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Sadr (2003, 69-71) discusses metaphorical and literal meaning in lesson ten of his Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence.

It is argued that Islamic social customs can only be fully appreciated when sympathy is given to the context within which they occur (Smith 1998).

Griffel (2009) is a study of the classical Islamic theologian, Abu Hamid al-Ghazali. The study includes both biography and philosophical analysis.

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Books: Locke, John. 1975 [1690]. *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Edited books: Clarke, P., ed. 1988. *Islam*. London: Routledge.

Translated books: Tabataba'i, Muhammad Husayn. 2003. *The Elements of Islamic Metaphysics*. Translated by Ali Quli Qara'i. London: ICAS Press.

Chapter in edited books: Gould, Glenn. "Streisand as Schwarzkopf." In *The Glenn Gould Reader*, edited by Tim Page, 308-11. New York: Vintage, 1984.

Articles in journals: Schmidt, Jochen. 2014. "Critical Virtue Ethics." *Religious Inquiries* 3(5): 35-47.

Webpage: Losensky, Paul. 2012. *Sa'di.* Accessed January 1, 2014. http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/sadi-sirazi.

E-mail: Williamson, Brian. 2005. E-mail from Brian Williamson to Catharine White, "New Perspectives." (09:15, 1 January 1999).

CONTENT

Nearness to Allah

Esmaeil Alikhani,[1] Hajj Muhammad Legenhausen [2]

Among the most paramount issues related to human self-understanding that are found in various cultures and ages are questions of the perfection of man and ultimate human happiness. In Islamic texts, ultimate human perfection is described as nearness to Allah. This article offers a brief review of the teachings of the Qur'ān on this topic and a sketch of the history of discussions of nearness to God in some of the Islamic sciences, particularly jurisprudence (*fiqh*), mysticism (*'irfān*), theology (*kalām*), and (Islamic) philosophy (*falsafah*). Each of these areas is an arena for the expression of a distinctive perspective on nearness to God. With regard to each of them, we consider the following questions: Is it possible for human beings to approach God? If it is possible, what is the maximum extent of nearness to the divine? Can one become God or divine, or is proximity to God more limited? And, finally, what is the nature of this nearness, and what happens to a person when one approaches God? The answers found to these questions allow for a comparison of the four perspectives on nearness to God. The method used in this article is both rational and scriptural, although particular emphasis is given to the Qur'ān.

Keywords: nearness to Allah, *qurb*, proximity, jurisprudence, *'irfān*, philosophy.

1. Assistant professor, the Iranian Institute of Philosophy, Iran (ismailalikhani@gmail.com), corresponding author.
2. Professor, Imam Khomeini Educational and Research institute, Iran (legenhausen@yahoo.com).

Introduction

Nearness to God is described in the Qur'ān as *qurb*, which in the form *qurbān* can mean either a sacrifice or a means of approach (9:99).

The special relationship between man and God, called "approximation to God" or "nearness to God," which has degrees or ranks, is found in Judaism and Christianity, as well as in Islam (Dupre 2004, 4). It was also a major theme of the Neo-Platonists (Remes 2008, 179-86) and in the hermetic and gnostic currents of late antiquity (Filoramo 1999). The highest degree of proximity is taken to be an encounter with God or union with Him, which is achieved through the soul's ascension toward God or through God's self-manifestation to those He chooses among His creatures. In the Islamic tradition, the peak of this encounter is illustrated by the *mi'rāj* or *ascension* of the Prophet (ṣ); in Christianity, the ultimate divine encounter is represented in the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1–8; Mark 9:2–8; Luke 9:28–36) and in the beatific visions granted by God to some of His saints (Kākāeī 1381/2003, 106).

The emphasis on oneness (*tawḥīd*) in Islam leads to the view that since reality is (ultimately) God and the final purpose of man is to reach God, the final purpose is the achievement of reality; other goals are subordinate. Nearness to God is a spiritual connection with God and this connection constitutes human perfection (Muṭahharī 1368/1980, 162). From this perspective, the true believer only seeks God. Nothing else is desired except as a means to approach God (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1406/1985, 1:363-4; 2:190-2). Although this goal also has incidental benefits and subsidiary goals, only proximity is inherently desirable.

In his attempts to draw near to God, the human being has a special advantage, for God breathed His spirit into him (Qur'ān 15:29) and made a covenant with him (7:172). Man has an inherent disposition to seek God through his ontological dependence on Him and in view of

the divine covenant. Hence, man finds his perfection through wayfaring toward God and approaching Him (Muṭahharī 1369/1991, 34).

A survey of the Islamic literature on this topic shows that most discussions of nearness to God are to be found in texts on mysticism (*'irfān*) and ethics (*akhlāq*), as well as on philosophy (*ḥikmat*). The topic has attracted comparatively little interest in the fields of *kalām* (theology), *tafsīr* (exegesis of the Qur'ān), *ḥadīth* (the study of narrations), and *fiqh* (jurisprudence).

Attention to the topic is first found among the *'urafā,* the mystics of Islam, and it is one of the first topics to which they turned, which led to discussions of the nature of proximity to God, its degrees, and the means for attaining it. In the most important books of the *'urafā,* such as Ibn al-'Arabī's *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah* (*The Meccan Revelations*), Qayṣarī's introduction to Ibn al-'Arabi's *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (*Bezels of Wisdom*), and Jāmī's *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ*, there are extensive discussions of how to achieve nearness to God. It remains a topic to which attention is devoted in more recent works on spiritual wayfaring, such as *Risālat Liqā' Allah* (*Epistle on Encountering Allah*) by Mīrzā Javād Malikī Tabrīzī, *Risālat al-Wilāyah* (*Epistle on Trusteeship*) by Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Chihil ḥadīth* (*Forty Hadiths*) by Imam Khomeini, and many others.

After the mystics, Muslim theologians and philosophers added their own views to the discussion: Ibn Sīnā in the ninth *namaṭ* of *al-Ishārāt* (*Remarks and Admonitions*), Khʷājah Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī in *Risālat al-Nafs* (*Epistle on the Soul*), Mullā Ṣadrā in his *Asfār* (*The Four Journeys*), and, more recently, Shahīd Muṭahharī in *Insān-i kāmil* (*The Perfect Man*), Ayatollah Javādī Āmulī in *Tafsīr tasnīm* (*The Accession Exegesis*), and Ayatollah Miṣbāḥ Yazdī in *Bi sū-yi khudsāzī* (*On the Way to Self-Construction*), to mention just a few.

This has not been taken up as a particular topic of study in Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), although Shī'ī jurists have maintained that the

intention of approaching God (*qurbat^an ilā Allah*) is obligatory for every act of worship, which will be invalid without this intention.

In what follows, we discuss the references in the Qur'ān to man's ultimate goal and the nearness to God before reviewing the perspectives of (1) the *'urafā* (the mystics of Islam)*,* (2) the *ḥukumā'* (Muslim philosophers), (3) the *mutakallimūn* (theologians), and (4) the *fuqahā'* (jurists). Following this, we consider how each of these groups would respond to the following questions: To what extent is it possible for human beings to approach God? Can one achieve complete union with God, or does some distance always remain? What is the nature of proximity to the divine?

The Ultimate Goal
The ultimate goal of human beings is discussed in the scriptures of different religions and in the works of philosophers, theologians, and other thinkers. There are differences about whether there is such an ultimate end, and, if there is, how it is to be understood. According to Islam, the ideal and final goal is achieving the station of nearness to God and divine intimacy. This ultimate goal is considered to be intrinsically desirable and motivating.

The goal for human beings is described in the Qur'ān through the use of a number of terms, which are often paired with the terms for failure. The success terms are often associated with heavenly rewards, and failure with the fire of hell. An explicit link between nearness to God and heavenly bliss is to be found in one of the earliest revelations: , for the God-wary there will be gardens of bliss near their Lord" (68:34). In another Meccan *āyah*, the idea of the ultimate goal is made explicit with the phrase "the final end (*muntahā*) is unto your Lord" (53:42).[1]

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1. A similar phrase is found at (79:44).

Another important term for the ultimate goal is found in the call to prayer, which includes the phrase "*ḥayy ‘alā al-ṣalāh; ḥayy ‘alā al-falāḥ!*" We are called to hurry, or somewhat more literally, to make ourselves lively, toward the prayer (*ṣalāh*) and toward the "*falāḥ*." This last word is usually translated as "prosperity" or "success."

he ultimate success in philosophical traditions as diverse as those of Aristotle and Mengzi[1] has been described as happiness, (Aristotle's *eudaimonia, ευδαιμονία*), and, by subsequent writers in these traditions, as *flourishing*. Muslim philosophers translated Aristotle's *eudaimonia* as *sa‘ādah*, while Latins used *beatus* or *felicitas* (from *felix*) to describe the ultimate goal of life, from which the English *beatific* and *felicity* are derived.

There are two occurrences of words with the same root as *sa‘ādah* in the Qur'ān: (11:105, 108). *triumph* or *victory*, using words derived from the root *f-w-z*. A frequent phrase is "the great triumph" (*al-fawz al-aẓīm*). *falāḥ* is sometimes coupled with the promise of the great triumph to the God-wary. Two derivatives from the root *falāḥ* occur forty times in the Qur'ān: *aflaḥa* twenty-seven times and *mufliḥūn* thirteen.

he state of flourishing is what results from the purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*): "Felicitous [flourishing] is he who purifies himself, remembers the Name of his Lord, and prays" (Qur'ān 87:14-15). This admonition is followed by the statement that one should have God-wariness (*taqwā*) in order to flourish or attain success (*falāḥ*). The promise of success for the God-wary is expressed with a derivative of *f-w-z* in the following Meccan *āyah*: "Allah will deliver those who were God-wary with their salvation (*mafāzat*). No ill shall touch them, nor will they grieve" (39:61).

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1. Aristotle (384–322 BCE) was contemporary with the Confucian scholar Mengzi or Mencius (391–308 BCE); and both of them emphasized the importance of virtue.

In *Sūrat al-Tawba,* we find a link between the two terms for the ultimate goal, *falāḥ* and *fawz*, together with a reference to jihad (9:88-89). In another *āyah*, we read, "indeed the victorious" (5:56).

The Prophet (ṣ) formed a community or nation, *ummah*, in Medina. In *Sūrat Āl ʿImrān*, calling for unity and warning against factionalism, flourishing (*falāḥ*) is introduced as the outcome of the mission of this *ummah* (3:104).

Felicity is not merely a matter of personal piety; it has a social dimension as well. However, this social dimension is bound to the moral mission of the new community. The unity of the new community in Medina was threatened by divisions between the immigrants from Mecca (*muhājirūn*) and the Medinans who hosted them, the helpers (*anṣār*). Through their love for the *muhājirūn,* the *anṣār* are counted among the felicitous, for they were saved from their own stinginess (Qurʾān 59:9).

The *saʿādah* or felicity described in these passages of the Qurʾān is an ultimate rather than an instrumental goal. It is not sought for its utility with regard to some more ulterior motive (Miṣbāḥ Yazdī 1376/1998, 1:28).

This is a dominant recurring image in the Qurʾān. There is a path or road to be taken that leads us to heaven and God. In *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah*, we pray to be guided on the "straight path," *al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm* (1:6). Often, this is described as a path from darkness to light, as in the beautiful opening of *Sūrat Ibrāhīm* (14:1-4).

Two Kinds of Nearness

Nearness to God is not a symmetrical relation. Even when we are far from Him, God is near to us. While both are valuable, it is only the first that is sought through divine guidance. We could say that the nearness to be attained by the servant has a positive prescriptive value, while the nearness of God to the servant is without any burden of

obligation. The *'urafā* speak of these as *qurb-i sulūkī,* the nearness of wayfaring, and *qurb-i wujūdī*, existential nearness. They are also referred to as *qurb-i takwīnī,* ontic nearness, and *qurb-i tashrī'ī,* prescriptive nearness.

There are many *āyāt* and hadiths that speak about ontic nearness; for example: "He is with you wherever you may be," (Qur'ān 57:4) and "Certainly We have created man, and We know to what his soul tempts him, and We are nearer to him than his jugular vein" (50:16). Here, there is no distance between God and His creatures, and nothing is far from God or absent from Him. In another verse we find, "Allah intervenes between a man and his heart" (8:24). This ontic proximity is not limited to humans; God is present within each particle (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1406/1985, 18:347). Ontic proximity, therefore, is not a virtue for human beings; and despite His nearness to them, God will do away with those of His servants who defy him (Qur'ān 11:68; 23:44). It is because of this distance that man needs to approach God. Prescriptive nearness to God involves the servant's turning to Him. The servant must engage in a kind of spiritual wayfaring to approach the divine. The imagery is that of a spatial distance that needs to be crossed by the servant so that he can enter the divine precincts. If there were no distance, nearness to God would be meaningless (Jāmī 1373/1995, 226).

The kind of nearness to God commended in religious texts and in the teachings of the mystics is not ontic, but prescriptive. So, Ibn al-'Arabī says that what is beneficial for the servant is to be with God (Ibn al-'Arabī 1405/1983, 3:457).

Ontic proximity is universal: God is with all His creatures. This leads to a universal guidance for all existence: "Our Lord is He who gave everything its creation and then guided it" (Qur'ān 20:50). The proximity of wayfaring, on the other hand, is specific to believers, to those who are God-wary, who strive to advance on the path toward Him, who do the beautiful: "Indeed Allah is with those who are God-

wary and those who are virtuous (or those who do the beautiful, *al-muḥsinūn*)" (16:128; also 29:69, 2:194), and "Allah is with the faithful" (8:19). The Prophet said to his companion when he was in the cave: "Do not grieve; Allah is indeed with us" (9:40), and Moses said: "Indeed my Lord is with me, He will guide me" (26:62).

Nearness in *'Irfān*

As mentioned earlier, the topic of nearness to God was first subject to extensive discussions by the Sufis, and it was one of the first topics they discussed. Very early in the history of *'irfān, qurb* (nearness) was used as a technical term for one or more stations on the path toward unity with God. However, the term also retained a more general sense, as indicated by Abū Ḥāmid Ghazzālī's definition of Sufism as nearness: "And by Sufism (*taṣawwuf*), I mean that for which the human being (*al-insān*) was created: wayfaring (*sulūk)* the path of nearness (*qurb*) to Allah, the exalted" (Ghazzālī 1964, 378).

The discussions of nearness to God are so extensive in mystical sources that a book-length study is needed to review them. Here, we provide only a few representative examples.

In the 3rd/9th century, we find fairly extensive discussions of proximity to God in the works of Ḥakīm Tirmidhī. The detail and complexity of his writings on the topic suggest that even at this early period in the development of Islamic mysticism, there were already fairly technical discussions of *qurb* (nearness) as a station on the path toward God (Sviri 2002, 203). In some of his writings, Tirmidhī suggests the ascent of the soul through the cosmos until it reaches the border between the created universe and the divine realms of light. This is the sphere of the divine throne, and it is also called the locus of nearness (*maḥall al-qurbah*) (Radtke and O'Kane 1996, 64-65).

Another early controversy arose with regard to the extent to which, with divine grace, one could attain nearness to God. According to

Tirmidhī, the *walī Allāh* has the station of standing in God's unicity (*waḥdāniyyah*) (Radtke and O'Kane 1996, 131).

By the 5th/11th century, the Sufi tradition was well established and a number of manuals had been written, the most popular of which was the *Risālah* (Epistle) of ʿAbd al-Karīm Qushayrī. One of the chapters of the *Risālah* is devoted to the topic of *qurb*. While Qushayrī considers union with God possible, his explanation of it is epistemological rather than ontological.

> As for the nearness to the identity [essence] (*dhāt*)—Allah, the king, the real, is exalted beyond it. He is transcendent to all boundaries, areas, ends, and measures. No created being attains union with him. No originated being preceded by him can separate from him. His *ṣamadiyya* [the property of being the everlasting refuge, see Qurʾān (112:2)] is too sublime for any union or separation. There is a quality of nearness that is impossible: the coming near of essences [*dhawāt*]. There is a quality of nearness that is necessary: the nearness through knowledge and vision. There is a quality of nearness that is possible; he singles out those of his servants he wishes for it. This is the nearness of favor through graciousness (*lutf*). (Sells, 1996, 141)

The topic of divine nearness was not confined to the theoretical texts and practical manuals of the Sufis. In the 7th/13th century, we have the following exquisite treatment from Rumi's *Mathnavī*:

> The Prophet said: "My *mirʿāj* (ascension) is not preferable to the *mirʿāj* of Jonah—
> Mine through the celestial spheres, while his through the depths—
> For nearness (*qurb*) to *Ḥaqq* (the Truth, Reality) is beyond calculation.
> Nearness is going neither up nor down.
> Nearness to *Ḥaqq* is escaping from being.
> What place has nothing up there or down?
> Nothing is neither early, far, nor late!
> The workshop and treasure of *Ḥaqq* is in nothingness.
> With the vanity of being, what do you know of what nothing is?
> (Mathnavī 3:4512-16)

Here, Rumi (604/1207 – 672/1273) treats being as a property that needs to be abandoned if one is to reach beyond what can be positioned in spatial or temporal dimensions, beyond extended being. This approach contrasts with the tendency to understand divinity as absolute or unconditioned being that is common in the school of Ibn al-ʿArabī (560/1165 – 638/1240).

Ibn al-ʿArabī's discussion of nearness is especially concerned with *hadīth al-nawāfil* (narration on the supererogatory prayers). This hadith was also subject to commentary by Tirmidhī and Qushayrī in their discussions of approaching the divine. The *hadīth al-nawāfil* is included, with slight variations, in both Sunni (e.g., *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*) and Shīʿī collections (e.g., *al-Kāfī*), and is regarded as authentic by the consensus of the Muslims (Khomeini 2003, 577). Imam Khomeini gives a commentary on the hadith in his *Forty Hadiths*. A translation of the relevant section of the text of the narration as given in *al-Kāfī* follows:

> When the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his Household, was taken on his [celestial] journey, he said [to God]: "My Lord, what is the state of the believer before Thee?" He replied, "O Muhammad, … there is nothing dearer among things that bring a servant of Mine near to Me than the obligations that I have assigned to him. And indeed he draws nearer to Me gradually through supererogatory acts until I love him, and when I love him, I become the hearing with which he hears, the sight wherewith he sees, the tongue wherewith he speaks, and the hand wherewith he holds, and if he calls Me, I answer him, and if he asks Me I grant him." (Khomeini 2003, 573-74)

Qurb (nearness) is often contrasted with the complementary concept of *buʿd* (farness). In pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, the hero was expected to travel far and wide, while those who lacked sufficient strength would remain near to home (Bravmann 1972, 32-38). With Ibn al-ʿArabī, the perfect man is one who realizes his own ontological poverty and farness from God; and through this realization of farness and wayfaring across

the long distance, he is brought into the divine proximity (Chittick 1989, 319). All things are governed by divine Names; so, Ibn al-'Arabī holds that there can be nearness with respect to some of these names but farness with respect to others. When a believer finds refuge in some Names and is thus able to achieve felicity, he considers himself to have achieved nearness. The idea of nearness of the ordinary believers is the nearness of felicity; and this idea is reflected, Ibn al-'Arabī tells us, in the common definition of nearness by Sufis as "undertaking acts of obedience" (Chittick 1989, 151). Far superior to the nearness of felicity, however, are the two kinds of nearness indicated in the *hadīth al-nawāfil*: *qurb al-farā'iḍ* (the nearness brought about through the performance of obligations) and *qurb al-nawāfil* (the nearness gained through the performance of supererogatory works). Ibn al-'Arabī holds that nearness attained through the obligatory works is superior to that obtained through the supererogatory, since in the hadith, God says: "There is nothing dearer among things that bring a servant of Mine near to Me than the obligations that I have assigned to him." Yet, it is by the supererogatory works that God becomes the servants hearing and seeing (Ibn al-'Arabī 1405/1983, 2:354). This state is sometimes called "annihilation (*fanā'*) in the [divine] attributes" (Āshtiyanī 1370/1992, 578). This is not because God somehow enters into the person, but because the acts of hearing and seeing of the person may be correctly attributed to God. This state is often illustrated by the following *āyah*: "[Y]ou did not throw when you threw; rather, it was Allah who threw" (8:17). Thus, the Prophet's hand becomes the divine hand, and He who threw was not the Prophet (Jāmi 1370/1992, 152). Similarly, Imam Ali says, "I am the eye of God, I am the hand of God, and I am the side of God" (Kulaynī 1407/1986, 1:145). What could be superior to that?

Ibn al-'Arabī's explanation is that while the hand of the servant becomes God's hand through the supererogatory works, through the obligatory works, it is the servant who becomes God's hearing and seeing! At this station, the hand of God becomes the hand of the servant,

so that what God does can be attributed to His servant. Imam Khomeini explains that this is a station of sobriety following annihilation in the attributes and may be considered an annihilation in the divine essence, or absolute *fanā'* (Khomeini 2003, 587).

The commentators of *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* have designated this as the station of the *perfect man* (Qayṣarī 1375/1996, 351). Such a person is said to have *wilāyah takwīnī,* an ontic guardianship and mastery over the natural world. According to Ibn al-'Arabī, the perfect man is the cause of the maintenance and persistence of the universe (Ibn al-'Arabī 1405/1983, 2:345).

In short, when we survey the history of the literature in *'irfān*, we find a wide variety of views on divine proximity. Some deny that proximity ever reaches union with the divine essence, while the school of Ibn al-'Arabī generally affirms this. Some consider proximity to result from the acts of worship or good works, while most have insisted that divine grace is needed. Often, nearness to God is described as becoming similar to God; that is, as taking on divine attributes. Generally speaking, nearness to God is considered as a state or station that the wayfarer attempts to realize within him.

Philosophical Nearness

Many of the Islamic philosophers have interpreted nearness to God in terms of perfection. Since, God is perfect, one can be considered close to God to the extent one acquires perfections. Since the distinguishing feature of man is the intellect, and since it is the intellect that is immortal, the perfection of man requires the perfection of the intellect (Mullā Ṣadrā 1374/1996, 161). The intellect is divided into practical and theoretical aspects. According to Mullā Ṣadrā (c. 979/1571 – 1045/1636), the perfection of the practical intellect is a prerequisite for the perfection of the theoretical intellect, which is considered to be the ultimate human perfection. Through the perfection of the practical

intellect, the vegetative and animal faculties of the soul come under the domination of the intellect. Without this domination, the lower faculties would be obstacles to the soul's perfection.

According to al-Fārābī (c. 260/878 – 339/950), ultimate felicity is achieved through the perfection of the intellect, and this comes about when it is joined to the *active intellect*, which is the source of all intelligibles. Majid Fakhry explains:

> This stage, al-Fārābī sometimes calls conjunction (*ittisāl*), sometimes proximity (*qurb*, *muqārabah*), in which humans' ultimate happiness consists. At that point humans become, according to al-Fārābī, intellects in themselves and from being material beings (*hayūlānī*), they become divine beings (*ilāhī*). Al-Fārābī goes so far as to identify the Active Intellect, with which humankind is now conjoined, with the Qur'anic Faithful Spirit (*al-Rūh al-Amīn*) or Gabriel (*Jibrīl*) and the Holy Spirit (*al-Rūh al-Qudsī*).
>
> Al-Fārābī dwells on this divine or semi-divine goal of happiness in a number of works…. And although a primary means of attaining this goal is theoretical, Al-Fārābī does not ignore the many practical means, or moral virtues contributing to this good. (Fakhri, 2002, 93)

These themes are reiterated by Avicenna, and further developed. While for al-Fārābī, there is no greater perfection than conjunction with the active intellect, according to Avicenna, this conjunction takes place whenever a person grasps a universal. The active intellect directs the development of the individual's intellect through successive stages until a permanent conjunction or union with the active intellect is achieved (Ibn Sīnā 1380/1959, 68). The acquired intellect at this stage is also called *al-'aql al-qudsī,* "the holy intellect."

There he argues that felicity consists in the perfection of the rational soul. The perfection of the rational soul comes about through the acquisition of knowledge. The attainment of the higher forms of knowledge requires that one free oneself from material attachments and, to this end, undergo ascetic disciplines. Those who gain *gnosis* (*al-*

'ārifūn), are properly prepared, and are released from preoccupation with corporeal matters will arrive at the *'ālam al-quds wa al-sa'ādah* (the world of sanctity and felicity) (Ibn Sīnā 1968, 32) (Inati 1996, 77).

In other words, the soul should pass from the sensual world to the rational world. At this stage, it becomes a mirror of the objective world. Mullā Ṣadrā believes that when all perceptional forms are realized in one, the form of the whole universe stamps on him and his soul becomes an intellectual world corresponding to the objective world. Here, man becomes a mental version of the outside world, and his soul becomes the perfect mirror of the real world (Mullā Ṣadrā 1981, 1:120; 1366/1988, 2:338; 1360/1982, 250; 1380/2002, 100). The soul at this stage becomes the perfect man, and the forms of all creatures subsist it (Mullā Ṣadrā 1981, 9:7; 1380/2002, 437), as he sees all things as parts of his nature (Mullā Ṣadrā 1981, 8:132).

Of course, there is a difference between Mullā Ṣadrā and philosophers before him; he goes ahead one step further. He believes that the soul, after attaining the rank of the acquired intellect, receives the forms of the intelligences from the active intellect, which is the director intellect of the material world and has all the virtues and realities of this world, and then unites with it (Mullā Ṣadrā 1981, 8:64; 9:140; 3:336). He believes that when the soul attains the acquired intellect and unites with the active intellect, it will be free of the material world (Mullā Ṣadrā 1981, 3:395, 461).

Of course, according to Mullā Ṣadrā, the perfection of practical intellect is detachment from material concerns and purification of all immoralities and removing the rusts of heart (Mullā Ṣadrā 1981, 9:7). Finally, he believes that the ultimate end of the human being is to attain the annihilation in God (*fanā' fī Allah*) and the vision of God (*liqā' Allah*) and that previous steps are preliminaries to this vision and nearness (Mullā Ṣadrā 1981, 6:380). The perfect man, thus, finally

walks beyond the active intellect and brings himself to the Origin of the universe.

Avicenna, who combines philosophy with *'irfān* in the last volume of his *Remarks and Admonitions* (*al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt*), says that the final degree of the journey to God is the vision of God (*liqā' Allah*). Here, the soul is totally absent from itself and only sees God (Ibn Sīnā 1403/1982, 3:386-7).

Nearness in *Fiqh*

The subject of nearness to God has been discussed in jurisprudence (*fiqh*). A believer has to do the religious rites with the intention of getting closer to God or with similar godly intentions; without such intentions, his worship would be invalidated. The Prophet (ṣ) is reported to have said, "The reward of deeds depends upon the intentions, and every person will receive the rewards according to what he has intended" (Majlisi 1403/1982, 67:210). According to the Qur'ān, worship has to be done purely for the sake of God: "[T]hey were not commanded except to worship Allah, dedicating their faith to Him as men of pure faith" (98:5). Anyway, it means thatTherefore, the servant has to worship only to get closer to God or to gain His satisfaction and pleasure, not to gain social, political, or other benefits (Khomeini 1417/1996, 1:141).

According to Muslim jurists, this intention is a part of worship and must accompany it until the end. may have various forms. highest level of intention, which leads to the highest degree of closeness to God, is to worship Him because He is worthy of worship, as Imam 'Alī said: "I did not worship You coveting Your Paradise, nor fearing your Fire, but found you worthy of worship" (Kulaynī 1407/1986, 3:135); and the lowest level of intention is to worship God in order to gain entrance to Paradise or salvation from hell ('Āmilī n.d., 1:77).

Conclusion

It can be concluded that although mysticism paid great attention to the discussion of nearness to God, it is the Qur'ān that has provided most references and keywords for this topic. Qur'ānic approach is that since the Qur'ān is the book of *sharī'a*, its contents, especially in this discussion, are sensible and achievable for all people—unlike mystical and philosophical approaches that are not much accessible to ordinary believers.

OIn all these approaches, human beings are considered able and obliged to approach God, and nearness to God is regarded as the true source of human perfection and felicity. Man can approach God as far as his existential limits allow. In other words, he will always remain a created, contingent being and a servant of God.

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Quine on the Possibility of Religion-Based Science

Nader Shokrollahi [1]

There are various ways in which science can be classified as theistic or religion-based. One is when the components of scientific theories are accepted by the followers of religions and rejected by the opponents of religious beliefs. Although Quine (1908-2000) does not believe in any religion, the possibility of one concept of religious science can be inferred from his explanation of the foundations of science. According to him, science is based on empiricism and physicalism, but these two presuppositions are not demonstrated. Therefore, introducing supernatural elements into scientific theories is not impossible; that is, empiricism and physicalism in science can be put aside, and the production of religion-based science in the above-mentioned sense is possible. But according to Quine, this probable science should be able to predict the events in the empirical world and pass the test of experiment. There are some teachings in religious texts that have experimental implications. If these teachings can be used to gain more control over the empirical world, science will be committed to accept them and, according to Quine, must be supplemented by the supernatural implications of these teachings.

Keywords: religion-based science, physicalism, naturalism, empiricism.

Introduction

Science can be classified in various ways. One is to divide empirical science into religion-based and non-religion-based; more precisely,

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1. Assistant professor, Kharazmi University, Iran (nadershokrollahi@gmail.com).

some thinkers have claimed the possibility of such a division. Of course, the opponents of such a division are not few. The division of science into religion-based and non-religion-based may be proposed in various ways. One is to say that a religion-based science is one in which the scientific theory is based on suppositions that are affirmed by the followers of religions and rejected by the opponents of religious beliefs. But is it possible to realize such a science?

This article studies the possibility of realizing such a science based on Quine's concept of science. Quine loved science and restricted himself to accepting scientific achievements. His advice to philosophers is that science has been so successful in human life that its weaknesses should be ignored. He has no devotion to religion, nor to religion-based science. But there are some points in his thought that can open the way for the production of religion-based science. In short, he maintains that sciences seek to dominate the world and the criterion for evaluating their theories is being able to pass the test of sensory prediction. And a theory that can provide more accurate prediction and empower us more to dominate the world deserves to be accepted and appreciated. In his view, any scientific theory that explains the world may use components within itself that cannot be seen in any laboratory. But if it helps us more than other competing theories in explaining the world around us, we will be committed to its non-experimental components.

At this point, the path to introducing supernatural/theistic elements into science is open. In this article, at first, we describe Quine's theory, though a critical evaluation of his ideas about the nature of science is not our aim. Then, we focus on the meaning of religion-based science, the foundations of science according to Quine, the possibility of introducing religious/supernatural phenomena into scientific theories according to Quine's understanding of science, and the extent to which religious/supernatural elements are actually found in scientific theories.

The Meaning of Religion-Based Science

There are many debates on how a science or discipline can be regarded as religious. The term "religion-based" can be applied to a science either based on its content of and, second, considering external matters.[1] The second itself can be divided in various ways—for example, according to whether the theorists of that science are religious, according to whether a theory is introduced in a religious country, or because religious sources recommend that type of science. It is clear that such definitions of religious science are not substantial, and religious teachings do not play an important role in them.

In terms of content, we can also propose a number of possibilities: (1) A science may be regarded as religious/religion-based if its theories are revealed by religious sources, just as it is possible that some scientific theories may be inspired to their theoreticians in a dream or a film. (2) A science or its theories can be called religious/religion-based if religion contributes to the evaluation and correction of its mistakes or affirms its validity.[2] (3) A science may be considered religious/religion-based if it is inferred from religious texts through a proper method. (4) A theory or science is religious if the subject of some experimental research in it is a religious teaching that can be examined empirically; for example, in the Quran and hadiths, there are some teachings that have empirical implications, such as the following verses: "Now surely by Allah's remembrance are the hearts set at rest" (Quran 13:28), and

1. We have borrowed these meanings from the discussions on the meaning of religious philosophy (see Shokrollahi 2010).
2. For example, Avicenna, the great Muslim philosopher, developed an argument for the existence of God, which he called "the Argument of the Righteous" (Avicenna1993, 3:55). The argument is based on reflection on existence itself, not on existents. He believed that the following verse of the Quran referred to his argument: "Is it not sufficient as regards your Lord that He is a witness over all things?" (Quran 41:52). We have borrowed this meaning of religious/theistic science from 'Ubudiyyat (2003).

"And if the people of the towns had believed and guarded (against evil), we would certainly have opened up for them blessings from the heavens and the earth" (Quran 7:96).[1] (5) If the criteria of evaluation in a science were religious texts/teachings, that science may be regarded as religious/religion-based. According to Quine (as will be explained more later), although this kind of science is not impossible, it's realization is very unlikely; therefore, we will not examine this kind in this article. (6) Finally, a science or a scientific theory may be considered religious/religion-based if its criterion of evaluation is experiment but the theory or science is based on or implies things that are claimed by religion and denied in contemporary science (i.e., empiricism and physicalism)—for example, when a theory implies an interrelationship between natural and supernatural worlds, which is against physicalism, but religious sources affirm it.[2] In what follows, this meaning of religion-based science will be discussed in more details.

Quine on the Foundations of Science

Willard Van Orman Quine (1908-2000) was a central figure in philosophical debates for half a century or perhaps "the most influential American philosopher" of the second half of the twentieth century (Lacoste 1997, 92). Quine made remarkable contributions to various topics, including philosophy of science. Some authors place "Quine's work in the context of … twentieth century scientific philosophy, a movement within the broader stream of twentieth century analytic philosophy" (Hylton 2005, 181).

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1. This meaning of theistic science is borrowed from Dinani's concept of Islamic philosophy. He maintains that Islamic philosophy is a philosophy that reflects on religious teachings rationally (see Dinani 2005, 4-31).
2. Javadi Amuli, an outstanding contemporary Muslim philosopher in Iran, holds that a philosophy can be considered Islamic/theistic if it affirms the supernatural claims mentioned in Islamic/theistic sacred texts (Javadi Amuli 2010). This meaning of theistic philosophy corresponds to the religious/religion-based science mentioned here.

By science, Quine means "the farthest flights of physics and cosmology, as well as experimental psychology, history, and the social sciences. Also mathematics, insofar at least as it is applied, for it is indispensable to natural science," and excludes prior philosophy (Quine 2004b, 276).

Quine's view of the nature of science can be summed up in naturalism, by which he means commitment to the method and achievements of empirical science without seeking any knowledge outside it.

Naturalism

Quine is an empiricist and the successor to Locke, Berkeley, and Hume (Follesdall 2000, 193), but in some aspects he differs from his predecessors. One of these aspects is naturalism. He states, in his *Five Milestones of Empiricism*, that empiricism left behind five turning points in the last two centuries. He explains these milestones and counts naturalism as the fifth milestone (Quine 2004a, 301). Naturalism is present throughout Quine's writings, sometimes explicitly and sometimes implicitly. According to Gibson, "There is a key to unlocking a correct interpretation of Quine which many of his critics and commentators have overlooked. That key is Quine's commitment to naturalism" (Gibson 2000, 25). But what is the meaning of naturalism exactly, and what are his reasons for this commitment?

According to Quine, naturalism is "the recognition that it is within science itself, and not in some prior philosophy, that reality is to be identified and described"; it is the "abandonment of the goal of a first philosophy prior to natural science" (Quine 2004b, 275). Gibson describes Quine's naturalism as consisting of "the following two theses. First, that there is no first philosophy; second, that it is up to science (and, in particular to physics) to identify and describe what there is (i.e.,

what exists)" (Gibson 2000, 25), which means that ontology and epistemology is up to science (see Magee 2003, 297-8).

In other words, not only we ask empirical science to explain the relationships between the objects of the physical world but also it is only empirical science that tells us what kinds of beings exist and what things do not exist; therefore, we do not need first philosophy[1] or any other disciplines to learn about the existence or non-existence of anything. Thus, according to Quine, the only acceptable and reliable disciplines are the various branches of science.

Quine's Reason for Favoring Naturalism

Why is Quine so enthusiastic about empirical science? Pointing to the attempts of Carnap, Russell, and early Wittgenstein, he says, "Naturalism has two sources, both negative. One of them is despair of being able to define theoretical terms generally in terms of phenomena, even by contextual definition" (Quine 2004a, 305). According to Quine, those philosophers wanted to explain the whole structure of human knowledge in terms of sense-data, but they were not successful, because scientific theories sometimes imply elements that do not have any empirical content: "The other negative source of naturalism is unregenerate realism. The robust state of mind of the natural scientist who has never felt any qualms beyond the negotiable uncertainties internal to science" (Quine 2004a, 305).

Therefore, according to Quine, scientists are realists, but they are not certain about their achievements. Some kind of uncertainty always accompanies them. Although scientists know this uncertainty, they do not doubt their method and continue their increasingly successful procedure. So, Quine's advice is that we should follow scientists. Although its

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1. In classical philosophy, including Islamic philosophy, it is first philosophy (metaphysics) that determines which things exist and which ones do not (See Tabataba'i 1984, 5).

achievements are tentative, uncertain, and fallible, science has brought us more useful knowledge than other disciplines such as philosophy.

In what follows, we will discuss three questions: (1) What is the nature of science? (2) How reliable is science? (3) Does absolute commitment to science, or naturalism, mean denying the supernatural?

The Essence of Science

We cannot describe Quine's explanation of the nature of science in one or two sentences. There are many components in his concept of science that should be considered for this purpose, including (1) his theory of "holism,"[1] (2) his description of "observation sentences" and its relation to scientific theories,[2] and (3) his criteria for the evaluation of theories.[3] But it can be briefly said that the main elements of science, according to Quine, include observation and hypothetico-deductive method (Quine 1981, 27; 2004a, 305).

It should be noted that although Quine was a great proponent of science, he did not regard it infallible and certain: "It [i.e., naturalism]

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1. The theory of holism was introduced by the French philosopher Duhem (1861-1916). Quine believed that the theory was well argued by Duhem (Quine 1961, 41). However, Duhem's holism was restricted to physics (Gillies 2001, 124), and Quine extended it. It could be said that Quine first introduced a strong holism but gradually he returned to a moderate holism. In his *Two Dogmas of Empiricism*, Quine wrote, "The dogma of reductionism survives in the supposition that each statement, taken in isolation from its fellows, can admit of confirmation or information at all. My countersuggestion, issuing essentially from Carnap's doctrine of the physical world in the *Aufbau*, is that our statements about the external world face the tribunal of sense experience not individually but only as a corporate body" (Quine 1963, 41; see also Quine 2001, 45).
2. Some of his important discussions on this subject can be found in his *Pursuit of Truth* (Quine 1990, 2).
3. On this topic, his works *Pursuit of Truth* and *Web of Belief* are especially important.

sees natural science an inquiry into reality, fallible and corrigible"
(Quine 2004a, 305).

The Incorporation of Religious Teachings in Science

As it was said, Quine is a naturalist—that is, he maintains that natural
science can adequately provide answers to our questions about the
world—and two main elements of naturalism are empiricism and
physicalism: empiricism means that the only evidence for science is
empirical evidence (Quine 1969, 75), and physicalism means that the
only effective agents in the world are physical agents. Quine also believes
in some abstract phenomena like mathematical truths but does not believe
in spiritual beings (Magee 2003, 269). However, according to Quine,
science is not committed to empiricism and physicalism; they are
temporal elements in contemporary science, and it is possible that science
desists from them in future. In his *Pursuit of Truth*, Quine writes,

> The science game is not committed to physical, whatever that means
> … Even telepathy and clairvoyance are scientific options, however
> moribund. It would take some extraordinary evidence to enliven
> them. But, if that were to happen, then empiricism itself—the
> crowing norm, we saw, of naturalized epistemology—would go by
> the board. For remember that that norm, and naturalized
> epistemology itself, are integral to science, and science is fallible
> and corrigible. Science after such a convulsion would still be
> science, the same old language game, hiding still on checkpoints in
> sensory prediction. The collapse of empiricism would admit extra
> input by telepathy or revelation, but the test of the resulting science
> would still be predicted sensation. In that extremity it might indeed
> be well to modify the game itself, and take on as further checkpoints
> the predicting of telepathic and divine input as well as of sensory
> input. It is idle to bulwark definitions against implausible
> contingencies. (Quine 1990, 21)

He also writes, "Naturalism is naturally associated with physicalism,
or materialism. I do not equate them ... I do embrace physicalism as a
scientific position, but I could be dissuaded of it on future scientific
grounds without being dissuaded of naturalism" (Quine 2004b, 282).

So, although empiricism and physicalism are temporal and the supernatural may enter the science game, science will remain science if the newcomers successfully pass science's checkpoints (i.e., predicted sensation). Quine mentions another possibility: when things such as telepathy can be regarded as checkpoints. But he regards it as implausible, so we do not discuss it here either. Thus, considering the above quotations, Hylton is right in saying that "Quine's position relative to this tradition (twentieth-century scientific philosophy) is ambivalent. On the one hand, he is its greatest exponent in the last forty years of the century. On the other hand he revolutionizes it, in such a way that one might say that he rejects the tradition rather than continuing it" (Hylton 2005, 182).

Therefore, we can infer two points from Quine's concept of science: first, physicalism and empiricism are tentative foundations of science; second, the reason for choosing this foundation is the successfulness of natural sciences compared to other branches of human knowledge, such as philosophy, until now.

Applying Quine's Theory to Theistic Science

In religions such as Islam, there are at least two kinds of teachings that can prepare the grounds for religion-based science in the sense that was mentioned above. The first kind is some sources of knowledge that can be used to understand certain events in the world, such as veridical dreams. The second kind is the teachings that claim an extraordinary relationship between some events, such as the relationship between righteous deeds and some natural phenomena. If these two kinds of teachings find their way to science, the result can be called religion-based science from two aspects: first, the subject has been revealed by religious texts, and, second, this kind of relation between events is maintained by religious people and denied by atheists. We can explain this by an example.

In the Quran, some dreams are regarded as veridical dreams, which inform the dreamer of some events. In the Quran, the story of Yusuf is narrated, which includes five dreams. Some of these dreams were interpreted by Yusuf, and all his interpretations proved to be accurate. One of these dreams was the king's dream reported in the following verse: "Surly I see seven fat cows which are devoured by seven skinny ones. And seven green ears and seven others dry" (Quran 12:43). Yusuf interpreted this dream by saying that after the next seven years, seven years of famine would begin. "You shall sow for seven years continuously, then what you reap leave it in its ear except a little of which you eat" (Quran 12:47). The next fourteen years were exactly as Yusuf predicted. So, an alleged source of knowledge (i.e., dream) was tested by predicted sensation. The existence of veridical dreams has many implications for the human soul and the world, but their existence is a religious claim. Nowadays, many scientists, including neurologists and psychologists, deny this kind of dreams. However, providing evidence for religious claims about dreams is rather possible. Accepting veridical dream does not deny Quine's naturalism, because the checkpoint of this acceptance is sensory prediction—that is, the checkpoint of theories in natural events.

Other religious claims that may find their way to science are seen in the following Quranic verses: "Now sourly by Allah's remembrance are the hearts set at rest" (Quran 13:28), "And if the people of the towns had believed and were careful of their duty to Allah, we would certainly have opened up for them blessings from the heavens and the earth" (Quran 7:96).

These kinds of religious claims can be tested empirically, and if they can be supported by empirical evidence, according to Quine's description of the nature of the scientific method, we should accept their ontological and epistemological implications. Some of these implications may be the existence of other worlds and the relation

between these worlds. This kind of knowledge may be properly named religion-based science.

Conclusion

There are many teachings in religious sources that can be examined or tested empirically. If adequate empirical evidence is found for these teachings, they can be accepted by science and scientists. If accepted, these teachings will have many religious, ontological, epistemological, and anthropological implications. The ensuing body of knowledge may be considered religion-based science based on two grounds: first, it is inspired by religious sources; second, its theories imply theistic/religious affairs. However, although the production of this kind of science is not impossible, we have a long way to go before its realization.

But what do we want from this kind of science? More control on nature or deepening people's religiosity? Pursing first goal through religious sience is not crucial, because science continues its progress in that direction without any need to use religious sources, and the second goal can be achieved through other, or even better, procedures than science. It could be said that religious science is important for those scholars who are naturalists, in Quine's terms, and religious at the same time, and want to their worldview consistent.

Finally, it should be noted that although Quine's theory can support this narrow meaning of religion-based science, it cannot support other important meanings of religious science that were mentioned in the article.

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Truth in the Context of Christian Faith and its Relation to Other Religions

Reinhold Bernhardt [1]

In the following reflections on the understanding of truth in regard to Christian faith (or even in regard to religious faith, experience, and language in general), I advocate a relational interpretation of truth. Truth in that sense is understood not primarily as an intellectual assertion but as a qualification of a dynamic, existential, personal relation. Truth is the trustworthiness of that relation and of the person to whom it relates. I distinguish that interpretation from two other types: from the understanding of truth as the rightness and validity of a proposition, and from depicting truth as a qualification of a certain faith or religion as a whole. Contrary to those concepts, a relational understanding of truth is open to a plurality of perceptions of truth without leading to relativism.

Keywords: truth, theology of religion.

Three Types of Truth

A *propositional* understanding of truth qualifies certain religious statements (propositions) as being true. An *ontological* understanding can be used to qualify a whole religious belief-system as true in contrast to other religious belief-systems. An *existential* understanding qualifies the personal relation to God as true (without implying necessarily that other relations to God are false). In those three approaches the meaning

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1. Professor and dean, the Theological Faculty of Basel University, Switzerland (Reinhold.Bernhardt@unibas.ch).

of the term "true" is not univocal. The different meanings become obvious when one asks for the contrasting terms.

Contrast-terms of the propositional understanding of religious truth are "error" or "lie" or "heresy." Contrast-terms of the ontological understanding are "false religion," "unbelief," "faithlessness," "apostasy," "blindness," or "hardness of heart." Contrast-terms of the existential understanding are "sin" (in a meta-moral sense), "estrangement," "meaninglessness of life," "falling short of existential fulfilment," and so on.

Those three understandings of truth—the propositional, the ontological and the existential—are not mutually exclusive. The existential understanding can adopt the ontological and the propositional in order to articulate its certainties but also goes beyond it. It refers to the basic life-orientation of its "holder" in relation to God and not mainly to modes of articulation of religious beliefs. Or, to put it differently, it refers to "being in faith" vis-a-vis "having religion."

Propositional Truth

Propositional truth is related to assertions and thus to language. In the first instance, it refers to statements about empirical states of affairs and can be verified by observation. But in many cases, an observation is not possible, because the state of affairs to which the proposition relates lies in the past or on a level of reality which is not accessible by sense perception—like the realm of quantum physics. In such cases, other modes of verification need to be used, like historical research on the basis of written or oral documents, or physical research on the basis of experimental arrangements. Verifications of that kind can lead solely to a lesser or higher degree of probability, and not to solid knowledge. The truth-claim of the proposition holds as long as there are no propositions which could be proven to be entitled to claiming a higher degree of probability.

The same applies to propositions of a more general scope, like "all-sentences" ("all ice bears are white") or rules on functional relations ("if p then q"). They cannot become verified in a strict sense, because it is not possible to get knowledge of all the instances which are covered by the all-sentence or the rule. Here, the principle of falsification needs to be applied: such propositions can claim to be true as long as no instances are discovered which contradict them.

It is not just the propositions on single empirical states of affairs and on general functional relations that belong to that concept of truth. Purely intra-mental rational operations (like in mathematical derivations) can also lead to true statements. In such cases, the truth-claim cannot be verified by empirical verification; it needs to be substantiated in purely logical ways. What is crucial here is not correspondence with empirical reality but the coherence of the rational path of thought in the context of the intellectual system. The formal correctness in applying logical principles leads to true propositions.

Propositional truth is binary. It follows an either-or distinction and can assume only a positive or a negative truth value. According to the principle of non-contradiction, it cannot allow for a plurality of truths. If there is a conflict between truth-claims of that kind only one of them can be true. If p is true, q must be false.

Contradictory propositions might both be true only in the case that they are located on different levels or are related to different perspectives. The statement that "a car was approaching from the right side" can be as true as the statement that "the (same) car was approaching from the left side," if we consider the different positions and perspectives of the two observers. But if there is only one observer, if there is no difference of perspectives, there cannot be a plurality of true statements referring to the same state of affairs.

In the context of religion (like in the context of ethics, aesthetics, political opinions, and so on), the propositional understanding of truth can be applied only in regard to *factual* statements (like the statement that "Jesus is crucified"). But when it comes to judgements on *meaning*, *relevance*, and *value* (like in the expression that "Jesus' death has a salvific effect"), truth cannot be claimed in the same theoretical and objective sense.

That insight was already gained in the history of theology, like in Luther's distinction between *certitudo* and *securitas*[1], but became crucial in the 19th century, like in David Friedrich Strauß' distinction between the mythic (faith-related, kerygmatic) and the historic (fact-related) strands within the New Testament (Strauß 2012). Albrecht Ritschl adopted the distinction between theoretical knowledge statements and practical value judgements in the second and third editions of the third volume of his main work *Die christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung* and interpreted religious knowledge as a certain type of value judgement (*Werturteil*) (see Ritschl 1870-1910, vol. III[4], §27f., 84-201). „Das religiöse Erkennen bewegt sich in selbstständigen Werthurtheilen, welche sich auf die Stellung des Menschen zur Welt beziehen, und Gefühle von Lust oder Unlust hervorrufen, in denen der Mensch entweder seine durch Gottes Hilfe bewirkte Herrschaft über die Welt genießt, oder die Hilfe Gottes zu jenem Zweck schmerzlich entbehrt" (195).[2] In philosophy, the

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1. See Schrimm-Heins (1990) and Basse (1993, 166ff). In his careful study. Basse states that Luther's distinction between appropriate certainty and false security is not clearly expressed with the terms "certainty" ("certitudo," "Gewissheit") and "security" ("securitas," "Sicherheit"), because there are passages in Luther's later works in which he uses both terms synonymously (Basse 1993, 170, footnote 24).
2. "Religious knowledge comprises independent value judgements, which are related to the relation of humans to the world, and evoke sensations of (religious) pleasure or unpleasure: pleasure of enjoying God's guidance, unpleasure of lacking it" (my translation).

Heidelberg-school of Neo-Kantianism (especially Hermann Lotze) emphasized axiological (evaluative) reflection over against the fact-asserting (onto-theoretical) propositions and related the two types of truths to the two groups of academic disciplines: natural sciences and humanities (Krijnen 2006, 287-300).

One of the main conflicts between "orthodox" (like Evangelical) theologies and those which are called "liberal" was sparked by the question on how to understand biblical statements. For example, on the divine status of Jesus and the exercise of divine power by him. Are they to be understood as asserting supra-natural facts, based on the knowledge of the divine revelation, or as confessions of faith in the experienced "truth" of the *kerygma*? In spelling out the existential understanding of truth below, I will follow the second—kerygmatic—interpretation, which can express itself also in an assertive way, but requires a different hermeneutics in understanding those assertions: not as asserting facts but as confessing the trustworthiness of God's promise.

All the Christian confessions of faith consist of statements which claim to be true in a propositional sense. That Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man, that he was crucified for our salvation, that he arose again from the dead and ascended into heaven, whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead, are truth-claims at the heart of the Christian faith. But they are not to be understood as objective assertions of supranatural facts but as expressions of the relation to God as it is experienced in a faithful life, summarized in confessions of faith and reflected in theological reasoning.

Ontological (or Essential) Understanding of Truth
While the *propositional* understanding of truth refers to the truth value of assertions—be it in relation to the empirical reality or in relation to other statements in the context of an intellectual system—the

ontological understanding relates the phenomenal appearance of objects or states of affairs to their true being or essence (*quiddity*). Truth, according to that idealistic understanding, is not attributed to language but to the "idea" or "nature" or "substance" of existing realities. It means authenticity, genuineness, or veritableness.

Essential truth can be attributed to the *process* of discovering (or unveiling) the truth (ἀλήθεια, *aletheia*) and to the *result* of that process: seeing "clearly" the unveiled truth as the essential kernel of a certain thing or state of affairs. In our daily language, we employ that concept of truth by qualifying something as "true," like "true love" (as opposed to a merely pretended love) or "true gold" (as opposed to an imitation). Truth means the compliance of an experienced phenomenon with an ideal as the ontological fullness of that phenomenon.

In the context of religion, this understanding of truth appears in creedal statements (like in the Chalcedonian creed, according to which Jesus Christ is "truly God and truly Man"), but it can also become extended to refer to a religion as a whole. In the speech Paul gave on the Areopagus in Athens, he proclaimed the true name and nature of God (Acts 17:16-34). In his essay *De vera religione* (390), Augustine depicts Christianity as the true religion over against Manichaeism and even over against Neoplatonism which he regards to be closer to the divine truth revealed in Jesus Christ. Also in the dogmatic writings of Lutheran theologians in the second half of the 17th century, Christianity was predicated as *religio vera* and set in opposition to superstitious *religiones falsae* (Calov 1685, C.2; König 1664, §57f.; Quenstedt 1685, I.2).

While propositional truth-claims can be employed to qualify beliefs of one's own religion (like the belief that Jesus' death has a salvific effect) as true by (positively) relating them to divine revelation, ontological truth-claims can be used to qualify the whole religion as true by (negatively) relating it to other religions. In this usage, they are

comparative (or even competitive) by their very nature. They take the plurality of religions as the starting point but respond to it in an apologetic way.

Especially from the Enlightenment on, the term "religion" was used as a general collective term, which overarched the different historical religions. In his dramatic poem *Nathan the Wise,* Gotthold Ephraim Lessing declared the quest for the true religion to be answered only eschatologically. Hegel und Schleiermacher went beyond that containment and developed arguments for prizing Christianity to be the "absolute religion." That claim was now understood in a comparative and inclusive sense rather than in an exclusive one. In order to substantiate it, Hegel proceeded in two steps: at first he defined the essence of religion in general. Religion is

> the standpoint of the consciousness of the true; ([it is] the consciousness of the most completely universal speculative content as such), not of something that is true, not of this or that, not of something that on one side is still finite and untrue, but rather of the absolutely true, of the universal, of the absolutely self-determining true that has being in and for itself. But this absolutely self-determining true *is* only as an idea. (Hegel 1988, 205)

Religion is the self-consciousness of absolute spirit mediated in and through finite consciousness. Secondly, he identified Christianity as the consummate or absolute religion, because in the incarnation of the divine Word in Jesus the cleavage of the human self-consciousness from God, from itself, and from nature is reconciled. As long as humanity's true nature is not realized, it exists in a state of untruth (Hegel 1988, 437). In Jesus, the "true Man," that nature is revealed. The alienation of the subjective spirit from God as the absolute spirit, which is experienced as "evil" or "misery" (Hegel 1988, 447) is overcome. In Christianity, the absolute spirit came to its highest self-manifestation (see Mooren 2018).

In *The Christian Faith in Outline* §§ 7-13, Schleiermacher develops a normative typology of religions, which depicts Christianity as the realisation of the essence of religion. That essence consists in the mediation between divine and finite reality. It is realized in Christ as the mediator of God.

Throughout the 19th century, many approaches were presented to prove Christianity to be the true (in terms of the highest developed) religion. They culminated in Ernst Troeltsch's reflections on the absoluteness of Christianity (Troeltsch 1998). And even Karl Barth, who criticized Troeltsch harshly, regarded Christianity as the true religion. But he insisted that such a predication is not justified by any quality inherent in this religion; rather, it is an undeserved gift of God that this religion was elected to bear the name of Christ—in analogy to the justification of the sinner out of pure grace (Barth 1956, §17.3).

Obviously, the ontological understanding of truth does not allow for a plurality of truths on an equal level. It locates *the* truth in the essence of things and states of affairs and relates the different manifestations of that essence in terms of a hierarchy of realisations to it. The more they manifest the essence the closer they come to *the* truth and the higher their value is. Applied to religions, that leads to a hierarchical array: some religions (or types of religions) may be regarded as mere superstition, to others a lower or higher value can be attributed, but none reaches the quality of the consummate religion.

Relational-Existential Truth

The third conception of truth, which I term the relational-existential model, attributes "truth" in the first instance neither to religious propositions nor to religious phenomena nor religions as a whole but to the existential relation of the believer to the transcendent ground of being. That relational understanding of truth seems to me to be most

relevant for a theology of religions.[1] I characterize it by four terms: relational, existential, personal, and dynamic.

Relational

According to this model, religious truth is not conceived of in terms of a doctrinal concept of revelation knowledge about supra-natural facts (as it could be the case in the propositional model) nor as identifying an essence of religion (like in the ontological model). It is tied not to the belief in theological assertions or doctrines but expresses the promised and realized quality of the relation to God, which is constituted by God alone: God's relation to creation, to humans, to his "people," and to the individual person. First and foremost, it means certainty and trust in the reliability of God's promise.

The Hebrew word for truth, "*emet*" (אמת), already signifies the faithfulness and steadiness of God, the reliability of his covenant, and the fidelity and commitment of God to his pledge. In the Gospel of John, we find a similar understanding. Truth here does not mean inerrancy of supra-natural knowledge, the rightness of religious propositions, or claiming that the Christian religion is the true religion. It means the proclamation of the reliability of God's promise to grant community with Godself mediated by Jesus Christ (see Landmesser 1999, especially 107-53). That comes close to the understanding of truth in the above quoted passage from the declaration "Dialogue and Proclamation," which states that truth is not a thing which one can "have" and a claim which one can raise against others, but it is a personal relation by whom we must allow ourselves to be possessed.

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1. In my understanding it complies to depicting the Qur'an as *speech* of God, as Josua Ralston in his contribution to this volume pointed it out. According to that interpretation the Qur'an is not a collection of revealed supranatural propositions but a call *of* God *to* God.

Truth, according to that understanding, is at first a predicate of Godself.[1] God *is* truth, that is, characterized by absolute truthfulness. In the Old Testament, we find that predication, for example in Ps 86:11, "Teach me your way, Lord, that I may rely on your truthfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name," Truth, secondly, refers to the faithful person who trusts in that promise. He/she participates in that truth so that it can be said that he/she lives *in* that truth. And, thirdly, truth is a predicate of the relation between God and the faithful person, which is characterized by trustworthiness.

Being faithful in the first instance does not mean believing in certain doctrines (*fides quae creditur*) but being steadfast in the relation to God (*fides qua creditur*). That does not mean to deny the importance of the cognitive content of faith. But that content is like a cinder of the fiery nucleus of the living self-communication of God and like a coagulation of the flow of living faith, responding to it. The symbols of Christian faith can be seen as condensed summaries of the reflection on existential truth which was disclosed to the first generations of Christians in their way of living in relation to Christ by following the gospel.

Existential
Truth, according to this understanding, is related primarily to the meaning and orientation of a person's life based on a faithful relation to God. It refers to understanding and practicing one's existence, is perceived in the mode of certainties (as opposed to knowledge), and is articulated in the mode of confessional language (as opposed to supra-natural fact assertions). It is not given as such and once for all time in an absolute form and content but is actualized always anew in a sentience of basic trust in the spiritual foundations of one's life—trust in the relation to God as the ground of all being. In the first instance, it is an experience of being

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1. Cf. the 51st name of Allah in Islam: al-Ḥaqq = the Truth.

called into that relation, which gives safety and asks for responsibility. Its roots lie in the deep dimensions of experiencing what gives life a firm ground, orientation, and hope. Truth is the "*aletheia*," the unveiling/unconcealing/disclosing of that fundamental existential safety, which occurs in a permanent dialectic of concealing and unconcealing. „[D]er Glaube artikuliert nicht Tatsachen, sondern Erleben, das […] den Erlebenden mit umfasst."[1]

One cannot *have* that certainty and take it as a divine privilege, but can only *be* in it. Existential truth is not possessable; that is, its source is not subject to human grasp and control. The mode of understanding it is by standing under it. Living in relation to God means living in a realm of truth. It appears as a kind of relational space in which the believer dwells. Existential truth is inhabited by those who live from that meaning-giving source. According to John 3:21, truth in that understanding needs to be *done*.

Its content is not cognitive knowledge of metaphysical facts but rather existential life-orienting wisdom as it is passed on in the Biblical testimonies and in the Christian tradition. But there may also be *loci theologici alieni*, foreign locations of God's self-communication (Cano 1563; Körner 1994). As a source of meaning and of life-orienting, the truth of Christian faith is not a matter of rightness, correctness, or veracity but of being truthful and trustworthy and giving spiritual empowerment. It is not something theoretical, which is claimed to be true as opposed to be false, but something practical, which proves to be true by living according to it. As a consequence, it can neither be verified theoretically by the use of pure reason nor by empirical observation nor by looking for references in the Holy Scriptures, but only practically by the fruits it bears in one's (and the community's)

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1. "Faith does not articulate facts but an experience which involves the experiencing person" (Fischer 2005, 191).

life. It refers to the Christian's self-understanding which frames all of his/her knowledge.

Truth of that kind is "soteriological" truth, because not only it proclaims but *exerts* a healing power in the basic relations of the human being—the relation to him-/herself, the relation to other humans, the relation to the natural and cultural environment (the "world"), and especially in the relation to the divine ground of one's own existence. It is not just a pure informative message but a performative speech-act, a gospel.

Personal
Truth, according to this understanding, cannot be detached from the person who is experiencing and expressing it—as opposed to *rational* truth-claims which claim to be *generally* valid. Personal truth is related to a person's perception of herself, the interpretation of her life, and the relations in which she lives. Its perception and realisation is shaped by her education, by the social and cultural context, and by religious traditions.

As Kant postulated that every act of thinking needed to be accompanied by the consciousness of the transcendental *cogito* (I think), every expression of faith also needs to be accompanied by the consciousness of the transcendental *credo* (I believe). Confessional language is language in the grammatical first-person singular or plural.

That does not mean that existential, personal, and confessional truth is only a *subjective* expression of sentiments and as such tends to be *irrational*. Against such a charge of relativism, it needs to be stated firstly that personal truth is not confined to an individual person. It wants to be shared; that is, it is intersubjective and embedded in a faith community. Secondly, it can, and tends to, become articulated in (confessional) statements, rationally reflected (*fides quaerens intellectum*), and communicated.

But in proceeding from articulating faithful experiences in confessional statements to formulating theological propositions, the nature of truth shifts; its attachment to the person (or the community) who gives testimony to it recedes. The language switches from the first person ("I/we believe") to the third person ("it is the case that" or even "it must be firmly believed that"[1]). The statement turns from a personal testimony to an assertion which claims general validity, and as such it might come into conflict with other truth-claims of that kind. That conflict can lead to a rejection or, in extreme cases, even the condemnation of contradicting claims and those who raise them.

That shift cannot be avoided completely when it comes to theological reasoning. All the more, it is important then to make theological assertions transparent for their existential dimension. Theological propositions are to be understood as rationalizations of confessional language, which express a soteriological meaning that affects the life-orientation of the believer. Only in the light of that meaning—and that means only in the hermeneutical circle of Christian faith—do those facts become existentially relevant.

Dynamic
Even if the truth itself—which is God's self-determination to be in a salvific relation with creation—is beyond all history, all its manifestations (or revelations) and, all the more, all its perceptions are historical. The truth of Christian faith according to that understanding occurs in history as the word of God proclaimed by prophetic voices, incarnated in Jesus, and disclosed by the Holy Spirit. Such occurrences need to be received in order to become life-orienting truths.

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1. That formulation appears seven times in the declaration "Dominus Iesus. On the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church," issued by the "Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith" on August 6, 2000 (http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000806_dominus-iesus_en.html) (accessed 02/06/2018).

"Revelation" comprises not only the impartation of the divine truth but also the participation in it. It leads to gaining a new self-understanding, "seeing" patterns of meaning, and being gifted with new trust and hope.

Existential truth as basic trust in the foundations of life is not given once and for all times, but accompanies the process of life, is involved in it, and shapes the way of life. The perception of it can change, get stronger and weaker. It is not static but dynamic and fluid. Karl Jaspers stated: „Wahrheit ist in der Zeit immer auf dem Wege, immer noch in Bewegung und wird selbst in ihren wunderbarsten Kristallisationen nicht endgültig".[1]

The same applies to the truth of faith as being shared in the community of the faithful (be it a single community at a certain place and time or the worldwide community of Christians throughout history): it develops with the way that community lives and understands the faith in Christ. It is part of their language-flow ("*Sprachstrom*") and thus involved in history.

In John 14:6, where Christ is confessed to be the way, the truth, and the life, the existential and the dynamic dimensions of the truth of Christian faith are expressed. It is the truth of Christ as the source of the Christian way of life. But just *that* verse of the New Testament, especially the second half of it ("no one comes to the Father except through me"), was and is often quoted in order to justify an apologetic or even polemic attitude toward other faiths. That leads me to the last part of this paper, in which I want to investigate the relevance of that understanding of truth for a theology of religion.

Existential Truth and Theology of Religion

The existential understanding of truth leads to distinguishing between God's truth and one's own perception of it. *God's* truth exceeds all

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1. "Truth is always on the way in time, always in movement, and never becomes final, not even in its most wonderful crystallisations" (Jaspers 1947, 961) (my translation).

perceptions and realisations of it. There might be other perceptions and realisations. From that distinction, it follows that Christians ought to be open to the testimonies of adherents of other religions. In *Dialogue and Proclamation*, it reads, "While keeping their identity intact, Christians must be prepared to learn and to receive from and through others the positive values of their traditions. Through dialogue they may be moved to give up ingrained prejudices, to revise preconceived ideas, and even sometimes to allow the understanding of their faith to be purified" (§ 49).

Personal perceptions of truth can be exclusively valid for the persons and communities who refer to them without necessarily excluding adherents of other religions from the source of the truth. That source is the saving will of God, which, according to *Lumen Gentium*,[1] the "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" §16, is universal. *Gaudium et spes*,[2] the "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern World," states in §22 that in the hearts of all men of good will, God's grace works in an unseen way.

Giving testimonies of one's own perception of truth need not include judgements on the faith of others. Enunciating existential truths can be attended, on the one hand, by the firm conviction that they express truth of divine origin and, on the other, by the consciousness that they are only *expressions* of that truth and not the truth itself. That leaves space for acknowledging different perceptions and expressions and thus acknowledging a plurality of truths.

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1. Available at
<http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/
  vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html> (accessed 02/06/2018).
2. Available at
 <www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-
  ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html> (accessed 02/06/2018).

In a 2015 published declaration on "Christian faith and religious plurality in protestant perspective,"[1] the Protestant Church of Germany states, "Because the Christian faith is an individual certainty, it cannot be held in a responsible way, without granting the right to others to hold their own religious convictions and thus without acknowledging and strengthening the right of religious pluralism."[2] In a similar way, Ingolf Dalferth and Philipp Stoellger state: „Man ‚hat' nicht, was einen wahr macht, und man sollte anderen nicht bestreiten, dass das auch für sie gilt" (2004, 27).[3]

If it is taken into account that truths of faith are relational, existential, personal, and dynamic, they cannot claim to be absolute, that is, detached from the way the believers understand and practice their existential relations, especially their relation to God. They are not detached from the believer's mode of perceiving and realizing that truth und thus from the cultural and religious frames, which shape their views of themselves, the world, and God.

Accepting that God's truth is "greater" than every religious perception of it creates a kind of theological humility and curiosity in the encounter with the adherents of other religions. It does not at all relativize the truth of the Christian faith but rather takes it for granted that Christ, who, according to Christian faith, is the true self-revelation of God, will give his mandate back to God at the end of time (I Cor. 15:28). Only then God's complete and full truth will be manifest. The New Testament preserves the tension between the "already," what God has done in Jesus Christ, and the "not yet," the final completion, which

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1. *Christlicher Glaube und religiöse Vielfalt in evangelischer Perspektive. Ein Grundlagentext des Rates der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland (EKD),* available at <https://www.ekd.de/ekd_de/ds_doc/christlicher_glaube.pdf> (accessed 02/06/2018).
2. The English translation is mine.
3. "One does not 'have' what makes oneself true and one should not deny that this applies also to others" (my translation).

is yet to come. Of course, this "full" truth will be no other truth than the one which was revealed in Jesus Christ—the truth of the universal salvific will of God. But it will come to its consummation and full realisation only then. That "eschatological reservation" does not allow for any form of religious fundamentalism which claims to possess the final truth to its full extent already now.

As long as that consummation is not reached, there will be conflicting truth-claims within and between the religions. But the (confessional) conflicts are of a different kind, depending on whether a cognitive-propositional or an existential truth-claim is raised. Conflicting fact-assertions cannot be true at the same time in the same respect, while different existential expressions of truth can coexist and become related to each other in a dialogical way.

As stated before, there are fact assertions embedded in the existential truths of the religious traditions. For Christianity, there is no doubt that Jesus was crucified. The Qur'an, however, in Q 4:157f. rejects that. Even if there is a scholarly debate on how to interpret that verse, the vast majority of Muslims would contradict the Christian understanding of the historicity and the salvific meaning of the crucifixion. There is a clash of truth-claims on the level of fact-assertions and, even more, on the level of theological meaning, for example, in regard to salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Not only are those truth-claims *not* accepted by other religious traditions, in some cases, they are even explicitly and sometimes polemically rejected. On the level of the belief-systems, those clashes are hard to resolve. But if those systems are seen not primarily as ideologies but as life-orientations—that is, less in regard of their cognitive content and rather in regard of their existential function—then the conflict is mitigated. The different truth-claims can become a subject of mutual understanding.

In Rom 14:5, Paul wrote: "Let everyone be fully convinced in his own mind." Of course, Paul did not tend to be a postmodern thinker who pleads for a religious relativism. For him, the proclamation of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection was the only means of salvation for all humanity—Jews and gentiles. But he considered that there are different ways of participating in that truth. That can be seen as a justification for demanding freedom of religion on the foundation of Christian faith. But the freedom *within* Christian faith cannot be limited to Christian faith. By an inherent necessity, it tends to get extended beyond. That does not lead to accepting every religious truth-claim. Paul asked for a discernment of spirits, that is, for a theological critique of religion.

But how are we to interpret the clearly exclusivist statements on the salvific relevance of Jesus Christ which can be found in the New Testament, like in John 14:6? Isn't that an assertion which does not allow for any openness toward other religious truth-claims? If Jesus Christ is *the* way to God and if there is no other way, aren't then all adherents of other religions off the right track and deprived of all hope to gain salvation? (See Bernhardt 2007, 157-68)

A hermeneutical reflection is required to understand this verse. It makes a big difference whether one understands it as a metaphysical, and thus general statement on the truth of the Christian faith, or as an existential confession of that truth by a faithful follower of Jesus, for whom *this* is the only way to God. As pointed out above, confessional language is language in the first person, while metaphysical language is language in the third person. Of course, one cannot separate the two from each other—if Jesus Christ is not the way to God, it would make no sense to follow him and express that discipleship in confessional statements—but it is important to understand that metaphysical statements are rooted in confessions of faith. All the traditional symbols of the church were intended and used as doxologies.

They are communal testimonies of faith, not decrees of supra-natural knowledge.

According to such an understanding, John 14:6 must not be conceived as a conditional clause which imposes a proviso for getting access to salvific community with God and by that excludes others who are not be able or willing to fulfil that proviso, but as a an expression of a personal experience: the follower of Jesus experienced Jesus Christ as the personification of the Torah, who led him unconditionally to communion with God. Based on that understanding, the statement expresses the salvific sufficiency of the experienced relation to God constituted by the mediation of Jesus, the Christ.

Interpreting John 14:6 not as an authentic word of the historic Jesus but as a confession of faith in Christ by a Christian of the community of John (as the majority of New Testament scholars suggest), the "claim" of exclusiveness becomes understandable as a proclamation of faith which invites others to participate in that relation to God. The verse does not maintain the possession of truth against others who lack it and thus are not included in God's saving will. It is not a manifestation of religious arrogance but a "missionary" statement of a believer who felt possessed by that relational truth and could not keep it private.

Conclusion

The understanding of truth in the context of Christian faith has nothing to do with religious imperialism or with a sense of superiority which denies the truth of other religious convictions. It expresses the truthfulness of God's promise as it is expressed in the gospel, for example in Rom 8:38, where Paul assured that nothing can "separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." It is that certainty which can constitute an open attitude towards other ways of being Christians and towards other ways of believing in God.

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Rational and Religious Roots of Peaceful Coexistence with the Religious Other

Seyyed Abolhasan Navvab [1]

In this article, rational arguments and religious teachings that underlie the necessity of peaceful coexistence with the followers of other religions will be discussed. Moreover, the core impediments to coexistence, such as lacking self-knowledge and being ignorant about the others, will be examined, and practical ways for effectively interacting with the followers of other religions will be suggested. Without a doubt, being rational and following the instructions of the Holy Quran and the teachings of the Holy Prophet and his family can result in the prevalence of peace for all human beings in the world. In this essay, we will present rational arguments for, and religious teachings on, peaceful coexistence, taking into account the conditions of the contemporary world.

Keywords: interaction, coexistence, peace, pluralism, salvation.

Introduction

As Shiite Muslims, we believe that Islam is the true religion and the last divine revelation for mankind; it will lead to guidance, righteousness, and ultimate salvation. However, the reality is that in that the majority of Muslims are not Shiite, and the majority of the world's population is not Muslim. How to interact with the religious other is an important

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1. Associate professor, University of Religions and Denominations, Iran (navvab@urd.ac.ir).

issue that can have a significant impact on the survival and success of Islam and Shiism.

It should be noted at the outset that the attitude of many Shiite scholars, especially jurists[1] and theologians,[2] on this issue has been to a great extent exclusivist, and its results can be seen in the rulings pertaining to ritual purity and impurity, marriage, burial rituals, and their definitions of faith. As a result of different worldviews and ways of thinking, this exclusivist approach is less found among Shiite philosophers (e.g., Tabatabaʿi 1417 AH, 1:193) and mystics (e.g., Rumi 1336 Sh, 72.2; Shabistari, 1365 Sh, 79).

Of course, rejecting the religious other is not exclusive to Shiite scholars; prominent figures among Sunni Muslims[3] and among the adherents of other religions also have the same attitude. For instance,

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1. A group of Shiite jurists, such as Shaykh Ansari (n.d., 325) , Yusuf al-Bahrani, (n.d., 5:6 -164), Sahib al-Jawahir (Najafi 1367 Sh, 6:42), and Tusi (5:234), among others, maintain that the People of the Book and Zoroastrians are polytheists and therefore ritually impure. Some other Shiite jurists, such as Sayyid Abul Qasim al-Khoei (n.d., 1:107), Makarem Shirazi (1392 Sh, ruling 113), Sayyid Ali Sistani (1379 Sh, 26), and Jawad Tabrizi (n.d., ruling 107), question the viewpoint of the former group but avoid taking a position on the matter. A third group, such as Sayyid Mohsin al-Hakim (Jannati 1986, 22), Muhammed Jawad Mugniya (1379 Sh, 33), Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr (1403 AH, 1:319), Sayyid Ali Khamenei (n.d., 1:97), Fadil Lankarani (1386 Sh, ruling 109), and Nuri Hamadani (1393 Sh, ruling 106), however, maintain that all human beings are essentially pure. Comparing the views of the recent and past jurists shows us how the changes in the attitude of our jurists toward the followers of other religions has led to changes in their fatwas.

2. For instance, al-Shaykh al-Saduq considers the rejection of imamate the same as the rejection of prophethood and divine unity (1418 AH, 27). Al-Shaykh al-Mufid (1413 AH, 44) and al-Sharif al-Murtada (1405 AH, 1:165-66), among others, also have the same viewpoint.

3. For instance, Muhammad b. Musa al-Hanafi, the judge of Damascus, excommunicated Shafiʿi Muslims (Haydar 2002, 1:200), and Ibn Hatim al-Hanbali stated that "he who is not a Hanbali is not a Muslim" (1:202). The recent Salafi groups have also surpassed all other sects in excommunicating other Muslims.

in 1854, Pope Pius IX stated the following: "It must, of course, be held as a matter of faith that outside the apostolic Roman Church no one can be saved, that the Church is the only ark of salvation, and that whoever does not enter it will perish in the flood" (quoted in Sulaymani 1393). But when the Church faced the real world and decided to open its doors to everyone, it changed its attitude. In 1962, the Second Vatican Council, modified some of the previous teachings of the Church, including the teachings on the salvation of the followers of other religions and also of non-Catholic Christians, in significant ways:

> Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do His will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience—those too may achieve eternal salvation. (quoted in Sulaymani 1393)

Even the Jews, who strongly believed that they were the chosen people and superior to the others, later changed and adapted themselves to the conditions of new world (Gandomi ١٣٩٤ Sh).

We live in a new world with advanced communications technology that has connected people with various cultural and religious backgrounds to each other. In such a world, what should be our strategy, based on Islamic teachings, in our interactions with the others? This is the main question we seek to answer in this article.

It is necessary here to briefly discuss the topic of pluralism and exclusivism. The latter is the belief that salvation is achieved only through following one particular religion. Other religions may contain some truths, but there is only one true religion (Peterson et al. 1390 Sh, 402). Pluralism stands in contrast to exclusivism and can be divided into two types: pluralism in truth and pluralism in salvation. Pluralism in truth is the idea that all religions are true and valid, because they all

are manifestations of, and ways to, the Truth. We do not adhere to this type of pluralism. According to our beliefs, Islam has been the only true, unaltered, valid religion since its advent: "Indeed, with Allah religion is Islam" (Quran 3:19). Therefore, other religions are no longer valid, even though they may have been valid prior to the advent of Islam.

However, this does not mean that the followers of other religions will not be saved. According to pluralism in salvation, for every person who believes in God and worships Him and sincerely seeks the Truth, salvation is possible, even if they cannot find the true religion. This kind of pluralism is accepted in Shiite thought. The scope of salvation must not be narrowed down to such an extent that only a very small number of people could be saved. In this regard, Shahid Mutahhari says:

> By God, seventy or eighty percent of them [i.e., Christin clergy] have a deep sense of faith, piety, and sincerity, and they have given, in the name of Christ and Mary, so much truthfulness, piety, and purity to people. They have no fault; they will go to Paradise; their pastors also will go to Paradise. (Mutahhari 1362 Sh, 1:51).

In another place, Shahid Mutahhari introduces the criterion of salvation and mortality as follows:

> If someone pays attention to the narrations, he will discover that the Imams (a) have emphasized that whatever befalls man is because when the truth is presented to him, he rejects it, or because he does not seek the truth when he must. Therefore, those who do not reach the truth because of their weak intellectual faculties or because they are in certain circumstances and thus do not knowingly deny the truth will not be at the same rank as the deniers and opponents of the truth. The pure Imams considered many people from this category. Such people are in an unfortunate state, and God will hopefully forgive them. (Mutahhari 1392 Sh, 1:320 ff.)

From a Shiite Islamic perspective, it can be argued that peaceful coexistence and interaction with the followers of other faith traditions

is a necessity, especially in our world today. Arguments based on both reason and tradition can be presented to demonstrate this claim.

Tradition-Based Arguments

The Holy Quran and the hadiths of the Prophet (s) and Imams (a) are the main source of Shiite Islamic tradition, which provide us with important teachings regarding interaction and coexistence with the religious other. For instance, in Sura al-Nahl, we read: "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good advice and dispute with them in a manner that is best. Indeed, your Lord knows best those who stray from His way, and He knows best those who are guided" (Quran 16:125). This verse is counted as one of the most comprehensive verses of the Quran with regard to interaction with the followers of other religions. It explains the steps of calling people to the path of God: "wisdom," "good advice," "dispute" in the best manner, and finally leaving the outcome to God. This is the best method of calling people to God, which was the essential mission of the Prophet (s), and in which no traces of cursing, bigotry, or arrogance can be found. Having wisdom, philanthropy, and tolerance are among the important points that this verse teaches us.

In another verse, God portrays the worst situation and the most difficult circumstance in interaction and gives the following instruction: "Repel [evil] with what is best. [If you do so,] behold, he between whom and you was enmity, will be as though he were a sympathetic friend" (Quran 41:34). This is one of the most important commandments of the Quran with regard to creating constructive interaction, which unfortunately has been neglected. According to this verse, when someone wrongs the Prophet and becomes his enemy, the Prophet not only should not retaliate but rather he is commanded to do good in return. Such a kind and benevolent reaction, which is a manifestation of the truth upon which Islamic beliefs are founded, transforms the heart

of the enemy and makes him a friend or even a follower. Unfortunately, however, there is a big gap between what this verse teaches and the way many Muslims deal with the religious other.

In Sura al-Saba', God commands the Prophet to call the people to his way, using the following proofs, which are rational and rooted in their primordial nature (*fitra*):

> Say, "Who provides for you from the heavens and the earth?" Say, "Allah! Indeed either we or you are rightly guided or in manifest error." Say, "You will not be questioned about our guilt, nor shall we be questioned about what you do." (Quran 34:24-25)

In the first step, the verse focuses on the common beliefs between Muslims and polytheists (i.e., the fact that God provides for all creatures), and then asks the polytheists to refer to their conscience and decide whether the Prophet is saying the truth or not. But even if the polytheists insist on their beliefs and reject the call of God, the Prophet adopts a peaceful position by simply stating that everyone will receive the fruits of his own actions. And he says this with great humbleness, since he uses the term "guilt" for the Muslims ("You will not be questioned about our *guilt*") but avoids using this word for his opponents ("nor shall we be questioned about *what you do*") as it may offend them and leave a counter-productive impact. To be sure, not judging the opponents and being polite with them in dialogues and debates are among important points that need to be observed.

Of course, we cannot have a comprehensive discussion of the Quranic view on interaction with the followers of other religions in one article. Such topics as freedom of thought, rejection of racism and tribalism, priority of peace, co-operation in righteous affairs, fighting against ignorance, recognizing the past Prophets and sacred scriptures and places, inviting to peaceful dialogue, paying attention to the common grounds, and respecting the rights of minorities are some of the themes that have been discussed in the Quran.

Shiite Islamic tradition also has many teachings with regard to the topic of interaction and coexistence with the followers of other religions. Instances of these teachings can be found in *Bihar al-anwar* (vol. 58), which not only address personal and individual ethics but also principles of forming a global society in which people can learn about Shiism and willingly embrace it.

In the accounts of the life and conduct of the Prophet and his family (Ahl al-Bayt), no traces of ridicule, threatening, slander, or cursing the religious other can be found; rather, all one can find is wise and respectful encounters and dialogues, rooted in the high morals of the Prophet and Ahl al-Bayt.

Nahj al-balagha reports one of the important sayings of Imam ʿAli (a) against Kharijites, who would negate any kind of human rule over other humans by referring to the Quranic verse "Judgement belongs only to Allah" (6:57):

> A true statement to which a false meaning is attributed. It is true that verdict lies but with Allah, but these people say that (the function of) governance is only for Allah. The fact is that there is no escape for men from ruler good or bad. The faithful persons perform (good) acts in his rule while the unfaithful enjoys (worldly) benefits in it. During the rule, Allah would carry everything to end. Through the ruler tax is collected, enemy is fought, roadways are protected and the right of the weak is taken from the strong till the virtuous enjoys peace and allowed protection from (the oppression of) the wicked. (Nahj al-balagha, sermon 40)

In this statement, the Imam points to the necessity of having a ruler for society based on the necessity of security and order, without which the foundation of society will be destroyed and there will remain no place for anyone, whether believer or disbeliever. Therefore, anything that harms social security and public order has to be avoided.

Interpreting Quran 2:83 ("and speak kindly to people"), Imam Sadiq (a) is reported to have said,

> We must speak to all people, believers and non-believers, kindly. This is obvious in the case of believers, but, in the case of non-believers, one should talk to them kindly so as to attract them to faith. This is also the easiest way to protect oneself and one's believing brothers from their harm. (Majlisi 1403 AH, 68:309).

In this hadith, reference has been made to rational tenets such as attracting the hearts and repelling the threats of the opponents from oneself and from other believing brothers. Our strategy in facing the opponents in all circumstances, whether we are weak or in power, must be tolerance and peaceful coexistence. If a person is in a position of power, tolerance toward his opponents will be the cause of attracting their hearts and inviting them to faith; and if he is in a position of weakness, it will protect him from being persecuted by his powerful opponents. This hadith also clearly shows the rational bases of being tolerant and kind to one's opponents. An important teaching that can be derived from Quranic verses and traditions is that we need to have an inclusive attitude in order to be able to live peacefully with the followers of other religions, even with unbelievers and polytheists.

The way the Prophet and Ahl al-Bayt treated their opponents is completely different from the way Muslims treat their opponents today. The Prophet (s) visited a Jew who was ill, Imam Rida (a) visited a Christian at his bedside, Imam Ali (a) walked with a Christian as a farewell, he also allocated a share of public treasury to a poor Jew, and Imam Sadiq (a) prohibited cursing a non-Muslim. These are among the many instances of constructive, ethical interaction between Ahl al-Bayt and the followers of other religions. Of course, exclusion and battle have their respective places, but they must be restricted to the cases in which peaceful measures cannot solve the problems and the faith, lives, or properties of believers and the oppressed ones remain in

danger. Therefore, the defauld principle is peaceful coexistence with all people.

Rational Arguments for Interaction

The foundation of creation is laid upon difference and diversity. God created all creatures, including human beings, in different shapes and colors, and the basis of the survival of the world is this diversity. Of course, this diversity is part of a coherent and purposeful system, which is progressing towards perfection. Many Qur'anic verses refer to this point; for instance, in Sura al-Rum, we read: "Among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colours. There are indeed signs in that for those who know" (Quran 30:22). In this verse, God clearly states that He has purposely created diversity and that this diversity is one of His signs. Although it is possible to remove the differences, but God declares that this is against the purpose of creation: "[H]ad Allah wished He would have made you one community" (Quran 5:48). The Quran considers the diversity of religions and sects natural, and rejects the use of divine power in unifying religions: "Had Allah wished they would not have ascribed partners [to Him]. We have not made you a caretaker for them, nor is it your duty to watch over them" (6:107). Elsewhere, we read, "And had your Lord wished, all those who are on earth would have believed. Would you then force people until they become faithful?" (10:99) and "With Allah rests guidance to the straight path, and some of them are devious, and had He wished He would have guided you all" (16:9).

The difference between forcing the masses to convert and giving them free choice (which may lead to some people's going astray) is evident, but what is valuable in the eyes of God is the latter; that is, God has placed the perfection of human beings in their choosing the path of perfection on the basis of their free will, which leads to higher and lower

degrees of spiritual growth among human beings, and it is important is to keep the flow of this divine tradition in leaving people free to choose their religion.

The reports of the conduct of the Prophet (s) show that not only he strove to resolve conflicts but he also tried to make positive use of the conflicts and change the threats into opportunities. As an example, Bilal, a former Abyssinian slave, was regarded as a threat by some people, but the Prophet turned him into an opportunity; even with the stuttering of his tongue and the darkness of his skin, he became one of the closest people to the Prophet, and the Prophet's friendly, non-biased attitude toward him, among other things, resulted in the conversion of a great number of Africans to Islam (seven hundred million African Muslims today). On the other hand, referring to Jewish and Christian scriptures is not only found in the Qur'an but also in the traditions of the Prophet and Ahl al-Bayt. Many hadiths also contain direct quotations from the scriptures of other religions, which paves the ground for the followers of other religions to embrace Islam.

In order to achieve the truth, we should have a holistic rather than particularistic approach in our study of hadiths and try to understand the depth of the meaning and philosophy behind the words. For example, in his famous latter, Imam Ali wrote the following to Malik al-Ashtar: "People are of two types: either they are your brethren in faith or they are similar to you are in creation" (Nahj al-balagha, letter 53). This instruction was given by the Imam to Malik when Malik, considering the power and authority that he could have had over Egypt, was able to easily force non-Muslims to convert to Islam or to create significant restrictions for them. It is in this context that Imam Ali (a) commands him to respect the principle of justice and to avoid oppression, and that by reminding him of religious commonalities or at least of the similarity in creation. In these valuable words, Imam Ali (a) introduces humanity, rather than religion, as the base of coexistence and justice. Of course, if

religious commonalities also exist, the responsibilities and obligations also increase. This commandment is rational, and even non-Muslims would agree with the truth and wisdom behind it.

Another rational reason is that the Shia, except in a few regions, are in the minority throughout the world. The only way to preserve this minority, which has gone through various religious, economic, and even genocidal crises, is to ensure that their religiosity and their social activities are in such a way that does not harm coexistence, mutual respect, and consequently survival. Thus, one of the important teachings of Shiism, which has guaranteed the survival of this religious minority throughout history and in the most critical times, is precautionary dissimulation, which is also rational, because being religious is dependent on being alive, and being alive is contingent upon staying away from dangers, which is possible through peaceful coexistence. So, it is entirely rational that all people must respect each other's rights to live; if we respect the rights of others, they will respect our rights.

Considering the fact that in the contemporary world the geographical boundaries have faded away, especially as a result of the advanced information and communications technology, it is no longer possible to consider precautionary dissimulation specific to a certain place; rather, dissimulation should be observed more than before, because the slightest error will cause waves of trouble and difficulty for fellow believers in other parts of the world. Therefore, peaceful coexistence and interaction and precautionary dissimulation are all rational principles that guarantee peace around the world for everyone.

Rejecting Coexistence and Its Root
Rejecting peaceful interaction and coexistence has a fundamental cause, and that is ignorance. Undoubtedly, evil people are found among the

followers of different religions, but many of them do not claim that their beliefs are universal and absolutely true. Moreover, their social conduct is not based on their religion but on the laws and regulations of where they live, which in many cases have nothing to do with religion. This is a fundamental difference between Shiism and those religious traditions, because Shiism considers itself a universal faith that regulates both individual and social aspects of human life. Therefore, the importance of engagement and interaction for Shiism is doubled. This is clearly stated in the following hadith of Imam Sadiq (a), in which he said to one of his followers: "A good deed is good from everyone, but it is better from you, because you are related to us; and an evil act is bad from everyone, but it is worse from you, because you are related to us")Hilli 1408 AH, 153). Therefore, being ignorant of the place of Shiism and not knowing anything about leading a global community, consisting of various religions and sects, lead to exclusivist and monopolistic attitudes among some religious people. The Holy Quran condemns such attitudes and actions, which are rooted in ignorance: "Ah! You are the very ones who argue about that of which you have knowledge. Why then do you argue about that of which you have no knowledge? And Allah knows and you do not know" (3:66).

Therefore, an analysis of the foundations of peaceful coexistence is not possible without having an efficient anthropology that covers two important areas: knowing oneself and knowing others. If a person does not know himself, he cannot understand the extent of his expectations from others; he cannot realize whether he is a fanatic that considers himself the criterion of truth, who thinks that others can be true only if they think and behave completely like him. We need to think clearly about such points. If we look at the world from such a narrow and one-sided angle, we will naturally reject any kind of interaction and coexistence with those who think and live differently from us.

The second aspect of the anthropology that underlies peaceful coexistence is the way we look at others and how much we know them. Do we look at them the way they are or the way we like to see them? Have we ever tried to understand the world from their perspective? Here, a sympathetic look towards others and a sincere effort to know and understand them is crucial.

The Quran and hadiths contain many teachings about people and their nature. For instance, Imam al-Husayn is reported to have said, "Verily, people are the slaves of this world, and [their claim of adherence to] religion is merely lip service" (Harrani 1404 AH, 245). These words are not to disparage people, but to acquaint us with the reality that the relationship between religion and people is the weakest relationship. Without deep and accurate fundamentals in theology and anthropology, our efforts to strengthen this relationship would be fruitless.

Conclusion

Based on the rational and traditional evidence that was presented, we realize that in order to reach peaceful coexistence we need to change our view and emphasize humanity, not racial, regional, or religious affiliations. We must admit that all humans are honorable. If a person is guilty of a crime, he must be punished regardless of whether he is a Shiite, a Sunni, or a Christian; otherwise, there is no reason to persecute or exclude him. This can be verified on the basis of rational arguments and the teachings of our religion. The necessities of the world today also lead us not only to thinking about peaceful coexistence and interaction in theory but also to putting it seriously into practice.

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Shiʿi-Sufi Relations: The Imams of the Shiʿa in the Works of the Sufis of Khurasan

Mohammad Nasiri,[1] Sajjad Vaezi Monfared,[2] Hamed Aleyamin [3]

The relation between Shiʿism and Sufism has been long a matter of discussion among scholars, leading to a spectrum of views: some maintain that the two are identical, and, on the other extreme, some believe that they are totally divergent. However, the love for the Imams of the Shiʿa is shared by all Sufi orders, including the Sufis of Khurasan. As the paragons of spirituality and representatives of Islamic esotericism, the Shiʿi Imams were highly regarded by the Sufis of Khurasan, so much so that their teachings were a major foundation for the formation of different aspects of this branch of Sufism.

This article attempts to show the Khurasani Sufis' great love for, and devotion to, the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt by referring to the early sources of this school and the sayings of its figures. This fact, on the one hand, points to a basis for the Iranian inclination to Shiʿism and, on the other hand, further reveals the common ground between Shiʿism and Sufism.

Keywords: Sufism, Shiʿism, Shiʿi Imams, Sufis of Khurasan.

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1. Assistant professor, University of Tehran, Iran (nasiri.m@ut.ac.ir), corresponding author.
2. Assistant professor, University of Sistan and Balouchestan, Iran (sajadvaezi114@theo.usb.ac.ir).
3. Assistant professor, University of Tehran, Iran (aleyamin@ut.ac.ir).

Introduction

With its prominent Sufi figures and writings, Khurasan can be counted as one of the three main centers of Sufism beside Mecca and al-Quds. After mentioning some of the Sufis of Khurasan, Hujwiri writes, "The sun of love and the fortune of the Path is in the ascendant of Khurasan" (Hujwiri 1390 Sh, 263). Considering the abundance of Sufi orders in Khurasan in the early Islamic times, some scholars have maintained that Khurasan should be regarded as the birthplace of Sufism (Zarrinkub 1367 Sh, 83).

From the very beginning of Islamic history, Iranians were inclined to Shiʿism. Salman al-Farsi, an Iranian and a follower of Ahl al-Bayt, marked the beginning of the bond between Iran, Islam, and Ahl al-Bayt. Iranian Shiʿi inclinations further increased by the emigration of Imam al-Rida (a) to Khurasan.

Sayyid Haydar al-Amuli, the well-known Shiʿi mystic, strives in his works, especially in his *Jamiʿ al-asrar wa manbaʿ al-anwar*, to demonstrate the identity between Sufism and Shiʿism. He is surprised by the conflict between the Shiʿa and Sufis, because he believes that the origins of both sides are the teachings of Imam ʿAli (a) and his children (Amuli 1377 Sh, 14, 171). In his view, Sufis are the "learners on the path to salvation" (38-39), true Shiʿis, tested believers, and bearers of the secrets of the Imams (39).

Elsewhere, Amuli explains about the chains of Sufi masters and their links to the Imams. He mentions Sufi masters such as Bayazid Bastami, al-Hasan al-Basri, Shaqiq Balkhi, Maʿruf al-Karkhi, Sari al-Saqati, and al-Junayd, relates them to Imam ʿAli (a), Imam Musa al-Kazim (a), and Imam al-Rida (a), and emphasizes that no one, especially the Twelver Shiʿis, should reject Sufism (Amuli 1377 Sh, 172-73).

In order to demonstrate the same claim, Kamil Mustafa al-Shaybi also presents and analyzes several Sufi teachings—such as *wilayah*,

zuhd, honoring the graves, visiting the masters, praying at the graves of Sufi figures, the belief in infallibility, miraculous works, and the intercession of the *awliya'* (Friends of God), concealment (*kitman*), precautionary dissimulation (*taqiyya*), and esoteric interpretation—and shows the correspondence between them and the similar concepts in Shiʿism. Moreover, regarding the chains of masters and disciples (*salasil*) in Sufism, he explains that Sufis trace their masters back to Ahl al-Bayt through four chains: to Imam Ali (a) through Kumayl b. Ziyad, to Imam al-Sajjad (a) through Ibrahim b. Adham, to Imam al-Sadiq (a) through Bayazid Bastami, and to Imam al-Rida (a) through Maʿruf al-Karkhi (Shaybi 1982, 1:467-71).[1]

The Imams in the Eyes of the Sufis of Khurasan

A major characteristic of the school of Khurasan is the Shiʿi inclination of its prominent founders and masters, such as Fudayl b. ʿAyyad, Ibrahim b. Adham, Shaqiq Balkhi, ʿAtaʾ Khurasani, and Bayazid Bastami. The first Sufis of Khurasan can even be regarded as the disciples of the Imams. Since early Islamic times, love for the Imams made this region a Shiʿi center. Fudayl, who is an outstanding representative of the school of Khurasan and a hadith transmitter from whom Shiʿis and Sunnis have transmitted hadiths, is influenced in his thought and sayings by the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt.[2]

Concepts such as annihilation (*fana'*), trust in God, fear, sorrow, and knowledge, among others, are specially reflected in the words of Imam

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1. In his *Living Sufism*, Hossein Nasr has discussed the relation between Sufism and Shiʿism (Nasr 1382 Sh, 162-86). According to him, since both Sufism and Shiʿism are rooted in the esoteric side of the Islamic revelation and were inspired, in the early stages of their development, by the same source, they have the same origin (186). Nasiri and Rudgar (1390 Sh) also have shown the influence of the teachings and thought of the Imams of the Shiʿa on the Kubrawiyya.
2. For more detals on the thought and sayings of Fudayl, see Radmihr (1383 Sh).

al-Sajjad (a), and the Sufis of Khurasan used the teachings of the Imams in their spiritual wayfaring. In *al-Lumaʿ*, one of the most important and earliest Sufi sources, Abu Nasr Siraj mentions the eminent characteristics of Imam ʿAli (a)—including his unparalleled sayings on *tawhid*, his knowledge (*maʿrifa*), faith, and other noble virtues—and points to the Imam's God-given knowledge, which was exclusive to Khidr but then was also given to Imam ʿAli (a) as well (Nasiri and Karimi 1396 Sh, 207).

The high regard of the Sufis of Khurasan for Ahl al-Bayt, especially for the first eight Imams[1] (a) and the use of their hadiths (see Nasiri 1395 Sh, 275 ff.) show the deep bond between Shiʿism and Khurasani Sufism such that Qadi Nur Allah Shushtari (d. 1019 AH), in addition to devoting many pages of his *Majalis al-mu'minin* to Sufis, states, "The author believes that none of this lofty group were Sunnis" (Shushtari 1376 Sh, 2:5).

According to some definitions of Shiʿism (see Aqanuri 1386 Sh, 93), the Sufis of Khurasan can be considered Shiʿis. Sufis pay more attention to the esoteric aspect of religion, and, in that respect, follow the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt. Moreover, since Sufism is essentially linked to esotericism, which is also an important element in Shiʿism, it is probable that some Sufis conducted precautionary dissimulation and concealed their real religious affiliation.

In what follows, based on the evidence that will be presented, we will show the high regard of the Sufis of Khurasan for the Imams, especially for the first eight Imams, as indicating a deep historical bond between Shiʿism and Sufism.

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1. The fact that the last four Imams of the Shiʿa are mentioned less in Sufi sources may be related to the circumstances in which they lived, such as increasing political pressure on them, being under surveillance by the Abbasid authorities, and the fact that they could not be easily accessible.

Bayazid Bastami

In his *Asrar al-tawhid*, Mihani writes,

> Some maintain that the great master Bayazid Bastami (may God sanctify his soul) followed the school of the noble Imam Abu Hanifa the Kufan (may God be pleased with him). However, this is not the case, because Bayazid (may God sanctify his soul) was a disciple of Jaʿfar al-Sadiq (may God be pleased with him) and his water carrier. Jaʿfar (may God be pleased with him) called him Bayazid Saqqa' (the Water Carrier). And Bayazid adhered to Jaʿfar's school and followed him. (Mihani 1384 Sh, 35)

Although the idea that Bayazid was a contemporary of Imam al-Sadiq (a) has been questioned (Sahlagi 1384 Sh, 33-34, 38-39, 91), it is noteworthy that Sahlagi quotes on the authority of Shaykh Abu ʿAbd Allah Dastani that "Bayazid served 313 masters, the last of whom was Jaʿfar al-Sadiq" (Sahlagi 1384 Sh, 109). Also, in *Tara'iq al-haqa'iq*, various views have been presented, and sometimes criticized, on the relationship between Bayazid and Imam al-Sadiq (a).

Abu Saʿid Abu l-Khayr

In *Halat wa sukhanan Abu Saʿid Abu l-Khayr*, the earliest biography of Abu Saʿid (357-440 AH), the spiritual genealogy of Abu Saʿid is traced back to Imam ʿAli (a). His immediate master was Shaykh Abu l-Fadl Hasan Sarakhsi, who was a disciple of Shaykh Abu Nasr Siraj (Tawus al-Fuqara'), who in turn was a disciple of Abu Muhammad ʿAbd Allah b. Muhammad al-Murtaʿish. Afterwards, Junayd, Sari al-Saqati, Maʿruf al-Karkhi, and then al-Hasan al-Basri, who was a disciple of Imam ʿAli (a),[1] appear in the chain.

Regarding the great love of Abu Saʿid for the family of the Prophet (s), Mihani reports that one day, Baba Hasan, who was the leader of the

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1. "He [i.e., al-Hasan al-Basri] was a disciple of Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali b. Abi Talib—May God honor him—and his virtues do not need explanation" (Abu Ruh 1384 Sh, 62-63).

Sufis at the time of Abu Saʿid, said, "*Allahumma salli ʿala Muhammad* [O Allah! Bless Muhammad!]" in the *qunut* of his morning prayer. Abu Saʿid asked why he did not include the family of the Prophet (s) in his prayer. In response, Baba Hasan pointed to the disagreement between the companions in this matter, to which Abu Saʿid replied, "We do not go to a procession in which the family of the Prophet (s) are not present" (Mihani 1367 Sh, 204).

Abu l-Qasim Qushayri
In his *al-Risala al-Qushayriyya*, in the section on *futuwwa* (chivalry), Qushayri reports that Shaqiq Balkhi asked Imam al-Sadiq (a) about the meaning of *futuwwa*, and the Imam replied, "Futuwwa is to donate when we are given, and to remain patient when we are deprived" (Qushayri 1361 Sh, 363-64). In the same section, Qushayri mentions the story of a person who did not know Imam al-Sadiq (a) and thought that the Imam had stolen his money. So, he asked the Imam to return his money. The Imam (a) gave him one-thousand dinars of his own money. The man returned home and found his money there and realized that he had made a mistake, so he took the money back to the Imam (a) and apologized, but Imam al-Sadiq (a) did not accept the money back and said, "We do not take back what we have given away" (Qushayri 1361 Sh, 363).

In the section on humbleness, Qushayri mentions the story of Imam al-Husayn (a) when some kids invited him to eat some pieces of bread with them. The Imam (a) sat down and ate with them. Then, he invited the kids to his house and offered them food and clothes, and said, "They did better than me, because they didn't have more than they offered, but I have more than I offered them" (Qushayri 1361 Sh, 223).

Elsewhere, he reports that Imam al-Sajjad (a) was prostrating himself in prayer when his house caught fire. However, the Imam (a) did not stop his prayer. Later, people asked him about that, and the

Imam (a) responded, "The great Fire [i.e., hell] occupied [and distracted] me from this fire" (Qushayri 1361 Sh, 110).

Moreover, in several places, Qushayri mentions some sayings of Imam ʿAli (a) and some hadiths on his virtues; for instance, he quotes the following: "Paradise yearns for three people: ʿAli, ʿAmmar, and Salman" (Qushayri 1361 Sh, 582).

Khʷaja ʿAbd Allah Ansari

Khʷaja ʿAbd Allah writes that Maʿruf al-Karkhi was the guard of Imam al-Rida (a) and that "it is said that he was converted to Islam by him" (Ansari 1362 Sh, 38). Moreover, in several places, he mentions the sayings of Imam Ali (a) (108, 247, 225). He quotes ʿArif ʿAyyar as saying, "Give me the help of God and the sight of Mustafa and Dhu l-Fiqar; I will eradicate Mount Qaf." Khʷaja then explains, "This is not a defect in ʿAli; rather, it is a testimony that ʿAli had those three" (614).

In the section on concealment (*talbis*) in his *Manazil al-sa'irin*, Khʷaja ʿAbd Allah considers the third concealment (the concealment of the "people of sovereignty over the world") to belong to Prophets and then to "divine Imams" who come from the *abode of unity* (*wadi al-jamʿ*) and inform people of it (Ansari 1355 Sh, 222-23). Although Khʷaja ʿAbd Allah is a strict Hanbalite, no referents can be found for the expression "divine Imams" other than the Imams of the Shiʿa, who are divine leaders coming from the abode of unity in order to guide people to that abode and to be God's deputies in calling people to Him. Qasani, also, in his commentary on *Manazil al-sa'irin*, explains that the "people of sovereignty over the world" are Prophets and their inheritors, the true sages who are the deputies of God in calling people to Him (Qasani 1392 Sh, 790-91).

ʿAli b. ʿUthman Hujwiri

After mentioning the first four caliphs, including Imam ʿAli (a), Hujwiri mentions the Imams of the Shiʿa until Imam al-Sadiq (a) in a separate section of his *Kash al-mahjub*, entitled "Section on Their Imams from Ahl al-Bayt." The following are some of the descriptions that he mentions for Imam ʿAli (a): "The brother of Mustafa, drowned in the sea of affliction, burnt by the fire of love, leader of the Friends and the Chosen ones, Abu l-Hasan ʿAli b. Abi Talib" (Hujwiri 1390 Sh, 101-2). He quotes Junayd as saying, "Our master in the principles and affliction ʿAli al-Murtada" (102).

> Elsewhere, he writes, "And the family of the Prophet (peace be upon him), who are endowed with original [and pre-eternal] purity—each of them has a firm standing in these meanings, and all [of them] were the leaders of this group [i.e., the Sufis]" (105), and then writes about Imam al-Hasan (a): "The sweetheart of Mustafa, the flower of the heart of Murtada, the light of the eye of Zahra'" (Hujwiri 1390 Sh, 105).

About Imam al-Husayn (a), he writes,

> The candle of the family of the Prophet (s), free from bonds, the master of his time, Abu ʿAbd Allah al-Husayn b. ʿAli b. Abi Talib (may God be pleased with them both). He was one of the verifiers (*muhaqqiqan*) among the Friends [of God] and the *qibla* of the people of affliction, who was murdered one in the desert of Karbala. The people of this story [i.e., the Sufis] agree upon his truthfulness. He followed the truth until the truth was manifest, but when the truth was lost, he took his sword and did not relax until he sacrificed his dear life in martyrdom for the sake of God Almighty. (Hujwiri 1390 Sh, 108)

In addition, he mentions the following about Imam al-Sajjad (a):

> The heir of prophethood, the light of the *ummah*, the oppressed master, the blessed Imam, the adornment of the worshippers, and the candle of the Pillars (*awtad*), Abu l-Hasan ʿAli b. al-Husayn b. ʿAli b. Abi Talib (may God be pleased with them) was the noblest and most pious of the people of his time. (Hujwiri 1390 Sh, 110)

Regarding the virtues of Imam al-Sajjad (a), Hujwiri mentions the anecdote of the journey of the Imam and Ahl al-Bayt to Damascus and reports that the Imam likened his and his family's state to that of the people of Moses and the persecution they faced under Pharaoh. Here, Hujwiri uses the expression "May God disgrace him!" for Yazid (Hujwiri 1390 Sh, 113). In addition, he points to the story of the encounter between the Imam and Hisham b. ʿAbd al-Malik in hajj and the famous poem that Farazdaq composed and recited there (113).

Hujwiri praises Imam al-Baqir (a) with the following words: "The proof upon the people of action (*muʿamala*), the demonstration of the people of vision, the Imam among the descendants of the Prophet, and the chosen one among the offspring of ʿAli" (Hujwiri 1390 Sh, 113), and describes Imam al-Sadiq (a) as follows: "The sword of tradition, the beauty of the Path, the interpreter of knowledge, and the adornment of the chosen ones" (Hujwiri 1390 Sh, 116). Moreover, Hujwiri quotes some of the sayings of these two Imams on themes such as asceticism, remembering God and turning away from the others, and knowing Him. He also quotes a moving and eloquent supplication by Imam al-Baqir (a) (Hujwiri 1390 Sh, 114-16).

Shaykh Ahmad Namaqi Jami

In the thirty-third section of his *Uns al-ta'ibin* and also in his *Rawdat al-mudhnibin*, Jami[1] praises the answer that Imam al-Sadiq (a) gave to a question about the meaning of love: "He was asked, 'What is the meaning of love?' Now, see what he has answered! Bravo! O he more steadfast than whom has not risen from the house of the Prophet! He said, 'Love is a divine madness that is not blameworthy or praiseworthy'" (Jami 1355 Sh, 124-25; 1368 Sh, 211).

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1. Regarding the religious affiliation of Jami, see Fazel (1373 Sh, 99-112). The author discusses some views on the Shiʿi affiliation of Jami and concludes that he was a Hanafite Sunni but inclined to Shiʿi beliefs.

Elsewhere, in addition to praising the Companions of the Prophet and the first four caliphs, he states that the referent of the phrase "the faithful who maintain the prayer and give the zakat while bowing down" in Quran 5:55 is Imam ʿAli (a) (Jami 1355 Sh, 30) and, in the ninth section of the same work, he notes that "The Commander of the Faithful Ali (may God be pleased with him) never worshipped idols in his life" (95).

Kalabadhi and the Commentators of *al-Taʿarruf*

In his *al-Taʿarruf li-madhhab ahl al-tasawwuf*, Kalabadhi writes about the first six Imams of the Shiʿa in the section entitled "The Men of Sufism" (Kalabadhi 1422 AH, 21-22). Mustamli Bukhari, in his commentary on al-Taʿarruf, mentions the Imams of the Shiʿa in a very respectful way. He states that the title Zayn al-ʿAbidin (the adornment of the worshippers) is given to Imam al-Sajjad (a) because of his utmost similarity to the Prophet (s) in his outward and inward aspects, in his sayings, actions, manners, and appearance. He also states that "all the descendants of the Prophet until the Day of Judgment are [linked to the Prophet] through him" (Mustamli Bukhari 1363 Sh, 198). Moreover, he refers to Imam al-Baqir (a) as "the master of his time" and states that "the books of this group [i.e., the Sufis] are full of their [i.e., Imam al-Baqir's and Imam al-Sadiq's] sayings" (Mustamli Bukhari 1363 Sh, 198). Mustamli Bukhari calls Imam ʿAli (a) the "secret of the mystics" and the "owner of the breaths of the Prophets" and believes that the Imam has words of wisdom the like of which is not said by anyone before or after him (Mustamli Bukhari 1363 Sh, 199). He also mentions some of the virtues of Imam al-Hasan (a) and Imam al-Husayn (a) and writes, "Who can talk about the virtues of those who are parts of the Prophet … and God said about them: 'Indeed Allah desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification' [Quran 33:33]" (Mustamli Bukhari 1363 Sh, 200).

The title of the second chapter of a summary of *Sharh al-Taʿarruf,* written by an anonymous author in 710 AH, is "The Names of a Group of Sufi Men," and the first names that appear in this chapter are those of the Imams of the Shiʿa (*Khulasa Sharh Taʿarruf* 1386 Sh, 47). Although he accuses "the Rafida" of exaggerating in their love for Ahl al-Bayt, he asks the Nasibis

> not to say bad things about Ahl al-Bayt, especially about ʿAli (may God be pleased with him) since the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to ʿAli, "You are to me like Aaron was to Moses, except that there will be no Prophet after me." Moreover, he said, "Whoever I am his master, ʿAli is his master" … and also, "O ʿAli! Those who love you are not but pious believers, and those who hate you are not but wretched hypocrites." He said about Fatima (may God be pleased with her), "She is a part of me," and said about al-Hasan and al-Husayn (may God be pleased with them), "Al-Hasan and al-Husayn are the two masters of the youth of Paradise, and their father is better than them." (*Khulasa Sharh Taʿarruf* 1386 Sh, 115; Mustamli Bukhari 1363 Sh, 462).

Moreover, in the sixteenth section of the book, although, like other Sunnis, he places Imam ʿAli (a) after the first three caliphs and does not consider it a condition for the caliph to be from Ahl al-Bayt (*Khulasa Sharh Taʿarruf* 1386 Sh, 138-40), he explicitly states that, in the conflict between Imam ʿAli (a) and Muʿawiya, the Imam was right and Muʿawiya was a transgressor (140).

Hakim Sanayi

The poems of Sanayi in praising the Imams of the Shiʿa are so moving, beautiful, and profound that make the reader doubt his Sunni affiliation. He also has famous poems about dissociation from the family of Abu Sufyan (Sanayi 1368 Sh, 259-62).

Although he speaks about the first three caliphs and about Abu Hanifa and al-Shafiʿi with respect (Sanayi 1368 Sh, 226-44, 272-79),

his harsh criticism of the family of Abu Sufyan, Muʿawiya, and ʿAmr
b. ʿAs is not much in line with the mainstream Sunni view. On the other
hand, the fervent way in which he praises the family of the Prophet (s),
especially Imam ʿAli (a) and his descendants (Sanayi 1368 Sh, 244-59,
262-71), has been considered by some scholars as indicating his Shiʿi
affiliation (see Jaʿfarian 1386 Sh, 601-4, 760-67). Shushtri considers
the explicit statement of Sanayi as to the superiority of the Imams of the
Shiʿa as evidence for his perfect adherence to the Jaʿfari school
(Shushtari 1376 Sh, 2:78-79).

Farid al-Din ʿAttar

ʿAttar specifically writes about Imam al-Sadiq (a) and Imam al-Baqir
(a) in his *Tadhkirat al-awliya'*. Although there seems to be no doubt
about ʿAttar's Sunni affiliation, attested by his especial respect for the
first four caliphs, all the Companions, and other Sunni figures, he
speaks about the Imams of the Shiʿa with great love and devotion. The
first figure that he mentions in his *Tadhkirat al-awliya'* is Imam al-
Sadiq (a), about whom he writes, "The king of the nation of Mustafa,
the demonstration of the Prophetic proof, the truthful sage, the sage of
verification, the beloved of the Friends, the loved one of the Prophets,
the transmitter of [the knowledge] of ʿAli, the heir of the Prophet, the
lover mystic, Abu Muhammad Jaʿfar al-Sadiq" (ʿAttar 1354 Sh, 12).
Afterwards, he quotes some anecdotes about the Imam's virtues and
miraculous works and states that he does not intend to write about the
Prophets, the Companions, or Ahl al-Bayt, because that would require
a separate book, and he intends to write only about Sufi masters.
Nevertheless, he explains that he has written about Imam al-Sadiq (a)
in order to seek *baraka* (blessings).

ʿAttar ends his book with an account of Imam al-Baqir (a) and his
virtues (ʿAttar 1354 Sh, 819). There, he quotes the Imam's lamentation
for his grandfather Imam al-Husayn (a):

> O my friend! Jacob lost one Joseph, so he (peace be upon him) cried so much that his eyes turned white. Now, I lost ten of my paternal kin—that is, al-Husayn and his people—in Karbala. Am I supposed to do anything less than making my eyes turn white for being separated from them? (ʿAttar 1354 Sh, 820)

Moreover, in the beginning of his *Musibat namah*, after eulogizing the Prophet (s) and writing some poems on the virtues of the early caliphs, ʿAttar praises Imam ʿAli (a), al-Hasan (a), and al-Husayn (a) (ʿAttar 1386b Sh, 144-46). The descriptions that he mentions for Imam ʿAli brings him very close to the Shiʿa (ʿAttar 1386b Sh, 144). The fact that, in *Musibat namah* (1386b Sh, 146) and in *Mukhtar namah* (1386a Sh, 90), ʿAttar calls Imam al-Husayn (a) the head of "the ten[1] infallible ones," and, in *Mantiq al-tayr*, calls Imam ʿAli "the infallible master" (ʿAttar 1386b Sh, 523-24) blurs his Sunni affiliation.

Conclusion

There have been different definitions and types of Shiʿism since early Islamic times. *Love-based* Shiʿism can be regarded as one of these types, adhered by those who love Ahl al-Bayt based on the teachings of the Qurʾan and hadiths. The sayings of the Sufi masters of Khurasan about the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt clearly show that they are inside the circle of love-based Shiʿism. Some of them, such as Sanayi, can be even considered Shiʿi in a narrower sense, considering their preference for Imam ʿAli over the other caliphs.

Whether at least some of the Sufi masters of Khurasan can be regarded as adherents of Imami Shiʿism needs more investigation. The

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1. A question may be raised here as to why ʿAttar speaks of ten infallible ones, whereas, according to Shiʿi beliefs, there are only nine infallible Imams after Imam al-Husayn (a). As a solution to this problem, Shafiʿi Kadkani suggests that ʿAttar probably means that, in a gathring consisting of Imam al-Husayn (a) and the nine Imams after him, al-Husayn (a) is their king (see ʿAttar 1386b Sh, 523-24).

fact that precautionary dissimulation and secrecy are common practices among Sufis and Shiʿis makes this investigation difficult. The Imams of the Shiʿa continued to be held in high regard by the Sufis of Khurasan in the subsequent centuries, which made the Sufi-Shiʿi ties further established. For instance, the masters of the Kubrawiyya expressed their love and devotion to ʿAli (a) and Ahl al-Bayt to such an extent that the possibility of their Shiʿi affiliation has become a matter of discussion among scholars.

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The Influence of Modern Western Philosophers on Iqbāl

Gholam Ali Haddad-Adel [1]

Muhammad Iqbal's cultural, literary, and philosophical influence on the Indian subcontinent, especially his impact on the events that led to the birth of the state of Pakistan cannot be denied. Prior to visiting Europe, Iqbāl had gained profound understanding of Islamic teachings. While in Europe, he acquired deep knowledge of Western scholarship and was also exposed to Western philosophical thought, which he acquired from his Western mentors. He synthesized these two worldviews in his own work and thought. The principle concept in Iqbal's thought is the idea of the *self*, which he gleaned not only from Islamic sources but also from the works of philosophers such as Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Bergson. This paper addresses the influence of these European philosophers on the development of Iqbal's thought.

Keywords: Iqbal, Western Philosophers, idea of the Self, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Bergson.

Introduction

As a high school student and later when he was pursuing higher education, Iqbāl was introduced to the Western philosophical thought and culture by studying the works of scholars such as Sir Thomas W. Arnold. He also closely observed the economic and cultural conduct of the British in India. Moreover, in 1905, he travelled to Europe and spent

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1. Associate Professor, University of Tehran, Iran (hadel@ut.ac.ir).

three years in Britain and Germany in order to study and conduct research at Cambridge, Heidelberg, and Munich. In Europe, not only did Iqbāl meet Reynold A. Nicholson, who had translated Rūmī's *Mathnawī* into English and had prepared a critical edition of its Persian text at Cambridge but was also introduced to William Wordsworth's (1770-1850) poetry and thought. During this period, Iqbāl studied the philosophical ideas and systems of the new European philosophers. He was in Europe in the 1890s, and thus, like others, he was acquainted with the new British idealists such as Bradley, Bosanquet, McTaggart, and Ward and experienced the German philosophical atmosphere of the day. After Kant's death in 1804, German Idealism emerged in the nineteenth century with philosophers such as Fichte (1762-1814), Schelling (1775-1854), and Hegel (1770-1831), who carried Kant's legacy forward. In fact, it was this nineteenth century context that stimulated the emergence of philosophers like Schopenhauer (1788-1860) and Nietzsche (1844-1900). At this time, Henri Bergson (1859-1941) was also quite popular among French thinkers. During the period of Iqbāl's residence in Europe, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the voices of thinkers such as Kierkegaard (1813-1855), Kafka (1883-1924), and Dostoevsky (1821-1881) were being heard across the continent. Iqbāl certainly heard these voices too.

Upon his return from Europe, Iqbāl authored *The Secrets of the Self*, in which he put forth his understanding of the truth about "man." As will be discussed later in greater detail, in defining the fertile ground which motivated the inception of Iqbāl's philosophy, it can be said that Kant's students and followers like Fichte and Schelling brought his philosophy closer to idealism such that *self* was central in Fichte's theory and anything outside of it or the "non-self" was defined in contrast to it. Such tendencies and developments are seen in Schelling's works as well. After Kant's death, his philosophy was made to undertake a journey towards idealism, which ended in Hegel's absolute

idealism. Part of this journey was Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation*. Schopenhauer believed that the reality of the world is the same as its representation in the human mind and emphasized the centrality of *will*. Schopenhauer's world and worldview are based on the two pillars of *idea* and will. Schopenhauer not only saw will as the origin and truth of man but also saw everything as an offspring of will; in fact, he believed that everything is in will's capable and mighty hand and that will employs the rational mind as its servant and compels the mind to find paths to what it desires. The will's power over creatures is so immense that it can guide their limbs and organs based on its needs and can control their movements to realize its goals.

In the introduction of *The Secrets of the Self*, Iqbāl clearly claims that he has something new to offer; as Hafez said, he aims to "crack the heavens' vault in half" and "hew a wholly new design." In the third verse of *The Secrets of the Self*, he says with an epic tone:

> The Gardener taught me to sing with power,
> He sowed a verse and reaped a sword. (Iqbāl 1920, 1)

A little further, he likens his ideas to a "new sun":

> I struck dumb the musicians where they were gathered together,
> I smote the heartstrings of all that heard me.
> Because the lute of my genius hath a rare melody,
> Even to comrades my song is strange.
> I am born in the world as a new sun,
> I have not learned the ways and fashions of the sky. (Iqbāl 1920, 2-3)

He adds that his contemporaries do not understand his words and that he is speaking to the future generations:

> I have no need of the ear of To-day,
> I am the voice of the poet of To-morrow.

My own age does not understand my deep meanings,

My Joseph is not for this market.

I despair of my old companions,

My Sinai burns for sake of the Moses who is coming.

Their sea is silent, like dew,

But my dew is storm-ridden, like the ocean.

My song is of another world than theirs:

This bell calls other travelers to take the road.

How many a poet after his death

Opened our eyes when his own were closed,

And journeyed forth again from nothingness

When roses blossomed o'er the earth of his grave

But I am a lover: loud crying is my faith:

The clamor of Judgement Day is one of my minions.

No one hath told the secret which I will tell

Or threaded a pearl of thought like mine. (Iqbāl 1920, 3-6)

He then reveals his allegiance to Rūmī, whom he calls the "Sage of Rūm" and moves on to tell the story of having a revelation in which he meets Rūmī and shakes his hand. He summarises his encounter with Rūmī in saying that Rūmī asked him to tell this story to others:

He said, "O frenzied lover".

Take a draught of love's pure wine…

Up, and re-inspire every living soul

Say ' Arise!' and by that word quicken the living!

Up, and set thy feet on another path;

Put aside the passionate melancholy of old!

Become familiar with the delight of singing;

O bell of the caravan, awake!

At these words my bosom was enkindled

And swelled with emotion like the flute

> I rose like music from the string
> To prepare a Paradise for the ear.
> I unveiled the mystery of the Self
> And disclosed its wondrous secret. (Iqbāl 1920, 10-12)

Occasionally, he claims that it is indeed Man who is the center and focus of his thought:

> Many a night I wept for Man's sake
> That I might tear the veil from life's mysteries. (Iqbāl 1920, 13)

After putting forward all the preliminaries to call the reader's attention to the importance of his words, he explains the meaning of the Self and opens a new chapter through his complex Persian prose and says: "Showing that the system of the universe originates in the Self, and that the continuation of the life of all individuals depends on strengthening the Self" (Iqbāl 1920, 16). In the first verses of the next chapter he writes:

> The form of existence is an effect of the Self,
> Whatsoever thou seest is a secret of the Self.
> When the Self awoke to consciousness,
> It revealed the universe of Thought.
> A hundred worlds are hidden in its essence
> Self-affirmation brings Not-self to light…
> Subject, object, means, and causes
> They all exist for the purpose of action.
> The Self rises, kindles, falls, glows, breathes.
> Burns, shines, walks, and flies.
> The spaciousness of Time is its arena.
> Heaven is a billow of the dust on its road…
> It dissolved itself and created the atoms,
> It was scattered for a little while and created the sands.

Then it wearied of dispersion

And by re-uniting itself it became the mountains…

When Life gathers strength from the Self,

The river of Life expands into an ocean. (Iqbāl 1920, 16-22)

This is where he proposes that the life of the Self depends on creating and producing wishes or goals; then, he begins to speak of "purpose" and "desire." We can consider desire as craving and wanting, and assume purpose to mean all that is wanted and desired:

Life is preserved by purpose:

Because of the goal its caravan -bell tinkles.

Life is latent in seeking,

Its origin is hidden in desire.

Keep desire alive in thy heart,

Lest thy little dust become a tomb.

Desire is the soul of this world of hue and scent,

The nature of everything is faithful to desire.

Desire sets the heart dancing in the breast,

And by its glow the breast is made bright as a mirror.

It gives to earth the power of soaring,

It is a Khizr to the Moses of perception.

From the flame of desire the heart takes life,

And when it takes life, all dies that is not true.

When it refrains from forming wishes,

Its pinion breaks and it cannot soar.

Desire is an emotion of the Self

It is a restless wave of the Self's sea.

Desire is a noose for hunting ideals,

A binder of the book of deeds.

Negation of desire is death to the living.

Even as absence of burning extinguishes the flame.

What is the source of our wakeful eye?

Our delight in seeing hath taken visible shape.

The partridge's leg is derived from the elegance of its gait,

The nightingale's beak from its endeavour to sing…

'Tis desire that enriches Life,

And the intellect is a child of its womb…

The object of science and art is not knowledge.

The object of the garden is not the bud and the flower.

Science is an instrument for the preservation of Life,

Science is a means of establishing the Self…

We live by forming ideals,

We glow with the sunbeams of desire! (Iqbāl 1920, 23-27)

The resemblance of the message of these verses to Schopenhauer's thoughts is uncanny. We can easily see that the desire Iqbāl defines as the principle of life and later interprets as seeking or purpose is identical to Schopenhauer's will and intention which are the principles of his philosophy and worldview. He believes that will is the only reality whose objectivity we can experience inside ourselves without any intermediary; he believes this will to be the basis of all realities, movements, forms, and organizations in the world. Limbs and organs of living creatures are created and formed based on their pursuits that stem from their will and urges. In his main philosophical work, entitled *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer asserts that

> will-to-live … it is that which is first and unconditioned, the premise of all premises, and for this reason that from which philosophy has to start, since the will-to-live does not appear in consequence of the world, but the world appears in consequence of the will-to-live. (Schopenhauer 1966, 1:360)

He points out that "a will is that which forms or shapes" (Schopenhauer 1966, 1:332) and later adds that

the parts of the body must correspond completely to the chief demands and desires by which the will manifests itself; they must be the visible expression of these desires. Teeth, gullet, and intestinal canal are objectified hunger; the genitals are objectified sexual impulse; grasping hands and nimble feet correspond to the more indirect strivings of the will which they represent. (1966, 2:108)

Furthermore, he states that "the organism is merely the visibility of the will here existing" (Schopenhauer, 1966, 1:329) and that "therefore we are bound to see that the will that extends the elephant's trunk to an object is also the same will that, anticipating objects, has pushed the trunk forth and shaped it" (1966, 1:332).

In *The Story of Philosophy*, Will Durant has explained what Schopenhauer means in a simpler and clearer manner:

[T]he whole body is nothing but objectified will … The parts of the body must therefore completely correspond to the principal desires through which the will manifests itself; they must be the visible expression of these desires. Teeth, throat and bowels are objectified hunger; the organs of generation are objectified sexual desire ... The whole nervous system constitutes the antennae of the will, which it stretches within and without. (Durant 1926, 341)

However, Iqbāl parts ways with Schopenhauer and opens a new section, "Showing That the Self Is Strengthened by Love":

The luminous point whose name is the Self

Is the life-spark beneath our dust?

By Love it is made more lasting,

More living, more burning, more glowing.

Love makes peace and war in the world.

The Fountain of Life is Love's flashing sword. (Iqbāl 1920, 28-29)

Another German philosopher who was influenced by Schopenhauer was Friedrich Nietzsche, who, like Schopenhauer, emphasized the will. However, what Nietzsche meant by the will was different from this

concept in Schopenhauer. In Nietzsche's philosophy, the main principle is the individual's will to power, which affords him the possibility and the authority to enact his own moral values as he sees fit and to trample upon the commonly accepted traditions and rules. A man armed with this much power and creativity for rejecting the commonly accepted good and evil, a man who goes "beyond good and evil," a man who could defy the established morality and break through common value systems in order to enforce his own desires, principles, and values, is an "*Übermensch*" in Nietzsche's philosophy. Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, his ideal man, is the manifestation of the will to power, individualism, creativity, mobility, liberty, and supremacy. Nietzsche well understood and believed in these words of Dostoevsky that "if God does not exist, everything is permitted." However, in this regard, Nietzsche's view differed from Dostoevsky's in that Nietzsche never said, "if God does not exist"; rather, he clearly said, "God is dead" and that now *Übermensch* is the new God and is an absolute self-starter like Him.

Although there is a sharp contrast between Iqbāl's and Nietzsche's worldviews, thoughts, and beliefs, Iqbāl's poems are lucid reminders of the following words of Nietzsche:

> [T]he herd man in Europe today gives himself the appearance of being the only permissible kind of man, and glorifies his attributes, which make him tame, easy to get along with, and useful to the herd, as if they were the truly human virtues: namely, public spirit, benevolence, consideration, industriousness, moderation, modesty, indulgence, and pity. In those cases, however, where one considers leaders and bellwethers indispensable, people today make one attempt after another to add together clever herd men by way of replacing commanders (Nietzsche 1966, 111) … The highest and strongest drives, when they break out passionately and drive the individual far above the average and the flats of the herd conscience, wreck the self-confidence of the community, its faith in itself, and it is as if its spine snapped. Hence just these drives are branded and slandered most. High and independent spirituality, the will to stand alone, even a

powerful reason are experienced as dangers; everything that elevates an individual above the herd and intimidates the neighbor is henceforth called evil; and the fair, modest, submissive, conforming mentality, the mediocrity of desires attains moral designations and honors. Eventually, under very peaceful conditions, the opportunity and necessity for educating one's feelings to severity and hardness is lacking more and more; and every severity, even in justice, begins to disturb the conscience; any high and hard nobility and self-reliance is almost felt to be an insult and arouses mistrust; the "lamb," even more the "sheep," gains in respect (Nietzsche 1966, 113-14) … Morality in Europe today is herd animal morality-in other words, as we understand it, merely one type of human morality beside which, before which, and after which many other types, above all higher moralities, are, or ought to be, possible. But this morality resists such a "possibility," such an "ought" with all its power: it says stubbornly and inexorably, "I am morality itself, and nothing besides is morality." (Nietzsche 1966, 115-16)

Iqbāl maintains that "self-denial" is an invention of the weak and that it is used by the oppressed to erode the influence of the ruling classes. Mujtabā Mīnuvī accurately explains Iqbāl's point as follows:

In the third chapter, there is a story demonstrating how self-denial (i.e., fading, negating sensuality, leaving sensual pleasures, and condescending to a poor and short life, having the attitude of being a lamb, and selecting the dervish way) is an invention of defeated nations who aim to weaken the morale and the nature of the dominant nations. He tells the story of a herd of sheep that resided in a pasture abundant with food and other blessings, and never needed to work. Then, one day, a pride of lions came out of their lair and dominated the herd of sheep and deprived them of their freedom. Years passed by like this until one of the sheep … devised a strategy to protect the herd against the lions. He said to himself that one could not preach the wolf's character or the lion's bravery to the sheep; however, "to make the furious tiger a sheep — that is possible." So he claimed prophethood and that he had brought a new religion …

Whoso is violent and strong is miserable:
Life's solidity depends on self-denial.

The spirit of the righteous is fed by fodder

The vegetarian is pleasing unto God.

If you are sensible, you will be a mote of sand, not a Sahara,

So that you may enjoy the sunbeams.

O thou that delightest in the slaughter of sheep.

Slay thy self, and thou wilt have Honour!

Life is rendered unstable

By violence, oppression, revenge, and exercise of power.

Though trodden underfoot, the grass grows up time after time

And washes the sleep of death from its eye again and again.

Forget thy self, if thou art wise!

If thou dost not forget thy self, thou art mad.

Close thine eyes, close thine ears, close thy lips,

That thy thought may reach the lofty sky!

This pasturage of the world is naught, naught:

O fool, do not torment thyself for a phantom!

As the sheep who claimed prophethood said these words, the lions, tired from their hard work, weary of their constant effort, and immersed in their self-indulgence and extravagance, accepted the sheep's religion and stopped their efforts; against their nature, they gradually became lazy, abandoned their innate ways, and turned into sheep:

The wakeful tiger was lulled to slumber by the sheep's charm:

He called his decline Moral Culture. (Mīnuvī 2009, 81-83)

The allegory that Iqbāl uses is reminiscent of Nietzsche's "herd" and his "herd animal morality." Nietzsche claims that these are constructs of the mind of the weak and thus very lowly.

Iqbāl also criticizes Plato in valuing the imaginary and unattainable Forms over the sensible world of nature and matter. Iqbāl warns everyone about the dangers of following Plato and writes that Plato's

thought "has deeply influenced the mysticism and literature of Islam" and that "we must be on our guard against his theories" (Iqbāl 1920, 56). In fact, he states that one of the obstacles on the path of progress in the Muslim world is mysticism, which promotes a disregard for worldly affairs; he attributes this avoidance of natural and sensory realities to Plato. Iqbāl believed that Plato's mistake was that he departed the earth to go to the heavens, but never returned:

> He spread his wings towards the sky
> And never came down to his nest again…
> The peoples were poisoned by his intoxication:
> He slumbered and took no delight in deeds. (Iqbāl 1920, 59)

He then criticizes the "narcotic" mystical literature of the "Islamic Tradition," which tends to impede human resolve, passion, and intent.

Iqbāl is completely aware that his statements about the will, desire, endeavor, and actions, all of which are the consequences of the truth of the Selfhood, are not to be confused with these concepts in European philosophies such as those of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. Thus, he talks about "edification of the Self" and explains what he means in this piece of prose before stating it in verse: "On expounding upon the fact that 'edification of the Self' goes through three levels. The first is submission, the second is abstinence, and the third is the divine vicegerency."

To distinguish Iqbāl's religious beliefs in "the Self" from those of a philosopher like Nietzsche, who also in one sense deeply believes in it, it is proper to refer to a part of a dialogue between Bryan Magee and J.P. Stern. In the course of his discussion of Nietzsche's value system, Magee says: "We would like to know what Nietzsche is offering after he vastly sweeps everything aside. Which positive values are proposed by him after all?" And Stern responds:

> [T]he answer to this question is very simple and at the same time very complicated. The simple answer is: be yourself! Whatever you

are, be to the highest degree; be to the last particle of your soul; be overflowing with life, surrender not; be adventurous and live. one could speak of all such things in the human reals that were later propounded as "vitality". The commandment "be yourself, be that which you are," is not only a major premise in Nietzsche's syllogism, but is also an orientation and telos to which all morals should be directed. However, you might ask if everyone is nothing but himself, what would be the broader consequences? How could this issue be reconciled with a political system, and other such queries? As far as Nietzsche is concerned, the answers to these questions are unfortunately far from satisfactory. His treatment of social issues is not in principal fruitful. As I said previously, the answer to your question is both, very complicated but also, simultaneously simple. The reason is that if you would like to follow his recommendations, harmonious and conciliatory social life becomes exceedingly difficult, especially when one adds that he thinks laws exist in order to protect the weak. Nietzsche's program is apparently a simple one. However, if one wants to set it up as the program of social life, one would, in my opinion, be faced with many complications. One might even say that some bold and radical political thoughts of our contemporary era along with some fascist policies, at least among intellectuals of the early 20th century, have to some extent originated in the belief that one is to create his or her system of values and live according to them disregarding the consequences and outcomes of his actions. As you see, such beliefs have not helped us attain anything. (Magee 1992, 241-42)

In this part of *The Secrets of the Self*, Iqbāl shows that his emphasis on the "the Self" is defined within the creator's dominance over all creatures, and that it is not the case that no one should control the power of "the selves" so that all end up in "anarchism." Commentators and critics have criticized Nietzsche's philosophy because it leads to anarchism and chaos in social life, and because his emphasis on the "Superman's" creativity, vitality, and perilous praxis, fails to justify that if every Superman decides to do as he pleases, then what would happen in case of conflict between supermen's decisions?

In the atmosphere when notions such as "ego," "will," and "will to power" were emphasized in Germany in the nineteenth century, another philosophical movement, i.e., "The Philosophies of Life," emerged, which considered the *Élan vital* to be the ultimate reality and also attributed "ego" and "my will" to life itself. The most famous representative of this philosophical stream was Henry Bergson, who attached great significance and authenticity to the mind, consciousness and cognition. He also validated the originality of data obtained via direct and immediate insight. He relies on insight to explain important concepts such as "freedom" and "time" as the basic immanent characteristics of human beings, and thus distinguishes two definite and distinct "selves" in man. One, which is original and liberal, originates from his pure continuation and intuition; the other is formed under the influence of environmental and social determinants in society. Of course, it is important to focus on "life" and on the effects of the *Élan vital* and to appreciate the authenticity of "the Self" that somehow resembles Iqbāl's thought and his Philosophy of the Self.

It is then and in this context that the conception of "alienation" finds its significant place in the philosophical thought of most philosophers of the nineteenth century, particularly German idealists such as Hegel and even the materialist philosopher Marx, who was influenced by Hegel in some respects. In fact, any philosopher who has a theory about "the Self" and "the selfhood" would also have a theory about "alienation" just as having a theory for interpreting and explaining "error" in knowledge requires having a theory about "truth value" in knowledge.

Now, we can somewhat imagine what Iqbāl could see in the first decade of the twentieth century when he looked upon the landscape of European philosophy, particularly in Germany. The outcome and common perspective and the dominant tone and tenor of Europe's modern philosophical approach was "humanism." Humanism was the

trend that began in philosophy with René Descartes (1596-1650), when he said, "I think, therefore I am." In this well-known key philosophical expression, Descartes, in a sense, considers existence to be derivative with respect to the "thinking subject." It took two or three centuries for this seed, which had been planted in the ground of European philosophy, to bear fruit and bloom as Nietzsche's *Übermensch.* At any rate, it was this development that granted "Man," "Self" and "man's Selfhood" and his will primacy and originality.

Another aspect of the philosophical perspective facing Iqbāl was that most philosophers did not accept rationalist philosophies, which were dealing with general and abstract concepts. Instead of a general and far-reaching concept of "being" in the rationalist philosophies. They preferred to focus on the "human existence" that was tangible and evident and life, freedom, will, belief, emotions, passions, anxiety, dread, doubt, and certainty were all among its manifestations. It was this developmental trend towards humanism and *human existence*—not in the sense of Being, but in the sense of Existing or Existence—that formed the context in which the philosophies of Existence appeared in Europe, particularly after WWI and WWII. Some Iqbāl scholars have cast doubt on whether he had read the works of philosophers like Husserl and Heidegger (Akhtar 1986, 414). However, there may be no doubt that he had met Bergson and had carefully considered Nietzsche, whose thought and philosophy are mentioned several times in his work. Another philosopher of whom the readers of Iqbāl's philosophy of "the Self" might be reminded of is Leibniz (1646- 1716). Leibniz is a famous philosopher who has been specifically known as the one who believed in Monad and Monadology. He maintained that the world was the world of Monads; that is, the world of separate and individuated essences with two fundamental traits: "perception" and "dynamism" or "appetition." Monads or "selves," based on their capacities, could disclose their inner

realties and turn from the potential to the actual. He bases his philosophy on dynamism and states, "Dynamism, to a large extent, could be the foundation of my philosophical system" (Haddad-Adel 2013, 394).

In the world of thought and philosophy, it was this Europe that Iqbāl encountered. However, side-by-side with these intellectual and philosophical realms, there was another perspective before his eyes and that was a Europe full of upheavals. During the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century, Europe enjoyed peace, which proved to be the calm before the storm. Every now and then there was news of a new discovery in physics, chemistry, and biology, or new inventions in technology, engineering, and medicine, which at the same time increased the power and self-esteem of the Europeans and caused amazement among the "Eastern nations."

If we ask what Mohammad Iqbāl carried in his thoughts and mind when he returned to Lahore from Europe, we may realistically say that at that time Iqbāl was a devout Muslim who loved the Prophet and was intimately familiar with the holy Quran; he was a Muslim whose residence in Europe with all its luxury had not damaged his faith. On the other hand, he was returning to his homeland with a collection of information and philosophical knowledge. Post-Renaissance European schools of philosophy, as well as the contemporary philosophy of his time, were mostly formed around "man" and most of them had set up "man" against God to the extent that they not only denied the truly divine and celestial human nature but considered man not "the vicegerent of God" on the earth but "God's replacement," his rival and substitute. That was the humanism that was mostly constituted and developed based on atheism. Returning from Europe, Iqbāl did not think only about what he had seen or learned there. Instead, he also thought of what he had sought but had failed to find. He had witnessed

that in Europe, there was science but no faith; there was law but no sympathy; there was intellect but no love; there was consciousness but no ecstasy; there was manufacturing but no fire in the soul.

A third element that was present in the mind and heart of Iqbāl was his care for his nation and homeland, for India and its peoples, particularly for the Muslims. He suffered when he witnessed their weakness, backwardness, helplessness, and their affliction with colonialism, ignorance, superstition, and ineffectiveness. He had sacred and important concerns; he wished to rescue his oppressed compatriots from the tyranny of colonialism. Not only he thought about the suffering of the Indians but he was also concerned with the chaos, confusion, and divisions throughout the Muslim world.

The fourth and final part of Iqbāl's mental and intellectual constitution is his awareness of and attention to the material progress of Europe. He was as aware of the weaknesses and lack of scientific, industrial, and economic advancement of Muslims and his countrymen as he was of the material progress of Europe. Europe was developing and becoming increasingly powerful thanks to the advance of various sciences; it had ordered its social conditions through education, hygiene, security, the arts, and so forth. One of Iqbāl's first works was a book about modern economics, which he personally taught in Lahore State University. He was deeply distressed when he compared what he had seen in Europe with the condition of different Muslim societies.

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The Impacts of Modernity upon Religiosity: A Critical Study of Charles Taylor

Vahid Sohrabifar [1]

The relationship between modernity and religiosity has been in the center of many scholarly debates. Among others, Charles Taylor presents in his works a general picture of the elements that shape the secular age. He starts with the question why people used to be faithful, while they are not easily so in our age. To answer, he explores the past five centuries in the West and coins some terms to explain what happened. Among these terms, the "conditions of belief" is a key concept to explain the current situation. This article discusses four impacts that, according to Taylor, modernity had on religion. Additionally, it tries to shed some light on certain aspects of Taylor's ideas and critically analyze them. Finally, it concludes that although Taylor's work helps us better understand our age and the modern situation of faith, it needs to be modified and completed.

Keywords: modernity, Charles Taylor, religiosity, conditions of belief, secular age.

Introduction

In his work *Nothing to be Frightened of*, Julian Barnes begins the memoir by expressing a nowadays familiar condition regarding faith: "I don't believe in God, but I miss Him" (Barnes 2009, 1). The same statement is, more or less, used by a considerable fraction of people in

1. Assistant professor, University of Religions and Denominations, Iran (v.sohrabifar@urd.ac.ir).

modern societies; a kind of statement that is not as certain as pre-modern statements, a statement that conveys a sort of doubt, silence, or even denial. What is the story of faith in the modern era? What are the impacts of modernity upon religiosity? Many scholars have tried to address these questions. Charles Taylor is one of the key thinkers in this regard.

Taylor's Question

Taylor begins his project with a simple question:

> Why was it virtually impossible not to believe in God in, say, 1500 in our Western society, while in 2000 many of us find this not only easy, but even inescapable? (Taylor 2007, 25)

To answer this question, he starts a long journey in history. He explores various theological, philosophical, and social movements in the past five centuries to discover the pieces that have shaped our identity today: Idealism, Deism, Reformation, Enlightenment, and Romanticism are, according to Taylor, the most important events that have affected our identity. To explain this gradual shift, he coins some new terms, one of which is "conditions of belief."

Conditions of Belief

To understand this term, one needs to consider the philosophical tradition to which Taylor belongs. Taylor can be seen as a bridge between analytical and continental philosophy. He is influenced by Heidegger, Wittgenstein, and Merleau-Ponty, among others, and he also refers once in a while to philosophers like Foucault.[1] A common idea among these thinkers about belief is that belief does not appear in

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1. For example, Taylor uses the Foucauldian term "unthought" to explain the Secularization theory (Taylor 2007, 427-36). The term "unthough" can be introduced shortly as "the given empirical and historical truths about who we are" (Gutting 2014).

a vacuum and always has a background[1] and context; for example, in his *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein emphasizes the concept of picture as a background that shapes our understanding: "A picture held us captive. And we couldn't get outside it, for it lay in our language, and language seemed only to repeat it to us inexorably" (Wittgenstein 2009, 53).[2]

Taylor also believes that people think, live, and understand in a special image that they receive from society, which he calls "social imaginary":

> By social imaginary, I mean something much broader and deeper than the intellectual schemes people may entertain when they think about social reality in a disengaged mode. I am thinking, rather, of the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, notions and images that underlie these expectations. (Taylor 2004, 23)

Taylor's social imaginary also refers to the idea that belief and thinking always occur in a context. Hence, if we want to answer the question about faith in 1500 CE and in 2000 CE, we need to pay enough attention to the background of these two eras. And without considering these two backgrounds, we will not be able to understand the difference.

The social imaginary has been affected by many events during the past five centuries. Taylor tries to explore different social movements,

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1. "This emerges as soon as we take account of the fact that all beliefs are held within a context or framework of the taken-for-granted, which usually remains tacit, and may even be as yet unacknowledged by the agent, because never formulated. This is what philosophers, influenced by Wittgenstein, Heidegger or Polanyi, have called the 'background'" (Taylor 2007, 13).
2. In 2015, Taylor and Hubert Dreyfus published a book on Epistemology titled *Retrieving Realism.* The first chapter of the book was titled "A Picture Held Us Captive" after this idea of Wittgenstein (Dreyfus and Taylor 2015, 1-26).

theological and philosophical schools, and important phenomena that had impacts on the social imaginary; he studies Reformation, Deism, Nominalism, Enlightenment, Romanticism, Disenchantment, and so forth to show the factors that paved the way for a shift in the social imaginary.

He emphasizes that he does not speak about a theory that is replaced by another but about "how our sense of things, our cosmic imaginary, in other words, our whole background understanding and feel of the world has been transformed" (Taylor 2007, 325).

This transformation in the social imaginary has led to a change in the conditions of belief, where we find some criteria for plausibility and implausibility of the beliefs. The conditions of belief refer to the cognitional status of humans, which is affected by the social imaginary, and since our social imaginary has changed, our conditions of belief also have transformed.

Taylor's Answer

In short, the answer to the first question is that since our conditions of belief have changed, some ideas and beliefs which were believable in the past are not very persuasive nowadays. This change is not limited to the content of beliefs but also to the process of belief; as one of the commentators of Taylor has said, nowadays "we don't believe instead of doubting; we believe while doubting" (Smith 2014, 4).

This shift in the conditions of belief is the main reason why the belief in God in 1500 CE was very predominant and seemed very natural, while in 2000 CE people find it easy (or even inescapable) to abandon it.

> Now I believe that an examination of this age as secular is worth taking up in a third sense, closely related to the second, and not without connection to the first. This would focus on the conditions of belief. The shift to secularity in this sense consists, among other things, of a move from a society where belief in God is unchallenged and indeed, unproblematic, to one in which it is understood to be

one option among others, and frequently not the easiest to embrace. (Taylor 2007, 2-3)

The change in the conditions of belief does not necessarily entail unbelief, because it is obvious that there are still many believers in the secular age. However, the difference usually is not what a person believes but how she believes is the main question. In other words, the primary distinction is not the subject and content of belief but the way one believes a creed (Smith 2014, 23). So, we need to pay attention to both the content and the process of belief in the modern context.

The Impacts of Modernity upon Religiosity
The shift in the social imaginary and then in the conditions of belief have had deep impacts on religious beliefs and practices and generally on what is called religiosity. In this part, I will discuss some of these impacts.

1. An Option among Others
After the rise and fall of many social, theological, and philosophical movements and the advent of scientific discoveries that led to different understanding of the reality, the public sphere was witnessing various prescriptions for humanity. For example, while the Catholic Church emphasized the hierarchy and the authority of the Pope, the Reformation Church denied such authority (Taylor 2007, 61). In contrast to the Enlightenment that called humanity to rely on reason, be mature, and "dare to know" (Kant 2000, 51-57), Romanticism called for following the inner voice and recognizing the feelings as a source of knowledge (Taylor 1989, 368-69).

New ideas about the universe, humans, knowledge, the ideal way of life, and so forth emerged that were different from previously predominant religious ideas. In the new explanations, the universe was not necessarily a creature of God. The same was true about humans:

humans were no longer "porous selves" that could be affected by external beings and powers but "buffered selves"; a kind of self that is independent and resistant against the outside (Taylor 2007, 37-39).

The new explanations become more acceptable by new philosophical arguments and scientific discoveries. Hence, we arrive at a stage where faith and religious explanations are not the only way of thinking and understanding but one among the others and, therefore, an option among other options. This is what Taylor explains as secularity in the third sense:

> [T]he change I want to define and trace is one which takes us from a society in which it was virtually impossible not to believe in God, to one in which faith, even for the staunchest believer, is one human possibility among others. I may find it inconceivable that I would abandon my faith, but there are others, including possibly some very close to me, whose way of living I cannot in all honesty just dismiss as depraved, or blind, or unworthy, who have no faith (at least not in God, or the transcendent). Belief in God is no longer axiomatic. There are alternatives. (Taylor 2007, 3)

This change is one of the main impacts of modernity upon religiosity, and the secularity in the third sense is one of the substantial contributions of Taylor to scholarship. This new sense can explain our current circumstances; circumstances in society that leads to

> a pluralist world, in which many forms of belief and unbelief jostle, and hence fragilize each other. It is a world in which belief has lost many of the social matrices which made it seem "obvious" and unchallengeable. Not all, of course; there are still milieux in which it is the "default" solution: unless you have powerful intuitions to the contrary, it will seem to you that you ought to go along. But then we also have milieux in which unbelief is close to being the default solution (including important parts of the academy). So over-all fragilization has increased. (Taylor 2007, 531)

The fact that, in a pluralistic world, the belief in God is not axiomatic and belief and unbelief mutually fragilize each other depicts the current

situation in the Latin Christendom, where, in each aspect of personal or public life, there is a contest. In this circumstance, each person has the freedom to choose the option that she thinks fits better to her beliefs and needs. There is no single answer to all questions but plenty of possible answers to one single problem. This contest continues and each side tries to overcome the other; the contest shows that we are witnessing a post-secular era, where belief and un-belief can be present in public. Unlike the previous age, in which the secularization theory emerged, religion can be seen as an authentic option—not a superstition or secondary phenomenon. In contrary to the previous theory that predicted the decline of religion, the idea of Taylor makes room for religion and presents new possibilities for a religious understanding of the world.

2. Anthropocentric Interpretations of Religion

The great emphasis on humanity—whether on human emotions and feelings or on the intellect and reason—has led to new interpretations of religion. These new interpretations try to understand religion from a human point of view and to be concerned with the new social imaginary and conditions of belief.

Taking this concern into consideration, while religious dogmas, creeds, and obligations have the same appearance, their meanings have changed in the new interpretations. This shift in the meaning is one of the important impacts of modernity upon religiosity. In what follows, I will mention some of these changes.

God

The common notion of God in the pre-modern era as a king that rules the whole world and everyone must follow His orders gradually changed through the ages. This change took place through the plentiful criticisms of religious beliefs and the unhelpful apologetics delivered by the Church, which, instead of defending the God of religion, tried to

defend God as a general creator—the idea that, Taylor thinks, paved the way for Deism (Taylor 2007, 225).

However, in the new notion, God is not a king. There is a tendency to portray Him as an impersonal being that is not active and does not intervene in the world:

> What Deism in its various forms wanted to reject was seeing God as an agent intervening in history. He could be agent qua original Architect of the universe, but not as the author of myriad particular interventions, "miraculous" or not, which were the stuff of popular piety and orthodox religion. (Taylor 2007, 275)

Another aspect of God that has changed is His providence. Unlike the pre-modern era, humans now know that the goal of creation is to flourish the capacities of human beings and, thanks to the power of reason, humans now can realize the true way of life, the way in which their capacities can be activated (Taylor 2007, 222). Taking this shift into consideration, the plan of God for creation can be understood and executed through human reason; therefore, humans are not in need of other sources to discover the divine providence.

In the anthropocentric interpretation, God is not capable of anger. God is pure love and does not have any wrath; hence the decline of the belief in the Hell (Taylor 2007, 649-50). This image is basically different from the picture that one can find in religious texts. They are many attributes of God that are mentioned in the sacred scriptures of Abrahamic religions, and although love is one of them, there are such divine attributes as anger, punishment, commanding, and so forth. The anthropocentric interpretation of God takes a selective approach toward these attributes, and the criterion for this selection is human preference.

Worship
In all Abrahamic religions, worship has an important place. Believers ought to worship God. Since the notion of God has changed, the position of worship has shifted too. While in the pre-modern

understanding of religion, worship was an essential part of religion and people would gather in religious centers to worship God, the anthropocentric interpretation of religion does not put much emphasis on worship, and it loses its significance: "Moreover, there didn't seem to be an essential place for the worship of God, other than through the cultivation of reason and constancy" (Taylor 2007, 117). This shows that worship became a secondary issue that is a means to achieve the cultivation of human reason, and since now humans know the true way of life, it is possible that some people see worship as "unnecessary and irrelevant" (Taylor 2007, 117).

Sin

Taylor believes that one of the main concepts that have been transformed is sin, which is a central concept in all Abrahamic religions. In the past, sin meant disobedience against the command of the almighty God. But this concept was gently replaced by the concept of illness, and "[w]hat was formerly sin is often now seen as sickness" (Taylor 2007, 117, 618). In other words, what in the religious outlook was a sin (disobedience) turns into sickness through the new therapeutic outlook. While the first outlook emphasizes the role of the human and her freedom and responsibility, the second insists on the innocence and sickness of people. Hence, in the second view, sinful humans do not deserve punishment but just need care, because they did not commit sin—they simply became ill.

Problem of Evil

The problem of evil has been an important topic of philosophical and theological debates for centuries. It has relied on a conflict between believing in God that is all-knowing, all-merciful, and all-powerful, on the one hand, and observing so many disasters and evil in the world, on the other. These two sides raise the question of the possibility of having such a God and such evils in the same world.

To address this question, there are two approaches: the pre-modern approach, which tries to emphasize the role of unknown factors, such as the hereafter, or the divine wisdom, which is also beyond our comprehension. The second approach which is affected by modernity is what Taylor describes in the following passage:

> Once we claim to understand the universe, and how it works; once we even try to explain how it works by invoking its being created for our benefit, then this explanation is open to clear challenge: we know how things go, and we know why they were set up, and we can judge whether the first meets the purpose defined in the second. In Lisbon 1755, it seems clearly not to have. (Taylor 2007, 306)

This second approach encounters the problem from a point of view in which it is given that humans have the privilege to understand the whole problem and sit in the position of the judge and announce that the purpose of the creation of the world is not compatible with evil. This anthropocentric shift changes the content of the problem, although it seems that it is the same problem.

3. Reviving the Original Message of Religion

Taylor tries to have a just evaluation of modernity. While he is against some of the central results of modernity, such as Exclusive Humanism, he acknowledges some positive aspects for modernity—the aspects that he thinks paved the way for reviving some original messages of the Gospels.

> The view I'd like to defend, if I can put it in a nutshell, is that in modern, secularist culture there are mingled together both authentic developments of the gospel, of an incarnational mode of life, and also a closing off to God that negates the gospel. The notion is that modern culture, in breaking with the structures and beliefs of Christendom, also carried certain facets of Christian life further than they ever were taken or could have been taken within Christendom. In relation to the earlier forms of Christian culture, we have to face the humbling realization that the breakout was a necessary condition of the development. (Taylor 1999, 16)

This reviving is one of the helpful impacts of modernity upon religiosity. To be specific, Taylor gives an example:

> For instance, modern liberal political culture is characterized by an affirmation of universal human rights—to life, freedom, citizenship, self-realization—which are seen as radically unconditional; that is, they are not dependent on such things as gender, cultural belonging, civilizational development, or religious allegiance, which always limited them in the past. As long as we were living within the terms of Christendom—that is, of a civilization where the structures, institutions, and culture were all supposed to reflect the Christian nature of the society (even in the nondenominational form in which this was understood in the early United States)—we could never have attained this radical unconditionality. It is difficult for a "Christian" society, in this sense, to accept full equality of rights for atheists, for people of a quite alien religion, or for those who violate what seems to be the Christian moral code (e.g., homosexuals). (Taylor 1999, 16-17)

The new possibilities for original religious teachings to be followed in society are one of the impacts of modernity that should not be ignored. The idea of equality and justice has always been a concern for humanity, and even though our situation nowadays is far from being ideal, it has improved in comparison to the past.

4. Independence of Spirituality from Religion

Spirituality is a deep-seated need acknowledged by most humans. Taylor believes that "This often springs from a profound dissatisfaction with a life encased entirely in the immanent order" (Taylor 2007, 506). This appeal has always been traditionally fulfilled by religions, but in the late modern era, we observe new sources for spirituality—sources that are not necessarily dependent on religions.

New spirituality, Taylor thinks, is against institutionalized religion, and the reason for abandoning religion is that since we are living in the age of authenticity, it is not easy for modern people to follow an outsider

authority (Taylor 2007, 508). To understand the significance of authenticity, one needs to consider its roots in the previous social and philosophical movements, especially Enlightenment and Romanticism, both of which invite humanity to rely on human capacities and depend upon inner authority (reason or feelings) rather than outsider authority. This characteristic is much highlighted in the age of authenticity, and modern people try to live accordingly. Hence, they begin a personal quest for spirituality "defined by a kind of autonomous exploration, which is opposed to a simple surrender to authority" (Taylor 2007, 509).

The personal exploration does not necessarily entail the individuality of the new spirituality. Taylor thinks that although the new spirituality starts from an individual point, it can end up in traditional religions and in participating in a community (Taylor 2007, 509).

Critical Evaluation

The momentous project of Taylor has explained some aspects of modern circumstances. It benefits from new concepts and terms to better understand this multi-facet phenomenon. However, one can see some problematic points in his theory. In this part, I will discuss some of these points. To do so, I will try to evaluate the consistency of his theory and its coherence, and explore some counterexamples and certain aspects of the modern world that have been neglected in it.

Which Religion?

If we look back, Taylor points out some impacts of modernity upon religion. One can pose a simple question here: which religion does Taylor mean when he is analyzing the impacts of modernity? Taylor did not neglect to answer this question; he clearly states that his project tries to study the "Latin Christendom" (Taylor 2007, 15). Therefore, "religion" is Christianity in Western Europe and North America during the past five centuries.

However, this answer does not seem to be enough, because the inhabitants of Latin Christendom are not the same; there are different situations in North America and Western Europe, and one cannot unify all the diversity (Casanova 2010, 270-71). Latin Christendom consists of Catholicism and Protestantism, and each one of them has its own characteristics. While Protestantism—and generally Reformation—is one of the origins of modernity, the Catholic Church was the target of the modern movements and their criticisms. Considering this difference, one cannot put both the Catholic Church and the Protestant Church in the same category in encountering modernity.

Moreover, in each denomination, there are various kinds of thought. The liberal and orthodox are two poles, and there is a spectrum of different ways of thinking and interpreting religion between them, each of which has its own encounter with modernity. So, it is not easy to present a meta-narrative about religion in the Latin Christendom in the past five centuries.

Furthermore, an important point to be considered is that the question of the impacts of modernity has many variables, and it is not only religion that shapes the encounter with modernity but also society, culture, economy, and so forth. And it is not right to raise one factor and neglect the rest.

David Martin has discussed this problem and stated that secularization is an outcome of the encounter of the culture of each society with the religious outlook of that society, and since each society has its own culture and its own religious outlook, it is not feasible to have a general secularization theory for all (Martin 2005, 123-40). Considering his point, each society has its own circumstance (culture and religion), and the outcome of the encounter of the religion with the

public culture is not necessarily the same in all societies; therefore, it is not possible to have a meta-narrative about secularization.

Belief/Unbelief Dichotomy

The main question of Taylor in his project is why it was "virtually impossible not to believe in God in, say, 1500 in our Western society, while in 2000 many of us find this not only easy, but even inescapable" (Taylor 2007, 25). This question is based on a dichotomy of believer/non-believer, and I think this is not as accurate as it may seem.

If we consider the anthropocentric interpretations of religion as one of the impacts of modernity upon religiosity, which was discussed earlier, then we can see that there are various new interpretations of religious teachings. Some of the central concepts of religion have been re-interpreted in accordance with the new understanding of humanity—the modern social imaginary; for example, God, worship, sin, and the problem of evil are among many concepts that have changed. This change did not affect the appearance of these concepts, and people still believe in "God," but their contents have extremely changed: God in the pre-modern era is not the same as God nowadays. A scholar like Butler can observe the gradual transformation of a given creed through the ages and realize that a certain religious notion like God is not the same in the pre-modern and modern eras (Butler 2010, 202-4).

Another point that should be taken into the account is the significant concept of conditions of belief. As Taylor put it, the conditions of beliefs—the standards of acceptance or rejection, the criteria of the plausibility or implausibility of beliefs—have changed since our social imaginary has been shifted. This explains the difference between the pre-modern and modern eras regarding the question of faith. The transformation in the conditions of belief means that we are living in a different social imaginary and we have a dissimilar way of acceptance or rejection of a belief. In other words, the change in the conditions of

belief leads to the change in the whole process of belief, which makes it difficult to compare pre-modern beliefs to modern ones.

In short, (1) the change in the contents of belief and (2) the change in the conditions of believers make the dichotomy ineffective, because not only the contents of belief are not the same but the believers are not similar either. Therefore, the comparison between these two eras, based on this dichotomy, is not successful.

Religious Fundamentalism

One of the influential religious movements in the modern age is Fundamentalism. "Fundamentalism" is a relatively new term that was first used for Evangelicals in the U.S. and, later on, its usage expanded to other religions as well (Frey 2007, 35). Today, the term is used for Christians, Jewish, Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus who seem to have certain characteristics. Fundamentalism—or fundamentalisms— usually emphasizes religious teachings and calls for a return to the golden religious past. They give priority to "divine knowledge" over "human knowledge." These movements normally do not refuse to use violence to reach their goals.

The important point here is that Fundamentalism is a modern phenomenon; it is a reaction to the radical secularization that took place during the modern age (Munson 2006, 255). Fundamentalism understands modernity as a crucial hazard for religion and, therefore, tries to fight modernity and its implications, worldview, and plans.

Fundamentalism appears in the modern societies, as it was mentioned earlier; the term itself was coined in the US., and nowadays one can easily find religious fundamentalists in Europe and other developed countries. If we accept this situation, then we need to look back to the ideas of Taylor.

Surprisingly, religious Fundamentalism is missing in Taylor's analysis, whereas it is such an important part of religiosity in modern times that he is not justified in ignoring it.[1] Fundamentalists are found in all great religions and have their own ideologies, goals, and plans; they understand modernity as a trackless way which should be replaced by divine guidance. Fundamentalism is one of the impacts of modernity upon religiosity, but it is not considered in Taylor's project. None of the impacts that have been mentioned for modernity emerged among Fundamentalists: they do not consider faith as an option among others, they do not offer anthropocentric interpretations about religion, and they do not believe in the independence of spirituality from religion. The absence of Fundamentalism in Taylor's work makes his image of modern religiosity incomprehensive.

Reviving the Original Message of Religion

For Taylor, one of the positive impacts of modernity upon religiosity is reviving some of the original teachings of Christianity:

> [I]n modern, secularist culture there are mingled together both authentic developments of the gospel, of an incarnational mode of life, and also a closing off to God that negates the gospel. The notion is that modern culture, in breaking with the structures and beliefs of Christendom, also carried certain facets of Christian life further than they ever were taken or could have been taken within Christendom. (Taylor 1999, 16)

He takes social justice—a major goal according to Christian teachings—as an example to show how modern liberal political culture, based on the idea of universal human rights, could improve the situation of humanity in terms of unconditional justice—a kind of situation which was unachievable without taking distance from Christendom (Taylor 1999, 16-17).

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1. Especially considering the violent operations executed all over the world today.

Taylor's recognition of the positive aspects of modernity seems very fair and admirable at first glance, but is it defendable in a closer look?

Taylor does not give any criteria for what makes a teaching authentic or unauthentic. If one claims that a certain dogma or creed is central to a given religion, she should present her justification for such classification. To name a teaching original, we need a reason, and that reason cannot be our taste or personal preference. Taylor does not explain his criteria for such classification, and, as long as the criteria are not explained, any religious teaching can be introduced as central, which is not permissible according to hermeneutical principles.

Spirituality or Religion?

One can easily observe various types of new spiritual movements. These numerous spiritualties and their new approaches brought thinkers like Taylor to claim the independence of spirituality from religion as one of the impacts of modernity.

Although this claim seems very obvious, it needs more clarification. What is spirituality? There is no consensus on the definition of spirituality. Following some of the practitioners of spirituality, Taylor sketches spirituality as what is in contrast to "institutional religion" (Taylor 2007, 508). On the other hand, some of the scholars tend to present another definition: "[S]pirituality is the living reality of religion as experienced by an adherent of the tradition" (Nelson 2009, 8).

The idea of the independence of spirituality from religion needs to be based on a theoretical base, and we need definitions to distinguish religion from spirituality, and such theoretical base does not seem to have been offered. Taylor's concept of spirituality was already mentioned; with regard to religion he says:

> I insist on this point because in a way this whole book is an attempt to study the fate in the modern West of religious faith in a strong sense. This strong sense I define, to repeat, by a double criterion: the belief in transcendent reality, on one hand, and the connected aspiration to a transformation which goes beyond ordinary human flourishing on the other. (Taylor 2007, 510)

If we take Taylor's definitions of religion and spirituality, we can say that while Taylor introduced spirituality as against institutional religion, nowadays even some spiritual movements have an institutional order; therefore, mere "institution" cannot be the difference.

On the other hand, Taylor's definition of religion can easily apply to all spiritualities, because they are concerned with both transcendent and transformative aspects; therefore, this criterion is not effective either. Taking this difficulty into consideration, one can see that the needed theoretical basis for distinguishing the religion and spirituality is not provided, and hence the claim of independence is not defendable.

Conclusion

To conclude, Taylor is one of the most important thinkers that discussed the question of religion and modernity. His analysis, which opens a new horizon for understanding the question, is very valuable. He emphasizes the role of the social imaginary and, through that, the conditions of belief. His answer to the main question—i.e., why people were faithful in 1500 CE while they are not so in 2000 CE—is the change in the conditions of belief.

This change led to other changes that were called in this paper "impacts" of modernity upon religiosity: "an option among others," "anthropocentric interpretation of religion," "reviving the original message of religion," and "independence of spirituality from religion,"

Taylor's study is a great step toward understanding ourselves and the situation of religion in the modern age. However, it can be criticized

from different perspectives: the metanarrative of religion, the ineffective dichotomy of belief/unbelief, the absence of religious Fundamentalism in his analysis, and the lack of any criteria for discerning authentic religious teachings and for distinguishing spirituality from religion.

In short, although Taylor's account is capable of explaining some of the central phenomena in the modern age, it needs to be modified and also completed by more information. This improvement can make the theory more capable of explaining the current situation.

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