

**A FICTIVE SEPARATION: SACRED and PROFANE*****The Unity of Spirituality and Materiality From Islamic Perspective***

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"that All is upon the earth must pass away; only the glory and majesty of thy Lord abide forever." *The Qur'an 55:26-*

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"The truth is so noble that, even If God could turn His back on truth, I would cling to the truth, and would leave God. But indeed, God is the truth, and everything which is in time, everything created by God, is not the truth."

*M. Eckhart, Mulier, Venit Hora et Nunc Est. Quando Veri Adoratores Adorabunt Patrem in Spiritu Et Veritate, John 4.23*

The words of 'sacred and profane' in this title have been connoting some works in which both the primitive religions and divine religions were examined in detail. Yet our purpose is not to prove and make clear some differences between the both. Rather, we will investigate and cross-examine that academically separation, not spirituality. Human being is who has been broken the nature of all things, and then divided it (this nature) into pieces: Sacred and Profane. In the three major religions, particularly in Islamic understanding of things, it can not find a separation like that. We will examine this argument towards the end of this presentation.

Modern man, Muslim or non-Muslim, has been having many difficulties in his / her spiritual life. His relationship with himself, God and the universe has deteriorating. This bad relationship alienated him from his intellect, beliefs, God and the universe, that is to say, from all which make him meaningful in a worldly life.

Almost both the two civilisations of Islam and Christianity, from the beginning of XIII. Century, had been sacrifice of this separation, even if had

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happened inversely proportional. Thus, the first chose the 'sacred', and the latter chose the 'profane'. Eventually both of them has artificially broken the universe, man and God into two pieces. Islamic world has clearly sacrificed 'profane' (that actually means modern science and world -view) on behalf of 'sacred'; spirituality. On the other hand, Western world has clearly sacrificed 'sacred' (that actually consist of spiritual approaching to the universe) on behalf of 'profane'. However, neither Islamic world could establish spiritual basis of the 'sacred' and conceive the real meaning of it, nor could Western view get the ultimate truth from the 'profane' which was isolated from all the spiritual and metaphysical dimensions of the human life and of universe.

Strictly speaking science and technique caused slavery as well as a comfortable life. So the blind and insane reason has lost its original and natural character. Reason in question, which created modern science and technique, thought that it itself is the same truth; thus it became itself god, deity. Then it went to mad at that point. New name given to the insane reason is 'Nihilism'.

The intelligence (or cleverness) is the opposite of the rationalism. A reasonable reason must be in connection with what could not be conceived by reason. By the words of Edgar Morin, rationalism is a mechanical system employed to be put forward consistently that the beliefs and dogmas which aim to escape from the wise criticism, are just, and right.

The separation of faith, reason, spirit and the nature from each other has resulted in that each other was closely pressed together within its fictive area, and then began seeking their own basis within their possession:

1. Reason leans against consistency; coherence,
2. Nature leans against the determinism,
3. Science leans against material proof, evidence of experimental method,
4. Man depends on his pure reason and the technical proficiency, mastery,
5. Humanism on human being only without regard to God.

Eventually, the truth was put under the yoke of logic, and the beauty, under the aesthetic which has not any spiritual dimension, saying like what Heidegger asserted. So academic life has destroyed the meaning of the moral responsibility. Art and literature have transformed into the tools of the industrial civilisation. Because of that human reason was instrumentalized, modern man

or expert subject objectified all things around him including himself. Then, very strictly it could be asserted that everything has only one aspect; everything does not but only exists in one way not in another way. The authoritative power of human being from God was stolen from him, and given to the objectified thing.

It should be stressed on the fact that everything has two aspects, one to itself and the other one to its Lord. As regards the aspect to itself, it is a nonentity, but as regards the aspect of God, it is an entity. Then since nothing exists except God, and His aspect, and since everything is perishing save His aspect from eternity to eternity. This approaching to the universe reveals the two essences of spirituality: **purposeless thinking** (it means thinking which does not only consider a certain material possessions but considers their spiritual sides), and the second one is **pure contemplation**. At that point we must say that the facts which make statements true or false are not only the experimental criteria, nor the thinking which examines the truth because of its material usefulness.

In Islamic understanding of spirituality, there is a meaningful and deep relationship between man and God, and then between man and universe, and finally between scripturalism and spirituality, which unifies heart, spirit and intellect within in accordance with the meaning of the Ultimate Reality.

Scripturalist Islam integrated with theology and Sufism defined the normative form of Islamic belief and practices. The supreme authority of scripture as revealed truth was integrated with rational judgement. Commitment to the fulfilment of God's command in everyday life allied to the quest for spiritual insight. Normative Islam was thus a religion of living the life of this world in terms of its ultimate meaning. Within the purview of Islamic culture, however, there were alternative visions of human nature and religious salvation. They were embodied in intellectual form in philosophy and gnosticism, they were expressed in popular rituals and worship. (Ira Lapidus 88:208)

According to Ibn al-Arabi (d.1240), man consists of three elements: spirit, soul and body. The three aspects of the soul are the rational, vegetative and animal. The rational soul, Ibn al-Arabi seems to identify with spirit or the rational principle in man (and not, as does Aristotle, with intellect).

Mawlana Jalaladdin al-Rumi, who is the great sufi (d.1273), does not distinguish clearly and absolutely among the heart, the spirit, and the intellect.

Each of these pertains to man's meaning as opposed to his form. It can be said that the spirit is the broadest in scope, embracing the whole of man's inward reality, the term 'intellect' lays stress upon the spirit's power of discernment; and the word 'heart' emphasizes consciousness and especially Consciousness of God. But each of the two terms is sometimes employed synonymously with one or both of the others, and each denotes a multi-levelled reality. Al-Rumi often refers to the animal spirit by the term of al-Nafs, which is the most commonly rendered into English as 'soul' or 'self'. The term 'Nafs', most often is used to be referred the animal spirit. Al-Rumi, in this usage he is inspired at least partly by the Qoranic verse: " Yet I claim not that my soul (nafs) was innocent: Verily the soul of man incites to evil." (12:53). Sufis and others often refer to this 'soul' as nafs-i ammara, 'the soul which incites to evil'. Because of the negative connotations of this 'soul' and the positive and spiritual connotations of the word 'soul' in English it has been chosen the translate the word as 'ego'. (Chittick 83: 40,33).

Here the word of heart must be defined. As well-predicted 'heart' does not mean the heart of flesh but, a certain transcendental spiritual subtly in some connection with the physical heart. It is the essence of a man, the pakt which perceives and knows. How it is connected with the physical heart is a very perplexing question. Its connection resembles the connection of accidents with substances, or qualities with things they qualify, or the user of a tool with the tool, or things located with their locus. But must of the Islamic scholars does not wish to enter farther on this matter for the reason of that God Himself told the prophet Muhammad in the Qoran (17:87) to say, "The spirit is my Lord's affair".

The terms of spirit, soul and intelligence, each of them has its own mission of providing a sort of knowledge which is peculiar its natura. Elsewhere (Ghazali: Ihya) subdivides the knowledge of the heart (which is the central element of man) into three: 1. Axiomatic knowledge; 2. Knowledge from experience; 3. Prudence, the last fruit of experience. (See, Filiz 95:120)

Behind heart (qalb) there is the physical heart; behind spirit (ruh) the physical vapor which issues from the physical heart; behind nafs (soul) there is the sensual being, the 'flesh'; behind aql (intelligence) there is knowledge. But there is also a fifth idea, that knowing and perceiving subtly in man, which lies behind all the four, and to which the four terms apply in common. It is called especially as 'heart'; because its first connection with the heart,

thought it rules and uses all the body. Its seat is there as the seat of God is on His throne in heaven, while He rules the universe.

What in man distinguish him from the lower animals and makes possible his approach to God is a particular kind of knowledge and of will. The knowledge is that about religion and the world to come and about the intellect essences; these all lie behind the objects of sense, and are metaphysical.

This kind of knowledge, then, and this kind of will distinguish man from the other animals. Yet even he must grow up to these things; the child at first is as the beasts that perish. He gains them in two steps. The first that he grasps in an external fashion all axiomatic, necessary knowledge which is intuitively perceived, such as the impossibility of this and the possibility of that; but of speculative knowledge he has only, so far, the near possibility and not the actuality. Then, secondly, there comes to him knowledge acquired by experience and reflection, and he has a store of it on which he can draw when he wills. Now he knows all about writing and can write what he likes. In this stage there are all manner of degrees, reaching through the ordinary experiences of man to the direct vision of sufis, and finally to the divine revelation to prophets. ( See, Al-Farabi, Al-Madina al-Fadila; Ibn Sina, al-Isharat; Ghazali, Al-Munqiz; Ibn Al-Arabi, Fusus Al-Hikam).

We turn back to examine man and his spirituality.

Traditional metaphysics of Islamic thought has a clear theory of human personality. Human personality, according to the Islamic tradition, has three aspects, as pointed out before: Spirit (ruh), heart (qalb), and soul (nafs). A distinction must be made among the following: 1. The animal soul, the soul as passively obedient to natural impulsion; 2. The soul which commands, passionate, egoistic soul; 3. The soul which blames, i.e. the soul aware of its own imperfections; 4. The soul at peace, the soul reintegrated in the Spirit and at rest in certainty. ( S. H. Nasr 87:295) the last three of these expressions are given by the Quran. ( 89:28-30)

The two contraries spirit and soul try to capture the heart. If the soul wins the battle, the heart is 'veiled' by her. The soul is also interested in the nimble transitions of the conditions of the world. She passively clings to form which dissipates. There is a tradition of the Prophet Muhammad according to which, 'It should be known that there is a lump of flesh in the body of a man on which depends his being good or bad. When this piece of flesh is healthy,

man remains (spiritually) healthy, man goes astray-and that lump of flesh is man's heart' (Kirk Hadis, DIBY.)

In a word in which the intellect has become synonymous with reason and intuition with a 'biological' sixth sense concerned with foretelling future events, it becomes difficult to understand what intellect and intuition, these two key faculties upon which knowledge is based, can mean in the context of Islamic thought. To understand the meaning of these terms in the traditional Islamic universe where the light of the One dominates all multiplicity, and multiplicity is always seen in the light of unity.

In modern Western languages the fundamental distinction between intellect and reason is usually forgotten and the term 'intellect' is used as the equivalent of reason. On the other hand, the Islamic thought of the XIII. Century, up till now, could not make a reasonable distinction between knowledge (ilm) and gnosis ( irfan); that is to say, any religious knowledge or information is always considered representative of all the various knowledge.

In Arabic and other languages a single term 'aql', is used to denote both reason and intellect, but the distinction between the two as well as their inter-relation and the dependence of reason upon the intellect is always kept in mind, 'aql' in Arabic is related to the root 'ql' which means basically to bind. It is that faculty which binds man to God, to his origin. But 'aql' is also used as reason, intelligence, keenness of perception, foresight, common sense and many other concepts of a related order. Even though this understanding had disappeared after the period of the XIII. Century, at least this exists in the Quran. Moreover, each school of Islamic thought has elaborated in great detail certain aspects of the meaning of intellect as it pertains to its perspective and inner structure.

As far as the word intuition is concerned, such term as 'hads' and 'firasa' (horsemanship) in Arabic have usually been used. These terms imply a participation in a knowledge which is not simply rational but not opposed to the intellectual as the term is understood in its traditional sense, especially before the XIII. Century . Another set of terms more prevalent in texts of philosophy, theology and sufism are *taste (dhawq)*, *illumination (ishraq)*, *investigation (mukashafah)*, *discernment (basirah)*, *sight (nazar)* and *inspiration of the heart (badihah)*. These terms are all related to the direct vision and participation in the knowledge of the truth in contrast to indirect knowledge upon which all ratiocination is based. This contrast is emphasised

also in the usage of the term presential knowledge (al-ilm al-huduri), as opposed to attained knowledge (al-ilm al-husuli), but these terms refer to the difference between intuition as a form of a knowledge based upon mental concepts. In no way, however, do all these terms, as used in traditional Islamic languages stand opposed to 'aql'; rather, they serve as its profoundest sense. Islam has never seen a dichotomy between intellect and intuition but has created a hierarchy of knowledge and methods of attaining knowledge according to which degrees of both intellect and intuition become harmonised in an order encompassing all the means available to man to know, from sensual knowledge to knowledge of the heart. This wedding between revelation and the intellect makes it in fact possible for the mind to participate in the truth by means of that act or leap which is usually called intuition and which is inseparable from the faith which makes knowledge of the truth possible. (S.H. Nasr 82:37)

Since all knowledge comes from God and is interpreted by the soul through its spiritual and physical faculties and senses, it follows that knowledge, which reference to God as being its origin, is the arrival (husul) in the soul of the meaning of a thing or an object of knowledge. On the contrary, the philosophy of science in the west has evolved into a secular science, because the concept of science in that context lays emphasises upon three conditions for its viability, namely: 1. The reality of individuals and particulars as against the Platonic universals, 2. The validity of the empirical (Aristotelian) rather than the rational (Platonic) methods: and 3. The insistence upon logic and facts as conceived according to the data of the very day level of ordinary experience (Al-Attas 85:218). Eventually this understanding of viability was caused of the coming into a spiritless and inanimate academic thought.

Indeed, that philosophy has in fact evolved as a sophisticated development of ideas based upon the everyday level of ordinary experience. Although it is not entirely rejected the validity of modern view of the structure of reality and human cognition, as intuitively experienced according to higher levels of experience and consciousness and as expounded by the Sufis based on the Quranic sources. Some of the insoluble problems that beset Modern philosophy of science do not, according to the Islamic vision of reality and truth as seen by the Sufis, present themselves as problems. Just as **interpretation** is a development of tafsir (commentary on the Quran) and the one is not opposed to the other, nor is there a methodological cleavage

between them, so analogically in Islamic philosophy of science the rational and intellectual is a harmonious development of the empirical. Surely the metaphysical vision of reality and truth as conveyed by Islamic spiritual understanding of sufism must, when correctly interpreted, form the basis for an Islamic philosophy of science. (See, Al-Attas, *Ibid*:219)

Islam proceeds through 'sincerity in unitary faith' and we know this faith must imply all the consequences logically following from its content-which is unity or the Absolute. First, there is '**iman**', the accepting unity by man's intelligence; then, since we exist both individually and collectively, there is '**Islam**', the submission of man's will to unity, or to the idea of unity, this second element relating to unity considered as a synthesis on the plane of multiplicity; and finally there is '**ihsan**', which expands or deepens the two previous elements to the point of their ultimate consequence. Under the influence of ihsan, 'iman' becomes 'realisation' or a certitude that is lived-'knowing' becoming 'being'-while Islam, instead of being limited to a certain number of prescribed attitudes, comes to include every level in man's nature; in the beginning faith and submission are hardly more than symbolical attitudes, although none the less efficacious at their own level. By virtue of ihsan, iman becomes gnosis, or participation in the divine Intelligence, and Islam becomes 'extinction' in the Divine Being; since participation in the divine is a mystery no man has right to proclaim himself a mumin (believing, one possessing iman) though he can perfectly well call himself muslim (submitted, one conforming to Islam); iman is a secret between the servant and his Lord like ihsan which determines its level, or 'station' (maqam), or 'secret' (sirr), its ineffable reality. In unitary faith-with the fullness of its consequences-as in total love of God, it is a question of escaping from the dispersing and mortal multiplicity of all that which-being 'other than He'- is not, a question of escaping from sin because sin implies a love that is in practice total for the creature or the created, a love turned aside therefore from God-who-is-Love and squandered into fragments on what is inferior to man's immortal personality. (Fritzjof Schoun 63:118-9). These reveal the mystical interpretations and commentaries of the Islamic tradition including the Quranic texts and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad.

Alongside the scholars of hadith, law and theology, mystics and ascetics carried on another form of quest for religious fulfilment. While the legists and the theologians concentrated upon finding out the rules which God had



commanded to govern everyday life and sought a rational understanding of their beliefs, the mystics attempted to acquire an immediate and personal experience of God's reality.

Islamic mysticism originated in the spiritual aspirations and religious practises of the Prophet Muhammad, his companions, and their successors. While the Muslim elite was engaged in conquest and empire, other Muslims questioned the value of a worldly life. They discussed such issues as the value of celibacy versus marriage, poverty versus wealth, and retreat versus active engagement. Many of these questioners chose a piety which emphasised the memorisation of the Quran, devotion to hadith and law, and the fulfilment of their teachings in daily life. Others chose a more extreme asceticism. They renounced their attachment to this world, and concentrated upon religious devotion. Some of the notable Islamic mystics: Hasan Al Basri (d.728) (For him, moral responsibility extended from the life of the individual to the community as a whole. Abu Yazid al-Bistami (d.873), he epitomised the quest for an intoxicated rapturous union with God; According to him, the mystic seeks annihilation of self and union with the divine names or attributes; al-Harith al-Muhasibi(781-857) was the great ninth-century proponent of this position. His teachings combined the quest for interior moral perfection with observance of Muslim law and theological clarification of the principles of the belief. (See for a detailed information, Filiz: Muhasibi and His Teachings:97); al-Junayd (d.911) continued this effort to integrate Sufism with other aspects of Islamic life. Al-junayd laid stress upon renunciation, purification, and mental struggle in order to return to that pre-existent state in which the human being is a concept in the mind of God. (Lapidus 88:113)

Sufism's pragmatic program of spiritual and moral developments was accompanied by a quest for intellectual insight. Sufis also cultivated a metaphysical, theosophical, and philosophical concept of the divine reality, the creating of the material world, the place of the human being in the universe created by God, and a theory of the correspondence of the essential reality of man's nature with that of the divine being. By the early tenth century metaphysical theories of the relation of human beings to God but one whose spiritual radiance or emanation was implanted in human beings. This implantation, however, is obscured, overcome sometimes by the material and worldly side of human beings. A human being must overcome these bodily and animal forces restore purity of will and intellect, and thus realise his

inherently divine nature. Through this realisation he returns to his origins in God. (Lapidus Ibid:113)

It should be added that Islamic world view, while considering the spirituality and the religious manner, had gradually transformed the religious belief into a universal knowledge which is accepted and believed that it represents all the levels of knowledge. It confused the belief with knowledge. On the other hand, the Western thought had little by little transformed the knowledge and the science into belief. Both of the two world has thus separated episteme from sophia; knowledge from the gnosis; reason from heart, and spirit from body, in the way of an inversely proportional. So it might be put forward that neither the Muslims have a reasonable and convenient spirituality; nor has the Modern thought ultimate reality and knowledge The former has an incompletely wisdom; and the latter has an incompletely truth, as the post-modern period indicated.

The world hikmah, usually rendered as "Wisdom", is derived from the root "h k m", which expresses something like practical wisdom, the kind of activity associated with decisions made by a judge or ruler (it is understood that is kind of juridical, administrative, military, or political wisdom requires previous experience and knowledge, as well as the ability to make the right decision in particular cases.) Thus wisdom in the sense of the practical judgement, perhaps, because it has to do with most important of human affairs, is said to be more than mere science or knowledge: it serves the purpose of science or knowledge-the making of well-constructed or well-fitted (muhkam) things (the physician, because of his healing art thus popularly called hakim), as well as pursuing right human conduct and the right way of life. (M.Mahdi 94:247)

Wisdom is distinguished from mere science or knowledge as comprehensive knowledge of things human and divine, especially the latter, or knowledge of the most important things, and thus distinguished from specialised knowledge and trial knowledge. In this respect, the distinction between wisdom and science or knowledge, respectively, is comparable to the distinction between sophia and episteme in Greek literature translated into Arabic, sophia (i.e. the knowledge of things human and divine) was occasionally translated as falsafah (i.e. philosophy) Thus, wisdom and philosophy were in some cases used to mean the same thing: knowledge of the remote of things or knowledge of the highest things. When used to mean

different things, wisdom reverted to its original sense of practical wisdom or else referred to a particular science or art. Hence the use of the expressions "highest wisdom" and wisdom of wisdoms" to mean the highest science and science. (M.Mahdi Ibid:247)

As thinkers reflected on the multiplicity of the sciences and the relations among them, they developed the basic grouping or division of the sciences into "traditional" and "rational". So, to call a discipline rational or universal does not mean that its theoretical principles, methods, or practical consequences are above suspicion, or that in can not be refuted or changed, improved and transformed. What it means is that for one to engage in a discussion of this principles, methods or conclusions, one must use one's God-given reason, which anyone can do regardless of linguistic, national, or religious affiliation. Again to call a belief or a religiosity spiritual and metaphysical does not mean that its principles, methods and practical consequences represent or include a scientific way. Hence it should be reconciled them (traditional which is related to spirituality; and rational which is related to academism) within the synthesis of God-Human-Nature centred trinity.

As for the Quranic understanding of spirituality, it can be resumed briefly with such a like remarks. According to the Quranic perspective, spirituality and materiality, or faith and knowing can not separated from each other; on the contrary, they are the two different side of the same reality, or truth. However we learn from the Quran that reason and knowledge are prior to the revelation and the faith. This fact has the two consequences; firstly , the Quran invites all mankind to the common principles of the reason among them, and depends on that principles. Secondly, the Quran, with this understanding, corrects some inevitable mistakes in knowledge in general, whether it is a scientific one or not. Furthermore it puts that a religious charity upon the Muslims. As implied in the Quran:

"But let those rejoice who keep from idol-worship turn to God in repentance. Give good news to My servants, who listen to My precepts and follow what is best in them. These are they whom God has guided. These are they who are endowed with understanding." (Quran 39:18)

Another verses are cited here makes the priority of reason and knowing clear as follows:

"To Moses We gave the Scriptures, a perfect code for the righteous with precepts about all things, a guide and a mercy, so that they might believe in meeting their Lord." (Quran 6:154)

"A veritable sign has now come to you from your Lord: a guide and a mercy." Quran 6:157)

However, after the proper reason and the true knowledge, one should believe in revelations from God, without being trusted into mere knowledge:

" Say: Who provides for you from heaven and earth? Who has endowed you with sight and hearing? Who brings forth the living from the dead, and the dead from the living? Who ordains all things? They will reply: "God". Say: Will you not take heed, then? Such is good, your true Lord. That Which is not true must needs be false. How then can you turn away from Him?" (Quran 10:31-32)

Speaking in brief, the Quran does not desire a religious man which automatically acts, and worship without thinking, reasoning and knowing. But, in the end of the XIII. Century the falsehood of Muslim' Islamic understanding made man a mechanical-religious tool.. From this view of point we may claim that both of the two worlds has broken the truth into the two equal pieces; one of them was possessed by spiritual world view, and the another one was possessed by material world view. If the principle of unity of the truth is exactly understood, it will not be any antinomy between materiality and spirituality i.e., academism and spirituality; science and religion etc.

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