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datum prijema / date of receipt: 02.05.2023.  
datum prihvatanja / date of acceptance: 20.06.2023.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52510/sia.v4i1.61>  
UDK: Al-Bašir Lisjud: 130.3  
Essay – Esej

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## OBNOVA GNOSTIČKE MISLI I NJEN UTJECAJ NA RAZVOJ ČOVJEKA

THE RESTORATION OF GNOSTIC THOUGHT AND ITS INFLUENCE  
ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF MAN

## Abstract

The phenomenon of human development seems to them the central question of philosophical and religious thought with the aim of overcoming the state of moral degradation in which man himself has found himself. In this context, Gnostic thought represented one of the more innovative ways of reading through which its promoters offered an educational alternative to delivering man from a situation of moral failure and a state of conflict of civilizations between nations. The following questions arise: What are the conditions for the construction and development of man contained in Gnostic thought? And how can gnosis represent a kind of intellectual and educational school that saves man from value degradation caused by the materialistic discourse that controls human freedom, limits the horizon of his thinking, and narrows the spaces of coexistence and cooperation?

**Key words:** *gnosis, thought, man, upbringing, tolerance*



## THE RESTORATION OF Gnostic Thought AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF MAN▼<sup>1</sup>

Asking questions about gnosis marks a dilemma between two contradictory positions on this problem. In one opinion, gnosis is considered a form of spiritual consciousness that withdraws into itself in search of individual salvation. According to the second, it is a condition for spiritual stability and the foundation for resistance and national liberation. So, what value and moral criterion will help us clarify the essence of this problem, which constantly raises numerous cultural and ontological issues? Is our elite capable of offering a clear theoretical and practical vision of gnosis that will save the nation from humiliation and encourage it to be at the forefront of all prosperity?

Allah Almighty says: *Had We sent down this Quran upon a mountain, you would have certainly seen it humbled and torn apart in awe of Allah.*<sup>2</sup> Al-Qurṭubī asks: "Can the strength of the heart and the strength of the mountains be compared?" Then he replies, "The exalted God has provided His servants with the power by which they can bear all that He has bestowed upon them, all from His immense grace."<sup>3</sup>

The Sufi discourse must be initiated rather than renewed. So, first we need to confirm it. It is at the very beginning that you should devote yourself to it. And that only because of the fact that "the Qur'an emphasizes action more than thought",<sup>4</sup> as the philosopher and poet Muhammed Iqbal puts it. The doctrine of *Taṣawwuf* abounds in spiritual and humane values which the believer wants to practice by obeying and striving for heights. Values are active and do not evolve. Truthfulness, responsibility, awareness, contrition, and devotion are the same in the past, present and will be in the future. However, when these values become active, they inspire the human being and encourage him to value creativity and emotional and material giving in moments when the spirit reaches the highest horizons, overcoming the soul that is prone to evil, and the one that reproaches itself as well as the one that is peaceful, with the hope that that spirit will become satisfied, and the Lord will be satisfied with him. In this way, the values from the *carefully guarded Tablet* are transformed into a primeval driving force that inhabits the deepest depths of man during the ceaseless battle in which man fights against himself and the yoke of his vanity. The driving force of

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▼<sup>1</sup> The text was created on the basis of a debate at an online international symposium organized by the Central College of Islamic Sciences at Passion International Open University in the United States of America on March 31, 2021, under the title "Sufi discourse and the issue of renewal".

▼<sup>2</sup> *Sūrah al-Ḥaṣhr*, verse 21.

▼<sup>3</sup> Al-Qurṭubī, Abū Abdullah Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad Ibn Abī Bakr. *Al-Jāmi' li-ahkām al-Qur'ān wa al-mubayyin limā taḍammahu min al-sunnati wa āy al-furqān*. Edited by Abdullah Ibn Abduh Al-Muhsin Al-Turki. Foundation "Al-Risāla", Vol. I; 2006. p. 9.

▼<sup>4</sup> Iqbal, Muḥammad. *Tajdīd al-Fikr al-dīnī fī al-islām*. Arabic translation by Muḥammad Yusuf Adas; Introduction by al-Shaymā' al-Damardāsh al-'Aqālī, Dār al-Kitāb al-Maṣrī, al-Qāhirah, Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, Beirut, 2011, p. 9.

slavery, knowledge and the *caliphate* on earth makes thinking about the infinite possible, and even real, because, as it is transmitted to us from the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, "if you did not speak too much, you would hear what I hear."<sup>5</sup>



ILLUSTRATION ~ Kamāl ud-Dīn Behzād Herawī, *Portrait of a dervish*, 1500 (Timurid Period). © Private Collection: Bichzd. S. 176.

ILUSTRACIJA ~ Kamal ud-Din Behzad, *Portret derviša*, 1500. (Timuridski period). © Privatna zbirka: Bichzd. S. 176.

It is wrong to try to limit gnosis to hermitage niches. The aim of this thinking is to muffle the gnosis or to completely ignore it as a source of inspiration and spiritual strength that will be the starting point of liberation movements. In this sense, we should recall that the gathering spaces are merely barracks for soldiers, dwellings for ascetics, a monastery for pious people, shelters for students, schools for students, classrooms for Qur'an reciters and homes for teachers dedicated to teaching. The fear of gnosis probably arises due to the fact that spiritual knowledge is

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▼<sup>5</sup> *Hadith* is narrated by Ahmed.

reconciled with the problems of the community, which frees it from the spiritual and material perversion in which it found itself. Therefore, the champion of spirituality in Islam, our teacher Muḥammad, secluded himself in the cave of *Hīrā'*. In this he was followed by the inhabitants of the sofa, for whom Ibn Khaldūn says that "at the time of the Prophet, peace be upon him, they were not specific in the way of worship, but were a model for the Companions in worship and performing *Sharī'ah* duties.",<sup>▼6</sup> because in the shadowy, rear part of the Prophet's house in Medina they made a place for prayer and night prayer, which still exists. "They are rejoicing in Allah's bounties and being delighted for those yet to join them. There will be no fear for them, nor will they grieve."<sup>▼7</sup>

Our Arab and Islamic history remembers several Sufi movements that assimilated education and defense of homelands. "We must not forget the uprising of Sheikh Seid al-Kurdi al-Nakshibandi in Turkey, the struggle of Sheikh Shamil al-Nakshibandi in Turkestan, the Alemgir movement in India, which is the result of the efforts of Sheikh al-Faruqi al-Mujeddidi, and the resistance of the Senusi in Libya and the dervish movement in Sudan",<sup>▼8</sup> who led his people in spirituality and defensive-liberation struggle, and defeated his opponents and won victory for his people "which [also] explains the extraordinary progress of the Idrisian state in areas that were disobedient even to local leaders, but surrendered to that spiritual power enjoyed by prominent individuals, which played an important role in paving the way for many sheikhs who would later lead the *ṭarīqat*"<sup>▼9</sup> in the Maghreb countries.



ILLUSTRATION ~ Theodor Horschelt, *Captured Shamil before the commander-in-chief Prince Bariatsinsky on 25 August 1859.*

ILUSTRACIJA ~ Theodor Horschelt, zarobljen Šamil pred vrhovnim zapovjednikom princom Bariatinskim 25. avgusta 1859.

<sup>▼6</sup> Ibn Khaldūn, Abū Zayd Abdurrahman ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad. *Shifā' al-sā'ili wa tahdhib al-masā'ili*. Ed. Muḥammad Muṭī' al-Ḥāfiz, Dār al-fikr al-Mu'āšir, Bairut, Dār al-fikr, Damasq, 1996., p. 53.

<sup>▼7</sup> *Sūrah Āl 'Imrān*, verse 170.

<sup>▼8</sup> Ḥawwā' Sa'īd. *Tarbiyatunā al-rūhiyyah*. Dār al-salām liṭṭibā'ah wa al-našr wa al-tawzī' wa al-tarjamah, 1999., p. 11.

<sup>▼9</sup> Banabdullah, Abdulaziz. *Mu'allimah al-taṣawwuf al-islāmī*. Dār našr al-ma'rifah, al-Rabāt, al-Maghrib, 2011, Vol. I, p. 90.

Spiritual authority finds its theoretical and practical realization exclusively within the framework of political authority. However, it seems that the combination of Sufism and politics is plunged into the framework of misunderstanding of faith and deviant thinking, while the very origin of Sufism is primarily political, economic, social and educational. Thus, Sufism is a method, embodied in man and in everything that touches him in the context of the inevitable conformity of spiritual and worldly authority.

Linguistically speaking, the root of the word politics (*siyāsah*) comes from the verb manage and guide (*sāse*). *Taṣawwuf* in this sense is governed by the believer and in his daily life, in a spiritual and material perspective. It is, indeed, a doctrine that reflects the tangle of moral and spiritual values that shape the human mind and thinking, and encourage it to follow virtue and avoid scourge, not only on an individual level but also at the level of a leader and *calif*. In this field, our sheikh, the purple jewel,<sup>▼10</sup> honored us with his manuscript "Divine Guidelines for the Betterment of the Human Kingdom", in which he presented us with a clear vision of policy and governance. This manuscript is more substantive and deeper than the book *The Social Contract* of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.<sup>▼11</sup> Rousseau sought to question the system of the relationship between society and individuals, and between the state and individual. The work "Divine Guidance" describes the relations between individuals, the state, authorities and, finally, the relationship of all of them to the Creator or the Truth. It is a constitution that regulates the communication relationship between God as the Truth and man as a being, because the complete vision of religion is not limited to man but includes existence as such and all that it contains such as stone, wool, earth, sky, stars, planets, palm trees, bees, horses, night, crops, and fruits. Existence points us to the Creator, and the Creator points us to existence: *The signs are also within you*.<sup>▼12</sup> Hence the difficulties in understanding the incarnation (*al-ḥulūl*) and the transcendent unity of being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), and the unity of spiritual conviction (*waḥdat al-shuhūd*). "When a Sufi says: 'I see nothing but God', he is in a state of unity of spiritual realization, and when he says: 'In everything I look at I see God', he is in a state of transcendent unity of being,<sup>▼13</sup> and Al-Hallaj said, 'I saw nothing without seeing God in it.'<sup>▼14</sup>

We do not deny that *Taṣawwuf* was influenced by several Platonic concepts to the extent of great similarity and intertwining of ideas due to the understanding of Islam in other nations with different religions and customs. However, this does not nullify the historical role of *Taṣawwuf* and its civilizational value imposed on Muslims, and even man in general, just as one should not neglect the power of *Taṣawwuf* to restore the community, and hence build man in a way that serves another man while avoiding all kinds of conflict, warfare and exclusion.

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▼10 One of the titles of Ibn Arabi which was assigned to him by his followers.

▼11 Jean-Jacques Rousseau was born. Is 1712, died 1778.

▼12 *Sūrah al-Dhāriyāt*, verse 8.

▼13 Si'rān, Ṣuḥaib. *Muqaddimah fī al-taṣawwuf*. Dār al-ma'rifah, Ṭab'ah al-'ajlūl, Damasq, 1989., p. 83.

▼14 Abbās, Qāsim Muḥammad. *al-Ḥallāj: Al-a'māl al-kāmilah*. Maktabah al-iskandariyyah, 2002, p. 252.





ILLUSTRATION – The impoverished Dervish of Faryab crosses the river on his prayer mat, painting by Safavid Isfahan, circa 1526.  
 ILUSTRACIJA – Osiromašeni derviš iz Faryaba prelazi rijeku na svojoj molitvenoj prostirci, rad isfahanskih Safavida, oko 1526.

Therefore, we can only confirm what Corbin mentioned in his book "The Creative Imagination in the Tasawwuf of ibn Arabi" about the great regret of the state of Western philosophy, which has given up contemplation and spirit. It has thus transformed into a dead body or into an upright statue, devoid of any kind of resurrection. This philosophy began to inherit dead seeds that carry in their depths the conditions of self-destruction. The natural development of philosophical thought can only be realized through the accumulation of knowledge in the light of noble human values and original meanings that connect a series of ideas, religion, and the history of peoples. Western philosophy, according to Corbin, cries out for "fragments from the biography of the Messiah" in order to stand firmly on its feet and preserve vitality, harmony and selflessness.





ILLUSTRATION ~ Croki drawing from the *dervish tekke* by Richard Dadd (English painter of the Victorian era, known for his orientalist scenes), Turkey 1842-1843. and an Ottoman miniature of one of the *dervishes*.

The absence of the idea of Christ in Western philosophy led to its objectification and anthropomorphism, and lost its meaning and vitality, unlike the Islamic philosophy of, which remained firm, although it was undermined by both stagnation and languishing in some periods of its history. It remains capable of renewal and transcendence because "it is a virtue of the Qur'an, as the 'signs' of the eternal word that it can always produce new phenomena",<sup>▼15</sup> that is, it has the ability to repeat creation, because of the "spiritual, an inner interpretation which reaches out and transforms all material phenomena."<sup>▼16</sup> For Corbin in the Qur'an, it is not the external meaning of speech that matters, but its depth, significance and hiddenness, which gives the self and existence an open horizon towards the Absolute.

The spiritual crisis that afflicts the West further emphasizes the responsibility of the Gnostic weeping and the stake in *Taşawwuf* in the construction and development of man who should theoretically and practically embody that we are the "best community of people".<sup>▼17</sup> *Taşawwuf* centres and schools should not only be places where good people and restorers gather, but should be active throughout the country, transmitting refined human values and showing the wonderful image of humanity offered by Islam as "mercy to all worlds"<sup>▼18</sup>

Therefore, solutions that are difficult to defend and implement should be offered. Today, the avant-garde elite, as well as numerous honest and educated people, are required to act in silence, "because honesty is the sword of God, which touches it and cuts it",<sup>▼19</sup> as Zunnun Al-Misri says. Our societies today need sublime and real spiritual upbringing through the right path to God, and this implies liberation from the shackles of self-love, salvation from ignorance, overcoming some of the *ṭarīqat* customs that aim to enchant individuals with dance and throw them into ecstasy, which ultimately deprives *Taşawwuf* of its meaning and turns it into a commodity that is offered and sold, or adjusted to the demands of the authorities, political calculations and social spectacles.<sup>▼20</sup> Al-Junaïd said, "If you see a Sufi taking care of his appearance, know that there is ruin within it".<sup>▼21</sup> The people around the Sufis did not want to be distinguished by their clothing, but wore woollen robes to be more similar to them, and let's remember that our champion Omer also sewed his own clothes with leather patches.

Original Sufi thought realizes its mission only by following the approach of beneficence – *iḥsān* in word and deed, and offering a map of a wide spectrum, and this is precisely what represents a true challenge for the champions of this doctrine and all those who have dedicated themselves to education. In the context

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▼15 Corbin, Henry. *Al-khayyāl al-khallāq fī taşawwuf Ibn 'Arabī*. Trans. Farīd al-Zāhī, Manşūrat Marsam, al-Rabāt, 2006, p. 33.

▼16 *Ibid.*, p. 33.

▼17 *Sūrah Āl 'Imrān*, verse 110

▼18 *Sūrah al-Anbiyā'*, verse 107.

▼19 Take a closer look at: Ibn Khaldūn. *Shifā' al-sā'ilī wa tahdhib al-masā'ilī*; s.a., p. 181.

▼20 Al-Junaïd Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Al-Junaïd al-Baghdādī (215-298, H).

▼21 Quote taken from: *al-Risālah lilqushairī*, 2/522.

of a reality dominated by moral perversion and the culture of globalization, "no one is forced to convert to Islam, and when a person makes his principles known, one should accept his ideas and teachings and act accordingly. It is therefore a matter of sincere self-determination"<sup>▼22</sup> – as Michel Onfray clearly describes.<sup>▼23</sup> Therefore, the completion of the project of realizing a prominent way of education is the responsibility of everyone who believes in the humane role of the Gnostic message and its central importance in building a human being through spiritual elevation and striving towards the highest horizon that gives the individual strength and inspiration, as well as the power to lead and innovate.



ILLUSTRATION ~ Mir Sayyid Ali, *Portrait of a Sufi*, from the Album of Prince Salim ca. 1556/60.  
The original Sufi thought achieves its mission by following the approach of charity in word and deed.

ILUSTRACIJA ~ Mir Sayyid Ali, *Portret sufije*, iz Albuma princa Salima ca. 1556/60.  
Izvorna sufijska misao svoju misiju ostvaruje slijedeći pristup dobročinstva riječju i djelom.

▼22 Onfray, Michelle. *Nafy al-Lāhūt*, Arabic translation: Mubārak al-Karūsī, Dār al-jamal, Baghdad, 2012., p. 233.

▼23 The French philosopher.



When we talk about Western societies, we should not expect *Taşawwuf* institutions to spread in urban areas and cultural institutions. However, through the Gnostic message we can offer a foundation for opening wider horizons of human thought, which will free him from the worship of the golden calf presented under the guise of rationalism, science and technology, which "attack the living human heart and root out of it the hidden wealth that lies in its hidden depths",<sup>▼24</sup> as we can understand from the word of Farīduddīn Al-Attār.<sup>▼25</sup> Therefore, the human being is dehumanized and turned into a thing and a commodity, therefore a theoretical discourse is necessary through which the Sufi perspective will be re-established, which will no longer be fragmented and limited to the religious one, but will represent a universal human discourse. Through this discourse, hope will be renewed in the realization of religious tolerance, fraternity among people within the framework of diversity and pluralism. Furthermore, a practical vision of the world that unites the demands of the times such as technological and communication progress and a religious worldview that is embodied through spirituality and religious practice is necessary. Therefore, "epochs of faith are epochs of rationality",<sup>▼26</sup> hence the idea that man must be delivered from the position of means and the state of exploitation, and placed in a position of creativity, humanism and the humanity of man as an honourable creature, not as a means of production. In this sense, Gnostic discourse is not only realized in a theory that transcends the human power of cognition, but rather becomes an active and realistic discourse that seeks to provide psychological and spiritual answers to real questions and ontological concerns that burden human existence.

According to people who follow God's path, the height of *zakāt* is that everything belongs to God. Therefore, human existence is from God and for God, as clearly stated in the revelation, *I created humans and jinn only to serve me*.<sup>▼27</sup> The role of those who surrender to spiritual enthusiasm<sup>▼28</sup> is an effort to truly revive the active meaning, freed from all forms of lies, and to achieve peace between people as brothers. The renewal of Sufi thought begins with the renewal of our ethical, educational and spiritual self, which is represented in the Qur'anic verse that says: *Every moment He is in motion*,<sup>▼29</sup> and this is achieved through a spiritual struggle that results in "the most beautiful relationship to God, public and secret deeds and in accordance with His regulations".<sup>▼30</sup> In this way, Gnostic thought is transformed into a universal message that aims to build a grateful and perfect

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▼24 See more in: *Manṭiq al-ṭay* 5. part, p. 243, written by the philosopher and Sufi Poet Farīduddīn al-Aṭṭār; Also see: Iqbāl, Muḥammed. *Tajdīd al-fikr ad-dīnī fī al-islām*; s.a., p. 14.

▼25 Farīduddīn al-Aṭṭār, (513-586 H), Nīsabūr.

▼26 Take a closer look at: A.N.. Whitehead. *Religion in the Making*; Also see: Iqbāl, Muḥammed. *Tajdīd al-fikr ad-dīnī fī al-islām*; s.a, p. 15.

▼27 *Sūrah al-Dhāriyāt*, verse 56

▼28 Spiritual enthusiasm and sweetness In the knowledge of God It relates to the spiritual Light bokmāl truth reflects Your the apparition in hearts Selected people, Well by Such a chosen one. Distinguish truth from falsehood a dand that Not find out from A book or Else. Take a closer look at: al-Jurjānī. *al-Ta'rifāt*. p. 93.

▼29 *Sūrah al-Rḥmān*, verse 29.

▼30 See also: Ibn Khaldūn. *Shifā' al-sā'ili wa tahdhīb al-masā'ili*; s.a., p. 54.

person, who will inherit the earth and manage it in the best way in accordance with the Prophet's, peace be upon him, catchphrase "to be a grateful slave"<sup>▼31</sup> as the honourable Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her.



ILLUSTRATION ~ *Dancing Dervishes*, Folio from a *Divan of Hafiz*, ca. 1480. © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.  
ILUSTRACIJA ~ *Ples derviša*, ilustracija iz *Hafizovog divana*, oko 1480. © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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<sup>▼31</sup> The *ḥadīth* is narrated by Aisha, r.a.

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▼<sup>31</sup> *Hadis* prenosi Aiša, r.a.