

## THE QUR'ĀN - AS THE MAIN IDEA OF ISLAM THAT HAS NOT WHOLLY REALIZED ITS POTENTIAL

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The Islamic world is faced today with a deep crisis. Seeking solutions without analysing the roots and real reasons of the processes or the intentional perversion of the reasons deepen the crisis further and magnify it. Without paying attention to the specificity of the problem, its evaluation in the context of Globalisation, which is the only criterion of the modern day, can seriously damage not only the development of the Islamic world, but also the development of the whole humanity.

It is a known fact that the root of every crisis in life is directly related to the crisis in thought. For the reason that the thinking circles, which were established on the basis of the Islamic essence, have already become distanced from it, the contemporary Islamic thought is at the antagonistic stage. The problem is that it is easy to prevail over the form, which has become distanced from its essence, and wipe it away, and for this reason the circles, which were formed by the information and events that are nearer in terms of time, can occasionally make `the waves` of the true Islam invisible.

Those who forget about the central point and essence of the circle claim that Islam is the circle and thus they distract the attention from the real Truth as well as they allege that Islam has already become dilapidated` and cannot keep up with the new fashion and with the demands of Globalisation. It is interesting that now all the attention is focused on this very intersection point of these circles: a lot of research studies have been written as well as many international conferences and symposiums have been held about this issue, and what is worse, confrontations have been created and even humiliations and threats have been of concern.

It is indeed very difficult today to unambiguously define the condition of the philosophical thought in the Islamic East. On the one hand, the West, which is going through a moral crisis, shows a serious interest for Islam and according to statistics the worldwide Muslim population is growing in numbers. This fact creates a self confidence in the Islamic East. That is to say, any researcher, who uses statistical information as a base, can self-assuredly claim that Islam is rapidly growing.

On the other hand, it is undeniable fact that today Muslim countries and Muslim population are the most oppressed and humiliated ones in the world. Qur'ān says: "Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur'ān and indeed, We will be its guardian." (The Qur'ān, 15:9) Indeed, it is not about paper pages of the book. There is a wisdom and unused potential that the human body has to cognize and realize.

*The tradition of repeating prevails in the Islamic world and this, in turn, impedes selecting original ideas.* It is known that for many ages the vast majority of Muslim authors have mainly worked and written in the fields of *tafsir* (the commentary of the Qur'ān), *hadīth* (the prophetic tradition) and *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence). Today these fields are also the centres of interest of researchers as well as they put other problems in the shade, and this, in turn, leads to the dangerous steps like not seeing the new problems of the New Age and not keeping up with the times. As a consequence, a number of directions have been formed in the Islamic thought:

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making the subjects, which were current in the Middle Ages, the objects of discussions in present-day conditions, and taking defensive position by claiming that Islam does not need contemporaneity in spite of the change in time and the developments in science and technology, as well as exaggerating moral principles and rules of good manners by making thought dependent on them and presenting them nearly as the leading ideas of Islam and thus preaching `moral lessons to the whole world`, and with all that, declining into fanaticism for `making their presence felt`, etc. In a world, although it has been repeated time and again that Islam is a progressive religion and though it has been proudly emphasized that all the great scientific discoveries were mentioned in the Qur`ān, it is impossible not to see that now the Islamic world goes behind Western thought. It is undeniable fact that today not only the Islamic world cannot become distanced from the problems that are imported from the West, but also it is not able to solve its own problems without the support of the West. If we talk about the destiny of the united world and humanity then the mobilization of the energies of the West and East must be accepted as praiseworthy. However, if we speak about the two regions` acting from two different poles then it should be very important that the interest of one of the two sides should not be in the leading and ruling position, but both of them should stand in the same position.

We would like to pay attention to an important detail in The Qur`ān,. The Holy Book is the message to Muslims: Say, [O Muhammad], "The Pure Spirit has brought it down from your Lord in truth to make firm those who believe and as guidance and good tidings to the Muslims." (The Qur`ān, 16:102) And the message can be divided into three types: for those Muslims who live in Islamic society among Muslims; for those Muslims who live among non-Muslims and converge with them; for those Muslims who tend to communicate and recognize Nature. The first type of the message includes the Qur`anic verses about **sharia** rules and family life. The verses contain the smallest details of life and it is, first of all, the wise guide for the establishment of good family, society and state. For example: "Upon the father is the mothers' provision and their clothing according to what is acceptable. No person is charged with more than his capacity. No mother should be harmed through her child and no father through his child". (Qur`ān, 2/233, etc).

The second type of verses teaches Muslims the rules of communication with their non-Muslim neighbours during war and peace conditions. They include advices about the treatment of prisoners, mercy to neighbours, revenge, the culture of war, etc. For example: "So when you meet those who disbelieve [in battle], strike [their] necks until, when you have inflicted slaughter upon them, then secure their bonds, and either [confer] favor afterwards or ransom [them] until the war lays down its burdens. (The Qur`ān 47/4)" or "Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbor, the neighbor farther away, the companion at your side, the traveler, and those whom your right hands possess. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are self-deluding and boastful. (4/36)" or "If the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is disease and those who spread rumors in al-Madinah do not cease, We will surely incite you against them; then they will not remain your neighbours therein except for a little." (33/60). But the best advice takes place in the surah (chapter) "al-Kafirun" - "the Disbelievers". This surah includes the ideas on the mercy of Muslims and their tolerance as well as their task to defend their religion.

The third type of the verses reminds Muslims that they cannot be blind to this world; they have to think about history and the present day, about Nature and about their religion, and to cognize their essence.

I think the problems occur when these addresses confuse their places. When a Muslim, who cannot build and rule his society at the high level, tries to convey to his non-Muslim neighbours the Truth that he does not yet cognize himself, then he becomes a danger to his own society and his religion.

The Holy Qur'ān is the source of the high universal ideas about the material and spiritual worlds of the human being.

The Holy Qur'ān is the source of high ideas which contain the material and moral worlds of the human being. It is a system of morality and thought as well as a system of great verses and signs which give directions to science. However, it is impossible to gain anything other than an extremist image and to go a step further from a defensive position by repeating it time and again and by insistently seeking evidences for it as well by trying to surprise the whole world. These are not only my words, but also the words of long years, centuries and the present deplorable condition of Muslims. And probably the most heart-rending facts are the attempts towards the purposeful identification of Islam with terrorism, and unfortunately in many cases these intentions are realized successfully.

In fact, what is growing and expanding now is the outer aspect of Islam and its outward image, and this, in turn, gives a satisfaction to some people and also horrifies those who are not aware of its essence. If we consider the fact that some researchers intentionally present the principles and verses of Islam related to fear, punishment and threat by de-contextualizing them, then the determination of the West to protect and rescue itself from this horror will become clear.

Indeed, The Holy Qur'ān teaches to fear Allah. But it is not an animal fear. It is an innate sense. The Qur'ān is the wise Book and addresses all human beings. There are verses in the Qur'ān about fear of people of all levels. Naturally, every reader recognises appropriate truth.

However, the Qur'ān is the Book, which teaches the path of moral perfection and improvement, in other word, through cognition of the Qur'anic wisdom the human being can be free from animal fear and reach his perfection and high level. With the purification at moral level and perfection at thinking level as well as the rising of the human being through relative truth to the Absolute, the object of fear also changes and eventually he is afraid only of God. Unlike the other types of fear, this type of fear is not of a blind, degrading and destructive character. For example, along with the verses about the hellish consternation, there are also a lot of verses about taqwa (divine fear) in the Qur'ān: Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah , the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; [and who] establishes prayer and gives zakah; [those who] fulfill their promise when they promise; and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous” (Qur'ān 2/177). The human being, who advances to this level of fear, is afraid of the extinction of light and becoming blind. He is afraid of dimming his spirit: “And is one who was dead and We gave him life and made for him light by which to walk among the people like one who is in darkness, never to emerge therefrom? Thus it has been made pleasing to the disbelievers that which they were doing” (Qur'ān 6/122) or “Their example is that of one who kindled a fire, but when it illuminated what was around him, Allah took away their light and left them in darkness [so] they could not see” (Qur'ān 2/17). Indeed, a righteous and god-fearing man knows that «he to whom Allah has not granted light - for him there is no

light. » (Qur'ān, 24/40). We talk here about the light of science and cognition and about the ability of determining good and evil.

The Qur'ān teaches to love God – The Creator and His creations. God, who has the best beautiful and highest names and attributes, creates everything with the love and beauty. “And He is the Forgiving, the Affectionate» (85/14) and this love is the reason of the wisdom and good in every creation of God. In addition to his inherent love, God gives love to the human being for his good deeds as well as for his pure and complete belief. In other words He increases the love: «And whoever commits a good deed - We will increase for him good therein» (Qur'ān 42/23).

It is also emphasized in the Qur'ān that God loves not only those who take care for their own belief and soul but also who love others with the same love and compassion, justice and patience: «Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds - the Most Merciful will appoint for them affection» (Qur'ān 19/96). God open His hopeful door not only for the righteous but also for sinners: «Indeed, Allah loves those who are constantly repentant and loves those who purify themselves» (Qur'ān 2/222)/ In other words He calls everybody to look at their own essence and perceive the great love.

The call to love in Islam, like other calls, does not stay at theoretical level. It is practical love that can be realized in daily life. It is not a love of an ascetic who meditates day and night in seclusion. It is a love of a citizen who realizes his belief in social life and this love keeps a truth for the whole society. The process of rising, purification and perfection, which, by starting in the inner world of man, permeates the external world; and such model man can rise to the level of his society. It is no coincidence that the countries where the army of Caliphate (Khilafah) could not reach, Islam reached with love.

*Proceeding from this point, we should note that, unfortunately, what is growing in the world is not the interest in Islam, but the interest in its exotic and mystical aspects.* Even those who do not believe in Islam as a religion show a strong interest in Islamic mysticism (Sufism) and study the works of Sufi thinkers as well as they collect their manuscripts from all over the world and establish academic societies and research centres on the bases of these studies... and then they attempt to teach Muslims about their own thinkers and values, but only according to their own interpretation. These interpretations, which, first of all, have to serve the interests of the West, sometimes unintentionally and sometimes intentionally, falsify a meaning. For example, today, in many cases, the organizers of the weighty international academic conferences devoted to Sufi thinkers are the West-oriented societies. It is known that Sufism mostly includes the spiritual and tolerant aspects of Islam. From this view point, by embracing the most beautiful and highest qualities of Islam via Sufism and using its tolerance, not only one can stay in his own religion but also he can look at Islam from above. Mawlānā Jalāl ad-Dīn Rūmī (1207 –1273), for instance, has become nearly a uniting power of the whole world. However, unfortunately, there are a considerable number of people who do not see him within Islam. That is to say, the invitation `Come, come, whoever you are, unbeliever or fire-worshiper, come, which was addressed by him to everyone, regardless of who they are, in many cases is interpreted only as a tolerance, and those who do it do not go deeper about this subject. It is not explained that the doors of Islam (Sufism) are open to everyone, and in order to be purified from sin and become aware of the high moments of the spiritual world and reach the perfection peak of humanity by being united with the divine world it is necessary to enter inside and perceive the essence. The difference is outside of that door. It is not accepted that what enthrones Rūmī on the throne of Mawlānā is the very truth and energy of Islam.

As a result of the noted ideas we would like to pay attention to an important point: both in his fear and in his love the human being has to perceive the essence and the results of his actions. In other words Qur'ān teaches man to think and select his way in this light. As noted in the ayah, God taught Adam all names (sciences) (The Qur'ān, 2/30) that are known only to Him as well as He created him as His representative on Earth. The human being is the creation who contains many attributes of God (Merciful, Knowing, Utterly Just, Hearing and etc.) and he can confirm his mission of Successor by improving of these qualities.

Moreover, we read in another verse that the human being is the only creation who carries His Trust: «Indeed, we offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it and feared it; but man [undertook to] bear it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant» (The Qur'ān, 33/72). Some scholars consider that the human being carried this trust because “he was unjust and ignorant”. In our opinion (and we are not alone) the human being “had been unjust and ignorant” before he undertook it and this trust – knowledge and belief helps him to reach the perfect level. Only the human being has a chance to think and to improve morally by means of this knowledge and to help his society and nation through his perfect personality. God reminds us about this important chance almost in every verse of the Holy Qur'ān. “Don't you think about it?” Islam is not a religion of fanatical bigotry. Qur'ān calls every Muslim to perceive his religion: “For there should separate from every division of them a group [remaining] to obtain understanding in the religion and warn their people when they return to them that they might be cautious”. (The Qur'an, 9/122).

The process of creation is not mass production. In other words God creates His every creation, especially human being, individually. Firstly, it witnesses the relation between God and the human being. Secondly, it indicates that the cognition process directed to the divine essence of the human being must be individual too. It is not accident that everyone is responsible for his knowledge and for his sins himself! And this responsibility calls the human being to think and make the right choice.

As is known, some medieval Islamic thinkers named Qur'ān “the knowledge of knowledges” or “the key of all types of knowledge”. It is also known that some thinkers and researchers have subjectively considered that only Islamic knowledge is true and others are untruth. And this opinion is still in force. So where is the truth? Where is the true criterion of the truth and false? Following the Qur'anic truths, it could be said that the true criterion is not related to theology but to the result. In other words, the true criterion is determined by the contribution of this knowledge to humanity.

Today a Muslim can love and write the praises of love; he can fear and scare. And he can do it at the high level, so “Islamic life” or “being Muslim” only recalls the following feelings: praying with high feelings (wajd), taking high pleasure from prayer”, a beautiful ethic or morality, being implacable to unbelievers, etc. Everything is high and beautiful! But everything is without the important thing - thought! Abu Turkhan says: “The feeling is the unknown thought”. Indeed, we feel, but do not think about essence. While high feelings are raging in the East, the West turns the energy of this rage to his own interests and own good. This resembles the power plant, which turns violent flow of water into energy. Therefore, in this age-old collaboration the East has always been the loser, and the West always the gainer.

*It is possible to come to a conclusion from what have been mentioned above that the spreading line of Islam in the world is vertical.* In fact, the number of Muslims is growing. However this issue has two aspects. On the one hand, this growth is purely quantitative and

mainly serves the secret purposes of certain movements and organizations. This, of course, can affect neither Islamic thought nor the present situation of Islam. That is to say, the growth in quantity not only does not enhance quality but it actually has adverse effects. Namely, the movements and denominations, which have serious impacts on quantity, in many cases do not go out of the frame of the interests of one person. This situation can move people away from the real truths of Islam as well as can damage the correct perception of its essence. On the other hand, it is an interesting fact that those who really have understood and accepted Islam in the developed countries are the people who have managed to reach a level of success in their fields and, in a certain meaning, have been fed up with the stale and immoral rules of the civilisation. Many of these people are ones whose thoughts were kneaded by the western principles and Islam means a spiritual food as well as an aesthetic taste and high feelings for their hungry spiritual world. Although these people understand Islam's problems and regret that Islam has not found its real value, they cannot show a solution to these problems, because their bases and thoughts belong to the West. This step only has very positive effects as well as it is stimulating.

Then, it is not sufficient to popularize only the spiritual values of Islam. First of all, it cannot completely explain the reality of its relation with the material life and its progressive character. Secondly, it cannot show the way for the salvation from adopting it as an aesthetic taste within a narrow scope and from being an `exotic servant`.

What are needed in order to be a next new stage in the world's history of philosophy are Islamic thought's discovery of its own creative potential and the creation of a new philosophical system of Islamic thought. It is neither `a Europeanization` of *sharia* nor adapting the Qur'ān to global conditions. What is of concern here is a philosophical system which is formed on Islam's eternal and progressive principles and which can be a new manifestation of the eternal wisdom that is compatible with Modern Times. This philosophical system also must be a confirmation of the previous Islamic wisdom. It is not a coincidence that Abu Turkhan says: `The future is ours only when it is a continuation of the past`. Indeed, for the confirmation of the previous magnificence of Islam and its summit, it is not necessary to turn over the pages of history, but to conquer this summit once again. Izutsu writes: `Before we begin to think of the possibility of a fruitful philosophical understanding between East and West, we shall have to actualize a better philosophical understanding within the confines of the Oriental philosophical traditions themselves`.<sup>1</sup>

Every idea that belongs to the world of ideas includes in itself a certain truth which is thought for the material world and whose manifestation is necessary, as well as it involves the motive and directing power which could be called the energy of creativity. This truth could be also called the mission of that idea. Unless the truth is realized and unless the energy does not reach the necessary result and is not completely expended, the idea will seek its own dwelling and its optimum manifestation form. Surely, sometimes time and socio-political conditions can cause that idea to be generally forgotten and can pervert it. However, it is an undeniable truth that no material cause and no obstacle can prevent the divine power and will. The idea is only waiting for a suitable condition and for an appropriate means; it is waiting for a person who can realize and convey it.

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<sup>1</sup> Toshihiko Izutsu, *The Concept and Reality of Existence*, Malaysia, 2007, p. 4.