

Status of Man, Biology and Theology

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Abstract: Man's instinct has instigated him to assess the status of this world and the creatures therein. This desire of man has led him to raise questions on his own status in this world. Various branches of knowledge, philosophy, psychology, anthropology and biology etc. discuss this problem of man.

Modern biological knowledge has reduced man's status to an animal being. This is in contradiction to anthropological studies and theology. Theological knowledge raises man's status to the vicegerent of God; manipulator manager and organizer of these worldly resources. There are many distinctions that are the proof of his dignity.

With the advancement of science and technology, man is becoming more and more materialistic in his approach. He measures everything around, with scale of reasoning and evidence. If man finds the evidence, he becomes satisfied, if not, he criticizes. In accordance with other branches of sciences, natural sciences are also advancing which have a direct approach to the beginning of the universe and the origin of man. As the process of origin of man has stopped now and its propagation is through sexual activity only, man is reluctant to accept its origin without any intermediary stages. The scholars of natural sciences, studying the biological happenings ignore the metaphysical aspect. Due to this tendency, an atheistic ideology develops. A theory, based on simple reasoning may prove fatal to the development of knowledge in that branch of science. It is the transcendental knowledge that is unchangeable. Islam, the last message of Allah, has given, man the best vision about himself and the happenings of nature. Ultimately, man made concepts become falsified and we have to consult these sources of knowledge. Similar is the case of human status in the universe.

Modern Man's assessment of himself in relation to the animal kingdom has passed through several phases. At the end of 17th century, western philosophy became enthralled with the idea that "all living things were directly related in the form of what was called a great chain of being."⁽¹⁾

During the 18th century, the idea that each successive form could have emerged or evolved without discontinuity from the form below it, rather than being directly created, began to be tentatively proposed. In the 19th century the concept of evolution was crystallized. Darwin contributed that the evolutionary process was carried forward progressively by natural means without the need of supernatural intervention at any stage.

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population about the turn of the century, surpassing the number of Christians some years later, and probably accounting for about 30 percent of the world's population by 2025". See Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations and the remaking of world order." (Touchstone Books, 1998), p. 65-66. I have this discussion and table from the following website: www.adherents.com/Religions_By_Adherents.html

- 20- Rorty, Richard, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 63, see also Rorty, R., *Achieving Our Country*, (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 9.
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- 22 - Westphal, Merold, (ed.), "PostmodernTheology," in *Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 699.
- 23- Charlesworth, Max, *Philosophy and Religion, From Plato to Postmodernism*, p. 157.
- 24- Taylor, Mark, C., "Reframing postmodernisms," in *Shadow of Spirit, Postmodernism and Religion*, p. 11.
- 25 - See website: www.alastairmcintosh.com/articles/2000_watt.htm, *The Whole house of Islam, and we Christians with them...*, An interview with "the Last Orientalist" – the Rev. Prof. William Montgomery Watt, interviewed by Bashir Maan & Alastair McIntosh, this paper was published in *The Coracle, the Iona Community*, summer 2000, issue 3:51, pp. 8-11.
- 26 - Bernhard, Welte, "Suchen und Finden" [Seeking and finding] (speech at the funeral on 28 May 1976), in *Erinnerungen an Martin Heidegger [remembering Martin Heidegger]*, ed. Günther Neske (Pfullingen: Neske, 1977), pp. 253-256, quoted in *Hans-Georg Gadamer, A Biography*, written by Jean Grondin, translated from German by Joel Weinsheimer, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 101.
- 27 - Griffin, Ray, David, *God and Religion in the Postmodern World*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), p. 138, see also Raschke, Carl, "Fire and roses, or the problem of postmodern religious thinking," in *Shadow of Spirit, Postmodernism and Religion*, p. 100.
- 28 - Al-Quran 21: 22.
- 29 - It is most familiar form of deductive argument, which is called categorical syllogism. A syllogism consists of three lines—two premises and a conclusion -- and contains three terms or categories. (The term that appears in both premises is called the middle term.)
- 30 - Al-Quran 36: 79.
- 31 - Toynbee, *A Study of History*, vol. I, p. 241.
- 32- Giddens, Anthony, *Sociology*, p. 454, see also Turner, Brian, *Weber and Islam: A Critical Study*.
- 33- See particularly its last chapter, Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and The Remaking of World Order*, pp. 301-318.
- 34 - Rate of change of Christians and Muslims:
Of the two largest religions, the "market share" of Christianity appears to be fairly constant: U.S. Center for World Mission estimated in 1997 that the percentage of humans who regard themselves as Christians rose from 33.7% in 1970 to 33.9% in 1996.(1) Its total number of adherents is growing at about 2.3% annually. This is approximately equal to the growth rate of the world's population. Islam is growing faster: about 2.9% and is thus increasing its market share. Greg H. Parsons, Executive Director, "U.S. Center for World Mission," Pasadena, CA; quoted in Zondervan News Service, 1997-FEB-21. Author Samuel Huntington disagrees: "The percentage of Christians in the world peaked at about 30 % in the 1980s, leveled off, is now declining, and will probably approximate to about 25% of the world's population by 2025. As a result of their extremely high rates of population growth, the proportion of Muslims in the world will continue to increase dramatically, amounting to 20 percent of the world's

Notes and References

- 1- Rathakrishnan, S., *The Religion We Need*, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1932), p. 34.
- 2- Kant, E., *Critique of Pure Reason*, Eng. trans. Mahaffy, (New York: Harper, 1966), he further says: "that human mind will ever give up metaphysical researches entirely is a little to be expected as that we should prefer to give up breathing altogether to avoid inhaling impure air. There will, therefore, always be metaphysics in the world, nay, everyone, especially every man of reflection will have it for himself after his own pattern," p. 138.
- 3- Blake, Jerusalem, pp. 52-53, quoted by S. Rathakrishnan in *Recovery of Faith*, (India: Viva Books Private Ltd., 2003), p. 40.
- 4- Toynbee, *The World and the West*, p. 93.
- 5- Heidegger, M., *Being and Time*, trans. J. Maaquarrie and E. Robinson, (New York: Free Press, 1967), section 44, 52.
- 6- Iqbal, M., *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, edited and annotated by M. Saeed Sheikh, (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 2006), p. 149.
- 7- Bell, Daniel, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, (New York: Basic Books, 1976), p. 29.
- 8- Anderson, P., "Modernity and Revolution," in *New Left Review*, No. 144, (1984).
- 9- Toynbee, A., *A Study of History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), vol. IX, pp. 640-641.
- 10- Bell, D., *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, p. 171.
- 11- Foucault, Michel, What is Enlightenment?, translated by Mathew Henson, 1992, see website: <http://philosophy.eserver.org/foucault/what-is-enlightenmnet.html>.
- 12- *Ency. of Britannica*, under "Antoine Destutt de Tracy."
- 13- Habermas, J., *Towards a Rational Society*, (London: Heinemann, 1970), p. 99.
- 14- The end of ideology thesis was also advanced by Bell, Lipset and others in the 1950s and early 1960s behind the conception of post-industrial society. The core of the "end of ideology" thesis was not exactly that historical progress had brought us to the point where the truth of the world was plainly written on its finally revealed deeper surfaces, but it was not, in fact, too far from this. For the "end of ideology" theorists, the power of general ideologies, such as Marxism, was definitely on the wane. By the mid-sixties, "Protestantism and Catholicism, Fascism, Capitalism, Communism, and social democracy [had] all lost their power to inspire Western people to work hard, to live morally, or to change the world." see for detail, Lipset, Seymour Martin, *Political Man*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2nd edition, 1981), p. 531, see also Bell, Daniel, *The End of Ideology*, (Mass: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 217.
- 15- It was Hegel who wrote, "Europe is absolutely the end of History," see Hegel, F., *The Philosophy of History*, (New York: Dover Publication, 1956), p. 103. The collapse of communism had recreated faith in Hegel's hope of an "end of History" and of the final triumph of capitalism. Fukuyama, F., "The End of History"? in *The National Interest*, vol. 16, summer, 1989.
- 16- Fukuyama, "The End of History"? p. 3f.
- 17- *Ibid.*, p. 18.
- 18- Giddens, A., *Sociology*, p. 529.
- 19- Eagleton, "Awakening from Modernity," in *Times Literary Supplement*, 20 February, 1987, p. 5.

	Musa			
<u>Spiritism</u>				12.6 million <1%
<u>Baha'i Faith</u>	1863 CE	Alkitab Alaqqdas		7.4 million <1%
<u>Confucianism</u>	520 BCE	Lun Yu		6.3 million <1%
<u>Jainism</u>	570 BCE	Siddhanta, Pakrit		4.3 million <1%
<u>Zoroastrianism</u>	600 to 6000 BCE	Avesta		2.7 million <1%
<u>Shinto</u>	500 CE	Kojiki, Shoki	Nohon	2.7 million <1%
<u>Taoism</u>	550 BCE	Tao-te-Ching		2.7 million <1%
<u>Other</u>	Various	Various		1.1 million <1%

western and Eastern Europe, Central and South East Asia. Majority of countries in the in the world, with a majority of the global population, are entering in the circle of Islam. We are totally disagreeing with the clash of civilization thesis³³, Islam is not spreading by sword or force in the world today, but only by Islamic teachings is fascinating the people of the world. Islam has no need to use sword for preaching.

According to the statistical data on religious adherents, Islam is only growing religion (see Table 14.1).³⁴

Basic information on various religions

Religion	Date Founded	Sacred Texts	Membership	% of World
<u>Christianity</u>	30 CE	The Bible	2,039 million	32% (dropping)
<u>Islam</u>	622 CE	Qur'an & Hadith	1,226 million	19% (growing)
<u>Hinduism</u>	1,500 BCE with truly ancient roots	Bhagavad-Gita, Upanishads, & Rig Veda	828 million	13% (stable)
No religion (Note 1)	-	None	775 million	12% (dropping)
Chinese folk religion.	270 BCE	None	390 million	6%
<u>Buddhism</u>	523 BCE	The Tripitaka & Sutras	364 million	6% (stable)
<u>Atheists</u>	No date	None	150 million	2%
New religions.	Various	Various	103 million	2%
<u>Sikhism</u>	1500 CE	Guru Granth	23.8 million	<1%
<u>Judaism</u>	From Prophet	Torah, Tanach, & Talmud	14.5 million	<1%

In addition to it the subject of Quran that God, who is well-versed to bring nothing into existence, is also powerful to revive the dead and no one can refuse His act of creation. This can be stated in the following form of categorical syllogism²⁹:

The syllogistic form

“He will give them life who created for the first time. Indeed He is well-versed in every kind of creation.”

“God is powerful to create for the first time His act of continuous creation is a sound argument for it.”

“He being creator supreme has the skill to recreate a thing.”

Contrarily setting aside all logical rules and regulation, Quran has stated the same object in simple concise but comprehensible words which is appealing to every mind. Quran says:

“Say, ‘He will give them life Who created them for the first time!’”³⁰

Keeping all this in view it can easily be concluded that Islamic teachings, being simple, intelligible and compatible to all time, are adoptable to enlighten the whole world. At present the circumstances, being confronted also demand objective approach. It seems to be conformable at political and social stage to constitute a new world order, by acting upon Islamic teachings, so that the humanity could come out of the prevailing darkness of instrumental reason and regain its actual lost status in the light of revelation which is a source of mental as well as spiritual satisfaction.

Toynbee specifically notes the possibility of Islamic resurgence in the future:

“As for the Islamic society, we may perhaps discern an ideological premonition of a universal state in the Pan-Islamic movement.”³¹

Anthony Giddens who is “the high priest of modernity” agrees with Max Weber’s prophecy for the revival of Islam in late twentieth century:

“Weber would have suspected that a traditional religious system like Islam could undergo a major revival and become the basis of important political developments in the late twentieth century; yet this is exactly what occurred in the 1980s in Iran. In recent years, Islamic fundamentalism (an emphasis on a literal interpretation of scriptural texts) has also had a significant impact on other countries, including Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Algeria.”³²

World Turns To Islam?

Islam is spreading all around the world; it has a tremendous impact in Latin America and United States, and is now influencing former Soviet world,

“Speaking personally, it has taught me to think more deeply about the Oneness of God. I am not happy with the traditional Trinitarian Christian formulation of God comprising three ‘Person’-Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The word ‘Person’ has changed since it was first used in English four centuries ago. It was a translation of Latin *persona*-a face or mask, such as that used by actors. Now the English word means an individual, which is different. Christianity is not trying to say that God comprises three individuals. Islam, with its many different names for the qualities of God, can help the Christian see a more true meaning of Trinitarian doctrine. The trinity is different faces or roles of the same one God.”²⁵

Similarly, Heidegger during his whole life remained a “seeker after God,” as Bernhard Welte said of Heidegger in his funeral oration. The God whom he sought was not to be found in the dogmatism of the Catholic church, however. The “system of Catholicism” probably seemed to him obscured by layers of Greek, Roman, and scholastic concepts concealing the primordial Christian experience of being unable to control one’s own existential destiny.²⁶

In Griffin’s opinion renaissance of religion will be on the following pattern:

“Postmodern theology rejects the extreme voluntarism of super naturalistic theism and the atheistic naturalism of modernity, replacing both with a naturalistic form of theism.”²⁷

Naturalistic form of theism about which Griffin is talking is better fitted to Islam because there is no other religion except Islam which can be considered in natural and original form. It is one of the qualities of Islamic civilization that Greek philosophy and logic could not take root in it. The Muslim society never liked the efforts made either by an individual or by an intellectual group to adjudge the natural teachings of Islam in the light of Greek philosophy or logic. Moreover, Muslim *ummah*, as a whole, refused to admit such like efforts. In view of this very fact the basic teachings of Islam have been growing in the society in a clear, transparent, simple and comprehensible way as Quranic mode of expressions and manner of reasoning has always been commonly known and absorbing axiomatically. For example, Quran explains the reality of Oneness of God in an easiest and simplest way by describing, if had there been more gods (except God) in the heavens and the earth, the whole system of universe would have been collapsed shatterly. This would have been based on their counteract having different habits and aims. Such out come is necessary for confrontation but no sort of counteract has been confronted. As a result the number of gods is negated automatically.

“If there were, in the heavens and the earth, other gods besides God, there would have been confusion in both”!²⁸

“Postmodernism replaces Nietzsche’s announcement of the death of God with an announcement of the end of philosophy.”²²

Merold Westphal by using the words “replace” in his statement has indicated that according to Nietzsche God died in 19th century has revived in the postmodern period. In this way the fact relating to God, faith in God, and religious teachings as well discussions are being confessed. On the other side the “philosophy has ended” and therefore it has become possible that religion and its teachings can be studied in natural and original represented form without the help of modern and Aristotelian logic, directly and consequently they will embrace the grace of religion.

Max Charlesworth says that Heidegger and Derrida strongly suggest that there is a space for God and religion in postmodern age.²³

Mark C. Taylor says that postmodernism is ‘the return of traditional faith and the possibility of recasting religious ideas’.²⁴

Religious realities are neither entangled in the doctrine of Aristotelian or modern paradigm of logic nor mingled with the ratiocination of philosophy. Moreover, the rationale of religious is also not based on logic or philosophy. Religion addresses to every person irrespective of ones mental or comprehension level. Therefore, its teachings are based on simple, comprehensible, natural and known to all manners.

The postmodern Western philosophers are also very well aware of the facts that religious realities are always free from formal logic and philosophical ideas. Therefore, when they represented the idea of the “end of philosophy,” they actually talked about the development of religious ideas.

In the beginning of a revealed religions’ teachings were free from the undesirable shades of logic and philosophy. Afterwards, the theologians of these religions were also influenced by the vicissitudes or perplexities of philosophy. Thus the original teachings of religions were intermixed with logic and philosophy. For example, sake the role of Saint Thomas Aquinas with the Christianity is very much mentionable. As a result of the end of philosophy, the religions developed on its basis will lose importance. Keeping in view the objective facts of the postmodern world, W. Montgomery Watt has desired for the Oneness of God to get rid of the Trinitarian faith of Christianity which is under arrest in Greek philosophy. Contrary to this faith of Christianity, the Muslims faith of Oneness of God is crystal clear, day light shining and transparent to every human being. The object of W. M. Watt seems to be the reform of Christianity by securing it from the philosophical faith of trinity. Therefore, Watt in an interview, answering the question that what can Islam teaches to Christianity says:

“It seems very doubtful that history has come to a stop in the sense that we have exhausted all alternative open to us. Who can say what new forms of economic, political or cultural order may emerge in the future? Just as the thinkers of medieval times had no inkling of the industrial society that was to emerge with the decline of feudalism, so we can’t at the moment anticipate how the world will change over the coming century.”¹⁸

My “end of ideology” thesis is that the power of major ideologies which are rooted in Enlightenment philosophy, such as Fascism, Communism, Capitalism, Liberalism, Socialism, corporatism and liberal democracy has lost their philosophical justification in postmodern era. Postmodernism begins from a recognition of the failings of modernity and its concept of rationality; the scientific and technological “disenchantment of the world” and the manipulation and exploitation of nature; the emergence of extreme individualism and the consequent collapse of a sense of community; the divorce between technology and moral values; the denial of the validity of “local knowledge” or tradition, with its pluralism and variety, in favour of universal, abstract systems and “meta-narratives” or grandiose theoretical frameworks. Eagleton has expressed this sense of crisis in modernity and its values, and the need to go beyond it, in the following dramatic way:

“Postmodernism signals the death of meta-narratives whose secretly terrorist function was to ground and legitimate the illusion of a ‘universal’ human history. We are now in the process of waking from a nightmare of modernity.”¹⁹

Now Enlightenment ideas have been spreading only by force and weapons. So I am agreeing with Fukuyama that ideologies have now ended. Rorty also says same thing that a modern ideology like liberal democracy has lost its justification:

“Liberal democracy cannot have, and does not need, any philosophical justification.”²⁰

In view of such like reasons, postmodernism is being called elite of religion. Keeping in view such like reasons Carl Raschke, by referring the postmodern philosopher Heidegger writes:

“Heidegger is generally regarded as the first postmodern thinker because of his declarations about the ‘overcoming’ of metaphysics and the ‘end’ of philosophy.”²¹

Similarly Merold Westphal writes that announcement by Nietzsche that “God has died,” has been “replaced” by end of philosophy in postmodern era. He says:

Western European intellectuals. These questions were encouraged by the impact of Protestantism with its insistence on the individual and on liberty of conscience.

The Hegelian ideas strongly influenced Marx and it was Marxism, that put the concept of ideology in the forefront of political discourse. At any rate, until the last few decades, the study of ideology, however conceived, was largely the preserve of those who related themselves in some way to the Marxist tradition.

Ironically, the term which Marx and his followers had done so much to popularize was used as a weapon against Marxism and Islam. This “end of ideology”¹⁴ approach has obviously been severely challenged by the more troubled nature of the last three decades. The most successful proponent of the end of ideology and indeed of history itself, is Francis Fukuyama. His article “The End of History?”¹⁵ Aroused immediate and enormous controversy and was followed by a book entitled “The End of History and the Last Man” which elaborated on many of its themes. In his article Fukuyama argued that “the unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism” over all competitors meant “not just the end of the cold war, or the passing of a particular period of history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind’s ideological evolution and the universalisation of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.”¹⁶ Fukuyama was not claiming that there would be no more events, but only that the final conceptual and political framework in which these events would take place had already been achieved. In the past, war had been a great catalyst of change: but to date there had been no example of liberal democratic states going to war with one another since, with the decline of ideology, the particular interests hitherto pursued by conflict could now be absorbed into the competitions of liberal capitalism. Moreover, Fukuyama did not claim that the end of history yielded a perfect society—only that there was no prospect of a better alternative to liberal capitalism. I think Islam and its teachings are better alternative to liberal capitalism.

At the end of his article Fukuyama painted a rather gloomy picture of the capitalist eternity he foresaw in which “the end of history will be a very sad time. The struggle for recognition, the willingness to risk one’s life for a purely abstract goal, the worldwide ideological straddle that called forth daring, courage, imagination and idealism, will be replaced by economic calculation, the endless solving of technical problems, environmental concerns, and satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands. In the post-historical period there will be neither art nor philosophy, just the perpetual caretaking of the museum of the human spirit.”¹⁷

Anthony Giddens did not agree with Fukuyama’s thesis, he says:

The Enlightenment thinkers were intellectual precursors of the French Revolution of 1789; and it was in the immediate aftermath of the French Revolution that the term ideology was first coined. Its originator, in 1789, was Antoine Destutt de Tracy, one of the group of philosophers whom the revolutionary Convention had put in charge of the newly founded *Institute de France* specifically to spread the ideas of the Enlightenment. De Tracy proposed in his book "*Elements d' Ideologie*," a new science of ideas, an ideology, which would be the ground of all other sciences. Rejecting the concept of innate ideas, de Tracy explained how all our ideas are based on physical sensations. A rational investigation of the origin of ideas, free from religious or metaphysical prejudice, would be the foundation of a just and happy society. According to Ency. Britannica:

"Destutt de Tracy coined the word *idéologie* (English: "ideology") in 1796 as a name for his own "science of ideas." Influenced by the work of John Locke, he presented his basic ideas in *Éléments d'idéologie*, 4 vol. (1801–15). Like the sensationalism of Étienne Bonnot de Condillac (1715–80), *Idéologie* stressed the importance of human sensations in the formation of knowledge. Destutt de Tracy, however, further refined Condillac's views to emphasize the physiological nature of sensation. Human thought, he asserted, is nothing but an elaboration of sensations, an activity of the nervous system. The four principal realms of conscious behaviour—perception, memory, judgment, and will—all employ various combinations of sensations. As a result of its extreme dependence on the human senses for verification of knowledge, *Idéologie* threatened religious doctrine."¹²

The term ideology is less than 200 years old. It is the product of the social, political and intellectual upheavals that accompanied the Industrial Revolution: the spread of democratic ideals, the politics of mass movements, the idea that, since we have made the world, we can also remake it. According to the German social philosopher Jurgen Habermas, three new world-views:

"Emerge from the critique of dogmatism of traditional interpretations of the world and claim a scientific character. Yet they retain legitimating functions, thereby keeping actual power relations inaccessible to analysis and to public consciousness. It is in this way that ideologies in the restricted sense first came into being. They replace traditional legitimations of power by appearing in the mantle of modern science and by deriving their justification from the critique of ideology. Ideologies are coeval with the critique of ideology. In this sense there can be no pre-bourgeois ideologies."¹³

The word ideology is directly a product of the French Revolution, the notion obviously roots in the general philosophical questions about meaning and direction with which the breakdown of the medieval world view confronted

predicaments confronting Western civilization in a postmodern age might be alleviated through a transfer of energy from economics to religion, he says:

“It might be that, in the long run the transfer of energy from Economics to Religion would justify itself from the chartered accountant’s, as well as from the spiritual pastor’s, point of view. If the transfer of energy from Religion to Economics at the opening of the Modern Age of Western history had shot a bolt that subsequently come home to roost like a boomerang in the economic field, it was conceivable that a re-transfer of energy from Economics to Religion at the opening of a post-Modern Age might ultimately come to a self-stultified Western *Homo Economicus*’s rescue. Under the aegis of Religion, Western Man might find himself able to handle with spiritual impunity the material power thrust into his hands by the mechanization of Western technology.”⁹

Bell argues that a return to religion in Western civilization is required if postmodern problems arising from the existing ‘shambles of appetite and self-interest and deconstruction of the moral circle which engirds mankind’¹⁰ are to be resolved.

The ‘End of Ideology’ Thesis:

The spiritless and materialist man nurtured by the modernism seems to be in the grip of schizophrenia in the second midst of the 20th century because of witnessing fanciful dreams scattering in the air and thus is wandering in search of absolute reality.

In fact, now, after touching the best peaks of materialism, greed, thirst for wealth and lust for luxurious endless wishes, he had realized that this all is neither the end nor aim of human life. It is rather worse than brutality. Therefore, spiritual as well as actual instinctual thirst have reverted him towards religion. This is because of the reality that wisdom alone for economic hunger based on sensationalism and empiricism cannot be a substitute of religion. Metaphysical realities rejected by western philosophers like David Hume and Kant on the bases of epistemological and the Logical Positivists on the bases of linguistic analysis seemed to be quaked in postmodern period. In this way the modern philosophy, which was the answer of “what is Enlightenment?” as Foucault says:

“What is modern philosophy? Perhaps we could respond with an echo: modern philosophy is the philosophy that is attempting to answer the question raised so imprudently two centuries ago: *Was ist Aufklärung?*”¹¹

Now modern philosophy has lost its importance in the postmodern age and presented the idea of the “end of philosophy”.

these needs? Surely, these needs are not material but spiritual. Toynbee sees the vacuum of spirituality in western society, so, he says:

“Life now is more secure than it was in the preceding age; but for this very reason it is also more dull. The benevolent action of efficient authoritarian governments has undesignedly created a spiritual vacuum in human souls.”⁴

Heidegger believes that that Western metaphysics has mostly failed to recognize that Being is of a different order than individual beings or entities; it has failed to recognize that the Being or ‘is-ness’ of individual beings is different in kind from any particular being.

One of the consequences of the entity—focused style of Western metaphysics, is to understand truth—that conception which is the standard for all inquiry—as the correspondence between a judgment and some condition of individuals. This, according to Heidegger, is a mistake. Once the idea of truth is defined in reference to individuals, it becomes inevitable that one will understand the truth associated with Being in a manner which assumes that Being is just another entity. From a Heideggerian standpoint, this implies that the conception of truth that is central to Western metaphysics has lost sight of the proper investigation of Being.⁵

Allama Muhammad Iqbal narrates this spiritual vacuum in following words:

“Surely, the present moment is one of great crisis in the history of modern culture. The modern world stands in need of biological renewal. And religion, which in its higher manifestations is neither dogma, nor priesthood, nor ritual, can alone ethically prepare the modern man for the burden of the great responsibility which the advancement of modern science necessarily involves, and restore, to him that attitude of faith which makes him capable of winning a personality here and retaining it hereafter. It is only by rising to a fresh vision of his origin and future, his whence and whither, that man will eventually triumph over a society motivated by an inhuman competition, and a civilization which has its spiritual unity by its inner conflict of religious and political values.”⁶

Daniel Bell recommends a ‘return in Western society of some conception of religion’⁷ as a potential solution to the crisis of modernity, but Anderson continues to cling to conception of socialist revolution, the vocation of which is ‘neither to prolong nor to fulfill modernity, but to abolish it.’⁸

The crisis of postmodern Western civilization as essentially one of the absence or loss of spiritual values and belief constitutes the most significant parallel between their respective analyses. Where Toynbee suggests that the

For thousands of years, from the earliest dim beginnings of human consciousness, man has been longing to comprehend Reality and adjust himself to its demands.

“From the primitive kneeling before some supposedly sacred tree or holy stone, thrilled with the thought that somewhere at the back of perceived phenomena has, and vibrates a force, a power beyond his knowing, into contact with which he must somehow come down to the great faiths of today.”¹

Man has always felt that there is a Great Reality, behind and beyond and within shifting panorama of nature and history.

One may not like to stand inside the cloistered walls of the traditional forms of religion, yet faith is a dire necessity. Kant says of metaphysics, that:

“It is an instinct which we cannot destroy, however much its successful achievement may be denied.”²

It is also true of religion. This quest for Reality cannot be banished from human nature. To live without this urge is impossible. If nature has the horror of a vacuum, the human soul has the fear of emptiness. Blake says:

“Man must have and will have some religion; if he has not the religion of Jesus, he will have the religion of Satan and will erect the synagogue of Satan, calling the prince of this world God and destroying

All who do not worship Satan under the name of God?”³

Modern Man in Search of Soul:

Eric Fromm says that the countries in Europe which are among the most democratic, peaceful and prosperous ones, and the United States, the most prosperous country in the world, show the most severe symptoms of mental disturbance. The aim of the whole socio-economic development of the Western world is that of the materially comfortable life, relatively equal distribution of wealth, stable democracy and peace, and the very countries which have come closest to this aim show the most severe signs of mental unbalance.

From concludes that could it be that the middle-class life of prosperity, while satisfying our material needs leaves us with a feeling of intense boredom, and that suicide and alcoholism are pathological ways of escape from this boredom? Could it be that these figures are a drastic illustration for the truth of the statement that “man lives not by bread alone,” and that they show that modern civilization fails to satisfy profound needs in man? If so, what are

The Thirst for Religion in Post-Enlightenment Age

Hafiz Muhammad Abdul Qayum*

Abstract: Toynbee sees the vacuum of spirituality in western society, so, he says: "Life now is more secure than it was in the preceding age; but for this very reason it is also more dull. The benevolent action of efficient authoritarian governments has undesignedly created a spiritual vacuum in human souls." Allama Muhammad Iqbal narrates this spiritual vacuum in following words: "Surely, the present moment is one of great crisis in the history of modern culture. The modern world stands in need of biological renewal." Toynbee suggests that the predicaments confronting Western civilization in a postmodern age might be alleviated through a transfer of energy from economics to religion. Bell argues that a return to religion in Western civilization is required if postmodern problems arising from the existing 'shambles of appetite and self-interest and deconstruction of the moral circle which engirds mankind' are to be resolved. "What is modern philosophy? Now modern philosophy has lost its importance in the postmodern age and presented the idea of the "end of philosophy". The most successful proponent of the end of ideology and indeed of history itself is Francis Fukuyama. His article "The End of History"? I think Islam and its teachings are better alternative to liberal capitalism. Rorty says that a modern ideology like liberal democracy has lost its justification: Similarly Merold Westphal writes that announcement by Nietzsche that "God has died," has been "replaced" by end of philosophy in postmodern era. "Postmodernism replaces Nietzsche's announcement of the death of God with an announcement of the end of philosophy." Max Charlesworth says that Heidegger and Derrida strongly suggest that there is a space for God and religion in postmodern age. W. Montgomery Watt has desired for the Oneness of God to get rid of the Trinitarian faith of Christianity which is under arrest in Greek philosophy. According to the statistical data on religious adherents, Islam is only growing religion in the modern world. Keeping in view the objective facts of the postmodern world, Watt in an interview, answering the question that what can Islam teaches to Christianity says: "Speaking personally, it has taught me to think more deeply about the Oneness of God. I am not happy with the traditional Trinitarian Christian formulation of God comprising three 'Person'-Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The word 'Person' has changed since it was first used in English four centuries age. It was a translation of Latin persona-a face or mask, such as that used by actors. Now the English word means an individual, which is different. Christianity is not trying to say that God comprises three individuals. Islam, with its many different names for the qualities of God, can help the Christian see a more true meaning of Trinitarian doctrine."

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Notes and References

- 1 Al- Himsi, Nuaym, *Tarikh Fikrah Ijāz al-Quran*. Damascus 1374 AH/1955 AD., p. 149.
- 2 A. Yusuf Ali, *The Glorious Quran – Translation and Commentary*, p. 525, footnote No. 1538.
- 3 Al- Jurjāni, Abdul Qāhir, *Dalāil al- Ijāz*, Matba'ah al-Manār, 1331 A.H., Cairo, pp. 36-37.
- 4 *The Quran*, 11:44.
- 5 Ibn Rabban Al-Tabari, *Al-Din wa al-Dawlah*, p. 40
- 6 *The Quran*, 2: 23-24.
- 7 Al-Tabari, Ibn Jarir, *Jam'i al-Bayān 'an Tawil Āai al-Quran*, edited by Mahmud Shakir, Beirut, *Dar Ihya al-Turāth al-Arabi*, 1421/2001, Vol. 1. pp. 190-191.
- 8 Al-Rummani has quoted to prove his thesis some other Quranic predictions as well. The forecasting of the Roman overcoming over Iranian empire in the chapter *al-Rum* verses 1-3 was realized within few months after the Quranic pronouncement. The prediction of the dominance of Islam in the chapter *al-Saff* verse No 9 was also actualized. Other predictions made in the chapter *al-Baqarah*: 94-95; chapter Qamar: 45; al-Fath: 27, 20,21 were also fulfilled in due course of time. Al-Rummani, Abul Hasan Ali, *Thalath Rasāil fi Ijāz al-Quran*, ed. Muhammad Khalfullah & Muhammad Zaghlul Salam, Egypt, Dar al-M'aarif, pp. 69-70.
- 9 *The Quran*, 26: 64-67.
- 10 *The Quran*, 26: 43-46.
- 11 Al-Rummani, op.cit. pp. 69-101.
- 12 Ibid, p. 69.
- 13 Quoted in Dr. Abdul Aleem, *The Islamic Culture* Vol. 33, Nos 1-2.
- 14 Al-Khattabi, Hamd bin Muhammad, *Al-Bayān fi Ijāz al-Quran*, ed. Dr. Abdul Aleem, Aligarh, A.M.U., 1953, p. 9.
- 15 There are two ideas associated in men's minds with a mountain: one is its height, and the other that it is rocky, stony, hard. Now comes the metaphor of the Quran. The Revelation of God is so sublime that even the highest mountains humble themselves before it. The Revelation is so powerful and convincing that even the hard rock splits asunder under it. Will man then be so arrogant as to consider himself superior to it, or so hard-hearted as not to be affected by its powerful message? The answer is "No" for unspoilt man, "Yes" for man when degraded by sin to be the vilest of creatures. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Op.cit., p. 1527, footnote No. 5398.
- 16 Al-Jurjani, Abdul Qāhir, *Dalāil al-Ijaz*, Matbah al-Manar, Egypt, 1331 AH. P. 196.
- 17 Ibn Khaldun, *Al-Muqaddamah*, Beirut, 1297 AH, p. 553.
- 18 Al-Zamakhshari, Mahmud bin Umar, *Al-Kashshaf an Haqāiq Ghawāmidh al-Tanzil*. Dar Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut, 1417/1997, Vol. 2, pp. 647-648.
- 19 Ibid., Preface to the Vol. I, pp. 42-43.
- 20 Al-Zarkashi, Badruddin, *Al-Burhān fi 'Uloom al-Quran*, ed. Muhammad Abul Fazl Ibrahim, Egypt, 1376/1957, Vol. 2, pp. 90-91.
- 21 Al-Suyuti, Jalaluddin, *Al-Itqān fi 'Uloom al-Quran*, Matb'ah Hijaziyah Misriyah, Cairo, 1368 AH, Vol. 2, pp. 116-117.

disappear with the disappearance of the observes; by he reason and the intelligence would be lasting to be observed continuously by the coming generations.

A third interpretation was provided by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (d 852/1449) in his *Fath al-Bari bi Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari* that reads a combination of both the stands quoted above. The result of both the arguments is not contradictory.²¹

Al-Suyuti has discussed all the different sayings of the ancestors about the dimensions of the Quranic miracle providing arguments from the Quran, the hadith, and the classical scholars, amid his elaboration of the learning and sciences derived from the Quran. He believes in the Quran as the source of all the religious and temporal learning widening the scope extensively, a stand taken already by Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d 505/1111) in his *Ihya Uloom al-Din* (Chapter VI, pp. 259-264), and was, conversely, refuted by Abu Ishaq al-Shatibi (d. 790/1388) in his magnum opus *al-Muafaqat*. Al-Suyuti has quoted in this context the two oft_cited verses of the Quran as well as a number of prophetic traditions in his favour. The Quran declares:

“Nothing have We omitted from the Book” (6:38)

“And We have sent down to you the Book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims”. (16:89)

While elaborating the classical scholars and their varying stands about the *ijjaz al-Quran*, al-Suyuti has mainly emphasized on the ulama like Abu Bakr al-Baqillani, Fakhruddin al-Razi, Ibn al-Zamlakani, Ibn Atiyah, Hazim al-Qartajani, al-Murrakushi, al-Isbahani (d. 749) al-Sakkaki, Bundar al-Farasi, Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi, al-Khattabi, Ibn Suraqua (d. 410), al-Zarkashi, al-Rummani, and al-Qadi Iyād (d. 544).

This brief account, provided here, demonstrates clearly how the learned scholars from different schools enriched the legacy of *ijjāz* and tried their utmost to contribute a remarkable literature on the everlasting miraculous eloquence of the holy Quran.

Al-Itqān fi Uloom al-Quran, the magnum opus of al-Suyuti in two volumes, offers a detailed description of the theory of *ijaz al-Quran* taking the various dimensions and shades of the discipline from their sources without a proper evaluation of most of them accordingly. He, for instance, quotes the theory of *sarfah* as well as the Arabic rhetoric and the Quranic reporting of the unseen as the basic elements of the composition of *ijaz*. It is very difficult for a reader to assess what al-Suyuti intends to opt and what he chooses to criticize, as the learned author does not necessitate to estimate any of these theories.

Al-Suyuti, however, defines *mujizah* and *ijaz* elaborately in the comprehensive terms. To him, the *mujizah* implied an extraordinary and supernatural thing being accompanied with the divine challenge (*tahaddi*), free from any resistance, evacuated of all the imitations and human followings. The *mujizah* are of two kinds: sensuous and rational. According to the learned author, most of the miracles concerning the Bani Israel (Israelites: the Jews) were sensuous because of their lower intelligence and short-sightedness, while the majority of the miracles bestowed to this Ummah constitutes rational because of its perfect understanding and abundant intelligence. Also because this Shairah was eternal and everlasting it was specified and characterized by the lasting rational miracle so that the men of intellect and deep understanding might have realized it. Al-Suyuti has cited a hadith from al-Bukhari's *al-Sahih* in this regard to prove argument. The Prophet(SAW) is reported to have said:

"There is no apostle who was not granted by Allah a thing (miraculous) like unto him in which his peoples had faith accordingly. What is bestowed on me is (*Wahy*) the revelation Allah has made to me. I hope I would be followed more than these apostles".

The hadith was varyingly interpreted by the traditionists, says al-Suyuti. Some meant the previously awarded miracles were exterminated with the passing history and were observed only by those who physically attended them. The Quran, in contrast, constitutes the miracle, lasting for the day of judgement. Its inimitability implies its eloquence, rhetoric, style and its reporting of unseen. With the passage of time its forecasting would be disclosed and its claim for authenticity would be testified more.

Some others interpreted the hadith cited by al-Bukhari in terms of a difference between being sensuous and rational. The previously sent down miracles were based on the senses like the she-camel of the Prophet Sālih, the rod of the Prophet Moses etc. The miracle of the Quran, conversely, may be realised by the intellect and the insight, and consequently the following of the later would be more in number and quantity. The miracle to be observed; and the one observed by the eyes would naturally

11. The dimension of *ijaz* is implied in the Quranic rhetoric, a stand held by Hamd bin Muhammad al-Khattabi in his *al-Bayān fi Iijāz al-Quran*. The author comments on al-Khattabi and says that he relied in this regard on the verdict of the taste and acceptance to the soul because providing its detail was inconvenient to him (p. 101).
12. The miracle covers all the dimensions of *ijaz* propounded so far. The *ijāz* may not be confined in any single dimension. It may consist some new dimensions also not discovered so far.

Apart from these dimensions of the miracle of the Quran discussed by the ancestors, al-Zarkashi points out some new areas of *ijaz* as under:

- i. the thrill and the excitement the hearers of the Quran feel, whether believers or un-believers.
- ii. The rhymes created out of the recitation of the Quranic verses make it eternally tender, soft and luxuriating.
- iii. the reciter of the Quran finds in it God addressing his Apostle directly in some verses, and addressing the human being in the other extempore and abruptly. Thus he is not bored inspite of the connotations being oft-repeated.
- iv. The two seemingly contrasted attributes of literature e.g. the plentifulness and the sweetness are combined in the Quranic style unlike the human literature. The plentifulness requires in general the force and the roughness to some extent while the sweetness demands the fluency and the convenience. Combining both the qualities by the Quran proved a great contribution and made it inimitable.
- v. The final revelation is dispensed with the previously revealed books while the later are in need of the Quran for their clarification and perfection sometimes, (p. 107) as the Quran says:
"Verily this Quran does explain to the Children of Israel most of the matters in which they disagree." (27:76).

Al-Suyuti

Jalaluddin al-Suyuti (d.911/1505), the shafiite scholar, was born and died in Cairo. He benefited formally as a student from 51 ulama and teachers and travelled for the sake of knowledge almost all the Arab countries including India. After he reached 40 of his age he devoted his life to writing. His works exceeded five hundred in the disciplines of tafsir, hadith, Islamic jurisprudence, and Arabic grammar and rhetoric. His commentary on the Quran titled *al-Durr al-Manthur fi al Tafsir al-Mathur* represents a bet selection of the exegetic sayings cited by the ancestors who followed the classical method to explain the Book of Guidance.