THE PHENOMENON OF THE UNITY OF IDEA


ABSTRACT

Beauty and wisdom are, in point of fact, manifestations of the One Idea (Unity of Idea). Note that these manifestations are not coincidental, they do exist: responding to these manifestations are philosophical trends, teachings and works of art. The human being unveils manifestations of this concept, so he cannot evade it, for one of its branches stems from the very essence of man. In other words, in case where man enters into harmony with the beauty and wisdom that surround him (he is needing a lot of it), he uncovers the truths of the One Idea. The One Idea is integrally associated with the Absolute Being to personify His beauty, grandeur, resplendence and other attributes. Every being is related to the world of Ideas, which accumulate in itself different relative ideas, diverse feature, because all ideas belong to it. For this reason, traces of the beauty and wisdom above are occasionally detected within any essence created. The One Idea is a Creative force which gives birth not only to other ideas but also realizes and materializes the images of these ideas, synthesizing them. It is naturally determined that man as a creative factor contributing to the sustainability of the Creation is in the lowermost scale of ranks. That is one more argument in favor of the fact that the heavens and land are indissolubly tied. The Creation process is an implementation of the One Idea. In other words, the One Idea (Unity of Idea) is in perpetual motion with its new and new forms of personification.

Ideas of beauty and wisdom that have always attracted humans are the multiform manifestations of the universal concept. Not accidental, these manifestations never waste away. That said, philosophical trends, teachings and works of art are none other than man’s response to these manifestations. Not indifferent to these manifestations, man makes a note of them, especially as they are echoed deep in his soul. In other words, when man enters into harmony with the beauty and the profound wisdom around him (his heart craves for it), the truths of the Unity of Idea (UI) uncover themselves to him.

The very phenomenon of the UI is complex and diverse. To uncover its contents and significance, it is essential to clear up several questions. It would, in our view, be appropriate to
examine the UI from the points of view of its formation, or realization and cognition, i.e. first, from top to bottom; and secondly from bottom to top.

What is the UI then? It is the thing that mirrors all the beauty, sublimity, richness and other properties of Absolute Being. For all that, it is concurrently the unity encapsulating different features and, hence, different and relative ideas. It is, in other words, a source of each existence’s idea (relative idea). For this reason, the signs of the beauty and the wisdom are retraced in the crux of each creature.

The UI is the essence of the existence. In other words, its manifestation and, hence, realization are none other than the very process of creation. This phenomenon embraces ideas of both material and non-material beings.

First of all, it should be noted that in the history of philosophy the creation process, i.e. manifestation of the idea finds its parallel, primarily, within the hierarchic system. Although there are some fundamental differences depending upon their outlooks, hierarchic systems are notable for a number of common features, and it is through the analysis of these similarities that it becomes possible to get a clear picture of the UI. The fact is that the hierarchy as more consistent with the nature of the creation process forms a suitable model to uncover its depths. Firstly, a direct relationship is attainable between the universal and relative ideas within the hierarchy. Secondly, apart from confirming the inevitable existence of the worlds other than the material world in the act of creation, the significance and the role of each of these worlds are explained within the hierarchy, too. At the same time, it demonstrates on logical grounds that each creature has his own place (!) or rather his own idea within the system. Thirdly and finally, making use of the God-endowed talent and wisdom the conscious being proceeds from his own idea, and thus the possibility of advancing toward the perfection, as well as the individuality of the process is accentuated.

The creation is a realization of the ideas; however, no idea can be realized in a simple, facilitated manner. Although its existence is not dependent on other ideas but its realization is closely related to them. At the beginning, these ideas, taken separately, are independent though, some of them, depending upon certain circumstances, come out as principal ideas, others as “an idea of the idea”, or “auxiliary idea”. It would be appropriate to add that under various conditions ideas may replace each other, and the principal idea may turn into the relative one.

Each idea is simple, transparent, and the truth that it embraces is complete and perfect. However, this character of idea is changed in the creation process: one thing or one event comes as a result of the unification of several ideas. That means the complication, i.e. the realization of a thing results in the concentration of the relative ideas around the principal idea. At the same time, owing to the fact that some ideas come out as principal and others as auxiliary, one of the
truths is positioned as central while others being truths notwithstanding, contribute, nevertheless, to the disclosing of the principal truth, and thus are transformed into the “truth” which, to a certain extent, diverts from the principal idea. A certain idea appears as “original grain”, others as its “shells”. This means that the idea loses its purity. Plato was prone to define the manifestations of the material world as the shades of the ideal world, i.e. the shade within the world whose natures and truths vary (are in the other world). Plotinus wrote: “The spirit is responsible for the creation, however, contrary to the principles that add strength to it; the spirit adds something its own, but this addition is of lower quality.” ¹ For this reason, creatures are positioned at the lower, imperfect stage in relation to the Supreme Being, and “are just debris of the Supreme Order”. ² According to the philosophy of illumination, the first abstract light which is emanated from the Light of Lights is essentially “feeble in itself” “.³ The Light of Lights varies in its perfection only”, ⁴ i.e. the essence of the Light of Lights is perfect, while the essence of the First Light is imperfect in relation to the former, for it came as a result of creation and its essence was related to other. Abu Turkhan defines material entities as copies of ideas, however, as distinct from Plato, he adds that not only essence of things and phenomena but also their structures are composed of copies of ideas, too.

It appears that the creation is, to some degree, a sort of “division” of the UI. Of course, “division” cannot be construed literally, for the UI is simple and indivisible. As has been noted above, the point is about the plurality within the universe: man produces infinite ideas just as the Sun radiates endlessly. Plotinus pointed out: The world spirit fed by inexhaustible light of the Primary Universe distributes it (light) among numerous beings and thus satiates them with life and mind. Its contribution can be compared with the fire effect ….⁵ The philosopher notes that “against the background of the Divine Mind and Spirit, the Divine Consciousness-Form embarks upon this stage of the Spirit: Sun’s rays do exist as certain form of the Light”⁶.

Typical for all indestructible and simple beings, the UI, according to S. Khalilov, “ is common, essential and inevitable. The material embodiment is single; it is the phenomenon…”⁷ The UI is great, so it is essential to “divide” in order to cognize. For instance, as viewed by Nicholas Cuzanus, Allah (read: UI – K.B.) cannot be cognized as a unified entity, and be perceived only in the form of line (plurality, nature – K.B.) only.⁸ The idea is simple but difficult to be perceived, and from this standpoint it is necessary to make it complicated. To cognize the

² Ibid.
⁴ Ibid, p. 127.
⁵ Plotinus. Enneads.
⁶ Ibid.
⁸ For more details, see Kuzanski N. Sochineniya, 2 t. t.1, Moskow, Misl, 1979, p. 241.
Sun, E.A.Konuk stressed the necessity of hiding the Sun behind cloud as writing: “To watch the Light of the Truth, it is crucial to see it from under a curtain of the beyond”. However, it should be emphasized that these “curtaining” and complication contribute to the cognition of the idea. Abu Turkhan writes: “Activities arising from the disintegration of the UI are put together to materialize the primary idea”. Let’s return to our view as set above: all the ideas of a thing or an event contribute to the principal idea – comprehension of the slightest grain of the UI.

The last stage of the creation process is the material world. Most philosophers are prone to classify the existence of the material world into minerals – plants – animals – humans. This classification is notable for its ascent from the bottom – vegetation soul (from nutrition point of view), next to the animal soul (sensation, reproduction) and finally to the top - human soul (thinking creatures). A question arises: if minerals, plants and animals dispose of complex structure, if man can cognize many truths through their meditation, if the vegetation and animal kingdoms possess their own mode of life, “world outlook”, means of communication, is it correct then to place them at the stages inferior to the human one?

Of course, we do not intend to make changes into this classification. We’d just like to comment on some distinctive features of this classification. In other words, the question is not about putting the spirit of the entities into the forefront, but singling out the ideas which form their essence. Note that it was Abu Turkhan who came closer to the comprehension of the above, so it’d be advisable to quote him: by their nature ideas may be passive and active and “the idea at the stage of materialization is, as a matter of fact, passive. Maturing of the idea is its life process! The idea has its own life (i.e. idea’s specific life) It is still living idea!” It appears that one stage of the classification is different from another by the activity of the idea and considered more superior. Against the background of the above, man takes a particular place, for “he is the incarnation of the spirit, not passive idea. The spirit is not passive; it is active and creative. The manifestation of the idea within material phenomena as an entity with its forms and structure is the idea’s frozen, static form”. Of interest is the fact that Abu Turkhan presents the active idea as the spirit only. Account has to be taken of the fact that there is no specific view on the spirit allegedly characteristic of other entities but man. Furthermore, not every man disposes of creative and active spirit; in this case, it would be logical to link activities and properties of the spirit to the activity or passivity of the idea it is pertaining to. In other words, the activity or passivity is bound up with the idea of the spirit, not the spirit proper.

3 Ibid, p. 132.
4 Ibid, p.133
5 Ibid, p.102
An appropriate question arises here: what is the criterion of activity and passivity? Why the idea of the plant is considered as passive and one of the human active? Or activity or passivity is inherent in the idea from its origin, or its properties may change due to the circumstances?

As has been noted above, the UI is peculiar to the Absolute Being, i.e. the creation process is subordinated to the External Will. The idea which is led and specified by the External Will in the process of realization may be termed as passive. Once the direction of the activity has been chosen, some ideas appear to be passive again, because they are again subordinated to the External Will’s effect. S.Khalilov explains this as being due to the following: “The inanimate idea being mirrored in the form of the passive idea notwithstanding, its form comes, nevertheless, out as its bearer and cannot be transferred to other bodies, nor give birth to the like”. The situation around the active idea is slightly different. There is no force capable of changing or substituting the Absolute Will inherent in the UI. At the same time, the active idea within the framework of this Will may dispose of a certain will, i.e. it assumes an ability to create.

It would be appropriate to add that the major or minor entities of the idea may directly be associated with the activity and the passivity of the idea, yet, it should be stressed that the principal idea is not always active, hence, the active ideas are not always principal to form the pivot of the system.

The realization or materialization of the UI drives it away from its nature; still, this contributes to the comprehension of the singleness. S.Khalilov points out that “the great idea is disintegrated, staged, so minor ideas and minor purposes come out into the arena to advance toward their realization”. And on the contrary: the process of the creation of the singleness is a ladder which is arranged from top to bottom, so that man could climb it up and cognize universalities.

The fact that man is an intellectual entity among other creatures makes it logical that man is, directly or indirectly, in the center of the idea realization; in other words, everything is fed by his world outlook; every phenomenon occurs against the background of his activity only under objective circumstances. Indeed, the UI is closely related to man; still, it is not his adequate; hence, the UI is not reflective of man only; it embraces the entire being. To put it bluntly, the path to this entity is open to man only; and it is man only to cognize this entity. Hallaj writes: “Claims of Satan and Ahmad (s.) are veritable only. However, Satan digressed from the entity (the World of Truth), while the essence of the entity revealed itself before Ahmad (s.)”. Extrapolating from other assertions of Hallaj, one can infer that by Ahmad was meant here not only Prophet Mohammad (s.) but mankind as a whole.

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1 Ibid, p.125

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Man is distinct from other entities by his acting as bearer of ideas; as an entity capable of “obtaining information” about ideas of other entities. In this regard, man is a microcosm, a starting-point of the top-to-bottom UI realization, “in the line of descent” of wisdoms and their comprehensions.

As has been noted above, any (there is not any) idea (which) manifests itself in things and phenomena in the clear, pure form. In order “to gain opportunity” for becoming reality, it is essential for this idea to enter into alliance with other ideas. The fact that things are made of the principal and auxiliary ideas becomes apparent in the course of their comprehension: from auxiliary to the principal idea. A special emphasis has to be made that some people are satisfied with comprehending the principal idea while others take it as a transition from the principal to the UI. When proceeding along the path leading from relative ideas (truths) to the principal idea (sometimes alleged as Absolute), a rational thinking is placed in the forefront (that’s not to say that the irrational thinking is deficient at the given stage); meanwhile, along the path leading from the principal idea or phenomenon to the world of ideas or the UI the irrational thinking lies at the root of the intellectual process (similarly, that’s not to say that the rational thinking is deficient at the given stage).

The UI is sustainable and absolute while its manifestations – relative ideas are variable and innumerous. At the same time, however relative ideas are parts of the UI (just as rays are parts of the Sun), their mere concentration cannot be commensurate to the UI proper. First of all, there are parts of the UI that are not apparent; and secondly, depending upon circumstances relative ideas may manifest themselves differently (just as rays of the Sun, depending upon time and space, differently affect the surrounding world).

Preconcerted by the very essence of the UI, the path to its comprehension lies across entities of beauty, good, justice, wisdom, spiritual purity and sublimity. When adjusted for their content and significance, types of the path advancement are inspiration (poets, craftsmen), ecstasy (sages, scholars, saints) and revelation (Prophets). A closer look reveals that these types are based on various forms of the laudation of some properties of the UI (these include one, two and more properties, even the UI proper). The above finds its parallel in the works and treatises which accentuated one, several properties, and, finally, the UI proper. It is natural that depending upon levels of thinking and consciousness the ideas they advance are different. While the revelation is predestined for the nation, mankind and is of paramount importance as a whole, the inspiration is of individual nature. Although it also aims to meet needs of humanity, and even results in some radical changes (various inventions, works of art and poetry, etc.), it is not obligatory. The nature of the revelation is individual as well, and
sometimes it cannot overstep certain bounds, however, messages it addresses the mankind contribute to the selection of righteous path and devout deeds.

Of interest is the following aspect of the subject. As is known, Prophet Mohammad (s.) is the last Prophet, and with his (s.) leaving from this world Vahy (direct knowledge from Allah - K.B.) discontinued. May it be concluded then that the UI in its perfect and complete form ceased “to be watched” by humans? Or, perhaps, its manifestations are no longer of common to all mankind importance, since it is apparent at the level of ecstasy and inspiration only? It would be appropriate to cite Mansur Hallaj’s appeal to Allah as follows: “Should you appear incessantly, everybody would be driven mad. Should you hide yourself perpetually, everybody would fall into blasphemy”.1

A brief look at the history of philosophy would reveal that nature, religion or man were placed in the focus of attention of prominent philosophers or formed the basis of their philosophical teachings. Indeed, it is natural that the UI’s manifestations are of regular nature. It is obvious that it is possible to employ the same source through the use of different means; however, not all of them are correct for attaining the goal. In other words, through the use of correct methods it is possible to get access to larger sources from comparatively smaller sources. It is also known that services of philosophers are appreciated due to the authority of “sources” they ever used. These philosophers are reputed to be materialists, idealists, existentialists, Sufis, etc. Thus, Hegel points out: “The idea may be perceived through the intellect (that’s authentic philosophical meaning of “intellect”), then as the unity of subject and object, ideal and real, finite and infinite, spirit and body…”2 The philosopher presents the development of the spirit or self-comprehension process as common principle of the eternal idea hidden inside the thing and used for the creation of things3. Besides, successful in getting over subjective, objective and absolute stages, the spirit has reached the absolute truth of the idea.4

One can conclude that the UI is keeping a certain energy which inspirits and activates thinkers for “self-assertion”. Three methods of this “self-assertion” are known: Allah’s Book, nature and man. It is no mere coincidence that Mohammad Iqbal, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Sheikh Taha Jabir al-Alwani and some other modern thinkers focus on the two Books – Allah’s and nature. Azerbaijani philosopher Salahaddin Khalilov is prone to supplement this list with the intellectual, human world. Indeed, it is possible to encounter his intellectual world in some philosophers to certain extent; however, it happens in a different way. Thus, intellect is a medium to comprehend religion and nature. For instance, subjective spirit is tantamount to the

3 Ibid, p. 32.
human intellect in Hegel’s philosophy. As indicated above “idea itself is intellect”. That is, the question is the self-accomplishment of spirit, and intellect is the “arena” of this process. However, in Khalilov’s perception, the idea is transcendental and objective source of cognition as intellect, nature and divine book.

It is incontestable truth that through the study of the Heavenly Books it is possible to get comprehensive information about the UI. Besides, it is well-known that the UI being fully and thoroughly mirrored in the Heavenly Books notwithstanding, not everyone is able to cognize it. One of the sages referred to Koran as saying: “Not any reader is predestined to grasp the meaning of Koran as was granted to Prophet Mohammad (s.)” Indeed, it would be inappropriate to allege that any person, including religious figure, is in position to comprehend Koran and the spirit of the UI properly. Also, it would be wrong to insist that the UI is disseminated through the religion only: it is obviously echoed in the works of literature, science, art, etc., i.e. in all the spheres of human activity. Hence, there is need in local “prophet” to clarify “ulterior sense” of each sphere and bring it to humans’ notice.

Some thinkers call to explore, along with the Heavenly Books, nature and its truths and thus come closer to the crux of the UI. It is no mere coincidence that over the past few centuries sciences and technologies have impetuously been developing. New sciences are developed, ties being established between present-day sciences and discoveries are made to unveil secrets of space and nature.

In short, from the origin of religions till now scholars and thinkers have contributed greatly to the study of religious sciences and religious principles through putting forward various ideas in this direction. Man has also achieved appreciable successes in exploring the nature, identifying new methods of the development of sciences and technologies. Beyond any doubts, there are great potentialities on this track. At the same time, sciences are also developed and new methods devised to thoroughly examine man’s essence and improve his spirituality. We’d like to focus on the following: three Books above – Heavenly Books, nature and man as integral parts of the UI or Absolute Truth are mutually complementary methods aimed at uncovering the UI. Al-Alwani meant the revelation and nature in writing that “The two Books are sure to be brought together, otherwise, it would be no possible to grasp the authentic kernel of the reality”.

Supplementing the two Books is man. As independent Book, man is a link to connect them. S. Khalilov notes: “In the course of idea reanimation man acts as a subject. However, when joining another idea…he may turn into an object of the idea….and man may form a part of the structure of the idea he reanimated. Both completely and partly…Completely at the level of one

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1 Hegel. *Nauka logiki*, p. 404.
structure; partly at the level of another structure!\textsuperscript{1} True, there are sciences exploring man as an object, and the new ones currently in progress. The purpose is to thoroughly study moral properties of man. The question is put differently here. Firstly, man is a microcosm that embraces the creation essence in him. On the other hand, he is one of the components of the three Books; “a component” that supplements the first two. In other words, man forms a unity with the two Books acting as the third important component in “reading” them. As viewed by S. Khalilov, all the three Books have to be explored and “read” in their synthesized, mutually related form; in this case only it becomes possible “to cognize the nature of the creation comprehensively and perfectly”\textsuperscript{2}. That means that through the study into the external world (nature and wisdom of the Heavenly Books) man is in position to read the Book of Intellect, i.e. cognize the spiritual world. As a matter of fact, all the three Books are “gates”, integral parts of the Absolute Being. In an attempt to cognize “a part (i.e. one of the Books – K.B.), man strays from the integrity, while the truth is to come closer to it”\textsuperscript{3}. The researcher lays a special emphasis on the fact that each part of the three sources implying in a hidden, potential form the other two notwithstanding, it is, nevertheless, essential to apply different methods and approaches to their study, the complex research into the three Books makes it later possible to expand the spheres of application of the results achieved. In other words, it helps man get out of a closed space - exclusively physical or spiritual worlds – and enables him to mature and shape on both as an individual and a member of society.

As stated in Koran, the man is the vicegerent of Allah on Earth (2/30), aware of His names, begotten from His spirit, and finally a bearer of His most attributes. All the properties above enable man to express his will within the framework of the Absolute Will and create within the limits as set by the Absolute Creator. A.-T. Tymieniecka writes: “The human, creative microcosm is revealed between the macrocosm and transcendence. Following the logical pointers toward the ultimate stages of the foundations of reality and of the human condition we have, indeed, to operate a radical conversion within the concatenations of human beings whose queries, as much as their foundational status, are at stake here. Pursuing a path different from Husserl's, I came over time to bring out the crucially significant creative function of the human logos and to substitute it for the all-dominating intentional consciousness of Husserlian analysis”.\textsuperscript{4} It becomes evident that the idea activity is none other than his creative abilities. This,

\textsuperscript{1} Khalilov S. 2006. The teaching of “Three books” and “Two lights” of Abu Turkhan // Journal of Philosophical and Social-Political Sciences, No 3-4, 2006, 125.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid, p. 121.
\textsuperscript{3} Ibid, p. 125.
in turn, is typical for man only, since the latter “is responsible for the existence and functioning of the system of certain ideas directly (or through the insignificant mediation)”\(^1\). Account has also to be taken of the fact that each manifestation of the UI being realized through the Divine Will (a part of the UI though) is complete and perfect. As a result, the possibility arises to demonstrate the beauty and the perfection of each thing having been created by Allah. As distinct from this, an idea being attained through the human will risk to be defective and incomplete.

The UI runs through the entire existence and is pertaining to the Absolute Being, i.e. Allah, and it is for Him to decide which of the ideas is principal and which is auxiliary. Concurrently, this Will is directly related to the human mind. Thus, man synthesizing certain ideas and arising from the resultant harmony comes closer to the very source of creative idea, is in position to operate as “searchlight”: it illuminates everything if turned into proper direction. The human intellect tends to elucidate obscure, transcendent aspects of the UI. In doing so, human becomes commensurable with intellectual abilities and potentialities of man. In other words, man enters into harmony with the UI. A.-T. Tymieniecka says: “The unveiling of the hidden and yet so powerful logos of life is the work of the intuition of the human mind, which concurrently leads the constructive logos to constitute appearances into the manifestation of the phenomenon and to appropriate them in an appreciative, cognitive modality. This is possible in virtue not only of the vitally significant lights possessed by all living beings to varying degrees, but also of the creative powers that carry human beings to the peak of their proficiencies”.\(^2\)

The above makes it possible to infer that the UI comes out as the Creative Force contributing to the creation, materialization and subsequent synthesis of ideas. The fact that man is placed at the last stage of the hierarchic line is the appropriateness with which to ensure the sustainability of the creation process. This is one more argument in favor of the continuity of unbreakable ties between the Heavens and the Earth. The creation process is the realization of the UI. In other words, the UI is in perpetual motion to act under new forms of presentation. In Holy Koran says: “Say: "If the ocean were ink (wherewith to write out) the words of my Lord, sooner would the ocean be exhausted than would the words of my Lord, even if we added another ocean like it, for its aid."

If we cast a glance at the history of philosophy, a conclusion may be drawn that the human intellect’s distribution by space and this phenomenon’s establishment is a product of the newest time. In terms of decisive role of economy and policy the world panorama tends to change into the stratum of differently minded nations, with humans being properly classified and their types

\(^1\) Khalilov S. 2003. Idea and material embodiment, p. 137.
\(^2\) Tymieniecka A.-T. *The unveiling and the unveiled*. p. 32.
of thinking respectively affected. It is indisputable today that indeed there are certain distinctions in how Eastern and Western thinkers express their views or even identify objects of their reflections. For this reason, attempts directed to cognizing the UI in the West and the East are notable for their imperfect, defective nature. Manifestations of the UI are poles apart; sources of the UI are explored out of touch with each other. The polarization is, as a matter of fact, the incomplete presentation, or localization of the UI; it is the expression of copies rather than the Idea proper.

To proceed from natural regularities, the poles are sure to start drawing nearer, and this tendency is clearly apparent in the views of some intellectuals, including Toshihiko Izutsu, Mohammad Iqbal, Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, Salahaddin Khalilov. It would be appropriate to note that a mere analysis of the philosophies of the East and the West and drawing parallels between them cannot be appreciated as a complete presentation of the UI. Overwhelming majority of those engaged in exploring the UI are Eastern researchers or experts in the Eastern philosophy. However strange it may seem, the fact is that those recognizing the UI to be more pure and simpler in the system of the Eastern philosophy are prone to take as naturally determined.

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