

## **The Sources of Truth in the History of Philosophy**

*Fəlsəfə və sosial-siyasi elmlər*. Vol. 2, No. 30, Bakı: AFSEA, 2010, pp.75-90.

### **Introduction**

By studying the history of philosophy since ancient times one could come to the conclusion that the whole universe is the manifestation of an idea, a divine wisdom. The gist of this idea, which illuminates and directs thoughts, remains unchangeable and constant, though its form, style, method, language and religion, which find their expressions in different worldviews, could occasionally differ from each other. This ideational tradition, which has been passed from generation to generation in a certain sense, is defined by Seyyid Hossein Nasr as `truths or principles of a divine origin revealed or unveiled to mankind`.<sup>1</sup> According to the medieval Islamic thinker Ibn Miskawayh, this eternal philosophy that is known as *al-hikma al-khalida* (*Javidan Khirad* in Persian) in Islamic philosophy and *perennial philosophy* in the West as well as *sanatana dharma* in Hinduism, is `an eternal intelligence and wisdom. It is an eternal wisdom which is a super-historical truth that does not change from time to time or from one nation to another and it has revealed itself in different cultures for ages.<sup>2</sup>

### ***Of the two regularities of Idea***

There are two regularities of the unit-idea, which are superior to space and time, and assume the same importance for the past and present of the history of philosophy. The first is to accept that it is the basis and essence of the whole existence and to choose the correct sources and means that guide to it. As for Plato people see the shadows of the creatures of `he who is able to make not only vessels of every kind, but plants and animals, himself and all other things — the earth and heaven, and the things which are in heaven or under the earth (in Hades); he makes the gods also` and thus they suppose them to be real. ”<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Сейид Хусейн Наср. “Что такое традиция” // <http://www.newatropatena.narod.ru/p22.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Miskawayh, *Al-hikma al-khalida*, (Beirut: 1983), pp. 375-376 // see also: İlhan Kutluer. *İslamın klasik çağında felsefe tasavvuru*, (İstanbul: İz yayıncılık, 2001), p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, trans. Benjamin Jowett, (New York: Dover Publications, 2000), p. 284.

So the way to truth lies not through these copies, but through the discovery of original ideas. Namely, as numerous manifestations of the only Creator both material and non-material things are the means that guide back to the source.

It is also an undeniable fact that not every opinion or idea expressed is the reflection of the truth of the source and sometimes it can even have an opposite meaning. The Sufi thinker Hallaj (10<sup>th</sup> century) said `Faith and unbelief are different only in name, as in reality there is no difference between them`.<sup>4</sup> That is to say, the same words that are based on the same source or the same idea could get a new `truth` in the tongue of those who has brought them into being. And those who understand that the mistake is not in the source, but in the expression, apply not to the form but to its essence for learning the truth. Another Sufi thinker Abu Yazid Bistami (9<sup>th</sup> century) says: `The colour of the water is the colour of its vessel. If the water is in the white vessel then it becomes white and if it is in black, yellow or red vessels then it becomes black, yellow or red and etc.....` It means that the essence of beings or events, which is studied considering the source, is closer to the truth.<sup>5</sup>

The second regularity is the eternity and continuity of this unit-idea. Prof. Salahaddin Khalilov writes: "One of the most important conditions of civilization is continuous history. Namely, if an achievement obtained in the development of society is not maintained later, it could not enter the historical process in the long time interval."<sup>6</sup> If we accept these words of the philosopher in larger scale and ascribe it not only to the history of a nation, but also to the eternal circulation of The Ultimate Idea and the one truth, we will bear witnesses to a simple and at the same time always protected regularity: Every historical idea and philosophical system should be the continuation of the former one and the former should be a permanent basis for the next one. Every idea that goes beyond this principle is doomed to go out of spotlight.

In order to confirm the information that he has got and to cognize the gist and truth of what he has learnt, the human being tries to go deeper to its source by different means and the deeper layers of truth become revealed to him when he becomes closer to it. And the complete discovery of the source signifies the cognition of the Ultimate Reality. No wonder there have been teachings and analyses which has overshadowed it and moved it away from its essence and perverted it as well as the information abundance, which made it unseen, was created. However, there have also been people at all times who have seen its essence and contributed to its success and thus provided the conditions for the protection of the ultimate reality on Earth. For the sake of the protection of this

<sup>4</sup> أخبار احلاج. نشر وتصحيح ل. ماسينيون وب. كراوس, باريس, مكتبة لاروز, مطبعة القلم, 1936, ص. 53.

<sup>5</sup> الطوسي ابو نصر السراج. حقهه وقدم له وخرج أحاديثه عبد الحليم محمود وطه عبد الباقي سرور دار الكتب الحديثة بمصر, مكتبة المثني ببغداد, 57, ص. 1960

<sup>6</sup> Salahaddin Khalilov, "Kəsilməz tarix və dövlətçilik ənənələri" (*The traditions of the continuity of history and stadehood*), *Ipek yolu* (N 1, 2001), p. 24.

idea and wisdom, which is 'the same truth in essence no matter how its appearances differ in variety of existence and existential forms' and 'the same knowledge no matter in which cultural forms it takes shape'<sup>7</sup>, God has bestowed and is bestowing his revelation and inspiration upon prophets, philosophers and scholars whom he has chosen. One of the doors of such a people is open to people-to the area of appearance and another to the Creator who is the Master of this wisdom.

The different worldviews of philosophers and thinkers as well as the religious, philosophical and mystic movements and teachings, which were formed throughout history and developed at a certain period of time and then either fell into decay or, have continued their existence till the present time, and numerous sciences that include different fields, are the sign of the abundance of the sources of the same idea as well as the variety of the ways that go to these sources. It is clear that the discovery of small sources could lead to the discovery of larger ones. In respect to this, it is possible to call the ideas of Globalisation or the approaching and synthesizing circumstances between scientific fields as the transition from small sizes to larger fields.

Even the classification of the characteristics, and types of the appearances of the unit-idea as well as their level of significance gives the opportunity to come to the conclusion that its essence, namely the cognition of the Ultimate Reality has three sources: *the divine book (divine revelation)*, *nature* and *the human being*. Every source demands a specific means of cognition as well as the object corresponding to the means is elucidated. The methods of approaching to these sources and the commentaries on one or all of them have caused the certain philosophical movements and schools to be founded. Certainly throughout the history of philosophy, these sources were actual and the basis of the dominant ideology, sometimes one, sometimes the other, or sometimes alone and sometimes as a synthesis.

### ***The Ancient Period***

Still in ancient time those who accepted nature as the one and only source of Truth, sought different means to learn it. For example, the people (mags, shamans, etc. ) who possessed the divine gift, by means of different forces, rituals and prayers, tried to be aware of the secrets of nature and intervene in natural events and even to make them obedient to themselves. According to ancient myths and legends, beside the secrets of nature, human beings sought the secret of nature in nature itself. The legend of Gilgamesh, which is the ancient Sumerian monument, exemplifies this situation. Gods hide the secret of eternity in a mysterious flower. Though it was find by Gilgamesh (the human being), the snake, which ate that flower, became the possessor of it. The secret, which

---

<sup>7</sup> İlhan Kutluer, *İslamın klasik çağında felsefe tasavvuru*, p. 29.

had been hidden in nature, remained in nature.<sup>8</sup> The same situation and fact could be witnessed in Ancient Greek philosophy, which sought the only source of all beings either in air or fire and water.

However, there were also the philosophers who did not see nature as a sufficient source and wanted to complete it with other sources. For example, Pythagoras (6<sup>th</sup> century BC), whose philosophy was based on the knowledge about the comprehensible world and gods<sup>9</sup>, and who accepted the Creator and nature as same and immanent each other, considered that He is `the creator of all powers and creatures, the initial beginning of everything as well as the source of the light. At the same time he is the common father and the mind and the spirit of all things and the motive beginning of all surroundings`.<sup>10</sup> By the means of numbers he not only tries to explain and cognize existence, but also to be harmonious with cosmos, and because `it is difficult to cognize and express the initial form and beginning and to verbalize them clearly, he applies to numbers for making them clear.<sup>11</sup> He is of opinion that `the true being is not material, but the only eternal and effective`. Everything rest share the same name with what really exists, and at the same time they are material, physical and are capable of birth and death; they do not truly exist<sup>12</sup> and `their existence is dependent on their imitation of numbers`. For this reason, Pythagoras accepts it the major and only condition to be in harmony with it and to yearn for the main essence to reach the truth and cognize it.

Unlike Pythagoras, Plato takes a further step and following the way of his teacher he transformed the human being into the object of thinking and considered him as `a part of the divine wealth`<sup>13</sup>. However, the human being is not only a divine wealth, but also he includes everything in his mind. For Socrates things are two: `What is that which always is and has no becoming; and what is that which is always becoming and never is? That which is apprehended by intelligence and reason is always in the same state; but that which is conceived by opinion with the help of sensation and without reason, is always in a process of becoming and perishing and never really is.`<sup>14</sup>

I want to point out that the human being who is the subject of the philosophy of Socrates, is one who is capable of rising above the materiality, because `the philosopher can observe himself only by liberating his soul from the body`<sup>15</sup>. So by moving away from materiality, the human being

<sup>8</sup> See *Bilqamis dastani*, tr. İ.Vəliyev, Bakı: Gənclik, 1985.

<sup>9</sup> Пифагор, *Золотой канон* (Pythagoras, *The golden verses*), *Фигуры Эзотерики*, (Moscow: ЭКСМО-Пресс, 2001), p. 256.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 268

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 428.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 254.

<sup>13</sup> Платон. *Федон* (Plato, *Phaedo*), *Платон, Диалоги* книга первая, Т.1. (Moscow: ООО Изд-во ЭКСМО, 2008), p. 639. (62 b)

<sup>14</sup> Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. B. Jawett, (28 a), <http://www.ellopos.net/elpenor/physis/plato-timaeus/genesis.asp>

<sup>15</sup> Платон. *Федон*, p. 642 (65 a)

could get an opportunity to be united with the divine world that he is part of, and thus he becomes enabled to cognize everything : ` In thought, then, if at all, something of the realities becomes clear to it? `16 As is seen, Plato gathers the secrets of the real existent not somewhere there in nature or divine power, but in the soul of the human being. He puts the human being in a central position. The philosopher says: `And when the whole soul follows the philosophical principle, and there is no division, the several parts are just, and do each of them their own business, and enjoy severally the best and truest pleasures of which they are capable.`17

During ancient time, philosophy had included a large number of different sciences and arts and then from time to time, each of those sciences and arts chose its own specific way by gaining independence. It showed itself in approaching to sources, especially in the philosophy of Plato. Namely, though the sources is closely linked to each other and complement one another, all three has been based on the same source. Aristotle was the first in whose works these sources started to be separated from each other and thus each of them gradually gained the partial independence. It is not a coincidence that in the Middle Ages the central point of the philosophical movements, which enabled sources to overshadow each other, was the very teaching of Aristotle. The philosophical schools, which were founded in Christian and Muslim worlds, are examples to this situation. In addition, it could be said that at the result of the independence of different schools, religion and science were at cross-purposes with each other and the contradictions and irreconcilability between them have increased.

### ***The Middle Ages and the Modern Times***

The emergence of the Abrahamic religions in the middle ages and their becoming the dominant ideology not only made the holy book important, but also made the human `books ` the parts of it. On the one hand it was connected with the growth of the influence of that book, but on the other hand with providing the opportunity to view the human being and nature from a new perspective. The philosophers who have orthodox views are examples to this.

Nevertheless, corresponding to the principle of the continuity of idea, the development line that had started in ancient time also continued in the Middle Ages. There was only a single difference: the divine revelation was the major basis and the main criteria that determined the angle of approach. For example, the 11<sup>th</sup> century French philosopher Johannes Scotus Eriugena (c. 815–c. 877) who based his ideas on Neo-Platonism and Christianity believed that ` the development of the

---

<sup>16</sup> Платон. *Федон*, р. 643. (65 с)

<sup>17</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, p. 276

world is a circular movement that began from God and will ultimately return to Him. In this development that began with God's creation, the divine spirit, which is not creature, but the creative nature, flows in stages ... Thus there are three parts in nature: **God, ideas and other different things.**<sup>18</sup> Although he defines God as inconceivable, the philosopher accepts the Son and the Holy Spirit as the symbols lead into His cognition. At the same time, nature and all beings is accepted by him as the appearance of the Ultimate Spirit. It means that the human nature could return to God by cognizing the divine secrets that exist within him.

Nonetheless, the German philosopher Nicholas of Cusa (1401 –1464) does not accept the dualism between God and the World and points out that the World is immanent in God and He encompasses the whole universe. For the philosopher 'the universe was created in accordance with Him'<sup>19</sup> and 'in its universal oneness this maximum encompasses all things, so that all the things which derive from the Absolute [Maximum] are in this maximum and this maximum is in all [these] things.'<sup>20</sup> The line is the unveiling of the point<sup>21</sup>, likewise for Nicholas of Cusa, like the Word and Son of God, the human being is a microcosm, which encompasses intellectual and sensible nature folded within himself.<sup>22</sup> However, if we pay attention to the fact that the philosopher accepts that God is inconceivable to the human mind as a unit point and conceivable only as a line (plurality, nature), then it could be said that the source in Cusanus' views is God-nature. Thus the philosopher emphasizes the inseparability of the two notions and considers it necessary that in order to understand a thing, the human being should apply to nature- 'the book' through which the Ultimate Reality is thoroughly revealed.

As we mentioned above, besides nature, the human being himself is a means which leads to the divine world. Namely, according to Christianity, which was the leading ideology in the Middle Ages in western philosophy, the human being is the lowest being among creatures, and throughout his life he must purify himself from his sins. The approaches of philosophers are significantly different from those of clergymen and theologians who defended this idea. Namely, the Christ-the Son of the Father who is one of the three forms of the Trinity, besides being the Holy Word, he is also a human being. In this regard, the two lines could be seen in the views of Christian philosophers: either by being like the Christ and following Him, the human being must rescue his soul (it is rather the characteristics of theologians), or through the Christ he must discover the Christ-

---

<sup>18</sup> Gökberk M., *Felsefe tarihi*, (İstanbul: Remzi kitabevi, 1999), pp. 141-142.

<sup>19</sup> Nicholas of Cusa, *De docta ignorantia*, Book III, trans. Jasper Hopkins, (Minnesota: 2001), p. 120.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, Book I, p.7

<sup>21</sup> Кузанский Н., *Сочинения: В 2-х т. т. 1*, (Moscow: Мысль, 1979), p. 241.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

The Word of God within himself (it is the characteristics of irrationalist philosophers ). According to some of them, only the Christ possesses divine secrets, but to some others, this blessing was given to every person and it need to be cognized. For instance, according to Meister Eckhart (c. 1260 – c. 1327) `God is within everything, but most people do not know it and only he who cognizes it, is capable of knowing Him. Therefore, the human being is more glorious than anything else in creation.`<sup>23</sup> The thinker thinks that `if I cognize him directly then I become Him and He becomes me.`<sup>24</sup> By the way, as a continuation of this idea Hegel (19<sup>th</sup> century) also thought that God and the human being are means to each other in understanding themselves: ` God is God only insofar as he knows himself; his self-knowledge of himself is moreover his self-consciousness in man`.<sup>25</sup>

As is seen, according to Christian philosophers not only Jesus Christ, but also the human being in general is a part of the Holy Trinity and only in the relationship with God he could become the source of true knowledge. However, the two main aspects should be emphasized here. Firstly, from the New Age onward, this centre of gravity passed to nature and the priority was given to studying the human being only as a part of it (nature), that is, as a material being. Secondly, both in the Middle Ages and afterwards the divine revelation was studied and accepted as `melted` either in the human being- Jesus Christ or in nature.

Accordingly, a branch of the unit-idea was developing in the Islamic East on the ground of different religions and principles. The sources here sometimes acted as the parts which completed each other and sometimes as the parts negated each other. According to the founder of Hurufism Fazlullāh Naimi (1340–1394), for instance, `all names are 32`, or `all things derived from 32 letters`. He also thought that `the letter and the word are not separated from the Perfect Man (al-Insan al-kamil)` as well as `the soul and the letter are the same`.<sup>26</sup> It means that the human being who includes in himself the secrets of material and divine worlds is the microcosm and the source of irrational knowledge. For the thinker `the human being is immortal as a reasoning soul and as a being who has a divine attribute. All the attributes of God are immortal...The human being also possesses them, but because of his ignorance he is not aware of this fact`.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, by being liberating from his ignorance, the human could not only understand the secrets of the universe, but also he is even able to become divine.

---

<sup>23</sup> Экхарт М., *Духовные проповеди и рассуждения*, Перев. с нем. М.В.Сабашникова, (Sankt-Peterburg: Азбука, 2000), pp. 62-63.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 155.

<sup>25</sup> Гегель Г.В.Ф., *Философия духа / Энциклопедия философских наук: В 3-х т. Т. 3*, (Moscow: Мысль, 1977), p. 389.

<sup>26</sup> Кулизаде З.А., *Хуруфизм и его представители в Азербайджане*, (Ваку: ЭЛМ, 1970), pp. 126-127.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 118-119.

Or in Ismailism (9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century), which is another Islamic sect, the human being is accepted as a possessor of divine attributes and characteristics as well as a conveyer of divine secrets. For this sect, which accepts the theory of immortal and divine imamate, `the secret mystic knowledge as a basis of religious knowledge belongs only to the imam`.<sup>28</sup> The cause of the existence of the imam is accepted as `the ultimate cause of all things and thus of the existence on Earth.` In one respect, he is a mediator between God and man and a guider who informs him (the human) about every type of knowledge: `They way to knowledge in this world is always open, because the faithful teacher (imam) has been sent to the world.`<sup>29</sup> In addition, it could be said that it includes every type of knowledge and science. `The knowledge of Imams is natural and at the same time supernatural. They could give humans the religious knowledge which they consider them necessary. The ordinary mortals (humans) could not reach the effective religious knowledge without Imam`<sup>30</sup>

It is interesting that in spite of the ruling position of the religion in the Islamic East, the philosophical movements, which accepted nature as the only source, like *barahima* (brahmans), *mulhids* (atheists), *tabiiyyun* (naturalists), *hissiyyun* (sensualists), *zanadiqa* (clandestine apostates), *dahriyyun* (materialists), were also founded there as reverberations of proper ideas of the ancient time. For example, the two famous naturalist philosophers of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, Abu al-Husain Ahmad al-Rawandi (827 – 911) and Abu Bakr Muhammad Ibn Zakariya al-Razi (865-925 or 935), who claimed that `the universe was created not by a creator, but by itself`, tried to deny religion and the idea of God as a result of the meditation of prophet and thus they accepted nature as the one and only source of truth and knowledge.

The similar approach in Eastern philosophy could be encountered in the movement of *Noqtawiyya* founded by Mahmud Pasikhani Jilani (d. 1427) in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. They thought that `everything is in unity and the unity is the point as well as the point is the soil`.<sup>31</sup> Nature, that is, is the beginning of the cognition and its ultimate point. Nevertheless, though the *noqtawits* is considered as an Islamic movement and although they accepted some principles of the religion and supported the conception of the perfection of the human being with mystical knowledge, in fact, they considered nature as the main source which guides to Truth. However, for the reason that they lost the touch with the dominant ideology of the time, these teachings could not be long-lived and soon collapsed.

---

<sup>28</sup> Агаев И.А. *Исмаилийя.*, *Историко-философские очерки становления основных концепций*, (Баку: Еко, 1996), p. 35.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Роузентал Ф, *Торжество знания. Концепция знания в средневековом Исламе*, перев. с англ. С.А.Хомутова, (Moscow: Наука, 1978), p. 150

<sup>31</sup> Кулизаде З.А. , *Хуруфизм и его представители в Азербайджане*, (Баку: ЭЛМ, 1970), p. 254.



Sufism is one of the movements that are distinguished among those which were founded in the Islamic East by its special worldview. As there is an unseen world, which is the place of power and in which, on the one hand all material and non-material things exist potentially and without any form; who can enter there he could directly learn these truths and on the other hand it is a macrocosm that encompasses the human-the microcosm. According to *Wahdat al Wujud* (the Unity of being), which is its main principle, God is the only true being and His creatures, for the reason that they were created from nothing and will return to nothingness and are dependent on the outside will in their creation as well as they get their essence and existence from another being, are the beings which are relative, possible and like a reflection in the mirror they do not possess any essence (Zat) and reality. The Muslim philosopher [Ayn-al Quzat Hamadani (1098-1131), for example, thinks that `God is the cause of the creation of every creature so no being apart from Him has essence and existence in reality`.<sup>32</sup> However, God is not a component of the chain of cause and effect, but is the creator of it and He is the *Necessary Being* who gave existence to possible beings as well as He is the substance which formed their essence: My friend, God is the origin and root of everything as the true substance. He acts with will and love.<sup>33</sup> And for Ibn al-Arabi `God (the Ultimate Reality) is the source (ayn) and essence (zat) of every single creature that the eye sees`<sup>34</sup> Therefore, all creatures are the manifestation of `the Existence`-the Ultimate Reality and the existence and development of the whole universe happens within this `Existence`.

According to Sufism, that is, God is the creator of the only Truth as well as knowledge and idea. And the way which guides to Him is firstly the human being himself and the environment with which he is in contact. .

It becomes clear from the general analysis of either different philosophers or movements and generally from the development line of idea in the Middle Ages that the process of separation of the sources from each other, which started from Ancient time, was not so sharp and the distance between them did not yet grow to an impassable level. For this reason, not depending on geographical location and the basis on which it is grounded, the existence of similar aspects between the manifestations of the same idea could be considered not only as a coincidence, but also a necessity. Therefore, the directions, which spread from the same source like the rays of sunshine, were separated further and with the New Age this sharp confrontation already showed itself.

<sup>32</sup> الميانجي الهمداني ابو المعالي عبد الله بن محمد بن علي بن الحسين بن علي الملقب بعين القضاة. زبدة الحقائق. تقديم و تحقيق ع.عسيران. 44طهران. چاپخانه دانشگاه. 1341 هـ. ص

<sup>33</sup> الميانجي الهمداني ابو المعالي عبد الله بن محمد بن علي بن الحسين بن علي الملقب بعين القضاة. تمهيدات. تقديم و تحقيق ع.عسيران. طهران. 181گلستان. 1373 هـ. ص

<sup>34</sup> ص. 1946 احياء الكتب العربية. ابن عربي محي الدين. فصوص الحكم. التعليقات عليه بقلم ابو العلا عفيفي. دار 107

Certainly, the decisive step here is the complete formation of the approach to the ruling source – the divine revelation of the time. Muhammad Iqbal emphasises here, first of all, the missions of al-Ghazali and Kant which possess a prophetic wisdom: `Kant, consistently with his principles, could not affirm the possibility of a knowledge of God. Ghazali's, finding no hope in analytic thought, moved to mystic experience, and there found an independent content for religion. In this way he succeeded in securing for religion the right to exist independently of science and metaphysics`.<sup>35</sup> It becomes clear that unlike Kant Ghazali left the door of religious-mystical experience open to the limited frame of mind, to wit, both Kant and Ghazali drew the line between rational thinking and religion. In the Islamic East, the way shown by Ghazali on the one hand provided the development in this direction and extended the possibilities of the human being as a spiritual being, but on the other hand, for the reason that rational thinking has limited possibilities, this way caused it `to be locked` in general. At the same time, by preserving the limits of each side, the West opted to develop in depth and learn nature. It should also be highlighted that exactly the approach to the books –sources determined the development of philosophical thought in the New Age.

As from the New Age, till the present time, the West paid its main attention to learning the book of nature as well as science and technology developed independently and separate from religion and obtained in its way new achievements one after another.

On the contrary, the Islamic East attached importance to the Holy revelation. If we compare them, it is possible to come to the conclusion that both the East and the West have run almost to the same extremes in `the books` that they read, merely in different directions.

### ***Modern Times***

At the first glance the main tendency that attracts attentions in Modern Times is that the traditions of the New Age have deepened. The West has become specialized in the book of nature and the East in the Divine book. The important question here is that, besides the one-sided and imperfect approach, the human factor itself has also been valued from this point of view.

The idea is unit and the one-sided study of it causes the last result to be imperfect. It is not a coincidence that the West, which has obtained the last achievements of science and technology, nowadays, has mostly intellectual and spiritual crisis. The works, which is written by the distinguished western thinkers, on `the Fall of Europe`, `the Death of Humanity`, `the Decline of Humanity` and similar subjects and ideas, is the manifestation of the very unknown darkness that the

---

<sup>35</sup> Muhammad Iqbal, "Knowledge and Religious Experience", *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/works/prose/english/reconstruction/01.htm>

West has fallen into. Accordingly, the Islamic East has fallen into economic and political decay, though it has fascinated the world with its spiritual richness and high aesthetic-artistic pearls. It is not a coincidence that being based on the Koran Taha Jabir al-Alwani writes: 'the two readings (the divine book and nature) must be combined, for if they are not allowed to complement one another, the result will be an unbalanced understanding of reality'.<sup>36</sup>

Certainly the both side are aware of the essence of their problems and try to solve them. Dialogues have been set in this subject and books have been written as well as conferences have been held. At the result, the East, which is weaker materially, is being assimilated within the West, which is more powerful and stable. Actually, it is only the annihilation of one side by the other, and 'putting a patch on the idea' without adopting it'. So the idea is cognized imperfectly once again. Considering the principle of the continuity of idea, it could be said that besides preserving their specificities, the way of the salvation of both the East and the West from the crises that they have fallen into, lies in the formation of the correct approach to the sources of the essences of idea as well as truth and existence.

Muhammad Iqbal is one of the thinkers, who approached the question from this perspective. Being based on the philosophy of Sufism, he considers it necessary to read the spiritual world of the human being and considers the two others (history and nature) as its 'further materials': 'Devotional Sufism alone tried to understand the meaning of the unity of inner experience which the Qur'an declares to be one of the three sources of knowledge, the other two being History and Nature'<sup>37</sup> and 'it is in tapping these sources of knowledge that the spirit of Islam is seen at its best.'<sup>38</sup> It becomes clear that by 'the human spirit' and 'inner experience', the philosopher means the divine revelation, or more precisely, using the philosophy of Sufism as a base, we can say that the human being approaches to himself in the context of the divine book.

Salahaddin Khalilov is another philosopher after him who takes a comparatively different approach to this question. He writes: Though it is acceptable within the Islamic worldview, the reading of the third book, to wit, to learn and realize the use possibilities of the spiritual world of the human being from the cosmic mind, has been met with contradictive approaches. Basically, this line that was developed under the name of Sufism is sometimes accepted as an extrinsic value to Islam. However, for us, the major superiority of Islam over other religions appears in this very direction.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> Taha Cabir al-Alwani. *Issues in Contemporary Islamic Thought*. (London-Washington: 2005), pp. 32-33.

<sup>37</sup> Muhammad Iqbal, "The Human Ego – His Freedom and Immortality", *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/works/prose/english/reconstruction/index.htm>

<sup>38</sup> Muhammad Iqbal, "The Spirit of Muslim Culture", *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/works/prose/english/reconstruction/index.htm>

<sup>39</sup> S.Xəlilov. "İslam fəlsəfəsi nə vaxtdan başlayır", *Fəlsəfə və sosial-siyasi elmlər*, p. 24-25.

As is seen, S.Khalilov approaches the question from a larger context and he is the first one who puts forward the idea of 'the three books': the divine book, the book of nature and the universal intellect.<sup>40</sup> Namely he takes into consideration not only to the material and divine aspects of the human being, but also his world of idea. It is worth, here, reminding that for Plato: 'reason herself attains by the power of dialectic, using the hypotheses not as first principles, but only as hypotheses — that is to say, as steps and points of departure into a world which is above hypotheses, in order that she may soar beyond them to the first principle of the whole; and clinging to this and then to that which depends on this, by successive steps she descends again without the aid of any sensible object, from ideas, through ideas, and in ideas she ends.'<sup>41</sup> So S. Khalilov's idea of the three books in fact is Plato's theory of ideas (forms). Plato merely considers the others as a secondary event- as a shadow of the third. In addition, it is possible here to draw an analogy with the notions of 'the world unseen' (*al-`ālam al-ghayb*) and 'fixed essences' (*al-'ayān al-thābita*) in Sufism. However, for the reason that it is the subject of a larger and deeper study, we leave it to another study. To tell the truth, Prof. Khalilov limits his service to 'uniting the teaching of the two books', which is firmly established in Islamic philosophy, with the Platonic teaching of 'the one book', which is different from the previous one, and 'to taking into consideration the equivalence of these three books'.<sup>42</sup> However, one more truth emerges in the context of our interpretation.

As we mentioned above the peak point of these sciences is also philosophy. Prof. Khalilov says: 'Plato took the absolute ideas as the only truth, that is, he took the world of ideas (forms) as the only true book. Plato simply accepted the truths which exist in the material world and nature only as the opinions which is known to the human being; however he did not accept that the absolute truths, to which the human successively comes nearer and which are the purpose of studies and cognition, also exist in nature'.<sup>43</sup> That is to say, by denying the two first books Plato confirmed the last book.

At the first glance it seems to be the third extreme approach. Plato's book however was not limited and as a philosophy of its time it included the two others in a certain meaning. By force of time and circumstance, 'the books' were also separated corresponding to the sciences that were separated from philosophy and this process started with Plato's student Aristotle, who emphasized the importance of 'the book of nature'. Determining the equivalence of each of 'the three books', Salahaddin Khalilov succeeds in abolishing the distinction between different teachings and including them within a more perfect teaching. At the same time, he tries to combine them once again in the

---

<sup>40</sup> See: "Əbu Turxanın "Üç kitab" və "İki işiq" təlimi", *Fəlsəfə və sosial-siyasi elmlər*. № 3-4, 2006, p.121.

<sup>41</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, p. 196

<sup>42</sup> S.Xəlilov. "İslam fəlsəfəsi nə vaxtdan başlayır", *Fəlsəfə və sosial-siyasi elmlər*, p. 25.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., pp. 25-26.

same point. In other words, *the Eternal Wisdom and that started from the same point and then divided into different parts, units in the same point once again.*

### **Conclusion**

Each idea that belongs to the world of ideas includes in itself a certain type of truth, which is intended for the material world and whose manifestation is necessary; it also includes motive and guiding power that we can call it creative energy. It is possible to call this truth the mission of that idea. Idea looks for the optimum form of its manifestation unless truth is realized and energy leads to the proper result and becomes completely consumed. Surely, time and socio-political situation sometimes can generally cause that idea to be forgotten and perverted. Nevertheless, it is also an undeniable fact that no material cause and barrier could prevent the divine power and will. Idea only awaits a proper condition and means as well as a person who will realize it.

### **Bibliography**

1. al-Alwani Taha Cabir. *Issues in Contemporary Islamic Thought*. (London-Washington: 2005).
2. *Bilqamis dastanı*, tr. İ.Vəliyev, Bakı: Gənclik, 1985.
3. Əbu Turxanın “Üç kitab” və “İki işıq” təlimi”, *Fəlsəfə və sosial-siyasi elmlər*. № 3-4, 2006.
4. Gökberk M., *Felsefe tarihi*, İstanbul: Remzi kitabevi, 1999.
5. Ibn Miskawayh, *Al-hikma al-khalida*, Beirut: 1983.
6. İlhan Kutluer. *İslamın klasik çağında felsefe tasavvuru*, İstanbul: İz yayıncılık, 2001.
7. Iqbal Muhammad, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/works/prose/english/reconstruction/01.htm>
8. Khalilov S. İslam fəlsəfəsi nə vaxtdan başlayır // *Fəlsəfə və sosial-siyasi elmlər*, № 1, 2010.
9. Khalilov Salahaddin, “Kəsilməz tarix və dövlətçilik ənənələri” (*The traditions of the continuity of history and stadehood*) // *Ipek yolu*, N 1, 2001.
10. Nicholas of Cusa, *De docta ignorantia*, Book III, trans. Jasper Hopkins, Minnesota: 2001.
11. Plato, *The Republic*, trans. Benjamin Jowett, New York: Dover Publications, 2000.
12. Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. B. Jawett, (28 a), <http://www.ellopos.net/elpenor/physics/plato-timaeus/genesis.asp>

13. Агаев И.А. *Исмаилийя., Историко-философские очерки становления основных концепций*, Ваку: Еко, 1996.
14. Гегель Г.В.Ф., *Философия духа / Энциклопедия философских наук: В 3-х т. Т. 3*, Moscow: Мысль, 1977.
15. Кузанский Н., *Сочинения: В 2-х т. т. 1*, Moscow: Мысль, 1979.
16. Кулизаде З.А., *Хуруфизм и его представители в Азербайджане*, Ваку: Элм, 1970.
17. Наср Сейид Хусейн. “Что такое традиция” // <http://www.newatropatena.narod.ru/p22.htm>
18. Пифагор, *Золотой канон (Pythagoras, The golden verses)*, *Фигуры Эзотерики*, Moscow: ЭКСМО-Пресс, 2001.
19. Платон. *Федон (Plato, Phaedo)* // *Платон, Диалоги книга первая, Т.1*. Moscow: ООО Изд-во ЭКСМО, 2008.
20. Роузентал Ф, *Торжество знания. Концепция знания в средневековом Исламе*, перев. с англ. С.А.Хомутова, Moscow: Наука, 1978.
21. Экхарт М., *Духовные проповеди и рассуждения*, Перев. с нем. М.В.Сабашникова, Sankt-Peterburg: Азбука, 2000.
22. 1946 احياء الكتب العربية. ابن عربي محي الدين. فصوص الحكم. التعليقات عليه بقلم ابو العلا عفيفي. دار
23. 1936 أخبار احلاج. نشر وتصحيح ل. ماسينيون وب. كراوس. باريس. مكتبة لاروز. مطبعة القلم
24. الطوسي ابو نصر السراج. حققه وقدم له وخرج أحاديثه عبد الحلیم محمود وطه عبد الباقي سرور دار الكتب الحديثة بمصر, مكتبة المثني ببغداد, 57, صد. 1960
25. الميانجي الهمداني ابو المعالي عبد الله بن محمد بن علي بن الحسين بن علي الملقب بعين القضاة. زبدة الحقائق. تقديم و تحقيق ع.عسيران. طهران. چاپخانه دانشگاه. 1341 هـ
26. الميانجي الهمداني ابو المعالي عبد الله بن محمد بن علي بن الحسين بن علي الملقب بعين القضاة. تمهيدات. تقديم و تحقيق ع.عسيران. طهران. گلشان. 1373 هـ