

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

دکتر صلاح الصاوی

از گروه آموزشی ادبیات عربی

عرض و تحلیل یک گفتار

آنچه که در زیر آمده خلاصه‌ای است از مقاله‌ای که اصل آن در این مجله به عربی چاپ شده است. مقاله مزبور، در هشتمین کنگره شناسائی تفکر اسلامی، که در الجزایر منعقد گردید، خوانده شد و عنوان آن چنین است:

«سهم متفکر در جهان امروز و مسؤولیت وی در قبال ملت خود و سایر ملل در مورد مسائل کنونی و آینده بشر.»

Presentation and analysis of a Paper,

by

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In the introduction of this paper, the writer has emphasized the significance and value of spiritual perfection and moral rectification. Expressing his intellectual standpoint in concrete terms and trying to base his views on solid and tangible grounds, he has come to the bitter, but real conclusion that modern man has deviated from his divine nature and has betrayed his ontological value as

man, as the vicegerent of God on earth. He has tried to analyze the reasons of this calamitous denaturing of man: «The problem of man today, as from the very dawn of his terrestrial existence, is closely related to the Problem of his soul. Man, in all times and at all places, has endeavored to cut himself off from his divine origin. He has been enticed to make himself existentially independent of his source, or in other words, he has assumed the ontological status of God, as if the mortal creature could have eternal life here and now. Hence he has reversed the relation existing between him and God, and has audaciously turned the scale of values in his own favor. He has gone to such extremes that it is as if the earth has become the race-course of evil forces».

Notwithstanding the fact that modern science has unleashed the mysterious forces of the Universe and that, it is expected to awaken man from the slumber of his ignorance to eternal truth, but alas man has turned his face away from the absolute beauty and has appropriated to himself the attribute of omnipotence, which in the true sense, belongs to God alone: "It is no wonder then that science has unveiled its aspect of omnipotence to man and has made him confronted with the worst and most dangerous plights. Man is, on the one hand threatened by danger, from within his own soul, which makes him servile and spiritually suffocated. He is on the other hand menaced from the outside by nature, which is prostituted and desacralized by him. There is nothing to rectify and restrain the soul, but the intellect, which takes man back to the road of truth, justice and wisdom when the veil existing between the relative power of man and the absolute Power of God is removed. Only then

will man be obliged to surrender in constraint and servility, where he could surrender himself to God, out of love, goodness, beauty and free choice."

After this brief introduction the writer divides the subject of discussion into four sections

In the first section he deals with the role of a true "intellectual" in our age and observes that: "most of the thinkers in our age have turned out to be like chronic diseases in the body of their respective communities, who have unwittingly caused unforeseen illnesses, thereby contaminating and endangering the spiritual existence of man. They have made their communities so weak and helpless that they are no longer able to stand immune to the slightest illness, occurring to them". Then he tries to delineate the personality of a true intellectual, so that his role will become more clear. He proceeds to explain the standpoint of different religions and philosophers. He starts with the views of Plato in this respect, as expounded in the 'Politeia', and then proceeds to Hinduism and the traditional points of view expressed by the Hindu sacred texts and also by Hindu sages and saints. Then a considerable part is devoted to the Islamic conception of an 'intellectual' as expressed in the Holy Quran and the Prophetic traditions. The views of the representatives of the various schools of Islamic philosophy, such as peripatetics, illuminationists and gnostics etc. are put forth and discussed; then he tries to judge their respective viewpoints in the light of the Holy Quran and the Prophetic traditions and gives an authentic definition of the word 'intellectual' with reference to Islamic perspective and as conceived by the body of Muslims throughout the ages.

In the second part the writer turns to the modern and especially post-Renaissance philosophy to see if a solution can be found to this perennial question. He alludes to the fact that modern Western philosophy has ended in a blind alley and that it has nothing new to offer concerning this problem. There is an utter perplexity and confusion among the western thinkers and one cannot get a satisfactory answer from thinkers whose civilizations are on the verge of intellectual and spiritual bankruptcy. In this respect, he quotes the following passage from the cultural historian Will Durant: "This battle which was not unlike the fight between frogs and rats, lasted for two centuries and a half, without producing any definite results in philosophy or in culture and without having any benefit save for the book-Publishers." The famous Muslim philosopher, the late Muhammad Iqbal, remarks in this connection: "The idealism of Europe never became a living factor in her life and the result is a perverted ego seeking itself, mutually intolerant democracies whose sole function is to exploit the poor in the interest of the rich. Believe me, Europe today is the greatest hindrance in the way of man's ethical advancement."

Then the writer probes into the problem of deviation and decadance and tries to find the deep-rooted cause for these maladies in the West. He finds it to be implicit in the very nature of Christianity which gives the intellect the second rank after the will. It is as if it tries to annihilate the intellect. This is a fact which has turned the intelligence over against religion, which in christianity is based upon the element of will. For this reason, human intelligence has tried to desacrelize the sacred and profane

the divine. Then the writer concludes this section by saying that: "There can be no thinker in the true sense of the word, without a civilization, and no civilization without a religion. Moreover there can be no religion in the true sense, unless it takes into consideration all aspects of human existence, especially the intellectual aspect." This fact has been duly considered and realized in Islam upon which it has established its foundations. "As to the so-called Iron Age, it should not deceive us, because it has glorified and almost deified iron and has debased man so much so that it has made man the master of creatures, a servant of tools and made out of matter a prison for the spirit. It has made the intelligence a mocking-stock, to the extent that apes have become man's overlords." The writer aptly mentions the brilliant words of Frithjof Schuon: "There is a great deal of talk in these days about 'humanism', talk which ignores the fact that once man abandons to matter, to machines, to quantitative knowledge his own prerogative he ceases to be truly "human". What is most totally human is what gives man the best chances for the beyond and, by the same token, what also most deeply corresponds to his nature."

The author begins the third section with the following remark: "The East has not borrowed much from the West... On the contrary, it bestowed upon the West, but the latter has abused the gift. He quotes the words of Bertrand Russell, who not without an air of exaggeration, has expressed his utmost surprise for the sudden resurgence of Greek civilization, but the author argues that the Greek civilization was a natural outgrowth and a gradual evolution of principles borrowed from the East and the Greek thought had an Eastern hue before Aristotle, who narrowed down thinking

itself by ratiocination. It was he who by logicizing the process of thought destroyed its more pristine intuitive aspect. The writer mentions that Islamic civilization has come face to face with the west twice: once in the Abbassid period, when all the Greek and Hellenistic tradition was translated into Arabic and entered the mainstream of Islamic culture. The second encounter with the West has come in modern times

As to the first encounter, the writer argues that Islam has been on the whole, immune from the Western intellectual onslaught and has repelled what has been alien to its nature and perspective. This fact has been attested to by Avicenna, in his introduction to his celebrated (*mantiq al-Mashriqiyyin*) (The philosophy of the orientals) and can be also evidenced by the dialogue between Ibn Arabi and Averroes, as recorded in detail, in the *meccan Revelations*: He goes on to say that the Aristotelian logic has not been immune from the attacks of people such as Suhrawardi, Biruni, Razi and Ibn Taymiyyah. Then with reference to the famous attack of Ghazzali on philosophers, the writer says that: 'Islam in its totality is a self-subsistent whole and has the seal of divine authority and does not need the intrusion and interference of foreign elements' Concerning Islamic practical philosophy, the writer says: "The Aristotelian ideal city or the Platonic utopia, or more generally, the Greek practical philosophy, when compared to the purely Islamic communities of Mecca and Medina, at the time of Prophet, is nothing but a drop of muddy and impure water as compared to an ever-surgling limpid and transparent ocean'.

Consequently in the first period, the Muslim philoso-

phers and sages turned rather to pre-Socratic thinkers as their source of inspiration and despised the rationalistic tendencies of Greek and Hellenistic thinkers. Suhrawardi, for example, believed that the divine wisdom or philosophy, which was revealed to man through the Prophet Idris, had two ramifications. One appeared in Persia and the other in Egypt, from which it was transmitted to Greece. This view is attested to by Plato himself in the Timaeus, where he maintains that Greeks learned philosophy from the Egyptian priests.

In the second encounter of Islam and the West, however, the European civilization has become too much deviated. Philosophy has turned in favor of false ideologies, in the service of colonialism. It can be termed as an intellectual plunder, or in the words of Thomas Hobbes, man as a wolf unto his brother, or rather colonialism armed with an intellectual weapon. Moreover, this second encounter did not come about in the midst of the glory of Islam, but at the time of its decadence when its energies were sapped. But this time Islam had to fight on two fronts, the one combative or defensive and the other intellectual. There were leaders who could fight with the West on the more combative side, of whom one could mention persons like Jamal-ad-Din al-Afghani. But on the intellectual side, Muslim thinkers were not well-equipped to enter a meaningful dialogue with the West. Their Islamic education was strong enough, but they did not have a first hand knowledge of Western sciences and philosophy. So this intellectual encounter was one-sided, tilting in favor of the West. Even now, there are very few people among Muslims well-versed both in Islamic and Western traditions, who can conduct a well-meant dialogue with

the West.

In the fourth section, the writer visualizes an imaginary^o spatio - temporal vehicle, with a view to find a real world rich with ideas and spirit, of which we might not have been possibly informed, where the inhabitants are truly happy, and which we could take as an exemplary model." But such an expected universe is practically non-existent. whereas Islam is a truly real religion, which has not been understood in its pure essence. He emphasizes the fact that it is impossible for modern man to escape the spiritual crisis in which he is entangled. unless he understands Islam in its essential nature. "We should trim it of all unnecessary accretions and make it a pure religion, as willed by Allah and as practised by the Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, but slightly modified in some minor points to suit the exigencies of our time."

The writer finally ends his paper with a very terse, but extremely meaningful statement by Schuon which splendidly sums up and consummates the whole subject, "The world is sick because men live beneath themselves; the error of modern man is that he wants to reform the world, without having either the will or the power to reform mān, and this flagrant contradiction, this attempt to make a better world on the basis of a worsened humanity, can only end in the abolition even of what is human, and consequently the abolition of happiness too. Reforming man means binding him again to Heaven, re-establishing the broken link, it means plucking him from the kingdom of passions, from the cult of matter, quantity and cunning, and re-integrating him into the world of the spirit and serenity-even, it might be said, into the world of his own sufficient reason."