



## FALSAFEH

The Iranian Journal of Philosophy  
Vol. 37, No. 1, Spring 2009

### Content

<b>Indian Philosophy of Mind: A Comparative Study</b> <i>Maya Radhakrishnan</i>	<b>5-19</b>
<b>Priscianus of Lydia at the Sasanian Court: Solutionum ad Chosroem</b> <i>Victoria Erhart</i>	<b>21-31</b>
<b>Zarathrustrian Mind: Some Comparative Reflections on the Philosophy of Zarathrustra</b> <i>Heinrich Blücher</i>	<b>33-55</b>
<b>Love (<i>mohabba</i>) in Sufism</b> <i>John Napora</i>	<b>57-65</b>
<b>The Feminine vs. the Masculine: A Sufi Perspective of Life</b> <i>Mariam S. Mir</i>	<b>67-89</b>
<b>Morality, Rationality and Impartiality</b> <i>Mahmoud Khatami</i>	<b>91-110</b>
<b>Freedom and Human Dignity</b> <i>Gholamhossein Ebrahimi Dinani</i>	<b>111-113</b>
<b>Book review</b>	<b>115-128</b>

# Indian Philosophy of Mind: A Comparative Study

**Maya Radhakrishnan**

*Indian Center for Philosophical Research, US*

## **Abstract**

*In this paper I explore surprising parallels in the arguments between dualists and materialists in the philosophy of mind in India and the West. In particular, I compare the Nyaya School of India with Cartesian dualism and its Western defenders and the Carvaka School of India with contemporary Western materialists.*

**Keywords:** *philosophy of mind, Indian philosophy, dualism, materialism.*

## **Introduction**

Comparative intellectual history is instructive. It can tell us a great deal about the originality of distinctiveness of a particular culture or civilization, and it can tell us when notions are the result of logical trains of thought common to more than one civilization. The comparison of Western and Indian philosophy of mind is instructive in this regard. Although there are some significant differences, India and Western philosophy of mind follow very similar patterns of reasoning and come up with very similar conclusions. Both traditions have contending materialist and dualist traditions, and both sets of arguments have much in common.

The assumption guiding this presentation is that the two traditions had very little contact, and thus the arguments in the two traditions have developed independently. This assumption of independence is important since if influence has occurred between the two traditions we will be able to claim much less about both the nature of each civilization and the universality of certain conceptual moves of philosophical thought. The first point is obvious. The distinctiveness of an intellectual culture is based on the ideas that have been proposed in it. It does not say much about the mentality of a culture when these ideas are borrowed except that the culture may be receptive to the idea. (This is not always an uninteresting point, however. For

example, the receptiveness of China to Buddhism has a lot to do with the Taoist framework in place prior to the arrival of Buddhism). It is much more effective to argue for distinctiveness when the ideas the distinctiveness are based on are indigenous.

The universality thesis is similarly imperiled by evidence of borrowing. One cannot argue that certain steps of argument are universal when they have simply been borrowed from a single source. It says nothing about the nature of human thought in general when ideas simply diffuse. It is much more interesting when similar ideas develop independently of each other, particularly in traditions separated in both space and time. The calculus was developed independently by both Leibniz and Newton, but they were working in the same scientific tradition at the same time. Thus they had access to the same antecedents, and were working in the same intellectual milieu. This is not the case for India and European philosophy of mind. Indian philosophy of mind is much earlier and its ideas do not reach the West until after the West develops similar ideas independently. Thus the philosophy of mind offers an excellent test case of the comparative method in intellectual history.

Now it is true that borrowed ideas sometimes become distinctive or integral parts of a mentality. But that isn't my argument in this paper. If I were discussing Chinese philosophy I might have to deal with the Buddhist influx, but the Indian philosophical tradition is largely independent of outside influences. The key counterargument to my approach is that Indian ideas did in fact reach the West and therefore did influence Western philosophy of mind. There turns out to be some evidence for this as is explained in a paper by Nolan Pliny Jacobson. Jacobson points out that certain ideas, and, in particular, the Buddhist notion of "no-self," could very well have traveled not only from India to China, which is not in dispute, but from China to France and then to scholars such as David Hume, who spent time in libraries in France and who had read the work of Pierre Bayle, who we know had some familiarity with Buddhist thought. Nevertheless, it is clear that the broad outlines of the debates in the philosophy of mind were already in place prior to this time, with the possible exception of Hume's ideas about the self, and

that the debates carried on even after it was possible for there to have been contact were carried out largely independent of Indian thought.

Interestingly, the philosophy of induction is another area of thought that developed independently in the West and in India. There is little reason to believe there was any influence in this case as the arguments concerning induction did not make the trip from India to China (since Buddhism had little interest in induction) the necessary first step to travel to Europe until later when ideas started to flow straight from India to the West. It is also interesting that two distinct sets of philosophical argument, induction and the self, both make major developments in David Hume while the same topics were treated earlier in India.

### **I. Cartesian Dualism and Nyaya Philosophy**

I begin with dualism and the self. In Europe, the first important philosopher of mind is, of course, Descartes. Descartes' status is so well-established, that one type of dualism even carries his name, "Cartesian dualism." Cartesian dualism involved two substances, material and mental which are distinguished by whether or not they are extended or unextended in space or composed of matter or thought. Descartes was led to this conclusion by the fact that while he could doubt the body, he could not doubt the mind. Western dualism typically regards mental substance as being in time but not space. Further, the self is a thinking substance, and thus is never without thought. To be without thought is, by definition, to be material.

Indian dualism, as represented by Nyaya philosophers such as Gotama, Vatsayana and Uddyotakara, also argue in favor of the self as a substance. Unlike Descartes, who argues for the existence of the self on the basis of the famous cogito, Nyaya philosophers argue (a) from property to substance and (b) from the possibility of memory. Just as a mango is inferred from the properties of the mango, and from the fact that something continues while the properties change, so the self must also be a substance to provide a something for mental properties to inhere in. The Nyaya's arguments with the Buddhist positions against the self and substance proceed much the same as the Western analogues. Buddhists and Humeans argue that all perception

reveals is a stream of perceptions and qualities, never selves or substances, and argue that the inferences from the perceptions to selves and substances are unfounded. Hume and the Buddhists argue that the continuity we seem to perceive in nature is mistaken. Hume tells us that our minds provide us with the continuity of objects and substances of which we really have no direct experience nor any good reason to infer they exist. This is also true of the self. "For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but perception." (Hume, 1975, p.162) Hume is arguing that while we have perceptions of this or that thing, we never have a perception of our self separate from such perceptions. He offers instead a "bundle theory" of the self. The idea is that the self, instead of being a unitary entity, is really a bundle of perceptions that we pull together to form an idea of a continuing self. Hume's basic view is still extremely popular among materialists and may constitute some sort of orthodoxy in materialist philosophy of mind. In the case both of substance in general and mental substance the Nyaya philosophy infers from properties to substances. One might argue that the Nyaya are similar to Locke in asserting both properties and substances, with a key difference, Nyaya philosophers argue that we actually perceive the mango substance, in the sense that when we see the mango drop we are not merely seeing the properties of mango drop, we are seeing the substance drop as well, whereas Locke merely infers the existence of substance as a bearer of qualities. "For the Nyaya-Vaisesika the substance is not a mysterious entity hiding behind the phenomena. It is perceived and perceived to be different from its qualia. (Chakrabarti, 1999, 80)

Vatsayana argues that memory constitutes a distinct problem for those such as the Buddhists (and by extension, Humeans). "Just as even those who deny the self do not admit that the different states of consciousness abiding in different bodies and restricted to their respective objects cannot have re-cognition, so also (the different state of a stream of consciousness) abiding in the same

body cannot have recognition, there being no difference in the two cases.” (Vatsayana, 1967, 73-74) What Vatsayana is arguing is that just as there is no memory of mental life across bodies, memory from one moment to the next in the same body is impossible if there is no on-going self to do the remembering. This same argument was rehearsed by Thomas Reid in the West centuries later. My personal identity, therefore, implies the continued existence of that indivisible thing which I call myself...But perhaps, it may be said, this may be fancy without reality. How do you know—what evidence have you—that there is such a permanent self...which you call yours? To this I answer, that the proper evidence I have of all this is remembrance.” (Reid, 1855, 249) Thus we see both sides of the argument concerning the permanent self occurring in two separate traditions.

The problem with Cartesian dualism is the infamous mind-body interaction problem. If mind and body are so different, how is interaction between the two possible? In fact, they seem defined so that they could not possibly interact. Extended things seem only able to interact with other extended things. Descartes' solution, that the interaction takes place in the pineal gland, is not generally taken as even having addressed the problem. Wherever the interaction takes place, there is the problem of something unextended interacting with something extended. The most radical solution to this problem is in the theory known as occasionalism, as proposed by Malebranche, in which mind and body are set in correspondence by God, without any real interaction at all. Because of this seemingly insuperable problem, dualism is seen as deeply problematic in the West as a philosophy of mind.

In contrast to Cartesian dualism, Nyaya philosophy proposes two distinct substances, but, interestingly, distinguishes them a bit differently from Cartesian dualism. The defining characteristic of physical substance for the Nyaya is being the causal substratum of a specific quale that is externally perceivable. (Chakrabarti, 1999, 20) The defining characteristic of physical substance for a Cartesian, as we have seen, is that it is extended, while mental substance is unextended. Nyaya also utilizes the notion of extension in the distinction, but

understands extension slightly differently. For the Nyaya, the self is not claimed to be unextended. For a Cartesian, this would seem to make the self another physical substance, but this turns out not to be the case. The Nyaya distinguish two different senses of extension. One sense of extension involves preventing another substance from occupying a space. This is true of physical substance. On the other hand, extension can mean “being in contact with” another substance. While the self is in contact with other substances, it does not prevent them from occupying the same space.

Note that while internal states like cognition are not “in the body” for a Cartesian, the Nyaya can make such a claim based on the idea of contact between mental and physical substance. Internal states (like desire) have location but not extension. The self does have extension in terms of being in contact with a body. Thus Nyaya dualism is not beset by the key problem of Cartesian dualism: the interaction problem. Because mental substance is said to be extended, and therefore not so completely different from physical substance, the idea that mental substance and physical substance can interact is not so obviously problematic. Cartesian dualism simply defines itself into the problem.

Descartes will also have a problem with non-conscious states like sleep or coma, while Nyaya, with its idea of consciousness as a quality of a self rather than composing the self does not have the problem. If the self is composed of thought, and there is no thought, where is the self? If the self is distinct from thought, the lack of thought is merely the lack of a quality of a substance. For Nyaya, consciousness is not the essence of the self. “On the Nyaya view the self alone is the substratum of consciousness; but consciousness or thought is an adventitious quale and originates in the self only when other necessary causal conditions are available.” (Chakrabarti, 1999, 27)

Now does the Nyaya view that mental substance is extended in the sense that it is in space really overcome the interaction problem, or is this just a way of defining away the problem? If we remember, mental substance has extension in the sense of occupying space, but it does not have it in the sense of preventing another substance from occupying it. This raises the

problematic issue of contact. Contact is understood to mean “the conjunction of two substances that were previously not in conjunction.” (Chakrabarti, 1999, 24) It isn’t clear that this definition is very helpful, for what is conjunction but contact? Still, one can get a sense of a mental substance in contact with a material substance at location X. Apparently this contact would spread over a certain amount of space, but not in such a way that it would prevent another physical or mental substance from being in contact at the precisely same space. This idea is worth exploring. If two things, A and B, can take up exactly the same space, one wonders what kind of contact that might be. One is tempted to think of a gas mingling with another gas. Or two liquids mixing in a solution. But this analogy cannot be quite right. Gases and liquids don’t really occupy the exact same space. Gas molecules do not share the exact same space with other gas molecules. They move to one side, assuming a compound is not formed via chemical reaction. If something else, B, can enter the exact same space as A, then one wonders what sense it makes to say it is “there.” What is it to touch? Could something, C, come between A and B if A and B are touching?

Contact seems to imply resistance, but this is impossible for a substance that does not prevent another substance from being in the same space. This leads to the uncomfortable realization that maybe the Nyaya concept of mental substance does not overcome the mind-body interaction problem after all. Interaction requires the kind of contact that involves two things that can resist each other. How can one thing affect another unless the contact of the two causes some sort of resistance? Without resistance, how is an effect produced? Now radiation produces effects, but it also provides a form of resistance in affecting the molecules. And a material substance can be irradiated without giving way to another substance, so the analogy works pretty well. One would think that the Nyaya have something like this in mind even though they did not yet have a concept of radiation. But radiation, or energy generally, still isn’t a substance. Nor does it seem to be the right sort of thing to bear mental properties. Although it can be said in favor of the Nyaya position that they don’t immediately define themselves



into an interaction problem, the materialists can say even Nyaya dualists have failed to explain mind body interaction.

### **Privacy Arguments**

Nyaya philosophy uses what have come to be known as “privacy arguments” against materialism that are very similar to those used recently. Thomas Nagel has argued that materialism cannot account for first-person experience of qualia, such as what it might be like to be a bat. While materialism can describe, for example, the bat’s echo-location system, it cannot explain what it would be like, especially what it would *feel* like, to move around using that system. Frank Jackson has argued that materialist accounts cannot account for perceptual knowledge of qualia in the fullest sense since it couldn’t explain the “extra” that is learned when a person who knows all about the theory of the color spectrum but has never seen a color, say red, then comes to actually have the experience of seeing red.

Consider the argument of Vatsayana for psychophysical dualism:

“For this, too, consciousness is not a quale of the body, viz., because of utter dissimilarity from bodily qualia. Bodily qualia are of two types: (1) imperceptible, such as weight, and (2) [externally] perceptible, such as color, etc. But consciousness is of a different type. It is not imperceptible, for it is internally perceptible; not is it [externally] perceptible, for it is grasped by the inner sense. Therefore, it is the quale of a different substance.” (Chakrabarti, 1999, 127) It is clear from this passage that Vatsayana is noticing something similar to what Nagel and Jackson notice, the seemingly categorical difference between perception of external objects and perception of mental states. Vatsayana is here arguing that since consciousness is perceptible, but not externally perceptible, there must be a mental substance to account for this sort of private experience.

Uddyotakara makes a similar argument that is laid out by Chakrabarti in the following steps:

P1: All perceptible physical qualia are perceptible by both oneself and others, for example, color and so on.

P2: No conscious states are perceptible by both oneself and others.

Conclusion: Therefore, no conscious states are perceptible physical qualia. (Chakrabarti, 1999, 133; *Nyayavarttika*, Uddyotakara, 52) This is more explicitly a Nyaya version of the Western argument from privacy since it refers more clearly to the first person perspective that is unavailable to anyone else. The argument is that no amount of description from the third person perspective can possibly capture the uniqueness of the first person perspective.

### **The Unitary Self**

Another interesting parallel between Indian and contemporary Western arguments in the philosophy of mind has to do with the unitary nature of the self. Consider the “Pervasion Argument” of Vatsayana:

“The body and all the parts of the body are pervaded by the origin of consciousness. There is no part where consciousness does not originate. Since like the body the bodily parts are also conscious, the plurality of cognizers follows as a necessary consequence. In that connection just as the restriction of the awareness of pleasure and pain is a sign for there being different cognizers in each different body, it should have been so in the same body as well. But it is not so; hence consciousness is not a quale of the body.” (Chakrabarti, 1999, 124) Someone like Dennett would simply accept what Vatsayana takes to be the unhappy result. There are bodies with multiple selves, as split brain and MPD experiments show. For example, Chakrabarti writes in explanation of Vatsayana’s argument that “one and the same person is aware of what is happening in different parts of the body. Split brain experiments show that is not necessarily true. Dennett has done a fair amount of work on MPD from a materialist perspective and argues that the self is more of a “narrative center of gravity” than anything like a special type of substance. So Dennett simply has a factual disagreement with Vatsayana. There are sometimes multiple selves in a single body. And sometimes one side of the brain does not have knowledge that the other side of the brain has.

### **Dead Bodies and Zombies**

Another set of parallels arise with the sort of examples anti-materialists come up with in Nyaya and the contemporary West. Let's call them "Dead body arguments" and "zombie arguments." Vatsayana asks: "Is consciousness found in the body a quale of the body or is it a quale of some other substance?" (Chakrabarti, 1999, 116)

Vatsayana also writes, "The body is not known to be without color, etc., but is known to be without consciousness, like water which is no longer hot. Therefore, consciousness is not a quale of the body." (Chakrabarti, 1999, 117)

It is important to note that Vatsayana does not believe heat to be a quale of water, which obviously contradicts modern science's understanding of heat. Chakrabarti has laid out the argument thus:

P1: All qualia of the body endure as long as the body does, for example, color and the like.

P2: No consciousness states endure as long as the body does.

Conclusion: Therefore, no conscious states are qualia of the body.

In other words, we know of dead bodies in which consciousness does not reside. All the other qualities of the body remain, like color, size etc. There is no non-question-begging reason to distinguish consciousness from other qualia. Therefore, consciousness must inhere in something besides the body.

Interestingly, the Western materialist Paul Churchland makes an argument for materialism that draws on some of the same facts:

P1: We see minds functioning with intact bodies.

P2: Minds function less well or not at all with damage to the body, particularly the brain.

Conclusion: Therefore, the mind is a result of the functions of the brain.

Where is the disconnection between the two arguments? Vatsayana and Churchland draw opposite conclusions from virtually the same facts. The key is in the Nyaya's refusal to consider consciousness to be a *special* sort of qualia of the body. Churchland is operating in a physicalist framework in which evolutionism is assumed, and therefore in which new sorts of qualities and abilities can evolve over time in a biologically

complex organism. Nyaya is operating in a context in which qualities function with a strict consistency, which isn't surprising since the only examples of qualities they had to work with were ordinary physical properties and seemingly exception mental properties. They had no knowledge of the possibility of computers, which furnish an example of special sorts of properties arising out of pure matter.

The recent spate of zombie arguments seem to combine elements from the privacy arguments with the Nyaya "dead body" arguments. The zombie arguments of Searle, Chalmers and others invoke the idea of a zombie in order to undermine physicalism in the philosophy of mind. We are to imagine a human being similar in all respects to a normal human except that it has no conscious experience. Such a possibility seems to some to suggest consciousness must be something more than mere brain processes. Since there is a possible world in which all behaviors are the same, but consciousness is missing, that must mean that consciousness cannot be reduced to the functions of physical processes. Such arguments from conceivability are odd to be sure, and I am one who finds them unconvincing; nevertheless, notice that although the point of the two sets of arguments (dead body and zombie) are different, they follow a similar argument pattern, namely to take a normally functioning human body, alter the case with one that is not functioning in some way, and then draw conclusions. The Nyaya method is very similar to contemporary dualists or anti-physicalists. The Nyaya have one key disadvantage compared to modern dualists or epiphenomenalists; they do not have access to modern science. So the Nyaya make the mistake of believing the heat in hot water to be a quale of something besides the water and then drawing an erroneous analogy with the body and consciousness.

### **Language and Mind**

Another key argument dualists draw upon is that the ability to understand language is difficult to account for on materialist grounds. While we already have computers that can simulate conversation, the argument is that such computers do not and can not ever get to the point of understanding language. The

most famous such argument is Searle's Chinese Room "semantic argument." The idea of the argument is that while a room could be set up to take inputs and give appropriate outputs in such a way as to pass a Turing test of understanding, no real understanding would be taking place, thus showing that a merely syntactic processor can ever be considered capable of thought. We see something similar in the 10<sup>th</sup> century Nyaya philosopher Jayata Bhatta: "Hearing the letters in succession, understanding the word meanings by way of remembering the semantic connections....understanding the meaning of the sentence as a whole by means of the expectancy and other relationships—these will be very difficult to explain without the self." (Chakrabarti, 133)

## **II. The Materialistic Philosophy of Mind and Carvaka Philosophy**

The Carvaka view is known almost entirely from texts of its opponents; nevertheless, it is regarded as a distinct school of thought in Indian intellectual history. Carvaka philosophy is based on a generally materialist metaphysics and an empiricist epistemology. Like most theories of matter in the Ancient world, there are four elements. Radhakrishnan states the Carvaka view in writing, "Intelligence is the modification of the four elements, and it is destroyed when the elements from which it arises are dissolved." (Radhakrishnan, 1989, 279) Carvaka argues that since we never see a soul existing separately from the body, it must in fact be the body. Mind therefore does not outlive the body. Contemporary materialists such as the Churchlands or Dennett would have no problem accepting this argument. Paul Churchland makes an additional argument that since when we damage the body, particularly the brain, the mind's functions are impaired or cease. This point would be readily accepted by the Carvaka, and I don't doubt that if we had more of the Carvaka's writings we would probably find that very argument.

The key claim of all materialism, ancient and contemporary, Indian and Western, is that mind results from a particular and very special organization of matter. The Nyaya are aware of this argument and respond by pointing out that since the body is made up of things lacking consciousness, then consciousness

must be the result of something besides the body. (Chakrabarti, 1999, 135) The Carvaka argue, in effect, that the Nyaya commit the fallacy of composition. Carvakas give a counterexample to support their position. Fermentation produces a drink that is intoxicating from a combination of elements that are not intoxicating.

Carvaka argues that mind does not result merely from combination, but that “consciousness emerges when the material elements are combined in a certain way.” (Chakrabarti, 1999, 118) This is essentially the contemporary materialist view of the mind. We cannot expect much in the way of scientific details, but the general articulation is defensible even today. Vatsayana, however, was aware that the Carvaka physicalist explanation was woefully inadequate and asked the materialists to specify precisely what sort of special combination might yield consciousness. (Chakrabarti, 1999, 143)

Contemporary materialists such as Churchland and Dennett have some answers to Vatsayana, although they would be the first to admit that an acceptable account of this process is years away. Contrasting his own view (the “hardware” or eliminative materialist view) with Dennett’s (the “software” or functionalist view) Churchland writes, “I think Dennett is wrong to see human consciousness as the result of a unique form of ‘software’ that began running on the existing hardware of human brains some ten, or fifty, or a hundred thousand years ago....I shall argue, the phenomenon of consciousness is the result of the brain’s basic hardware structures, structures that are widely shared throughout the animal kingdom, structures that produce consciousness in ....animals just as surely and just as vividly as they produce consciousness in us.”(Catching Consciousness in a Recurrent Net,” (Churchland, 2002,. 64-5) If we therefore distinguish the “software” materialists like Dennett from “hardware” materialists like Churchland, we would have to put the Carvaka in the “hardware” camp.

By contrast with Churchland’s neurobiological treatment of the mind, however, the accounts given by Carvaka seem quaint today. According to Sadananda, there were apparently four schools of materialism, whose primary dispute was over the conception of the soul. These schools identified the soul variously with the whole body, the senses, the breath or with the organ of thought. (Radhakrishnan, 280) There are also accounts

as to how intelligence is produced. “That intelligence which is found to be embodied in modified forms of the non-intelligent elements is produced in the same way in which the red colour is produced from the combination of betel, areca nut and lime.”(*Sarvasiddhantasarasamgraha*, ii. 7, quoted in Radhakrishnan, 279) Radhakrishnan quotes Cabanis, who says “the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile.” (*Sarvasiddhantasarasamgraha*, ii. 7, quoted in Radhakrishnan, 279) These views seem to suggest that intelligence is a property which emerges merely from the combination of certain elements, and possibly that thought itself is material. Mind, of course, requires a very complex organization of matter, not simply the combination of certain types in the right proportions, and thought, whatever it is, is probably not identical with a particular material thing, as the problems with identity theory have shown. Contemporary materialists can draw on the information processing function of computer software to make the notion of intelligence emerging from matter more plausible, and they also have the theory of evolution to help make sense of how intelligence could naturally occur over time as the organization of living matter became increasingly complex. It is a testament to the imagination of the Carvaka that even without this contemporary science they still felt mind could emerge out of matter.

### **Conclusion**

I believe that the above has shown that there is some plausibility to the view that there is a universal logic to the nature of thinking about minds. With the possible exception of the Buddhist no-self doctrine, it is unlikely that these arguments were the result of diffusion. Thus we can have a fair certainty that most of these arguments were developed independently. This implies that even aliens, if we ever encountered them, might very well be vexed by the same concerns, and develop their own sets of materialist and dualist arguments. If a conscious being evolves anywhere, develops knowledge and becomes curious about the nature of mind and intelligence, they will likely end up rehearsing many of the same arguments listed above.

**References**

Chakrabarti K.K. (1999) *Classical indian philosophy of mind: the Nyāya dualist tradition*, SUNY Press.

Churchland P., (2002) in *Daniel Dennett*, ed. Andrew Brook and Don Ross, Cambridge UP.

Hume D., (1975) *Treatise of Human Nature*, section 6 of Part IV, Book One, 1739 in *Personal Identity*, ed. John Perry, Berkeley, University of California Press.

Radhakrishnan S., (1989) *Indian Philosophy, Vol.1*, Delhi: Oxford UP.

Reid T., (1855) *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, ed. James Walker. Boston: Phillips, Sampson and Company.

Vatsayana, (1967) *Bhasya*, trans. Debriprasad Chattopadhyaya and Mrinalkanti Gangopadhyaya, in *Nyaya Philosophy*, Calcutta: R. Maitra, R.D. Press.



## **INSTRUCTIONS TO CONTRIBUTORS**

The Journal welcomes unsolicited contributions of two types: Articles and Discussion Notes.

Articles are not normally longer than 6,000 words and Discussion Notes are not normally longer than 2,000 words. Discussion Notes should engage with articles recently published in the Journal. In both cases, there will be double blind refereeing. The Journal will not consider papers under review at another journal. Send on copy by email attachment indicating word processing program to [philosophyj@ut.ac.ir](mailto:philosophyj@ut.ac.ir). Submissions should be in Persian (Farsi) or English, formatted to be double-spaced. Including a short abstract in the paper is strongly advised. Manuscripts accepted for publication will be required to conform to Journal style.

### **Journal Style**

Citations should appear in the text in the following form: (author's surname(s) year: page number(s) if any), as (Lycan 2001: 25-9); (Black 2002: 151-63; Goldman 1994: 107; Velleman 1995) Several works by an author in the same year should be distinguished by adding a lower case letter to the date, as (Jones 1999 a: 23), (Jones 1999 b). Where the author's name is mentioned in the text or in a note, followed closely by a citation, the author's name may be omitted from the citation, e.g., "Bloggs denies that colours are primary qualities (1997: 234-7)." Endnotes should be set before the list of References. An alphabetical list of References should be included; items should be formatted in the following way:

#### **Book:**

Lycan, William G. 2001. *Real Conditionals*, Oxford: Clarendon Press

Devitt, Michael and Kim Sterelny 1987. *Language and Reality: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Language*, Oxford: Blackwell.

#### **Article:**

Black Tim (2002) (A Moorean Response to Brain-in-a Vat Scepticism), *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 80: 148-63.

#### **Chapter in a book:**

Goldman Alvin I (1994) (What is Justified Belief?) in *Naturalizing Epistemology*, ed. Hilary Kornblith, 2nd edn, Cambridge MA: MIT Press: 105-30.

#### **Edited book:**

Shoemaker, S., ed. (1996) *The First-Person Perspective and Other Essays*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

#### **Edited text:**

Hume D. (1974) (1747) *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. P. Nidditch, Oxford: Clarendon Press.  
For subscription contact: [philosophyj@ut.ac.ir](mailto:philosophyj@ut.ac.ir)

IN the Name Of God



## FALSAFEH

Falsafeh is Iran's oldest and leading philosophy journal based and edited in the Department of Philosophy of the University of Tehran since 1972 and now is in its 37th year of publication. It is a quarterly journal of philosophy and publishes research articles, and special issues in Persian (Farsi) and English. Falsafeh is a refereed journal, Publishing original Articles of high quality in any area of Philosophy.

**Publisher: University of Tehran**

**Managing Director:**

*Hossein Ghaffari* (Associate professor, University of Tehran, Iran)

**Editor-in-Chief:**

*Mahmoud Khatami* (Professor, University of Tehran, Iran)

**Editorial Board** (in alphabetical order):

*Rouhollah Alemi* (Associate Professor, University of Tehran, Iran)

*GholamReza Awani* (Professor, Shahid-Beheshti University, Iran)

*HamidReza Ayatollahi* (Professor, Allameh Tabataba'ii University, Iran)

*Reza Davari Ardakani* (Professor, University of Tehran, Iran)

*Hubert Drefus* (Professor, University of California at Berkeley, USA)

*MohammadAli Ezhei* (Professor, University of Isfahn, Iran)

*MohammadReza Hosseini Beheshti* (Assistant Professor, University of Tehran, Iran)

*Mohammad Ilkhani* (Associate Professor, Shahid-Beheshti University, Iran)

*Mohsen Jahangiri* (Professor, University of Tehran, Iran)

*Seyyed Hossein Nasr* (Professor, University of George Washington, USA)

*Shahram Pazoki* (Associate Professor, Research Institute of Philosophy, Iran)

*Alvin Plantinga* (Professor, University of Notre Dame, USA)

*Nasrollah Pourjavadi* (Professor, University of Tehran, Iran)

*Richard Swinburn* (Professor, University of Oxford, UK)

*Seyyed Hamid Talebzadeh* (Associate Professor, University of Tehran, Iran)

*Hossein Ziai* (Professor, University of California at Los Angeles, USA)

Executive Manager: **Farzaneh Najafi** Design: **Mojtaba Khatami**

Address: Falsafeh Room311, third Floor, Faculty of Human Sciences,  
University of Tehran, Enghelab St., Tehran, Iran.

Email: philosophyj@ut.ac.ir

Website: <http://jop.ut.ac.ir>

Tel/Fax: (+9821) 66407550

phone: (+9821) 61113086

**Price : 15000 Rls**

Printed by : University of Tehran Press



## Priscianus of Lydia at the Sasanian Court: Solutionum ad Chosroem

Victoria Erhart

*American University, US*

### Abstract

Priscianus of Lydia's *Solutionum ad Chosroem* is a series of answers to questions asked at a philosophical debate held at the Sasanian court c. 530 CE. Priscianus of Lydia was one of seven non-Christian philosophers from the Byzantine Empire who journeyed to the Sasanian Empire to take part in the debate. Long overlooked in the history of philosophy, Priscianus of Lydia's text represents a branch of Neoplatonism that survived for centuries uninfluenced by the official Christianization of the Roman Empire. Priscianus of Lydia was one of the last remaining representatives of non-Christian Neoplatonism in Late Antiquity. *Solutionum ad Chosroem* provides a record of the world of Neoplatonism shortly before it disappeared under a tide of officially Christian philosophy and theology. I discuss the context of Priscianus' work and its relation to activities in the Byzantine Empire, such as Emperor Justinian's suppression of paganism and the closing of the Academy in Athens in 529 CE. I also discuss the specific contents of the *Solutionum ad Chosroem*, including questions on first principles, generation, natural history, and the relationship between the soul and the body.

**Keywords:** Persian philosophy, Sassanian wisdom, *Solutionum ad Chosroem*, Priscianus of Lydia.

The Neoplatonic philosopher Priscianus of Lydia would have had an unremarkable career had he not been mentioned by the early Byzantine historian Agathias as one of seven Hellenic (non-Christian) philosophers who journeyed to the Sasanian court at Seleucia-Ctesiphon early in the reign of the Byzantine emperor Justinian (527-565). (Agathias, *Histories*, Book II:30:3) These philosophers felt compelled to leave the Byzantine Empire because "they did not share the view of God prevailing among the Romans and thought that the Persian state was far better." (Agathias, *Histories*, II:30:3) (1) Although the Hellenic philosophers decided to return to Byzantine territory after a relatively brief sojourn at the Sasanian court, the philosophers did participate in at least one debate on philosophical questions attended by the shah himself and some higher ranking members

of the Zoroastrian clergy. Priscianus of Lydia's contribution to this debate, *Solutionum ad Chosroem*, has survived in an edition edited by Ingram Bywater in 1886 and now difficult of access.<sup>(2)</sup> Before considering the specific contents of Priscianus' surviving work, an examination of the historical context in which the work was written is necessary.

### **I. The Context of Priscianus of Lydia's *Solutionum ad Chosroem***

Agathias states that Priscianus and the other Hellenic philosophers travelled to the Sasanian Empire partly for religious reasons. Being pagans in an increasingly officially Christian empire had rendered their teaching positions more and more vulnerable. Also, Persia in their minds was "the land of 'Plato's philosopher-king' in which justice reigned supreme. The subjects too were models of decency and good behavior and there was no such thing as theft, robbery or any other sort of crime." (Agathias, *Histories*, II:30:3) There is nothing unusual in the philosophers' belief in these stories about life in the Sasanian Empire. Persia had long been looked upon by Romans as the place where Chaldean magic and astrology originated. Persia was also the gateway to India and all the wisdom of the Brahmins. It is therefore hardly surprising that an idealized notion of Persia loomed so large in the minds and hearts of those seven Hellenic philosophers from various places in Byzantine territory. Agathias mentions in passing another reason why these Hellenic philosophers looked to the Sasanian Empire. "They were forbidden by law to take part in public life with impunity owing to the fact that they did not conform to the established religion." (Agathias, *Histories*, II:30:4) Agathias, unfortunately, does not offer any further details concerning the law that prohibited these philosophers from playing any role in the public political life of the Byzantine Empire.

There is ample evidence from other sources that Emperor Justinian tried to enforce adherence to the imperial understanding of Christianity and that he did promulgate legislation meant to suppress both paganism and heterodox forms of Christianity throughout the Byzantine Empire. John Malalas of Antioch, who wrote a chronicle that continued down

through Justinian's reign, mentions Justinian's campaign against those who kept the older beliefs.

In that year there was a great persecution of Hellenes. Many had their property confiscated. Some of them died: Makedonios, Asklepiodotos, Phokas, the son of Krateros, and Thomas the quaestor. This caused great fear. The emperor decreed that those who held Hellenic beliefs should not hold any state office, while those who belonged to the other heresies were to disappear from the Roman state, after they had been given a period of three months to embrace the orthodox faith. This sacred decree was displayed in all provincial cities. (John Malalas, *Chronicle*, Book 18:42)

Many scholars combine the above entry from Malalas with the following brief entry, also from Malalas, dated to the year 529 C.E. "During the consulship of Decius, the emperor issued a decree and sent it to Athens ordering that no one should teach philosophy nor interpret the laws." (John Malalas, *Chronicle*, Book 18:47) Many scholars then argue that both entries pertain to the persecution of Hellenes and that part of this persecution of Hellenes involved the closing of the Platonic Academy in Athens. They argue further that the closing of the Academy in Athens was the catalyst for the seven Hellenic philosophers to depart for the Sasanian court.<sup>(3)</sup> However, no other Greek, Syriac or Arabic source besides Malalas reports that Justinian issued a decree prohibiting instruction in philosophy in Athens. Nor does Malalas himself specifically connect the suppression of paganism throughout the Byzantine Empire with the prohibition of philosophical instruction in Athens. Nor, according to Malalas' account, does it follow of necessity that the Academy in Athens was specifically targeted for closure for whatever reason. Only when these two entries from Malalas are read in conjunction with the information in Agathias does any type of connection appear. This connection is based partially on the fact that one of the seven philosophers who went to the Sasanian court was Damascius the Syrian who was head of the Academy in Athens during at least part of the reign of Emperor Justinian. Damascius had ambitious plans for reinvigorating the Academy in Athens, plans which he was well on his way to implementing by 529. He wanted to model the Academy in

Athens after the school of Aphrodisias which he had visited as a young man. Damascius envisioned the Academy in Athens as an educational and cultic center.<sup>(4)</sup> Agathias does not state that Damascius and Priscianus and the other philosophers were from Athens. He enumerates several persons including Damascius known to have been associated with the Academy at the time. Other scholars have constructed the connection between Priscianus and the Academy in Athens given Priscianus' relation with Damascius while they were both at the Sasanian court. On the face of it, the connections between Justinian's decision to limit the public role played by anyone other than orthodox Christians, some decree aimed specifically at a situation in Athens, and the appearance of a group of Hellenic philosophers at the Sasanian court at about the same time are neither implausible nor farfetched. Neither are these connections inherently necessary.

Given the present state of the primary sources it is simply not possible to know precisely what Emperor Justinian's policy was towards suppression of paganism in the Byzantine Empire nor what his actions, if any, were towards the Academy in Athens in particular. I suggest that the Hellenic philosophers decided to travel to the Sasanian court for reasons having little to do with the religious policies in force in Byzantine territory at the time. Greek and Latin sources for the late antique period are replete with examples of philosophers from Byzantine territory who journeyed to Persia in pursuit of 'the wisdom of the East'. In 242 C.E. the philosopher Plotinus accompanied the army of Emperor Gordian III (238-244) when it invaded Sasanian territory. Plotinus was trying to get through Persia to India. (Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus*, 3) The philosopher Metrodorus went from eastern Roman territory to India via Persia in 337. On his return trip, many of his luxury goods were confiscated by Persian soldiers. Metrodorus' complaints to Emperor Constantine I (306-337) led the emperor to threaten the Sasanian shah with war if some sort of restitution was not made to Metrodorus. (Ammianus Marcellinus, *The Later Roman Empire*, Book 25:4:23) In 358 the Neoplatonic philosopher Eustathius was sent on a diplomatic mission to the Sasanian court to forestall Sasanian invasion plans. According to an account of

Eustathius' life, the shah was impressed with Eustathius' eloquence and would have given up his own crown to become a philosopher like Eustathius had not members of the Zoroastrian clergy intervened. (Eunapius, *Lives of the Sophists*, 6:5:2-10) According to Agathias, Shah Khusro was so impressed with one philosopher from Byzantine territory, Uranius, that "he swore on many occasions that he had never before seen his equal, in spite of the fact that the shah had previously beheld real philosophers of great distinction who had come to his court from Byzantine territory." (Agathias, *Histories*, Book II:30:3) These examples of philosophers who journeyed to the Sasanian Empire do not give any evidence that a trip to Persian territory was an extraordinary undertaking or that it involved any negative catalyst on the part of Roman or Byzantine authorities to force such a trip.

The Sasanian ruler at the time of the seven Hellenic philosophers' visit to the Sasanian court was probably Khusro I "The Immortal One" (c.530-579).(5) Throughout his period of rule, Shah Khusro I remained openly tolerant of the Christian church as well as other religions in the Sasanian Empire. He instituted reforms to improve the agricultural infrastructure of parts of Mesopotamia and Iraq. He also began sweeping economic reforms throughout the Sasanian Empire. Shah Khusro was "well versed in philosophy which he had learned, it is said, from Mar Barsauma, Bishop of Qardu, when Khusro stayed in the region. He also learned philosophy from Paul the Persian philosopher who, not having been able to obtain the metropolitan throne of Persia, renounced the Christian religion."(6) It is quite possible that the Hellenic philosophers considered Shah Khusro to be the idealized philosopher-king. There was a long tradition of translating Hellenistic philosophical, scientific and literary works from their Greek originals into both Syriac and Middle Persian editions for use in the Sasanian Empire. By early in the sixth century C.E., portions of Aristotle, including major portions of the *Organon*, had been translated into Syriac. Sergius of Reshaina was a doctor who translated many medical as well as philosophical works including Aristotle's *Categories* and Porphyry's *Isagoge*, twenty-six works by Galen, twelve by Hippocrates and at least part of an agricultural treatise, the *Geoponica*.(7) Sergius is also



credited with translating a version of the collected works of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite.(8) Paul the Persian philosopher, the man from whom Khusro I learned his Neoplatonism, is credited with a commentary on *Peri Hermeneias* and another commentary on the logical works of Aristotle.(9) It is quite reasonable to conclude that, regardless of any action on the part of Emperor Justinian, the Hellenic philosophers "gave a ready hearing to stories in general circulation"(Agathias, *Histories*, Book II:30:3) that Hellenic philosophy was alive and valued at the Sasanian court, particularly during the period 528-532. It was during this period that a conference or series of debates on religious and philosophical questions occurred at the Sasanian court. Representatives from the various religions and philosophical systems in the Sasanian Empire were invited to attend the conference, having first set out in writing a statement of belief in order for this to be presented at the Sasanian court so that the shah could judge which statement was best. (*Histoire Nestorienne, Patrologia Orientalis* 7 (1910), 126) (10) Priscianus of Lydia's *Solutionum ad Chosroem* is one such example of a statement of belief and answers to questions posed at the conference, questions similar to those posed at a conference at which the Byzantine philosopher Uranius participated, "questions as to the origin of the physical world, whether the universe will last forever and whether one should posit a single first principle for all things." (Agathias, *Histories*, Book II:29:11)

## **II. The Contents of Priscianus of Lydia's *Solutionum ad Chosroem***

Priscianus' *Solutionum ad Chosroem* consists of ten chapters, each chapter consisting of one or more questions and Priscianus' answers to the questions. There is no specific dedication to Shah Khusro in the opening section, which is primarily a list of the authors and works with which Priscianus was conversant. Here one finds the standard acknowledgement to Plato's *Timaeus*, *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus*, as well as Aristotle's *Politics*, *Physics*, *On the Heavens*, *Generation and Corruption*, *On Dreams* and *On Prophecy by Dreams*. There are also references to

Hippocrates, Strabo's *Geography*, Ptolemy's *Almagest*, Iamblichus' *On the Soul* and the works of both Plotinus and Proclus. The list is a catalog of Neoplatonic works on cosmology and natural history.

Chapter one addresses the human soul and the greatness of humanity. Naturally the first question is what is the nature of the human soul, followed by questions about whether the soul is essential or by accident, whether the soul is incorporeal, whether the soul can exist separate from the body, questions on the immortality and incorruptibility of the soul, what is the nature of the relationship between the soul and the body, and questions about how the soul is composed without either mixture or parts. All these questions are covered in chapter one in the space of ten pages in the Bywater edition, thus giving some indication of the superficial treatment of these questions by Priscianus of Lydia.

In chapter two Priscianus discusses the nature of sleep and what happens to the soul when the body is asleep. What happens to the various sensory perception organs during sleep? How can a sleeping person perceive hot and cold? How does sensory perception function in non-human animals? Much of this chapter appears to be heavily dependent on Aristotle.

Chapter three contains questions on how to establish the existence of a thing. If a thing is visible must it therefore exist? Does the class the entities that are not visible, such as gods and demons, nevertheless exist? How are these invisible entities perceptible to the senses?

Chapter four is a brief treatise on astronomy, equinoxes and how the solar year effects different climatic zones. Chapter five is a brief discussion of the human characteristics and temperments most commonly found in various climatic zones. Both chapters four and five are indebted to Ptolemy and Strabo.

Chapter six is a study of lunar phases and the impact lunar activity has on tidal variations. This chapter also includes specific examples related to tidal changes in the Red Sea and quite a lengthy discussion of the geography and natural history of the ancient and late antique world.

Chapter seven is a discussion of the four primary elements and whether each element can exist in actuality or in potential in its opposite, that is, can weight exist in air or fire in humidity? This

chapter also contains a discussion on the various ways in which the different elements can combine with one another.

Chapter eight deals with questions concerning generation and how members of a species can be both similar and yet remain individually distinct. Priscianus also discusses notions of immortality and immutability as well as the virtues proper to each entity according to its nature.

Chapter nine discusses how every entity is composed from the four elements and how species may differ from each other, and how different ethnic groups differ from one another, the Scythian from the Persian from the Italian, in characteristics that are dependent upon the physical environment.

The tenth and final chapter discusses the precise nature of spirit and its power of motion or change. What is the first principle of the body, its beginning and its end? The work ends with that most Platonic of questions: how is virtue to be manifested?

Priscianus' answers end rather abruptly and there is no information in a colophon on the circumstances of the work's composition. Priscianus was not an independent, original thinker, at least not from the evidence supplied in *Solutionum ad Chosroem*. He was, however, a faithful and accurate compiler of his philosophical predecessors. His work is valuable in several respects not least in that he has preserved information from a number of sources popular at the time he wrote. Priscianus' work also represents a branch of Neoplatonic philosophy that was enjoying its last days in the sun, a Neoplatonism untouched by the Christianizing influences that had so powerful an impact on Christian Neoplatonists such as St. Augustine. Priscianus' work preserves a record of Hellenic philosophy at the point of vanishing under the tide of Christianization that shortly afterwards engulfed the Byzantine Empire, the heir of much of what was most precious from centuries of Hellenistic culture.

**Notes**

(1) Agathias, *Histories*, Book II:30:3. For a translation of Agathias' *Historiarum libri quinque*, see Agathias, *The Histories*, J.D. Frendo, tr., (Berlin & New York, 1975). All quotations from Agathias in this paper are from this edition.

(2) On Priscianus of Lydia's work relating to the Sasanian court, see Ingram Bywater, ed., *Prisciani Lydi Solutionum ad Chosroem liber* (Berlin, 1886).

(3) For a recent survey on Justinian's treatment of paganism in the Byzantine Empire and the suppression of the Academy at Athens, see Gunnar af Hällström, "The Closing of the Neoplatonic School in A.D. 529: An Additional Aspect," in Paavo Castrén, ed., *Post-Herulian Athens. Aspects of Life and Culture in Athens A.D. 267-529* (Helsinki, 1994), 141-165 with extensive bibliography.

(4) For a discussion of Damascius' career and his work, see L.G. Westerink, *Damascius, Traité des premiers principes I* (Paris, 1986). On the Hellenistic Academy at Aphrodisias, see Charlotte Roueché, *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity* (London, 1989).

(5) Khusro was fighting with his father, Shah Kavād (488-531), and another brother over right of succession. Both men claimed to be the rightful Sasanian ruler, though neither man could muster enough power to force his claims outright. This confusion over who precisely was the legitimate Sasanian ruler during this period is reflected in many late antique sources.

(6) Addai Scher, ed., *Histoire Nestorienne (Chronique de Seért)*, *Patrologia Orientalis* 7 (1910), 147. For an analysis of Khusro's reign, see Zeev Rubin, "The Reforms of Khusro Anushirwan," in A. Cameron and L. Conrad, eds., *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East III: States, Resources and Armies* (Princeton, N.J., 1995), 227-297.

(7) Gérard Troupeau, "Le rôle des syriaques dans la transmission et l'exploitation du patrimoine philosophique et scientifique grec," *Arabica* 38 (1991), 2. For a discussion of the translation and transmission of Greek medical works, see Michael Dols, "Syriac into Arabic: The Transmission of Greek Medicine," *ARAM* 1:1 (1989), 45-52.

(8) Polycarp Sherwood, "Sergius of Reshaina and the Syriac Versions of the Pseudo-Denis," *Sacris Erudiri* 4 (1952), 174-184.

(9) Henri Hugonnard-Roche, "Introductions syriaques à l'étude de la logique: à propos de quelques *Divisions de Porphyre*," *Hautes Études Médiévales et Modernes* 73 (1994), p.385.

(10) For a discussion of the circumstances at the Sasanian court leading up to the conference, see Arthur Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides* (Copenhagen, 1944), 355-362.

**References**

Agathias, (1975) *The Histories*, J.D. Frendo, tr., Berlin & New York.

Cameron A., and Conrad L., eds., (1995) *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East III: States, Resources and Armies*, Princeton.

Castrén, Paavo ed., (1994) *Post-Herulian Athens. Aspects of Life and Culture in Athens A.D. 267-529*, Helsinki.

Christensen, Arthur (1944) *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, Copenhagen.

Dols, Michael (1989) "Syriac into Arabic: The Transmission of Greek Medicine," *ARAM* 1:1, 45-52.

Hugonnard-Roche, Henri (1994) "Introductions syriaques à l'étude de la logique: à propos de quelques *Divisions de Porphyre*," *Hautes Études Médiévales et Modernes* 73

Scher, Addai (ed.), (1910) *Histoire Nestorienne (Chronique de Seért)*, *Patrologia Orientalis* 7

Troupeau, Gérard (1991) "Le rôle des syriaques dans la transmission et l'exploitation du patrim

# **Zarathrustrian Mind: Some Comparative Reflections on the Philosophy of Zarathrustra**

**Heinrich Blücher**

## **Abstract**

*This paper deals with an essential problem which the modern western thinker faced with and tried to find a solution for that in the benefit of modern humanity. This problem is human reason and his free mind. The author tries here to go back to Zarathrustrian concept of mind and bring forth some fresh reflections in a comparative way. This will let him to evaluate in the main the view that argues for the difference between the Asiatic concept of free mind and the Western concept of free mind. Some reflections and conclusions of the author here should be taken in the light of this evaluation.*

**Keywords:** Zarathrustra, Persian philosophy, comparative philosophy, mind, reason, human being.

## **I. The Concept of Divinity**

Zarathrustra's thinking is in many parts similar to Abraham's but it is also very different in one decisive point: namely, in the concept of the freedom of man, and the break that Zarathrustra makes with Asiatic thinking is even more decisive than Abraham will make. This break is mainly contained in the concept of divinity which is distinguished from the Asiatic concept of divinity. We have seen that, philosophically speaking, we do not decide but are neutral towards the question as to whether God makes man or man makes God. We leave the decision of this question to belief, faith, or theology, since we in philosophy are only equipped with the means of human reason, and we are bound to the use of those means, hence we are certainly not able to decide this question.

Knowing this, we can nevertheless say that although we are not able to decide whether God makes man or man makes God we have seen up to now that the two processes are always related. Looked at from the philosophical side, this means that as soon as a fundamentally new concept of man is developed (that is, when man takes a new view of his own position and being in the

world)--then also, a new concept of divinity comes into the world. They are always related. It is a mirror phenomenon, although we still do not know which of the two poles is the original and which is the mirror. We cannot decide that. We can only say that both phenomena are intimately related so as soon as a new concept of divinity comes into the world (whether it be a mythical, metaphysical, or free philosophical one), then we can conclude that bound to it is a new concept of man, and that as soon as a new concept of man is conceived then there will be a new concept of divinity that corresponds exactly to it. Philosophically, it gives us one more means to consider the profundity of the concept of man because in philosophy a concept of God can teach us nothing more than how profound the concept of man is. There we must stop our inquiry, because all other conclusions would go beyond human reason and cannot be used by us.

With the mythological concepts of divinity we have considered, Hindu, and Chinese, we have seen that they have a strange thing in common, and this might be the reason why neither Lao Tze or Buddha speak about divinity at all. It has been thought that Buddha was an atheist, which he certainly was not, however the concept of divinity which would correspond to Buddha's conception of man as a free thinking being could only have been Zarathustra's, yet he did not have this concept. Neither did Lao-Tze. Both refrained from answering this question. Gods or divinities in the old mythological sense were accepted by Buddha in order to, overcome them through the power of the mind of man which he put above those divinities. When a demon said to him that he should become one of the highest gods Buddha answered "I am not concerned with that because I am about to make the gods and the heavens tremble by becoming a Buddha". (A Buddha means an enlightened one--an enlightened human being). To become an enlightened human being was considered, by him, to be an action that would make all of the heavens shake and all of the gods tremble. That is the reason why he was considered to be an atheist. We can see in all of his discourses that he left the question open which shows what a critical philosophical mind is at work here. It was the same with Lao-Tze. He too left the question open. Neither



talked about a definite concept of divinity; they refrained from it and they must have done so consciously.

Now Zarathustra does not do so, because those barest thoughts that we will consider from the original Gathas must be the thoughts of one definite thinker, and we cannot help but take Zarathustra's concept of God or divinity and consider it within the context of these thoughts, because they must be his. But why did he, being not the founder of a religion as neither Buddha nor Lao-Tze were, nevertheless develop a concept of God?

### **I. Divinity, Humanity and Reason: Toward a Comparative Interpretation**

In the eighteenth century when Immanuel Kant brought all of the propositions that human reason had developed thus far about itself to their final critical conclusions, he made the, strange and not yet understood discovery that if we start to reason critically (that means always in self-criticism of reason) though we cannot explain everything out of metaphysical propositions like Being or God, nevertheless if we reject these limits of human reason entirely (if we reject this "beyond" of human reason) and take it out of our mind then we lose the very functioning of our reason. Why? Because it means to give up the self-criticism of our reason. As soon as we say, as modern positivists like Hans Reichenbach say, that we must stop asking unanswerable questions then we lose the capability of raising answerable questions, let alone answering those that can be answered. Unanswerable questions have a relation to all answerable questions and the reason is simple, because as soon as we stop asking such questions we lose the limits of our reason, and as soon as we lose awareness of the limits of human reason then human reason gets to be crazy. It thinks it can really answer everything. It thinks it is a value in itself and we enter an age of boundless rationalism--rationalism, not as a religion but as a superstition, a cult, or a ritual like any other. It only means that the concept of "admiration" is mistaken for a religious concept. I wouldn't say this is a religious concept just as I wouldn't say that Communism and Nazism are religions. I would say that religions are only lines of human thought that include divinity, however this is a matter of definition. But certainly, they are

cults. They are cults, rituals and superstitions--exactly what religions are to a certain degree. But they are only that, and rationalism as an "ism" is as boundless a cult and superstition of the human mind as is any other ideology or "ism". To forget the limits of human reason by not asking unanswerable questions means to go beyond the limits of human reason and to go beyond it uncritically in a mad way. This is not exactly what Kant said but it is certainly what he found. He brought us exactly up to this limit of human reason and he wanted us to understand that we should keep it in mind.

Then, he tried to fortify that knowledge by saying there is another reason in us--practical reason, which we always should follow and he tried to give us not a moral law, but rather the moral law, the "categorical imperative". Unfortunately, this was a blunder, because already Nietzsche could easily destroy this proposition showing it to be a metaphysical proposition, and with that we became lost in this stream of boundless rationality which on the other hand brought forth at once irrationality. Both have nothing to do with reason. There are (so-called) irrational acts of human beings which are most reasonable, and there are highly rational acts of human beings which are most unreasonable. We got into a wrong cut of those propositions because it is a scientific cut. We lost entirely our view of the original (creative) functioning of human reason, but if we had considered this borderline we might have preserved it, and we have to try to go back to it.

Now, the miracle comes. There has been a thinker, Zarathrustra, who at least five or six hundred years before Christ faced the same situation of reason in the world that Kant faced in the eighteenth century. He was aware of the fact that when the human mind breaks the framework of myth and goes on in free thinking, then this free thinking can only bear fruit if it knows its own boundaries. He set those boundaries very simply: namely, by asserting that divinity exists and by giving a concept of God that would make man aware of the existence of something beyond human reason; but he was very careful to make this concept the most philosophical concept of God we have ever seen. He calls his God Ahura-Mazda. Ahura-Mazda does not even mean God. It means literally "the Well Thinking One". The

One (whatever that is), that is well-thinking. There is no other attribute, no enlargement of his powers, nothing but this bare abstract concept. Now we must disregard all that has been made of Zarathrustra's original teachings--that means the whole Persian religion, which has become one of the most involved and mixed up religions in the near Orient. Zarathrustra wanted only this one God. If he had lived earlier than (the historical) Abraham, and Abraham himself had been merely an invention of the Jewish prophetic writers during the time of the prophets, then even if the original Zarathrustra lived around eight or nine-hundred B.C. that only means that the idea of one transcendent God was actually a Persian idea. However we cannot make this assumption because we have no historical material to rely on. We can only try to distinguish between them. But at least one thing is sure: the idea of Zarathrustra's is the more abstract one. He does not give Him all of the names that the Hebrews gave to the God of Abraham. He does not try to show us that he knows anything about the qualities of God except this one quality--the "Good Thinking One".

He makes one more explanation about this Being. He conceives of a Being out of being or above being, and that means philosophically at least, that he makes the first decisive distinction between the Creator and creation. The creation is Being; the Creator is a being. We cannot give Him another name. We cannot say it is a "nothing" that is above Being, because it could not create Being. This God-Creator of Zarathrustra's is so unlike the other God-Creators (the Hindu or Egyptian gods for instance) who are so poor in imagination that one is often appalled at how dry they seemingly are. That is we can never know if they hadn't created the world out of their own bodies (their own being), because they are so mixed up with their own creation. There is not a trace of (distinguishable) cosmological speculation in them. They are as mixed up in their own creation as those inventors of purely scientific world pictures were after the Renaissance. Spinoza for instance, couldn't help but draw exactly the same conclusions as those drawn by Indian mythological thinking: namely, to identify the Creator and creation whom for Spinoza were One. There is a very strange resemblance between modern naturalistic thinking

(founded so to speak by Spinoza) and the oldest mythological thinking as founded by the Indians. The secret is that both are concepts of energy. They are energetic world pictures. The development of energy in modern science has brought us back to this metaphysical superstition of a God that is mixed up with his own creation. Zarathrustra's God is not. He is a God whom the Christians will later call the Creator, and who created the world out of nothingness. He didn't need anything to create Being -- that is a pure definition of the Creator.

We meet this first in Zarathrustra. He says "Ahur-Mazda is apart from everything else". He is apart from Being, and there is no possible relation. This distinguishes him from the Hebrew conception and it is also what makes the concept of divinity in Zarathrustra so abstract. Abstract, not only in thinking, but abstract in ritual and in performance. We see this most clearly in those little "cults" (if one can call them cults at all) that Zarathrustra founded, the circle of contemplative thinkers (almost like the Quakers), however these little circles had no rituals. Their only activity was thinking in common -- in community; nothing else. When later sacrifices came to be made and the sun (the light) became an object of worship they departed from Zarathrustra's meaning. Zarathrustra meant by "light" not the sun, but rather the light of thought. Thinking is the light for him. He does not distinguish body, mind, and spirit in our way. When he says "the body of Ahura-Mazda is light, the spirit of Ahura-Mazda is thought" he means only that Ahura-Mazda is nothing other than this pure activity of thinking. Nothing else. The idea of fire (light) was later taken by Heraclitus in a different way, and we shall see, when we come to him, how he takes this idea and transforms it into a purely western thought.

Here in Persian thought it means exactly what the light meant to Buddha: namely, the enlightening element. Light is only a symbol. The symbol of free thinking and free reasoning. That is why in Zarathrustra the main prayer, which in these original cults was repeated again and again was, as I said the last time "Ahura-Mazda: we thank thee who has given us a free will and a discriminating mind". This "being-apart" of God makes it possible for Zarathrustra to speak of creation as a "term." He

calls "Being" the creation. This is the first time in philosophical thought that we have a concept which absolutely distinguishes Being from the Creator, and in which there seems to be no way, no personal way, to communicate with this Creator except in a relationship of pure thought. In Abraham, a personal relationship with God is still possible. In Zarathustra, the Creator cannot be reached, but if we think of Him then we can be certain that our thinking will be directed in the right way. We will never reach Him by our thinking but that gives us an aim, and this aim brings us into the right way of thinking. That is the reason for those common circles of contemplative thinkers, for as they direct each other they are directed toward the idea of Ahura-Mazda. One can almost say that here, in an original religious sense, is the only instance in all human development where a performance--namely, sitting in this circle and thinking things out, was taken as a religious performance, but was really a straight reasonable philosophic performance and nothing else. It is almost a philosophical religion--something that seems to be a paradox, but nevertheless, it must have been reached then, because no other indication is given as to a reason for the performance. The idea of a God absolutely apart from creation takes this immense idea of the Absolute out of creation. We do not know what this idea is, because we haven't thought enough about what the number "one" is. What is "one"? Where do we get this concept from? We don't know, but (this much is certain). The Absolute is an idea which we need, because if we did not have it we could not relate. We could not have the concept of relation, and therefore the concept of the "relative" either. This idea of the Absolute might only be a working hypothesis, but it is certainly the best working hypothesis the human mind has ever made, because we use it all of the time without knowing it. We use it whenever we establish relations and man is an establisher of relations. That is one of his main creative capabilities.

Now Zarathustra seemed to have-been aware of this and like Kant later he seemed to have been aware of another thing -- that if we lose the idea of an Absolute and make our relations in such a way as they are not directed towards this idea of an Absolute, then we lose the best capabilities of our reasoning. This seems to

be a merely logical fact, but it is existential and can be shown to be existential. We see, for instance, in all clinical cases in modern psychopathology, that as soon as the capacity to establish relations has been lost within a given mentality, then the Absolute has been lost in that mentality. It is the same thing in the case of another polarity; cases like those in the first world war-- clinical cases -- such as the brain injury of a man who seemed to be absolutely normal but who could not do one thing. If one was sitting with him, and the sun was shining outside and one asked him "Say the sun is shining outside" he would say "It is raining outside". He was unable to make the switch from a true statement to a false statement. That was his brain injury. Other brain injuries showed that relations could not be made as soon as the Absolute wasn't there.

On the other hand, we have also seen that as soon as the Absolute rules relations absolutely, then all touch with the world and with reality is gone so that only the idea of the Absolute remains, and then relations are developed out of the Absolute towards the world rather than from the world towards the Absolute, resulting in the absolute loss of contact with reality and insanity -- the full capability of developing relations out of an idee fixe. This idee fixe is unmovable and is, mentally speaking, nothing but a mirror reflection of this idea of an Absolute. The insane person has no ideas. He is incapable of having ideas. This idee fixe is his substitute for the idea of an Absolute and it rules him and it rules all of his thinking, so exactly, so to speak, does this mechanism which governs the real relationship between our idea of an Absolute and the relative work.

To have then, the concept of divinity that the Hindus have had, that all myth has had, that we in the west had again with Spinoza, and that most of us have without knowing it, means to mix up the concept of God with creation, to make an actual infinity out of relative phenomena, which is exactly what the creation is if we truly look at it. We do not even know that the creation is One -- we haven't the slightest idea that it is. It is a mere speculation of ours and we cannot even prove that the creation is thoroughly related. What really comes before us as true relations, meaningful relations in the world, are relations

that we have established ourselves. Of all other relations we know nothing as soon as we haven't established them. So the metaphysical idea that the creation is a whole, a "one", that it is thoroughly related, one thing to another, and that this whole is an Absolute, means really to mistake an infinite mass of phenomena and their relations for the Absolute, and every mixing up of this kind makes man lose his freedom, because then he becomes merely one function in an infinite bundle of relations which he cannot overlook and yet which he doesn't even know.

That was the tragedy of all mythical thinking, and it is ours too, because we are only modern mythologists without even knowing it. I mean the believers in those modern ideologies like naturalism -- if it is called naturalism or supernaturalism, idealism or materialism, it is all the same thing, the same medal from the other side. Only Kant's operation and Socrates operation, and basically Zarathrustra's operation -- namely, to say we do not know and cannot know the Absolute -- that the Absolute is something completely separate from the world of the relative -- only this can keep us on the right track of a development of straight and fruitful reasoning. We will see later that Heraclitus took this position up. We don't know whether he got it from Zarathrustra or not, but this position was not taken up by the whole Greek world with the exception of Heraclitus and later Socrates. All other Greek thinking has nothing whatsoever to do with this proposition of the absolute separation of what we here call God and creation.

Making man aware of this absolute separation also means another thing. It means to take God out of the realm of power. Power, in our sense, is not might. Let us not call that power, because we are after the sources of human power, and we mean by it something other than what is meant today. In order to distinguish it from force and violence let us go back to the two kinds of power I mentioned before -- namely, performing power and creative power. Performing power is not really power. It is energy. Real power is something absolutely different. It is that which can direct energy -- quite a different quality. Power then, in this sense can only be the possession of the One

transcendental God who does not need to do anything but direct energy by thinking, and thinking taken here, is not itself energy (as it is taken, for instance, by the Hindus as the highest spiritual energy). Even in Christian thinking it is sometimes taken for energy, let alone in modern western thinking. Thinking does not know what thinking is. It only knows that it is and that it can direct. As soon as, we try by thinking to define thinking as a certain material or natural quality we have already fallen back into the concept of energy, and as soon as we think in terms of energy we are back into a world in which Creator and creation are mixed up with one another, that is, we are back into a merely scientific scheme. We do not transcend any more, and that means that we lose the highest capability of thinking by thinking wrongly about thinking. That sounds so complicated but it is all really very simple. It only means what all free philosophers have meant, the few who have existed in the whole development of the world, and that is that philosophy starts with one thing -- namely, never to pretend to know anything that you do not really know. And of thinking and reasoning and the human being, the human person we can only say that we know that it exists. We can also say and find out to a certain extent how it exists, but we certainly do not know what it is. We cannot answer the question as to its essence. What it is we do not know and so we should not pretend to know, because if we could know what it is then we would have the truth, and then we would have lost freedom already. It would mean that then we could direct thinking, we would be gods so to speak, and we are not gods. We cannot know what it is we have here. We only know that we have it, that, it is "here", the "das", the "that" which modern existentialists call existence. I do not call it existence, because I think that existence is just the what, but this is a matter of terminology and we won't go into it here. Their proposition is, in the end, a mere psychological one. It is not a real ontological proposition and that is what we are talking about here.

So Zarathrustra's concept of God is the most pure way of saying something about an unknown absolute factor which is always in the awareness of the human mind as being possible -- yes, being highly probable -- but it is not known and it is not knowable by



the human mind. It can only be described in negative terms. If human reason attempts to describe this phenomenon of which it is aware that it might exist then it can do no more than to describe it in a philosophically negative way -- the Absolute separate One, the well or good-thinking One -- and then finish. No more. Communication with it is possible only in thinking, because it gives the awareness of thinking Itself. In this sense Zarathustra develops the first concept of a transcendent God-Creator whom we do not know and whom we will never know, but of whom we will always be aware as soon as we follow our human reasoning purely to its limits. Here, in this Zarathrustrian thinking, as well as later in Kant's thinking, a discovery is made which for us is most important in our course -- namely, a way is shown which was dimly perceived by Pascal when he said "All knowledge leads away from God; real knowledge, the best knowledge, leads back to God". That means not to an understanding of God or to a knowledge of God, or to a foundation of any religion or any concept of God, but rather to go to the limits of human reason, to really try out nihilism in all of its consequences and then go through it, because nihilism is one of the bitterest consequences of human reason, and when you have done; this you will be exactly at this borderline of reason and faith.

So this relation, this funny relation, that man can never conceive of a real position for himself in the world, can never learn anything basically new about himself without having created, at the same time, a new concept of divinity, has a certain profundity to it, because both factors are permanently related to one another in human thinking and in human experience. This concept of the transcendent God is really; if we want to be critical of it, also a picture of God. Later the Hebrews, and especially Abraham, will tell us that we shouldn't make a picture of God, although they also made one. They hadn't yet refrained from it. But this Zarathrustrian concept is also a picture. It is a symbol. God is conceived, though Zarathustra says we can never know anything about Him. Nevertheless He is conceived as an absolute mind, and a mind is something. We have a mind too, and our own mind becomes the absolute mirror reflection into the unknown of the concept that we make for ourselves of

God. It is the most abstract and the most pure concept of God ever made, and the most sober one, yet it is still a concept of God and not merely a factor that we could call divinity or the Absolute. It is, as I mentioned before, also a symbol, but the most philosophical symbol ever to be invented and used in speculations like these. It enabled Zarathrustra to attain this knowledge that lies at the borderline of human reason, enabled him to find out a few things about the human mind that had not been seen up to his time, and that have since been entirely forgotten.

When Nietzsche chose Zarathrustra as the hero of his main work *Thus Spake Zarathrustra* he did a very remarkable thing. He was perhaps the first modern philosopher to become aware of the strange fundamental significance of pre-Platonic thinking, who already, as a young man in his early twenties, tried to give his students at Basel a picture of the significance of the pre-Platonic philosophers, and who was able to interpret the only saying that we have left from Thales -- "Everything is made of water" -- in such a way that it later became the foundation of all modern western philosophy. He showed how this one sentence could never have been possible before Thales, and why. He was truly concerned with those figures and he was the first to be concerned with them. For his whole life through he both hated Socrates and loved him -- it was an ambiguous affair all of the time, an ambivalence, and he had to write about him again and again and again. Another man he hated (and he took him for a man as we do in this course) was Jesus of Nazareth, whom he wanted to destroy, because he thought he was one of the originators of all the evils in our time because of his moral concepts. Nevertheless, he was so fascinated by him that he always turned back to him. He said "He was so young, this Hebrew, when they crucified him, and he was so noble. If he had only grown older like me and had really seen the world he would have taken back everything that he said. He was noble enough for it".

The third man he was concerned with was Zarathrustra. He knew little about Zarathrustra, because at that time he did not have any of the critical apparatus necessary to go deeply into the *Zend-Avesta* texts, let alone to find the few rocks that are lying

at the bottom, and which we analyze today. So he made a big mistake about Zarathrustra, and that means he made the same mistake that everybody has made about him, and that is still made today -- namely, to believe that Zarathrustra was the inventor of good and evil. That he was the man who brought into the world the distinction between good and evil, and this does not mean that in Indian or mythological thinking people did not talk about this thing being good, or that thing being evil. Rather it means good and evil as absolute criterias of human life, as absolutes, and Nietzsche used his Zarathrustra in order to show how bad it is for the world to take morality, to take good and evil, as absolutes that become the judges of human life. That human life is destroyed by this moralism, and that we have to attain a position beyond good and evil. In this wanting to go beyond good and evil he thought he could do best by taking the figure of Zarathrustra whom he loved, because of his sayings, and whom he made contradict himself. He made Zarathrustra the Jesus who repented, who really could say now, after having learned better about the world, the opposite of what he formerly had said. That was his reason for taking Zarathrustra. The most remarkable thing about it is that he was deeply mistaken. If he could have read Zarathrustra's original statements about good and evil he would have had to realize that Zarathrustra's thinking was far beyond his own. That Zarathrustra really had discovered the right relation of human reason to what was later called good and evil, and that lie developed them not as absolutes but as the relative human creative capacities, almost already in the Socratic sense, which Nietzsche hadn't understood either, because he didn't want to. He had other purposes in mind.

The second reason he had to take Zarathrustra was that Zarathrustra was considered to be not only the man who brought the dogma of good evil as absolutes into the world, but that he was also the first to make a decisive distinction between body and spirit -- A dualist -- the first great dualist, and Nietzsche hated dualism, because he had found after a long experience of Christianity that as soon as we introduce the concept of sin into the world, and then, by making the distinction between body and spirit identify sin with the body and spirit with the good, that then we are decidedly lost. He was right there, but once again he

was wrong as far as Zarathrustra goes. Zarathrustra never made such a distinction. Rather he was like all of the other thinkers we are considering here and that includes Jesus of Nazareth (although it is a case that is hard to make but nevertheless it can be made). They did not accept the distinction between body and soul, or between body and spirit. When they talked about the soul they meant the human person. They didn't mean any spiritual energy which inhabits as a divine element the dirty body of man. They did not think that the body of man or the body of nature was dirty, and they did not think that nature (or the body) was the house of sin or evil. They thought that man's person is the creator of good and evil, not the house. We will look into Zarathrustra's so called theory of good and evil, but first there is a third point in which Nietzsche showed his splendid instinct for taking the figure of Zarathrustra, because he identified with him without knowing it, in one decisive respect. Nietzsche as Heidegger has said, and rightly so, concluded the whole metaphysical development of the west by finding, as the central concept of western metaphysical thinking, the concept of the "will". Nietzsche's last work, *The Will To Power*, tries to show that the will to power, in its naked form, rules and governs all of humanity, and that this is by no means an accident. That all of the cosmos, the "whole" in all of its parts, is nothing but this will to power, and that man is nothing but the highest development of the will to power. This is a merely energetic concept, and it is set against the concept of Hegel, that other great metaphysician of the nineteenth century, who believed that everything is spirit, that the "All" is only the different transformations, the "becoming" of spirit. Nietzsche put against this the will, and this "will" is a modern scientific concept that is very low indeed. He ran into biology, into all of those modern scientific factors, and he became distracted from his main purpose, nevertheless the concept of the will itself is absolutely decisive. When Nietzsche took it up it was in order to show that man has no free will, that all will is blind, and that it is blind because it is only the will to power, to mere energy. It is simply the will to have more energy, and that means to have more effect, to have more of what I would call performing power,

power over others, power over things, and so he creates a theory of violence without having wanted to do so.

He tried to overcome that theory of violence by a marvelous trick. The trick is that he, being a Christian (and Nietzsche was very much a Christian) re-introduced the concept of self-overcoming. Now, he believed, the will of a man could stand against this cosmic will, could overcome it and purify it by this act of self-overcoming, with the consequence that Nietzsche fell back into what he really wanted to destroy -- namely, Christian morals. But the decisive point he envisaged was that there might be in the will an element that gives us a lead toward creative power, that there might be a lead in the concept of will that would bring us into a deeper insight into human creative capabilities, and creative powers for him were only artistic powers, because he couldn't see any others in the nineteenth century. The businessmen had stopped being creative, let alone the politicians, and so only the artists could be considered to be creative and perhaps the scientists, though he chose the artists.

He tried to overcome that theory of violence by a marvelous trick. The trick is that he, being a Christian (and Nietzsche was very much a Christian) re-introduced the concept of self-overcoming. Now, he believed, the will of a man could stand against this cosmic will, could overcome it and purify it by this act of self-overcoming, with the consequence that Nietzsche fell back into what he really wanted to destroy -- namely, Christian morals. But the decisive point he envisaged was that there might be in the will an element that gives us a lead toward creative power, that there might be a lead in the concept of will that would bring us into a deeper insight into human creative capabilities, and creative powers for him were only artistic powers, because he couldn't see any others in the nineteenth century. The businessmen had stopped being creative, let alone the politicians, and so only the artists could be considered to be creative and perhaps the scientists, though he chose the artists.

So that was what Nietzsche rediscovered, and this was the original discovery of Zarathustra. Zarathustra's concept of will however, is quite different. He is talking about free will. "We thank thee for having given us a free will and a discriminating mind". What is this free will? In order to find out we must first

destroy the superstition that has been built around Zarathrustra -- namely, that he was a dualist who created two gods, Ahura-Mazda and Ahriman. The later Persian gods are two and the creation has been done by both. One is God, the other is the devil. In the later religion there is a bad God and a good God and men have the task of choosing between them -- either to join the army of the good God, or to join the army of the devil, and whoever comes to govern the world will be decided in this battle. All of this emerges in later Persian thinking. Later, the gnostics, in Hellenistic times, will reformat this idea, and also the Manicheans who will take over this theory of the two spirits, one good and one evil, which try to rule the world with man in-between, torn apart by them. So Zarathrustra was credited with being the inventor of the devil and the inventor of hell. (He did no such thing). What he really did do was to discover, quite clearly and philosophically, the demonic element in man. He did not say there are two gods. There is only one God, Ahura-Mazda, but the world, the creation, is ruled by two spirits. By spirits he does not mean demons in the Indian sense. These spirits (of which he speaks) are not mythological figures. They are not in the world. They are spirits only in the sense that is meant when we speak of the "spirit" of the American Constitution, that is, they are institutional. In that sense they are leading ideas. Man has two possible leading ideas within him and these leading ideas can rule the world. The one is the idea of the "better" and the other is the idea of the "bad". This is a very funny distinction. He is not talking about good or evil. He does not talk about the good, but rather, about the better, and he does not talk about evil. He talks about the bad. Why on the one side the comparative and on the other side the noun? Why?

The good sounds like an Absolute -- the better is a relative. The statement is strange at first sight. We will fully understand it when we see what Socrates did with the same idea, because he developed it to the full understanding of human reason. Here we have to see first why they are not absolutes. The later Zarathrustrian religion is full of demons, and demons not in Zarathrustra's sense as spirits, as leading ideas, but spirits really as ghosts of all kinds, hundreds and thousands of them. Nevertheless, Zarathrustra is responsible for this

misunderstanding. He was also thinking about an infinite army of demons, but demons created by man. He talked about the better and the bad and made a distinction we have come to understand in modern psychology -- namely, the automatism that sets in as soon as man engages in any wrong action with the wrong intentions. The bad is infectious. If I do a bad thing to you, a really mean thing, then you must be very strong and conscious of yourself not to take revenge upon someone else. That would mean to get infected with a bad action and just let it go on. It is just the opposite with a good action. That is why there is no good action or "Good" but only the better. We do the better and it is not infectious. The other one who also wants to do the better will have to do it out of his own power and make a decision for it. It is not infectious except in certain cases of love, where it is not really an infection but rather the interchange of goodness.

That is what Zarathrustra meant by producing demons. Men, in doing bad actions with intentions towards the bad, set spirits into the world which possess other men, and so the bad spreads continuously and can be hemmed in only by the free decision of every single man to do actions for the better -- all of this is the eternal struggle, and the struggle goes on only in man himself and nowhere else. Man has the possibility to be a demon. More than that, he is a creator of demons -- that is his bad capability. Here we have an entirely new concept, a concept comparable to that of Lao-Tze and Buddha. It is a concept of free human reason. They conceive of the human person as being free within the world. They show a position that man can take, that he has a certain task in the World, but that he has no task with the world. Zarathrustra's, on the other hand, is a concept of a task that man has with the world, and it is the greatest of all that have ever been made. The Christian concept is nothing compared to it. The Hebrew conception is nearer to Zarathrustra's but Zarathrustra's is the purest of them, and here comes the great misunderstood myth of Zarathrustra. It is not really a myth. It is as little a myth as his idea of God is a religious idea. It is rather a clear philosophical concept. This concept has never really been considered in all western philosophy, and I think this is quite in order, because to consider it almost requires our present day

knowledge of human power over nature which Zarathrustra by no means could have had. What did he know of human power over nature and what do we know about it? We know that we can almost destroy all of the basic propositions of nature, so great is our performing power.

Zarathrustra envisaged a task of man with the world and "world" means here the creation. As soon as he had thrown God out of creation so to speak, and made him the Creator he made man free thanking Ahura Mazda for creating man with a free will and a discriminating mind. And then he took the next step -- namely, to say that if this is so, that man is free, then the creation cannot be thoroughly determined, because if it were and man were only in creation, then man himself would be determined and there could not be any freedom. This could not be a cosmos.

So this is a working proposition for man -- this idea of "the world". When I first took this idea up, before I even heard of Zarathrustra, man was beginning to claim that for the first time he could not prove that the world is a cosmos, and we can see in the natural view of today that we can only handle an infinite mass of more or less related phenomena, but that this is not a world in the human sense. What we mean here by world, or the creation, is only a possibility for a world. It means that God has created a creator of a world, and a creation which this creator can handle in order to make it a world. Zarathrustra was the first to conceive of this idea. The idea of man, not as a conqueror, though he came from a conquering people, but rather the absolute responsibility of man for Being -- not only for himself, but for Being. He approached this with the idea that man is a producer, a creator of demons. That means that man can make the world intolerable, and by god we have learned in our century that man can make the world intolerable by creating those demons of whom Zarathrustra spoke. But man can also bring the world into a cosmic order and that means to make things move the right way, the better way by his free thinking and decision if he is only ready to take over the responsibility. All of this is contained in one myth of the Gathas.

After Ahura-Mazda had created the world, the soul of creation, and by soul he meant only the "voice" of creation spoke to Ahura-Mazda. The voice asked "Who will be my master"? And



Ahura- Mazda answered "Zarathrustra". That means man. And the soul, the voice of creation said "How can you do that to me? I was expecting a real master who can truly put me into order, who can truly be my master, a strong being, a being who can really rule the world, and here you give me such a fragile thing that dies every minute." And Ahura-Mazda said "Be silent. It is the best thing to do. He will be the only one who can take care of you".

To take care of the creation of God as man's task in the world -- to take care -- this idea had come to me quite independently of Zarathrustra and I tried to develop it and then forgot it. Then I made another astonishing discovery -- namely, that another philosopher of our time, Martin Heidegger at Freiburg, who also had been shocked by this tremendous event was starting to think along the same lines. To ask the question "Is there any capability in man to take care of the world"? And after that I went on to discover that neither of us were so original as we might have believed, because Zarathrustra had already developed exactly the same idea in 500 B.C. Man's task is to take care of creation, and in taking over this responsibility he becomes free. This is the price he has to pay for his possible freedom, because freedom is only this basic possibility. Man is not born free. Man can only become free. Free will does not mean that man is free. Free will means only that man can become free if he uses his will rightly, for the better, and not for the bad. That is his only way to freedom, to becoming a free person, a free personality, and he can do it only at the price of taking over the responsibility for what God has done with the world, and understanding that God might have created the world to give him this opportunity, and that he should be thankful for it. The great joy of Zarathrustra's message (and we have talked about the fact that all of these messages we have been considering are messages of joy) was to discover this great basic possibility of man. It is the center of all man's creative capabilities and also the center of man's possible freedom, hence, we have both the basic distinction and also the basic unity of his message with that of Asiatic thinking. It is certain that although Zarathrustra had not known anything of Buddha or Lao-Tze he did the same thing. He tried to break the iron

framework of the human mind that was myth, to break out of this iron cage, and to put man on his own feet, on his own ground, through free reason and through the consciousness that each human being can have of himself and his own possibilities. By doing so he could almost have drawn the same conclusions that Buddha and Lao-Tze drew. He could have concluded that man has the possibility of isolating himself from Being as Buddha did, by drawing all of Being into himself, into his own mind in order to reach Nirvana (which is only the fullness of human awareness and thinking and living within), or he could have identified man with the great possibility of benevolence as Lao-Tze conceived of him, like a gardener of Being, a gardener of other men, of plants, of animals, a benevolent one. But both of these possibilities of freedom are related only to man himself and not to the world. Zarathrustra relates man's capability of absolute freedom not only to man but to the world. He says, so to speak, "The world, the creation, needs man and man's freedom. He is not only the dear child of creation. Rather he is the one who is needed by creation, because, to put it in modern terms, otherwise the creation wouldn't make sense." Being has no meaning in itself. If this being is to have a higher meaning this higher meaning can only be reached by man. That is Zarathrustra's main idea. Man is here to put meaning into being, and that means to create the better, to bring meaning into being by making out of this being a world. This Persian world conqueror coming out of a race of nomads who conquered the greatest empire in the east was really the man who overcame the lust for conquest. That is why we so bitterly need to reconsider his thinking, because all of our development since the Renaissance has been nothing but a lust for the conquest of nature, of nations, of ourselves, of everything, and a lust for power as energy.

Zarathrustra knew already that man can be much more than a world confrere. You conquer only worlds that are there. He can also be a world builder, a builder of worlds, and how he is this and how he can become this was the main concern of Zarathrustra's thinking. Ahura-Mazda is outside of creation. Man is exactly within creation, but being within creation he also transcends creation. He is not entirely explained by it. He can

transcend creation towards the Absolute and can therefore bring meaning to creation. He is needed by creation, and that is the basic thought that Zarathustra took. It means to take man, not as he is taken by metaphysical philosophy, as a being of which we can say that he has a nature -- namely, the nature of man. The nature of man is something that pretends to say that we know what man is, and therefore can give a valid definition of what he is and what his possibilities are. Zarathustra is the first who explicitly shows that we cannot know what man is, because if there is a transcendent Absolute, even if only as an idea in man's mind, then that means that man is at least a transcendent being. If he loses his capacity for transcendence he loses the center of all his creative capabilities. Therefore, he cannot be defined as a mere "what", a mere being. He has to be defined skeptically and very cautiously. If we want to define him as a being, then we must define him as a being who can be. It is his own capacity to be, or not. He can be, he can become, and that is the definition of becoming. Man is a becoming being. There is nothing else becoming in the world. There is no other becoming in the world. We can only show there is -ome other becoming in the world if we believe with the scientists, or with Hegel, that there is a cosmic process which we overlook and out of which comes a meaning. But we don't know any such process. The only thing that we know is that those masses of phenomena are in continuous change. That is all we know. We know of change, but this change is not becoming. Becoming we make within ourselves, because we are becoming beings. We can make ourselves by our life and by our reason and by our will into a continuous and consistent human being, and that we can or cannot lose that chance. By losing that chance we take hold of certain changes in the world, certain processes, and transform them into processes of becoming by giving them certain aims, by forcing certain aims upon them, and then, in an abstract sense, inferring continuous changing lines of occurrences which are again transformed into systems of events. Events and occurrences can distinguished by the fact that in occurrences we do not know of any meaning or aim, while in events, which we can produce ourselves with the help of occurrences, we turn the occurrences around in a certain direction, and we can know their meaning, because we provide the meaning. Man, in that sense, is not only needed by creation but he needs creation, because if

there were no creation then he could not be what he is -- a realizer of world. To realize world, to make out of the elements of phenomena that are given, a meaningful world -- this is the real task of man in the world, and the seal of his freedom.

Those are the modern implications of what Zarathrustra stood for, and upon looking back it seems almost impossible that a man of his time could have developed thoughts which are so far reaching and for us so entirely new. For the first time we see, if we look deeper into history, a historical phenomenon that has occurred very often not only in human, or philosophical thinking, but also in human actions, concepts, and plans. I think it was Voltaire who first rejected the idea of a continuous history saying that "I for my person think that the age of Pericles, though it was so short, is worth more than a thousand years of any other history." So, with the Augustinian age in Rome, and so he thought, with his own age. We are so prejudiced. By making a choice he was the first to break with the age-old European, Jewish-Christian superstition that there must be a sense or a meaning to history. Just because it flows in a certain way there must be a meaning, an over-all meaning, and this was the first breakthrough, to say there must not be. There are many meanings to history and the ones that are most worthwhile may be those that had formerly been defeated a few times. They might carry us further than all of those victorious opinions that have ruled us for two centuries. Don't overrate victory. There might be thoughts and concepts that turn out later to be more profound and to be more useful than all of those which have really lived in reality. Here we can see such an example. We have, and we will consider more such examples. People who have considered the fundamental possibilities of man which the men of their time could not yet make into realities, could not yet develop, because the conditions had not yet been given.

Today, in the twentieth century, a whole mass of conditions have been given that have never been given before, and to those of us for whom such thoughts so not seem strange it is amazing how they can be so automatically rejected and overlooked, because they seem so crazy within the context of our time. So that is why this especially one fundamental thought of Zarathrustra than man is responsible for creation and that this responsibility is a precondition for his freedom, had to be discarded. But it also shows, as Goethe once said:

"Wer kann was kluges wer wass dummes denken, das nicht die Vorwelt schon gedacht?"

"Who can think something clever or something stupid that has not already been thought by his forefathers?"

Here is something clever that has been thought by Zarathustra. It shows us another thing -- namely, the craziness of the modern scientific mind that thinks, as John Dewey once said "Oh, those are all errors of the past." The superstition of people who, because they have been born into the twentieth century with all of those enlarged opportunities for knowledge, think themselves all to be more clever than Plato. They aren't. Even our best philosophers today cannot be compared with a mind like Plato's, let alone that we all should be more clever.

There is a third thing to learn from it, and that is of the existence of the absolute capacity of reasonable thinking in the human mind, of any age. There is a deep justice to this because we may ask those people who have said "Poor Plato, having been born in that dark time when humanity knew so little and we, who are so bright, know so much" how did it come about that they did not despair at the idea that they did not live at the end of time, in the fiftieth century. What knowledge people might have then. It would be a deep injustice, wouldn't it, if the profundity of experience and thinking about the essential things of life should increase with the accident of having been born a century later than another fellow?

It goes against the basic equality of man. That every human mind is a mind, that every man is a being that can be, that every man has equal value not only before God but also I hope before every other man. So all those historical fantasies of progress and of how far we have proceeded, are, from a philosophical point of view, all sheer nonsense. The real question is how profound is our thinking and what can be done with the world. Up to now we have not shown that we can do better with the world than people of former ages. We have only shown we can do worse.

- 
- This article has originally been a lecture delivered by Heinrich Blücher the German scholar; this is edited by J. Katz, and prepared by Maryam Mostafavi as an article for publishing in *Falsafeh*.

# Love (*Mohabba*) in Sufism

**John Napora**

*Kutztown University, US*

## **Abstract**

*In the following, I describe the Sufi Path (tariqa) as a dialectical process which transforms the person through love. I examine the belief system of Islamic mystics as a journey involving both creativity and passion. I do so by using a fresh approach, a perspective that has heretofore yet to be applied to the spiritual alchemy of the Sufis.*

*Keywords: Sufism, love, lover, mohabba, path, tariqa.*

Each step or stage in the Sufi Path will be seen as a metaphor, a symbolic inclusion with what came before and an extension to what is yet to come. Such a perspective allows us to have a greater understanding of the logic of the *tariqa*, and thus a better appreciation of Sufi beliefs and the statements and commentary through which their transformation is described. The Sufis can be seen as developing and describing a syntagmatic chain of motivation, for each step in the journey can be seen as a part of a greater whole which propels them to seek yet another until the entirety is realized. Each stage is a metaphoric transformation which is linked to the next, and through the various transformations, the person draws ever closer to God, and is cumulatively transformed.

## **I. Love or *Mahabba***

This is to be effected through and for love (*mahabba*) (e.g. Schimmel, 1975 130; Chittick 1983). Done for love, the entire Path is an expression of it. For the Sufi, one's yearning for God provides a means to be ultimately consumed with and by love (e.g., Harvey, 1996, 138). Since the Path as a whole is a transformation of love, it can be seen as a master trope which informs each stage in the journey, effecting each of the minor transformations and enabling its ultimate culmination.

The most dramatic example of a Sufi transformed by love is Husayn ibn Mansur al-Hallaj whose striking,

ecstatic pronouncement “I am Reality” (*ana’l-haqq* in Arabic, Reality being one of the names of God) can be seen as a point to be interpreted and perhaps as the culmination of the Sufi way. His statement was of course considered blasphemous, and was in keeping with his preaching to the masses that God could be discovered within one’s own heart (Massignon, 1971, 100). Perhaps for such reasons, as well as perhaps implied political ones,<sup>1</sup> he was put to death by the authorities in 922 A.D. His death may also be instructive. Attar (d. between 1220-1230), the most famous hagiographer of the Sufis, records his death in the following way.<sup>2</sup>

When Hallaj was in prison he was asked: “What is love?” He answered: “You will see it today and tomorrow and the day after tomorrow.” And that day they cut off his hands and feet, the next day they put him on the gallows, and the third day they gave his ashes to the wind. (Schimmel, 1975 p63-64)

From each of his dismembered limbs came the cry *ana’l-haqq*, from each drop of his blood the word Allah was formed, and even his ashes did not fail to proclaim the Truth (Arberry 1966, 270-271).

It can be asked what enabled and motivated such passion, that it was said to continue even after death? Or to put it another way, what allowed for the person to be seen as so transformed, that every part of Hallaj’s body was seen as imbued with sanctity, if not divinity? The Sufi Path is intrinsically transformative and is permeated with and predicated upon love for God.<sup>3</sup>

To use a Sufi metaphor, this is to be accomplished by the cleansing of one’s heart. According to Hallaj the heart is enveloped by a series of veils (sg. *kashf*), obscure and incoherent sensations and images which prevent man from contemplating God and which coincide with or reside in the *nafs*, or lower self and base instincts. The purpose is to strip away each veil, as al Ghazzali (d.1111) writes, “to overcome appetites of the flesh and [dissolve] its evil dispositions and vile qualities, so that the heart may be cleared of all but God” (Arberry, 1950, 80).<sup>4</sup>

## II. Station and State

To do this one proceeds through a series of stations (*maqamat*, singular *maqam*, and states *ahwal*, singular *hal*). The number

and order of stations and states varied from sheikh to sheikh, and often a particular master did not clearly delineate between them, or he disagreed with another sheikh as to whether a particular point in the path constituted a state or station (Schimmel, 100). But generally, the first stage was conversion or repentance (*tawba*), which means “to give up to this world and eventually to give up everything that distracts the heart from God, even to renounce the thought of renunciation” (Schimmel, 100). Clearly, this could lead to poverty (*faqr*), another early stage in the *tariqa*, for it also meant to give up any and all possessions. This could lead to putting complete trust in God (*tawakkul*), stemming from the realization that all things come from God. As Schimmel (*ibid.* 119) notes, complete trust in God “*tawakkul*” “means to realize *tauhid*” [the unity of God], another stage on the path, “for it would be *shirk khafi* ‘hidden associationism [i.e. polytheism] to rely upon. . . any created being.” The realization that one must completely rely on God involves another stage, patience (*sabr*), that one must accept whatever comes from God, and this elicits still another, gratitude (*shukr*), which as Schimmel (125) states is superior to patience because not only does one accept what comes from God but one is also thankful for it. The two states resolve themselves in contentment or satisfaction (*rida*).

Many other stages could be enumerated. For example, al-Ghazzali lists resolve (*niya*), sincerity (*ikhlas*), contemplation (*muraqaba*), self-examination (*muhasaba*) yearning (*shauq*) and intimacy (*uns*) (Arberry, 1950, 82) But it usually culminated with gnosis (*ma'rifa*) and love (*mahabba*).<sup>5</sup>

Junayd's (d. 910) statement on love is perhaps the clearest example of the preeminence given to it. His definition of what it means in Sufi thought marks it as the culmination of the Path: “Love is the annihilation of the lover in His attributes and the confirmation of the Beloved in His essence.” Or again: “it is that the qualities of the beloved enter in the place of the qualities of the lover” (Schimmel, 134). Hallaj (Harvey, 144) is also worth quoting here:

Love is that you remain standing  
In front of your Beloved.



When you are deprived of all your attributes,  
Then His attributes become your qualities.  
Between me and You, there is only me.  
Take away the me, so only You remain.  
Then of course there is Rumi (Chittick, 215):  
Love is that flame which when it blazes up, burns away  
everything except the Beloved. . . .  
There remains but God, the rest has gone. Bravo, oh great, idol-  
burning Love!

Thus love can be seen as an overarching metaphor for the transformation between believer and God.<sup>6</sup>

Also, according to Rumi (Mathnawi 5:672), when this has occurred the goal of *fana* “annihilation in God” has been achieved. Or, according to al-Ghazzali, the “spiritual alchemy” or “alchemy of bliss” (*al-kimiya as-sadah*) has been completed (Burckhardt, 1959, 101). Hallaj’s image of this process was the moth drawn to the flame, circling ever nearer, until finally, motivated by its love, extinguishes itself (Schimmel, 142). But when extinguished the lover simultaneously achieves *baqa*, persistence in God. As Hujwiri (Nicholson, 1976, 245) says, “Whoever is annihilated from his own will subsists in the will of God...” Hujwiri (245) maintains that this is possible because there is no “annihilation of substance but of attributes”. Significantly, Hallaj would seem to have expressed the same idea, and perhaps again to be proclaiming the culmination of the Path, when he declared “*ana’l-tajawuz*” (“I am crossing over”, “I am passing from one thing to another”). Indeed, Massignon (1975, 53) sees him as meaning that he is an exemplar, or transformation, “de Dieu transportee en l’homme.”<sup>7</sup>

The logic of the *tariqa* Hallaj’s statement underscores and demonstrates the underlying logic of the Path, a logic of continual transformation which brings about a cumulative one. The various states and stages of the Path can be seen as metaphors. This would be consistent with the insights of perhaps the greatest of Sufi sheikhs ‘Ibn Arabi (d. 1240).

According to Corbin (1982, 13) Ibn Arabi stressed the importance of *ta’wil*, which Corbin explains as meaning “essentially symbolic understanding, the transmutation of everything visible into symbols.” And further, following in Ibn

'Arabi's terms, when the Sufi engages in symbolic understanding, i.e, when he embarks on the Path, he has entered the *alam al-mithal*, the realm of images of which the Path consists. Each metaphor in the Path brings about a transformation, a transformation of the metaphor which preceded it – hence the Sufis could talk about renouncing renunciation. Each metaphor also elicits the next. This is the nature of metaphor, to create as it negates, and it is important to emphasize that each metaphor subsumed that which came before. Each stage therefore remained a part of the overall process, and is thus both a metonym and a metaphor.

Since the process of successive transformations is cumulative, the final stages of gnosis and love encompass all that come before them. The entire path can therefore be recapitulated by reference to them. Since they are the endpoints of the Path, including all that came before, they are the ultimate mediators between man and God. Wagner (1978) has labeled and described such a sequence of cumulative metaphorization as obviation, and notes that such a conclusion to a process is determined by it. Wagner (36) writes that a process of obviation “carries mediation to its ultimate conclusion by the very continuity that makes its closing term a mediation of the original dialectal polarity”.

The *tariqa* thus ends in the midst of mediation. But though the final stages encompass the whole, they are part of each of the steps. Because they give the whole its meaning, they motivate the Path from moment to moment, effecting each of the transformations. Thus, it is not only that the major transformation is effected by a series of minor ones, but also that the minor transformations are motivated by the major one. Further, since the process stems from the ultimate transformation which is to be effected, the culminating metaphors are also the original mediators between the initial opposition, and the process returns to the beginning. This is in keeping with the nature of obviation: the sequence is “self-containing and self-closing” (Wagner, 35). Being recursive, it returns to its original point. Or as the Sufis say “who begins in God ends in Him” (Schimmel, 106).

### III. Conclusion

The Path is endless. Once the initial opposition has been mediated, the sequence is self-motivating, effecting and transforming itself by setting up a series of minor oppositions, dissolving each one in its turn and transforming the whole in the process. It is thus not surprising to that the Sufis speak of love as endless, and consistent with the Beloved having no end (Schimmel 45).

The same is true of gnosis, given that it is *ma'rifa* as the flow of tropes which creates the *tariqa* from moment to moment. Also, since the Path does consist of this endless series of instants, it is neither surprising to find the Sufi being called *ibn al-waqt*, “the son of the present moment” (Schimmel 130). And because at every moment he is drawing closer to God, for the Sufi, Being is a state of perfect Becoming.

Clearly, the Path has enormous potential for effecting a transformation, as attested to by Hallaj, and just as Hallaj can be seen as a manifestation of love, so may the Path. It is through love that the culmination is realized, for love that it is achieved. The Path, therefore, can be seen as providing a model of and for the transformative power of love, becoming in itself a guide to love’s potential for enriching the human condition.

---

1 It might be noted that all Muslims, whether Sufis or not, have the potential to transform themselves spiritually and are normatively guided to do so by the tenets of Islam. For a largely implicit, yet insightful, discussion of this see Murata and Chittick (1994).

2 According to one tenth century chronicler, Hallaj was believed to have had an “ardent desire for a change of government” (Schimmel, p. 65), and it was also suspected that he was a Shia’ extremist (Massignon, p. 100).

3 I should note that of course the Path has had a myriad of permutations from a host of Sufi sheikhs. But I am treating was meant to effect the transformation by allowing the pious to achieve greater purity (*safaa* in Arabic, from which *at-tasawwuf*, or Sufism, may be derived).

4 As al-Kalabadhi (d. 995) writes, “Some say ‘The Sufis were only named Sufis because of the purity of their hearts...’” But he also notes “Others have said: ‘They were only named Sufis because of their habit of wearing wool (suf).’” Many commentators opt for the last derivation. Interestingly, as if to support the latter possibility, Ibn Khaldun (1958, p. 77) writes “Sufis were opposed to people wearing gorgeous garments and therefore chose to wear wool.”

5 Schimmel (pp. 130-131) states that they were often considered complementary to one another. For example, al-Ghazzali stressed their complementarity: “love without gnosis is impossible – one can only love what one knows.”

6 Again, Rumi (Chittick, p. 215) is worth noting here: “Love is the alchemist’s elixir: It makes the earth into a mine of meanings.”

7 It is also significant that *tajawuz* is etymologically related to *majaaz* – “metaphor.” Both come from the root verb *jaaza*, which includes in its meanings “to go beyond,” “to overstep,” “to cross,” “to pass,” as well as “to forego” and “to relinquish” (Wehr, 1976, pp. 147-149).

## **The Feminine vs. the Masculine : A Sufi Perspective of Life**

**Mariam S. Mir**

*Institute for Cultural Studies*

### **Abstract:**

*In Sufism, one may find a very interesting feminine approach according to which the feminine is the source of life. Though it is roughly distinguished from modern feminism in principle and aim, it would be very critical to see how this perspective overcomes the masculine dominated world. The overall aim of this paper is to give only a remark and an entry to this perspective without involving in its implications.*

**Keywords:** *Sufism, Quran, Feminine, Masculine, Iblis, Devil, Erotic, Allah, Human nature, Ego, Spiritual path, Buddha*

### **Introduction**

The feminine is a reality with which most of us are entirely unfamiliar. Due to the lack of differentiation between the feminine and our erotic nature, popular custom have learned to associate the feminine with the reality of Iblis, referred to as the Devil in the religious tradition. Our erotic nature, which longs to merge, transcend and become one, will naturally resist bowing down to God's creation, for the longing to merge, transcend and become one is pure in essence. In other words, there is meaning for Iblis to resist bowing down to Adam, who is created in God's image, just as it makes sense that Iblis is ordered to leave paradise as a consequence of rejecting God's command. Iblis' devotion to God is pure love, which does not and cannot bow down to anything other than its beloved, in whose reflection it witnesses the purity of its own creation – Allah! The paradox of this love, this longing to merge, transcend and become one with essence, is that which leads us fall in love with creation, which we come to worship in our longing to merge with God's essence. Love is the experience, through which we awaken to

the consciousness of God, on the one hand, and the recognition of our self, on the other. Love, the longing for oneness, is our connection to God, whereas the longing for self-knowledge is God's relationship to us. We awaken to our innate longing to merge and become one in the experience of love, which is the cause of our conception and the reason for our birth. Love is the life stream of creation and where it ceases to flow, death is the result. Love is the fire of life. Although it can burn us, we depend on fire to exist. The same applies in regard to our erotic nature, which is founded on love. We are born with the task of mastering our passion, to awaken to the truth of our erotic nature; and our taskmaster is Iblis. To remember God in creation and worship no other than Allah is our challenge as God-fearing believers. What is implied by God-fearing? It means to fear to forget Allah and worship something other than Allah's essence, the unity of being. It is this which the prophets of old wanted to make us aware, namely our forgetfulness of Allah's presence and our worship of money, power, beauty, status and security. But instead of listening and making efforts to integrate the wisdom they revealed, we questioned the righteousness of their message and thus subverted the feminine in our worldly culture. Listening is not about doing, but rather the willingness to expand ourselves so that we can hear the other. Listening is like making love, which is not concerned with attaining or becoming, but rather sharing, relating and cooperating. Listening is like praying, feeling and participating. Listening is the sound of creation, which we can hear in our being. Listening is the receptive faculty of God in creation, embodied by the feminine, which is associated with language, religion, mythology and wholeness. We have to become silent to hear God's words as they have been inscribed in our hearts. Silence is the expression of the masculine; silence is the witnessing of God's being in form. We have both to listen and be silent to hear the words of guidance as contained in the Qu'ran, the Bible, Torah and the various other Holy Scriptures, through which God has spoken to us. We have both to listen and be silent to hear the melody of love. We have both to listen and be silent to hear the advice of our heavenly witness, our spiritual twin, who always informs us when we have deviated from the straight path or

when we are about to do something that invalidates our human dignity, freedom and justice. And it is our heavenly twin, our spiritual witness, who contains the purity of our human being. In retrospect, we may conclude that we intentionally associated the feminine with our erotic nature, which has been troubling our sense of self ever since we have become aware of its longing to merge and transcend. In retrospect, we may conclude that we intentionally associated the masculine with God, instead of valuing it as the inspirational dimension, the reality of faith that pertains to our self. In essence, it does not really matter if we intentionally or ignorantly confused the man with God and the woman with the devil, for what matters is that we acknowledge the discriminatory and self righteous interpretations of Holy Scriptures.

As it is impossible to determine the why of Sidi's behavior, what counts then is the acknowledgment of it and its consequences. Regardless of whether he acted from the will of God or Iblis' mastery, many were hurt. The fact is that others entrusted themselves to him due to his ascribed holiness and rank of Sufi mastery, which comes with a great responsibility. The position of spiritual guide, therapist or healthcare giver carries a commitment to ensure that the student, client or patient is not stretched beyond her capacity; that she is not hurt. When the teacher overstretches the student, to the point of breaking, it is his responsibility to claim.

### **I. The Claim for Ego**

Spiritual evolvment is often falsely associated with the conscious and intentional denial of our ego, which explains why many of us allow a spiritual teacher to do with us as she or he pleases. On the contrary, spiritual evolvment is about the conscious and intentional integration of our ego. To do so, we have to make the efforts to become aware of our unconscious drives, thoughts, desires, feelings and wants or, to put it differently, we have to be willing to face our pain, for life is suffering, as Quran reads: "Verily We create man in Suffer"(90:4) But why is life suffering? Because we want things that we cannot have and we have things that we do not want. Example: I did not choose to have a stutter; nonetheless, I have

had this condition since I can remember talking. Do I stutter as a consequence of my past life? Do I stutter because I did something wrong and this is how God punishes me? I stutter. The rest is speculation and belief. The rest is an attempt to not deal with my condition; to rationalize and construct meaning around it. Confronting it means to acknowledge it, which in turn means to deal with all the uncomfortable feelings related to it; feelings of shame, embarrassment and the agony of not being able to speak fluently, to speak like everybody else.

Most of us harbor feelings, drives, dreams and thoughts of which we are entirely unconscious and to confront ourselves is a rather painful process. To confront ourselves brings us face to face with our attachments and the letting go of them is experienced as painful. Example: While we still feel one with our mother at birth, there soon comes a time when not all of our immediate desires and wishes are fulfilled. This is a painful experience, yet it motivates us to evolve. In the process of separating ourselves from our parents we form a myriad impressions of what we consider to be important, would like to avoid, and what we aspire to become, once we have matured into adulthood. In other words, during our childhood and youth we construct our ego, the very thing which we surrender ourselves to deconstruct on the spiritual path. Just as death may be contemplated and theorized about, but only understood in the experience, so too is our ego only fully experienced in its deconstruction. We have to unveil and deconstruct the ego in order to integrate and value it in ourselves. We have to awaken to its essence rather than judging it by its actions. This is not a psychological endeavor, nor has it much to do with thinking or talking, it is rather experienced in discipline of a spiritual practice.

Deconstructing the ego is what the spiritual path is about; the rest is pretty much commentary. As Abu Said Ibn Abi Khayr put it:

Until college and minaret have crumbled

This holy work of ours will not be done

Until faith becomes rejected and rejection becomes belief

There will be no true Muslim. (Abusa'd Abul Kha'ir, 25)

Instead of investing all our energies into questioning whether the male is uniquely culpable by his nature or if he is as prone to err



and act in ignorance and self-righteousness as the female half of our human creation, we may be better off to simply acknowledge mistakes, which have caused much suffering, despair and hurt; as testified by the state of the world today. Only by acknowledging that something went wrong, that we have lost our equilibrium, lost our balance, are we able to learn from our mistakes and discover the meaning for why they happened. Only by assessing where we are currently located, are we then able to change direction. It is not that our world does not work due to our past, but rather because of our lack of being present. Our life as a whole is in such disarray because we are unconscious of the desires, wants, drives and aspiration of the ego, which conflict with our intentions and commitments.

The compound "ego" is not a single thing, but consists of different parts; such as the masculine - feminine and our erotic nature. The compound "ego" is about "I," while the feminine is about relationship and the brotherly/sisterly love we experience and witness in relating to others. The feminine is about morals, ethics and forgiveness, contrasted against the masculine, which is about social order, law and justice. The feminine is about co-existence, whereas the masculine is about the survival of the fittest. Related to this subject:

"Judaism, Christianity and Islam turned myth into dogma on the basis of the biblical and Quranic story of creation and the fall of Adam and Eve. N. Abbot argues that in all three religions essentially the same devices were used to keep women in a position of inferiority: 'the ever-present threat of physical violence too readily executed; energy- and time-consuming excessive child-bearing in the interest of passion, church, or state; denial of free access to the world of books and publications; psychological attitudes that undermine self-esteem and eventually induce in all but the strongest of body and mind a false and vicious inferiority complex.'" ( Sarah Graham-Brown 1984, 5)

Both the woman as well as the man have to work toward the deconstruction of this vicious inferiority complex and take initiative to overcome physical threats and violence by objecting to laws that infringe upon the freedom of the woman's body, be it in regard to child-bearing or abortion, and by transcending the

dynamics that en the separation of the sexes, which result in tremendous suffering for both. We have to inquire into the logic and wisdom of institutions which divide men and women.

## **II. The Masculine Dominated World**

We may do well to acknowledge that we live in a masculine dominated world, a world that is on fire and tormented by war. Our life as a whole is a battlefield, organized around the credo that there is not enough for everybody. This sense of scarcity makes fear an organizing principle in our world. And, in our fear to relate and reveal, in our fear to fall in love and be real, in our fear to cross the boundary, we succumb to it. The fear of confronting our human nature and that which makes us want to merge with it, lies at the root of many of our dysfunctional behaviors:

“Sexual murder, perversion and violence constitute the acts of revenge, real or fantasized, that reassure the desperate man-child that he is powerful in himself and therefore safe from invasion, engulfment and attack: that his ever-fragile masculinity is intact. Yet in the endless and self-renewing parabola of his emotional life, as he swings between the twin poles of his compulsion to be free of woman and to be at one with her, the normal male also stands perpetually condemned to confuse the intense childhood experience of the mother with his desire for other women.... Only this rage, fusing woman with mother, empowers the terrified child against the all-powerful female.... Infant rage comes into play to fuel the break with the mother: but ‘the severity of the ego-splitting can be very acute: the process leaves fissures in the ego structure.’ Rage then becomes, by some manic connection, the answer to its own problem: ‘omnipotent rage is better than to be helpless, terrified and in fear of annihilation.’ (Rosalind Miles, 1986, 45)

Rage is the fire in which our world is burning. Rage is the fuel of terrorism. When we feel oppressed or wronged, or harbor feelings of jealousy or victimization, we tend to justify our actions beyond reason and feel entitled to take the law in our own hands. For terrorism to end at a worldwide level, we must understand our feelings of rage and the feelings of those who terrorize us for a particular cause. We must stand united against

the use of violence and instead look for nonviolent healing and conflict resolution to bring about a change of heart. For, as Martin Luther King stated, "Through violence, you may murder a murderer, but you cannot murder murder. Through violence, you may murder a liar, but you can't establish truth. Through violence, you may murder a hater, but you cannot murder hate. Darkness cannot put out darkness. Only light can do it."

We must listen to our aggressors and understand what they are saying. We need to ask ourselves to honestly consider if there is any truth to what they say. We must look to ourselves and take responsibility for our contributions to these situations. Finally, we must realize that we are one people; humanity is like a body, and each culture is a part of this body, each individual valued for his or her being. And, from this perspective, we must correct the wrongs that have contributed to oppression and injustice, keeping this body sick and dismembered.

### **III. The Subjugation of the Feminine**

We have to recognize the subjugation of the feminine, the oppression of all that which does not fit into the frame of current consciousness, our academia, our politics, our religious leadership. We have to recognize how difficult it has become to address the whole of our human existence and inquire into its meaning, wisdom and beauty.

"Neither conscious gynophobic malice nor unconscious assumption of privilege can completely account for the cohesiveness and resiliency of philosophy against the intervention of women thinkers. Feminist philosophers have documented a masculine identification in philosophy that goes er than discrimination which might be redressed in affirmative action programs, er than biases which might be cured in an effort to consider women as well as men when choosing texts.... If civilization is male in its very constitutive structures, there is no medium for women's thought but men's thoughts; revised, corrected, but still categories, methods, arguments borrowed from men. Feminist theory itself must be expressed in the terms of 'philosophies of man,' as Marxist feminists criticize liberal feminists, radical feminists draw on the existentialism of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty to criticize Marxist feminists, continental

feminists turn to Heidegger to criticize Anglo-American empiricism, poststructuralist feminists turn to Derrida and Lacan to criticize radical feminism.... If it is possible to say that abstract forms of logical argument have provided continuity in philosophy, it may also be possible to say that what holds together a search of wisdom on these questions is the very refusal of abstracted argument and an insistence on constantly returning to painful experiences which provide reference and which provoke and energize passionate thought. At the end of the twentieth century there is a great need for such thinking, which is practical and theoretical, engaged and general.... The tradition of male philosophers has failed to produce an understanding of divinity, self, value, reality, knowledge viable in the late twentieth century. As long as women's thought is defined in opposition or resistance to this failed thought, as what is not logical, not authoritative, not rational, no redress of that failure is possible." (Andrea Nye, 1989, 64)

In the reflection and the awareness of the feminine, we become conscious of our human being. In that consciousness we learn to recognize our longing, our desire to merge and become one with the transcendental. The awakening to the feminine goes hand in hand with the recognition of our erotic nature, for in awakening to the feminine, we become aware of our innate longing. It is this longing, which makes us believe that we are separate from the source of being, exiled from the celestial planes, punished by God. It is this longing upon which the Sufi teaching is based; and this longing to merge and become annihilated; this longing for truth, is based on love. As the Qu'ran puts it, "I was a hidden treasure that longed to be known."

"God reveals Himself most completely and perfect in the human being, made in the image of the name Allah, the name that comprehends every possible name, every reality, every ontological possibility. Hence witnessing Allah in the human being must be the most perfect form of witnessing. However, one can then ask if witnessing Allah is more perfect in the form of men or in the form of women. Ibn al-Arabi answers with the latter, especially since women 'were made lovable' to the Prophet. He could not have been made to love something other than Allah, since nothing other than the Real is truly worthy to

love. ‘There is no beloved but God’ is the theme found throughout Sufi literature, though rarely expressed in these particular words. Rumi provides the most detailed and accessible explanation of the fact that all love is in fact directed only toward Allah.” (Sachiko Murata, 1992, 86)

Regrettably, many authoritative people in the religious and spiritual field have not undertaken the efforts of contemplating the mysteries, as revealed by our prophets and put in perspective by our mystics and saints. Relying on second hand knowledge and borrowed insights, they give themselves all sorts of lofty titles, and we, in our ignorance, tend to follow them. All this happens in the name of faith, the surrender to God and the realization of one’s self:

“There has been a reversal of human values, a spiritual breakdown, which has brought into play forces beyond the material and the human. The present crisis has been prepared by the whole system of science, philosophy and religion. The only way of recovery is to rediscover the perennial philosophy, the traditional wisdom, which is found in all ancient religions and especially in the great religions of the world. But those religions have in turn become fossilized and have each to be renewed, not only in themselves but also in relation to one another.” (Bede Griffiths, 1988, 13)

Indeed, this is the task of our time, for without a reversal of our contemporary human values, we will be met by a future in which we would rather not live. This reversal will only come about with the integration of the feminine and the acknowledgment of our ego which, in relation to the transcendental, is our humanity. This reversal will include our erotic nature and the passion experienced and associated with it; the passion which we have been investing in consumerism, productivity, competition and pornography in favor of being authentic, transparent, straightforward, honest, sincere, and, alas, compassionate.

In the course of this process, we may recognize the man’s tendency to promise too many things too quickly, which he then cannot hold, thus jeopardizing his constitutional self for wanting to be respected. We may recognize the woman’s propensity to be carried away by those man made promises, in her need to be

cherished. It is hard to believe that the man would have the power to break a woman's heart, especially if we attribute equal responsibility to both of them. We all want to be respected in our humanity and cherished for who we are. No gender is attached to our aspiration to awaken to our true nature, which infuses our being with meaning, wisdom and love. No gender is attached to the feeling of joy nor the experience of sorrow; no gender is attributed to such concepts as truth, justice, politeness and peace.

“It is my strongest hope that, as the male once rescued consciousness from the chthonic matriarchate, the female might today help rescue consciousness and her brother from patriarchy.... We need today to develop intuition and alert passive awareness.... But until males stop killing themselves (and others) in order to be strong and silent; until females stop encouraging just that behavior as evidence of a ‘true man’; until chauvinists settle their accounts with their own masculinity and stop defensively exploiting their sisters; until angry feminists stop, on the one hand, reactivating chthonic ‘female only’ matriarchal obsessions and, on the other, trying to co-opt patriarchal obnoxiousness; until feminist intellectuals stop asking what it means to be truly female and start asking instead what it means to be neither male nor female but whole and human then the patriarchy, the mental-ego, which has served its necessary, useful, but intermediate function, and which, for that, we have much to be thankful, will nevertheless soon prove quite literally, to be the death of us all.” (Ken Wilber, 1984, 194)

While we can and have to question and redefine the ascribed gender roles, we cannot change our sex - our biological constitution. We can, however, explore and learn from it.

“There are, generally speaking, very strong differences between the male and the female value spheres—that is, both in sex and gender. Men tend toward hyper individuality, stressing autonomy, rights, justice, and agency, and women tend toward a more relational awareness, with emphasis on communion, care, responsibility, and relationship.” (Ken Wilber, 1996, 23)

Gaining some insight about our sex and gender related differences may help us to identify more clearly the aspirations and traits we share with each other, the depth of our human

nature and the reality of our spiritual oneness. On a plane practical level, acknowledging our gender-related differences helps us to relate to each other by valuing them instead of agonizing over them; which generally results in further separation, rather than the transcendence of our gender-related differences.

Learning to embrace the other—our femininity as a male and our masculinity as a female—seldom happens solely through our spiritual practice, but more often in the context of a romantic relationship. It is here that we may witness that, as Tannen writes, “a protective gesture from a man reinforces the traditional alignment by which men protect women. But a protective gesture from a woman suggests a different scenario: one in which women protect children. That’s why many men resist women’s efforts to reciprocate protectiveness—it can make them feel that they are being framed as children.” (Deborah Tannen, 1990, 34)

“Where it gets less simple, is in groups such as Robert Bly’s ‘Wild Man’ workshops and other groups that still urge men to identify with dominator archetypes such as the warrior and the kind, while at the same time often talking about equal partnership between women and men and a more generally just equitable society... But although it is touted as new, the script for men offered by some of these groups is actually not all that different from the old macho script except that it is dressed in New Age clothes. As in the old macho all-male peer groups, once again male identity is defined in negative terms, as not being like a woman. As in the old macho script of contempt for the ‘feminine,’ Bly berates his followers for being ‘too soft’ or ‘too feminine’ and thus, ‘unmanly’ expressing horror at being ‘controlled’ by women, from whom, according to him, men must at all costs be independent. To this end, men must even distance themselves from their own mothers, lest they be contaminated, in Bly’s words, by ‘too much feminine energy.’ (Riane Eisler, 1994, 125)

In a time when female infants were buried alive and the average woman had no social standing on her own, Mohammad was apparently neither intimidated to marry a woman who was fifteen year his senior nor did he resist being comforted by her

when he was in utter distress and felt most vulnerable, as when the angel Gabriel pressed his chest and commanded: “Recite, recite in the name of God.” Islam, the religion whose messenger is Mohammad, is the revelation of a joint effort, which is why women are equally included on the Sufi path, albeit still struggling to be equally accepted.

Like Lilith is said to have left paradise long before Eve was to become Adam’s mate, so is the feminine a subverted reality in our monotheistic religious culture. Alluded to by Islamic Sufism within the poetry of Rumi, Hafiz, Khayyam, Saadi, Attar and Ibn Arabi, and incorporated in contemplative Christianity, in the form of Mary Magdalene, the feminine does not play a role in most of our lives. Leila Ahmed offers a historical perspective in the following:

“Zoroastrianism ...was principally the religion of the Persians, who predominantly constituted the ruling, warrior, and priestly classes.... The issue of chastity and of resistance to marriage was the central conflict in the battle of wills between prosecuting Zoroastrian priests and each woman. Women as well as men were among the early Iranian Christian martyrs. Although the Christian church endorsed male dominance, the narratives of the female martyrs suggest that it nevertheless introduced ideas which opened new avenues of self-affirmation and independence to women and validated ways to resist the belief that women were defined by their biology and existed essentially to serve the function of reproduction. Thus, Christianity promulgated ideas that were fundamentally subversive of the Zoroastrian social order in two ways: it enabled women to claim spiritual and moral authority and affirm their own understanding of the moral order, in defiance of male priestly authority, and it undercut the notion on which Zoroastrian laws on women were grounded that reproduction was their primary function.” (Laila Ahmed, 1994, 34)

Sufism acknowledges the equality of the genders and values their relationship with each other as an essential aspect of the spiritual path. Sufism emphasizes the unity of spirit in a couple who wants to merge with on the physical plane. Because, without this unity in spirit, without valuing each other’s principles of faith, physical union will fall short of the sought



after communion, inspired by the dialogue that proceeds our falling in love.

We may fall in love, because of the beauty that our eyes behold in the reflection of another or because we are told something that makes our heart sing and our spirit fly.

Such impressions, as elevating and inspiring they may be, are temporary in nature, for if we really want to know if we are made for each other, then we have to inquire into each other's principles of faith. Faith being the objective contemplation of self, imagination is the subjective, the intentional contemplation of self in relationship. How do we imagine living with one another, as a people, as different nations and as a couple? The feminine is visionary, intuitive and co-creative; in short, religious. The masculine is rational, cognitive, monotheistic. This coming together of wisdom and logic, imagination and reason, spirit and being is the cause of the Native American's vision quest: the experience of unity! Henry Corbin relates to this subject:

“When you create, it is not you who create, and that is why your creation is true. It is true because each creature has a twofold dimension: the Creator-creature typifies the *coincidentia oppositorum*. From the first, this *coincidentia* is present to Creation, because Creation is not *ex nihilo* but a theophany. As such, it is Imagination. The Creative Imagination is the theophanic Imagination, and the Creator is one with the imagining Creature because each Creative Imagination is a theophany, a recurrence of Creation. Psychology is indistinguishable from cosmology; the theophanic Imagination joins them into a psycho-cosmology.” (Henry Corbin, 1994, 34)

Faith, as such, is empty of substance, empty of content. Faith, the masculine, is the matrix; imagination, the feminine, its form, content and story. Faith is that which impregnates, imagination that which gives birth. Love is that which unites them both, for it is both their origin and source of being. Love is without past or future. Love is that which is uncreated, uncompounded and unconditioned, which is why we cannot directly approach it. Love is neither an object nor a feeling. Love is the witnessing of being alone, something which we can only experience, for there

are no words to describe it. As the *Gnostic Gospel of Thomas* puts it:

"When you make the two one, and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside, and the above like the below, and when you make the male and the female one and the same...then you will enter the Garden of Eden.

Love takes away our self-articulated limitations and allows us to experience our true nature; it makes us aware of the reality of our own being: communication!

Behold, I do not know any more where to draw a line: who is me and who is I? I have to at least start somewhere. How else can I claim to be, how else can I claim you are? This very You is our I, but you are not us nor are we thou. Essentially, we are the same but different, and without that difference neither you nor I could say: "I am."

You are thou and I am thee, we are not one, not two, not three, but different; is this so hard to understand?

You have no equal, no qualities, no nothing; you are not body, mind nor speech; you are neither this nor everything you are and that is why I am!

We do not contain thee, as we are only your container, nor have you a voice we will ever speak or an ear that will ever hear your silence because you are beyond form and emptiness, beyond the past and future. You are beyond the perception of our creation; you are the very being at the moment of climax: love!

But you have to cease to exist in order to be. Nothing, really nothing can be left of you, and even then "you still must travel a long journey before you reach the place you seek in your madness," to quote my beloved friend and compassionate guide Jalal al Din Rumi:

The day is coming when these words of mine will testify against you:  
I called you I, the water of Life but you turned a deaf ear.

Of course, I know, why tell, just listen: you criticize my creative use of language as irrational and confusing because it does not go along with our linear way of thinking and the style of writing we have been accustomed to reading.

We eat dinner, watch TV and talk to our lover simultaneously, and that is how we have been taught to live fragmentarily!  
Again quoting Rumi:

“Unbelief has come in war, faith in peace,  
 Love strikes fire to both peace and war.  
 In the ocean of the heart Love opens its mouth  
 and like a whale swallows down the two worlds.  
 Love is a lion, without deception and trickery,  
 not a fox one moment and a leopard the next.  
 When Love provides replenishment upon  
 replenishment, the consciousness gains deliverance  
 from this dark and narrow body.” (*Ibid.*45)

We easily adhere to our faith if it is in our favor, but things look differently when, in the process of inquiring into our faith, we discover that the faith of our chosen partner is different from our own. This does not imply that we have to belong to the same faith in order to make a relationship work, but we have to be able to fully value the principles of our partner’s faith; otherwise, we will never fully entrust ourselves to him or her. Faith is the matrix, the source of our life; faith is that which makes you you and me. It remains our responsibility to inquire into our own faith before making a life commitment. This is where the reversal of our contemporary human values begins – the inquiry into our faith and the imagination of how we would like to live our life!

“It is said that in the other world, scrolls will fly, some into the right hands of the dead, some into their left hands. There will be angels, the throne, heaven and hell, the scales, the reckoning, and the book. None of this is clear until an analogy is given. Although these things have no equivalence in this world, they can be determined by analogy. The analogy of that world in this is as follows: At night, everyone goes to sleep shoemaker, king, judge, tailor and all the rest. Their thoughts fly away from them, and no thoughts remain for anyone. But then the morning breaks, like Israfil’s blast on the trumpet, and it gives life to the motes of their bodies. The thought of each one is like a scroll; flying and running it comes back to each. There are never any mistakes. The tailor’s thought returns to the tailor, the lawyer’s thought to the lawyer, the ironmonger’s thought to the ironmonger, the tyrant’s thought to the tyrant, and the just man’s thought to the just man. Does anyone go to bed a tailor and wake up a shoemaker? No, for that activity and occupation

belong to him, and once again he occupies himself with it. So you should know that in the next world it is the same way. This is not impossible, for it happens in this world.

“If a person clings to this analogy and follows it to the end, he will witness all the states of that world in this world. She will catch the scent of them, and they will be revealed to her. He will come to know that everything is contained in God’s Power. You see many bones desiccated in the grave, but they are in comfort. Their owner sleeps happily and drunken, and is fully aware of that joy and intoxication. The analogy of this is to be found in this world of sensory objects: Two people are sleeping in a single bed. One sees himself in the midst of banquets, rose gardens, and paradise, while the other sees herself in the midst of serpents, the guardians of hell, and scorpions. If you investigate their situation, you will see neither the one nor the other. So why should it be strange that in the grave the parts of some people are in joy, happiness, and intoxication, while others are in pain, torment, and suffering, although you see neither the one nor the other? Human being’s existence is a jungle. Beware of their existence if you breathe the breath of the Spirit!” (William C. Chittick, 1983, 57)

The central affirmation of faith in Islamic Sufism is expressed as *La' ila ha illah' la*, there is no God but God. God is love, lover and beloved alike in Sufism. God is that which cannot may not be acknowledged as genuine by our learned scholars, for God is love; and love cannot be quantified or measured and hence is not considered necessary in our educational institutions. This veneration of love and inclusivity is the distinguishing criteria between the Western value of productivity and the Eastern understanding of religion.

“This veneration is accentuated in the overlapping realms of Saktism and Tantra that the devadisis and women of Tantric Buddhism inhabit. Perhaps the scholarly characterizations of Tantric Buddhist yoginis as ‘lewd,’ ‘sluts,’ and ‘depraved and debauched’ betray a vestige of Victorian indignation not only at nonmarital sexual activity of women but also at the religious exaltation and worship of women. Theologian Hans Kung acknowledged that religious awe of women is so antithetical to

Jewish and Christian values that is poses a major barrier to understanding:

‘It is especially hard for the Christian theologian to discuss... Shaktist Tantrism with its orientation toward female power or divinity... No one could fail to see that all the Tantric systems, and the Shaktist practices especially, are extraordinarily alien to Christians, more alien than anything we have met thus far in Buddhism or Hinduism.’” (Miranda Shaw, 1998, 76)

Tantra, alike Islamic Sufism, is inclusive, integrative and transformative, for it is neither in conflict with the feminine nor disvalues our erotic nature.

“The word Tantra, which has become part of the English language, is in Buddhism a term referring to one’s individual spiritual growth, and only secondarily is it made to cover the literate which deals with this developmental process. The words used in the Tantra literature are symbols for the experiences that are being lived through as the process of growth and maturation unfolds. They are not so much labels for things as, for instance, the label ‘dog’ is, rather are they incentives to lead people to, and finally evoke within them, those experiences which those who have had them consider to be of vital importance and which they try to communicate by those peculiar verbal expressions which do not seem to stand literally for anything.” (H.V. Guenther, 1985, 4)

Similar to Sufism, which does not exclude our egoist, erotic nature, our sense of self and humanity, and which even acknowledges Iblis’ role without making him/her wrong, Tantra includes the many conflicting and often times paradoxical dimensions of being. Tantra, like Sufism, crosses the boundaries of reason and logic; which is why as much mischief and confusion are attached to both of these paths as clarity and insight are gained while walking them.

“The Buddhist Tantricism of Padma-Shambhava, like Hindu Tantricism, postulates, in harmony with these more ancient teachings underlying all Tantric Schools, that good and evil are inseparably one; that good cannot be conceived apart from evil; that there is neither good per se nor evil per se.... Tantricism, in its highest esoteric reaches, of which Europeans have but little knowledge, propounds, as do all philosophies, ancient and

modern, based upon the occult sciences, that the ultimate truth (at least from the viewpoint of man) is neither this nor that, neither the Sangsara nor Nirvana, but at-one-ment, wherein there is transcendence over all opposites, over both good and evil.” (W. Y. Evens-Wentz 1982, 34)

The world, as I came to know it in my journey and study, is one of multiplicity, interdependence and imagination. It is a world based on wisdom and faith, aspiration and intention. I had no idea how central faith is to our life when I stumbled into the religious spiritual arena at the age of twenty-one. And I had no idea where my own faith was to take me and how predominant the question of faith would become for me.

Faith is all that has remained with me. I lost friends and community; I lost my religious belonging and spiritual kinship and even my place in the world. Had I known how alone I was to become in this journey, I may have never steered this direction. But, then again, I am very grateful for having been able to pursue this path. I have met with people who were so caught up in their religious studies that they had no time and space available to inquire into their motivation and the living presence by which their faith was sustained. Thankful for not being caught in their place, my heart felt very saddened to see them veiling their own light, their own spirit and own individual essence with all the knowledge, all the books and all the thoughts of other people they studied.

The acquisition of knowledge is valuable, but not for the prize of my wholeness of being. What good have I learned when I can splice a theological argument into innumerable pieces, but lack the ability to turn a person in need of support, comfort and love toward the faith, the living presence, that resides in his or her own heart?

“Al-Ghazzali ranks equally with Rumi, Rabia and Shabastari in his emphasis on the Sufi doctrine that life without true love is a farce, that love is the guiding star on the mystic way, and that love eventually leads one to the ultimate truth.... He contends that the truth of religion depends not on miracles, laws, or rites and rituals, but on the soul’s experience and communion.” (N. S. Fatemi, 1994, 4)

Our world is as troubled by the lack of education as it is by our inability to relate; our inability to communicate; our inability to turn inwards and be still; our inability to go beyond ourselves and render our being to love. As Rumi puts it:

“Look not at Time’s events, which come from the spheres and make life so disagreeable!

Look not at this dearth of daily bread and means of livelihood!

Look not at this famine and fear and trembling!

Look at this: in spite of all the world’s bitterness, you are passionately and shamelessly attached to it.” (Andrew Harvey 36)

It has become increasingly difficult, if not nearly impossible, to contemplate and address this issue called life, in its entirety, in our academic institutions; where we are supposedly prepared for and educated in to understand our role in the world. This understanding, however, is only possible if we are inspired to uncover our mission and genius, as inscribed in our heart; if we are encouraged to unearth our individual calling. For it is this calling that infuses our life with meaning and enables us to realize who we are.

#### **IV. Final Considerations**

Respect for the other arises when we are given the means to articulate our own principles of faith and when we are motivated to contemplate the values that constitute our moral-ethical life. Regrettably, this inquiry no longer bears much weight in education, with the result that many of our leaders, teachers and guides lack the integrity required in leading their fellow companions. Hence, we have come to live in a world where the blind lead the blind, where the greedy become greedier, the poor poorer, the educated ever more sophisticated and the uneducated tend to stay that way. No wonder then, that religious fundamentalism is in the rise, that corporate fraud can be traced into the White House and that science denies everything that may vaguely allude to the transcendental.

“The 1989 booklet *On Becoming a Scientist*, published by the National Academy of Science’s Committee on the Conduct of Science, recognizes that scientific knowledge emerges from an intensely human process. It acknowledges that much of the large

body of knowledge used by scientists in making decisions ‘is not the product of scientific investigation, but instead involves value-laden judgments, personal desires, and even a researcher’s personality and style.’... While I agree that a totally subjective approach to science is not useful because it does not permit knowledge to be shared, I am interested in exploring the ‘excluded middle.’ What if we look at the objective and subjective realms as permeable to each other where they interact and inform each other? What if the objective view of nature is consciously informed by the personal, and the personal is grounded by the objective? What are the benefits of a personal connection to knowledge?” (Linda Jean Sheperd, 1996, 24)

Mythology, the meta-story of language, defies definite and one-dimensional answers, for it evolves in relation to our own insight and realization. Mythology is the stuff theology is made of, while biology is the focus of our natural science. Can we really separate them from one another; separate our body from our mind and our soul from our spirit? Can we talk about the formation of the plasma membrane, which caused the distinction between inner and outer, without simultaneously contemplating its implied meaning? Language always involves the spirit, the theology of our own consciousness, which we therefore cannot separate from that which we observe, describe and formalize into concepts. Language will always inquire into the meaning of life, the mythos, for the purpose of wisdom.

“This directly brings us, of course, to the work of Carl Jung and his conclusion that the essential forms and motives of the world’s great mythologies the ‘archaic forms’ or ‘archetypes’ are collectively inherited in the individual psyche of each of us.... The question then centers and here Freud and Jung bitterly parted ways on the nature and function of these mythic motifs, these archetypes. Are they merely infantile and regressive (Freud), or do they also contain a rich source of spiritual wisdom (Jung)?... For one thing, literal-fundamental mythological motifs are the main social cement in many cultures (including a very large segment of our own), and as divisive and imperialistic as those mythologies are, their particular ethnocentric and social-integrative power has to be reckoned with carefully. One cannot simply challenge or deconstruct the



myths of such societies (or segments of societies) and expect them to survive (or expect them to acquiesce without a fight).” (Ken Wilber *Sex*, 1994, 124)

In the language of the Sufis, Allah created the world in interdependent pairs such as knowledge and wisdom, freedom and responsibility and man and woman. It is this interdependence, which we have to learn to incorporate into our lives, for it is this interdependence from which our creation arises. Thus, we must reflect upon today the peace that we aspire to cultivate tomorrow. And we must allow the generation to come the opportunity, time and space to be with the other, as well as themselves.

“We cannot hope to utter anything worth saying, unless we read and inwardly digest the utterances of our betters. We cannot act rightly and effectively unless we are in the habit of laying ourselves open to leadings of the divine Nature of Things. We must draw in the goods of eternity in order to be able to give out the goods of time. But the goods of eternity cannot be had except by giving up at least a little of our time to silently waiting for them. This means that the life, in which ethical expenditure is balanced by spiritual income, must be a life in which action alternates with repose, speech with alertly passive silence... ‘What a man takes in by contemplation,’ says Eckhart, ‘that he pours out in love.’ The well meaning humanist and the merely muscular Christian, who imagines that he can obey the second of the great commandments without taking time even to think how best he may love God with all his heart, soul and mind, are people engaged in the impossible task of pouring unceasingly from a container that is never replenished.” (Aldous Huxley, 1972, 182)

Does our way of life allow us to listen and hear? Does it invite us to remember our true essence, the reality of love and the source of being – Allah?

**References:**

Abul Kha'ir Abusa'd, *Robaiyyaat*, ed. G.Hasani, Sa'di Press

Ahmed Laila, (1994) *Women and Gender in Islam*, Yale University Press.

Chittick William C., (1983) *The Sufi Path of Love*, Suny Press.

Corbin Henry (1994) *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn Arabi*, Suny Press.

Eisler Riane (1994) *Sacred Pleasure*, Harper Collins.

W. Y. Evens-Wentz (1982) *The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation*, Shamabala Press.

Fatemi N. S. (1994) *Sufism*, p. 4, Castle Book.

Graham-Brown Sarah (1984) in *Aisha, The Beloved of Mohammad*, by Nabia Abbott, Penguin Press.

Griffiths Bede (1988) *A New Vision of Reality*, New World Press.

Guenther H.V., (1985) *Tibetan Buddhism in Western Perspective*, HarperCollins.

Harvey Andrew, *The Way of Passion-A Celebration of Rumi*, , Jeremy Tarcher/Putnam.

Huxley Aldous (1972) *The Perennial Philosophy*, Harper.

Miles Rosalind (1986) *Love, Sex, Death, and the Making of the Male*, Harper.

Murata Sachiko, (1992) *The Tao of Islam*, State University of New York Press.

Nye Andrea, (1989) *Feminist Theory and the Philosophy of Man*, Routledge

Shaw Miranda (1998) *Passionate Enlightenment*, Princeton University Press.

Sheperd Linda Jean (1996) *Lifting the Veil*, Harper.

Tannen Deborah (1990) *You Just Don't Understand*, Ballantine Books.

Wilber Ken, (1984) *Up from Eden*, Shambhala.

Wilber Ken (1994) *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*, Shambhala.

Wilber Ken (1996) *A Brief History of Everything*, Shambhala.

# Morality, Rationality and Impartiality

**Mahmoud Khatami**

*University of Tehran*

## **Abstract:**

*Morality as somehow involving rationality and impartiality received classic expression in philosophy of Kant who frankly speaks of “rational and impartial spectator” in contemplating the universal law. The overall aim of this paper is to show (1) that the idea of morality implies rationality and this will be reached at in refuting the moral scepticism; but (2) it does not necessarily indicate impartiality, since the justification of the principle of impartiality does not solve the problem of justifying particular moral principles. I will start with the question “Why should we be moral?” and then turn to moral rationality to refute moral scepticism, finally the relationship between rational morality and the principle of impartiality will be reconsidered.*

**Keywords:** *morality, rationality, impartiality, moral justification.*

## **I. The Idea of Morality**

Consider a person who has discovered a quick and sure way of getting rich. The prospects are great and he is tempted. Yet his conscience says “No, not that way”. He ignores his conscience. But he is prepared to reason with himself. He possesses the common knowledge of right and wrong. He sees that the way of getting rich he is contemplating is morally wrong. And yet his judging it as morally wrong, by itself, does not provide him with a reason for refraining from pursuing it. Perhaps he is not already committed to living a moral life. He sees the moral point of view but he does not actually look at the world from a moral point of view.

It will be an imposition upon him, I think, if we thought that his moral views nevertheless are simply those which ultimately manifest, or regularly show in his practical decisions. (Gert 2005; Gert, 1998)

Since he is clearly wondering why one should live a moral life at all. Why should he do what he himself sees as morally right?

If morality provided the only way of deciding between right and wrong, then, perhaps there will be some point in saying that a reasonable being should normally do what he sees as right. But there are ways other than moral of judging what is right or wrong. Why should one commit oneself to morality? This question about the justification of morality has puzzled philosophers ever since the time of Plato, although since the time of Prichard's *Moral Obligations* (1949), the search for an answer seems to have faded away. To the older philosophers the question itself was quite meaningful. (Tännsjö 1990; ch. 1)

Their problem was mainly how morality in the end could be shown to be to one's own advantage. They said, in general terms, what seems natural to say, that one should be moral because that is the way to get on with people. And getting on with people is important because as a member of a human community, happy and successful living requires that one should respect others and their rights, even though at times one is tempted to be ruthless and aggressively self-seeking; or, even better, that God takes morality seriously and although He seems to be a utilitarian in this world, He is most probably a retributivist in the other. What they said was essentially a prudential justification. This kind of justification, however, is thought to be ultimately unsatisfactory for various reasons. One obvious difficulty was to convince a person who believed that it is important to get on with others, but disbelieved that very often he could not get on with others and also get away with damaging their interests. If he were frequently successful in putting on masks and deceiving people in such a way that they did not even realize that they were deceived, he would see no reason to stick to morality. A person who says that he listens to the voice of prudence but not to that of conscience has, I think, to be taken seriously if he is prepared to reason about his position. And this he is, if he raises the question "Why should I be moral?" However, many philosophers have felt that a lot of moral philosophy rested on just this mistake; the older philosophy took the moral sceptic seriously. They think that the sceptic's demand for a justification of morality is itself unjustified. It is suggested that ultimately there are only two types of reasons that can be given when one is required to justify

his conduct, A) prudential reason in terms of self-interest, and B) moral reason. Now, the question “Why should I be moral?” cannot be interpreted as “Is being moral in my own interest?” since, as Hume observed, if the question “Is this right?” were the same question as “What is this to be?” it would seem very strange that this quite distinct way of speaking has emerged. Thus the sceptic’s question cannot be about his own interest nor can it be interpreted, for obvious reasons, as “Is there a moral reason for my being moral?” But, it is argued, if there are these two types of reason, the sceptic’s question itself must be illegitimate. (Bair 1995, 303 ff; Sinnott-Armstrong 2006; Superson 2009)

Now I do not think that this type of argument is successful; mainly, because *prima facie*, it does not seem to be true that there are only these two types of reason that could be given to justify conduct. There certainly seem to be other types of reason; for instance, religious reason, in terms of a loving obedience to God. And I take it, without arguing for it, that it is to the essence of acting truly on religious reasons, that one should not ask why one should obey the will of God, even though religious preachers untiringly go on telling you that acting according to the precepts of religion is really to one’s own advantage. But even if one accepts that, as a matter of fact, we are aware only of two types of reason, it does not seem to follow that there cannot be any other type of reason. To think that it did would involve the simple fallacy of supposing that if we do not know of any other kind of reason then we do know that there cannot be any other kind of reason, for if there can be other kinds of reason why do we not know them? Surely one must allow for the possibility that entirely new concepts may be born to mankind. New sources of reason, new modes of thought can emerge and vanish from human consciousness. Even what passes in the name of moral reasons can be distinguished as belonging to different types of reason. One may look at the history of ideas to get support for this contention. For instance in the society reflected in the Homeric poems, as McIntyre observes, the most important judgements that can be passed upon a man concern the way in which he discharges his allotted social function. Thus

for a Homeric nobleman to be *agathos* or good is to be brave and skilful, and to possess the wealth and leisure to develop these skills, etc. So, he is, in ordinary English use of good, “good, but not kingly, courageous, or cunning”. This makes perfectly good sense; but in Homer, “*agathos*” but not “kingly, courageous, or clever” would not even be a morally eccentric form of judgement, but as it stands simply an unintelligible contradiction. (McIntyre, 1968, pp. 5-6) This observation is correct and what it amounts to is that for the Homeric nobleman the concept of morality was not a source of the same type of reasons as it is.

Furthermore, I am not convinced that the question “Why should I be moral?” cannot be legitimately interpreted as “Does being moral pay? Prichard suggests that those, such as Plato, who thought that morality should be justified in this way, wrongly believed that advantageousness is a criterion of moral behaviour. (Prichard, 1968)

But asking for the kind of justification in question does not necessarily require that morality itself should be conceived as being advantageous to the agent. What is being asked here is simply whether, as a matter of fact, being moral always or in the long run turns out to be, in some or other way, good for the agent. To give the criterion of moral behaviour itself will be to explain that form of behaviour, it will not necessarily justify it. However, the requirement of advantageousness is supposed to furnish the criterion which justifies to oneself one’s commitment to being moral. This is well expressed by Butler in his famous “cool hour” passage where he says that though virtue and moral rectitude is indeed founded on the conscience yet in a cool hour, when one reflects, one cannot justify to oneself acting in a way which is at least not contrary to one’s interests. The sceptic need not maintain that moral behaviour is directly aimed at the furtherance of self-interest, he only quires a justification of moral behaviour in terms of the satisfaction of self-interest. He would be satisfied if the answer were in the affirmative. But, it is argued, how could there be such a justification? For it is obvious that acting morally does not necessarily bring returns. Now, it is not clear to me how this shows that the demand for justification itself is illegitimate.

That there cannot be a prudential justification of morality need not worry the sceptic. He may reply: “indeed there cannot be such a justification. So you can’t really justify morality. Your answer to my question can only be, “you mostly ought to act morally, since that is the way to exist in a human society, but not always”. To this, however, it may be objected, as Griffiths(1957-58) does, that ‘to ask such a prudential question, and get such an answer, need disturb no one; it can throw no doubt on any moral principle’. Why? Because, to give a prudential answer “seems to contradict what we would say from a moral point of view. But of course it does not, since it is not a moral observation”. (Bittner & Talbot 1989, ch. 1)

Now, the sceptic might admit this. Indeed the prudential answer is not a moral observation, since it is not an answer from a moral point of view. But his question is precisely why should he adopt the moral point of view? How is he bound to act for moral reasons? There cannot be moral reasons for adopting the moral point of view and prudential reasons are not compelling enough. So there aren’t any good reasons. But perhaps this does not sufficiently represent the force of Griffiths’ argument. Perhaps the force of his argument rests in emphasizing the question “What sort of question is an egoist asking, when he asks why be moral?” If he asks a prudential question he gets a prudential answer. And it is not surprising that it does not satisfy him. But, Griffiths writes, “If the question is not prudential: if the questioner accepts some rules of behaviour other than prudential: then what sort of question is it? What sort of rules does the questioner accept? What kind of reasoning would satisfy him? Unless the questioner can give us the answer he is demanding, give us examples of the kind of reasoning he is asking us to produce, then his question is empty, pointless and meaningless. It has no use (for him)”.

This argument is powerful, but is it convincing? It seems to me doubtful that the egoist who asks for a good reason for being moral must know what kind of reasoning would satisfy him. The egoist’s enquiry is innocent not rhetorical. One cannot simply reply to him: “if you do not know what kind of reasoning would satisfy you then I do not know how to answer you”. One cannot let the matter rest at that, for the ignorance of two put together



does not count for wisdom. The egoist's question may have no practical point (if no one knows how to answer it) but it is not unintelligible. It should puzzle all those who are sincerely concerned with finding reasons for living this or that kind of life.

Before I move on to say how I think it can be answered, I must consider one last attempt to deal with it. Kurt Baier (1958, 308-310) has discussed it. (see also: Taliaferro & Griffiths 2003, 489)

His answering strategy can be summed up as follows. The question "Why should we be moral?" is, for him, the same as the question "Are moral reasons superior to all others?" And, since it is necessarily true that a rational being will always prefer superior reasons to inferior ones, to establish the supremacy of moral reasons is *eo ipso* to provide the reason for being moral. Now, his first argument is simply that 'the very *raison d'être* of a morality is to yield reasons which overrule the reasons of self-interest in those cases when everyone's following self-interest would be harmful to everyone. Hence moral reasons are superior to all others'. To this it may be objected that from the fact, if it is a fact, that we do regard moral reasons as superior to those of self-interest, it does not follow that we ought so to regard them. Nor is it true that it is always in my interest to regard them so. Nor can one argue that there are moral reasons for treating moral reasons as superior to reasons of self-interest. But what other reasons are there? How does Kurt Baier deal with it? "the answer is", he writes, 'that we are now looking at the world from the point of view of anyone. We are examining two alternative worlds, one in which moral reasons are always treated by everyone as superior to reasons of self-interest and one in which the reverse is the practice. And we can see that the first world is the better world, because we can see that the second world would be the sort which Hobbes describes as the state of nature'. This shows why I ought to be moral. I have now a reason for being moral, namely that moral reasons are superior to reasons of self-interest. Let us examine this argument.

We are told that a world in which everyone regarded moral reasons as superior to the reasons of self-interest will be a better world. But what is meant by "a world in which everyone

regarded moral reasons as superior? Presumably it is a world in which everyone does what he does (acting, choosing, advising, commending, etc.) for moral reasons rather than considerations of self-interest. But surely, even if such a world will be a better one, it will be only contingently so. We can imagine a world very much similar to it in which everyone was led, in his deliberations, solely by social conventions or by what they believed to be the will of God rather than moral considerations. I am envisaging a world in which no one really looked at life from a moral point of view although an anthropologist from our world may classify many patterns of their behaviour as moral behaviour. It is quite possible that such a world may bear a similar contrast to the Hobbesian world as does Kurt Baier's moral world. And morality, I take it, is neither the will of God nor the will of society. Furthermore, it is simply not true, from everyone's point of view, that if everyone followed his own interest then everyone would be miserable. Let an immoral but prudent and powerful monarch rule and enjoy life in a society where everyone does follow his own interests and obeys the ruler either due to coercion or only in so far as he finds it in his own interest to do so. Quite clearly the moral world of Kurt Baier will have no appeal to the monarch. However, let us waive this difficulty. Let us grant him that his moral world is a better world than the Hobbesian world and there are no other possible worlds. How does it show that moral reasons are superior to reasons of self-interest, and in what sense are they so? What is the criterion of the superiority of moral reasons? Well, simply stated, it is the fact that everyone's acting on moral reasons produces a better world. But, it may be asked; why should one bother about producing a better world? If there is no reason why one should bother to produce a better world then there is no reason why one should act on those superior reasons which are declared superior, only because acting on them produces a better world. The truth, however, as that for Kurt Baier there is a reason why one should bother about producing the better world. It is that the better world is the one in which everyone's interest is served best; everyone including the egoist. So the egoist ought to act on superior moral reasons because everyone ought to act so. And everyone ought to act so because everyone's acting so

will serve everyone's interest best. But this surely is nothing but a prudential justification of morality in disguise.

Let us review the situation so far. We first considered the argument that Plato's question is illegitimate since it is unanswerable. And when we felt that in a sense it is answerable, we followed Griffiths who argued that in so far as it is answerable it need disturb no one, and in so far as it is unanswerable it is meaningless. To Kurt Baier the question was meaningful and answerable. But as we saw, his answer was only a prudential answer in disguise. No one would deny that "Why should I be moral?" is, from the point of view of prudence, answerable. When one argues that the question is illegitimate one does not believe that no one could, in actual fact, intend to pose it as a prudential question. What is meant is that the point of asking it could not be the same as asking "Does being moral pay". And if, in actual fact one did ask it as a prudential question, it would be, as Griffiths observed, answerable and undisturbing. The burden of my argument, however, has been to defend the legitimacy of the question, even though it will be pointless to attempt a prudential answer to it. Now it is obvious that morality cannot be justified in non-prudential terms either. There can be no transcendental justification of morality, i.e. our question cannot be answered with reference to anything outside the field of morality whether it be self-interest, the will of God, the will of the society, human nature or what you like. For one who can ask "Why should I be moral?" can equally well ask "Why should I obey the will of God?" or, for that matter, "Why should I pursue exclusively what seems to be in my own interest?" etc. If it is not clear why one should be moral, it is not clear why one should be flagrantly self-seeking or exclusively benevolent either. If morality is in need of justification all other basic and supposedly autonomous forms of life are so as well. But if this is so, how could there be a justification of morality at all? To give a justification is to give a reason why one should commit oneself to morality. And giving a reason seems to involve a reference to some or other relevant fact which would, from the nature of our question, always be outside the field of morality. But a long protracted discussion of "Why do that?" involving a regressive reference to valued facts must end in a

rationally binding principle. It would seem, then, that if there is a justification of moralities there must be a relevant fact such that it provides a reason for living a moral life, and whose value within the context of a wider way of life must itself be in no way questionable.

Now, think that there is such a fact, the fact that moral agents are rational beings, which is unquestionable in the relevant sense. That is to say that being rational is not questionable in a way in which being moral is and being rational provides a reason for being moral. No one can seriously entertain the question “Why should I be rational?” in a way in which one can ask “Why should I be moral?” In the case of the former, it is a necessary condition of answering it that it should be answered in the affirmative. We cannot question reason rationally and there is no other way of questioning.

Thus we would have given a justification of morality if it could be shown that being rational in some sense required morality. One could then reply to the sceptic by saying that you ought to be moral in so far as you ought to be rational. And, since there is no doubt that you ought to be rational, there is no doubt that you got to be moral. Our problem is then to show how being rational involves being moral. What sort of connection is there between reason and morality? (Gewirth A.:1984)

## **II. Morality and Rationality**

Kant (1948), who presumably first thought that morality must be connected with rationality, maintained that the basic criterion of morality, the Categorical Imperative as he called it, can be seen to be entailed by man’s rationality. (Stratton-Lake 2008, 28; Cahn, Kitcher & Sher 1984, 87)

In this he is rightly thought to have signally failed. The concept of rationality which he employed can be described as a thin one in that it appealed only to the limited sense of ‘self-consistency’. But the concept of a rational being, a being who not only has a capacity to make logical distinctions but actually accepts the principle of non-contradiction can be seen to involve more than simply the idea of a being who avoids inconsistencies. For to accept it is normally to use it in actual judgements and arguments, i.e. to avoid making self-contradictory statements

and fallacious deductions, etc. And a being who accepts the principle in this way has a reason for making the logical distinctions he does, namely not to let himself land into inconsistencies. It is not that he just happens to make the distinctions that he does, nor is he simply caused to do so. Thus the idea of a being who acts on reason is necessarily involved in the idea of a being who, in the relevant sense, accepts the principle of theoretical reason.

A rational being is necessarily reasonable. We need not seek, then, to connect morality with rationality only in its limited sense as Kant did. In the context of actions, where a being is freely deciding what to do, he is said to be rational or irrational in virtue of whether or not he has reasons for doing what he does. Very often it is irrational just to let things happen to oneself, things which one could control, without the censorship of reason, for that may be destructive to one's wider aims or purposes. Where one can have a reason, sometimes, though not always, it is irrational not to have it, for the consequences of such acts may conflict with the achievement of those aims for which one has reasons. It is thus a general necessary condition of a rational life that one should be aware of the nature of not only what he consciously chooses to do but also of what is happening to him. For what is happening to him may have the consequence of either impairing his ability to be rational or, by changing the conditions of his life, of compelling him to abandon his rational aims in future. But would acting on reasons irrespective of what kind of reasons one has, constitute a sufficient condition for the rationality of his acts? A person who enters a pub which is in flames to buy a pint of beer has a reason for acting in the way he does; but is he being rational in doing so? I take it that the answer here is no. In so far as he acts with a reason at all he is being rational as opposed to being non-rational, but not as opposed to being irrational. He is not being rational since he does not have a good reason for doing what he does. With another reason his action might have been assessed as quite rational, e.g. if he entered the pub in order to save the life of someone trapped in it, provided it was not impossible to do so. Thus there will be a gradient of the conscious doings of a rational being ranging from irrational to

the wholly rational, parallel to the range of reasons he could adopt as his reasons, ranging from very bad to the very best. But when we say that he had a bad reason we do not mean to refer to some feature of the reason itself. There is nothing intrinsically wrong in wanting a drink and entering a pub. He had a bad reason for entering this particular pub on this particular occasion. So there must be something about the situation in which he acts, and also something about himself and his relationship with the situation, which enable us to talk of his actions as rational or irrational. His reason must be somehow fitting, must be appropriate to his actions. But an assessment of this fittingness will depend upon the nature of the agent and the situation in which he acts. It will involve knowledge of both the nature of the agent and his situation.

This idea of the suitability between what is done and why it is done (in the sense of what it is done for) is usually put the other way round in saying that a rational person is one who chooses most appropriate means to an already determined end. Thus what one gives as a reason for doing something is ultimately the end one has settled with, and acting rationally is acting in a manner that achieves that end. In a particular situation if a rational being is trying to determine the most rational course of action, he would need to be aware of the total strategy of the situation in which he is to act. This will involve an awareness of his own abilities to manoeuvre the most appropriate means to an already determined end, an awareness of his own susceptibility to various destructively persuasive outside influences affecting his deliberations. He must also be prepared to abandon the end in view (the source of his reason for doing what he proposes to do) if he sees it as impossible to achieve, either due to the inadequacy of the means available or due to the limitations of his own ability to make use of what is available. Further he must also abandon the particular end in view if its pursuit would conflict and damage the fulfilment of his wider aims or purposes in life to which he attaches more importance. It is irrational to pursue the end in view without ascertaining how it would affect the realization of what is of more ultimate value to him. His rational deliberations, therefore, in particular situations presuppose his awareness of a scheme of fundamental values.

To be able to answer rationally “What shall I do now?” presupposes that he has already answered for himself “How shall I live?” But has he, and how has he? The question “What shall I do?” when it concerns the choice of a whole way of life is not easy to answer. I shall argue that answering it satisfactorily would require a kind of knowledge which is very rarely found in human possession. Let us consider then how he has come to attach so much value to those ultimate ends with reference to which he assesses the rationality of his particular ends and actions.

There are no items of his experience which account for his original choice of what he ultimately values. Nor do we think of people as pure agents in the sense that they are the sole authors of their personality, that their characters are the product of their freely chosen actions. The ultimate values are not even arbitrarily chosen for he does not seem to choose them at all. It seems that there can only be an explanation in terms of causes of his attachment with the scheme of values, which is, psychologically, the springboard for his actions and philosophically the limit of their rational justification. But may he not question the significance of this attachment? May he not doubt the true value of his identification with his scheme of the ultimates? For the course of human life is necessarily regulated by the scheme of the fundamental concepts man has settled for himself. Not only has this, but his whole experience of life itself distils through this conceptual framework. Among other things, what most affects his decisions and choices is his understanding of himself. Imagine, what a vast difference there will be between the doings and experience of a man who was convinced and really regarded life as nothing but a preparation for after life, and a man who knew (if such a thing is possible) that there was no after life, or an artist who cared neither way and put the satisfaction of his creative urges above everything. The way one pictures life shows something of how he pictures himself, for he necessarily pictures himself as related to it. And in accepting himself as he finds himself in the world, i.e. in accepting his “presented” self, he is already deeply committed to a sense of values in terms of which he rationally justifies his acts. But in acting, psychologically, from the position of his presented self,

he is acting from an evaluatively committed standpoint. How does he philosophically justify his standpoint, his identification with his sense of values, the basis of his rational choices? Are his ultimates truly ultimate? Can there be no other sense of value for him? Is he condemned to act from the point of view of the kind of person he is? Or can he be different, radically different in his awareness of himself, in his experience of life. And above all will it be worth it? Answering questions of this sort presents a rational obligation to anyone who seriously questions the values he already accepts as guiding concepts for his deliberations. A reflective being necessarily finds himself as an agent with a certain personality. He finds himself placed in a complex empirical situation with a number of courses of action, with their peculiar logic and consequences open to him. The agent finds himself, by his own nature, compelled to choose. He cannot simply withdraw himself, for the withdrawal itself will be an act of choice. Even if he just lets it all happen to him his awareness of it all would necessarily involve a silent nodding; an acceptance or rejection of what is. As long as he exists he must go on choosing.

The possibility of human living is the possibility of choosing. Man is, as it were, condemned to choose. But he is not condemned to choose from the point of view of the presented self. For it seems to be an important truth about him that in his self-consciousness he stands at a distance from his own self. It is important since such a being can accept or reject himself. He can either lend himself to the demands of his presented self—he may thus live a normal life of ambition, of love and hatred, of self-oriented customary virtues and vices; or he can in his constant awareness of himself, standing at a distance from it, spontaneously reject its demands.

Through a deeper understanding of the totality of his presented nature he may transform it or he may destroy it. The field in which he exercises his choices is the entire fabrication of life given to him through his presented self. In accepting himself as he finds himself, he is accepting the fabricated life as the real field of his actions. But in standing apart from it he has the possibility of rejecting this fabrication. A wholly rational action, then, presupposes the choice of the self and its consequent life.



The rational attitude embodied in the question “What is the best thing for me to do?” requires one first to find out if, and in what ways, it is possible for one to choose oneself. It requires one to discover what makes one think, feel and behave the way one does; how it comes about that he attaches so much worth to the pursuit of the ends determined by the desires which he happens to have, what are the sources of the emotions and the sentiments which colour his perception of the real, his emotional identity which hides from him the truth about his being. In short, it requires him to understand how the human soul is seduced by the conditions of empirical life, and lends itself to seek what appears to be worthwhile. This very saintly sounding discovery is nothing short of the pursuit of Truth- the truth about ourselves as self-conscious agents and the enjoyers and the sufferers of the produce of our deeds and destiny, the truth about what is ultimately real and significant. It may involve a number of different ways of knowing, such as mystical illumination, religious revelation, an intuitive insight which goes beyond discursive reason, yoga and scientific induction, etc., and the product of all this brought into a synthesis in one’s subjective consciousness. This is the kind of knowledge which earlier I suggested was among the necessary conditions of answering the question “What shall I do?”, when it concerns the choice of a whole way of life. If this approach is at all valid, if, that is, to a rational being it is not only meaningful but necessary to ask “How shall I live?”, and if an attempt to answer it for oneself necessarily involves him in an actual search for the whole truth, then, I think, it can be seen that acting rationally under the empirical conditions of life requires one to accept a certain conduct-guiding principle which I believe is basic to morality, namely the principle which Sidgwick (1909) calls the Principle of Rational Benevolence. Accepting this principle requires one to act in those ways which are the fruits of one’s impartial consideration of the interests of all concerned. Now, let us finally consider if rationality can be integrated with impartiality in the idea of morality.

### **III. Moral Rationality and Impartiality**

In a minimal sense the acceptance of the principle of impartiality can be seen to be implied by our mere preparedness to be rational in our arguments. An argument on these lines has been put forward by Peters (1963, 31-32) although he thinks that the acceptance of the principle in question is implied not only in a minimal sense but in a full sense. When a person, he says, “attempts seriously to decide between the demands of different authorities, then he must, as a rational critical individual accept certain normative standards or procedure”. He must respect truth at all costs. For if we are prepared to attend seriously to what another person has to say, whatever his personal or social attributes, we must have at least a minimal respect for him as the source of an argument. But Peters goes further and argues that when one is doing moral philosophy, where one is demanding reasons for rules, the only sorts of reasons that count “are those that refer to the effect of the rule on someone or other’s interest”. In such a context “it is surely illogical for a man who is seriously interested in giving reasons for rules to consider any particular person’s interests as being any more important than anyone else’s unless good reasons can be shown for making such a distinction”. But I am not quite convinced that this argument shows that a rational being ought to act impartially in contexts other than that of rational discussion of a problem. (Griffiths: 1957-58,116 ) The anatomy of Peters’ argument seems to be as follows. The moralist says to the egoist: “You are seriously interested in being shown good reasons for accepting moral rules. You realize that other people have their own interest as well, and your rejection of morality will adversely affect their interests. But since you are prepared to discuss what ought to be done, you don’t already have good reasons for adversely affecting their interests. Therefore you ought to bother about their interests”. But what is meant by “good reasons” here? When Peters says that the moral sceptic has no good reasons ‘to consider any particular person’s interests as being any more important than anyone else’s’ he is, surely, not implying that the egoist in fact has no reason for disregarding others, since one may reserve one’s reasons and discuss the issue impartially without any loss of seriousness. What Peters is implying is that the egoist has no morally justifiable reason. But

the egoist's question is precisely why he should regard morally justifiable reasons as good reasons. And if it is not a question of having morally justifiable reasons, then, he certainly has a good reason for making distinctions of the kind in question, namely that it serves him well to do so. Nevertheless, I think that Peters is essentially right in connecting the rational activity of demanding reasons for accepting rules with the acceptance of the principle of impartiality. When he says that 'the very idea of searching for truth takes for granted, a norm of impartiality' he is stating an important truth, provided it is realized that the search for truth is not complete before the whole truth is known. In our discussion of the necessary conditions for making a rational choice, we have already seen how a rational being faced with the question "How shall I live?" is committed to a search for the ultimate truth. But faced with this question he is also faced with a dilemma. On the one hand a rational being who does not yet know the true nature of his own self, who is ignorant of man's situation and his destiny, cannot truly decide upon any particular scheme of values as ultimate. Perhaps it is here that a true humility and a respect for other rational beings is born. However, I am not concerned with the psychological product of this Socratic wisdom. My contention is that in the context of a rational justification of our deeds, to accept one's ignorance is to stand away from the point of evaluation. How, then, can one accept the principle of the pursuit of one's own interests as ultimate? He cannot decide to be a thorough-going egoist. Nor has he any reason to accept that scheme of values which gives this or that individual's or group of individuals' interests top priority. He has no reason either to be completely selfish or to be completely benevolent. On the other hand (and this is the second horn of the dilemma) the immediate demands of life are too pressing. He cannot wait to achieve self-realization and total understanding to become a Mohammad or Christ before he acts. He has to act now and here. In what manner should such a rational being act in such a predicament? The only alternative seems to be a life of total neutrality. But a human being, as already noticed, necessarily finds himself as an agent. He is necessarily placed in the context of choice and action. A mere passive neutrality is incompatible with the

rational demands of his nature as an agent. It is impossible to exist in total passivity. Thus it seems to me that the dilemma can be resolved only by adopting, what may be called, an attitude of active neutrality arising out of a state of choiceless awareness. In the context of conduct, however, an active neutrality implies nothing but acting from the point of view of complete impartiality. The rational being must translate his attitude into acts. Since he has no overriding reason to act in one way or the other apart from the necessary attitude in question, which is the product of his rational consideration of his situation, it will clearly be less rational to act as though he attached more worth to the interests of one as opposed to the other for no ultimately justifiable reason. To choose rationally in ignorance, and in an awareness of one's ignorance, is to choose from the point of view of complete impartiality. And in so far as impartiality is characteristic of morality, to fulfil one's rational obligation is *eo ipso* to fulfil one's moral obligations as well.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

In conclusion, I would say that while the justification of morality implies to be rational, the justification of the principle of impartiality does not solve the problem of justifying particular moral principles since these cannot be obtained by a simple deduction from the former. In particular cases what counts as being impartial would remain to be settled by independent arguments. And sometimes it may be difficult to come to an agreement, since there may not be one single answer. However, as Wittgenstein maintained, if the concept were to have a purchase in language, in general there will have to be an agreement on its exercise in judgements as well. Furthermore, it cannot be claimed at all that the application of the principle of impartiality covers the entire field of morality. There may very well be moral matters which have nothing to do with being partial or impartial to anyone, and I have given no justification for observing morality in those cases. There may also be systems of rules as claimed as morality in which the principle of impartiality has no place at all.

**References:**

Baier K.: (1958) *The Moral Point of View: A Rational Basis of Ethics*, New York.

Baier K., (1995) *The rational and the moral order: the social roots of reason and morality*, Open Court Publishing Bittner R. & Talbot T., (1989) *What reason demands*, trans. Theodore Talbot, Cambridge University Press.

Cahn M., Kitcher P., & Sher G., (1984) *Reason at work*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Gert B., (2005) *Morality: its nature and justification*, Oxford University Press US.

Gert B., (1988) *Morality: a new justification of the Moral rules*, Oxford University Press.

Gewirth A.: (1984) *Reason and Morality*, Chicago

Griffiths A. P.: (1957-58) "Justifying Moral Principles", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, London

Kant I.: (1948) *The Moral Law*, tran. by H. J. Paton, London

McIntyre A.: (1968) *Short History of Ethics*, London.

Peters R.S. and Benn S.I.: (1963) *Social Principles and the Democratic State*, London.

Prichard H.A.: (1949) *Moral Obligation*, Oxford.

Prichard H. A.: (1968) *Duty and Interest*, Oxford.

Sidgwick H.: (1909) *The Methods of Ethics* London

Sinnott-Armstrong W., (2006) *Moral scepticisms*, Oxford University Press US.

Stratton-Lake P., (2000) *Kant, Duty, and Moral Worth*, Routledge.

Superson A. M., (2009) *The Moral Skeptic*, Oxford University Press US.

Tännsjö T., (1990) *Moral realism*, Rowman & Littlefield.

Taliaferro C. & Griffiths P. J., (2003) *Philosophy of religion: an anthology*, Wiley-Blackwell.

# **Freedom and Human Dignity<sup>1</sup>**

**Gholamhossein Ebrahimi Dinani**  
**University of Tehran**

As reflected in the sacred books, man is endowed with dignity, and dignity is considered to be one of his qualities. Scholars of ethics confess to this matter too and consider human dignity as one of man's attributes.

In divine Books, God has spoken with the man and the man has listened to God. On Who is qualified to listen to God is a dignified being as well. In man's speaking with God, some sort of harmony and interaction is required. Such a harmony takes place in two forms. In the first form one who speaks lowers himself and speaks at the level of existence of the listener. In the second form the speaker exalts the listener to the extent that he is capable of listening to the transcendental word.

There is no doubt that God Almighty, as the Creator of the world, has a relation and connection with all His creatures. But between man and God, in addition to the creator / created relation, there is another relation of speaker and listener, and this is what is considered to be the basis of human dignity. The relation of God of man is like that of the soul to the body. The same that the soul and body, although they are two different things, have some kind of unity and coexistence, the man, though being a creature of God and hence other than Him, has always been a manifestation of God and has fully demonstrated God's attributes. The reason man demonstrates God's attributes is that God has spoken with him, and since God has spoken with him, he is capable of speaking with others.

Man not only speaks when he is awake, but also speaks while he is asleep or in silence. Man's speaking does not stem from any special effort. Rather, human being is human being

FALSAFEH Vol. 37, No. 1, Spring 2009, pp. 111-113

---

1 - Paper presented by Gholamhossein Ebrahimi Dinani at the Sixth Colloquium of Abrahamic Religions, Oslo, June 16-18, 2008.

because he speaks, and since he speaks he is a human being. Nevertheless, Since man speaks, he is also capable of listening. Again, since he is capable of listening, God has spoken to him. Human dignity arises from this very characteristic.

Iranian mystical poet, Jalal al – Din Balkhi, has said :

«آدمی فربه شود از راه گوش» meaning that the man will gain weight through the ear. What this insightful mystic means is that growth of man's being and the exaltation of his very existence is due to this fact that he is capable of listening, and it is through this listening that new realms of spirituality open up to him. By this we do not mean that seeing through eyes and other sensual perception are not important, But it means that by hearing, the man can enter worlds that are otherwise unattainable to him.

Only those who listen properly, also speak properly, and one who does not have a hearing ear is not capable of proper speaking. From this we can discern that ear is the origin of the tongue, and the tongue is the most important tool of communicating one's understanding and culture to others, thus creating mutual bonds.

New liberalism is based on individual rights, but the very principles and foundations of this right is not much discussed. Wherever there is a right, there is also an obligation and responsibility with it. Nevertheless, wherever there is an obligation, there should be a corresponding right too. But, in the whole world, there is no responsibility greater than being a human being, and how wonderful it will be that this responsibility be fully recognized.

According to the holy Quran, the responsibility of man lies in his eternal attestation. This eternal attestation took place when, at the dawn of creation, God told his servant creatures : "Am I not your Lord ?" and they all replied : "Yes, you are". This eternal attestation is the beginning of man's responsibility, which also embodies his dignity and rights. Man's eternal rights exists in God's knowledge, which we can be discovered through intellect and revelation.

Some hold that since God has spoken to man we do not need the intellect any more. These people don't pay attention to the fact that God's word is the manifestation of intellect, and also it is not possible to understand God's word without intellect.



Generally speaking, it may be claimed that when God speaks with man, He is addressing him as an intellectual being, and the man listens to God because of his intellectuality. Nevertheless, When the man heard God's words he may accept it and submit to God's commandments, or he may not accept it and lead the way of disobedience and sin.

This freedom of choice is also one of the implications of human intellect. Freedom is always accompanied with intellect and reason. Without intellect and reflection, freedom has no sensible meaning. It is in the shadow of this freedom that human dignity becomes meaningful.

Apart from all which is said on this matter, it is fully evident amongst followers of divine religions that God has revealed Himself to us through words, and if we believe in God's revelation through word, we have to hold a high position for dialogue and verbal communication. Because, it is only through dialogue that truths are discovered and ignorances put aside.

In religious literature it is said that at the beginning it was the word, and the word was God. In the holy Quran it is said that God Almighty talked to Moses and so Moses is called "كليم الله" (One whom God has spoken to). Also, in the holy Quran, Jesus is described as the word of God. In Shi'ite tradition we read that Shi'ite Imams call themselves to be the perfect words of God. In the light of all these, we may conclude that human being, because of his quality of speaking and being spoken to by God, has an intrinsic dignity.

## **Book Review**

George E. Karamanolis, *Plato and Aristotle in Agreement? Platonists on Aristotle from Antiochus to Porphyry*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006. Pp. x, 419. ISBN 0-19-926456-2. \$90.00.

Karamanolis (hereafter K.)'s book, which grew out of his 2001 Oxford D. Phil. thesis, is a work of some scope and ambition. It endeavors to tell the story of the reception of Aristotle among Platonists over more than four centuries, from Antiochus (c. 130-68 BC) to Porphyry (c. 234-305 AD). K. approaches this story through two broad questions: how could committed Platonists accept Aristotle as an authority, and what did studying Aristotle offer such Platonists? (5) K.'s general answer to the latter question is that Aristotle offered "a recapitulation of the doctrines of Plato harmonious with their own thinking" and that consequently Aristotle became for them "an instrument in the reconstruction of Plato's alleged philosophical system" (23). While this general answer also contains an implicit pragmatic answer to the other question concerning the justification of Aristotle's authority for Platonists (viz. that the latter felt they needed Aristotle in order to interpret Plato's philosophy), K.'s later treatment makes clear that no blanket answer to both of these questions can be offered which will adequately represent the viewpoint of each of the Platonists under consideration. While there are certainly trends to be found within Platonism concerning these matters, one must generally accept to work piecemeal: the real answers to K's initial interrogations must consequently be sought in the extended treatments given to individual philosophers.

In each case, K. endeavors to characterize precisely the nature of that thinker's viewpoint towards Aristotle and (in cases where these Platonists do rely on Aristotle in interpreting Plato) to point us towards the Aristotelian material which either plausibly has (on the reliable grounds of linguistic parallels) or could have (on the more hazardous basis of conceptual parallels) inspired the Platonists in question. The bulk of the book thus features chapters on Antiochus (44-84), Plutarch (85-126), Numenius (127-149), Atticus (150-190), Ammonius (191-215), Plotinus (216-242) and Porphyry

(243-330). Each of these chapters is usually sub-divided into the various parts of philosophy in which the philosopher's position can be usefully related to the Aristotelian material. K. concludes his monograph with two appendices (one which briefly sketches the converse question of the Platonism of Aristotle and the Early Peripatos (331-336) and a list of Platonist works, most of which have not survived, dealing explicitly with Aristotelian philosophy (337-339)), a bibliography (340-361), a general index (363-377) and an index locorum (379-419). I shall first assess the virtues and vices of K.'s treatment of the individual figures before coming back to discuss the general argument.

The chapter on Antiochus takes as its point of departure a synthetic account of the debate which opposed him to Philo of Larissa concerning the possibility of apprehension (κατὰληψις, a Stoic borrowing), an account which is then broadened into the consideration of Antiochus' thesis to the effect that Platonism, Aristotelianism and Stoicism, properly understood, were the expression of a single doctrine. In this vein, K. rightly emphasizes Antiochus' belief that agreement on ethical matters betrays agreement in terms of general philosophical outlook (59), a way of relating to the tradition which will be influential in later Platonism. After an interesting argument against attributing to Antiochus the notion that Forms exist as thoughts in some divine mind (62 ff.), K. spends some time considering the harmony thesis insofar as it relates to Antiochus' ideas about epistemology and ethics. The presentation of Antiochus' stoicizing epistemology is lucid, but not enough time is spent comparing it to the Aristotelian position, a task required by the book's main argument. Of special interest in the ethics section is K.'s leveraging of the Aristotelian distinction between the 'fortunate' (εὐδαίμων) and the 'blessed' (μακάριος) life in order to illuminate Antiochus' view on the relationship between Stoic and Aristotelian ethics and Plato's (74-75), as well as Antiochus' defense of μετριοπικθεια as a position shared by both Plato and Aristotle (against Stoic πικθεια) in spite of views about the nature of emotions that are closer to that of Stoicism (79 ff.).

K. presents us a Plutarch who is also sympathetic to much of Aristotle, but for radically different reasons than Antiochus: the latter viewed both Plato and his student as dogmatists, while Plutarch (surely no skeptic) rather valued the aporetic spirit which can be found operating in both Platonic dialogues and Aristotelian treatises. K. rightly argues that we cannot infer Plutarch's lack of

knowledge of Aristotelian material from his lack of inclination to quote directly from that material (90) and gives us good evidence that Plutarch must have been quite familiar with that material. While Plutarch surely criticizes Aristotle, certain particularities of these criticisms lead K. to conclude that Plutarch criticizes the Stagirite to construct rather than to destroy. K. suggests that some of the latter's problematic opinions (insofar as Plutarch is concerned) might stem from a mistaken understanding of Plato rather than out of a polemical spirit-- this could be the source, for instance, of the apparent denial of some strong providence Plutarch takes to follow from the self-centered activity of the Aristotelian intellect.

In this context, I find it strange that K. can suggest that Aristotle's view (as understood by Plutarch) "may be formed on the basis of a particular understanding of Plato's God, such as that God is not in any kind of contact with the sensible realm" (107) without mentioning the first part of Plato's *Parmenides* (esp. 134c-e), where such a 'particular understanding' might be grounded without much difficulty. A more glaring omission is that within a discussion of Plutarch's psychology K. serially presents Plutarch's criticism of Aristotle on the question of the separability of the soul, Plutarch's agreement with Aristotle that there is no intellect without soul and Plutarch's agreement with Aristotle about the 'role and status' of the intellect without raising the issue of the separability of the intellect as it arises in the Aristotelian corpus. (113-115) K.'s critique of Düring's thesis that *De virt. mor.* 442b-c delimits two phases (one Platonic, one "Aristotelian") in Aristotle's moral psychology according to Plutarch is spot on (117-118).

The discussion on ethics in this chapter is very rich. K. argues that Plutarch's ethics suggests and presupposes distinctions between different kinds or levels of virtue (122-123), distinctions which will become increasingly popular in later Platonism. In another omission in terms of background, K. discusses Plutarch's thesis that Plato and Aristotle share the idea that there can be no courage without fear (118-119) without mentioning Nicias' comment in the *Laches* (197a-c) where this idea most obviously originates. The Aristotelian view according to which the temperate man (ἡμερότατος) is less virtuous than the φρόνιμος does not seem to me straightforwardly "entailed by the doctrine of the unity of virtues, which we do find in Plato" (121) -- it may be, but this needs clarification and argument which unfortunately K. does not

provide. The topics of natural philosophy and logic are also briefly considered. For some reason, this section is disproportionately affected by typographical errors ('Eythyphro' (88 n. 13), unnecessary comma: "accepts that these are, Plato's transcendent Forms" (99), 'Philipp of Opus' (104 n. 54)) in a book which is otherwise very good on that front.

The chapter on Numenius is appropriately short, given the scantiness of the evidence.<sup>1</sup> This basic fact drives K. to much speculation: we are treated to a "reconstruction" of a Numenian critique of Aristotle (142 ff.) which is itself based on an earlier "reconstruction" of a Numenian metaphysics. (136 ff.) While the picture provided by the latter reconstruction is plausible enough and the critique itself plausible in light of the first "reconstruction", such a degree of speculativeness, especially in the case of the critique, will not be to everyone's tastes. Nevertheless, K.'s basic angle on the Numenius-Aristotle relationship is obviously right: Numenius understands Plato as some sort of Pythagorean and consequently finds Aristotle's philosophy hard to reconcile with that of his teacher (129). "Consequently", that is, for Numenius and for moderns; as K. lucidly argues in a separate section on the compatibility of Aristotelianism and Pythagoreanism, Pythagoreans would not have universally drawn this inference (135). The section on psychology is likewise very speculative, and assumes too much. For instance, K's version of the Numenian critique of Aristotle rests on the claim that "in the *De Anima* [Aristotle] does consider the intellect *to be only a faculty of the soul* and not its essence, as Numenius holds" (147, my emphasis). This reading of the *De Anima* is far from obvious, and that Numenius would have adopted it even less so.

The chapter on Atticus brings us back on firmer textual ground. This polemical figure, as K. rightly points out, took upon himself to radicalize Numenius' critical stance against Aristotle so as to systematically argue against using Aristotle in reconstructing Platonic philosophy. Naturally there follows, in ten very dense pages (179-189), an extended argument for taking two lesser known Platonist philosophers (Taurus and Severus) as possible targets of Atticus' criticism. Significantly, Atticus combats attempts to harmonize the Platonic doctrine of the immortality of the soul with the Aristotelian doctrine of the immortal intellect (167) and thinks that this incompatibility is the symptom of a fundamental difference in philosophical outlook. This difference significantly

manifests itself in ethical matters, which for Atticus rest on the knowledge of the Form of the Good (163 ff.), as well as concerning the question of divine providence (165). On the latter topic, K. curiously neglects to refer us to his own earlier treatment of the Plutarchan view of this difference (107), which obviously invites comparison. K.'s analysis of Atticus' particular understanding of immanent forms as  $\delta\upsilon\nu\mu\epsilon\iota\varsigma$  of the transcendent (171 ff.) is important, if only for the posterity of this idea in the metaphysics and psychology of Plotinus and Porphyry. Likewise, the very rich section on Taurus' discrimination between diverse senses of  $\gamma\epsilon\nu\eta\tau\epsilon\varsigma$  (181 ff.) will be of special interest to those studying the long history of the debate within Platonism concerning whether Plato's account of the creation of the world in the *Timaeus* contradicted its eternity.

K.'s treatment of Ammonius begins with a thorough assessment of the evidence that he explicitly maintained the position that Platonism and Aristotelianism agree as far as their essential doctrines are concerned. K. concludes that there is no compelling reason to reject this evidence, even if Hierocles (our main source on this matter) has obtained some or all of his material second-hand from Porphyry (195, n. 9 in particular). This position led Ammonius to criticize both Platonists and Aristotelians who postulated disharmony between the founders of their respective schools. In this regard, K. unsurprisingly singles out Numenius and Atticus on the side of the Platonists and Alexander and Eudorus on the side of the Peripatetics as Ammonius' possible targets (197-99). Ammonius' position was doubtless, as K. points out, the result of his inclination to focus on the "spirit" ( $\nu\omicron\mu\epsilon\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ ) rather than on the "letter" ( $\lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\varsigma$ ) of the texts in question, a practice which Porphyry will later, with some reason, ascribe to his teacher Plotinus. (201)

K. enters more troubled waters when he derives from Ammonius' alleged 'purification' of the Ancients a higher philosophical independence from his tradition than that of earlier Platonists. Ammonius was, of course, a rather independent thinker, but then one may feel the same way about these 'earlier Platonist' (ironically, especially in light of what K. has written so far about them). Moreover, Ammonius' 'purifying' might simply or primarily involve the refutation of mistaken interpretations of Plato and Aristotle. At any rate, to derive from this independence that Ammonius has a "weak commitment to Plato" (206) is off the mark: Ammonius' stance is more likely the result of a strong

commitment to what Ammonius considered essential in the common philosophy which he understood both Plato and Aristotle as sharing, a position which need not entail any 'weak commitment' towards either.

The chapter ends with a short discussion of Ammonius' possible stance towards the exegesis of the *Timaeus* (212-14), possible insofar as all of it is admittedly derived from Hierocles' own position (213). K. successfully argues that Ammonius' position is compatible with that of Hierocles, but, as the class of propositions which could be 'compatible' with the position of an author is at least as large as our ignorance about that position, this might not tell us much about what Ammonius actually thought.

The chapter on Plotinus is, by all standards, pretty slim. This is less of a criticism than it might seem at first glance: the fact of the matter is that Plotinus' engagement with Aristotle is both pervasive and (as K. recognizes (217)) a very complex affair. It is complex enough that, by my lights, it cannot be adequately and globally assessed within a single chapter of a book which also deals with six other thinkers. Given these constraints, K. nonetheless provides compelling sketches that focus on passages where Plotinus seems to explicitly address basic Aristotelian doctrines about psychology, ethics, metaphysics and "physics" (i.e., about the nature of time). What is mostly lost, therefore, is a study of the extensive use of Aristotelian vocabulary by Plotinus, and of the related dependence of significant parts of his system on Aristotelian conceptuality.

I have reservations about K.'s treatment of Plotinus' critique of Aristotelian psychology, which rides on the simple contrast between the Platonist transcendent soul (defended by Plotinus) and the Aristotelian immanent soul. This is not the place to argue this out at length, but there are several pointers to the effect that what Plotinus rejects in both IV.1 and IV.7 is a particular understanding of the notion of  $\nu\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\chi\epsilon\alpha$  and Plotinus' highlighting in the latter treatise of the Peripatetics' continued reliance on "another soul or intelligence" which is transcendent suggests that Plotinus could have read Aristotle in a more favourable light than is presented by K.<sup>2</sup>

I'm even more puzzled by K.'s account of the divergence in matters of ethics: I see no grounds whatsoever for the "sharp distinction" (230) he sees Plotinus making between  $\epsilon\zeta\omega\alpha$  and  $\epsilon\delta\alpha\iota\mu\omicron\nu\alpha$ <sup>3</sup>, and when he states that Plotinus argues that the latter is not a state subject to improvement (230, 232- which is not

surprising, given that it is not a state at all) this is surely not, as K. claims (232), to the exclusion of a hierarchy of virtues.<sup>4</sup> K.'s suggestion that Plotinus fails to acknowledge Aristotle's "belief (...) that man's real self consists in reason" (231, referring to book X of the *Nicomachean Ethics*) is baffling when a significant portion of what Plotinus has to say about human nature (and consequently ethics) is predicated on this very idea, common to both Platonism and Aristotelianism.<sup>5</sup> K. provides no evidence (and as far as I know there is none) for his claim that Plotinus holds the belief "that Aristotle's accounts of happiness in *Nicomachean Ethics* 1 and 10 are contradictory" (232). Lastly, on metaphysical matters, when K. argues that Plotinus, on account of his doctrine of the One, "overtly rejects Aristotle's doctrine according to which the first entity by nature of which all else depends is an intellect, the unmoved mover" (236-7), I should like to point out a) that for Plotinus to subordinate the Aristotelian Intellect to the One is hardly to "overtly reject" it and b) that the Intellect *is* the first entity for Plotinus, as the One is not at all an 'entity', but is beyond being.<sup>6</sup> All in all, I have found that K.'s treatment significantly understates both the complexity of Plotinus' system and that of its relationship to the Aristotelian material, and this especially in ethical matters.<sup>7</sup> The chapter on Porphyry, which concludes the book, brings us back into safer waters. It is the longest of the volume and covers more areas (and those areas in more detail) than earlier. K. presents a compelling argument for maintaining the separate existence of two Porphyrian treatises on the question of the relationship of Plato's philosophy to that of Aristotle (Περὶ τοῦ μὲν ἐπινοήσαντος Πλάτωνος καὶ Ἀριστοτέλους ἀρεσῶν and Περὶ διαστοσεως Πλάτωνος καὶ Ἀριστοτέλους) as well as against presuming that the positions of the latter treatise contradicted those of the earlier (245-57). K.'s general view is that Porphyry "sought to show their [viz. Plato and Aristotle's] essential agreement, despite Aristotle's occasional mistakes" (329). In this light, he brings forward an interesting passage from Porphyry's *Commentary on the Harmonics of Ptolemy* [45.21-49.4 Düring] which demonstrates well how Porphyry could consider the positions of Plato and Aristotle to be divergent yet complementary (257-66). K.'s surprisingly strong and sweeping condemnation of Porphyry's harmonizing exegesis (267), even if it turned out to be ultimately warranted, surely does not belong right after the consideration of a single instance of its application. K.'s account of the relationship



between the positions of Porphyry and Aristotle in matters of physics and metaphysics is rich and enlightening, as is the chapter on ethics outside of the problematic contrasts made between Porphyry's position (which in the main I find accurately portrayed) and Plotinus' (which, it should be clear by now, I do not). In matters of psychology, K's evidence (289-291; 295) does not warrant the claim that Porphyry radicalizes the distinction between transcendent and immanent soul (288) or that he is "more committed than Plotinus" to the definition of the soul as  $\square\nu\tau\epsilon\lambda\chi\epsilon\iota\alpha$  of the body: nothing, as far as I know, indicates that Porphyry's position on this account differs significantly from that of Plotinus.

I would like to conclude with a general assessment of the kind of enterprise K. engages in, and of the place of K's book in it. The question of the Platonists' attitude to Aristotelianism, as everyone even remotely familiar with the topic knows, is fraught with peril. Most of the evidence is either fragmentary or allusive (when it is not both at once) and all of the evidence which has received some scholarly consideration is controversial. This should come as no surprise, considering the nature of the endeavor: how you position yourself about the relationship, say, of Plotinus (*qua* Platonist) to 'Aristotelianism' minimally depends on what you think Platonism is, what you think Aristotelianism is, what you think Plotinism is and (because Plotinus also relies on and/or criticizes the Peripatetic tradition) what you think about Peripateticism, especially insofar as it relates to Aristotle's original philosophy. It would be difficult to overstate the potential for errors and disagreements this situation creates. Perhaps the greatest virtue of K's treatment of these issues is his keen understanding of the fact that as we disagree today about what any of those school classifications means, so did our ancient counterparts, such that being a Platonist, for instance, meant different things for different Platonists.<sup>8</sup> This might generate conclusions which are too indefinite for the tastes of some; however, given the difficulty of avoiding arbitrariness and/or circularity in determining ourselves what constitutes a 'real Platonist' and a 'real Aristotelian', I can only applaud K.'s desire to reveal these traditions for the complex and continuously evolving spiritual communities they in fact were. K.'s exposition is fluid and unpedantic, and at its best gives us a tangible sense of the intensity and richness of the debates in which these thinkers were engaged. Even though it is not systematically enforced, I applaud his

decision to usually include both the full Greek text and the translations (which I understand are mostly K.'s, and are very good) of each passage at issue, making it all the more useful to both specialists and the general public. I finish by hoping that Oxford University Press will decide to release a reasonably priced paperback edition, as the breadth of interests displayed in the volume makes it an ideal candidate for use alongside, say, Dillon's *The Middle Platonists* in any course which might focus on this period in the history of Platonism, or Gerson's *Aristotle and Other Platonists* in any course which might deal with the relationship of Platonism to Aristotelianism.

**Julien Villeneuve**

*McGill University*

**Notes:**

1. Some will perhaps find the chapter not short enough, on the understanding that Numenius is a platonizing Pythagorean rather than a pythagoreanizing Platonist, a debate in which I have no inclination to partake. I suspect that K. thinks it does not matter that much, and he might be right, although I would have liked to hear more about his position on this issue. At any rate, Numenius' undeniable influence on later Platonism warrants, as far as *this* reader is concerned, his inclusion in a book on the history of Platonism.

2. Thus in IV.1 Plotinus maintains that the concept of  $\square\nu\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\chi\epsilon\square\alpha$  is unclear and not true "in the sense in which it is stated" [ $\square\varsigma$   $\lambda\square\gamma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ , IV.1.1.4], and in IV.7 Plotinus' investigation of the way in which the term "could be applied to the soul" [ $\pi\square\varsigma$   $\pi\epsilon\rho\square$   $\psi\upsilon\chi\square\varsigma$   $\lambda\square\gamma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ , IV.7.8(5).2] yields, as far as I'm concerned, the following conclusions: a) the term  $\square\nu\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\chi\epsilon\square\alpha$  itself is unclear (as in IV.1) and b) a *specific* understanding of this term, viz. as "inseparable entelechy" [ $\square\chi\square\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$   $\square\nu\tau\epsilon\lambda\square\chi\epsilon\iota\alpha$ , IV.7.8(5).26, 28, 33] must be rejected.

3. Indeed, a latter passage of the same treatise (I.4.14.5-6) equates them. Later developments (such as in I.1) seem to further integrate the Aristotelian conception into Plotinus' philosophical anthropology. K. sees this (229), but the general stance he has been establishing previously prohibits him from drawing this conclusion. On this aspect of Plotinus, cf. Gwenaëlle Aubry, *Traité* 53, Paris, Cerf, 2004, pp. 137-148. On a related note, K. mentions (227 n. 31)

the Platonic origin of συναμφοτερον to denote the composite of soul and body which forms the ζων but fails to point out the Aristotelian origin of σινθετον, a term which Plotinus is just as fond of using. (Indeed, 288 n. 149 suggests K.'s lack of awareness of this use.) There is some risk of confusion when K. writes that "Plotinus believes that immanent Forms are qualities", clearly meaning to state that Plotinus believes that *Aristotle's* immanent Forms are qualities. Now I think it rather unlikely that Plotinus (or anyone besides perhaps Alexander) could have believed *that*, and K.'s suggestion that Plotinus "presumably had (Alexander) in mind when criticizing Aristotle" (218) seems more aligned with the evidence and revealing of the actual target of Plotinus' criticisms.

4. On this topic cf. Brisson, L. (Chase, M., trans.), "The doctrine of the degrees of virtues in the Neoplatonists: An analysis of Porphyry's Sentence 32, its antecedents, and its heritage" in Tarrant, H and Baltzly, D. (eds.), *Reading Plato in Antiquity* (London, Duckworth, 2006), p. 92 ff. and, in more detail, Baltzly's own contribution to the same volume (pp. 169-184).

5. For instance, Plotinus clearly states in I.4 that "it is obvious from what has been said that man has perfect life by having not only sense-perception but reasoning and true intelligence [λογισμὸν καὶ νοῦν ἀληθινόν]".

6..E.g. "It [viz., the One] is not therefore Intellect, but before Intellect. For Intellect is one of the beings, but that is not anything, but before each and every thing, and is not being" (VI.9.3.36-38).

7. Some of the considerations which prohibit me from subscribing to K.'s understanding of these matters, especially insofar as the exegesis of the beginning of I.4 is concerned, are sketched in Villeneuve, J., *Bonheur et vie chez Plotin, Ennéade I.4.1-4*, forthcoming in *Dionysius* 2006.

8. Lloyd Gerson usefully compares this state of affairs to the case of religious affiliation (he uses Christianity, but others groups would do just as well) in his *Aristotle and Other Platonists* (Ithaca, Cornell UP, 2005), p. 25 ff.

## **Book Review**

Weinert Friedel, *Copernicus, Darwin and Freud: Revolutions in the History and Philosophy of Science*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2009

Debates concerning the import of scientific revolutions are an integral part of education in the philosophy of science. Often the main focus is on metaphysical and epistemic questions concerning the justification of scientific knowledge, (e.g., Popper, 1935; Kuhn, 1962; Bunge, 1964; Lakatos, 1970; Feyerabend, 1975; Salmon, 1989). By contrast, little or no attention is paid to the human being 'behind' the scientific revolutions or to the historic context in which the revolutions occurred. Thankfully, in this volume Friedel Weinert demonstrates not only the close connection between the advancement of scientific knowledge and philosophical ideas but introduces also some of the historic, social and human components of scientific revolutions. The volume consists of three chapters, each dedicated to one revolution in thought and its philosophical consequences, complemented by an extensive reading list and essay questions.

Chapter I (Nicolaus Copernicus: The Loss of Centrality, 90 pages) provides an overview of the significance of Copernicus' contribution to a radically new world-view. While Weinert appreciates the role of Copernicus in the shift from geo- to heliocentrism he also introduces many of the other scientists (most notably Galileo, Brahe, Kepler, Newton) who contributed to the advancement of our understanding of the cosmos. Further, he provides a detailed discussion of the philosophical consequences of this scientific revolution. This discussion supports one of Weinert's central theses of the book that "philosophical issues are inseparable from more scientific and historic concerns" (p. 16). This becomes evident especially in the discussion of presuppositions that restrict the kinds of hypotheses we are willing to consider. "A scientific revolution requires a change in perspective" (p. 21) and Copernicus provided the foundation for such a shift even though the work of others was required to complete the revolution. According to Weinert a scientific revolution is a multi-stage process that includes (1) a shift in perspective, (2) new problem-solving methods, (3) emergence of a new scientific tradition based on the

new methods and (4) convergence of expert opinion on the new tradition (p. 83). Each of these stages is discussed in the chapter.

Chapter II (Charles Darwin: The Loss of rational Design, 91 pages) introduces Darwin's most important contribution to the modern world-view, placing "all organic life, including human, under the cosh of evolutionary thinking" (p. 93). This replaced the dominant views of either (divine) design or a complete 'Great Chain of being'. Human beings had a privileged place in both views and Darwin's theory of evolution scientifically questioned this privilege. It showed how design arguments (e.g., Boyle, Paley, Maupertuis) could be overcome and substantially improved the evolutionary arguments from Lamarck. Weinert shows that Darwin was not committed to the 'survival of the fittest' dogma or the idea that evolution results in a "necessary progress towards higher forms of life" (p. 114). In addition Weinert discusses in some detail debates regarding adaptationism, heritability, and the limitations of a purely mechanistic worldview that could be inferred from the Darwinian revolution. The philosophical issues highlighted in this chapter include determinism, empiricism, emergentism, realism and issues of theory falsifiability and testability. Like in the previous chapter it becomes evident that while the name 'Darwinism' seems to implicate just one man in the scientific revolution it took the contribution of numerous other scientists (e.g., Wallace, Huxley, Agassiz, Mendel, Haeckel) to complete what we currently call Darwin's theory of evolution.

Chapter III (Sigmund Freud: The Loss of Transparency, 85 pages) deals with the work of Freud "who had a significant influence on language and thought" (p. 185). While the fact that Copernicus and Darwin made substantial contributions to science is uncontroversial the inclusion of Freud into the ranks of scientific revolutionaries may come as a surprise to many. In fact, based on the theorizing of Popper (1972) Freud's work is often presented to students as a paradigm example of pseudoscience because his theories are not falsifiable. Weinert defends the inclusion of Freud by stressing that Freudianism provides an interesting case study for the examination of the scientific status of a theory and the epistemological status of the social sciences. Because Freudianism has commitments to both its analysis helps to highlight "similarities and dissimilarities between the natural and the social sciences" (p. 187). Regarding human nature Freud rejected the commitments of the enlightenment (that man is essentially a rational animal and should

use reason to control his emotions and drives) and stressed the importance of the subconscious and the pleasure drives. Freud developed psychoanalysis (a method based on free association), which "aims at uncovering hitherto unarticulated material from the realm of the psyche" (p. 192) and linked many neurotic symptoms to suppressed sexual desires. Weinert shows that while Freud attempted to provide a scientific foundation for psychoanalytic theory he was unable to free his theory from hermeneutic models. This has important consequences for the coherence and testability of his theory. Weinert makes good on his promise to use Freudianism "as a launching pad for a philosophical consideration of the social sciences" (p. 187) and dedicates 60 of the 85 pages of the chapter to 'the social sciences beyond Freud'. Here he discusses issues ranging from the two standard models of the social sciences (the naturalistic and the hermeneutic model) to questions of methodology, the status of causation in social sciences, sociobiology and evolutionary psychology. The chapter concludes with a comparison of revolutions in science (Copernicus and Darwin) and revolutions in thought (Freud).

Weinert has provided an informative textbook that is written in a very accessible style. His examples invite the student to apply the philosophical concepts that are discussed. Since some knowledge of philosophical reasoning is presupposed this may not be the best choice for an introductory course and the choice of examples is certainly a matter of personal preference (I would have excluded Freud from the volume and focused more on the historic background of Copernicanism and Darwinism). Still, overall this should be a good supplement for advanced courses in philosophy of science.

Christopher T. Knight  
*Rogers College, US*

**Bibliography**

- Bunge, M. (Ed). (1964). *The Critical Approach to Science and Philosophy*. London: The Free Press.
- Feyerabend, P. (1975). *Against Method*. London: New Left Books.
- Hempel, C. (1942). The Function of General Laws in History. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 39.
- Kuhn, T. (1962). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lakatos, I. (1970). Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes. In: Lakatos, I. & Musgrove, A. (Eds). *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Popper, K. (1935). *Logik der Forschung*. Wien: Julius Springer Verlag.
- Salmon, W. (1989). *Four Decades of Scientific Explanation*. Regents of the University of Minnesota.