to me, a sinner.'

I tell you, this publican went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one who exalteth himself shall be abased; and he who humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18.10-14).

3. Honesty

Honesty encompasses the related qualities of sincerity, integrity, trust, openness and transparency. Honesty involves telling what one believes to be true and not necessarily what is true. To tell the truth always requires intelligence, fairness and concern for others which would require inordinate time and effort required for the truth's determination.

Sincerity involves being true to one's word so as to be honest in one's actions. With sufficient sincerity, one possesses integrity. When one has integrity, he becomes reliable and has earned the other's trust.

When one trusts others, he is willing to be honest. Thus, it is a virtue not without risk. In being sincere and trusting, he opens himself and becomes transparent to others, which renders him vulnerable.

Jesus, regardless, was unafraid. He boldly preached his message knowing that his candor would expose himself to danger and would result in suffering and death.

Jesus, therefore, did not hesitate in criticizing the Pharisees, despite their power and authority as the official teachers of the Law of Moses. Since they feared him as a grave threat to that authority, they spied on and stalked him and vainly tried to expose him as a fraud. In defiance, he criticized them, not just indirectly by parables as in that of the just-narrated Pharisee and the publican, but also directly.

At the temple in Jerusalem, he preached: "The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye do

after their works: for they say, and do not" (Matthew 23.2-3; see also Mark 12.38, Luke 11.43, 20.46).

Honesty is expressed in humility. He is merely being honest when he admits his lowly status before God. Honesty shuns ostentation and hypocrisy. He does not display in deceit the good qualities he does not possess.

Jesus preached: "Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, 'They have their reward.' But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6.2-4).

In the end, it is inner truth, not outward show, which matters. "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which you have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops" (Luke 12.1-3).

4. Justice

Jesus preached two kinds of justice: heavenly justice, also referred to as the Father's justice; and earthly justice, also known as human justice. The Father's justice is intrinsically intertwined with Jesus' mission of preparing man for salvation and is partly accomplished by informing humanity of the inevitability of the Father's justice. "Verily, verily, I say unto you: 'He that heareth my word and believeth in him (the Father) who sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come

into damnation; but is passed from death unto life.' Verily, verily I say unto you, 'The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.'" (John 5.24)

Of the apostles, John elucidates best the Father's justice, Jesus' role as his messenger, and the relation between them as he narrated the following words of Jesus: "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (John 3.19-24)

A similar passage explains this concept further: "He who cometh from above is greater than all; he who is from the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3.31-36)

The divine mission Jesus elaborates upon thusly: "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he had given me I should lose nothing, but I should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him who sent me, that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth in him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up on the last day" (John 6.38-40). He adds: "And if any man hears my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world" (John 12.47-48).

The Son is the measure of the Father's boundless love. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3.16-17).

Jesus' role as messenger has been depicted by various metaphors, as "the gate for the sheep," "the light of the world," "the bread of life," and "the lamb of God." It cannot be described more cogently and more completely than this: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14.6)

The Father metes out heavenly justice on earth impartially and indiscriminately. "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust" (Matthew 5.45).

The Father's judgment in essence is what awaits humanity on the final day. It is thus folly to ignore it. "For as the Father hath life in himself: so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute

judgment also, because he is the Son of Man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth. They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5.26-29).

Jesus' role as savior is distinguished from human justice and he was sent to correct and supersede it. About the Pharisees, he said: "Ye judge after the flesh, I judge no man" (John 8.15). "And if any man hears my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world but to save it" (John 12.47).

Human justice is neither impartial nor tolerant. It fails to understand the other's point of view and makes an exception of itself. It is so unlike the justice that Jesus taught. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, de ye even so to them" (Matthew 7.12, see also Luke 6.31).

"And why, beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considereth not the beam that is in thy own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, 'Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye;' and behold a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." (Matthew 7.3-5; see also Luke 7.41-42)

Impartial and tolerant justice shuns away from the arrogance, the moral righteousness and indignation that come with judging and morally condemning others which, as pointed out in the section on humility, also stem from hypocrisy and lack of humility. Such judgment and condemnation are but manifestations of human justice, which is ultimately accountable to the Father's justice.

"Do not demand justice when you yourself are with sin." "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned; forgive, and ye shall be forgiven. Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure—pressed down, shaken together and running over—shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again" (Luke 7.37-38; see also Matthew 7.1).

"Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you; and unto you that hear shall more be given" (Mark 4.24).

The arrest of Jesus at the garden exhibited the two kinds of justice, as well as the need for tolerance. Judas, accompanied by an unruly mob armed with clubs and swords, went to betray Jesus to the high priests with a kiss. In defense of Jesus, Peter cut off the right ear of one of them. Jesus, realizing that Peter reacted according to the dictates of human justice, calmly reminded him of heavenly justice: "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they who take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matthew 26.52). By these words, Jesus advocated non-violence. He then touched the man's ear and healed him in a display of mercy and compassion.

5. Compassion

Compassion, in its perfection, is characterized by non-violence, concern, forgiveness, mercy and limitless, unconditional love. It abhors envy, vengeance, violence and divisiveness. Christ's life was a testament to this ideal.

From fairness, impartiality and tolerance, it is but a short step to non-violence, mercy and compassion. To attain fair and impartial justice, one takes into consideration the

other's point of view. He thus avoids treating himself with special and undue consideration. He begins to understand and appreciate diverse points of view, which leads to tolerance. When he develops sympathy and concern for the other, he will then avoid violence and will experience the beginnings of compassion.

To complete his mission, Christ had to convince humanity that salvation is attained through compassion. Compassion is to be dispensed impartially. This message was repeatedly stressed, both in his words and by his deeds. As to the former, he accomplished this by means of parables and timeless words of wisdom. He succeeded in the latter by the testament of his own life, which, to attain salvation, must be emulated. This compassion is antithetical to human justice which ought not to be emulated as it is an obstacle to salvation.

Christ's compassion is so impartial that it indiscriminately passes judgment on no one and attempts to save everyone. In heeding the Son's message and emulating him, one must therefore manifest its impartiality and love all unconditionally and indiscriminately. Compassion, thus, is universal and treats all as brothers and humanity as one. "Lend and expect nothing back. You will then have a great reward, and you will be sons of the Most High God." "And when you stand and pray, forgive anything you may have against anyone, so that your Father in heaven will forgive you."

Compassion is so impartial that Christ urged that it be applied even towards one's enemies: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy.' But I say unto you: 'Love your enemies, bless them who curse you, do good to them who hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you.'" (Matthew 5.43-44, Luke 6.27-28)

It is accorded to the least of one's brethren. During the Final Judgment, the Son of Man will put the righteous on his right and the others at his left. He will tell the people on his right: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and took me in; I was naked and you clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me; I was in prison and ye came unto me.

Then shall the righteous answer him saying: "Lord, when saw we thee hungered, and fed thee or thirst and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger and took thee in, or naked and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?"

And the Lord shall answer: 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me." (Matthew 25.34-40)

It is thus to be dispensed to the lowest of the low and to the basest of the base, as in the shunned sick, the penniless poor, the petty prostitutes, the attractive adulteresses and the other sinners. For each one of them is one's brother or sister.

In fact, he purposely sought out these "scum of the earth" and associated with them, which provided a continuing source of irritation and criticism from the Pharisees. This was graphically depicted in the incident where he prevented an adulteress from being stoned to death.

"And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, they said unto Him, 'Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded

us, that such should be stoned; but what sayest thou?' This, they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them: 'He who is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." And again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her: Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?"

She said: 'No man, Lord!' And Jesus said unto her: 'Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more.'" (John 8.3-11)

Human justice consists in the stoning. Jesus compassion, which replaces human justice, is tolerant, non-violent, merciful and forgiving.

Its forgiving aspect is reflected in one of the beatitudes: "Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5.7).

The Lord's Prayer states: "And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive everyone indebted to us." (Luke 11.4; see also Matthew 6.12). This forgiveness is the road to salvation. "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any; that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you

your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your trespasses." (Mark 11.25)

Compassion, in the form of forgiveness, is best manifested to those who have lost their way, as in the Parable of the Lost Sheep.

"If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety-nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which has gone astray? And if so be that he find it, he rejoiceth more of that sheep than of the ninety and nine which went not astray." (Matthew 18.13).

"And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, 'Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.' I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner who repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, who need no repentance.'" (Luke 15.3).

"But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils, freely ye have received, freely give'" (Matthew 10.6-8).

He imparted exactly the same message in the Parable of the Prodigal Son.

Forgiveness is unbounded. "Then came Peter to him and said, 'Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?' Jesus saith unto him, 'I say not unto thee, until seven times, but, until seventy times seven." (Matthew 18.21-22; see also Luke 17.4)

Compassion is the supreme virtue. As earlier intimated, love is the greatest and most important commandment. (Section II, Matthew 22.37-41; see also Mark 12.29-31 and Luke 10.25-28). It is greater than contractual or distributive justice. This is shown by the Parable of the Vineyard.

"For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, who went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

And he went about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace. And he said unto them, 'Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way." Again he went about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, 'Why stand ye here all day idle?' They say unto him: 'Because no man hath hired us.' He saith unto them: 'Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.'

So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward: 'Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.' And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour they received every man a penny.

But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house saying: 'These last have wrought but one hour, and thous hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and the heat of the day.

But he answered one of them, and said: 'Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way; I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Why be jealous when I am only being kind?'" (Matthew 20.1-15)

When the Landlord paid those who first came a penny, he was contractually just but he was not distributively so in paying those who worked longer the same amount of money as those who worked less. He justified his actions in terms of love or compassion, which trumped justice.

Indeed, Christ came to replace human justice with compassion.

"Ye have heard that it hath been said: 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say unto you: 'That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not away.'" (Matthew 5.38-42, Luke 6.29-31)

Christ's sacrifice on the cross culminated his life of compassion. He exhibited then the highest form of love. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15.13)

In that supreme sacrifice, he achieved the unity of the inward and the outward virtues: the inward virtue by so purifying himself that he was rendered capable of surrendering

to God's will in the severest of tests and the outward virtue of sublime love which saved humanity.

V. THE CHURCH'S EARTHLY MISSION

All the ingredients of Christ's earthly message as revealed in the Scriptures and magnified by the events of Holy Week have been implicitly supplied by the previous analysis. With them, the skeletal structure to a scriptural solution to earthly problems has been constructed. This is encapsulated in the following prayer during the agony in the garden from which a complete solution may be fully fleshed out.

"As thou has sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe in me through their word. That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they may also be one in us, that the world may believe that thou has sent me.

And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them and thou in me, that they may be perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou has sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me." (John 17.18-23)

His prayer explained why he gave his disciples the same glory God gave him, which in turn outlined the role he envisioned for his disciples and, consequently, the Church. He did so in order that that they may be completely one with each other, one with him and with God, so that the world may know God sent him and that God loved them just as much. These

constitute the elements by which they were to continue Christ's divine mission of salvation.

To be completely one, the disciples had to instill in themselves the same inward self-realizing virtues of solitude, contemplation, purification, surrender and peace, which Christ possessed to perfection and achieved through intense spiritual preparation. They also had to manifest the outward social and political virtues of wisdom, humility, honesty, justice and compassion also to perfection.

These virtues would enable them to preach Christ's message effectively which included informing the world of the existence of the realm of the divine, its primacy over the earthly realm as well as the way to reach the realm of the divine, which is by developing the inward and outward virtues.

Under the present Philippine political circumstances, the Catholic Church has sadly deviated from making known Christ's essentially spiritual or divine message by venturing into worldly political matters.

This deviation, rather than solving political problems, promotes human or earthly justice at the expense of compassion as well as increases the incidence of selfishness, pride, superficiality, hypocrisy, self-deception, deceit, ambition, self-righteousness, arrogance, vanity, bias, intolerance, envy, vengeance, anger, rage, fear, threat, intimidation, divisiveness and violence in the world.

This error was committed by the Church in misconstruing the Scriptures either in interpretation or application. Arriving at a similar interpretation of the Scriptures in terms of basic doctrines does not necessarily result in agreement as to its proper application to earthly events.

Differing conclusions may be reached and separate courses of action proposed.

This critique of the Church's role is internal, not external. I adopt the same approach and avail of the same standards as the Church does in determining its earthly role, which is ultimately based on the Scriptures.

I do not make the argument that the Church does not have any special expertise on earthly matters. According to that argument, the Church, by delving into them, may arrive at naïve and erroneous political conclusions, rendered more harmful and dangerous by the fact that many of its followers blindly accept and apply them. This critique is external, which, though important, would be the subject of a different lecture.

My argument, in outline, proceeds as follows. The mission of the Church, as messengers of God and disciples of Christ, is to continue his mission of salvation, by preaching his message and living in accordance with the example of his life. This is accomplished by its priests preparing for the mission by realizing the inward virtues which leads to spiritual purification and genuinely living the mission by manifesting the outward virtues which culminate in compassion.

Thus my interpretation of the Scriptures as to their role does not merely entail prayer and meditation so necessary for the instillation of the inward virtues, as monks exclusively engage in. It involves immersion in the world by fully developing the inward virtues so that they can genuinely manifest the outward virtues leading to the world's transformation from corruption towards moral regeneration and fulfillment.

For this transformation to be effected, priests must confine themselves to promoting the inward and outward virtues which Christ realized to perfection. This is so for two reasons: (i) to deviate from that course would be contrary to the Scriptures and (ii.) this is the most effective means to attain such a transformation and to do otherwise would actually lead to more harm than good.

The Church failed for precisely those two reasons.

1. Church deviation from the Scriptures

2. The Harmful, Corruptive Influence of the Church

By insisting upon playing a dominant political role, the Catholic Church has set into motion harmful, corruptive influences detrimental to constitutional democracy and the rule of law. Indeed, this is precisely the reason why Philippine politics is beset by its present predicament of a nation careening towards the political status of a banana republic.

The much-lauded and highly-acclaimed intrusion by the Catholic Church into political affairs was the Edsa Uno phenomenon, when Cardinal Sin exhorted the concerned citizenry to mass at Edsa to form a protective shield around the beleaguered forces of coup plotters Minister of Defense Juan Ponce Enrile and Vice Chief of Staff General Fidel E. Ramos.

That intrusion averted much bloodshed. A peaceful resolution of the coup d'etat resulted, with the eventual airlifting of President Marcos out of Malacañang Palace to the joyous celebration of the millions massed at Edsa and the entire mesmerized world.

But that intrusion occasioned a chain of events which sent the Philippines' reeling towards its present predicament. For succeeding governments were no better than President Marcos' administration; human rights abuses and violations abounded, while corruption remained unabated.

What is worse, Filipinos soon saw the hopelessness of resorting to normal democratic processes in order to secure reform and became convinced that people power was again needed. Still and all, people power demonstrations came and went without success, until President Joseph Estrada and Edsa Dos.

No other President in Philippine history inflamed as much venom and hate against his person than President Estrada. For he was a drunkard, a gambler and a womanizer and, precisely for those reasons, succeeded in making his enemies the Roman Catholic Church and the moral majority; he was an uneducated boor who disaffected the intellectual elite; he propagated protectionist and nationalist economic policies which alienated big business; and he was grammatically inept which rendered him the media butt of jokes.

Nonetheless, he was beloved by the masses for they saw in him their champion and savior, someone who truly cared and fought for their interests. So he was, if anything, a man no one was neutral about; either you loved him or hated him to death.

This quality, repulsive to the elite and endearing to the masses, eventually was his undoing. Early on in his Presidency, his enemies were already plotting his ouster and only waiting for an issue significant enough to depose him. Then the jueteng scandal surfaced.

This was ironic because he campaigned on the promise that he would legalize gambling and eradicate its black market manifestations such as jueteng. Unfortunately, he alienated powerful jueteng lords who saw in President Estrada's program of government a deprivation of lucrative income. These lords thus became his avowed enemies. That proved to be his undoing, for they were not exactly without influence. Their campaign contributions extended to the highest reaches of government.

This conflict culminated in Edsa Dos. In a spontaneous demonstration of people power, the middle classes once again trooped into Edsa, no doubt manipulated by the Church and big business who controlled media. It did not take long for Estrada's own military to abandon him and he was forced to resign.

The Philippines thus is poised in its present precarious predicament, where military adventurists are only awaiting another scandal to incense a sizable portion of the public so that their defection will be met by popular support. Alternatively, concerned civilian reformists are only awaiting sufficient public indignation to be expressed in a massive demonstration serving as an invitation for military defection.

Whatever the manifestation, the Philippines appears hopelessly caught in the desperate quagmire of seeking change through the extra-legal remedy of a people power demonstration cum military defection. For, certainly, these two elements are indispensable to any successful overthrow of government.

The Church, with its meddling into political affairs, is much to blame for this unique Philippine predicament. It shunned neutrality and took political sides. Rather than

exposing or criticizing corruption whoever the culprit, it focused only on the wrongdoings of its enemies while quick to tolerate, if not defend, the wrongdoing of its allies.

This bias and partiality are not lost on the discerning Philippine public who accept the Church, not as a moral guide, but as a powerful political force fearful of losing political clout and influence. Church credibility thus is at an all-time low, so that its predicament is much like that of the Middle Eastern fundamentalist clergy who denounce the terrorism of the United States while turning a blind eye to the terrorism of its own.

For a religious institution to be credible, it must denounce terrorism in all its forms, be it committed by one's allies or enemies. This fact, expatriate Muslims in the United States and the United Kingdom realize only too well. Indeed, they are engaged in a vigorous campaign to influence their Muslim brothers in the Middle East to be consistent in their denunciation of terrorism.

The Church would do well to follow the Muslim example and refrain from playing favorites. It should adopt a consistent stand in promoting peace and non-violence, and stop its intolerant and divisive meddling in politics.

"THEOCENTRISM AND PLURALISM: ARE THEY POLES APART?"

Macrina Adjerol-Morados

Summary:

The topic on theocentrism and pluralism is very significant in our time as the world moves over to the pace of modernization, globalization, liberalization and industrialization. The world has been reduced to a global village because of modern trends in communication and technology. Along this development, there is a need to understand the reality of pluralism in order to foster peace and understanding among people with different culture and religions.

This paper will answer the question "theocentrism and pluralism: are they poles apart?" by providing paradigms of comparison. In this case, theocentrism is discussed in line with the Christian and Islamic perspectives. The Christian and Islamic perspectives show common teachings that can be used as a premise that all religious teachings underscore universal values of brotherhood, love and respect for human life as a sacred gift from God. The sacredness of life is discussed in line with the notion of the divine purpose of man's creation,

that is, to glorify God. Glorifying God in the Christian perspective means putting God in the center of one's life, while Islamic teaching expounds on the concept of worship or ibadah as the ultimate goal of man's creation. In either way, theocentrism is given meaning in both the Christian and Islamic teachings.

In discussing the concept of pluralism, the author presents scriptural and historical basis that support pluralism within the Islamic and the Christian context. Qur'anic principles on pluralism are discussed supported with historical evidences starting from the lifetime of the Prophet of Islam. The theory of the clash of civilization holding Islam's lack of mechanism to uphold the democratic values of the West is appropriately refuted. The points of convergence between theocentrism and pluralism are discussed in the light of understanding the concept of God-centeredness in man's life and accepting unity in diversity as a divine mandate. The author calls this the "theocentric view of pluralism." Hence, the two concepts are compatible and will lead humanity to peace, collaboration and mutual respect both in the local and global setting. The universal values common to all religions of the world transcend beyond differences of culture, religions, languages and ethnicities.

Theocentrism and Pluralism: Are They Poles Apart? Situations Calling for Reflections

In 2004, Muslims in Greenhills Shopping Center (GSC) met several oppositions coming from non-Muslim vendors and residents around the area in their attempt to establish a mosque inside the mall. Sympathizing with the growing concern of the Christian communities around Greenhills Shopping Center, columnist Max Solliven wrote: "The Muslim traders and vendors, if they obey our laws and behave themselves, are like

all Filipinos- entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of commerce. But a 'mosque' or 'Islamic prayer room' in the very heart of a Christian community makes no sense, especially when the Moros are transients, not residents."[1] This incident is not an isolated case of typical discrimination and stereotyping experienced by the Muslims in this country. Obviously, failure to accept the "otherness" of the other always causes a problem.

Moving further in a global setting, the challenges on how to address diversity of cultures and accommodate pluralism in various societies are indeed surging. Interestingly, Muslims enjoyed the freedom to practice their religion in pluralistic societies in the West. But the tragic events of 9/11 have been considered a major setback. It paved the way to the recurring debates of Samuel Huntington's theory on the Clash of Civilization where he postulates Islam being incompatible with democratic values of the West creates conflict.[2]

Below is an excerpt of an article that reflects a situation that captures the sentiments of some Americans during the post 9/11 incidents:

"A very polite American-born Muslim woman in headscarf approaches the counter of a roadside bakery in Texas. Before she even has a chance to place her order, the clerk behind the counter stuns her by saying: 'We don't serve Muslims here; get back on the camel and go back where you came from! What I've just described is a scene deliberately staged by ABC News, one of the largest television news networks in the U.S. The reason ABC staged this confrontation was to see and record how other people in the store would react. Would they come to the aid of the Muslim woman? Would they do nothing? Or would they actually show support to the bigoted clerk? It was refreshing to see that some

individuals showed great moral courage by intervening on the Muslim woman's behalf and denouncing the clerk's hatefulness. It was a bit more unsettling, but certainly not expected, to witness many others opting to remain silent and uninvolved. Most disturbing, however, were those expressed approval of the clerk's position: "If I were running the place, I'd do the same thing," said one middle-aged man. Another was less verbal and chose to employ the cowardly subtlety of a "thumbs up" gesture of affirmation aimed directly at the clerk." [3]

The GSC mosque incident in the Philippines and the scene in the bakery in Texas were not at all related incidents as it happened on opposite sides of the world on different occasions. However, the said events are reflections of important reality happening around the world. It seems that constitutional law in practice has been taken for granted either due to the laxity of the law enforcers or ignorance of the law among the people, so to speak.

Setting the Paradigm

The two situations mentioned earlier may not really be as bad as what is happening in Iraq and in other parts of the world where actual killings are happening. However, whether the problem is small or big, there is a need to address the problems by looking at the source of the conflict. Idris Shah, author of the very compelling book titled "The Way of the Sufi", illustrates how a simple misunderstanding can lead into a serious conflict, he wrote:

> Four people were given a piece of money. The first was a Persian. He said: "I will buy with this some augur."
> The second was an Arab. He said: "No, because I want Inab."

> The third was a Turk. He said; "I do not want Inab, I want uzum."
> Because they did not know what lay behind the names of things, these four started to fight.
> They had information but no knowledge. One man of wisdom present could have reconciled them all saying: "I can fulfill the needs all of you, with one and the same piece of money. If you honestly give me your trust, your one coin will become as four; and four at odds will be come as one united." Such a man would know that each in his own language wanted the same thing, GRAPES! [4]

The moral lesson of the story suggests that information without knowledge is irrelevant. Initiative to foster understanding and to iron out differences has always been the best option to attain harmony. Thus, the discourse whether or not theocentrism and pluralism are compatible will consider two perspectives as point of comparison. For this purpose, the author will focus the discussion of these concepts based on the two dominant perspectives, namely: the Christian and the Islamic views.

a. Theocentrism Core Value for Promoting Peaceful Co-existence: The Christian and Islamic Perspectives

Theocentrism comes from the Greek word *theos*, meaning God or gods and the English word center. In this context, theocentrism refers to the view that God's system of beliefs and values is morally superior to all.[5] Simply stated theocentrism is God-centered rather than man-centered. This

is a total negation of the concept of ethnocentrism that views one particular ethnic group's system of beliefs and values as morally superior to all others.

In Christian theology, theocentrism has been used to refer to God the Father, as opposed to those who focus on Christ (Christocentric) or on the Holy Spirit (Pneumocentric). Christocentrism views that man's salvation depends solely on the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.[6] However, famous theologian Jacques Dupuis gave a profound idea on how the so-called Christocentric is substituted by the theocentric perspective as an effective paradigm to understand other people's creed. He elucidates:

> The theocentric perspective consists in substituting for the Christocentric one, according to which Jesus Christ and his saving mystery no longer stand at the center of God's saving design for humankind. That place belongs to God alone towards whom all the religious traditions, Christianity included, tend as to their end. It needs to be recognized plainly that God, who shows no partiality (Acts 10:34), has manifested and revealed himself in various ways to different peoples in different cultures, and that the various religious traditions of the world embodying each in its own way, such divine self-revelation. It follows that... the various religious traditions complement each other in their differences; what is required between them is neither mutual exclusion nor inclusion of the many into one, but

reciprocal enrichment through open interaction.[7]

References in the Christian Scripture show many affirmations on the concept of God-centeredness in man's creation. In Isaiah 43:7 it says: " Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him". Man's ultimate goal in this world is to glorify God. It goes to explain that God requires us to obey the moral law revealed to us which proclaims that we must "love the Lord our God with all out heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves."[8]

The deeper idea of theocentrism means upholding God's glory as the source of moral good and insults against His glory as the source of moral evil. It is in this notion that God's righteousness is manifested by imposing judgment against a sinful man and rewarding the good deeds of a pious man.

The above Christian perspectives find similar basis in Islam. The Qur'an states that the whole purpose behind the creation of man was glorifying and worshipping Allah (swt). In Surah Ad-Dhariyat 51:56 it says: "I only created jinn and man to worship me". Worshipping in Islam means to testify to the oneness of God in His Lordship, Names and Attributes. Life is a constant struggle between good and evil. The Holy Qur'an provides the criterion on what is good and evil. Hence, Muslims should turn to the Holy Qur'an for guidance and the Prophetic traditions, as both constitute the primary sources of Islamic law or Shari'ah. The purpose of Shari'ah is to guide mankind in the pursuit of goodness in this life (i.e beauty of life and character) and to shun what is destructive or evil. In this context, those who persevere and do good will be rewarded

everlasting life in heaven while those who succumb to evil deeds will be punished in hell.

This is the wonderful truth of theocentrism, that in seeking God and seeking to glorify Him above anybody else, man fulfills the purpose for which he has been created. St. Augustine said: " You have made us for yourself, O Lord and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you".[9] Muslim philosopher Imam Ghazzali elaborates this kind of spiritual experience by stressing the importance of nurturing taqwah in a Muslim's heart, he stressed:

> Taqwa in the Qur'an has three meanings. First is fear and a sense of awe. The second includes obedience and worship. Third is freeing the heart from sins, which is the reality and essence of taqwa.[10]

In a sense, taqwa is to guard oneself against the anger of Allah and His punishment by fulfilling his commandments and abstaining from what He has made prohibited. It affirms the ultimate realization that man's objective in this life is to seek the pleasure of Allah by living in accordance with the divine guidelines embodied in the Shari'ah (Islamic Law).

Finally in modern theology, theocentrism is "often linked with stewardship and environmental ethics. It is the belief that human beings should look after the world as guardians and therefore in the way in which God wants them to. Humans should be considerate to all, from animals to plants to human themselves. It maintains that human beings are merely here for a short time and should be looking after the world for future generations."[11]

Interestingly, the equivalent notion of this principle is the concept of vicegerency in Islam. The human being in the Islamic world-view is considered a vicegerent (Khalifah). The Holy Qur'an explains this in the following passage, Surah Al-Baqarah 2:30:

> Behold, your Lord said to the Angels: 'I will create a vicegerent on earth. They said: 'Will place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood? While we do celebrate Your praises and Glorify your Holy Name?

As a vicegerent, the human being is perceived as the trustee of the earth. As trustee he/she is not supposed to cause corruption in any form on the earth. This includes maintaining a good relationship with fellow human beings and to preserve the beauty of the earth for the next generation to come.

b. Pluralism Challenging the New World order

Scholar K. Douglas Crow observes that: "the values of and pathologies of global pluralism increasingly forces a reconsideration of the relation of Power and Ethics in international relations."[12] This phenomenon is obviously the result of the growing trend of globalization, modernization and liberalization. Crow added: "with religion resurging in much of the world after the end of the Cold War, more civil wars have a religious component than ever before".[13] This observation is noted by Western author Samuel Huntington who wrote about the theory of the clash of civilization. Huntington argued that the Islamic culture of the East lacks

the mechanisms to accommodate the democratic values of the West. This notion is a sheer negation of the Islamic principles on pluralism and diversities of human culture.

Historically the term pluralism used to describe the fact of a variety of cultural or religious groups living side-by-side. This reality has been evident in many societies throughout human history and is by no means an exclusively contemporary phenomenon.[14]

In the recent Western context, pluralism has served to describe the reality of different cultures and religions existing alongside one another in relative peace within a larger political structure. There is no effort to make value judgments about these cultures. Pluralism simply describes the reality that they are allowed to coexist peacefully within the same environment.[15]

Anchoring on the Islamic perspectives, the author will provide both Qur'anic and historical evidences of effective mechanisms within the teachings of Islam that accommodate the so-called democratic values of the West. Like the Western concept on Pluralism, Islam promotes co-existence and harmonious relationship among other people i.e. Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

For Qur'anic reference, there are two verses that best capture the position of Islam on pluralism, stressing:

> To each among you, We have prescribed a law
> And a clear way. if Allah had willed,
> He would have made

You one nation, but that (He) may test
you in what
He has given you; so compete in good
deeds.
The return of you (all) is to Allah, and
then
He will inform you about that in which
you used to differ.

O humankind! We created you from
single (pair)
Of a male and female, and made you
into nations
And tribes, that you may know each
other (not that
You may despise each other). Verily,
the most honored
Of you in the sight of Allah is he who
is
The Most righteous of you. And Allah
has full knowledge
And is well acquainted (with all things)
Al –Hujarat 49:13

Guided with the Qur'anic principles, Prophet Muhammad and his successors proved to the world that Islam is a dynamic religion and responsive to the needs of the growing Muslim community in the past. He successfully defined Muslims' relations with non-Muslims accommodating pluralism and diversities of culture. The Madina (considered first Islamic State) Constitution and other covenants of the Prophet with Jews and Christians laid down the principles for building a multicultural and multi-religious community[16].

Moreover, in Islamic history, religious persecution of the members of other faiths was almost absent. The Qur'an which states in Surah Baqarah 2:256: "let there be no compulsion in religion" has banned Muslims from practicing what is called religious persecution against non-Muslims. Jews, Christians and other sects were free to practice their religion; their churches and synagogues were respected and left intact.[17]

Muslims recognized the Abrahamic roots of Judaism and Christianity. These two religions were not regarded as "other views" that it has to tolerate but as standing de jure religions coming from the same God with the Qur'anic reference of being the "people of the Book" or Ahlul Kitab.[18] This makes Islam very unique among the great religions of the world. Scholar Al-Faruki said: "there is no religion in the world has yet made belief in the truth of other religions a necccesary condition of its own faith and witness."[19] Only in the Qura'n, the holy scripture of the Muslims that great compliment is mentioned for the Christians: "And nearest among them in love to the Believers will thou find those who say: We are Christians, because amongst them there are priests and monks, and they are not arrogant", Surah Maidah 5:82. Because of this very tolerant policy, Muslims in those days were successful and rose to power. Writer and scholar Hassan Hanafi states: "pluralism which was one of the glorious moments of Islamic culture in its golden age, was behind the Islamic classical renaissance".[20] The golden age of Islamic civilization was a product of the liberality and open-mindedness of the Muslims.

Contemporary Muslim scholar Osman Bakr explains the Islamic position on pluralism and diversity of cultures in today's context, he said:

> Islam conceives of plurality and diversity within a theological framework. It affirms God as the transcendent source of plurality and diversity in both the natural and the human worlds. It also affirms the spiritual and moral purpose of human plurality and diversity, namely: mutual recognition and mutual understanding in the name of God. A major theme in Islamic pluralism is the idea of unity in diversity, which in fact, characterizes every domain of divine creation. God manifests His wisdom and power through unity in diversity in creation. On the human plane, man should strive for unity in diversity in his construction of society and civilization. Generally speaking, Islamic civilization has proved to be more successful in managing pluralism and realizing unity in diversity through its worldwide Ummah.[21]

In the traditional Christian position, the issue of religious pluralism was associated with the question on salvation. According to the Christian traditional doctrine, salvation consists in the divine forgiveness of sin, a forgiveness with respect to the human participation in Adam's original sin, is made possible only by Christ's suffering and sacrifice on the cross.[22] In other words, there is no salvation for those who do not believe in Christ. Leading Christian scholar, John Hick calls this position as Exclusivism[23] or the Christocentric point of view.

Contrary to the Exlusivist point of view surfaced another opinion which Christian theologians call "Inclusivism". This opinon seeks to combine the two fold New Testament

affirmations of the concrete and universal salvific will of God, on the other hand, and of the finality of Jesus Christ as Universal Saviour[24]. It affirms that the mystery of Jesus Christ and of his Spirit is present and operative outside the boundaries of the Church, both in the life of individual persons and the religious traditions to which they belong and which they sincerely practice. In short, to the Inclusivists Jesus Christ is the way of all; according to the pluralist model Jesus Christ is the way for the Christians while the respective traditions constitute the way for the others[25]. In short, salvation is open to all and is not a monopoly of the Christians. Adherents of religious pluralism consider the inclusivist point of view as an effective paradigm to understand and apply the Universal salvific design of God.

The Catholic Church through the Conciliar Decree Nostra Aetate (declaration on the relationship of the Church to Non-Christian religions) affirms the Universal salvific design of God to all humanity, it stresses: "In a way known to God – for members of the other religious traditions - it affirms salvation holds true not for Christians only, but also for all men of goodwill in whose hearts grace is active invisibly. Since Christ died for all, and since all men are in fact called to one and the same destiny, which is divine, we must hold that the Holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery.[26] Founder of Focolare movement Chiara Lubich stressed a similar conviction: "all religions are called to work together to re-establish the unity of the human family, because in all religions the "Holy Spirit" is present and active in some way."[27]

In our contemporary history, the Nostra Aetate is the most influential document of the church that clearly promotes religious pluralism among religions in the world. Religious pluralism in this context means the belief that no religion has a

monopoly of the truth or of the life that leads to salvation. Or in the more poetic words of the great Muslim Sufi Rumi, speaking of the religions of the world: "the lamps are different but the light is the same; it comes from beyond"[28]

The above discussions clearly show that Islamic and other cultures of the East are not an anti-thesis to the Western concept of democratic values. Mechanism to adapt to the challenges of pluralism is not the monopoly of the West as one scholar writes:

> It is sometimes said that pluralism is a product of post-enlightenment western liberalism. But this is a manifest error, since the basic pluralistic idea predates the 18th Century European Enlightenment by many centuries. It was taught by Muslim thinkers such as Rumi and Al-Arabi in the 13th Century, and Kabir, Nanak and many others in 15th century India. Indeed it occurs in the edicts of the Buddhist emperor Asoka in the 2nd century BC. So far from its having originated in the modern West, the fact is that modern West is only now catching up with the ancient East! Even within Christianity itself there were expressions of religious pluralism long before the 18th Century enlightenment. Thus, Nicholas of Cusa in the 15th Century wrote that:'there is only one religion in the variety of rites' (De Pace Fedei,6). It is an error born of ignorance, to think that religious or cultural pluralism is a modern western invention.[29]

At the end, the reality of pluralism should be appreciated by looking at the western and eastern perspectives

as represented by the dominant cultures in its respective world-views.

CONCLUSION:

Convergences of Theocentrism and Pluralism in Muslim-Christian Experience

a. Common Scriptural Teachings on Universal Brotherhood and Values

The Holy Qur'an and the Holy Bible of the Muslims and Christians, respectively, underscore the same teachings on universal moral values. Both uphold the sanctity of life and affirm the divine purpose of human creation. The fundamental values contained in the Holy Scriptures transcend beyond ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic differences among the people of the world.

Otherwise stated, similarities of cultures can be found in the religious and theocentric realm. With this, even the seemingly clashing cultures can find common grounds to foster unity among each other. The American Pledge of Allegiance that states: "...One Nation, under God indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all..." is a classical example of the application of a theocentric paradigm in upholding equality and justice for all. This paradigm finds basis in the Qur'anic principles in this verse: "Thus, have We made you an Ummah (community); Justly balanced, that you might be witness over the nations, and the Apostle (Muhammad) a witness over yourselves." Surah Al Baqarah 2:143. To be "witness over nations" means a global responsibility of becoming a model for the entire world in the implementation of justice and equality for all people.

Moreover, in Christianity and Islam, love for God is universal. For example, St. Augustine says: " O God, Who art

loved knowingly or unknowingly by everything capable of loving". Muslim Philosopher and mystic Ibn Arabi says: "Nothing other than God has ever been loved." In a practical sense, loving other people can manifest loving God, as each one is the reflection of God within himself.

In the Christian context, the parable of the Good Samaritan in the New Testament illustrates that compassion is for all people. This is affirmed in another passage of the Bible that states: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31). In Islam, Prophet Muhammad said: "I swear by the Holy Being in whose power my life is, any one of you cannot be a true believer unless he desires for his fellow-brother what he desires for himself." (AlBukhari). Hence, a pious Christian and a Muslim with taqwah who religiously follow their respective scriptural teachings will look at each human being with love, respect, compassion and dignity. Finding God's love inside each person, Muslims and Christians can walk together in harmony. For me, this is the essence of theocentrism— finding God's glory as it reflects God-centeredness in another's person.

b. Civilization Discourse thru Inter-religious Dialogue

The author concludes that theocentrism and pluralism are not poles apart but rather complement with each other. But for practical reasons, the convergence of these two important "isms" calls for a dialogue of civilizations and religions. The Conciliar Decree Nostra Aetate stating: " all men form but one community all stem from the one stock which God created to people the entire earth and also because all share a common destiny, namely God"[30] is an inspiring call for everyone to come together and talk of common issues

among the people of the world through Inter-religious dialogue.

Despite the reality of cultural, religious and linguistic differences among the people in the world peaceful co-existence is possible. There are so many issues that are common to all, issues that transcend the western and eastern geographic boundaries of people such as peace, cooperation, collaboration and humanitarian endeavors. These issues are everyone's concern and through dialogue people can put forward their thoughts and aspirations.

Therefore, the need to understand pluralism needs pluralistic ideas to attain unity in diversity. Ideally, this is the goal of pluralism. A Theocentric view of pluralism, I must conclude, will lead humanity to peaceful co-existence and mutual understanding.

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Humanism: The Spirit of the Renaissance

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SUMMARY:

The era in European history known as the RENAISSANCE, saw a rebirth or revival of classical learning. Basically Italian in origin and nature, it first started in Italy in the fourteenth century, and then spread all across Europe throughout the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries.

The Renaissance brought about tremendous and significant changes in Europe, in the fields of social organization, economy, science, philosophy, and in literature and the arts.

One of the most important phenomena of the Renaissance was the change in attitude toward man as an individual.

During the preceding middle ages, there had been a tendency to consider man less important than the social institutions of which he was a part, such as the church, or the feudal estate. The stress on the relative worthlessness of this life in comparison with eternity, had led to the belief that this world and its pleasures were of little value, and actually should be looked upon as threats to man's eternal welfare.

On the other hand, the Renaissance attitude, based in part on the study of classical literature and philosophy, was that man possessed dignity and worth as an individual, and that he had the night to pursue and cultivate the harmonious development of his physical, intellectual, and spiritual faculties; therefore a reorientation of art and learning toward his development was necessary.

This attitude became the intellectual movement known as HUMANISM during the Renaissance period.

As the spirit behind the Renaissance, humanism was characterized by a concentration on the human aspect, rather than the divine.

HUMANTISTS such as Petrarch and his followers devoted themselves to the study of classical literature rather than theological works. The aim of such a study was to educate one according to the ancient concept: that of a cultivated man of civic virtue, who combined a sense of responsibility to himself as an individual with a sense of service to the larger community in which he lived.

Looking back to the ancient Greco-Roman world, the 14th century Italian poet Petrarch would refer to the intervening centuries as "years of darkness". From this perspective evolved the concept of the "Middle Ages" lying

between the more brilliant epochs of antiquity and its modern "rebirth", the Renaissance.

The HUMANISTIC INFLUENCE manifested itself in the various fields of learning all throughout Europe: in science, in literature and the arts, in philosophy and religion.

Carried to an extreme, the new attitude called humanism led in some cases to rampant individualism and lack of morals; but checked and directed by reason and a sense of responsibility, it led to a richer development of the human personality, as illustrated by the great number of literary and artistic masterpieces, the advances in philosophical learning, as well as the scientific achievements produced in its time.

These advances in philosophical learning and in scientific achievements, as well as the copious production of literary works and artistic masterpieces as a result of the humanistic influence throughout 14th, to 16th century Europe will be discussed at length in the following pages of this paper, as well as some of the great minds and brilliant personalities that formed and influenced the intellectual attitude known as humanism.

The REFORMATION, along with the prominent and brilliant personalities involved in it, is also given a page or two, owing to its being an outstanding event in European history which the HUMANIST MOVEMENT is known to have almost singlehandedly influenced.

HUMANISM: THE SPIRIT OF THE RENAISSANCE

Prof. Magna Badiee

I – HUMANISM: THE SPIRIT OF THE RENAISSANCE

"Man is the measure of all things", declared the ancient Greek thinker, Pythagoras.

Little did he know that centuries later, and in another land far from Greece, these very words he had uttered would be reborn in the tenets of an era that would look back for philosophical guidance to the classical antiquity of his time.

A philosophy so opposite the attitude and manner of thinking of the previous medieval age, Pythagoras' words would best express the basic tenets of HUMANISM , which was the intellectual attitude or movement that characterized the era of the RENAISSANCE.

The era in European history known as the Renaissance, saw a rebirth or revival of classical learning. Basically Italian in origin and nature, it first started in Italy in the fourteenth century, and then spread all across Europe throughout the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries.

The Renaissance brought about tremendous and significant changes in the many and varied aspects of European life. In terms of social organization, it witnessed the decline of medieval feudalism and the growth of the national state; in

economics, the expansion of commerce and the rapid growth of wealth; in the field of science, the methods of observation and experiment were encouraged rather than reliance on the existing authority (consequently increasing man's knowledge of the physical universe around him); in philosophy, the gradual replacement of medieval scholasticism by the spirit of rational inquiry; and in literature and the arts, a golden age of creativity stimulated by the rediscovery of classical artistic achievements.

One of the most important phenomena of the Renaissance was the change in attitude toward man as an individual.

During the middle ages there had been a tendency to consider man less important than the social institutions of which he was a part, such as the church, or the feudal estate.

The stress on the relative worthlessness of this life in comparison with eternity, had led to the belief that this world and its pleasures were of little value, and actually should be looked upon as threats to man's eternal welfare.

On the other hand, the Renaissance attitude, based in part on the study of classical literature and philosophy, was that man possessed dignity and worth as an individual, and that he had the right to pursue and cultivate the harmonious development of his physical, intellectual, and spiritual faculties; therefore a reorientation of art and learning toward his development was necessary.

This attitude became the intellectual movement known as HUMANISM during the Renaissance period.

As the spirit behind the Renaissance, humanism started in Italy in the fourteenth century, and spread all over Europe -

principally, France, England, Germany and Spain - throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The movement was characterized by a concentration on the human aspect, rather than the divine. HUMANISTS focused on human reason rather than any external authority; their goal was to achieve man's greatest good while yet in this finite existence.

The spirit of humanism was secular, liberal, and tolerant; the methods with which it proposed to achieve its goal were education, free inquiry, and enlightenment. Subject to a wide diversity of expression, it was basically a philosophical outlook which emphasized the autonomy of the human being as a dignified, rational being, possessing the source of truth.

Humanists such as Petrarch and his followers devoted themselves to the study of classical literature rather than theological works. The aim of such a study was to educate one according to the ancient concept: that of a cultivated man of civic virtue, who combined a sense of responsibility to himself as an individual with a sense of service to the larger community in which he lived.

Looking back to the ancient Greco-Roman world, the 14th century Italian poet, Petrarch, would refer to the intervening centuries as years of darkness. From this perspective evolved the concept of the barbaric "Middle Ages" lying between the more brilliant epochs of antiquity and its modern "rebirth", the Renaissance.

II - THE INFLUENCE OF HUMANISM

The HUMANISTIC INFLUENCE manifested itself in the various fields of learning all throughout Europe: in science, in literature and the arts, in philosophy and religion.

Carried to an extreme, the new attitude called humanism led in some cases to rampant individualism and lack of morals; but checked and directed by reason and a sense of social responsibility, it led to a richer development of the human personality, as illustrated by the great number of literary and artistic masterpieces, the advances in philosophical learning, as well as the scientific achievements it produced in its time.

SCIENCE

In the field of science, humanism brought about a change in attitude towards the existing scientific methods. This change in attitude in turn, and as a result, increased man's knowledge of the physical universe around him. Previously, the investigation of natural phenomena had been hampered by too much reliance on authority. Also, it had been confused by the belief in a great number of medieval superstitions.

The humanists held a more skeptical attitude of the medieval scientific methods, especially since it soon became obvious that many traditionally accepted scientific beliefs were erroneous.

The English humanist, Sir Francis Bacon, contributed significantly to the progress of scientific investigation by his insistence on the value of observation, experiment, and inductive reasoning.

A brilliant scientist, philosopher, essayist and statesman, Bacon hoped to eliminate the superstitions and the quibbling which had confused science and philosophy during the Middle Ages. He also aimed to give mankind mastery over nature by discoveries and inventions. His scientific works make him one of the most important figures in the study of science. As a humanist, Bacon believed that it is life on earth which is important, and that all studies should be directed to improving that life.

The humanistic confidence in the potential capabilities of man is justified in the scientific achievements of the Renaissance. This period witnessed the advent of exciting new technologies, such as the invention of printing with moveable type somewhere around 1450 - which made possible a dissemination of learning beyond the wildest dreams of medieval scholars who had till then been limited to laboriously written manuscripts; the invention of the mariner's compass which facilitated sea travel and exploration; of the telescope; making the study of modern astronomy possible; and the invention of gunpowder, which rendered the elaborate armor of the medieval knight obsolete, thus tending to level the military distinction between commoner and aristocrat and hastening the disappearance of feudalism.

The explorations of Columbus, Magellan, Vasco de Gama, and others, significantly extended geographical knowledge and remapped the globe.

The work of Copernicus and Galileo challenged the existing concept of this world as the center of all creation and enabled man to see himself and his universe in better perspective; and Harvey's discovery of the circulation of blood marked an important milestone in the progress of medicine.

LITERATURE

In literature, humanism manifested itself in the revival of the classical spirit.

The intensification of interest in classic culture resulted in, among others, the introduction of the study of Greek at the start of the fifteenth century, which made it possible for students to read and study the classics for themselves instead of having to rely on imperfect translations, as they had done in the past.

The study of Greek and Latin classics, with their concentration on secular human values, was a great stimulus to the humanistic attitude and to the growing secularization of literature and the arts.

The Italian humanists believed that the "new learning" meant an educational reorientation designed to achieve literary and rhetorical excellence by studying the ancient Greek and Roman models. In literature, this meant studying the classics for their own sake, rather than for their use to religion, as had been the previous medieval practice. They maintained that this was a better means to developing the free and responsible individual.

In addition to gaining access to the classics, humanism produced a formidable literary collection of its own. Some of the world's greatest literary masterpieces were produced by European humanists of the Renaissance.

One such masterpiece was Francis Petrarch's SONNETS TO LAURA. Inspired by his passion for a lady named Laura, Petrarch's sonnets swept across Europe and immortalized their author. Described as the most polished verses in Western European literature, their mood, imagery,

and rime scheme dominated literary circles for centuries. A sonnet is an Italian word which means "little song", and is a lyric poem made up of fourteen lines or stanzas. The form of what came to be popularly known as the Petrarchan sonnet was widely imitated, and captivated such illustrious poets as William Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser, John Milton, John Keats, and William Wordsworth in England; Pierre de Ronsard in France, and many others.

Another outstanding literary work is the DECAMERON by Giovanni Boccaccio. Written in the years 1348 to 1353, the DECAMERON is a collection of stories narrated by a disinterested observer, recording with incomparable artistry and sense of comedy the follies of Boccaccio's age.

The humanistic rejection of medieval austerity, allegory, and otherworldliness, as well as its affirmation of joy in the natural world, are best illustrated by the DECAMERON, in which Boccaccio faced the facts of middle class life with joy and humor.

GARGANTUA AND PANTAGRUEL, by the French writer Francois Rabelais, is one of the masterpieces of comic literature. The vitality and exuberance of the humanistic spirit are clearly illustrated in this widely acclaimed literary work.

One more outstanding literary work of the Renaissance is DON QUIXOTE DE LA MANCHA, by Spain's greatest author, Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra. Written in the years 1600 to 1605, DON QUIXOTE was almost immediately acclaimed as a masterpiece. Its popularity went far beyond the boundaries of Spain; ultimately, it is said to have been translated into more languages than any other book except the Bible.

DON QUIXOTE is a vivid and entertaining narrative in its own right. The main characters, Don Quixote and his companion, Sancha, two of the greatest figures in all literature, not only represent two facets of the Spanish character and two fundamental human attitudes toward life, but also emerge as real, living, growing human beings whom the reader comes to know and understand intimately as the novel progresses.

The short but brilliant satire, THE PRAISE OF FOLLY by Desiderius Erasmus, is one more brilliant sample of the literary masterpieces produced by the humanists of the Renaissance. One of the most enduring of Erasmus' literary works, THE PRAISE OF FOLLY was written in Latin, and is a devastating satire on irrationality in all its forms and manifestations. It is written in the form of a monologue by the goddess Folly, who defends herself by arguing that all human satisfaction is ultimately based on folly, and then goes on to a survey of the role of folly in society, government, daily life, the arts and sciences, philosophy and even religion.

One more example would be UTOPIA, a literary work about an imaginary ideal commonwealth by Sir Thomas More, which is regarded as a masterpiece of humanistic writing.

A brilliant English scholar, lawyer, and statesman, as well as a leading humanist, Thomas More coined the word "Utopia" from Greek words, meaning "no place" to emphasize the fact that no ideal place in reality exists; and the point of the book lies in the ironic contrast between Utopia and More's contemporary society and civilization.

Because of this book, the adjective "utopian" has come to be applied to any idealistic but visionary or impractical idea or scheme; and the word "Utopia" has come to identify any literary presentation of an ideal commonwealth.

Written originally in Latin in 1516 for scholars, UTOPIA was translated into English in 1551.

Humanistic literature also included secular biography, and a new category of autobiography, as exemplified by the COMMENTARIES OF PIUS II and the MEMOIRS OF BENVENUTO CELLINI. Other forms of humanistic literature were letters, and essays on political theory, arts and manners.

ARTS

The Italian Renaissance brought a tremendous expression in artistic activity.

In the visual arts in Italy, the spirit of humanism manifested itself in both form and content. For instance, architecture deliberately rejected the gothic style associated with the previous era, favoring instead the classical forms inspired by the monuments of antiquity. Sculptors and painters, too, modeled their own art according to that of the classical standards. Eventually, new subject matter based on the philosophy, literature, and history of classical antiquity, transformed the meaning and function of the arts.

Italian artists and architects had belonged, much like artisans and tradesmen everywhere in Europe, to guilds in the medieval tradition. Artistic production took place in large workshops, where the master depended on the help of apprentices.

However, the idea of personal fame, and the humanistic emphasis on the individual, so central to the Renaissance thinking, led to a new concept of the artist as genius. The artist was no longer considered a mere craftsman, dependent

solely on manual skill, but a man of learning and imagination, whose ambition was to acquire, by his art, fame rather than wealth. It was also asserted that painting, sculpture, and architecture belonged to the sphere of the intellect; and that these were essentially liberal, not mechanical arts – as much products of the mind as of the hand.

Encouraged and supported by such wealthy and powerful patrons as the Medici family in Florence, painters and sculptors produced works of unsurpassed excellence. Among the greatest of them were Michelangelo, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, Andrea del Sarto, Boticcelli, and Correggio, all of whom lived in Florence at one time or another. Three other great painters of the Renaissance: Titian, (after whom the color titian, a certain shade of red, is named) Tintoretto, and Veronese, came from Venice.

At about the same time, in Northern Europe, a similar flowering of the arts occurred, though on a smaller scale. Two of the greatest figures of the so-called German school were Albrecht Durer and Hans Holbein.

Rubens, who was Flemish, and Rembrandt, who was Dutch, belong to a somewhat later period, the mid-seventeenth century.

In general, German, Flemish, and Dutch art tended more toward homely realism and fidelity to detail than did Italian art.

Among the other great artists of the Renaissance were Benvenuto Cellini, who was the greatest gold and silversmith of his time, and author of his own autobiography; Donatello, acclaimed as the major genius of early Renaissance sculpture;

Giotto, a brilliant Florentine painter of the 13th - 14th century, and many others.

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

The great French humanist Francois Rabelais had two fundamental propositions of his own, which are clearly expressed in his acclaimed literary works, and which further underlines the humanistic philosophy: first, that "every man desires to know"; and second, that "laughter is a proper function of man".

Humanism brought to the field of Philosophy a whole new set of stimulating ideas that dominated the European mind for centuries.

One of the important literary and philosophic influences of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century was the work of the great Florentine humanist Marsilio Ficino (1489-1562) and his followers, Pico de la Mirandola and Politian. They revived the study of Plato and tried to harmonize his philosophy with Christian theology. Neo-Platonism, as the movement came to be called, spread far beyond Italy and significantly influenced Renaissance literature and philosophy.

Perhaps the one outstanding event in European history which the humanist movement is known to have influenced is the Reformation, a prolonged religious and political controversy which resulted in the establishment of the various Protestant sects, dividing to this day what, till then, used to be one church with one creed.

The term "Reformation" was used by the adherents of the movement to emphasize that they sought to reform certain

aspects of the church; and the term "Protestant" which became the name for all the followers of the Reformation, came from the "protest" in 1529, against the revocation of the policy of toleration which had been decreed three years earlier.

Basically a theological dispute about the proper understanding and interpretation of religion, it also became a political controversy about the legal status of the new Reformation churches.

The controversy began in Germany in 1517, when Martin Luther, a priest and a professor of theology at the University of Wittenberg, came up with his ninety-five theses. Luther had doubts about the theology and practice of indulgences (commutation of punishment imposed by the church).

Luther employed the form of academic theses or sentences for discussion to initiate a scholarly debate. But what was meant as an academic matter, quickly became public, mainly because humanists throughout Germany responded enthusiastically to Luther's attack, and did much to propagate the issue to a much wider audience.

The humanists, especially led by Erasmus, had for some time been calling for church reforms. They felt that the church was too worldly, the papacy far too removed in Rome, the clergy too greedy, and the religion of the people allowed to be too vulgar.

Although efforts were made to dialogue and reconcile both sides of the controversy, none of them were successful.

The Reformation spread from Germany, to France, and England, and other parts of Europe. Having broken away from

and divided the church, the Reformist movement itself began to break into various dissenting groups, unable to agree among themselves on sundry issues. Prominent personalities, such as the humanist, John Calvin of France, and Zwingli, a Swiss reformer from Zurich; as well as groups like the Anabaptists, all had different opinions on varying issues involving how the reformation was to be achieved, and even as to what was to be reformed. As a result, we have to this day the diverse Protestant sects and denominations, such as the Lutheran, the Calvinist, the Anglican, the Anabaptist, the Antitrinitarian, and several others, all collectively known as Protestants.

In the end, Erasmus, who had been very active in the reformist movement, when asked to make a choice, made a decision to stay within the church, to much bitter criticism from the Protestants, who felt this action was inconsistent with his writings.

As for the church, it made immediate moves to renew and revitalize itself, formulating many of the practices and policies that characterized it for centuries to come.

III - HUMANISM AFTER THE RENAISSANCE

In the years that followed the Renaissance, the spirit of humanism lived on, appearing now and again in the literature and outlook of the Romantic tradition, and in the eighteenth century Enlightenment, during which the humanistic ideas of rationalism, individualism, and secularism were merged with a political and scientific outlook, and thus given a totally new dimension.

Still later, in the late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, humanism assumed a bewildering variety of forms. An example of such forms is the so-called scientific humanism, which aims to replace religion and make scientific knowledge the instrument of liberating man and improving his life. To this end, science and technology must be humanized and socialized, and man educated to respond positively to rapid change.

Other twentieth century humanists reject the traditional concepts of God, the church, and prayer and worship as backward and obsolete. Ultimate reality, they say, is to be found within human beings, expressing itself in the full dedication to their total well-being.

The humanism espoused by Irving Babbit and P.E. More in the 1930's ,on the other hand, reaffirms the humanistic principle of man's innate ethical sense – the higher will – pointing to a spiritual order above and beyond man.

Perhaps one more fact worth mentioning is that the term "humanism" is also claimed by pragmatists, existentialists, and even marxists.

It seems humanism, in all its varied forms and diversity of expression, has, and will remain, a basic ingredient in western thought as well as in that of the rest of the rational world.

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Nihilism in the Postmodern World: *Prospects for a Global Ethical Culture*

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Summary:

The postmodern world presents renewed prospects for the prevalence of nihilism in human relations. Religion and Science have traditionally served as defenses against the drift towards nihilism; similarly Ethics, as a purely rational discipline, has served as an imperfect guide for many individuals. This paper argues that the *possessive individualism* that has been the motor for the growth and progress of industrial societies in the last several hundred years contains within itself the seeds of nihilism. The Western humanist tradition cannot serve as the basis for a postmodern ethical sensibility. A new understanding of individuality, of what it means to be an integral *person*, needs to be reconstructed from the ruins of Western possessive individualism. Science, religion,

and ethics all must play a role in this reconstruction. Even the notion of theocentrism, suitably reconceived, can play such a conceptual role.

I

I begin with nihilism. In Philosophy, nihilism is the extreme paradox: it is the idea that there is nothing (*nihil*) for human beings to strive for, because nothing in what the human mind recognizes as being real is truly real. In Greek philosophy the Eleatics, and Plato after them, recognized the claim *that nothing is* to be absurdly paradoxical, because it involves the confusion between being and not-being. To Parmenides and Plato, only being is, not-being or nothingness could not possibly be. This is much more than a logical truism—it is an ontological principle whose validity is the very basis of all thinking about reality. There must be something, for thinking to be possible at all.

Thus Greek Rationalism rested on a premise which invokes an optimistic view of the relation between mind and reality. To the Greeks generally, when the mind thinks, it necessarily thinks about something real. Now for the Greeks *valuing* is as much a part of thinking as determining the truth. To Plato, in particular, it could be said that the *true* is a species of the *good*. An implication of this is that Plato would not have seen a dualism between knowledge and value, for to know is to fulfill a natural yearning of the human soul that is good for the soul. Not everything that is real, however, exists in the world that we see and perceive with our senses; on the contrary, sense perception does not carry with it the mark (*kriterion*) of the real. Only the eye of the soul can see with truth, i.e., can reveal the being of things.

The nihilist outlook is thus foreign to the spirit of classical Athenian philosophy, i.e., that of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. To these philosophers, to strive for the good is simultaneously to strive for the true and the real. This is an optimist view of reality and of human action: there is something to strive for because the living of human life, both on the individual and the collective level, involves the fulfilment of a *telos*, an end or purpose. This furnishes human history with the framework of an intelligible and edifying narrative.

II

The postmodern setting is indeed worlds away from the world of classical Athens. The Greeks exerted a profound influence on Western civilization, but many other currents have since been added to global civilization: Judeo-Christianity, Catholicism, Islam, Protestantism, the Industrial Revolution, Imperialism, Communism and the Cold War, and now globalization in all its various dimensions—economic, political, cultural. In the current atmosphere of globalization, many of these elements seem to be coming together in a not exactly harmonious way. Indeed there is much potential for conflict and conflagration in the world today as a result of the continuing clashes of cultures and world-views.

One of the most disturbing trends in the postmodern world is the growth of terrorism. The recent evolution of terrorism into suicide bombing is an expression not merely of mindlessness but of a *nihilistic* vision of the world. This postmodern brand of nihilism embodies a refusal to seek truth and value in the world that we inhabit in common with others, and a determination to locate all truth and value in a projected world. Terrorism has become the weapon not only of the desperate but of the willfully blind. Thus on the political sphere

it is clear that the postmodern world presents renewed prospects for the prevalence of nihilism in human relations.

III

In human history, the pursuit of religious and scientific truth has served as a defense against the drift towards nihilism. One can see that religion by its nature cannot be nihilistic, for religion offers *salvation*, the re-uniting (*re-ligare*) of the material/ temporal/conditioned self with the spiritual/eternal/ unconditioned self. All the great religions seek this re-connection. Thus religion arrests the drift toward nihilism at the very source, by providing human beings with the ideal of a life worth striving for in truth and in spirit, both for the individual and for society. It is only when religions acquire power by means of dominative political and economic institutions that they become exploiters of mankind and destructive of human prospects for harmonious living.

Similarly, science is essentially an optimistic element in civilization, for it offers the idea of progress in the growth of our knowledge of the world and our universe. The passion for scientific truth has often provided human beings with the moral courage to resist the worst excesses of religious dogmatism. There is an element of play in the passionate pursuit of scientific truth—science is an endless source of mental delight. Thus a life lived in pursuit of scientific truth for its own sake will not lapse into nihilism.

IV

The case of Ethics is a little more complicated than that of science or religion. Ethical theory provides a systematic account of the concepts of the good and the right.

Philosophical ethics, as a purely rational discipline, has served as an imperfect guide for many individuals. Like science, rational ethics is often a defense against religious dogmatism. Human civilization has undergone many periods of radical transformation due to the inevitable clashing of cultures and religions. Perhaps ethical theories emerge at the culmination of such clashes, as the ethics of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle emerged in the wake of the social upheavals created by the Peloponnesian War, or as Kantian ethics emerged in the wake of the Protestant Reformation, or as Utilitarianism was formulated in the wake of British imperial hegemony in the nineteenth century. The ethical view of life, based on reason, is an attempt to regain lost ground whenever faith recedes from human affairs, or whenever an old moral consensus based on communal myths withers away. The difficult question is whether ethics can replace religion in the lives of human beings, or whether such an outcome is a desirable one. I will not attempt to address such questions here.

V

Instead, I wish to trace a little bit more the emergence of the current notion of the *individual* that emerged from Western ethics. The Industrial Revolution created a need to tear large numbers of individuals away from the agricultural life, so that they can participate in the economic need for mass production, which in turn was required for the growth and actualization of the emerging idea of the nation state. Cities emerged, and with cities a new notion of what it means to be an individual.

In many ways, this historical transformation was liberating in character. It freed human capacities from old tasks towards new ones. Markets are often a progressive force,

furnishing human beings with choices and chances of life hitherto unconceived and inconceivable. But the natural logic of the market mentality tends toward the formation of individuals whose basic impulse is to acquire, to add substance to the self by increasing its share in the goods available in the market. The operation of such a mentality through a few centuries created a distinct and definable notion of human individuality, a consistent idea of what it means to be an *individual* within society. The Canadian political philosopher C.B. Macpherson refers to this notion as *possessive individualism*.

I can do no better than to quote Macpherson's enumeration and discussion of the assumptions of the theory of possessive individualism:

(a) Man, the individual, is seen as absolute natural proprietor of his own capacities, owing nothing to society for them; man's essence is to use his capacities in search of satisfactions;

(b) Society is seen, not (as it had been) [i.e., in the Middle Ages] as a system of relations of domination and subordination between men and classes held together by reciprocal rights and duties, but as a collection of free and equal individuals related to each other through their possessions, that is, related as owners of their own capacities and of what they have produced and accumulated by the use of their capacities; the relation of exchange (I.e., the market relation) is seen as the fundamental relation of society; and, finally,

(c) Political society is seen as a rational device for the protection of property, including capacities; even

> life and liberty are considered as possesssions, rather than as social rights with correlative duties. (*Democratic Theory: Essays in Retrieval*, p. 199.)

Possessive individualism has thus been the motor of the growth and progress of industrial societies in the last several hundred years. My claim is that possessive individualism has been part of the humanist tradition that the world inherited from the Enlightenment. To what extent Kantian ethics and Utilitarian ethics are also part of this tradition, however, is an important question that I will not go into here.

But I think it could truly be said that the Western humanist tradition that we inherit from the Enlightenment contains as an essential ingredient the theory of possessive individualism. Our question then is this: Is the notion of individuality, of what it means to be an individual *person*, entailed by the theory of possessive individualism still relevant in the postmodern world?

VI

I think the answer is clear enough. The pursuit of individual advantage in the marketplace—and the attendant conceptions of the individual as *essentially* a consumer of goods, and of social relations as relations between possessors of goods, and of politics as mainly instrumental to the protection of private property—all these notions are part of an unsustainable *weltanschauung*. They create conflict, separation between human beings, and an overpowering sense of alienation from nature, which is seen as nothing but a source of materials for the production of goods for the market.

The Western humanist tradition, based on the theory of possessive individualism, cannot serve as the basis for a postmodern ethical sensibility. The task of the philosopher in our time is to assist in the demise of such a worldview. A new understanding of individuality, of what it means to be an integral *person*, needs to be reconstructed from the ruins of Western possessive individualism. We need a postmodern ethical sensibility that assigns to the human striving for non-material fulfillments, such as conversation and communion, its place in the scheme of human needs.

VII

Science, religion, and ethics all must play a role in this reconstruction. But even the notion of theocentrism, suitably reconceived, can play such a role. A "theocentric" view, as the term implies, is one that puts the divine (*ho theos*) at the center of things. The challenge is, how to put the divine at the center of human striving in a way that takes into account the fallible nature of individual human beings. It seems to me that the key to the answer is to be found in the nature of our institutions. A theocentric perspective can take human fallibility into account by placing human beings' political and economic actions squarely within the bounds of strong and stable institutions with clearly defined ethical rules. The flourishing of human beings, *qua* material beings in an economically and politically complex world, depends on the proper evolution of rational institutions in global society. On the other hand the *spiritual* flourishing of humanity depends on the spontaneous growth of the impulse towards communion from within the depths of the soul—whose center, we might say, is none other than the divine.

EXISTENTIALISM OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Prof. Salvador E. Dimen

Summary:

Existentialism, as a body of ethical thought, stems from the Humanism of the Renaissance period. But while humanism addresses itself exclusively to the human rather than divine concerns – stressing that man is capable of attaining self-fulfillment without divine aid – existentialism focuses more on the epistemological facet of man, that is, the truth and the reality of his existence.

Two great minds of the 20th century put flesh and bones on the philosophical theory called Existentialism, whose roots date back to the early Greek thinkers.

The first is Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), a Danish philosopher acknowledged as the **Father of Existentialism**. He emphasized the individual's freedom to create his own

destiny and thus provide the truth and reality of his own existence. Truth arises out of existential experience. The communicator may evoke awareness of truth but he cannot tell another what to believe. Kierkegaard described the various stages of existence as the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious. As the individual goes through these stages, he becomes increasingly aware of his relationship to God. Such awareness leads to despair as the individual realizes the antithesis between temporal and eternal truth.

The second great thinker, whose powerful and charismatic pen made Existentialism the flair of intellectual Europe, is Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980), known as the **Guru of Existentialism.**

Sartre expounded on the main existentialist preoccupation, namely, the anxious search for meaning in a human society that seemed to provide no coherent explanation of what things are or why anything – man included – should exist, Sartre considered the reality of human existence as something created by the individual himself. Man has no nature that defines what he is. Rather, the individual defines himself for himself, from moment to moment by freely making choices/ commitment and living with the results.

Man is condemned to be free; condemned because he did not choose to exist; but once thrust into the world, he has to freely make choices and be responsible for them. In this context, man, in relation to the universe, that is other people, objects, and other beings, is faced with an infinite world of possible choices or commitments. In freely choosing to relate or interact with **this person** or **that being**, he creates the meaning and value of his own existence. It is the free choice that gives value to the act.

Many other great intellectuals took up this existentialist theme and recast it under the light of different hues.

The various divergent thrusts notwithstanding, existentialism can be defined as the body of ethical thought that is concerned mainly with the uniqueness of individual experience and regards human existence as unexplainable and, ultimately, meaningless. Man's free choice, for which he is responsible, is what gives meaning and value to his existence. And because man creates the meaning of his own existence, he does not need God.

By insisting on the transcendence of being as the first cause of existence, existentialism assumes a theistic forum. In holding that human existence creates itself by itself, thus assuming unto itself the functions of God, it presents itself as radical atheism. And, by asserting the finitude of human existence, that is, the inherent limits of choices, it translates itself into Humanism.

Towards the end of the 20th century, Existentialism reverted back into mainstream philosophy.

EXISTENTIALISM OF THE 19TH TO THE 20TH CENTURY

To the uninitiated in the seemingly rarefied world of philosophers, the word existentialism, to use a worn out cliché, may sound Greek. Yet in the mid 20th century, existentialism was the fad and flair of intellectual Europe, as well as of her working class and radical revolutionaries. Later, existentialism spread to the United States, albeit to a lesser degree.

We must recall that towards the middle part of the 20th century, Europe, in particular France, was in the throes of rebirth – struggling from the ravages of World War II. Appalled perhaps by the useless carnage and brutalities of the wars, and the emerging dichotomy between the working class and the bourgeoisie, intellectuals began an agonizing appraisal of life, its meaning, and ultimate purpose. Thus the problems of identity crisis, the meaning of existence, the nature of man, reality and transcendence, became the object of intellectual inquiries. The young of Europe felt trapped and bewildered by this kind of milieu. All the traditional and institutional values, all the theories of human existence which they held sacred, failed in the light of the obscene absurdities of man's inhumanity to man.

Intellectuals then began to ask: What is man? What is existence? What is freedom? What is reality? What is Being? What is truth? These were some of the questions troubling the nation in a period shaped by the war. And the postwar generation seemed to have found solace in the austere, somehow liberating arms of existentialism.

At a time when philosophers seemed to have lost their influence in a world in search of its own identity and purpose

of existence, **Jean Paul Sartre** appeared on the scene with his charismatic pen and brilliant gift of simplifying philosophical abstractions into live challenges to act.

He was a powerful writer who wrote not like a philosopher but commanded a graceful prose that could turn abstract concepts into everyday-life drama. He produced some four dozen volumes on philosophy, psychology, fiction, biography, plays, literary criticisms, political tracts and scores of other publication.

But Sartre did not invent existentialism. The roots of existentialism, as many writers agree, could be traced back to ancient Greece and Rome, especially in the writings of Socrates (c.469-399 B.C.) Socrates was a Greek philosopher who initiated a method of teaching through questions and answers whereby man could get to know himself. "Know Thyself" was the maxim that spread down to our own times. Socrates was in search of the meaning of human existence, the truth and reality of knowledge. He insisted that virtue is knowledge, vice is ignorance, and no one wittingly does wrong (echoed in Sartre's deterministic treatment of man). These theories were adopted by his student and admirer, Plato (c.428-349) who presented his philosophy in the form of dramatic dialogues where he espoused a system of education for "philosopher kings". Only those properly schooled in the arts, literature, and history were fit to be rulers.

The seeds of Greek existentialism remained dormant throughout the Dark and Medieval Ages. They began to find fertile soil and breathe life in the Humanism of the Renaissance of the 14th to 17th century. Humanists then- Montaigne, Rabelais, Erasmus, Petrarch, Machiavelli, Descartes, Alberti, Hobbes, to name a few – began to question traditional values and institutional beliefs. Freed from the stifling bonds of

doctrine and dogma, they searched for the meaning of human existence and its ultimate purpose, the meaning of truth and reality, the existence of a transcendent mind. They focused on human development. They thus advocated for a return to classical studies (Greek/Roman) as refined by the scholastics of the Medieval Ages. For they considered it a potent means for personal development.

SOREN KIERKEGAARD (1813 – 1855)

The cause for existentialism was first articulated in the writings and novels of Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), a Danish philosopher and theologian who is now regarded as the **Father of Modern Existentialism.** We can argue to a host of other forerunners. But it was Kierkegaard who articulated the concepts and vocabulary that influenced subsequent existentialists.

He opposed Hegel's idea that truth is absolute, even as he demeaned rituals and dogma.

Parenthetically, for **GEORG WILHELM FRIEDRICH HEGEL** (1770-1831), truth is achieved by a continuing dialectic: an initial **thesis**, when found unsatisfactory, generates an **antithesis**; these interact to form a **synthesis**, which, eventually, may constitute a new thesis. Because of his monastic and idealistic stance, he asserts that all that exists must be mental, and therefore thought is reality. History, especially history of thought, represents the search for truth through dialectics.

Against Hegelian necessitarianism, Kierkegaard interpreted existence in terms of possibility: dread – which dominates existence through and through – is "the sentiment

of the possible". It is the feeling of what can happen to a man even when he has made all of his calculations and taken every precaution.

Kierkegaard criticized reigning philosophies for their abstract speculations and their pretensions to answer grand questions without ever asking the immediate question of self-understanding. He declared: "Truth is subjectivity", meaning not that subjective illusions are true, but that truth is meaningful only as it applies to a personal subject. In his understanding of existence, Kierkegaard emphasized the "dizziness" of freedom as man decides his destiny and the anxiety of the contingent being who can find no meaning in the universe except as he makes a "leap" of faith.

Kierkegaard likewise attacked theology for its reliance on authority as an evasion of personal responsibility; for its timidity to commitment; and for its enslavement to the conventional church.

One of Kierkegaard's beliefs, important to the future of existentialism, was that significant truth can be communicated only indirectly. It arises out of existential experience. The communicator may evoke or provoke awareness of truth, but he cannot tell another what to believe. This would be the constant refrain in the existentialism of Sartre.

Other philosophers expounded on existentialism, albeit under the light of different hues.

FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY (1821-1881)

He was a Russian novelist who profoundly influenced not only the modern novel but also the thought of modern man. The characters in his novels were nothing but mouthpieces of his philosophical views. He attacked the liberals of his day, criticized western civilization, and claimed that redemption of man could be achieved by religion alone. Happiness could only be bought by suffering (Crime and Punishment – a psychological study of crime). If man had no spiritual life, no idea of beauty, he would fall into a state of boredom, indulging in all sorts of pagan fantasies. The nihilism of his novels results from his depicting man as continually defeated as a result of his choices and as continually placed by them before the insoluble enigma of himself.

KARL MARX (1818-1883)

A German journalist and philosopher who, with Friedrich Engels, produced the famous Communist Manifesto. Marx wrote Das Kapital which greatly influenced subsequent socialism and communism. Taking from Hegel's dialectics, he produced the theory of dialectical materialism (social change) and believed that violent revolution by the proletariat is necessary to create a classless society.

He opposed the individualistic tendency of existentialism, and, to the extent that he was an economic determinist, denied its belief in freedom. But the existentialist spirit surfaced in his description of alienation, his analysis of thinking as always imbedded in a historical context, and his call to philosophy to change the world instead of merely understanding it.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE (1844-1900)

A German philosopher who rejected the "slave morality" and values of Christianity. He distinguished between thought and emotion, and emphasized the value of intense emotion in art and life. He proposed the doctrine of supermen.

He hailed the "unique wonder" of every person often stifled by a cowardly herd-mentality. His atheistic declaration that the churches are tombs of God was curiously akin to Kierkegaard's intensely Christian polemic against the churches.

Existentialism became a part of a philosophic underground throughout the 19th century. But following World War I which shook the confident rationalism of western culture, it found its milieu. Kierkegaard's works, translated into German (into English in the 1930's) had a wide response and intensified by other thinkers who explored some of the themes.

KARL JASPERS (1883-1969)

A German existentialist philosopher, whose career moved through medicine and psychiatry to philosophy, had a scientific interest lacking in most existentialists. But he maintained the existentialist conviction, drawn from Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, that all fundamental thinking depends upon self-comprehension. Although skeptical about religious authorities, which he found confining, he insisted upon the importance of what he called "transcendence".

MARTIN HEIDEGGER (1889-1976)

A German philosopher, steeped in classical philosophy, and, like Nietzsche, in the pre-socratic philosophers, undertook a basically ontological explanation. But rather than analyzing

non human being, as much as the ontological traditions had done, he began with human existence, especially the experiences of anxiety, temporality, and awareness of death. His BEING and TIME became one of the major works of existentialist literature. Some critics consider him an atheist; others as mystic. He described himself as "waiting for God".

ALBERT CAMUS (1913-1960)

French existentialist novelist and a Nobel Laureate. For a time, he was a close colleague of Sartre, then broke with him on both political and philosophical grounds. His THE STRANGER and his essay THE MYTH OF SISYPHUS were radically existentialist in their themes of human self-assertion against the absurdity of the universe. But in THE PLAGUE and THE REBEL, he showed the power of compassion and brotherhood and enduring loyalties. Although he continued to stress the importance of freedom, Camus moved from radical existentialism to tragic humanism.

NIKOLAI ALEXANDROVICH BERDYAYEV (1874-1948)

Russian religious philosopher. Was attracted to Marxism but soon abandoned this ideology, turning to Christianity largely as interpreted by Dostoyevsky. From 1904 -1914 he played an influential part in the religious revival that was taking place in Russia. When the Czar fell, he (Berdyayev) fell into disfavor with the leaders of the revolution and was expelled from the Soviet Union. He settled in Paris, and founded a religious philosophical academy and published numerous works.

His basic concept: a person as a spiritual entity, is the highest value. This placed him in direct opposition to the

philosophies, economic systems and scientific views that reduce man to a body-mind organism and thus degrade and depersonalize him. Philosophically, he classifies himself as an existentialist, although he derived his insights from Dostoyevsky rather than from Kierkegaard or Heidegger. He regarded existence, spirit and freedom as primary; and being, matter and determination as secondary. Being denotes matter and existence connotes spirit. Man should be recognized as an individual in himself. No real progress can be made by economic, political or cultural means alone unless the human agents are first transformed spiritually.

JEAN PAUL SARTRE (1805 – 1980)

The most influential of existentialist Thinkers is Jean Paul Sartre, a French philosopher and writer who is considered the **Guru of Existentialism**. He was to the bourgeoisie born on June 21, 1805 whose values he later rejected with contempt. He graduated in Philosophy from the Ecole Normale Superieure, a training ground for many of France' intellectual leaders.

The heart of Sartre's philosophy is contained in his theory of the **moi** (I) and the **toi** (you). The **moi** is the individual who finds himself in a sea of **toi**'s (other individuals, concepts the universe, reality). His relating to a **toi**, this **toi**, or that **toi**, is a free act, unimposed by any being. It is this relating or reaction to this **toi** or that **toi** that gives meaning or reality, to his own existence. Existentialism stresses the individual's anxious search for meaning and personal integrity in a human society that seems to provide no coherent explanations of what things are or why anything - man included – should exist. Building his arguments on his claim that "existence precedes essence", Sartre insisted that man has no nature which defines what he is. Rather, each person must define himself for himself

by his own decisions, actuations, and views in life; he must continue to define himself from moment to moment by making choices and living with the results. Sartre looked upon life as "a never-ending process of self-creation in which the present cancels out the past, and the future erases the present." Nothing seems permanent.

To allow others – a spouse, an enemy, or society itself – to define us is to become guilty of "bad faith" to one's self. Thus in his famous play, NO EXIT, Sartre stresses: "Hell is other people."

For Sartre God does not exist. Man defines what he is, his essence through his sum of actions. Man is because of what he does and not because of an **a priori nature**. Man doesn't have a nature that determines his modes of being and acting but that, rather, these modes are simply possibilities from which he may choose and on the basis of which he can project himself. Nature does not define what man is. It is the person himself who defines or creates the reality of his being by the choices he makes in the world of possibilities he finds himself in. Life has no meaning or purpose beyond the goals that each man sets for him himself.

Sartre's philosophy of freedom rests in his assumption that each individual is free and responsible for his choice of actions. And "it is the choice that gives value to the act, and nothing that is not acted upon has value." No matter what circumstance man finds himself in, he is always free to give his existence importance. Thus Sartre wrote: "Man…exists only to the extent that he fulfills himself. He is thus nothing other than the whole of his acts, nothing other than his life."

Sartre continues : man is condemned to be free. Man is condemned because he did not choose to exist, but once

thrust into the world, he is responsible for his acts.

Lending a moral dimension to an otherwise indifferent universe, Sartre declared that a person cannot define himself by "disappointed dreams, miscarried hopes or vain expectations." Most people seek to evade responsibility by blaming something or somebody else for their fate. Sartre regards this as "bad faith".

Such was his influence and stature that, when many in the government urged President Charles de Gaulle to arrest and imprison Sartre for espousing the Algerian rebellion, de Gaulle calmly replied, "Sartre is also France". A Nobel Laureate, he refused to receive the price. He did not want to be institutionalized, so he declared. In later life, he backtracked from his stance that "Hell is other people."

Having briefly examined the ideas of these influential existentialists, may we now ask: What is Existentialism?

In a nutshell, it is a body of ethical thought, centering on the uniqueness of individual experience and regards human existence as unexplainable. It also emphasizes man's freedom of choice and responsibility for his acts.

Existentialism embraces a variety of styles and convictions. But one constant characteristic is its concern for human existence, especially for the affirmation of freedom and the refusal to subordinate personal awareness to abstract concepts or dehumanizing social structures. It represented a rebellion against established ideas and institutions that inhibit personal freedom and negate responsibility.

There is a close affinal relationship between humanism and existentialism, so much so that some would say that

existentialism is humanism. This may be true in a broad sense – that is in so far as both schools of thought focus on human concerns.

Humanists on the one hand, while searching for the meaning of man, the ultimate purpose of his existence, the meaning of reality and the need or non-need of a transcendent mind or Being, were more concerned with the individual's intellectual, moral, social and political development. Thus, humanists viewed Greek and Roman arts, literature and history as potent tools for the intellectual, social and political development of man. "Knowledge is power." Humanism addresses itself exclusively to the human rather than the divine concerns. Man is capable of self-development without divine aid.

Existentialists, on the other hand, focus their intellectual pursuits on the uniqueness of individual experience, emphasizing man's freedom to fashion the meaning of his own existence.

Existentialism is opposed to

1) any doctrine that views man as the manifestation of an absolute or of an infinite substance. It is thus opposed to most forms of Idealism that stress Consciousness, Spirit, Reason, Idea or Oversoul.

2) any doctrine that sees in man some given and complete reality that must be resolved into its elements in order to be known or contemplated. It is thus opposed to any form of objectivism or scientism since these stress the crass reality of external fact.

3) any form of necessitarianism; for existence is constituted by possibilities from among which man may choose and through which he can project himself.

4) Any form of solipsism (I alone exist) or epistemological Idealism (holding that objects of knowledge are mental) because existence, which is the relationship with other beings, always extends beyond itself, towards the being of these entities; it is, so to speak, transcendence.

From these bases, Existentialism can take diverse and contrasting directions.

1) It can insist on the transcendence of Being with respect to existence, and, by holding this transcendence to be the origin or foundation of existence, it can thus assume a Theistic form.

2) It can hold that human existence, posing itself as a problem, projects itself with absolute freedom, creating itself by itself, thus assuming to itself the function of God. As such, Existentialism presents itself as radical atheism.

3) It may insist on the finitude of human existence – i.e. on the limits inherent in its possibilities of projections and choice. As such, Existentialism presents itself as humanism.

To sum it up; according to Existentialism:

1) Existence is always particular and individual: always MY existence, YOUR existence, HIS existence

2) Existence is primarily the problem of existence – i.e. of its mode of being: it is therefore an investigation of the meaning of Being.

3) This investigation is continually faced with diverse possibilities from among which the existent (i.e., man) must make a selection, a choice to which he must commit himself. (Herein is man's freedom.)

4) Because these possibilities are constituted by man's relationship with things and with other men, existence is always a "being-in-the-world" –i.e. in a concrete and historically determinate situation that limits or conditions choice.

Later on, other bodies of thought increasingly turned from logical positivism to a sophisticated linguistic analysis not alien to the work of Heidegger. Existentialism therefore, became a less distinctive philosophy and more a coloration in most philosophies. If its radical non-conformity was thereby jeopardized, some of its rebellious quality persisted in the beatniks and later the hippies, although usually with an anti-intellectualism not characteristic of its originating geniuses.

Although existentialism may be religious or atheistic, its origin in Kierkegaard suggests that it influenced subsequent theology and philosophy of religion. Among the religious thinkers who acknowledged its impact have been Paul Tillich, and Rudolf Bultmann (Protestant), Gabriel Marcel (Catholic), Nikolai Berdyayev (Eastern Orthodox – Russian, spent most of his life in France), and Martin Ruber. Characteristic of these varied thinking is a religious personalism and a conviction that neither authority nor rational argument can take the place of

commitment or "ultimate concern" as a condition for religious understanding.

In the later half of the 20th century, existentialism passed its faddist and sectarian stage, and entered into mainstream philosophy. If few philosophers wished to be known as existentialist, most philosophers had taken up existentialist themes. Pragmatism had always had some kinship with existentialism – especially in William James' insistence that truth is sought by volitional process, not by abstract reason. John Dewey, although his emphasis on scientific method was sometimes hostile to existentialism, gave major attention to the existential matrix of inquiry. Phenomenology gave increasing emphasis to the same experiential phenomena that gave rise to existentialism. Thus, one of the two major streams of the 20th century philosophy exhibited the interaction of existentialism with pragmatism and phenomenology.

The legacy of Sartre never ceased its influence until our modern age.

Towards the end of his life, Sartre proclaimed: "The left no longer exists," and admitted that democracy "ought to be the way for men to live." And despite his physical defect – blind in the right eye at the age of three and lost most of his sight in 1973, he remained an icon to the intellectuals of his time. Sartre, who died in 1980, was called the **conscience of his generation**. He refused to be treated as an old man. He declared: "An old man never feels like an old man. It is the others who are my old age."

And now, ladies and gentlemen, in closing, let me paraphrase the French:

The king is dead. Long live the king!
Sartre is dead. Long live Sartre.

I thank you.

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful

Man's Place in Imam Khomeini's Mystical Perception

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Summary:

The study on the life of Imam Khomeini, the revered and revolutionary leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, serves as a reminder to any Muslim and to humanity that oppression, tyranny and dynasty is total abomination in the realm of Islam.

With strong determination and conviction to bring back Islamic moral consciousness to Iran, Imam Khomeini, while in exile in European Countries, triggered and led an Islamic Revolution in Iran unparalleled in modern history. With indomitable spirit and fortitude, his call for radical change and

reform galvanized waves of people's public demonstrations in the streets of Iran that finally led the corrupt and repressive Shah Pahlevi and his family to flee Teheran in 1979. The Imam returned to Iran in 1980, and paved the way to the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Today, Islamic Iran has become the bastion of courage and steadfastness against the evils of western secularism and materialism that is corrupting other Muslim-populated countries.

This study conducted on the 19th Anniversary of the passing away of Imam Khomeini is therefore a tribute to a man, who rose from the deserts of Persia to strive for and ensure the greatness of the people of Islamic Iran with the most powerful message – struggle in the way of Allah – to attain permanent peace. Although Ayatollah Khomeini passed away close to two decades ago now, yet his influence as a progressive reformer and steadfast revolutionary against global imperialism and materialism is still being felt and sustained by the present Iranian leaders, who have immortalized him by their own courage and fortitude in doing what is right and ideal for the people of Iran.

This study also focuses on the mystical perception of Imam Khomeini, whose humanistic values and virtues have endeared him to any Muslim or any man valuing righteousness and justice in this world. With his strong devotion to prayers and remembrance of the Almighty Allah, Imam Khomeini can only instill a strong influence on any man, who values more the life of the Hereafter rather than the frailties of the temporal world.

MAN'S PLACE IN IMAM KHOMEINI'S MYSTICAL PERCEPTION

I - INTRODUCTION

"And say not of those who are killed in the Way of Allah, "They are dead." Nay, they are living, but you perceive (it) not."

-54, Surah 2, Al-Baqarah

"Think not of those who are killed in the Way of Allah as dead. Nay, they are alive, with their Lord, and they have provision."

-168, Surah 3, Al-Imran

"Every soul shall taste death, and in the end you shall return to Us."

-57, Surah 29, Al-Ankabut

"Those who embrace the true faith and do good works shall be forever lodged in the mansions of Paradise, where rivers will roll at their feet. Blessed is the reward of those who labor patiently and put their trust in Allah."

-58-9, Surah 29, Al-Ankabut

Indeed, it is a tribute to the heroic people of Iran that they have experienced and shared in their lifetime the company of a blessed son, brother, guardian and spiritual guide and leader – Ayatullah al-Uzma Imam Ruhollah Khomeini – whose 19th death Anniversary serves to remind the Islamic Ummah and the whole of humanity that to live one's life in sacrifice and struggle in the way of Allah epitomizes the perfection of human life as required by Allah Almighty…

As a clear reminder to mankind, the Qur'an has emphasized:

"The life of men is tempted by love and desire for women, children, the holding of measures of gold and silver, branded horses, wealth of cattle and plantations. These are the comforts for the transitory life of this world; the everlasting best comfort, however, is with Allah."(14, Surah 3, Al-Imran)

In contemporary history, there is no other Muslim leader, who has shown genuine commitment and selfless devotion to serve the people and nation than the late Ayatullah Imam Khomeini. Unlike other Muslim leaders, who never learn the tragic lessons of history, but still continue in establishing dynastic rule and patronizing western securalism and materialism, the grand Imam truly followed the footprints of the first ruler of the Islamic Ummah, Prophet Muhammad Ibn Abdullah (s.a.w.).

Closely emulating the leadership qualities of the last Messenger of Allah, Nabi Muhammad (s.a.w.), Imam Khomeini was truly guided by the confirmation of the Prophet's (s.a.w.) status in the Holy Qur'an.

"And verily, you (O Muhammad s.a.w.) are of an exalted standard of character."(68, Surah 4, Al-Qalam)

Furthermore, struggling against all odds to liberate the people of Iran and nation from the corrupt, oppressive and materialistic rule of the dynastic Pahlevi regime, Imam Khomeini was surely guided by how Alphonse de Lamartine, the French statesman and poet, paid the greatest tribute in his choice of words regarding the Prophet of Islam:

"If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astounding results are the criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man in modern history with Muhammad? Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of dogmas, of a cult without images, the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may ask: is there any man greater than he?"

Moreover, it is significantly noted that the grand Imam was always conscious of the basic character assets of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) that his cousin cum son-in-law, Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib, in an authentic *hadith* (tradition) reported to have quoted the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.):

"Knowledge is my principal possession
Reason, the root of my religion
Love, my foundation
Longing, my coach
Remembrance of God Almighty, my weapon
Patience, my dress
Contentment, my prize
Poverty, my glory
Abstinence, my calling
Obedience, my measure
Striving (jihad), my character, and
Prayer, my pleasure."

Hence, while enjoying the fullness and vitality of life serving the people of Iran, Imam Khomeini took pride nurturing the simplicity of life, thanking and paying tribute and homage tirelessly to the sublime Creator and patiently anticipating His call anytime. Consciously, he was during his lifetime guided by the *hadith* of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.), who said: "*Allah*

does not like any drop, more than the drop of blood shed, in His way." And also, *"Above every virtue, there is another virtue, but there is no virtue higher than being killed in the way of Allah."*

Simply said, Imam Khomeini passed away resisting U.S. imperialism that once controlled the national wealth of Iran through the subservient dynastic leaders, whose materialistic greed left only the people of Iran deprived, miserable and agonizing until the success of the Islamic Revolution in 1979. The dawn of Renaissance in Iran that time after the immense sacrifice of the people of Iran under Imam Khomeini ensured symbolically the perpetuation of the myth of Karbala that its political content has made it a powerful emotional cry against tyranny and oppression. To summing up, *"Islam is reborn after every Karbala,"* according to an Urdu poet.

II – ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN – THE BEGINNING

Islamic moral consciousness was unheard of in Iran for a long period before the ascension of Imam Ruhollah Khomeini into power as the most revered spiritual and moral guide of the people of Iran.

It is undisputedly a known phenomenon that from 1979 up to 1989, Imam Khomeini was widely known as the spiritual and political leader of Islamic Iran. He received the Persian title *Ayatullah al-Uzma (*the supreme Ayatullah of the age), achieving the highest status that can be bestowed upon a Shi'i (Shi'te) Muslim for being the true guardian of the Islamic faith.

Imam Khomeini was forced into exile in 1963 because of his opposition to the repressive rule of the Shah (King) Muhammad Reza Pahlevi, son of Reza Shah Pahlevi, who

seized power in a coup in 1921, establishing the Pahlevi dynasty in 1925. The Shah Pahlevi dynasty became increasingly oppressive and unpopular during its reign in Iran. Nonetheless it was supported by the U.S. government since the tyrannical regime served completely the strategic interest of the latter.

While in exile in Turkey, Iraq and France, Imam Khomeini emerged as the prominent leader of the majority of the Iranian people opposed to the Pahlevi regime. After the popular people's revolution characterized by massive street demonstrations forced Shah Pahlevi and his family to flee the country in 1979, Imam Khomeini returned home to become the most revered leader of the new Islamic Republic of Iran. The Islamic Revolution of Iran also awakened the oppressed humanity of the world to the fortitude, strength and greatness of Ayatullah Khomeini to cleanse the society of Iran from the fallacy and decadence of western securalism and materialism embodied by the Pahlevi dynastic rule installed and propped up by US imperialism and other western powers.

The brutish intervention of foreign powers, like the United States of American, to subvert the sovereignty of Iran and other Third World countries during this early period in Asia is what the Cuban leader, Fidel Castro pointed out during the occasion of the closing ceremony of the first International Congress on Culture and Development, held in Havana in June 1999. The Cuban nationalist leader stated:

"The United States, captain and leader of the doctrines fostered by NATO, wants to sweep away the foundations of national sovereignty. It simply wants to take possession of the markets and natural resources of the Third World countries including those that were part of the former Soviet Union, like Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and others, while it is already almost the master of the great oil reserves of the

Caspian sea. It wants to play the role of a new Roman worldwide super-empire which, of course, will last much less than the Roman Empire and the reach of its ambitions and its clumsiness; and it will meet with universal resistance."

...The empire's pretexts? Ah, humanitarian reasons! Human rights is one of the reasons they give for which it is necessary to liquidate sovereignty and internal conflicts that must be resolved with 'smart' bombs and missiles." (Fidel Castro, *On Imperialist Globalization,* 1999)

Since 1979, acting as the leading light and guide of the people of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini was compelled to lead the people of Iran in a bitter war against Iraq. Under the late President Saddam Hussein, Iraq invaded Iran in September 1980. It is believed that the reason why the late Saddam Hussein was helped by the American government to become president of Iraq was in order to wage war against Iran on behalf of the American government. Apparently, the U.S. government could not easily forget its humiliation related to the "U.S. Embassy hostage crisis" in Teheran in 1979 immediately after its sinister plan of returning the despised Shah Pahlevi to power in Iran was uncovered. With the death of Shah Pahlevi in exile in 1980, the U.S. Embassy workers were released on January, 1981.

The Iran-Iraq war lasted for eight years, inflicting massive damage and high casualties on both Islamic countries. Iraq was supported by America and other western powers, as well as by the Islamic countries beholden to the U.S. government. Nonetheless, the 8-year long Iran-Iraq war only proved the moral and spiritual strength of Ayatollah Khomeini, and the love and reverence of the people of Iran for the spiritual leader as guardian of the faith and supreme religious leader. In time of distress and difficulties, the people of Iran found an

inspirational leader in Imam Khomeini, who also inspired the oppressed Islamic people throughout the world.

In 1989, the first grand Imam of the Islamic Republic of Iran breathed his last to return inevitably to the Creator. Never in modern history has humanity witnessed such sanctified and expressive solemn mourning as shown publicly by the people of Iran over a humble and simple holistic leader, whose love and compassion for the people and Islamic nation of Iran has inspired the succeeding Iranian leaders to chart their own destiny and posterity in accordance with the tenets of Islam.

Ayatollah Khomeini was succeeded by Imam Ali Khamenei in 1989 as *faqih* (guardian of the faith or the supreme religious leader).

III – IMAM KHOMEINI'S VIRTUES ON HUMANISM AND MYSTICISM

The inner thoughts and caring heart of Ayatollah Khomeini to preserve the Islamic faith and to serve the Iranian people is as compassionate as his love and passion to serve the Almighty Allah. Throughout his life as spiritual and progressive leader of the Islamic nation of Iran, he passionately believed that to be more of service to the people is to be closest to the Lord Almighty because a Muslim can only expect love and respect from his own kind if he loves and pleases dearly and deeply his Creator. He is consciously in agreement with the wisdom of the old that the wisest of all men is one who knows well and is closest to the Lord Almighty.

Indeed, Imam Khomeini was always inspired and morally guided by the words of wisdom of Caliph Ali ibn Abi

Talib, who eloquently articulated:

"Have you fully realized what Islam is? It is a religion founded on truth. It is a fountain head of learning that several streams of wisdom and knowledge flow from it. It is such a lamp that several lamps will be lighted from it. It is a set of principles and beliefs which will satisfy every seeker of truth and reality.

Know you all that God has made Islam the most sublime path towards His supreme pleasure and the highest standard of His worship and obedience. He has favored it with noble precepts, exalted principles, unquestionable arguments, unchallengeable supremacy and undeniable wisdom.

It is up to you to maintain the eminence and dignity granted to it by the Lord, to follow it sincerely, to do justice to its articles of faith and belief to obey implicitly its tenets and orders and to give it the proper place in your lives."

As an ideal human being, Imam Khomeini is an exceptionally different and rare kind of man, who does not hesitate to share the misery and difficulties of his fellow human beings. The humanism of Ayatollah Khomeini centered on humankind and human values, exalting free will and man's superiority to the rest of nature. He is of the firm belief that the salvation of man is completely guaranteed if his total life is devoted to the service of his people, nation, and God Almighty.

What then is the mystical perception of Imam Khomeini? Can his practiced mysticism be an influencing factor on another man?

It is discernable that during his lifetime as spiritual guardian of Islamic Iran, the transcendental union of Imam Khomeini with the Almighty Allah, the Merciful and Beneficent, is vouchsafed by his devotional prayers for forgiveness and gratitude every moment of his life.

Thus, his being blessed by Allah is strongly felt and witnessed by how the people of Iran loved and revered him.

In truth, beyond Iran, the Muslims in other horizons, particularly those in the Bangsamoro homeland of Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan, and possibly in other Asian nations, were also inspired by the selfless genuine leadership exemplified by Ayatollah Khomeini. The quality of leadership he practiced can only be emulated by another man whose mystical perception in life is derived from being a true servant of the Almighty Allah. Strictly a disciplined and committed seeker of truth, a prized pupil of the *Ahadtih* and *Sunnan* of the last Messenger of Allah, Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.), the most outstanding Iranian leader in modern history, the venerated Imam Khomeini could be worthy to have possessed the qualities of leadership as described by Ibn Khaldun, acknowledged as the greatest Arab historian who developed one of the earliest non-religious philosophies of history.

The masterpiece contribution – *Muqaddimah* – of Ibn Khaldun provided the modern world with a list of the qualities of a leader:

"Desire for goodness and good qualities such as generosity, forgiveness of error, tolerance towards the weak, hospitality towards guests, the support of dependents, patience in adverse circumstances, faithful fulfillment of obligations, liberality with money for the preservation of honour, respect for the religious law, and for the scholars who are learned in

it...great respect for old men and teachers, acceptance of the truth in response to those who call for it, fairness to and care for those who are too weak to take care of themselves, attentiveness to the complaints of supplicants...avoidance of fraud, these are the qualities of leadership."

It is noted that all these qualities elucidated by the foremost Muslim historian are enveloped in the Islamic value system and were fully reflected in the life of the Prophet of Islam, Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.), an exemplary and extraordinary leader who should be emulated by all conscious Muslims.

Judging from the years of service rendered by Ayatollah Khomeini to the people and Islamic nation of Iran, he is certainly in the forefront of the modern Muslim leaders to have emulated and closely followed the footprints of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.), the Messenger of Allah to all mankind.

On this note, his mystical perception and belief that Islam carries within it the seeds of renewal and revolution, and Shi'ism, in particular, may be seen as a revolution within a revolution only contributes to his immortalization. Further, he has inspired other men to follow his solemnity and sincerity to love passionately their fellow humankind, country and God Almighty.

IV – CONCLUSION

IMAM KHOMEINI'S SEARCH FOR THE IDEAL

Imam Khomeini is surely well aware that the saints and scholars of Shi'ism are revolutionaries, who are always exhorting and pointing towards the ideal. They either live in

or are inspired by Iran. To the Persians of the past and now, learning is a priceless commodity. A hierarchy ranking on the basis of population and scholastic attainment is recognized: *mullah, mujtahid, Ayatullah*, sign of God, and *Ayatullah al-Uzma*, the supreme Ayatullah of the age. (Akbar S. Ahmed, *Discovering Islam*, 1988)

Having gained the title – "Ayatullah al-Uzma" – Imam Khomeini assumed the authority to state the case for Shi'ism. Writing in, *Islam and Revolution,* 1981, he clearly explained:

"The Shi'i school of thought, which is the prevalent one in Iran, has had certain distinguishing characteristics from the very beginning. While other schools have preached submission to rulers even if they are corrupt and oppressive, Shi'ism has preached resistance against them and denounced them as illegitimate. From the outset, Shi'is have opposed oppressive governments."

Painstakingly envisioning a noble ideal for Islamic Iran, the Shi'i striving for the right goal is reflected in a central feature of the Islamic constitution in present Iran. The *Vilayat-e-fiqih*, supreme over government, a post held by Imam Khomeini, need not be from Iran as long as he is a good Muslim. The Islamic principle is superior to the national one. This is a unique provision, and not even the most advanced Western democracy could match its spirit, according to Akbar S. Ahmed.

The question now comes to mind, why was Imam Khomeini accorded the title and responsibility to supremacy over and above the civil and military government. The answer to this is simply premised on the reality that his mystical personality is beyond reproach because he is expected to fulfill his social responsibility based on compassion and true justice as always enshrined by his every actuation to serve faithfully

and sincerely his people, and Islamic nation as guided by the Almighty God.

Governing and leading an anti-dynastic and corruption-free concept of governance, Imam Khomeini is sure to have a positive impact on any man who wants to emulate his kind of leadership, leaving behind a legacy to be loved and respected by the people, and eventually to gain the pleasure of living forever in Paradise as promised by the Almighty God.

In the final analysis, any Muslim or any man for that matter can assume the role distinctively played by Imam Khomeini if he fervently follows his footprints in history – knowing well and closely communicating with his Creator throughout his life while staying temporarily in this world. This is the mystical perception of Imam Khomeini that would certainly help any man wishing to live peacefully in the way of the Almighty Allah permanently.

Revitalizing Islamic Thought in the Light of *Tasawwuf*

Kamaruddin Bin Alawi Mohammad

Summary:

Imam al-Ghazzali is one of the most celebrated Iranian Islamic scholars in the Muslim world. Being a famous Sufi Master, his life and work are so intimately connected. This alludes to the saying of another famous Iranian Sufi Master by the name of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi:

"He who does not taste, does not know."

In fact, what Maulana Rumi meant by "tasting" is actually rendered by Imam Ghazzali as "witnessing" At first impression, the two terminologies appear to have different meanings, but seen at least from a scholarly approach, both mean one and the same thing, and that is "experiencing" thus it is called "Mystical experiences".

As far as Islamic Mysticism is concerned, the significant relationship between man and God revolves around these so-

called Mystical experiences. In other words, the relationship between man and God is so deep it goes beyond the logical apprehension of knowledge. Its depth is only accessible through mystical reflection of the Reality of knowledge.

In relation to Mystical experiences, the life and work of Imam al-Ghazzali gives a clear picture of how a man of orthodoxy dramatically evolved into one of the great Iranian Sufi Masters. In fact, even his great works in Orthodoxy, Speculative theology, and Philosophy are evidently imbued with the essence of Islamic Mysticism.

Thus, it is of significance to mention that Imam Khomeini (R.H), the grand and late Leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran; and whom we personally consider as one of the great 20th century Muslim Saints, possessed such a high standard of spirituality in Islam. One possible reason is that he belongs to a group of pious people that have had been elevated by Allah just like Imam al-Ghazzali, Maulana Jalaludin Rumi, and Sultanul Awliyah Abdulqadir Jilani into a place for which every man must strive.

Imam al-Ghazzali: Revitalizing Islamic Thought in the Light of *Tasawwuf* [1]

I. Who is al-Ghazzali?

"*Al-Ghazali* [2] is most famous for his contributions in the field of Islamic thought. He is also known as Algazel in the West. His full name is Ibn Muhammad al-Tusi al-Shafi'i al-Ghazali.[3] He was born in *1058 C.E.* [4]in *Tus, Khorasan,*

Iran[5]."[6] "He is surnamed as "Islam's Convincing Proof"; "The Ornament of faith"; considered a *Mujaddid*[7]; and reckoned at par with the Four Imams. There have been many philosophers and [theologian] scholars in Islam and other religions, but the peculiarity of Al-Ghazali is that *his life and work are so intimately connected*[8] that it is difficult to separate one from the other."[9]

Al-Ghazzali received his early education in Tus. He was sent to Madrasah where he first learned jurisprudence under "a pious Sufi friend"[10]. Al-Ghazzali's education included learning the Qur'an and Hadiths, listening to stories about saints, and memorizing mystical love poems."[11]"[Along the way] his father died[12] [but his] last wishes were religiously carried out – further education for young Al-Ghazzali.... he was put under the tuition of Ahmad bin Muhammad Razkhani, a renowned teacher of Islamic law. After that he proceeded to Jurjan...to continue his studies in jurisprudence[13] under Imam Abu Nasar, a *famous divine*[14]."[15] "[Thus he] had the opportunity of getting [higher] education in the prevalent curriculum at [*Nizamiyyah University*[16] in] Nishapur, [Baghdad under]"[17] "the most erudite scholar of his time...*Al-Juwayni*[18]".

"Soon he acquired a high standard of scholarship in [theology,] and philosophy."[19] "Another [noted] area of study which engaged al-Ghazzali's mind during his stay in Naishapur was Sufism. [With the background that he had previously gained, al-Ghazzali] studied [further] its theory and practices under the guidance of *al-Farmadhi*[20]."[21] "A year after the death of his Sufi Master, al-Farmadhi [and on the same year of *al-Juwayni's death*[22]], he joined the court of Nizam-al-Mulk, omnipotent vizier of the Seljuq Sultan Malikshah, and became a close friend of the vizier. Nizam-al-Mulk appointed him

teacher of *Shafi'ite jurisprudence*[23] in the Madrasah Nizamiyyah of Baghdad in 484/ 1091."[24] He collected around himself a great number of students. Later on, he became an intellectual of the court and this matured his political ideas.

After a few years, al-Ghazzali was faced by a *great dilemma*[25]. In particular, it was a crisis of establishing the right relationship between reason and *intellectual intuition*[26]. *Al-Ghazzali claimed*[27] that he was delivered from the crisis not through rational arguments or rational proofs but as the result of a "light" which God cast into his breast. He strongly insisted the link of this "state" to his being a Sufi. In fact, according to him, "the Sufis were masters of states and not purveyors of words...[Furthermore,] he came to realize that there is a great difference between theoretical knowledge and *realized knowledge*[28]...and that his only hope of attaining certitude and beatitude in the afterlife lay in following the way of the Sufis."[29] Thus, he, upon the resolution of the crisis, proceeded to undertake a thorough study of both the Theoretical knowledge and Realized knowledge. He applied himself first to *Kalam*[30] while still at Nishapur."[31] "Having studied Kalam and written several works on the discipline, he devoted himself to the study of philosophy [and wrote about it too]"[32]

"So forceful was his argument in the favor of [Islamic] religion [as a complete source of Knowledge] that he was accused of damaging the cause of philosophy [as an independent science]."[33] In other words, his polemics against philosophy "broke its back" and in fact, brought the career of philosophy, as a discipline distinct from *gnosis*[34] and theology, to an end in the Arabic part of the Islamic world."[35]

"Then in his autobiography, al-Ghazzali claimed that...about six months after the completion of the *Tahafut*[36], he experienced [another extraordinary state]...because of his

[thorough] study of Sufism."[37] "[And because of this,] he [temporarily] gave up his academic pursuits and worldly interests and became a wandering ascetic. In fact, this was [his period] of [higher level of] mystical transformation."[38]

"An era of solitary life, devoted to contemplation and writing then ensued, which led to [further] authorship of a number of everlasting books."[39] "He did not attend anymore to philosophy [instead he]...applied himself totally to Sufism and the renewal of Islamic orthodoxy."[40] In fact, many scholars [in the field of religion] argued that al-Ghazzali achieved the reconciliation of Sufism and orthodoxy."[41] "He [occasionally returned to his family and delivered sermons] in different seats of learning such as Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Damascus [and]… attracted crowds of eager listeners."[42] "Al-Ghazzali's eleven year period of spiritual retreat had [further] convinced him that the Sufis are those who uniquely follow the way to God, their mode of life is the best of all, their way the most direct of ways, and their ethic the purest."[43]

By 1106 A.D., he assumed public teaching at Nishapur for at least three years. Then, somewhere around 1110, he returned to his home in Tus. At Tus, he set-up a Madrasah for students of theology and a *Khanqah*[44] for the Sufi adepts. Here, he spent the rest of his life as a religious teacher and a Sufi master. Every moment was filled with study teaching, and spiritual devotion until *his death*[45] on Monday, the 14th of Jumada II, 505/ December 18, 1111 at the age of fifty-three.

II. Significant Premises of Al-Ghazzali's Islamic Thought:

Orthodox theology:

Al-Ghazzali's foundation on jurisprudence was inclined towards the *Shafi'i madhab* [46] thereby making it the backbone of his theological remarks and practices.

[He]...recognized the jurists as the most important religious group from the point of view of the general welfare and goodness of the individual and the community in the life of the world.[47] [And accordingly,] in relation to the path to God, the jurists are analogous to "those who build and maintain houses of refuge and provide facilities along the way to Mecca to the pilgrimage."[48]

Highly critical of the legalism of many of the jurists, [he]...sought through [his] work to reassert the supremacy of the spiritual life within the framework of the Shari'ah and to revive the spiritual teachings embodied in the latter. Likewise, he criticized those esoterics who sought to belittle or negate the injunctions of the Shari'ah.[49]

It is this significant characteristic that ...often provided for the orthodox a "middle way" between opposite extremes, which is coherent with the teachings of the Prophet (S.A.W.). Both depart from obeying the law and the juridical prescriptions of religion, which are important because they have the risk of determining social relations.[50]

Speculative theology:

Al-Ghazzali described the *Mutakallimun*[51] as those who claim themselves as men of independent reasoning and intellectual speculation. This characterization of the

Mutakallimun as *ahl al-ra'y*[52] was principally related to their generally positive stand on the use of reason in understanding articles of faith.[53]

However, [he]...was highly critical of certain aspects of the methodology of *Kalam*[54]. He considered the methods of [common] Kalam to be defective both to satisfy his [personal] thirst for the knowledge of the reality of things and to inflict intellectual defeat on the opponents of Kalam. He wrote:

> *"...They [i.e., the mutakallimun] relied on premises which they took over from their adversaries, being compelled to admit them either by uncritical acceptance*[55]*...or by simple acceptance deriving from the Qur'an and the Traditions.*[56]

By the adversaries of Kalam, [he]...meant the philosophers. Later authorities like Shahrastani, Maimonides, and Ibn Khaldun confirmed his portrayal of Kalam, as a discipline that had become influenced by [Philosophy].[57]

[Yet he] accepted the fact that some people might find their thirst for knowledge and certitude quenched by the science of Kalam. But as far a he was concerned, Kalam could not deliver the certitude that he sought. [He]...seemed to be asserting that the spiritual and the intellectual needs of man are not the same for all individuals.[58]

Thus [he]...criticized those who claimed that "deviating from the doctrine of al-Ash'ari by even so much as a palm's width was *unbelief*[59] and that differing from him in even a trivial matter was error and perdition.[60]

The significance of [his]...position [as far as Speculative theology is concerned] is that he blamed both the person who is blindly subjugated to the principle of authority, and the person who exceeds in trusting reason. Both depart from obeying the law and the juridical prescriptions of religion, which are important because they have the task of determining social relations.[61]

Accordingly, this undertaking is performed through education, but it is not wise to instruct the laity in it just as they are instructed in jurisprudence and interpretation. For this is like drugs and jurisprudence is like food: the harm of food is not [as] dangerous [as]...the harm of drugs...[62]

As a result of his polemics against common Speculative theology, [he]...reconstructed Ash'arite Kalam into a dialectic basis of his religious revival, making it the actual framework of his...reflections.[63] [As such,] he subordinated Reason to Revealed faith [– basing both in the Islamic law and jurisprudence as Ulama; and basing both in Mystical intuition and *Dhawq*[64] as a Sufi.] In fact, [his]...treatment of Kalam marks a new turning point in the history of that discipline.[65]

[On one hand, the importance of a *Revelation-bounded Speculative theology*[66] for him is] to champion orthodoxy by a systematic discussion...designed to disclose the deceptions introduced by the contriving innovators contrary to traditional orthodoxy.[67]

Philosophy[68]:

Al-Ghazzali described the *Falasifah*[69] as those who claim that they are "men of logic and apodeictic demonstration".[70]

As such, they rely on reason to know all things and that; consequently, Falasafah ought to be identified with rational truths or human wisdom rather than with revealed *Hikmah*[71]. It is on the basis of this presupposition concerning Falasafah that al-Ghazzali carried out his criticism of the philosophers.[72]

[Thus he]...denied the "philosophic" method of its competence to comprehend metaphysical truths. A significant part of the philosopher's knowledge concerning such things as prophecy and spiritual psychology is simply borrowed truths taken over from prophets and saints. [He]...attempted to prove this limitation of the "philosophic" method by means of that method itself.[73]

He maintained that the metaphysical sciences of the philosophers are plagued with errors and inconsistencies precisely because in this domain they could not carry out apodictic demonstration according to the conditions they had postulated in logic. These are errors and inconsistencies, said al-Ghazzali, so that it is not possible to arrive with certainty at metaphysical truths through the "philosophic" method.[74] In other words, "Philosophy can not assure the truth because it does not produce certainty."[75]

[He attempted, in one-way or the other,] "to disillusion those who think too highly of the philosophers [to the extent of] consider[ing] them to be infallible"[76] Accordingly, the claim of Reason to comprehend those truths independently of Revelation must be denied. The denial of the claim... [is] affirmed by emphasizing the negative aspects of Reason.[77]

Relative to this, Revelation based in the Holy Qur'an is explained with certitude by another form of Revelation based on the "Love of God" according to a Sufi perspective.

According to al-Ghazzali, this "True knowledge is the consequence of *illumination*[78], [and] of a divine inspiration. Moreover according to al-Ghazzali:

> *"When God takes care of the heart [of his beloved]...the breast lightens and the mystery of the spiritual realm*[79] *is revealed, and the veil of error vanishes and the reality of divine things shines in the heart...Once the heart becomes owner of truth, the mind then obtains certainty: the necessary truths of the intellect became once more accepted, as I regained confidence in their certainty and trustworthy character. This did not come about by systematic demonstration or marshaled argument, but by the light which God [,] Most High, casts into my breast."*[80]

On the other hand, [he]...wished to draw the "legitimate" boundaries of Falasafah that would be acceptable to orthodoxy defined by [his new] Kalam. The believers, he said, should not entertain any negative attitude or prejudice towards the philosophical sciences except with regards to the errors and heresies...Thus; he reproached those Muslims who opposed the legitimate philosophical sciences – that is, those which are not in conflict with any religious principle – just because these sciences have been ascribed to the philosophers.[81]

Furthermore, "Legitimate philosophy" is enumerated as the *Intellectual sciences*[82]:

A. Mathematics: arithmetic; geometry; astronomy and astrology; and music

B. Logic

C. Physics or the Natural sciences: medicine, meteorology, mineralogy, alchemy

D. The sciences of beings beyond nature or Metaphysics: ontology; knowledge of the divine essence, attributes, and activities; knowledge of simple substances, that is, the intelligences and angelic substances; knowledge of the subtle world; the science of prophecy and of the phenomenon of sainthood including the science of dreams; theurgy-this science employs terrestrial forces to produce effects which appear as supernatural

Note: proper treatment of these sciences is necessary [, according to al-Ghazzali, in order] to demonstrate [its] extent of validity... [as defined by Kalam,]...in the light of Sufi epistemology.[83]

Tasawwuf:

"Al-Ghazzali described the Sufis as those who claim that they alone enter the Divine presence, and as men of *mystic vision*[84] and *illumination*[85]. The Sufi is thus presented as *an intimate witness of [God's Unity]*[86]. The Sufi way of witness is described as authentic vision and the unveiling of the mysteries"[87] through purification of the heart.

The Sufi's mystic vision refers to sapiential knowledge that is "realized knowledge", which is inseparable from the transformation of the knower's being. Certitude derived from "realized knowledge" is the highest kind of certitude, which in Qur'anic terminology is called *haqq al-yaqin*[88]. To perceive a truth inwardly through *contemplation*[89] is to see through the eye of the truth of certainty, since "contemplation is more real and clearer than seeing with the (physical) eye. Realized

knowledge is free from error and doubt, because it is not based on conjecture or mental concepts but on the heart's vision of spiritual truths. In the Sufi perspective, the *heart*[90] is the real key to sapiential knowledge.[91]

According to al-Ghazzali, although the heart of every man is created to know the "invisible divine world," what we find generally is that "man has veiled it by his lusts and worldly preoccupations and he has ceased to see with it." In other words, the eye of the heart is blinded by passion so that there is a veil between the heart and the spiritual world. What the Sufis seek to do is to remove the veil from the heart. In Sufism, there is a whole science associated with this goal, comprising theory as well as practice.[92]

The purification of the heart [through profuse *Dhikir*[93], in addition to common forms of worship], when it is efficacious, results in a transmutation of the very substance of the soul of the adept so that he becomes an accomplished Sufi. In his newly realized mode of being, he becomes a *witness*[94] to the Divine Truth.[95]

Since al-Ghazzali was himself a distinguished Sufi, he was able to give an authentic and authoritative account of the Sufi methodology. As far as the way to the knowledge of the true reality of things was concerned, al-Ghazzali considered the Sufi method the most excellent of methods, and the Sufis the most excellent of the knower sof the Truth for he himself found the light of certainty in the spiritual path of the Sufis.[96] Verily, one does not know when one does not taste.

III. Critique:

Al-Ghazzali in his stage as an orthodox theologian utilized the teaching of *Imam Shafi'i*[97]. His devotional

practices and instructions, along with his juristic undertakings, reflect the simple yet firm stand of the Shafi'i Mazhab. In fact, he became a judge and a professor almost at the same time, utilizing Shafi'i jurisprudence.

But his being an orthodox never became a hindrance towards his development as a great Islamic scholar. He remained "open-minded" yet firm as far as the implementation of Islamic law and jurisprudence was concerned.

In other words, the encapsulated orthodoxy of his views set a notable limitation just like of that of Imam Shafi'i. He maintained a "middle path" between opposite extremes with regards to personal conviction as far as the search for Truth is concerned.

It should be made clear that between orthodox theology and philosophy, there is what we call Speculative theology such as that of the Ash'arites. Thus, when we specifically speak about the speculative veracity of al-Ghazzali's ideas, we find him inclined toward that of the Speculative theology rather than that of the philosopher's speculative investigation. But as for the Source, he is uniquely different from that of the two, since both recognized and vied for the so-called superiority of reason, to a lesser or greater degree. On the context of al-Ghazzali's Kalam, he strongly emphasized the veracity of *Revelation*[98], either in orthodox perspective or Sufi's perspective.

And it is also worth mentioning that al-Ghazzali's significant place in the field of philosophy is more on utilizing knowledge as a "strategic gesture" in order to establish himself as a competent critic of philosophy.

It is an established fact that al-Ghazzali utilized

Tasawwuf as his foundation in reviving and criticizing all forms of knowledge. And as far as the issue of revivalism is concerned, al-Ghazzali as a Sufi spent his time every now and then in solitary seclusion *either known to the public or not*[99]. As a consequence of this selfless undertaking fueled by Love of God, he attained "God-realization" in its purest state.

It is in such a "consequence" that al-Ghazzali was able to internalize the true knowledge of God in his very being. In fact according to him, as we have mentioned previously, "to realize spiritual knowledge is to transform one's soul in conformity with that knowledge so that knowledge and being are one."

In this connection, we humbly opine that Tasawwuf speaks of intuition as a vehicle of True knowledge from Allah as inspired by Love. By definition, intuition through love is a providential apprehension of the Truth. It is a form of apprehension emanating from the Divine source to the human intellectual faculty without aid of *reasoning*[100]

Furthermore, to make the subject matter more clearly, it should be noted that Divine revelation is of two kinds – *Divine inspiration*[101] and *Spiritual illumination*[102]. Divine inspiration is exclusively for the Prophets such as the one which inspired Mohammad (S.A.W.). This known Revelation is none other than Qur'an, which is the very essence of the present form "Book of the Holy Qur'an". Along with Qur'an, Hadith ul-Qudsi is also considered as Divine inspiration.

On the other hand, Spiritual illumination is a kind Revelation which inspires a "Sufi's heart". And of course, this kind of Revelation perfectly coincides with that of Mohammad's (S.A.W.) Divine inspiration, for both have the

same source, which is Allah. And it is worth mentioning that the former is but an elaboration only of the latter for the purpose of *literal interpretation*[103] and *esoteric explanation*[104] in its purest state.

Far from being common, the kind of knowledge bestowed upon al-Ghazzali's being is a sort of "Science of Revivalism". This "Science" is in a form of Kalam treated under Tasawwuf thus we call it Kalam ut-Tasawwuf. It has been used intensively in dealing with all forms of inquiry, including of course the revivalism of the above-mentioned fields of sciences. But what's interesting in this kind of Kalam is that it treats a particular science using its own peculiar *languages*[105]. And as we have mentioned earlier, al-Ghazzali's Kalam insisted on the veracity of Revelation rather than Reason, despite the fact that common Kalam is inherently designed in accordance with the *latter claim*[106].

IV. Conclusion:

The Significant Differences between the Sciences dealt with in al-Ghazzali's "Revitalization of Islamic Thought":

The difference between a *Theologian*[107] and a Sufi with regards to *worship*[108] as the "Purpose of Creation" is that the former acted accordingly with *Fear of God*[109], being an interpretation of Taqwa. But for the latter, Taqwa means "Love of God". The Sufis believed that since *God is the Most Merciful and the Most Benevolent*[110], He deserves to be loved and not to be feared. Thus every form of worship is but an expression of love towards God.

The difference between a *Philosopher*[111] and a Sufi with regards to "Intuition" as the purest form of knowledge is that the former consciously claimed its ownership.

On the contrary, the Sufis believe that all forms of knowledge come from a single Source just like "rays of Sunlight" and "Sun as the Source". They believe that "intuition" is itself the "rays of Sunlight". All mankind is spiritually illuminated with this "light", with their *hearts*[112] as the "mirror". It is actually a sort of *static-kinetic mechanism*[113].

In other words, the "heart of man" serves as a "mirror" wherein the "primary ray of light" comes directly from the "Source" and the "secondary ray of light", which is actually a reflection from the "mirror", reflects to the field. The "primary ray of light" is the "Intuition" itself while the "secondary ray of light" is commonly known as "Reason". But it should be noted that the state of "Intuition" upon reaching the surface of the "mirror" is what we called "*Intellect*[114]".

Thus, Intellect in itself is as pure as Intuition, being a source of certitude. It only succumbs to corruption or becomes susceptible to error when it assumes the state of being "Reason". How could it be like that? Isn't Reason analogous to Intellect?

In layman's terminology, Reason and Intellect are the same but for the philosophers and the Sufis, Reason has its distinct characteristic that makes it thereby different from Intellect. And this characteristic is the inherent ability to choose "between right and wrong" thus having the tendency to acquire error.

On one hand, Intellect is not susceptible to anything erroneous because it remains attached to the "mirror" and does not reflect the *field*[115]. Now, the question is, how could "Reason" *revive*[116] its pure state just like when it is still attached to the "mirror" as "Intellect"?

For the Sufis, the heart as a "mirror" must be purified from all forms of *impurities*[117]. For a heart with impurities on its surface could cause the glow of the secondary ray of light to lessen thus becoming dim. Now, how could a dim light in a dark field distinguish between a marble and a pearl? Thus when it is already purified, "Reason", as the secondary ray of light, could now clearly distinguish right from wrong. Moreover, the intention should be "for the sake of God alone", no more, no less. In fact, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) once said:

"There is a part in your body wherein when it is purified, everything would be purified. Verily, that is the heart."

> Furthermore, the difference between a Philosopher and a Sufi as far as the concept of purification is concerned, distinctly lies within the "Intention". The intention of the former is to purify themselves from impurities of the heart in order to attain the Truth for their *own sake*[118] – either to be known as a learned man; to attain a high pedestal in society; or for the sake of personal attachment to knowledge thus becoming a "Lover of Knowledge". This "intention" is "noble" from a philosopher's perspective or even from a common man's perspective but for the Sufis, this is still a "great veil" between man and the *Truth*[119]

In contrast, the intention of the Sufis is to purify themselves from the impurities of the heart in order to attain the Truth for the sake of the Truth alone. They neither intend

to be known as a learned man, for it is only Allah Who is "Knowledgeable"; nor to attain a high pedestal in society, for it is only Allah Who is "High"; nor for the sake of personal attachment to knowledge but rather "a personal attachment to the Owner of the Knowledge thus becoming a "Lover of Allah". This "noble intention" alludes to the fact that Sufis purified their "whole being"; in order to attain "Absolute ignorance in the state of Annihilation" for it is only Allah that deserves to remain "Existent".

Allah Knows Best!

(Footnotes)

[1] Islamic Mysticism; Sufism; Irfan

[2] From the Arabic term Ghazzal – wool spinner; this is the source of their livelihood (from his grandfather to his father); although generally known as al-Ghazzali, he was sometimes referred to in traditional sources as al-Shafi'i,and al-Naishapuri (Arabic: al-Nisaburi); his original name was simply **Muhammad**

[3] This name was given later apparently because he had s son of that name who died in infancy

[4] **450 A.H.**

[5] A small town in Northeastern Persia, now in ruins, was then a flourishing settlement with water, trees and mineral deposits in the neighboring mountain; used to be a famous city and a celebrated birthplace of a large number of Muslim philosophers and men of letters

[6] http://www.unhas.ac.id/~rhiza/saintis/ghazali.htnl

[7] Islamic Revivalist

[8] According to Maulana Rumi, **"He, who does not taste, does not know."**- An inherent characteristic of a Sufi

[9] Sheikh, Saeed M., "Studies in Muslim Philosophy", 3rdEdition, Lahore: Ashraf Press, p. 125

[10] See al-Farisi's Life of al-Ghazzali in R.J. McCarthy, op. cit., p. xv

[11] See M. Smith, al-Ghazzali, The Mystic, p.11

[12] http://www.unhas.ac.id/~rhiza/saintis/ghazali.html

[13] Al-Sukbi, Tabaqat al-Shafiah al-Kubra, Cairo, 1324/ 1906, pp. 37, 111, 103, and 104

[14] A famous Sufi Master

[15] S.M. Rahman, "Al-Ghazzali", Islamic Review, Volume 15 (1927), Lahore, p.328

[16] Was recognized as one of the most reputed institutions of learning in the golden era of Muslim history

[17] http://www.unhas.ac.id/~rhiza/saintis/ghazali.html

[18] Known as **Imam 'ul-Haramain**– had the distinction of having lectured for years at the two Holy Cities (Medina and Mecca); thought Al-Ghazzali the sciences of Fiqh and Asharite Kalam; Source: S.M/ Rahman, "Al-Ghazzal", Islamic Review, Vol.15 (1927), Lahore, p.329

[19] http://www.unhas.ac.id/~rhiza/saintis/ghazali.html

[20] Al-Farmidhi (died 477/ 1084), another famous native of Tus and one of al-Ghazzali's teachers in Sufism

[21] D.B. McDonald, The Name of al-Ghazzali, **"Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society"**, 1906, p. 89

[22] Al-Ghazzali was appointed al-Juwayni's teaching assistant and continued to teach until the latter died in 478/ 1085

[23] Served as the "Foundation" of his devotional practices and instructions; and that includes his juristic undertakings

[24] Massimo Campanini, "Al-Ghazzali", Early Islamic Philosophers in the East, p.260

[25] His initial encounter with the methodological claims of the Orthodoxy, Mutakallimun, and Philosophers contributed to his personal crisis in the field of **Knowledge**.

[26] According to al-Ghazzali, intellectual intuition is symbolized by "light" which God casts into the breast (**Heart of man**); see al-Munqidh, p. 67

[27] The key to the greater part of knowledge says al-Ghazzali, is the light which God casts into man's heart

[28] To realize spiritual knowledge is to transform one's soul in conformity with that knowledge

so that knowledge and being are one

[29] Al-Munqidh, sec. 84, p. 91

[30] It should be noted that during this stage, al-Ghazzali critically studied Kalam under the "light of Sufism", thus his Kalam is absolutely unique and different as compared to the common

Kalam utilized by the Mutakallimun such as Asharites, Mu'tazilites, and others

[31] W.R.W. Gardner, "An Account of al-Ghazzzali's Life and Works", p.38

[32] Al-Munqidh, sec. 27, p. 70

[33] http://www.unhas.ac.id/~rhiza/saintis/ghazali.html

[34] **Ilm ul-Ma'rifa**

[35] Saeed Husain Nasr, "Islamic Life and Thought", p.72

[36] Al-Ghazzali's 'Magnum Opus" in the field of philosophy

[37] Al-Munqidh, sec. 81, p. 90

[38] S.M. Rahman, "Al-Ghazzali", Islamic Review, Volume 15 (1927), Lahore, p.328

[39] http://www.unhas.ac.id/~rhiza/saintis/ghazali.html

[40] Massimo Campanini, "Al-Ghazzali", Early Islamic Philosophers in the East, p.264
[41] *Ibid.*
[42] http://www.unhas.ac.id/~rhiza/saintis/ghazali.html
[43] Al-Munqidh, sec. 94, p. 94; again, "Verily, he who does not taste, does not [truly] know!"
[44] **A Sufi convent**
[45] On the **Folklore**surrounding his death, see M. Smith, "Al-Ghazzali, the Mystic", pp. 36
[46] One of the "Four Islamic School of Thought"
[47] Life, Works, and Significance of al-Ghazzali, "Classification of knowledge," p. 181
[48] *Ibid.*
[49] *Ibid., p. 171*
[50] Massimo Campanini, "Al-Ghazzali", Early Islamic Philosophers in the East, p. 271
[51] **Speculative theologian**
[52] As a legal term in Islamic jurisprudence, **ra'y** connotes the use of reason to produce a well-considered opinion or a sound judgment in legal matters on the basis of explicit textual evidence. More precisely, the term refers to the application of that method of reasoning called qiyas (analogy) in connection with problems of law. According to Ibn Khaldun, Kalam borrowed this method of reasoning from fiqh and applied it to the domain of faith.
[53] Life, Works, and Significance of al-Ghazzali, "Classification of knowledge," p. 183
[54] **Speculative theology; Dialectic theology**
[55] **Taqlid**; also known as **blind following**
[56] *Life, Op. Cit., p. 183*
[57] *Ibid. p. 184*
[58] *Ibid. 185*
[59] **Kufur**
[60] *Life, Op. Cit., p. 199*
[61] Massimo Campanini, "Al-Ghazzali", Early Islamic Philosophers in the East, p. 270
[62] Al-Ghazzali, Foundation of the Articles of Faith, p. 3
[63] *Al-Ghazzali, Op. Cit., p. 206*
[64] **Mystical experiences**
[65] Life, Works, and Significance of al-Ghazzali, "Classification of knowledge," p. 174
[66] Though he at times considered the used of Reason as long as it does not manifest excessiveness, for matters of "safety-ness", he is theoretically and practically inclined to Revelation (Note: later we would discuss in the "Critique" corner of this paper as to what does al-Ghazzali really mean by "Revelation only"

[67] *Life, Op. Cit, p. 174*
[68] **Greek-oriented philosophy– this is what the term PHILOSOPHY in this humble paper mean**
[69] **Philosophy**
[70] *Life, Op. Cit, p. 186*
[71] **Wisdom**
[72] *Life, Op. Cit,* p. 186
[73] *Ibid., p. 187*
[74] *Ibid, p. 187*
[75] Massimo Campanini, "Al-Ghazzali", Early Islamic Philosophers in the East, p. 258
[76] Life, Works, and Significance of al-Ghazzali, "Classification of knowledge," p. 188
[77] *Ibid, p.189*
[78] **Ilham**
[79] **Malakut**
[80] Massimo Campanini, "Al-Ghazzali", Early Islamic Philosophers in the East, p. 259
[81] Life, Works, and Significance of al-Ghazzali, "Classification of knowledge," p. 188
[82] *Ibid,, p.208-209*
[83] *Ibid, p. 209-210*
[84] **Mushahadah**
[85] **Mukashafah**
[86] According to al-Ghazzali, to witness the Divine Presence is to attain the highest possible state of spiritual experience
[87] *Life, Op. Cit., p. 194*
[88] **The truth of certainty**
[89] **Mushahadah**
[90] **Qalb**
[91] *Life, Op. Cit., p. 195*
[92] *Ibid, p. 195*
[93] **Remembrance of Allah**
[94] **Shadid**
[95] *Life, Op. Cit., p. 195*
[96] *Ibid, p. 196*
[97] One of the leading Mazhab or School of Islamic Thought
[98] For the orthodox, the only source of Revelation is Qur'an thereby the explanation of its content lies in **man's reasoning power** such as Qiyaas (analogy), Ijtihad (Independent reasoning), Ijma, and other forms of juristic undertakings; while the Sufis, although they also believe that the only source of manifested Revelation to man is Qur'an, but with regards to the mechanics of explanation, they does not rely on reasoning rather through **another form of Revelation which is "Intellectual intuition" direct from God.**

[99] Sufis always find there way to seclude from the majority every now and then, depending on the **location**– ranging from **'Itikaf** in their own home or in the mosque to as far as secluded areas such as cave or ruin of buildings away from the public...or duration – ranging from **hours** such as late at night (tahajjud prayer) **to years** with occasional visit to public places for the **"sustenance of the family members"**

[100] Reason or reasoning itself is susceptible to corruption since it can be interrupted by negative thoughts (whisper of devil), thus it has a tendency of giving wrong decision; it is what makes a man imperfect in spite being the most perfect creation of God.

[101] **Wahy**

[102] **Ilham**

[103] **Tafsir**

[104] **Ta'wil**

[105] Its own "Stand" with regards to the place of Knowledge in man

[106] Such as Reason is superior to Revelation

[107] Both **Orthodox Theologian** and **Speculative Theologian**

[108] **Ibaadah**

[109] The orthodox interpretation of **Taqwa**

[110] The most commonly uttered "Attribute of God" in the field of Islamic teachings

[111] Speculative theologians also share the same view to a lesser or greater degree

[112] We are referring to the Spiritual state of the heart

[113] Due to its never ending continuity of movement or continuity of Kinetic state, the "Final State " assumes a sort of Static characteristic

[114] This is actually the source of "Conscience"

[115] The **Field** here symbolizes a state wherein "Right and Wrong" are thereby laid down for the purpose of choosing; this is where "Good thought" and "Bad thought" roam; this is the very reason why man should be very careful in decision making for he might "unintentionally" choose "Bad thought" due to a sort of "Ignorance" in him

[116] The "revived state" of Reason is actually what the philosophers refer to as the "Pure Reason"; this is what al-Ghazzali referred to as the *Intellectual intuition*

[117] In Sufi terminology, everything is impurity save Allah; this is the concept of "Self-annihilation" where everything is annihilated such as all forms of evils, and "I-ness" being the "Throne of Ignorance" in man

[118] "Own sake" here may mean "to sharpen the power of rational faculty"

[119] It should be noted that when a Sufi use the term "Truth", he definitely means "Allah", Al-Haqq; on the other hand, the philosopher refer to it as the "Reality of a thing" or the "True Knowledge Behind"; but the usage of the term "Truth" in this sentence coincides with the philosopher's application since it is being expressed in relation to their state as compared to Sufis.

HUMAN NATURE FROM THE VIEWPOINTS OF KIERKEGAARD'S EXISTENTIALISM AND IMAM KHOMEINI'S GNOSTICISM

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Human Nature from the Viewpoints of Kierkegaard's Existentialism and Imam Khomeini's Gnosticism

Introduction

A teacher asked his student: "Who has created you?" Contrary to the expectation of the teacher, the student answered: "My creation has not yet finished."[1]

This paper attempts to examine the nature of man according to existentialism and Islamic gnosticism [*'irfan*], in particular the views of Søren Aabye Kierkegaard, the widely

acclaimed father of existentialism, and Imam Khomeini, a renowned Muslim mystic [*'arif*]. The study focuses only on certain general themes existing in each of their thoughts.

The Nature of Man

In philosophy, the things around us possess two aspects of 'being' and 'becoming'. If we consider an egg, it is an egg with all its distinctive features—specific mass, form and color—yet it is not a mere egg. For, given all the necessary conditions and chances, it can become a full-grown animal that can produce hundreds of eggs and fellow animals of its kind. An egg can be a potential small or big animal. This point can be observed in all phenomena, be it animate or inanimate. This gap between what is deemed its present state and its would-be state is always wide.

This movement of phenomena from their "what-is" state to "what-can-be" and the fulfillment of their potentialities is like an endless removal of an old garment and wearing of a new one, or wearing clothes over other clothes. Called 'putting off' and 'putting on' [*khal' wa labs*] or 'dressing after dressing' [*labs pas az labs*] in Islamic philosophy, this process suggests that every phenomenon should attain its own possible state of perfection and reach whatever can be reached.

As the human being, too, is subject to change and transformation, he is thus no exception to this transcendental and immutable law. During his infancy, he is more hapless compared to many other creatures but as he grows and matures, he always shows his capabilities and talents in molding and shaping himself. Like a painter who draws and erases an

object and draws another, man regularly abandons his preceding status and adopts another.

This continuous process of abandonment and adoption exists in all stages of man's life. True, his changeability in the early and formative years is more obvious, but the possibility of change is true for everyone so long as he lives. As such, his book is always an open one and his destiny not predetermined.

Be that as it may, there are divergent views on the nature of man. Is his 'existence' the same with his 'essence'? Does his existence precede his essence, or the other way around? Is he a beast or angelic, or both? According to the Qur'anic narrative, for example, after stating the manner of man's creation, God praised and named Himself as the most Excellent Creator:

> *"Certainly We created man from an extract of clay. Then We made him a drop of [seminal] fluid [lodged] in a secure abode. Then We created the drop of fluid as a clinging mass. Then We created the clinging mass as a freshly tissue. Then We created the fleshy tissue as bones. Then We clothed the ones with flesh. Then We produced him as [yet] another creature. So blessed is Allah, the best of creators."*[2]

However, in recounting the Trust [*amanah*] refused by the heavens, earth and mountains, God describes man who accepts it as iniquitous and imprudent: *"Indeed We presented the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it, and were apprehensive of it; but man undertook it. Indeed he is most unfair and senseless."*[3]

According to existentialism, all beings possess a definite nature that could be made known to them in advance. However,

the human being is the only creature whose existence takes precedence over his nature, or he 'builds' his own nature. John Paul Sartre,[4] a famous expounder and exponent of existentialism, opines on this matter thus:

> Man's conception of himself is not only what he has in his mind; it is also what he wants of himself. It is the concept (of himself) that he exhibits after its manifestation in the world of existence. It is that which he seeks from himself after moving toward existence. Man is nothing but what he makes of himself. This is the foremost principle of existentialism.[5]

This point, too, is part of the incontrovertible principles of Islamic philosophy and *'irfan* which has been asserted differently. The most prominent formula of this viewpoint is thus stated by Shaykh al-Ishraq Shahab ad-Din Suhrawardi:[6] "The self and the creatures superior to it are mere beings."[7]

Imam Khomeini articulates this principle in this fashion: Man cannot be confined to one of the worlds—the higher and the lower worlds. For, the people as well as the people of Yathrîb[88] Yathrib: the former name of the town which after the migration [*hijrah*] of Prophet Muhammad (*s*) to it, was renamed *Madinah al-Nabi* [City of the Prophet]. It is now briefly called Madinah (Medina).

> People of Yathrib: It is in reference to the following verse in the Qur'an (*Surah al-Ahzab* 33:13):
>
> *"And when a group of them said,*
> *'O people of Yathrib! [This is] not a place for you, so go back!*
> *'And a group of them sought the Prophet's permission, saying,*

'Our homes lie exposed [to the enemy], although they were not exposed."

have no position and from the descension point of view have *hayula*[9] rank which can manifest their God's power, and from ascension point of view they have a high horizon and the station of annihilation [*fana'*] at the Threshold of Unity. Thus, the chief of the Illuminationist [*Ishrâqî*] School[10] says that vocal self has no nature and it has the station of unity and union of all the truths of the world of creation and affair.[11]

Kierkegaard's Existentialism on the Human Nature

Although existentialism is traced from the ideas of such figures as Socrates, Marcus Aurelius, Apectitus, St. Augustine, and Pascal, it is Søren Kierkegaard, the Danish thinker and prolific writer of the 19th century, who is widely dubbed "the father of existentialism"[12] or "the first existentialist"[13] "whose work is generally regarded as the origin of existentialism".[14] He is said to have originated all the fundamental themes of existentialism.[15]

Existentialism goes beyond simple definition or definitions. It is a way of life as well as a philosophy. As viewed by atheistic philosophers, it is a life-view where the individual, in a universe devoid of a Supreme Being and thus with no revealed moral system, must create his own system of ethics. Taking man at the center of everything, this life-view assumes that the individual is ultimately responsible for his actions and it is up to each person to create an essence of his own existence. It is an ethical system in which man builds "meaning out of meaninglessness, and thus brings order out of chaos".[16]

The individual—the individual before God—and his personal responsibility also occupies a central position in theistic existentialism. Accordingly, the existence of a moral system believed to be given by God does not restrain howsoever man's responsibility and necessity to live with intelligence and volition. This version of existentialism acknowledges the Hobbesian notion of "man in the state of nature" in which life is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short,"[17] and presents it to God for forgiveness, healing and strength. Yet, it must not be construed to mean negation of responsibility for God has endowed him with the power to choose.[18]

Among the general features of existentialism identified by Peter Angeles[19] that can be wholly or partly applied to Kierkegaardian brand of existentialism are the following: (1) *Existence precedes essence* in the sense that existence fortuitously becomes and is whatever it becomes and is, and that it then makes up its 'essence'. (2) *Truth is subjectivity*. (3) *Abstractions can never grasp nor communicate the reality of individual existence*. (4) *Philosophy must concern itself with the human predicament and inner states such as alienation, anxiety, inauthenticity, dread, sense of nothingness, anticipation of death*. (5) *Individuals have complete freedom of the will*. (6) *Individuals cannot help but make choices*.[20]

In many of his mostly pseudonymous philosophical and theological works, Kierkegaard's principal concerns included the debunking of the philosophical system of G. W. Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) who sought to formulate a philosophical system that would embrace all thoughts but would lose in the process the most important element, i.e. existence which accordingly reserved for the individual human being. Being not concerned with a system but with man,

especially as an individual before God, Kierkegaard asserted that it is absurd to develop a philosophy from a detached standpoint, as if a philosopher is beyond the ambit of the system that he crafted.[21]

According to Kierkegaard, Hegel "dissolved the concreteness of individual existence into abstractions characteristic of the realm of concepts."[22] Maintaining that what the individual does depends not upon his understanding but upon his willpower, Kierkegaard bolstered his doctrine of the will with his conception of the decisiveness of undetermined choice:

> He maintained that the individual constitutes himself as the individual he is through his choice of one mode of existence rather than another. Christianity is not a phase in the total development of man's religious and moral ideas; it is a matter of choosing to accept or to reject God's Word. But choice is not restricted to this supreme decision; it is the core of all human existence.[23]

A recurrent theme in Kierkegaard's philosophy is his notion of three stages of life or spheres of experience: (1) aesthetic, (2) ethical, and (3) religious that do not necessarily mean periods of life that one proceeds through in sequence but as paradigms of existence. The aesthetic sphere is primarily that of self-gratification. The aesthete enjoys art, literature, and music. The ethical sphere of existence applies to those who sense the claims of duty to God, country, or mankind in general. The religious sphere is divided into Religiousness A and B. Religiousness A applies to the individual who feels a sense of guilt before God. It is a religiousness of immanence. Religiousness B is transcendental in nature. It consists of a radical conversion to Christ in the qualitative leap of faith.

Kierkegaard also mentions intermediate stages, each of which he calls a *confinium*, or boundary. Irony lies between the aesthetic and the ethical, and humor lies between the ethical and the religious.

Kierkegaard explains these spheres in the following words:

> There are three existence spheres: the aesthetic, the ethical, [and] the religious. The metaphysical is abstraction, and there is no human who exists metaphysically. The metaphysical, the ontological, is, but it does not exist, for when it exists it does so in the aesthetic, in the ethical, in the religious, and when it is, it is the abstraction from a *priori* [prior thing] to the aesthetic, the ethical, the religious. The ethical sphere is only a transition sphere, and therefore its highest expression is repentance as a negative action. The aesthetic sphere is the sphere of immediacy, the ethical the sphere of requirement (and this requirement is so infinite that the individual always goes bankrupt), the religious the sphere of fulfillment, but, please note, not a fulfillment such as when one fills an alms box or a sack of gold, for repentance has specifically created a boundless space, and as a consequence the religious contradiction: simultaneously to be out on 70,000 fathoms of water and yet be joyful. Just as the ethical sphere is a passageway—which one nevertheless does not pass through once and for all—just as repentance is its expression, so repentance is the most dialectical.[24]

These stages of life which Kierkegaard discussed in a number of writings especially in *Either/Or* and *Stages on Life's Way* reflect man's pursuit to attain salvation and achieve the greatest good and satisfaction in life wherever achievable.

Maintaining that God has no relation to mankind as a whole, Kierkegaard championed the 'single individual' over the 'numeric masses'. For him, the individual is more important than the Universal (the law, morality). Far from prescribing lawlessness, or anarchy which is rule by the numeric masses, he argued that each individual must come into a relationship with the Absolute (the religious stage) whereby the ethical stage can be properly established. In fact, his overwhelming individuality brought him into opposition with his country's state Lutheran Church that "tended to produce stereotyped members of 'the crowd' rather than to allow individuals to discover their own unique identities."[25]

Speaking of the 'crowd', Kierkegaard said:

> There is a view of life which conceives that where the crowd is, there is also the truth, and that in truth itself there is need of having the crowd on its side. There is another view of life which conceives that wherever there is a crowd there is untruth, so that (to consider for a moment the extreme case), even if every individual, each for himself in private, were to be in possession of the truth, yet in case they were all to get together in a crowd—a crowd to which any *decisive* significance is attributed, a voting, noisy, audible crowd—untruth would at once be in evidence.[26]

From Kierkegaard's religious perspective, Christian faith is a matter of individual subjective passion that defies any clerical or similar mediation. As the means to become a true 'self', faith is the most important task to be achieved by a person. As such, accordingly, the individual shoulders a heavy burden of responsibility for his/her eternal salvation or damnation, as the case may be, depends upon his/her existential

choices. For Kierkegaard, anxiety or dread (*Angst*)—a two-pronged emotion: the dread burden of choosing for eternity and the exhilaration of freedom in choosing oneself—is the premonition of this enormous responsibility when the individual stands at the threshold of momentous existential choice. Yet, as the choice of faith is not made irreversibly, it is essential according to him to renew the faith by means of repeated avowals of it and one's very selfhood depends upon this repetition.[27]

Imam Khomeini's Gnosticism on the Human Nature

The nature of man according to the gnostic school of Imam Khomeini can be approached by examining the following themes: (1) the complexity of man, (2) man's dual inclination, and (3) man as an arena of conflict between good and bad. Imam Khomeini also agrees with other thinkers and philosophers such as Kierkegaard that there can be an acceptable explanation of man only after the realization of all his potentialities and aptitudes.

A teacher asked his student: "Who has created you?" Contrary to the expectation of the teacher, the student answered: "My creation has not yet finished."[28] This implies that man is a changeable, imperfect and incomplete creature. With this fundamental principle on man's changeability and indescribability, there is no room for proverbs such as "What is bred in the bone will come out in the flesh" or "a walnut on a dome" or the expression "Our time has already passed" or "It's too late". This principle is what is called 'repentance' [*tawbah*] in Islamic religious-moral parlance. That is, man drifts from his path and rebels against himself. Imam Khomeini had

time and again highlighted this point, asserting that there is always room for nurture and reform:

> [A]s long as man remains in this world, which is the source of the tree of primal matter with its substantial, formal, and accidental changes and transformations, he can deliver himself from all levels of deficiency, wretchedness, polytheism [*shirk*], and hypocrisy and attain the higher levels of perfection and spiritual felicity.[29]

The Imam also said:

> All habits [*malikât*] and psychic dispositions are capable of change. As long as the soul remains in this world of change and transition, it is subject to time and renewal; and as long as it is associated with matter [*hayula*] and potentiality [*quwwah*], the human being can change all his dispositions and transform them into their opposites. This claim is affirmed, besides metaphysical proof [*burhan*], by experience, as well as by the summons of the prophets (*'a*) and the true religions to noble dispositions and their restraining people from the opposite qualities.[30]

In the opinion of Ayatullah Khomeini, doubt on the possibility of nurture springs from the satanic insinuation [*waswasah*] and guiles of the carnal self [*an-nafs al-ammârah*]—the two brigands along the path of human perfection:

> Do not think that psychic, moral, and spiritual vices are not curable; this is an erroneous notion that has been inspired in you by Satan and your carnal self that

> want to keep you from treading the path of the Hereafter and to frustrate your efforts at rectifying your self. As long as man exists in this realm of transition and change, it is possible for him to transform all his attributes and moral characteristics.[31]

Of course, the Ayatullah also acknowledged the difficulty of uprooting bad habits in old age:

> It is like uprooting a young plant that has not run its roots deeply into the ground. But when a quality becomes firmly rooted in one's nature, becoming a part of one's spiritual makeup, it is not easily uprooted, but requires much effort, like the tree that becomes old in age, having sent down its roots deep into the earth; it cannot be easily extirpated. The more you delay the decision to eradicate the iniquities of the heart, the more time and effort it will require.[32]

So, Imam Khomeini warned us against procrastinating and waiting for an imaginary tomorrow:

If the tree of sinfulness growing in the orchard of the human heart reaches maturity and fruition, its roots becoming strong, the results are calamitous, one of which is to turn away man totally from repentance. Even if once in a while it comes to his mind, he keeps on postponing it from day to day and from one month to another... Don't imagine that man can perform *tawbah* [repentance] after the strengthening of the roots of sinfulness or meet its conditions. Therefore, the springtime for *tawbah* is the time of youth when the sins are fewer, the inner darkness of the heart incomplete, the conditions of *tawbah* easier, and their fulfilment less difficult... Even if it

be admitted that man can succeed in performing *tawbah* in old age, there is no certainty of reaching old age and of not meeting one's death in youth in the condition of habitual disobedience.[33]

Another consequence of the principle of man's indescribability is his coexistence with fear and hope, in such a way that these two attributes are equiponderant in him. The Imâm devoted a whole *hadith* chapter in *Sharh-e Chehel Hadith* to this issue of fear and hope, examining the station of these attributes from the aspect of gnosticism:

> Hence, man should always be moving back and forth between these two views: neither should he ever close his eyes to his defects and shortcomings in fulfilling the duties of servitude [*'ubûdiyyah*], nor should he ever take his eyes off the expansive and all-encompassing mercy, love and compassion of God Almighty.[34]

But, why must these two attributes be equiponderant without either one of them prevailing over the other? Imam Khomeini's mystical reply is thus:

> The gist of the matter is that the self is in a state of utter imperfection and shortcoming, and God at the height of greatness, glory, all-embracing mercifulness and grace, and the devotee is always in a median state of fear and hope between these two views. And since the Divine attributes of glory and perfection cast their light simultaneously on the wayfarer's heart, none of the two, fear or hope, exceeds the other.[35]

Since the human being has no specific nature and builds his own self and that nobody has seen the future, no one can pass a definite judgment regarding himself or another person. Considering the profundity of this point, the Imâm has quoted thus from his mentor:

> Our great master, the accomplished gnostic [*'ârif*], Shâhâbâdî[36]—may my soul be his ransom—used to say, 'Do not look down on even a *kâfir* [non-believer] in your heart. It is possible that the divine light of his inner nature may lead him to faith and your rebuke and disdain may lead you toward a wretched life in the Hereafter. Of course to practice *al-amr bi'l-ma'rûf wan-nahy 'an al-munkar* [enjoining right conduct and forbidding bad behavior] is something different from the inner feeling of contempt.' He would even say, 'Never curse the unbelievers regarding whom it is not known that they will leave the world in the state of unbelief. If they leave the world as rightly-guided servants of God, their spiritual rectitude may prove to be an obstruction in the way of your own spiritual advancement.'[37]

Is man intrinsically wicked or innately angelic? In reply to this fundamental question, Imam Khomeini admits some truths in the views of both Thomas Hobbes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The Imâm describes the Hobbesian aspect of man in the following terms:

> It is evident that at the time of his birth, after passing through certain stages, man is no better than a weak animal and has no distinction over other animals, except for his potentiality of becoming a human being. That is, his humanness is potential, not present. Therefore,

man is an animal in actuality in the initial stages of his life in this world. No power but the law of animal nature, which governs through the faculties of Desire [*shahwah*] and Anger [*ghadab*], rules over him.[38]

Yet, man can let his other aspect prevail over this aspect. This aspect of man's existence is his *fitrah* or natural disposition. Imam Khomeini elaborates on the role and place of *fitrah* as well as some of its manifestations in the exposition of the eleventh *hadith* in his *Sharh-e Chehel Hadith*. Apart from the most important principles of man's *fitrah* which is his God-seeking instinct and belief in the hereafter and prophethood [*nubuwwah*], the Imam mentioned search for perfection as another decree on man's *fitrah*:

> The natural inclination to seek perfection [that] is so universal [in] that if all the eras of human existence are probed and each of human individuals, no matter to what group or nation he may belong, is questioned, a love of perfection will be found to be part of his nature and his heart will be found to be pulled toward it.[39][90]

Given this principle, it can be deduced that as the human being has a dual-inclination, he is a permanent battleground of good and bad. Imâm Khomeinî, in his own characteristic style, portrays human nature as follows:

> Let it be known that man is a marvel possessing two lives and two worlds within one existence. That is, apparent life or the outward world, which is this worldly existence, and is associated with his body, and the other is 'inner life', the inward world, associated with the hidden, invisible, higher other world, his soul in short, which belongs to the realms of the invisible

> and celestial world, and consists of several levels and grades… For each one of them is specified host of guardians. The host related with the divine and intellectual powers attracts him toward the sublime, heavenly spheres, and summons him to the acts of virtue and goodness. The other host of guardians is the ignoble and satanic, which attracts man toward the baser realms of darkness and shame, and invites him to the acts of villainy and destruction. There is always a state of conflict and strife between these two forces, and human existence serves as the battleground of these two bands.[40]

With this dual-inclination, man has the inherent right to choose and select which inclination to follow. In one of his ethical-mystical treatise, Imam Khomeini narrates a Prophetic tradition [*hadith*] to the effect that the heart of every human being possesses two chambers: one is the angel's domain while the other is under the sway of Satan, and God renders help and support to the faithful through this angel.[41] Corollary to this right and freedom to choose is man's need for cognition of the self. According to the Imam, it is only through self-cognition that man is able to understand the purpose of creation, know his place in this system, and realize that the aim of imparting to us all these graces and endowments is something else, superior to and higher than what is visible. This world is a stage of action and its aim is a higher and more sublime sphere of existence. This lower and animal existence is not an end in itself.[42]

Conclusion

Theistic existentialism as expounded and represented by Søren Kierkegaard and Islamic gnosticism or mysticism [*'irfan*] as embodied by Imam Khomeini share many points on the issue of man's nature. Both theistic existentialism and Islamic gnosticism hold that man is continuously moving from the state of 'being' to the state of 'becoming'—a phenomenon which is called 'dressing after dressing' in philosophy. Both Kierkegaard and Imam Khomeini acknowledge the centrality of man, his dependence on God, freedom of will, and burden of personal responsibility.

In particular, they agree that the 'creation' of man is not yet finished. Kierkegaard's notion of the three spheres of existence indicates man's intrinsic and persistent urge for perfection or the ultimate good, which is one of the facets of man's *fitrah* in the parlance of Islamic theosophy. The concept of 'fear and hope' [*khawf wa raja'*] in Islamic ethics and mysticism is somehow akin to Kierkegaard's idea of anxiety or dread—the dread burden of choosing for eternity and the exhilaration of freedom in choosing oneself.

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(Footnotes)

[1] Ronda Brandt and Barry L. Reece,
Human Relations: Principles and Practices (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990), p. 54.

[2] *Surah al-Mu'minun*
23:14. The translation of Qur
'anic passages in this paper is adapted from 'Ali Quli Qara'i, *The Qur'an with a Phrase-by-Phrase English Translation*(London: ICAS Press, 2004).

[3] *Surah al-Ahzab*33:72.

[4] Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-80): French philosopher, novelist, playwright, and exponent of existentialism. His writings reflect his vision of the human being as master of his or her own fate, with each life defined by a person's actions: "Existence precedes essence." His works include *Being and Nothingness* (1943); the novels *Nausea*(1938) and *The Roads to Freedom*, a trilogy (1945-49); and the plays *The Flies*(1943) and *No Exit*(1944). Sartre founded the review *Les Temps Modernes* in 1945.

[5] Jean-Paul Sartre,
Existentialism va Isalat-e Bashar [*Existentialism and Human Nature*], trans. Mustafa Rahimi (Tehran: Marvarid, 1358 AHS), p. 24.

[6] A towering figure of the Illuminationist School of Islamic Philosophy and likewise known as Shaykh Ishraq, Shahab ad-Din Yahya Suhrawardi, was born in Suhraward, near Zanjan, Iran in 1155. After studying in Isfahan, a leading center of Islamic scholarship, Suhrawardi traveled

through Iran, Anatolia and Syria. Influenced by mystical teachings, he spent much time in meditation and seclusion, and in Halab (modern Aleppo) he favorably impressed its ruler, Malik al-Zahir. His teachings, however, aroused the opposition of established and learned religious men [*'ulama*], who persuaded Malik to have him put to death. The appellation *al-Maqtul* [the killed one] meant that he was not to be considered a *shahîd* [martyr].

[7] Quoted in Sayyid Hasan Islami, *Imam Khomeini, Ethics and Politics*, trans. Mansoor Limba (Tehran: The Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works, Winter 2003/4), p. 9. The verse was revealed when a group of Muslims, misled by the defeatist rumors spread by the hypocrites, had suggested to the others to leave Islam and return to idolatry or to leave the ranks of the Muslims and go back to their homes. And some, under the pretext of taking care of their undefended homes, wanted to leave the ranks and go away to take shelter somewhere away from the battlefield, though their homes were not undefended. See S. V. Mir Ahmed Ali, *The Holy Qur'an with English Translation of the Arabic Text and Commentary according to the Version of the Holy Ahlul-Bait* (New York: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, 1988), p. 1251.[9] *Hâyûlâ*: the primary substance of creation.

[10] One of the most valuable schools of Islamic philosophy, the IlluminationistSchool combines Neoplatonic and Islamic ideas. According to this philosophy, the source of all things is Absolute Light. That which is visible requires no definition, and nothing is more visible than light, whose every nature consists in manifestation. We may distinguish two illuminations, i.e. modes of being of the Primal Light: 1) pure, abstract, formless; 2) accidental derivative, possessing form. Pure light is self-conscious substance (spirit or soul), knowing itself through itself 'for whatever knows itself must be pure light'. Accidental light is related to pure light as effect to cause and only exists as attribute in association with the illuminated object.

[11] Imam Khomeini, *Ta'liqat 'ala Sharh Fusus al-Hikam wa Misbah al-Uns* (n.p.: Mu'assaseh-ye Pasdar-e Islam, 1410 AH), p. 78.[12] William

McDonald, "Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855)," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, http://www.iep.utm.edu/k/kierkega.htm, 2006, accessed: June 1, 2008.

[13] Simon Blackburn, *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 207.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 130.

[15] Alasdair McIntyre, "Existentialism" in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vols. 3-4, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: The Macmillan Company and the Free Press, 1972), p. 150.

[16] D. Anthony Storm, "A Primer on Kierkegaardian Motifs," *D. Anthony Storm's Commentary on Kierkegaard*, http://www.sorenkierkegaard.org/primer.htm, 1996-2008, accessed: June 1, 2008. [17] Ian McLean, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 222. See Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1946), pp. 81-83.

[18] "A Primer on Kierkegaardian Motifs."

[19] Peter A. Angeles, *Dictionary of Philosophy* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1981), p. 88.

[20] "A Primer on Kierkegaardian Motifs."

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] Alasdair McIntyre, "S
øren Aabye Kierkegaard" in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vols. 3-4, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: The Macmillan Company and the Free Press, 1972), p. 337.

[23] *Ibid.*

[24] Søren Aabye Kierkegaard, *Stages on Life's Way*, p. 476f as quoted in "A Primer on Kierkegaardian Motifs."

[25] William McDonald, "Soren Kierkegaard," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kierkegaard, revised: May 11, 2006, accessed: June 1, 2008.

[26] Kierkegaard, *The Single Individual*, p. 110 as quoted in "A Primer on Kierkegaardian Motifs."

[27] "Soren Kierkegaard," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

[28] *Human Relations: Principles and Practice, loc. cit.*

[29] Imam Khomeini, *Sharh-e Chehel Hadith* (Tehran: The Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini
's Works, 1376 AHS), p. 528. The original work in Persian, *Sharh-e Chehel Hadith* was completed by Imam Khomeini in the month of Muharram 1358 AH (April-May 1939). Under the title, *Forty Hadiths: An Exposition of Mystical and Ethical Traditions*, its English translation is published by the Tehran-based Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 510.

[31] *Ibid.*, 110.

[32] *Ibid.*, pp. 110-111.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 273.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 230.

[36] Ayatullah Mirzâ Muhammad 'Alî Shâhâbâdî (1292-1362 AH): an outstanding jurist, mystic and philosopher of the 14
th century AH who studied religious sciences at the Islamic theological centers of Isfahân, Tehran (in Iran) and Najaf (in
Iraq). He was Imâm Khomeinî's teacher in *irfân* [mysticism] and *akhlâq* [ethics].

[37] *Sharh-e Chehel Hadith*, p. 67.

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 168.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 182.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 401.

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

The Role of Ethics in Human Relations

Dr. Hossein Faiyaz

Summary:

Rawls' Political Liberalism is a rich and suggestive account of how to justify a scheme of principles for ordering the basic structure of society. Clearly no one else has produced a work that matches the scope of **Rawls'** theory. But it still leaves us with some pressing problems. One of the problems that **Rawls** must answer is that of providing a critical justification. By calling justice as fairness a political conception, **Rawls** has abandoned the attempt to provide such a critical justification. But in doing so, one has to wonder what reasons one would have to ultimately accept the political conception, other than merely pragmatic ones. Another problem that **Rawls'** theory presents is that it is not clear that justice as fairness would be able to achieve an overlapping consensus of reasonable comprehensive views. For example, it is not clear that utilitarians could ever accept **Rawls'** priority of the first principle over the second. In the end **Rawls'** new theory has not brought us any closer to a resolution of the issues that he has raised over the past twenty-five years. But Political Liberalism is still an important work in contemporary political

philosophy- one rivaling A Theory of Justice.

Truth is a universal value in all religions. Some religions like Hinduism also maintain that truth (Satyam) is God. The Qur'an also elevates truth (Haq) to the status of being God. Allah has been described as Haq in the Qur'an. No human being can claim to be Truth in the absolute sense. Mansur al-Hallaj, the famous sufi saint who claimed to be ana'l haq (I am the Truth) was hanged because it meant claiming to be God. Thus truth has great significance in the Islamic ethical system.

Here it should be remembered that truth is not mere conformity with observable facts as in empirical sciences. Truth in moral sciences, especially in religion, has a moral or ideological dimension which is not necessarily verifiable. It is this aspect of moral or religious truth, which separates religion from science. However, it should also be borne in mind that truth should not be contrary to observable facts. All one can say is that truth, in moral and religious discourse, is not mere conformity with fact. It is more than mere conformity with fact.

In the Islamic system of morality, as in some other religions too, it is the establishment of a moral society that is very fundamental. The emphasis of Islamic teaching is not personal salvation but the establishment of a society that is just and free of zulm (oppression). The Qur'an lays great emphasis on 'adl' (justice). It is the central value in the Islamic ethic. The Qur'an says "Be just; it is closest to being pious."(5:8).

Thus in Islam there is no concept of piety without being just. The opposite of 'adl' is 'zulm' (oppression). Zulm is derived from the root 'zlm' that has several shades of meaning i.e. to do wrong, injustice, darkness, iniquity, oppression etc.

The Qur'an often uses it in the sense of wrong doing and oppression.

Islam basically lays emphasis on establishing a just society free of all forms of oppression. The Prophet also says that a society can live with unbelief (kufr) but not with oppression (zulm). Thus Islamic ethic conceives of a society which will be free of all forms of exploitation and oppression. Islam basically is a non-violent religion. It does not approve of violence at all. The most basic attribute of Allah is mercy and compassion.

But Islam approves of violence (in a highly controlled sense, of course) only to remove zulm, the structures of oppression. Thus the Qur'an says, "And how could you refuse to fight in the cause of Allah and of the utterly helpless men and women and children who are crying, O our Sustainer! Lead us forth (to freedom) out of this land whose people are oppressors, and raise for us, out of Thy grace, a protector, and raise for us, out of Thy grace, one who will bring us succor!".[4:75]

Thus the Qur'an's emphasis is on fighting against injustice, against oppression. Everyone has the right to live in peace in one's own country. If someone tries to throw them out just because they have their own inner conviction, they cannot be thrown out of their homeland. And if someone tries to do that, one has to stand up and fight against this injustice. Islam does not permit violence in matters of preaching religion.

But human society cannot be managed like a company, since its basis is quite different from that of a firm; this is of course, our view, while there are others who think otherwise. For instance, there is Bertrand Russell who thinks that the basis of social ethics is only individual interest. He considers

social ethics as a kind of contract between individuals, which they uphold as the best means of safeguarding their interests. Russell gives the following example to illustrate his point. He says: "I wish to get possession of my neighbor's cow, but I realize that if I do so, his reaction will be to seize mine, and another neighbor, too, may do the same. Thus, instead of getting a profit, I suffer a loss. So I consider it advisable to respect his right and let him keep him cow, so that I may keep mine. Russell believes the basis of social ethics to be a respect for individual rights. We may say robbers, too, have the same relationship, in being bound together for robbing and enforcing some kind of justice among themselves, since they cannot act alone. That is why we say that Russell's motto is at variance with his philosophy. His motto is humanitarian, but his philosophy is contrary to it. By considering self-interest as the basis of social ethics, we are making it compulsory for an individual to co-operate with others since he fears their reaction if they possess similar power and strength. But if a man reached a stage where he was sure that others were too weak to hurt him, there is no need to observe those moral principles.

It believes, as is obvious from the above verse also, in full freedom of conscience. In fact if this freedom is violated, Islam permits the use of regulated force. As for the preaching of religion, it has to be done only through 'goodly exhortation and wisdom' (16:125). There is no question of using violence for that purpose. If someone does that, it is against the Divine injunction. It is zulm.

To picture out the divine principles and ethics of Islam, one has to devote himself or herself to Allah and his beloved messenger and his households. The man-made theories can't make a perfect and complete social life as expected by individuals or society. Man-made polices and ethics would be reversible after years.

More important than that are the privileges of rank and position. Rockefeller, who has been one of the richest men in the world, has always had a longing for being elected President of the United States. Sometimes such a desire is so strong that many a wealthy man is willing to sacrifice most of his wealth to fulfill it, and gain fame and honor as a man of power. Man has always valued being respected by others no matter whether it is through fear, or affection and devotion.

Are there not men who would be in the place of Ayatullah Boroujerdi, so that people would be eager to meet them, kiss their hands, bring gifts to them, and feel honored to be received by them?

Do they not wish to be a king so that hundreds of officers and men would stand at attention before him, even if it is through fear? These things, then, are valued by human beings; otherwise they would not be willing to lose everything else to gain such an advantage.

Now as for the instances of the Meccan model of Islam, we do come across them in history, particularly in Sufi Islam. Sufi Islam is essentially built around the theory of individual salvation. A Sufi saint is engaged more in individual character building and spiritual practices and hence his whole emphasis on 'ibadat' (prayers). The Prophet of Islam, it is interesting to note, was a perfect synthesis of a Sufi and an activist engaged in building a just society. That is why the Sufis consider the Holy Prophet as their Master from whom they derive their spiritual practices.

Prophet of Islam had hardly any choice. In the attempt to set up a just society based on high ethical standards, integrity of character and spiritual values, he had to take on the most powerful vested interests out to wreck his movement. Thus

violence appears in the history of Islam not out of choice but out of compulsion. It is certainly not prescriptive violence but an imposed one.

We are not blindly focusing on our theological thinking without any logical background; it is very clear that Islamic Ethics are the only remedy for mankind. It is true that all religions are teaching almost the same thing, but above all Islam is the last and the only medicine that can cure all sickness in this world. East and West have nothing in comparison to the Islamic world. They might have their propaganda machineries, but up to when will these machines work with their standards? The world is experiencing a standard lifestyle minus religion, in which wealth is the criteria of measurement. What is the reason for the creation of the universe? There is a governing body of the world by the name of the **"United Nations"**; suggestively the name of this world organization **(United Nations)** should be changed to the **"United Nations of powers"** so that the "United Nations of Powers" with its **Ethical Standardization's Manner** and its **progenies** could govern the **"Life world"** just like **Pharaoh**, instead of **God's Divine and Heavenly Ethics**.

. The **"United Nation of Powers"** has given to itself the right to be the truthful governments on Earth and thinks that it is the only sole power in the universe with values in all aspects of life.

There is much misunderstanding about the inter-connection between the Islam and violence. Islam does not approve of violence, except in certain extraordinary circumstances, such as in the case of self defense. The word Islam has been derived from the root 'slm' which means to escape danger, to be free from fault, to deliver or hand over, to commit oneself to the will of God, to lay down arms, to

establish peace, thus the best meaning of Islam will be to establish or promote peace in harmony with the Will of Allah (s.w.t.).

Introduction

The most non-controversial issues that are not debatable are Ethics, principles and politics. These issues have different meanings in the thinking of different people. Philosophers, Politicians theologians and writers have different views about it.

In this regard, the core of this article is about the thinking of theologians and of writers from different parts of the world. By comparing their ideologies, views, and outlook on **"The Role of Ethics in Human Relations"** we will be able to evaluate the importance of our responsibility toward society, and thus broaden our own outlook.

People write different articles about a wide variety of topics, and oftentimes, trying to determine which one is right, and which is wrong can be very confusing. There are intellectuals who believe that their words and theories can change other people's way of thinking, and by so doing, guide them towards the right path- whether toward the path of man-made ethics and principles, or, in terms of religion and human spirituality, toward Islamic divine Ethics.

There are people who give their whole life for a cause that they think is right, but, on the other hand, there are people who think that they have the right to deny others of their basic rights. Every thing in this world is complicated, with things being created only to serve people's self-interests. But our life is not like a company or a business firm that needs to be managed by certain policies or principles. We, as well as the several billions of others whom we deal with everyday, should

live for one purpose only, because Allah has been created us for that sole purpose alone: to reach the level of self-salvation for ourselves; and we need a most pious man to help and teach others to reach that level of self-salvation for the sake of Allah.

This article will give a comparison between Islam and man-written theories on Ethics, Principles and policies. It will let you know how many problems a nation will have if there are no divine Ethics or principles to serve as a governing body. With the help of Allah[(s.w.t.)]. in whom alone I take refuge, the world will be cleaned up of all viruses which are harmful to mankind. I pray that humans will live under the flag of Islam, which is the only flag that can save man from this materialistic, capitalistic and worldly environment and help them live with dignity away from the satanic acts of East and West and their so-called standard life-style with a system that controls the human soul.

We are not blindly focusing on our theological thinking without any logical background; it is very clear that Islamic Ethics are the only remedy for mankind. It is true that all religions teach almost the same idea, but above all Islam is the only medicine that can cure all the sickness of this world. Both East and West have nothing in comparison to the Islamic world. They might have their propaganda machineries, but up to when will these machines work to their standards? The world is experiencing a standard life-style minus religion, in which wealth is the criteria of measurement. What is the reason for the creation of the universe? The world has a governing body by the name of The **"United Nations"**; suggestively the name of this world organization **(United Nations)** should be changed to the **"United Nations of powers"** so that The "United Nations of Powers" with its **Ethical Standardization's Manner** and its **progenies** could govern the **"Life world"** just like **Pharaoh**, instead of **God's Divine and Heavenly**

Ethics.

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Truth is a universal value in all religions. Some religions like Hinduism also maintain that truth (Satyam) is God. The Qur'an also elevates truth (Haq) to the status of being God. Allah (s.w.t.). has been described as Haq in the Qur'an. No human being can claim to be Truth in an absolute sense. Mansur al-Hallaj, the famous Sufi saint who claimed to be ana'l haq (I am the Truth) was hanged because it meant claiming to be God, which in reality was not true. Thus truth plays a significant role in the Islamic ethical system. The **"United Nations of Powers"** has given to itself the right to be the truthful government on Earth and think that it is the sole power in the universe with values in all aspects of life.

Theory of Justice of John Rawls

The Theory of Justice of **John Rawls**[1] has modified his conception of justice as fairness. He realized that the kind of stability that would be needed in a democratic society that is marked by a **pluralism** of reasonable, but comprehensive moral views was inconsistent with the account of stability given in Theory. In Theory, Rawls had conceived of his principles of justice as an alternative systematic conception that was superior

to utilitarianism. But conceived in this way, justice as fairness turned out to be simply another reasonable comprehensive doctrine that was incompatible with other reasonable doctrines, such as the utilitarianism moral theory.

This meant that the well-ordered society of justice as fairness was an unrealistic ideal for a democratic society. What Rawls came to realize was that the failure of Theory was that it did not distinguish between two very different kinds of moral conceptions: that of a comprehensive moral theory which addressed the problem of justice, and that of a political conception of justice that was independent of any comprehensive theory. This distinction is crucial in understanding the transformations that have taken place in Rawls's theory of justice. But he came out with a new theory of **Political Liberalism**. In what follows, it explains distinction and how it functions and shapes this new theory of justice.

The conditions of a comprehensive moral theory-and thus of a political conception of justice

Rawls regards a moral theory to be comprehensive when it satisfies the following conditions. **First** it must apply to a wide range of subjects. This is what makes it general. It becomes comprehensive "when it includes conceptions of what is of value in human life, as well as ideals of personal virtue and character, that are to inform much of our nonpolitical conduct. A political conception, on the other hand, differs from a general and comprehensive theory because "it is a moral conception worked out for a specific subject. In this case, the subject is the basic structure of a democratic society. But a political conception has two other important and distinctive features. **One** is that in accepting a political conception a person is not committed to any deeper comprehensive theory or doctrines. The **other** is that a political conception has its basis

in certain fundamental ideas **"latent in the public political culture of a democratic society."**

These features of a political conception of justice are the basis for how **Rawls** proposes to solve the problem of political stability. Since a political conception of justice has its basis in ideas that are **"latent in the public political culture,"** it is not controversial in nature. It is possible for persons with conflicting, but reasonable comprehensive views to agree that it should be the account of justice that is most compatible with their own views. As such the political conception would then be the object of an overlapping consensus about justice.

But what are these latent ideas? According to **Rawls** there are three fundamental ideas underlying a democratic society. The **'central organizing idea'** is that of **"society as a fair system of cooperation over time, from one generation to the next."** It is accompanied by two companion ideas: **the idea of citizens as free and equal persons**, and the idea of **"a well-ordered society as a society effectively regulated by a political conception of justice."** To these **Rawls** adds the idea that a political conception has as its subject the basic structure of a society. Finally he completes his set of fundamental ideas by introducing the idea of the original position. Now this idea differs from the other members of this set, in that it is not necessarily latent in the public political culture. Rather it is regarded as necessary as a mediating model that integrates the other fundamental ideas into a coherent scheme of justice.

This marks a change in the role of the original position as it was introduced in Theory. In Theory, the original position not only justified the principles of justice. It also specified the political setting that would give rise to the democratic institutions that would be necessary in justice as fairness. In

Political Liberalism[2] the original position has a more modest task. It seeks to show that only a specific set of principles and Ethics are compatible with the fundamental ideas implicit in a democratic society marked by the fact of reasonable pluralism.

This change in the role of the original position means that there is also a change in the process of justifying justice as fairness. It is now a two-stage process. The original position now has the less ambitious task of specifying that justice as fairness is the only conception that is fully compatible with the fundamental ideas of a democratic society. But even though this is a more modest task, it is still a very important one. In showing that justice as fairness is a most compatible conception, **Rawls**[2] has shown that it is also a **'freestanding view,'** one that is independent of any comprehensive moral and Ethical theory or doctrine. This independence means that it can also be linked to a variety of reasonable comprehensive views.

But this is still not sufficient to solve the problem of stability mentioned at the outset. **Rawls** must go one step further and show that his political conception would be preferred by reasonable persons over any other political and Ethical conception. **Rawls** argues for this point by introducing the idea of an overlapping consensus. An overlapping consensus "consists of all the reasonable opposing religious, philosophical, Ethical and moral doctrines likely to persist over generations and to gain a sizable body of adherents in a more or less just constitutional regime, a regime in which the criterion of justice is that political conception itself." The necessity of an overlapping consensus arises because those with comprehensive moral views must seek some common ground for reaching consensus about principles of justice. The actual circumstances of living in a democratic society then provide individuals with the motivation for accepting a political

conception that is not in conflict with each other's comprehensive views. **Rawls's** political conception is non-controversial for two reasons. **The first** is that because it has its basis in the fundamental ideas of a democratic society that all citizens share, it is acceptable to the wide variety of comprehensive views. **The second** reason is that the political conception makes no controversial claims about any reasonable comprehensive views. It is neither skeptical nor indifferent to the claims made by these views.

Instead it seeks to provide a basis for citizens to determine what issues can be removed from the political agenda and those that can not. Given these considerations, **Rawls** claims that his Ethical and principles of justice would then be the object of an overlapping consensus by those persons holding reasonable, but incompatible comprehensive views.

In order to better understand the idea of an overlapping consensus **Rawls** contrasts it with another way of reaching agreement on an Ethical and political conception, that of a modus vivendi.

Rawls sees that one objection to his theory is that it appears to be a consensus based on self-interest rather than on the principles of justice. In fact with the more subdued role of the original position such an interpretation is likely. A social consensus based upon a modus vivendi occurs when the various parties find it to be in their own self-interests to abide by the conditions of a contract or treaty. But the problem is that such an agreement lacks any principled basis. The parties to the agreement are ready to abandon the agreement and to pursue their own interests the minute that any one of them thinks that they can hold better their position at the expense of the others. The overlapping consensus differs in two crucial respects from a modus vivendi. **First** the object of the

consensus is a moral conception. And **second**, an overlapping consensus is affirmed on moral and Ethical grounds, not on those of self-interest. "An overlapping consensus, therefore, is not merely a consensus on accepting certain authorities, or on complying with certain institutional arrangements, founded on a convergence of self- or group interests. All those who affirm the political conception start from within their own comprehensive view and draw on the religious, philosophical, Ethical and moral grounds it provides." The solution to the problem of stability is found in the convergence of the various moral and religious views, each of which accepts the political conception from within their own comprehensive views.

In addition to the changes in the process of justifying justice as fairness, there are some significant changes in **Rawls'**[3] views of the two principles of justice. Here is how they are stated in "Political Liberalism":

1.Each person has an equal claim to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic rights and liberties, which scheme is compatible with the same scheme for all; and in this scheme the equal basic liberties, and only those liberties, are to be guaranteed their fair value.

2.Social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions: first, they are to be attached to positions and offices open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity; and second, they are to be to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged members of society.

The formulation of **Social and economic inequalities** in Political Liberalism is virtually unchanged from Theory. But throughout Political Liberalism there is virtually no discussion of the second principle. While this is

a significant omission it does not appear to affect the overall role of this principle in his theory of justice.

The most significant changes are in the content of the first principle. In Theory Rawls states the first principle as follows: "Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all." In Political Liberalism Rawls alters the beginning of the first principle by replacing the phrase "each person has an equal right" which "each person has an equal claim." He also replaces the phrase "system of basic liberties" with the phrase "a fully adequate scheme of equal basic rights and liberties." What is most unsatisfying about these changes is that Rawls fails to explain these changes and how they affect his Ethical and Principal conception of justice. For example, does **Rawls** now acknowledge that there are certain rights and liberties that are more fundamental than others when he claims that only the political liberties are to be given their fair value? What is his basis for determining that the political liberties have priority here?

The Discourse Ethics of Jurgen Habermas

One of the most famous phrases of the discourse ethics of **Jürgen Habermas**[4] is: "In discourse the unforced force of the better argument prevails". Or to put it in the words of hermeneutic philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, who gives this popular turn: "What the others are saying could be right!" As everyone knows, this ideal is very difficult to achieve in scholarly and everyday discussions. But there is an obvious deficit in practical philosophy- namely, its fundamentally **"unresolved openness"** concerning its problems and its various attempts at their solutions. This fundamental, unresolved openness becomes a great virtue in discussions- the virtue of fallibility.

I make use of this special kind of unresolved openness in the following. A brief presentation of some basic elements of Habermas' discourse will be followed by some problems and questions that are important from my point of view. The question that lies behind my presentation is: How much of practical impact does ethics need? But first, what do I mean by Meta-Ethics in my comments?

Is every sort of reflection on morality' Meta-Ethics? Or is Meta-Ethics a special kind of reflection, one that seeks to establish a theory about ethical theories, with the further aim of finding a justified theory for application in concrete situations? Historically 'meta-ethics' is an issue of analytic philosophy and of the linguistic turn. Meta-Ethical reflections could be interpreted as a propaedeutic, one which clarifies the use of moral judgments in terms of language analysis-a clarification that has to be followed by a normative ethics theory.

But understanding Meta-Ethics as a pure theory, one that is convinced all moral questions could sufficiently be handled on the neutral and theoretical level of language analysis (especially in ideal language philosophy), is excluding an orientation to application even in its self-understanding.

In what respect does **Habermas**' discourse ethics contain meta-ethical-that is, propaedeutic -elements? The answer is initially easy: Meta-ethical reflections are a part of discourse ethics in defining what is a moral question and what is not. Beyond the embedment of discourse ethics in the development of western rationality and in the process of differentiation of rationality (in its three types of theoretical, practical and expressive rationality) is a meta- ethical framework in a broad sense. **Habermas** chooses a specific way of combining theoretical meta-ethical statements with the

practical world, the **"life world"** contexts, in his discourse ethics. From this point of view, discourse ethics is neither pure meta-ethics nor applied ethics. It undertakes to combine the claim of universality that is inherent theoretical knowledge with the application of theory to practice. And it even claims to conjoin the sphere of theoretical justification of the theory with the sphere of practice.[4]

One point in question in **Habermas**' discourse ethics is the relation between empirical foundation and transcendental method, between context orientation und decontextualization in the so-called 'moral point of view,' which is the phrase **Habermas** uses to describe the specific dimension of morality, and normative questions.

Discourse ethics starts from the assumption that even moral problems are capable of being solved in a rational and cognitive way. This is against a moral skepticism which asserts that questions of practical reason could not be decided on rational grounds: "The non-cognitive conceptions are reducing the value of the whole world of moral intuitions based on everyday-life."

With this confession to cognition in moral theory, however, **Habermas** does not intend to assimilate the specific phenomenon of **'morality'** to what is the domain of cognitivism, **'truth.'** To say it in analytic terms: normative sentences could not be treated as propositions or as assertive sentences. There is obvious difference between **"You ought not to kill"** and "This grass is green". Hence the term "moral truth" is a quite difficult one, as **Habermas** himself recognizes.

And thus he claims for normative sentences only the 'weaker assumption of a valid claim that is analogous to the valid claim of truth'. This weaker assumption implies two

consequences. First, with this restriction **Habermas** take a step back from transcendental foundations as 'final grounding'. Secondly he situates the claim of validity of normative sentences in a social-evolutionary context: the differentiation of the claims of validity of normative justification and of truth is the result of the process of modernization. Discourse ethics is a normative ethics for pluralistic societies which no longer have a single, overarching moral authority.

In his conception of the life world **Habermas** has worked out the limitations of this horizon a limitation which is culturally, historically, and socially mediated, and within which takes place the substantial determination of our imaginations and aims to fulfill individually our **'good life.'** The phenomenal domain of morality, as he understands it, is, in his view, structured by intersubjectivity quite differently from the phenomenal domain of substantive ethics. The **'moral point of view'** has a force to transcend the particularity of the contexts. We are entering the sphere of morality when we are in conflict with others; when there is conflict and dissent. Moral theory has the task of preparing our means of responding to a partial destruction of the life world. Moral theory provides a sort of mending or repair. Thus **Habermas** differentiates strictly between 'questions of the good life' and 'questions of justice'. (In this direction lies also the difference between 'norms' and 'values.') This is quite plausible because determining what a **'good life'** is, under conditions of value pluralism, has to be necessarily a limited determination. For that reason, Habermas emphasizes the role of a formal moral theory, such as discourse ethics, in creating the **'free spaces'** needed for a pluralism of many different **'good lives.'**

But certainly moral questions arise in contexts of the life world, where our beliefs and decisions are shaped by values, habits and prejudices. Here reappears the problem: **to what**

degree must moral theory transcend the particularity of the life world, so as to ensure impartiality and justice-without, on the other hand, being so general and universal that it is no longer relevant as a criterion for moral conflicts?

To begin with, the principle of universalization[5] explains what our everyday, but post conventional intuition would outline for us as a strategy for solving moral conflicts: the principle of impartiality. This basic assumption of impartiality already draws a line between a cognitive and universal ethics and an ethics oriented towards **solidarity**; a first problem is that it does not provide a way of distinguishing coerced solidarity from voluntary solidarity. There is a second problem inherent in decisions guided by solidarity: those decisions could be easily unjust and unfair decisions for those who are affected by those decisions, but who are not part of the shared community [and thus excluded from the discussions in the first place].

Habermas insists on the principle of impartiality that first makes possible a formal framework for both different mores and acts of solidarity. Concomitantly, the principle of universalization (U) is formally stated as follows: A norm is valid only if "all affected can accept the consequences and the side effects its general observance can be anticipated to have for the satisfaction for everyone's interests (and these consequences are preferred to those of known alternative possibilities." In this way, the principle of universalization formally determines those conditions which must be met if the claim of legitimacy - the claim advanced by moral commands and norms - is really justified.

This principle is at the same time a principle for argumentation, because it summarizes the normative

implications bound up with the situation of 'entering into an argument.' These implications can be summarized as follows: equal participation of all who are affected; the postulate of being unlimited, the fundamental freedom and openness concerning time and persons; the postulate of freedom from constraint, the freedom, in principle, of discourse from accidental and structural forms of power and the postulate of seriousness or authenticity, the absence of deception and even illusion in expressing intentions and in speech.[5]

We have to presume these principles counterfactually, even when we know that people usually don't act that way.

For **Habermas**, the principle of universalization and these concomitant postulates should be applicable to the critical examination of practical, everyday norms. The principle of universalization is applied in the principle of discourse: "only those norms can claim to be valid that meet (or could meet) with the approval of all affected in their capacity as participants in a practical discourse." The problem lies in the subjunctive parenthetical phrase: Are we supposed to think that the practical discourse could also function adequately with substitutes, with advocates in place of those who are affected? As an example, we must decide as advocates for generations yet to come.

Habermas situates those institutionalized discourses that come closest to achieving the idea of justice, as formulated in the principles of universalization and discourse, as a connection between a real resolution and the counterfactual idealization of discourses. "This trivial necessity of institutionalizing discourses by no means contradicts the counterfactual elements of the [ideal] presuppositions of discourse. On the contrary, the attempts at institutionalization themselves obey the normative aims that are taken

involuntarily from the intuitive pre-understanding of what is argumentation." In **Habermas**'s discourse ethics, the concrete examples of institutionalizations of moral discourses tend to be vague. He seeks to overcome this gap in the discourse theory of law and democracy presented in Faktizität and Geltung (1992), translated as Between Facts and Norms.

One of the main problems concerning the Habermasian discourse ethics that emerges from this-very short-presentation is, whether he succeeds in his important conjunction of claims that are capable of justification by universalization, on the one hand, with, on the other hand, those particular contexts where the claims are generated and are going to be applied.

The separation of questions of justice that, as moral and legal questions, are suitable questions for practical discourse from those questions concerning individual ways of life, is based on the presupposition that only inter-subjective conflicts are relevant for morality. For **Habermas**, the process of self-understanding and self-determination of subjects in choosing their way of life is not an issue for moral theory. But it is in fact a point in question as to whether just here are connections that are difficult for a moral theory to avoid. From **Habermas**'s point of view, subjects' plans for their individual ways of life and their self-conceptions are connected with moral theory not only through possible conflicts but through the inter-subjectivity of the process of establishing one's identity and sense of self. **Habermas** recognizes that conditions of the lifeworld must cooperate with moral theory if they are to allow us be moral subjects at all. And so he criticizes all 'individualistic reductions' of morality, such as Rational Choice theory.

On Dewey's[6] belief in 'social intelligence,' Putnam argues that "Democracy is not just one form of social life among other workable forms of social life; it is the precondition for the full application of intelligence to the solution of social problems".

Only when individuals and groups within a society are free to imagine the context of their situation and alternatives to those situations are the conditions for addressing 'problematical situations' met. Quoting Dewey:

[Philosophy's] primary concern is to clarify, liberate, and extend the goods which inhere in the naturally generated functions of experience. It has no stock of information or body of knowledge peculiarly its own...Its business is to accept and to utilize for a purpose the best available knowledge of its own time and place. And this purpose is criticism of beliefs, institutions, customs, and policies with respect to their bearing upon good..." (Experience and Nature).

The traditional relations of 'the soul' reverse to 'the City.' Rather than viewing society from the perspective of rational principles inhering in individuals, public, social processes might themselves provide a way of understanding both our selves and our society. In doing this, we will see more clearly how 'practical reasoning' proceeds - in both its public and private forms.

Societies develop procedures for hearing different sides of a dispute- these require open and informed discussions and methods of negotiation. At bottom, all involve "the fair weighing and balancing of contrary arguments bearing on unavoidable and disputable issues." this, says Hampshire, forms

the essence of the adversary principle ('hear the other side') and seems to apply to our 'inner struggles' as well. While substantive justice evaluates actions and policies from a particular moral theory, procedural justice applies the adversary principle to conflicts between 'moral enemies' (deeply grounded conflicts of value). It is the latter that best fits our approach to moral philosophy and in the real world, this political ability to seek out a 'smart compromise' is to be considered a high virtue-one that expects conflicts of values and seeks procedures for regulating and refereeing the contest.

The need for such fundamental democratic institutions as freedom of thought and speech follows, from requirements of scientific procedure in general: the unimpeded flow of information and the freedom to offer and to criticize hypotheses. It offers similar arguments up to a point, but it would come to the conclusion that political opinions should rest on "expert opinion", those without expertise being required to defer to the authority of the experts (and especially to sociologists). "A class of experts is inevitably so removed from common interests as to become a class with private[6] interests and private knowledge, which in social matters is not knowledge at all." Here Dewey links up with another of these themes, that privilege inevitably produces cognitive distortion: "All special privilege narrows the outlook of those who possess it, as well as limits the development of those not having it. A very considerable portion of what is regarded as the inherent selfishness of mankind is the product of an inequitable distribution of power-inequitable because it shuts out some from the conditions which direct and evoke their capacities, while it produces a one-sided growth in those who have privilege" Thus, if a value as general as the value of democracy is to be rationally defended in the way Dewey advocates, the materials to be used in the defense cannot be circumscribed in advance. There is no one field of experience from which all

the considerations relevant to the evaluation of democracy come.

The dilemma facing the classical defenders of democracy arose because all of them presupposed that we already know our nature and our capabilities. In contrast, Dewey's view is that we don't know what our interests and needs are or what we are capable of until we actually engage in politics. A corollary of this view is that there can be no final answer to the question of how we should live, and therefore we should always leave it open to further discussion and experimentation. That is precisely why we need democracy.

At the same time, we do know that certain things stunt our nature and capacities. Dewey was well aware that equality and freedom can conflict, and that there is no easy solution when they do conflict; but he would, I think, feel that this conflict is too much emphasized in present-day political philosophy. In Dewey's[8] view, there is simply no doubt that inequality, on the scale that exists today, stunts our nature and capacities, and thus leads to unfreedom on a massive scale. If we are to talk about "conflicts between equality and freedom", we should also talk about the ways in which inequality leads to unfreedom.

The Islamic Individual and Social Divine Principle and Ethic

In our life, both personal and social, man is in need of a number of non-material objectives. Every social system requires a number of objectives which are common between individuals[9], without which social life would be impossible in its true sense. For, social life means co-operation and attainment of common goals, both material and spiritual.

The common goals of some people may be material, such as commercial or industrial companies which are formed by a number of people providing the capital and others providing the labor.

But human society cannot be managed like a company, since its basis is quite different from that of a firm; this is of course, our view, while there are others who think otherwise. For instance, there is Bertrand Russell who thinks that the basis of social ethics is only individual interest. He considers social ethics as a kind of contract between individuals, which they uphold as the best means of safeguarding their interests. Russell gives the following example to illustrate his point. He says: "I wish to get possession of my neighbor's cow, but I realize that if I do so, his reaction will be to seize mine, and another neighbor, too, may do the same. Thus, instead of getting a profit, I suffer a loss. So I consider it advisable to respect his right and let him keep his cow, so that I may keep mine. Russell believes the basis of social ethics to be a respect for individual rights. We may say robbers, too, have the same relationship, in being bound together for robbing and enforcing some kind of justice among themselves, since they cannot act alone. That is why we say that Russell's motto is at variance with his philosophy. His motto is humanitarian, but his philosophy is contrary to it. By considering self-interest as the basis of social ethics, we are making it compulsory for an individual to co-operate with others since he fears their reaction if they possess similar power and strength. But if a man reached a stage where he was sure that others were too weak to hurt him, there is no need to observe those moral principles.

Take Nixon and Brezhnev, who were considered to be equally powerful. In facing each other they calculated that it was to their interest to respect their mutual expectations. But had each of them faced a weak nation, there would have been

no necessity for such a respect. Russell's criticism of the United States in fighting Vietnam would then appear to be unacceptable! In any case, their school of thought is injudicious, for, it permits the strong to constrain the weak, If the weak have no tolerance for constraint they must try to become strong. Politically this may be true, but it is not ethics, for the weak cannot persuade the strong to act otherwise. Arbitrary conduct [9]Martyr Ayatullah Murtada Mutahhari would seem permissible for the strong in the political school of thought; any school of thought may be based on the same common material goals, but it ought to suggest other ways of checking depravity. By saying that the causes of individual aggression should be investigated and then removed, these causes are not necessarily related to human or intellectual or educational constraints.

If you ask what barrier there is against the aggression of the strong against the weak, they may say: the society should be built from the beginning in such a way that there would exist no strong or weak individuals in it. If the sources of strength and weakness are discovered and removed, then all men will be at the same level, and because of their equality of power, they will respect one another. That is possible, according to them, by doing away with private ownership of wealth/property. Getting rid of ownership will put an end to human inequalities/ transgressions A society where all men have a common material goal, will be managed like a real co-operative enterprise in which there will be no injustice.

The school of Marxism is almost such a school, where no emphasis is laid on human spirituality and there is no talk of moral conscience etc. The emphasis is on ownership which, according to them, is the source of all wickedness and oppression. private ownership is replaced by state or societal ownership, so that each individual works according to his

ability and receives compensation from the state or society in proportion to his needs. This is believed to be naturally conducive to the establishment of peace, tranquility, justice, and good morals. All evils, such as enmity, hatred and other complexes, are then expected to be removed, and all will live in brotherhood and equality.

But this is all wrong for the following reasons: It is actually shown that in societies where private ownership has been abolished, oppression, and deviation continue to exist. If the socialists were right in their reformatory claim, as soon as society is organized on a communist basis, it would be impossible for it to suffer corruption again. On the other hand, we have often witnessed that communist societies purge their own leading members from time to time. Private ownership, therefore, cannot be the only factor for gaining privileges.

Firstly, privileges do not consist only of money and deals, There are many others which are valued by human beings, For a woman being more beautiful than others is an advantage, which has nothing to do with ownership, and in a communist system, too, it has its own place.

More important than that are the privileges of rank and position. Rockefeller, who has been one of the richest men in the world, has always had a longing for being elected President of the United States. Sometimes such a desire is so strong that many a wealthy man is willing to sacrifice most of his wealth to fulfill it, and gain fame and honor as a man of power. Man has always valued being respected by others no matter whether it is through fear, or affection and devotion. Are there not men who would be in the place of Ayatollah Boroujerdi, so that people would be eager to meet them, kiss their hands, bring gifts to them, and feel honored to be received by them?

Do they not wish to be a king so that hundreds of officers and men would stand to attention before him, even if it is through fear? These things, then, are valued by human beings; otherwise they would not be willing to lose everything else to gain such an advantage.

Therefore, the root cause of human transgressions and social evils is not only wealth. There are also other factors which cannot be overcome by communism. Secondly, when other privileges are secured by their previous advantages, even in a communist society, the profits of those possessing better advantages are greater. For example, would the interest on the wealth of a Soviet leader be equal to that of a peasant, even if he represents the peasantry. A peasant may never get the experience of travel by plane even once in his life, while his leader has the best aircraft at his disposal. Therefore, it cannot be claimed that the advantage of wealth is solved by communism, nor that individuals will benefit equally from societal wealth.

Do our own civil servants benefit equally from public funds which are beyond private ownership? A man in a higher position enjoys much higher advantages than an ordinary employee.

What is significant is that even in the same communist societies, there arise needs for self- sacrifice and relinquishment of material advantages. For example, a soldier who goes to fight and is killed is not killed on the basis of mutual interest. He must be motivated by certain ideals or sentiment to be willing to offer his life for their sake. So, the most materialistic school cannot do without some kind of spiritual values, even if he turns his conviction into something to be worshipped.

A school of thought of a community based merely on material interest, cannot be really comprehensive or practical.

How do communist leaders act in connection with the principles, ideals, mottos and symbols of their system?

They act as if their system is above everything else, while in fact it is only a means of attaining life's interests. The principle of the materialistic school is like an architect's plan for a building.

There is nothing sacred about a plan; it is only an aid to construction. The best plan is subsidiary to the building for which it is drawn up. The most that can be said of a school of thought is that it is the best plan for a society, but why should the plan itself be considered as something to be worshipped? The plan is for a building, and the building is for me; so why should I be sacrificed for the plan?

Such a claim is nonsense, and yet a system is rarely regarded as only a means for building a society, It is often looked upon as something sacred for which it would be an honor to give up one's life. Its followers may think their claim baseless, yet they will have to inculcate themselves and others with a spirit of sacrifice.

Now let us see what comprise spiritual goals or values. Are they real or only suggestions to deceive simpletons? Why are they considered of much higher worth than material values?

What is a value after all? When a person performs a task willingly, it is for a purpose, a purpose which is important to him, whether it is material or spiritual. It means that purpose has an interest for him; otherwise he would never follow it. It is said that absolute purposelessness or futility is impossible.

From a material viewpoint, it is obvious that I will be

drawn to whatever is useful for me and for the continuation of my life; for, I am naturally attached to my life instinctively. The word value can be used for material things, as well as spiritual ones. A physician can have value for me. So has medicine.

Material things are in reality physical or required for the body; exercise is also needed for the body, though it is not a substance. SO! Food and exercise have value for us. Being charitable to others may have no material benefit for the doer; similarly serving society and the next generation may only be good deeds, but what are their values to him who serves?

A person makes a great effort to serve in an educational organization for the sake of the next generation, and receives no profit, and may even lose his time and the possibility of having a higher income. How should we regard this matter spiritually?

Spiritual matters are very important in human life. The question may be asked whether spirituality is confined to the faith in God, or whether it is possible to have no such faith and yet have a number of spiritual values to govern human life.

Sartre in his book on "Genuineness of Man" quotes this sentence of Dostoevsky: "If there were no God, everything would be permissible." This means that goodness and badness, truth and falsehood, treason and service all depend on whether we believe in God or not, If we have no such belief, then there will be no barrier, and everything is allowed. Is this true or not?

There is one thing peculiar to Marxists that, as materialists, they claim that they have nothing to do with spirituality, or humanity, and if they refer to sound humanism,

they imply a classless society, According to them men are either sound or deficient, and their defects arise from private ownership of property and socio-economic class differences. Once these differences are removed, human beings return to their previous state of soundness. They believe in no other perfection for man and no other progress or evolution.

What about recent schools of thought like Sartre's, which are materialistic and yet believe in spiritual values like humanism, and speak of human responsibility? On the one hand they believe man to be free from any divine sovereignty, or rule of nature, and his will does not by any means depend on the past. It is man who builds himself up, not environment, or destiny or God; so he is responsible for himself. Therefore any act chosen and done by him, must be good. In this way he makes himself a model for others to imitate, and to this extent he is responsible for the conduct of others, too.

Now let us see what this responsibility is and what it means. It is a spiritual matter, not a material one. In a materialistic school they may say, a human being has a conscience which answers questions of responsibility. If they believe that man has two personalities, an animal one and a human one, when he commits an offence, the former is chastised by the latter. That would be something. But they deny the existence of conscience. So, where is the root of responsibility?

In any case they believe in responsibility, and that is a spiritual matter. They say: "I am responsible before mankind and before the next generation". What does that mean? They belong to a materialistic school, and yet they want to build up humanism (or spirituality) and make men submit to it, they cherish this idea, but minus God. Sartre even says: "If God enters all this, then there exists no spirituality, for the basis of

it all is human liberty, and God's presence means lack of liberty, and thus responsibility without liberty of choice is meaningless.

Someone may say: "What prevents us from believing in spirituality without belief in God? For, there is a conscience inherent in man's nature, which enables him to enjoy good deeds, and abhor wicked acts. He performs good deeds not for the sake of material benefits, but simply because he enjoys doing do, as he enjoys knowledge of history or geography etc., the only profit of which for him is a greater awareness. Similarly, ethical matters give him pleasure." Epicurus, the Greek philosopher, supports this idea. Omar Khayyam, too, is said to believe in it. Hence Epicurism was applied later on to every type of pleasure-seeking unconcern. But it is claimed that in his real school, Epicurus also believed in spiritual pleasures which were more lasting and more easily secured. Love of beautiful flowers, birds, songs, etc. is another example of pleasure without having any material benefit, but giving the spirit some enjoyment.

All those remarks may be true to some extent, but they involve two limitations. Firstly, man's conscience may not be sufficiently identifiable in depth to provide a basis for a school of thought. If a human being does something only for pleasure, it is only as far as the border of death or successive imprisonment, and within the field of diversion, but not in the form of profound needs which are identified by a school of thought. No one is ready to give his life for flowers in his garden. He wants to be alive to enjoy them. Helping others gives pleasure, but no one is willing to die for it.

So, it is true that one enjoys good deeds in the depth of his conscience, and the Qur'an, too, recognizes this. However, even conscience does not provide a basis for a school of thought. It requires a much deeper faith. So, if someone

says that Imam Hussein[a] came to Karbala and offered his own life and those of his young followers, as a way of merely satisfying his urge to serve people, this is not a true judgment. This is because he was evidently motivated not only byhis conscience, but by his deeper faith.

If there is no God and no order of objectiveness, and no intrinsic connection between man and things, should we not say that there is an error in nature? Schopenhauer says: "Nature, in order to mislead people and send them after its own purpose, offers them pleasures." For example, nature desires the survival of creatures. If it orders a man to marry and work to support his wife and children, an intelligent man would not do so. But nature deceives him in such a way that he willingly seeks marriage In any case every pleasure is based on a need. We eat because our nature requires that substance, and drink and sleep for a similar reason. If we had no need, we would not resort to them.

The reason for material enjoyments is clear, but what about spiritual pleasures? If I watch an orphan feed, why should I be pleased? It has nothing to do with me, and so this pleasure is futile, for, there is no basic wisdom in it. But if we believe in an inter-relationship in world order and in a creation based on wisdom, then we consider all human beings as fellow-members of a single community, who seek the pleasure of witnessing others' wellbeing. This is so because we follow a true principle in creation. But if this pleasure is accidental and only due to one's natural make-up, again it would be futile, since it lacks a natural objective, Therefore, while we believe in a moral conscience and claim that men naturally benefit by good deeds and lose by evil ones, again our actions would be futile without a belief in God and in the goal of creation.

When we believe in a moral conscience granted by

God to man to attain a goal, then an orphan and an old woman and I will be considered fellow- members of an organization and parts of a general plan. Thus, we follow a divine will and wisdom and try to attain that goal. Then nothing is futile and everything is real and true.

Therefore every school of thought and every social system needs a number of spiritual ideas; an ideology which is above material values, and is so strong that it becomes sacred. This sacredness may be considered worthy enough by a man to sacrifice his personal life for it.

A school of thought, such as indicated above, is reminiscent of the poet Sa'di: "The wind and clouds, the sun and the firmaments are all busy working, So that you may gain a livelihood, and not spend it in negligence,"

It believes in a responsibility for every created thing. Or, as the Qur'an says [31:20]: "Do you not see that God tamed for you everything on the earth and in heaven?" Thus, each thing in creation is meant for a purpose, and it performs its task accordingly.

Therefore, man, too, has a responsibility, in an ocean of responsibilities. But a system which considers things to be without an ultimate goal, believes in no responsibility for any creature, but confines it to man. Why this should be so, is not explained.

Ideals are fundamental for every school of thought, in order to give an individual, as well as society, something to work for. And, these ideals are meaningless without a belief in the Creator and His Wisdom manifest in the Creation.

Every religion lays great emphasis on ethical aspects

of human conduct in its own unique way. Generally there is great commonality between different religions as far as moral and ethical questions are concerned. In fact to mould a moral character is the most fundamental function of religion.

All other functions are subsidiary to it. But it is also true that each religion has unique way of doing it and every religion puts differing emphasis on different aspects of human morality. Islam is also unique in this respect. It has its own ethical values and moral concepts, which are universal as well as specific to Islam.

Islam has a unique morality of its own. It puts a great deal of emphasis, for example, on equality and justice and emphasizes the dignity of all human beings. However, there are also universal moral values, which Islam lays emphasis on. The Qur'an gives us the concept of what it calls 'amal salih' which, translated into English, would mean 'good deeds'.

But this translation does not adequately convey the meaning. The key word here is 'salih'. The root of the word is 'slh' from which are derived many words with the meaning to be good, to repair, to mend, to improve, to be righteous, to be efficient, to be suitable, peace and friendliness, reconciliation etc.

Thus it will be seen that 'amal salih' leads to a society which is reformed, good, efficient, suitable (to humanity), improved and above all which is peaceful and friendly to all human beings. The Qur'an uses the word 'amal salih' repeatedly. For a moral conduct, according to the Qur'an, 'amal salih' is very necessary. In chapter 103 the Qur'an says, "By the time! Surely man is in loss, except those who believe and do good work ('amal salih'), and exhort one another to Truth and exhort one another to patience."

Thus the key ethical concepts are 1) 'amal salih'; 2) to be truthful and 3) to observe patience. One can say that these are key elements of Islamic ethic. Man is surely at a loss but those who perform good deeds and are truthful and patient would not be. Thus for 'amal salih' truth and patience are highly necessary. One can say that this is a most comprehensive statement of the Qur'anic ethic.

Here, an important question is: why so much emphasis on 'patience'? Why are truth and patience made integral to each other? Because to be truthful is a most arduous and challenging act. One has to face great problems in order to be truthful. One will have to face opposition, even intrigues, from vested interests. It is therefore necessary to be steadfast and patient and face all these challenges with fortitude and courage. This requires a great deal of patience. Hence the Qur'an lays so much emphasis on being steadfast and patient to follow the path of truth. Only a man of great patience can be truthful.

Truth is a universal value in all religions. Some religions like Hinduism also maintain that truth (Satyam) is God. The Qur'an also elevates truth (Haq) to the status of being God. Allah has been described as Haq in the Qur'an. No human being can claim to be Truth in an absolute sense. Mansur al-Hallaj, the famous sufi saint who claimed to be ana'l haq (I am the Truth) was hanged because it meant claiming to be God. Thus truth has great significance in the Islamic ethical system.

Here it should be remembered that truth is not mere conformity with observable facts as in empirical sciences. Truth in moral sciences, especially in religion, has moral or ideological dimensions which are not necessarily verifiable. It is this aspect of moral or religious truth, which separates religion from science. However, it should also be borne in mind that truth should not be contrary to observable facts. All one can say is

that truth, in moral and religious discourse, is not mere conformity with fact. It is more than mere conformity with fact.

In the Islamic system of morality, as in some other religions too, it is the establishment of a moral society that is very fundamental. The emphasis of Islamic teachings is not personal salvation but establishment of a society that is just and free of zulm (oppression). The Qur'an lays great emphasis on 'adl' (justice). It is the central value in the Islamic ethic. The Qur'an says "Be just; it is closest to being pious."[5:8].

Thus in Islam there is no concept of piety without being just. The opposite of 'adl' is 'zulm' (oppression). Zulm is derived from the root 'zlm' that has several shades of meaning i.e. to do wrong, injustice, darkness, iniquity, oppression etc. The Qur'an often uses it in the sense of wrong doing and oppression.

Islam basically lays emphasis on establishing a just society free of all forms of oppression. The Prophet also says that a society can live with unbelief (kufr) but not with oppression (zulm). Thus Islamic ethic conceives of a society which will be free of all forms of exploitation and oppression. Islam basically is a non-violent religion. It does not approve of violence at all. The most basic attribute of Allah is mercy and compassion.

But Islam approves of violence (in a highly controlled sense, of course) only to remove zulm, the structures of oppression.. Thus the Qur'an says, "And how could you refuse to fight in the cause of Allah and of the utterly helpless men and women and children who are crying, O our Sustainer! Lead us forth (to freedom) out of this land whose people are oppressors, and raise for us, out of Thy grace, a protector,

and raise for us, out of Thy grace, one who will bring us succour!". (4:75)

Thus the Qur'an's emphasis is on fighting against injustice, against oppression. Everyone has the right to live in peace in one's own country. If someone tries to throw them out just because they have their own inner conviction, they cannot be thrown out of their homeland. And if someone tries to do that, one has to stand up and fight against this injustice. Islam does not permit violence in matters of preaching religion.

It believes, as is obvious from the above verse also, in full freedom of conscience. In fact if this freedom is violated then Islam permits the use of regulated force. As for the preaching of religion it has to be done only through 'goodly exhortation and wisdom' (16:125). There is no question of using violence for that purpose. If someone does that it is against the Divine injunction. It is zulm.

There is much misunderstanding about the inter-connection between Islam and violence. Islam does not approve of violence except in certain extraordinary circumstances. The word Islam has been derived from the root 'slm' which means to escape danger, to be free from fault, to deliver or hand over, to commit oneself to the will of God, to lay down arms, to establish peace. Thus the best meaning of the word Islam will be to establish or promote peace in harmony with the Will of Allah (s.w.t.).

Thus a Muslim is not a true Muslim if he commits acts of violence either for the spread of Islam or for purposes of achieving power be it in the name of Islam. His primary duty is to establish peace so that justice prevails and humanity prospers. The Prophet has also said that the best form of jihad is to speak the truth in the face of a tyrant ruler. Tyranny could

be both physical and psychological.

The Qur'an says that no human life can be taken except in keeping with law. Thus we find in the Qur'an that "whoever kills a person, unless it be for manslaughter or for mischief in the land, it is as though he had killed entire humanity. And whoever saves a life, it is as though he had saved the lives of all men." (5:32) The Qur'an, it will be seen, is against violence against humanity. It could be resorted to only for a just cause and that, too, only after great deliberation and if all other doors are closed.

It is true that the Qur'an has permitted retaliatory violence (for qisas). But the Qur'anic statements should also be seen at various levels. At the level of the Arabian society, with its customs, norms and traditions, permitting qisas (retaliatory violence) was necessary. The Qur'an had to deal with a given society.

But at the higher moral level retaliation is not a good moral practice. It may be necessary in a society which is not highly morally developed. But in a morally developed society the virtue of pardon is the highest virtue. There is great moral worth in the act of pardon. One of Allah's attributes is that He pardons. He is 'Ghaffar'. He is the forgiver. Forgiving is a great moral virtue.

Retaliation may be human but forgiving is divine. Retaliation amounts to giving vent to ones anger but forgiving amounts to suppressing ones rage and suppressing one's anger or rage is described as a great virtue by the Qur'an. Those who suppress their anger are called 'kazim al-ghayz'. On a moral level the Qur'an deals with this issue in the verse 3:133 which reads, "Those who spend in ease as well as in adversity and those who restrain (their) anger and pardon men. And

Allah loves doers of good (to others).

This verse (3:133) deals with the moral aspect whereas the verse dealing with the question of qisas deals with the prevailing practice. The Qur'an's intention is not to perpetuate the practice of retaliation but to build a human character on the basis of restraining anger and forgiving.

To absolutise the verse on retaliation and to maintain that it is the ultimate divine will is to do injury to the spirit of the Qur'an which is to cultivate higher morality among human beings. It is the verse 3:133 which represents this higher morality. This is further reinforced by Allah's own attributes of being Merciful and Compassionate on the one hand, and the repeated assertion by the Qur'an of the concept of 'ihsan' (doing good to others). Thus it will be seen that the Islamic scripture does not morally approve even retaliatory violence without at least some justification.

Thus the question of violence has to be dealt with great caution as far as the Islamic tradition is concerned. The Qur'an upholds non-violence and exhorts Muslims to use wisdom and benevolence (hikmah and ihsan) while dealing with others. Whatever violence may have taken place in the Islamic history it is Muslims and the then Arab society and their norms that should be held responsible and not the teachings of the Qur'an.

It is highly necessary to make this distinction in order to properly understand the essence of the Islamic ethic. Certain concessions to the situation should not be mixed up with the transcendental ethical norms given by the Qur'an. In this connection it should also be borne in mind that the Qur'an's repeated advocacy to fight (qatilu) is not to give permanence to violence or to glorify it; but in the situation the Qur'an was dealing with, there was absolutely no other alternative but to

fight. Inter tribal wars went on for years.

Violence, in other words, was very much in the air. Also, there were powerful vested interests who were out to destroy Islam in its infancy and to eliminate the Prophet physically. Any moral discourse would not have influenced such people. The only alternative was to first defeat or subdue such elements and then to build the new moral human from out of the believers. It was a very difficult task indeed.

If there has been bloodshed, and there has been, in the history of Islam the problem lies with the type of the society rather than the quality of the religious teachings. Most of us read into religion what suits our interests. In other words, we often use religion for our own purposes. There is abundant proof in history if we care to examine it carefully. Buddhism, Jainism and Christianity laid a great deal of stress on compassion, non-violence and love and yet these religions put together could not build a society based on these values. Society still is full of violence, conflict and clash of interests.

However, there is one more aspect we have to deal with to clear Islam of the charge that it promotes violence. It can be said that the Buddhist, Jain or the Christian scriptures do not permit or talk of violence where as the Islamic scripture does. But here one has to keep in mind the historical and social situation those scriptures were dealing with and which the Islamic scripture was called upon to deal with.

Here one has to refer to the Meccan context also. In Meccan verses there is absolutely no mention of meeting violence with violence. Therefore some of the religious thinkers like Mehmoud Mohammad Taha of Sudan have laid emphasis on the Meccan Islam. The Muslims were a persecuted minority in Mecca and they bore with great patience all the persecution

let loose on them. Islam in Mecca was a great spiritual force. Those who lay emphasis on Meccan Islam would argue that had Muslims not migrated to Madina, Islam would have remained a passive spiritual force like Buddhism or Christianity.

There is a great deal of truth in this argument. But there are some problems, if not flaws, in it. Firstly, even in Meccan stage Islam was not a religion of individual salvation. Right from the beginning Islam laid great emphasis on building community. The concept of ummah was a collective concept. The concept of the community was always at the heart of the Islamic movement. In the tribal society in which Islam arose in Mecca, the individual was always subordinate to the collectivity. If Islam had laid emphasis on individual spiritual salvation, the Meccan tribal lords would have hardly bothered to oppose it.

However, Islam had a social agenda. It aimed at reforming not only the individual but also the whole society. It knew that the roots of exploitation and oppression lay in social structure, not only in individual avarice. So it aimed at transforming the society along with the individual. If the Meccan verses are examined carefully the transformatory agenda of Islam becomes very clear. It forcefully attacks accumulation of wealth and exhorts the believers to spend their wealth on the poor and needy orphans and widows. The rich of Mecca were neglecting them. Thus, the Islamic agenda even at the Meccan stage was to set up a society which was based on socio-economic justice. Look at this powerful denunciation of accumulation of wealth in one of the Meccan chapters[104]:

- Woe to every slanderer, defamer!
- Who amasses wealth and counts it
- He thinks that his wealth will make him abide.

- Nay, he will certainly be hurled into the crushing disaster;
- And what will make thee realise what the crushing disaster is?
- It is the Fire kindled by Allah,
- Which rises over the hearts.
- Surely it is closed on them,
- In extended columns.

More such chapters and verses could be cited from the Meccan verses. Thus it becomes clear that Islam was attacking the very roots of social and economic exploitation and trying to lay the foundations for a just society. The Meccan lords were, therefore, determined to throw out such a movement, lock, stock and barrel.

They, therefore, severely persecuted Muslims and forced them to migrate. When the Prophet migrated to Madina he seriously busied himself in laying the foundation of a just society. In doing so he became a threat not only to the Jews of Madina whom he had given full religious freedom in his covenant with them (known as Mithaq-e-Madina) but also continued to remain a threat to the Meccan vested interests.

The Meccan vested interests were determined to thwart any attempt to set up a just society even in Medina, as a successful experiment in Medina could pose a serious challenge to their own interests. They were lording over an exploitative system. Thus they went in full force and attacked Medina. The Prophet was again faced with a violent situation and had to defend himself and urge his followers to fight for the defense of Medina and for the defense of Islam.

The Jews and hypocrites betrayed him and thus he had to face internal strife also. He had to mobilize forces to fight

the Jews with whom he had no religious quarrel. The Jews, who were otherwise free to practice their own religion, felt threatened that they could no longer dominate the Madinese market. The migrants from Mecca too were expert traders and were now posing challenge to the dominance of the Jews.

The Prophet of Islam had hardly any choice. In an attempt to set up a just society based on high ethical standards, integrity of character and spiritual values he had to take on most powerful vested interests out to wreck his movement. Thus violence appears in the history of Islam not out of choice but out of compulsion. It is certainly not prescriptive violence but an imposed one.

Now as for the instances of the Meccan model of Islam we do come across them in history, particularly in Sufi Islam. Sufi Islam is essentially built around the theory of individual salvation. A Sufi saint is engaged more in individual character building and spiritual practices and hence his whole emphasis on 'ibadat' (prayers). The Prophet of Islam, it is interesting to note, was a perfect synthesis of a Sufi and an activist engaged in building a just society. That is why the Sufis consider the Holy Prophet as their Master from whom they derive their spiritual practices.

But in the later history of Islam we find either the Sufis or the activists or the 'Ulama (theologians) who theorized on the basis of the Qur'an and available reports of the Prophet's sayings and practices. The problem with the 'Ulama was that they froze Islam in its first century and lost track of its fundamental vision. Thus they could not keep pace with the changing society or new challenges emerging from different historical situations. The Prophet combined in himself both the Meccan and the Medinese Islam and thus he became a perfect model to follow.

However, for those who came after him the Meccan Islam lost all relevance and they became more involved with building up a political community. The overemphasis in history of Islam on building up a political community created several problems and Islam became politicized rather than spiritualized. Hence its critics usually maintain that Islam is integrally associated with power.

However, it would be a serious mistake to associate Islam with power. Islam, like any other religion, has a strong spiritual and ethical base. Its basic emphasis on the ethical foundations of individual action cannot be ignored. The 'ibadat' (which include praying, fasting, giving alms and performing hajj - pilgrimage) are very central to Islam. It is these 'ibadat' which, according to the Qur'an, lead to inner peace (sakinat al-qalb). Thus the Qur'an says "He it is who sent down inner peace into the hearts of the believers that they might add faith to their faith."[48:4]. Inner peace and spiritual solace are the very foundation stones of an ethical conduct.

Here I would like to point out that compassion, like in Buddhism is very central to Islam also. The key word for this is 'rehmah'. This word has been derived from its root 'rhm' which means 'womb of the mother'. And one of the ethical concept of Islam is 'sila-i-rahmi' i.e. maintaining close relationship with those connected with one's mother's womb i.e. close relatives.

Since mother nurtures and sustains life, she is more compassionate than man. Thus compassion and mother's womb are derived from the same root in Arabic. God is most compassionate (arham al-rahimin) as he is the creator and sustainer of all life. His Mercy and Compassion envelop everything in this universe[7:156]. Thus a Muslim who worships Allah has to display compassion by all his actions. True worship

does not mean merely physically bowing down before Allah.

It means bowing down to His attributes and to imbibe these attributes in ones life. Thus a true Muslim is compassionate to all forms of life and he is committed to remove suffering from this earth. In other words, a Muslim is quite sensitive to the sufferings of all living beings and he should never be a cause of the suffering of others. The Prophet is reported to have said that a good Muslim is one at whose hands others are safe.

The Islamic prayers ('ibadat') make Muslims sensitive to the suffering of others. The salat makes him sensitive to the equality of all human beings since all Muslims, irrespective of their social status have to stand in one line to pray; fasting during the month of Ramadan makes him sensitive to others' hunger and thirst and zakah makes him conscious of others' financial needs. And we need these prime virtues in human beings to make them righteous and conscious of their duties to other human beings. The Qur'an also lays great stress on spiritual freedom and accepts different ways of worship. Spiritual freedom is the very basis of a free human person responsible to himself as well as to the whole of humanit[10].

Conclusion

Rawls' Political Liberalism is a rich and suggestive account of how to justify a scheme of principles for ordering the basic structure of society. Clearly no one else has produced a work that matches the scope of **Rawls'** theory. But it still leaves us with some pressing problems. One of the problems that **Rawls** must answer is that of providing a critical justification. By calling justice as fairness a political conception, **Rawls** has abandoned the attempt to provide such a critical justification. But in doing so, one has to wonder what reasons

one would have to ultimately accept the political conception, other than merely pragmatic ones. Another problem that **Rawls'** theory presents is that it is not clear that justice as fairness would be able to achieve an overlapping consensus of reasonable comprehensive views. For example, it is not clear that utilitarians could ever accept **Rawls'** priority of the first principle over the second. In the end **Rawls'** new theory has not brought us any closer to a resolution of the issues that he has raised over the past twenty-five years. But Political Liberalism is still an important work in contemporary political philosophy- one rivaling that of A Theory of Justice.

We are not blindly focusing on our theological thinking without any logical background; it is very clear that Islamic Ethics are the only remedy for mankind. It is true that all religions teach almost the same things, but above all, Islam is the last and the only medicine that can cure all the sickness of this world. East and West have nothing in comparison to the Islamic world. They might have their propaganda machineries, but up to when will these machines work with their standards of living? The world is experiencing a standard life-style minus religion, in which capital is the unit of measurement. **What is the reason for the creation of the universe?** There is a governing body of the world by the name of The **"United Nations"**; suggestively the name of this world organization **(United Nations)** should be changed to the **"United Nations of America"** so that the "United Nations of America" with its **Ethical Standardization's Manner** along with its **progenies** could govern the **"Life world"** just like **Pharaoh**, instead of **God's Divine and Heavenly Ethics**.

There is much misunderstanding about the inter-connection between Islam and violence. Islam does not approve of violence except in certain extraordinary circumstances. The word Islam has been derived from the root

'slm' which means to escape danger, to be free from fault, to deliver or hand over, to commit oneself to the will of God, to lay down arms, to establish peace. Thus the best meaning of the word Islam would be to establish or promote peace in harmony with the Will of Allah (s.w.t).

Truth is a universal value in all religions. Some religions like Hinduism also maintain that truth (Satyam) is God. The Qur'an also elevates truth (Haq) to the status of being God. Allah (s.w.t) has been described as Haq in the Qur'an. No human being can claim to be Truth in an absolute sense. Mansur al-Hallaj, the famous sufi saint who claimed to be ana'l haq (I am the Truth) was hanged because it meant claiming to be God. Thus truth has a great significance in the Islamic ethical system. The **"United Nations of America"** has given to itself the right to be the truthful government on earth and thinks that it is the only country in this universe with value in all aspects of life, hence it has a lot to learn about the purpose of the creation of the human being in the eyes of Islam.

Footnotes

[1] John Rawls, A Theory of Justice, Cambridge, MA: Harvard Press, 1971. Cited in text as Theory.

[2] John Rawls, Political Liberalism, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1993. Cited in text as PL.

[3] Rex Martin, "Rawls's New Theory of Justice," Chicago-Kent Law Review, Volume 69: 737-761, 1994. Cited in text as Martin

[4] Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996).

[5] Universität Bamberg 96045 Bamberg

[6] (Dewey and Tufts, Ethics, pp. 358-386).

[7] Dr. Antje Gimmler Lehrstuhl für Philosophie II ab 1. Nov.: Philipps Universität Marburg Fb. 03 Gesellschaftswissenschaften und Philosophie

[8] Dr. Antje Gimmler Lehrstuhl für Philosophie II ab 1. Nov.: Philipps Universität Marburg Fb. 03 Gesellschaftswissenschaften und Philosophie

[9] Martyr Ayatullah Murtada Mutahhari

[10] Asghar Ali Engineer

"THE NEED OF MAN FOR SPIRITUALITY"

Dr. Jaime Baltazar Ramirez

Summary:

The chaotic world today is at a crossroads and probably facing the most crucial and difficult phase in the survival of humanity. Our world is in grave danger due to the weapons of mass destruction in the arsenals of the western superpowers still bullying the poor countries of the world.

Today, the need of the hour for man to survive is societal change and more emphasis on spirituality. The world's problems cannot be solved by the corrupt national governments with their poor decision-makers that presently rule most of the poorer countries. People around the world, regardless of creed, color, orientation, race, and religion, are crying for spiritualism and for lasting peace, coupled with sanity and the rule of law and justice. No country in this world is safe except, perhaps the so-called powerful nation – the United States- the financier of terrorism around the world.

What is needed is the sense of human love and true compassion for the hapless children of Allah on this mother earth, with the view to safeguard and protect the future of our children's children. The hope of the world today lies in the children of Allah, for they are the keepers of hope for humankind under the aegis of spiritualism. They are the hope for change and for a better, more spiritually oriented world.

As the future leaders of the world, the children are duty bound to work for peace, for man's dignity, and for the honor of the human race.

As tomorrow's leaders, let us continue the journey that our fathers started before us toward a world of changes and new ideas. Let us work for a world that is more inclined to the spiritual, more concerned and willing to strive for human dignity and lasting peace through non-violent means.

We need to improve human lives, and to alleviate the suffering of the poor.

Let us save the world from destruction and stop the madness of leaders who are interested only in self-aggrandizement. For the sake of all mankind let us move forward to change and reform the world and guard the future of our children's children. Let us strive for peace and try to find a solution for global warming and climate change.

The time has come for all of us to reiterate the finer qualities of human life with a spiritual outlook for this, our modern society. Our true nationality is mankind and we live in one world.

Let us continue our long and hazardous journey for peace as expounded by the UNESCO former secretary general

Federico Mayor, who said:

"Lasting peace is a prerequisite for the exercise of all human rights and duties. It is not the peace of silence of men and women who by choice or constraint remain silent. It is the peace of freedom and therefore of just laws, of happiness, of equality and solidarity, in which all children count, live together and share."

These are the challenges and effects of spiritualism in this new millennium for sustainable development and struggle for human dignity and change. So let us always be with Allah night and day and for all eternity.

THE NEED OF MAN FOR SPIRITUALITY

In the name of God the Beneficent, the Merciful and Compassionate.

"At present, the memory and auspicious name of the grand Prophet is more alive than ever, and this is an instance of divine order, ideology and favor.

"Today, Muslim ummah and our nation are more than ever in need of the grand Prophet; of his guidance, of the good things and warnings of his wise message and spirituality and the kindness he taught to human beings.

"Today, the Muslim Prophet's lesson to his ummah and all humanity is to build up knowledge and become powerful; it is the lesson of ethics and dignity; it is the lesson

of passion, jihad and resistance. So this year will be naturally called after the auspicious name of the Grand Prophet."

Ayatollah Khomeini
The Supreme Leader of the
Islamic Revolution of Iran

The teachings of the great leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran – Ayatollah Khomeini, is the overriding challenge of the new millennium for all men and the women of the great Persian civilization and the whole world: responsibility for building a culture of peace and not the culture of violence and death.

The challenge of the wise and great leader, Khomeini of the Islamic Republic of Iran is spirituality and not war and violence. We are all called upon by him to protect life: to defend and respect the sanctity of life everywhere. The challenge also calls on us to protect the lives of the unborn, give real help to mothers in need of support and assistance, and to defend the aged; to strive for purity, and resist the pressure and temptation to ignore the most fundamental truths of spirituality, and to strive for a better quality of life for all.

In our challenging role of promoting the culture of life and lasting peace in the new millennium, we are to draw our very own strength from the Holy Quran and the time-honored teachings of the great Ayatollah Khomeini.

It is only in the essence of spirituality that human beings are able to understand fully the unchanging mystery of life, the mystery of the human person, of the whole world and of human history. A spirituality based on the everlasting teaching of Allah and the verses in the Holy Qur'an. As the true children

of Allah on earth, let us always pray and ask the all powerful and loving God in Heaven, and say vocally and spiritually:

> "It is right that we should give you thanks and glory;
> You are the one God, one loving and living God;
> "Through all eternity, you live in an
> unapproachable Light.

Source of life and goodness, you have created all things, to fill your creatures with you and every blessing and lead us all to the joyful vision of your light.

Countless hosts of Angels stand before you to do your will; they look upon your splendor and praise you, Lord, night and day.

United with them, and in the name of every creature under heaven, we too praise your Glory, o powerful God of mankind!

Allah, our living and loving Creator demands that we make moral and spiritual choices as to the directions we are going to take in our life on earth, declaring: "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live". These solemn words of long ago echo down through the ages and tell us what we must do to ensure the survival of our nations by demonstrating religious and spiritual commitments. For it is a brutal truth, the lesson of history and external pressures. Moral decay, combined with rising violence, lawlessness, and intellectual apathy, leads invariably to the disintegration of the structures that make civilization…from ancient times, the presence of the pathology of decadence is unmistakable and

in times of trouble it is imperative that we heed these warnings for the sake of our children's children.

This is part and parcel of true commitment and closer relations with Allah, our only living and loving God, both spiritually, morally and intellectually. More so now that many of the children of Allah are forgetting Him and no longer respect His cardinal laws. As verse 18 says: "Of Rock who begot you, you are unmindful and have forgotten the living and loving God who fathered you".

In this world, what we need is the teaching of Allah and the Prophet Muhammad. God must always be the center of our lives and we must always rely on him.

What this world needs is spirituality in the context of peace and solidarity in order to solve the conflict and the tensions facing us today. This means that we must be serious in our search for truth and social justice and in affirming the dual structure of human existence on earth. This is in the light of the changing conditions and dimensions affecting our environment and through our very own interactions with the Spirit of Allah and possibly actualizing God's will in our very own lives and in the Muslim and Christian communities, regardless of color, creed, religion, and status in life.

In fact, Seyyed Housein Nasr in Islamic Spirituality, categorically states:

"Spirituality in Islam is inseparable from the awareness of the one, of Allah, and a life lived according to His will. The core of the Islamic faith is the principle of unity (Al-Tawhid); and Islamic Spirituality in all its plurality is determined by tawhid. Spirituality is tawhid and the degree of the spiritual

attainment achieved by any human being is none other than the degree of his or her realization of tawhid."

Moreover, the Arabic word for spirituality is ruhhaniyah, and is derived from ruh or spirit. Spirituality concerns what Allah has revealed or what he has commanded (Sura 17:85), and as such, spirituality "possesses inwardness and interiority, and is identified with the real, permanent and abiding rather than the transient and passing.

In the context of the Holy Qur'an, it involves a sense of the presence of the grace and blessing (barakah) which flows in the veins of the Universe and within the life of man to the extent that he dedicates himself to loving God.

Furthermore, the great essence of the Islamic spirituality of man is more or less to realize the principle of unity and peace as expressly stated in the Holy Qur'an and exemplified in the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad for more than 1,300 years of Islamic History. Thus, spirituality has rejuvenated and produced countless men and women of a saintly nature who have fulfilled the goal of human existence and brought joy to other human beings on earth.

The needs and challenges of the hour are the spiritual powers of God, the great Almighty. We need his power and his light to lead us out of the darkness, and to govern our lives. We need his help in solving the many problems that threaten our world, like climate change, and global warming; we need his strength with which to face and deal with disasters like tsunamis and cyclones, not to mention the problems we ourselves have created; we need him to lead us to harmony and lasting peace.

To understand human existence, we must first understand the awesome cause and ultimate source – the Spirit of Allah.

The Good News (March-April 2008, p. 20) says:

"Ever since the creation of the Universe, Allah has used His Spirit to sustain and maintain the universe — everything from the largest galaxies to the smallest galaxies (sub-atomic particles).

All creation functions perfectly according to the laws of nature – which Allah put in force and keeps in force."

Moreover, when we receive the infusion of his Holy Spirit, it brings with it righteous spiritual attributes that enable and empower us to develop the fruit of God's character in the growth of man. The Holy Qur'an guides from without and the Holy Spirit guides us from within. As a whole, Allah's spirit imparts desire, will power, motivation, love, truth and common understanding.

Thus the world today is characterized by innovative ideas for change in the field of culture, tradition, and, spirituality. In this perspective, the great Islamic Republic of Iran is now on the forefront of reviving and strengthening its cultural relations with the different countries in the whole world for lasting peace rather than violence.

This great nation is, today, considered both a modern and ancient country; the land of the great poets; of a culture of great diversity and of art, both ancient and modern. The great Persian civilization shows the national symbol – its flag composed of three equal horizontal bands of green (top), white (center) and red (bottom); the added Islamic emblem represents

the word "Allah" in the shape of a tulip, and written on the red and the green bands in white Arabic script are the words "Allah Akbar" meaning "God is Great."

The people of Iran are on their way to national greatness despite great trials and hardship. They are in the process of building a free and independent nation in the light of the great Mohammed's wise guidance.

The Iranian people as well as the rest of the world are tired of violence and deceit that cause mass destruction in our society. We need to revive a dynamic concept of spirituality that will help bring about changes for the better in our societies.

In these perilous times, we need to strive toward regaining the correct values that will bring about lasting peace and genuine democracy, and we can only achieve this by returning to spirituality – to the things that connect us to our Creator, the source of everlasting peace and all good things. For we are witnessing significant events in the history of mankind. As Jesus Christ tells his followers in Luke 21:28: "Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads because your redemption is near…"

The Iranian people are witnessing the birth pains of societal reforms and democratization under the auspicious guidance of the Grand Prophet. To address the ever-rising expectations and aspirations of the Iranian people, all respectable and responsible sectors of the Iranian society are working together and playing a vital role in achieving a sustainable development towards a better quality of life for everyone. It must be stressed that Iranian society is a market place of ideas with respect to and in terms of genuine reforms. Social and political institutions are expected to establish a harmonious balance and to keep abreast of the tempo of global

change. The Iranian society's struggle for survival requires the guidance of the Great Prophet. They need his guidance in reviving, preserving and promoting the great Persian civilization. This is the source of the Iranian people's formidable strength in their revolutionary struggle against western forces inside and outside Iran. The Iranians have added theirs to the global voice against western imperialism and neocolonialism.

As a whole, the powerful Allah, the compassionate, will always guide the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran wherever they may be in the national march to greatness.

For the Holy Qur'an (Verse 55) says:

"Allah has promised such of you as believers and do good works that He will surely make to succeed on Earth as He caused those who were before them to succeed others; and will give them in exchange for safety after their fear..."

This Islamic nation will continue its struggle for lasting peace, justice and freedom with the intention of putting an end to the bullying tactics of the rich and powerful nations against their poorer counterparts all over the world. The entire masses must rally to the call of the Iranian revolution.
The old Persian civilization, which is their heritage, serves as a beacon of faith and of national identity for the people in these trying times.

The True Meaning of Iranian Cultural Heritage

In this paper, we will attempt to discuss the importance of Iranian culture and their historic legacy in order to discover and fully understand the impact of Iran's cultural heritage on

the rest of the world. The civilization of the great Persian people has remained intact, untouched by the ways of Western culture.

The Iranian people's way of life, focuses on improvement through mental or physical training, education and refinement. The culture of Iran is based primarily on the kind of education obtained by the people from birth to death in their Islamic nation in accord with Allah's mandate. There is also the need to develop and put into practice the true concept of peace as part of the culture of the Iranian people towards modernization both in and outside the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iranian culture is passed on from generation to generation by means of learning and continuous training. There is a need for the establishment of more institutions to preserve this culture of the Iranian people for the coming generations in the multi-faceted phase of modern society in the Islamic world. These institutions should have the mandate to transmit experience and knowledge as part of the educative process for the Iranian masses, who are suffering harassment from Western colonialists.

From this nation's historic records, we learn that there actually exist three forms of culture: the illiterate tribal culture, the literate culture based on learning, i.e. writing and reading; and the literate scientific culture, which is more advanced than the other two.

Culture, according to Iranian anthropologists include much more than such things as literature, music, traditions, customs and beliefs. If we keep on changing and adapting to the new culture of one system, then we usually encounter the so-called "culture shock". Such would the case between the present and the old generations of the Iranian people. However,

the old Iranian culture is still the mainstay of the Iranian people rather than the new culture passing from one system to another. As a result, there are various cultural patterns to be integrated into the passing and changing modern society of Iran.

Moreover, the behavior of one group in the country differs from that of other groups and this difference in behavior is practically determined by the culture of the people in that society. All these culture systems, as well as the other sub-cultures of Iranian Society past and present, are interlinked with the other cultures of Iran and the Islamic world known as the "great Persian civilization of olden times". These are further linked with the interrelationship of culture traits in the modern and changing society of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Unfortunately, this country today is facing political "crisis" due to continuous American intervention into its national interests and affairs.

Through the centuries, ideas, practices, beliefs and Iranian traditions were handed down from generation to generation, usually moving from one ethnic Iranian society to another. The culture and sub-cultures of Iran are changing, and they are promoting, with great impact, progress and prosperity in all aspects of human society.

Admittedly, Iranian society continues to imbibe new influences from foreign cultures, brought about by their interaction with their Arab neighbors, who are friendly with the western world. Since Iran cannot isolate itself from the rest of the world, some changes in their culture are bound to take place; the influence of western culture on theirs is therefore inevitable. This is all part of the process of change. The western powers are still practicing their imperialistic tactics of colonial subjugation and domination. They have a hold on the Arab world, and they would like to control nations like the great

Islamic Republic of Iran. These rich and powerful nations, acting as colonial masters, are out to continue their subjugation and hold over the poor countries through harassment, and by pressuring these countries' governments to follow their dictates. The American leaders should respect the cultural identity, the sovereignty and integrity of Islamic nations, such as Iran.

Due to the continuous meddling of the western powers, the Islamic world faces all kinds of problems. However, the Iranian people, keeping in mind their own genuine historic legacies, are determined to chart their own destiny as an independent nation in the community of nations and to maintain their own identity as a free and freedom-loving sovereign Islamic nation dedicated to working for lasting world peace.

The Western powers would like to totally manipulate Iranian culture, language, and beliefs, (historic legacies through the centuries) to serve their own-vested interests and to control the peoples in the Arab nations. However, the Iranians have imbibed their own language and culture in their hearts and minds, and so Iranian culture can withstand the onslaught of western cultural invasion. Iranian culture will never give way and inter-link with the capitalist-oriented (or disoriented culture) of the West. The weak culture of the United States and those of her allies cannot be compared with the strong culture of the Iranian people, a culture that has undergone all kinds of dynamic processes throughout the centuries.

The Hidden Agenda of the Western Powers vs. Iran

Due to large-scale attempts by the west to introduce western culture into Iranian society, as well as continuous western political intrusions into the affairs of Iran, it is high time for the people of this Islamic nation to unite and fight

those who would undermine and subjugate the Iranian historic legacies of culture and language. It is time for them to fight for a free and independent nation based on the teachings of Prophet Mohammed in the Holy Qur'an. The spiritual leaders and the people, as well as the policy makers of this Islamic nation must be serious in their fight against the ongoing cultural onslaught on the great Iranian legacies and traditions that have survived for many centuries now. They must not to succumb to the western-directed culture tsunami of control, domination and subjugation in all its forms.

Now is the time for the people of Iran to remain true, united and sincere in protecting their very own culture and historic legacies. Without wasting anymore time, they must act now to maintain the status quo and go back to the roots of the great Persian civilization. They must move toward the true light at the end of the tunnel, which would be progress, prosperity and freedom from western domination and exploitation, intervention, plunder and total subjugation of all the historic legacies of Iran, past and present.

From this perspective, let me quote the kind and very analytical observations of an Islamic African writer, Ayadele (E.A. 1998:3C-34):

> "...The truth that should ring incessantly in the ears of the educated reformers is that...to date the greatest disservice of the misleaders and mis-builders of the African-Iranian edifice is their failure to recognize the cornerstone status of the nation's cultural heritage built through the centuries.
>
> "For the soul of a nation, its pride, its quintessenence and distinctiveness, is its cultural heritage, its birth-

right and self identity, the past to merge with the present and the future: the transcendental corporate. "(The) achievement of a people through which continuity is transmitted from generation to generation is the trump-card in their dealings with other peoples and the primary reason for their being respectable by truly educated, unbiased and unprejudiced citizenry of the democratic nation..."

Moreover, there are many political, cultural, economic and political dimensions in the ever-changing Iranian cultural heritage, particularly the impact of religious values and cultural beliefs. There is as well the great contributions of the Persian language and the literary works of the famous Iranian writers and spiritual scholars (scientific and empirical), in the context of Iranian national identity.

This is the challenge to modern-day Iran and it is high time that the Iranian leaders and the entire people come together and unite as one nation, to work for the total revival of the great Persian cultural heritage, language, and the distinct Iranian identities. They must strive to stop the continuing crusade of the Western powers to destroy Iranian culture, language, values, religion and ethnic traditions that are the way of life of the people of the great Persian nation —— the Islamic republic of Iran.

This is the big and monumental task of the Iranian people and their leaders. They must protect Iranian resources and preserve their true and genuine ethnic traditions and cultures for their children and their children's children in the in the coming years. The power hungry and bloodthirsty nations of the west would like to grab for themselves the rich natural resources of the great Iranian nation and those of the Arab world. Why interfere into the workings and systems of

Iran? Why not respect the dignity of Iran as a sovereign nation, and acknowledge Iranian national identity within the mandate of the community of nations all over the world?

For in the Islamic world, the Muslims are duty bound to believe that God has shared his words and messages and teachings through the Holy Qur'an. God (Allah) is the one loving God and the creator of the entire Universe for all of us, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Protestants, Hindus, and other sects. Allah is our first journey on earth. He is the one loving God, imbuing us with a soul and mind, and a pure heart in the continuing journey to His Kingdom for eternal life with him.

As the only loving God in our lives, he alone is the Creator of all. Miracles in our daily lives with Him are part and parcel of His spiritual power. We must have faith and abiding love and trust in our God, the kings of all kings. Because of the many miracles taking place in our lives, it is always through pure love and trust in Him that we feel the true existence and presence of Allah, our only loving God in the whole Universe.

In truth and in reality, Psalm 145:3 says:

> "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable." When we see God's greatness in our lives and in the vastness of the Universe —— then we realize that he alone is worthy of the Glory and praise."

For all the things we do on earth, we make errors and mistakes, but still our loving God forgives us all our sins, and with his power, heals all our ailments, both physical and spiritual.

So let us always obey Him, praying at all times, for he is for all of us – the one and only loving God. Let us answer His call and face the challenges he gives to us to perform, night and day, for a better world; for peace, harmony love, and understanding - never violence and war.

The need of the hour is spiritual power, and not violence through political power. Man needs to search for truth, justice, harmony, genuine democracy and world peace through spiritual power.

This is the real effective mechanism in the long journey for spirituality and in man's struggle for the holistic well-being of humanity on Mother Earth. Spiritual formation and growth are really very important in the quest for lasting peace, and in our continuing journey to the kingdom of Allah, we need to be with Him all the time, for away from Him, we are going to lose sight of the truth. It is in this perspective that we must always be at peace with Him and keep our close relationship with Him in order to know the truth and the meaning of man's existence on this earth.

In the context of the spiritual world, let us continue to be His servants on earth and offer our lives and all our strength to him. With love, harmony, peace and everlasting faith, let us offer our very own lives to him and declare in unison:

> "Allah, our heavenly father here I am to answer your call forever, Allah here I am to serve and love you always
> I have left everything just to follow you
> Here is my loving heart, here is my mind here is my soul, Here is my whole self I am for you and you alone."

Let us all answer his call for us to be with Him, and be true and faithful in following where he leads us. All must obey Allah in this spiritual world; it does not matter that we cannot see him in person, it makes no difference at all. We must stay with him and be faithful to him because it is Allah leading us to where he wants us to be in our entire life with him on Mother Earth.

The Spiritual World

In the spiritual world, man is the total embodiment of Muhammad, the prophet (S.A.W.) and the Muslim brethren believe in Him as the last prophet on earth. In light of the Holy Book of all the Muslims around the world and even the non-Muslims, the messages of Allah, the Most Merciful, most Gracious and the Most Compassionate, are considered parts of the most historic and revolutionary teaching for man even up to the present millennium.

Based on the Holy Qur'an, man has the spiritual power to conquer the whole world with justice, peace and the democratic principles of Humanism in accord with the spiritual mandate of the Great Allah, our merciful and ever loving father in Heaven. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, man is the maker of his own man-made world and of his very own destiny under the wise guidance of Allah. Without the heavenly teachings of Allah, our one loving God in this universe, naturally, we will not succeed in our journey to the kingdom of God, and we will go astray in broad daylight.

The Holy Quran in chapter 24, verse 41 says:

> "Have you not regarded that Allah is glorified by everyone in the heavens and the earth and the birds

> spreading their wings, each knows his prayer and glorification, and Allah knows best what they do on Earth."

Furthermore, the Holy Qur'an in chapter 22, verse 41 clearly states the heavenly teachings for Humankind:

> "Those who, if we granted them power in the land, maintain the prayer, give the alms, and bid what is right and forbid what is wrong…"
>
> "And Allah rests outcome of all matters."

Moreover, the power of the Holy Spirit in man is always inherent in this chaotic and materialistic world, and we need the wise guidance of the one living and loving God for a better world to live in for out children's children eternally.

In the light of the growing tension and the threat against the sovereignty of the Islamic republic of Iran, it is important and timely that this difficult phase in the history of this nation be remembered at all cost by whatever means by the people. This is the signal hour for the world leaders to hear the voice of the peace-loving people of Iran. They are the movers of world public opinion deep in their hearts, minds with honesty, impartially and human values.

This is the call of the hour and the struggle will continue against the western infidels. There will be more sacrifices in the preservation and protection of the Iranian national identity, and there is no easy way to freedom. The struggle must continue to break the chains that have bound them for centuries, but they must keep on marching with pride, honor, dignity and strength to victory.

As a whole, Allah, the compassionate will always guide the people of Iran in the march to national greatness and complete VICTORY!

The spiritual wisdom of the great Iranian Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini will continue to spark a cultural and social revolution for the preservation of the Persian civilization. With justice, freedom and sovereignity coupled with Jihad, Iran will be free from foreign exploitation this century.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Jaime Baltazar Ramirez is the Academic Program Coordinator of the Southern Eastern University for Asia and the Pacific (Great Britain) and incumbent Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the International States Parliament based in Palermo, Italy, since 1989 up to the present. He is an author, and has written 16 books already. A brief resume is hereto attached for further information.

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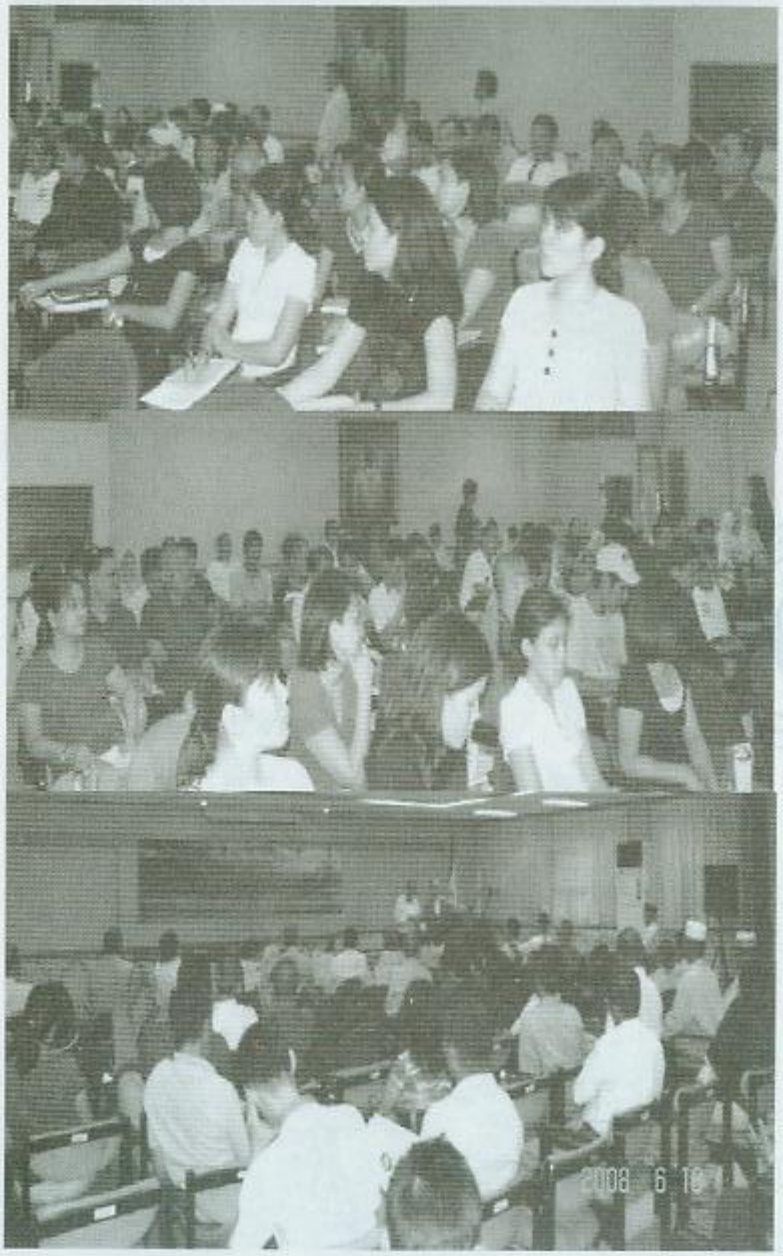

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