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PERSON, WORLD, TRUTH: A PHILOSOPHICAL-IRFANIC INTERPRETATION

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Abstract. Throughout human history, the eternal questions about the person, the world and truth have been central to the attention of philosophers and thinkers and their interrelationship, the place of the person in the world and the pursuit of knowledge of truth have become the main theme of research in philosophy and irfan. The article analyzes the interrelationship of this triad in the context of the history of philosophy, interpretations in various philosophical schools and Sufi views, the place of the person in being, the pursuit of knowledge of truth, the common and different aspects of irfan and philosophy, the uniqueness of irfanic knowledge and the influence on the spiritual perfection of the person are revealed through the prism of reason and heart. It also examines the significance of philosophical and irfanic values for modern society in solving the problems of preserving the spiritual orientation of the person in the context of globalization. The possibilities of creating an alternative worldview platform for the XXI century by synthesizing the views of philosophy and irfan on the person, the world and truth are presented.

Keywords: person, world, truth, philosophy, irfan, reflection, spirituality, reason, heart, values, being, knowledge, contemplation, interpretation, synthesis, analysis, globalization, spiritual orientation, alternative worldview, XXI century.

Аннотация. На протяжении истории человечества вечные вопросы о человеке, мире и истине были в центре внимания философов и мыслителей, а их взаимосвязь, место человека в мире, стремление к познанию истины стали основной темой исследований в философии и ирфана. В статье анализируется взаимосвязь этой триады в контексте истории философии, толкование в различных философских школах и суфийских взглядах, место человека в бытии, стремление к познанию истины, общие и различные аспекты ирфана и философии, своеобразие ирфанического познания, влияние на духовное совершенствование человека раскрываются через призму разума и сердца. Также рассматривается значение философских и ирфанических ценностей для современного общества в решении проблем сохранения духовной ориентации человека в условиях глобализации. Представлены возможности создания альтернативной мировоззренческой платформы для XXI века путем синтеза взглядов философии и ирфана на человека, мир и истину.

Ключевые слова: человек, мир, истина, философия, ирфан, размышление, духовность, разум, сердце, ценности, бытие, познание, созерцание, толкование, синтез, анализ, глобализация, духовная ориентация, альтернативное мировоззрение, XXI век.

Introduction. In a world striving for globalization, it is crucial to remember that every new piece of knowledge, every concept, principle, or theory, is born within the context of a

specific culture and civilization. The Western world traditionally relies on rational thought, logic and empirical data in its pursuit of truth. However, the East, with its rich history and spiritual traditions, offers an alternative and equally valuable, path to knowledge. Eastern thought, with its unique style, nuances of expression and interpretation of knowledge, relies on intuition, inner experience and the “eye of the heart”.

The “eye of the heart” is the capacity of the individual to perceive, sense and comprehend their inner world; a superior form of cognition grounded in divine endowment and spiritual experience, transcending the limitations of reason alone. An individual with an open “eye of the heart”, “sees” the truth of being, divine beauty and hidden meanings in a way that is inaccessible to ordinary vision. They understand the essence of things, the hearts of others and the divine design of the world. To unlock this faculty, one must turn inward, cultivate their “nafs” (ego), purify their heart and draw closer to Allah. This cultivation involves a deliberate process of self-reflection and spiritual discipline, leading to a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of all things and the ultimate source of reality.

The question then arises: How can we reconcile the strengths of Eastern and Western approaches to the pursuit of truth? How can we establish interdisciplinary research centers, uniting scholars from diverse fields, to collaboratively investigate complex problems such as the nature of consciousness, the ethics of technology and the societal ramifications of globalization? Furthermore, considering the unique characteristics of the modern era, how can we design educational programs that cultivate critical thinking and analytical skills necessary for discerning disinformation and manipulation?

Seeking answers to these questions holds the key to a more comprehensive and complete understanding of the world and to building a more just and harmonious society. This requires a concerted effort to bridge the gap between different epistemological traditions and to foster a global intellectual community that values both reason and intuition in the pursuit of knowledge. This also necessitates the development of new pedagogical approaches that equip individuals with the tools to navigate the complexities of the information age and to engage in constructive dialogue across cultural boundaries.

Literature Review. A student of the ancient Greek thinker Socrates (d. 399 BCE.) and one of the founders of Greek philosophy, mathematician and writer, Plato (d. 348 BCE.) understood truth as a supernatural, independent, ideal essence corresponding to the “world of ideas” and believed that human knowledge was only true to the extent that their soul was involved in this world of ideas. Plato’s theory of Forms posits that true reality exists in a realm beyond the physical world and that our understanding of truth is derived from our ability to access these Forms through reason and contemplation.

The concept of truth was first put forward by Plato’s student, the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle (d. 384 BCE.), defining it as “a correspondence between statements and the actual state of affairs, that is, to say of what exists that it exists and of what does not exist that it does not exist” [1.141.]. Aristotle’s correspondence theory of truth became a cornerstone of Western epistemology, emphasizing the importance of empirical observation and logical reasoning in determining the validity of knowledge.

One of the greatest philosophers and theologians of the Middle Ages, the Italian Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274 CE.) recognized the existence of truth in reason, noting that each thing is called true to the extent that it relates to the reason with which it is connected. Aquinas integrated Aristotelian philosophy with Christian theology, arguing that truth could be discovered through both reason and divine revelation.

The German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel (d. 1831 CE.) understood and expressed the “true thing as the activity of thinking” [2.196.] and viewed truth as a process of dialectical formation

of knowledge in the sphere of pure thought. Hegel's dialectical method emphasizes the historical and dynamic nature of truth, suggesting that knowledge evolves through a process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis.

In Buddhism, truth is linked to the practical attainment of a state of understanding (nirvana). This enlightenment is achieved through meditation, ethical conduct and the cultivation of wisdom, ultimately leading to the cessation of suffering. In Taoism, there is no expressed truth, as it loses its connection with the moment of truth. Taoism emphasizes living in harmony with the Tao, the fundamental principle of the universe, which is beyond human comprehension and cannot be fully articulated.

In Hinduism, truth is multifaceted and cannot be expressed holistically. Truth manifests through the holistic experience of "comprehension" [3.7.]. Hinduism recognizes the existence of multiple paths to truth, each suited to different individuals and their unique spiritual inclinations. In Christianity, there exists truth and a path to eternal happiness (hedonism), or bliss (eudaimonism), achieved through it, as well as falsehood and a path to eternal suffering, to which it leads. Christian theology emphasizes the importance of adhering to the teachings of Jesus Christ and living a life of love, compassion and forgiveness in order to attain salvation.

In Islam, truth is Allah and living in accordance with the ayats (verses) and hadiths (sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad) is the only path leading the individual to perfection. In the Quran, Allah is mentioned under the name Al-Haqq (The Truth) in several places. In Surah Al-Hajj, verse 62 states: "That is because Allah is the Truth and that which they invoke other than Him is falsehood and because Allah is the Exalted, the Grand". This ayat confirms that Allah is the absolute Truth and all else that is worshipped besides Him is falsehood. This concept of Tawhid (the oneness of God) is central to Islamic belief, emphasizing the absolute sovereignty and uniqueness of Allah as the ultimate source of truth and guidance.

Abu Nasr al-Farabi (d. 950 CE.), an eminent thinker of the Middle Ages, was not only a philosopher but also an encyclopedist whose knowledge encompassed music, mathematics, astronomy and medicine. His pursuit of knowledge of truth was reflected in his efforts to familiarize the Islamic world with the philosophy of Aristotle, in writing commentaries on his works, as well as in his works on logic, ethics, politics and other sciences. Al-Farabi's legacy in these areas greatly influenced subsequent generations of scholars and earned him the honorary title of "The Second Teacher" after Aristotle. Al-Farabi's contributions to logic, in particular, helped to refine the methods of reasoning and argumentation used in Islamic scholarship.

According to Abu Nasr Farabi, the knowledge of truth depends on the maturity of reason. Reason resides in the heart of the individual and its perfection is achieved through syncretization (fusion) with the "active intellect". In the "active intellect" are present all forms of truth, starting with the highest degree of being, that is, the First Cause (Allah). Truth is one, therefore there cannot be multiple philosophies [4.126.]. Abu Nasr Farabi believed in the unity of truth and considered philosophy the sole identification of truth. From this point of view, there is a connection between the views of the thinker and Sufism. This emphasis on the unity of truth aligns with the Sufi concept of Wahdat al-Wujud (the unity of existence), which posits that all of reality is ultimately a manifestation of the divine.

Abu Rayhan al-Biruni (d. 1043 CE.), a prominent polymath of the Middle Ages, considered truth to be the "correspondence of knowledge with reality". This definition of truth expresses the fundamental principle of his scientific approach. It implies that true knowledge must accurately reflect objective reality, that is, correspond to it. The thinker suggests that truth is not merely a subjective opinion, assumption, or belief, but knowledge obtained through experience, observation, analysis and scientific proof. Al-Biruni's emphasis on empirical

evidence and rigorous methodology laid the foundation for the development of scientific inquiry in the Islamic world.

Al-Biruni's views on truth are also related to his philosophical and religious views. He sought to harmonize the teachings of Islam with scientific knowledge. For Abu Rayhan al-Biruni, science and religion were not opposing but complementary methods of knowledge. He believed that both reason and revelation could lead to a deeper understanding of the universe and our place within it. This perspective highlights the importance of integrating different sources of knowledge in the pursuit of truth.

Research Methodology. The research methodology is grounded in the principle of objectivity in scientific inquiry and assumes an objective approach to the topic. The study employs methods such as historicity, logical consistency, continuity, systematic analysis, hermeneutics, tafsir (Quranic exegesis) and comparative analysis. Data is collected through archival documents and scholarly literature. The analysis of data utilizes methods of statistical analysis, content analysis and thematic analysis. This methodology aims to ensure the reliability, validity and practical significance of the research. The inclusion of tafsir as a method highlights the importance of interpreting religious texts within their historical and cultural contexts, while the emphasis on systematic analysis underscores the need for a rigorous and structured approach to the research process.

Analysis and Results. Truth, as a philosophical and epistemological characteristic of thought in relation to a subject or phenomenon, is defined by the correspondence of thought and knowledge with objective reality. In our reasoning, truth is a vital orientation point, a striving for the correct reflection of reality in human consciousness, the correspondence of one's thoughts and knowledge about the world to how that world actually exists. Truth, as a key question of cognition, is linked to human thoughts, ideas, beliefs and knowledge about objects and phenomena.

There are two paths to knowing truth: one through rational and irrational human knowledge and the other through inner knowledge, that is, comprehending the Truth and achieving "tajalli" (manifestations) of Allah. This second way of knowing Allah is of great importance and feelings such as rapture, passion, inspiration and love serve as the main fundamental principles on this path. Irfan points the way to achieving truth precisely through this inner knowledge. Philosophy, on the other hand, seeks to know truth by relying more on reason and logic. Therefore, philosophy and irfan are two different but complementary methods of knowing truth. Their harmony allows a person to achieve perfect knowledge and spiritual maturity. In modern society, the significance of these two approaches is increasing, as they help individuals to understand the world and find themselves.

Since things in the world are organized into a specific system, their cognition also occurs in the form of a specific system. To understand a system, it is necessary to deterministically define the introverted characteristics of its elements and the connections between them. Climbing the steps of cognition, at each new stage, a person seeks to find answers to the questions: "How is being known?" "Are there limits to cognition?". This aspiration, in essence, is a manifestation of the boundless desire to know the Truth.

Recognizing the complexity of the cognitive process and that reason does not always prevail, a person connects the problem of their transience in the eternal world with reason: reason is a means for a person to transition from the transient to the eternal. Consequently, reason allows a person not only to know the world but also to find their place in it, linking their life with eternal values and meanings. This, in turn, is another manifestation of the pursuit of Truth: through their reason, a person seeks to know not only the material world but also the

eternal and unchanging essence of Truth. Achieving Truth is the main goal of a person on the path to spiritual perfection.

However, the path to Truth is not limited to rational cognition alone. Many spiritual traditions, including Sufism, emphasize the importance of intuition, experience and spiritual practice in comprehending higher reality. Sufism, as a transcendent current in Islam, offers a special path to Truth based on spiritual experience and self-improvement. This path involves purifying the heart, cultivating love for God and seeking direct experience of the divine.

In the teachings of Sufism, the Egyptian ascetic Dhun Nun al-Misri was one of the first to speak about truth: “he was the first to translate “isharat” (allusion) into “ibarat” (expression) and speak about the tariqa (path)” [5.29.]. While his words about Sharia knowledge were accepted by both the “khawass” (elite) and the “awamm” (common people), his words about true knowledge (knowledge of tawakkul – reliance on God, mu’amalat – ethical conduct and muhabbat – love) were accepted only by the “khawass”. Dhun Nun al-Misri’s words about true knowledge were rejected even by the “khawass”, because this knowledge was “beyond the reason and power of the people”. This highlights the esoteric nature of Sufi teachings, which are often accessible only to those who have undergone rigorous spiritual training.

According to Abu Sa’id Abu’l-Khayr (d. 1049 CE.), a prominent Sufi from the village of Meikhene in Turkmenistan, truth is the manifestation of everything in knowledge and knowledge is the transformation of everything into truth. This implies that truth is revealed through knowledge. When a person gains knowledge about something, they begin to understand its true nature, its essence. Knowledge enables a person to see things as they truly are and not through the prism of their prejudices or delusions. This aligns with the Sufi emphasis on purifying the heart and mind in order to perceive reality without distortion.

Truth manifests when knowledge illuminates a subject, revealing its authentic characteristics and connections. The process of cognition and acquiring knowledge leads to a transformation of human understanding of the world. When one learns something new, it changes their perception of reality, bringing them closer to the truth. Knowledge does not simply add information; it transforms the individual’s consciousness, allowing them to see the world more clearly and fully. In this sense, knowledge “transforms” everything it touches into truth, making it more understandable and meaningful. This transformative power of knowledge is a recurring theme in Sufi thought, as it is believed to lead to spiritual growth and enlightenment.

Collectively, Abu Sa’id Mayhani’s statements emphasize the interrelationship and interdependence of truth and knowledge, i.e., truth cannot exist without knowledge and knowledge without the pursuit of truth loses its value. Truth is the goal of cognition and knowledge is the means of achieving it. This highlights the dynamic interplay between the seeker and the sought, where the pursuit of knowledge is simultaneously a journey towards self-discovery and a revelation of the divine.

In Sufism, “khawass” refers to a person knowledgeable about Sufi knowledge, while “awamm” refers to a person enslaved by their nafs (ego), blind in heart and ignorant of God. While the widely used word “ammah” (masses) refers to all of humanity today, the word “awamm” cannot be used in relation to all subjects. This distinction underscores the Sufi emphasis on the importance of spiritual discernment and the need to differentiate between those who are truly seeking knowledge of God and those who are simply following their own desires.

The renowned Sufi of Herat, Abdullah Ansari (d. 1088 CE.), left us a valuable legacy in the form of his classification of paths to knowledge. He did not limit himself to a simple division between knowledge and ignorance but subtly distinguished between levels of understanding corresponding to different stages of a person’s spiritual development. This nuanced approach

reflects the Sufi emphasis on the progressive nature of spiritual growth, where understanding deepens with experience and practice.

The thinker pointed to several types of cognition, including that based on evidence, characteristic of the ordinary person; that based on arguments, characteristic of the knowledgeable; and intellectual-sensory cognition, which is an intermediate stage between both types of cognition [6.21.]. This classification highlights the different ways in which individuals can access knowledge, depending on their level of spiritual maturity and intellectual capacity. It also suggests that there is a hierarchy of knowledge, with some forms of understanding being more profound and transformative than others.

In our opinion, the first cognition through evidence is the most accessible and widespread type, characteristic of the majority of the masses. They rely on obvious facts, logical inferences and empirical experience. This is the knowledge that a person receives from textbooks, observations and everyday life. This type of knowledge is often based on external sources and requires a minimal level of critical engagement.

The second cognition through arguments requires more extensive analysis and critical thinking. It is characteristic of those who possess certain knowledge and are able to justify their beliefs with logical arguments and reasoning. This is the knowledge that we gain as a result of study, discussions and scientific research. This level of knowledge requires a more active engagement with the material and the ability to critically evaluate different perspectives.

The third, intellectual-sensory cognition, is an exceptionally complex type of cognition that connects rational understanding with sensory experience. It involves not only knowledge but also an inner awareness of truth that comes through intuition, inspiration and spiritual experience. This is the knowledge that a person receives through meditation, introspection and communication with wise mentors. This type of knowledge transcends the limitations of reason and relies on direct experience and intuitive understanding.

It is important to note that Abdullah Ansari did not consider these types of cognition to be mutually exclusive. On the contrary, he saw them as successive steps on the path to true understanding. A person can begin with simple cognition through evidence, then move on to cognition through arguments and finally reach intellectual-sensory cognition, which is the most complete and exhaustive. This progressive model of knowledge acquisition highlights the importance of lifelong learning and the continuous pursuit of wisdom.

There exists a systematic hierarchy in the study of knowledge, where the first level consists of knowledge assimilated by the human mind and intellect. A rational person approaches thought, reality (objective reality) and phenomena with doubt that goes beyond simple logic. This is characteristic of the majority (the general public). This knowledge is called "Sharia" (Islamic law). This represents the foundational level of understanding, where knowledge is acquired through reason and adherence to established principles.

The second level consists of knowledge assimilated by the human heart and this is a grace and gift from Allah to those servants whom He has chosen. The arif (knower) is free from doubt and accepts every event and phenomenon as a blessing (mercy) from Allah [7.13.]. This knowledge is "ma'rifa" (gnosis or inner knowledge). This level of understanding transcends the limitations of reason and involves a direct, intuitive connection with the divine.

The third level of knowledge exists between the arif and Allah and their secret is not revealed to Homo sapiens (Reasonable Man), as it surpasses human understanding and only the prophets and messengers know about it. This knowledge is haqiqa (truth). This represents the highest level of understanding, which is beyond human comprehension and is reserved for those who have been chosen by God.

In Irfan (Sufi gnosis), knowledge is understood as Truth (Haqq) and truth is understood as Allah, because Haqq is one of the names of Allah. Proof of this is contained in the 6th verse of Surah Al-Hajj: “That is because Allah is the Truth and He gives life to the dead and He is able to do all things”. This verse underscores the Sufi belief that the ultimate source of knowledge and truth is Allah and that all knowledge ultimately leads back to Him. This hierarchical model of knowledge acquisition highlights the Sufi emphasis on the importance of both external and internal learning and the ultimate goal of achieving union with the divine.

The beginning of truth is such knowledge that is impossible to comprehend and the end is such knowledge that does not end. This highlights the infinite and transcendent nature of truth, which is beyond the grasp of human intellect. According to the analysis of the characteristics of the arif (knower), the arif who has their own experience of truth and speaks based on their character is more correct. This emphasizes the importance of personal experience in the pursuit of truth, as each individual’s journey is unique and shaped by their own particular circumstances.

Here, another problem arises. Even if the arifs speak about truth based on their own experience, the knowledge of truth by each arif is unique and unrepeatable. Even if they have isotropic (identical) beliefs on the same issue, the position and level of each arif, their path, is a unique reflection of their particular worldview. This underscores the subjective nature of truth, as it is filtered through the individual’s own lens of perception.

Among them are possessors of Divine knowledge, which is beyond the level of human thinking and which only the arifs can understand. They can see the essence of things with the “eyes of the heart”, hear sounds that no one can capture and tell about the sufferings, anxieties and events occurring in the soul of a person as if they were happening in reality. This alludes to the supernatural abilities and heightened senses that are often associated with advanced spiritual practitioners.

The reason for this is that the “words” of the arifs are interpretations of ayats (verses of the Quran) and hadiths (sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad), therefore they are revered as a “mirror of truth”. These interpretations are not merely intellectual exercises but are rooted in direct spiritual experience and intuitive understanding. Such phenomena are perceived in the eyes of the people as incredible supernatural events and by some persons as “kufr” (disbelief) and departure from religion. This highlights the tension between divine experience and orthodox religious belief, as the former often challenges conventional understandings of the divine.

Perhaps this is why Khoja Ahmad Yasawi, based on the above circumstances, instructed that “the pain of love cannot be told to the insensitive” [8.80.]. The thinker emphasizes that spiritual experience cannot be fully conveyed in words or explained rationally. One who has not experienced such cannot understand the depth and intensity of these experiences. Attempts to explain the “pain of love” to the insensitive will be useless, as they will not be able to appreciate its true meaning. It is like trying to explain the taste of honey to someone who has never tasted it. This underscores the ineffable nature of mysterious experience, which can only be truly understood through direct participation.

The “recurring” property of cognition leading to truth is qualitative and quantitative knowledge expressed through words and thoughts. This emphasizes the iterative nature of the pursuit of truth, where knowledge is constantly refined and expanded through reflection and experience. As long as a person does not lose the real dynamic of growth (reason), they follow meaningless beliefs and rituals that are a collection of different logical foundations, believe in Allah on the tongue but rebel against Allah in their heart, are dissatisfied with their fate, each time performing namaz (prayer) break the promise given to Allah, observe bodily fasting but do not perform heart fasting, intend to give zakat (alms) in the way of Allah but thank subjects, turn

hajj (pilgrimage) into trade, etc. This passage critiques the superficiality of religious practice when it is not accompanied by genuine inner transformation.

Therefore, the Creator, the only Divine power in the Universe, is known through knowledge and reflection but felt through faith. This highlights the complementary roles of reason and faith in the pursuit of spiritual understanding. While knowledge provides a framework for understanding the divine, faith allows for a direct and personal connection with the divine. If all truth is knowledge, then all knowledge is truth and the truth of truth is Allah. Therefore, Allah is known only by the state of the heart that has risen to a high level. This underscores the Sufi emphasis on the importance of purifying the heart and cultivating love for God as the path to achieving spiritual enlightenment. The ultimate goal is to transcend the limitations of the intellect and experience the divine directly through the heart.

The true “truth” lies in the fact that “nothing remains outside His (Allah’s) gaze, whether in the heavens or on the earth, even if it is less than a speck of dust” [9.437]. In our opinion, the true “truth”, according to this statement, lies in the omniscience of Allah. Nothing escapes His attention, whether in the heavens or on earth, not even the smallest thing, like a speck of dust. This passage emphasizes the boundless knowledge of Allah and His all-encompassing presence. It suggests that there is nothing that is hidden from Him and that He is aware of everything that happens in the Universe. This knowledge inspires awe and humility, reminding us of the omnipotence and grandeur of the Creator. This concept of divine omniscience is a cornerstone of Islamic theology and has profound implications for how believers understand their relationship with God and the world around them. It encourages a sense of accountability and responsibility, as every action and thought is known to the Divine.

Another dilemma that raises doubts is that the truth of the Khaliq (Creator) and the truth of the makhluq (created) are almost different. The truth of the Creator is “absolute” truth, while the truth of the created is “relative”. This distinction highlights the limitations of human understanding in grasping the full scope of divine reality. While human knowledge can provide insights into the created world, it can never fully comprehend the essence of the Creator.

If reason and the senses are the means of knowing philosophical truth and the path leading to it, then the heart is the means of knowing Divine truths. Although Allah is known by reason, He is reached through the heart. Theoretical knowledge cannot reveal Divine truth. This emphasizes the importance of intuitive and experiential knowledge in the pursuit of spiritual understanding. While reason can provide a framework for understanding the divine, it is only through the heart that one can truly connect with and experience the divine presence.

The dialectic of relative and absolute truth shows that knowledge comprehensively and accurately encompasses being, eliminating contradictions and clearly reflecting objective reality [10.208.]. This process involves resolving contradictions and deepening understanding in order to encompass objective reality as fully as possible. In other words, a person is constantly approaching absolute truth, clarifying and expanding their relative knowledge. This underscores the dynamic and progressive nature of the pursuit of truth, where knowledge is constantly refined and expanded through reflection and experience. The goal is to move beyond limited and fragmented perspectives towards a more holistic and integrated understanding of reality.

There are two levels of truth: the first level is knowing the Truth (cognition of Allah through visible attributes) and the second level is understanding the Truth (realization of the oneness of Allah) [11.112.], in which a person approaches the abode of closeness to Allah, purifying their heart from all imperfections (tanzih – transcendence). This highlights the Sufi emphasis on both the immanence and transcendence of God. While God can be known through His attributes that are manifested in the created world, true understanding requires a direct experience of His oneness that transcends all limitations.

Demanding the Truth is easy, but to find it, one must renounce two worlds, that is, one cannot achieve truth with worldly goods and desires, as well as claims to paradise. This underscores the Sufi emphasis on detachment from worldly attachments and desires as a prerequisite for spiritual realization. The pursuit of truth requires a complete surrender to the divine will and a willingness to sacrifice all that is held dear.

To fully understand the Truth, it is necessary to renounce the “self”. As Bayazid Bastami said: “Like a snake shedding its skin, I freed myself from myself and when I looked at my essence, I turned into Him” [12.33.]. Here, Bayazid Bastami metaphorically described a snake shedding its old skin. The snake, freeing itself from the obsolete, gains new life and freedom. Similarly, a person, renouncing their ego, is freed from the limitations and illusions that prevent them from seeing the Truth. This powerful metaphor illustrates the transformative potential of self-renunciation.

When a person casts aside their “self”, they cease to perceive themselves as a separate, isolated entity. They realize their interconnectedness with all that exists and discover that their true nature merges with the Divine. Thus, the rejection of the “self” is not self-denial but a path to self-knowledge and union with the Truth. It is the realization that the human ego is only a temporary construct and that their true essence is part of something larger and infinitely beautiful. This echoes the Sufi concept of fana (annihilation of the self), which is the ultimate goal of the spiritual path.

Consequently, the arif (knower) must free themselves from fleeting pleasures, worldly worries, contradictions and disputes, self-interest and worship of form, annihilate their essence and attach their heart to Allah on the path of knowing the Essence of Allah and attaining Him. This summarizes the ethical and spiritual requirements for embarking on the Sufi path. It emphasizes the need for detachment from worldly distractions and a complete surrender to the divine will.

A person’s cognition of their being reveals the essence of the being of the world. A person can find Divine truth in an adequate and unique position and place only in themselves and they attain truth not with significant knowledge and reason but through the Divine power that Allah has bestowed upon them. This suggests that true knowledge is not merely intellectual but is rooted in a direct experience of the divine within oneself.

For this, a person must discover in their heart the Divine power uniting being but invisible to their eyes, so that knowledge is in faith and the object of knowledge is Allah, knowledge is in the heart. This emphasizes the importance of cultivating inner awareness and recognizing the divine presence within oneself. The heart, in Sufi thought, is not merely an organ of emotion but the seat of spiritual intuition and the gateway to divine knowledge. The ultimate goal is to transcend the limitations of the intellect and experience the divine directly through the heart, recognizing that all knowledge ultimately originates from and leads back to Allah.

The Symbolic of truth lies in the fact that Allah directly stated in the Quran that not everyone can know (the truth): “Allah misguides whom He wills and guides to a straight path whom He wills” [13.132.]. This highlights the divine prerogative in the bestowal of knowledge and guidance. It suggests that the attainment of truth is not solely dependent on human effort but is ultimately a gift from God.

That is, if a rational person sees the external side and image of religion, then achieving its essence and truth falls to the arif who is at the level of “khawass ul-khawass” (“the elect of the elect”). This underscores the Sufi belief that true understanding of religion requires more than just intellectual knowledge; it requires a direct, experiential connection with the divine that is only accessible to those who have undergone rigorous spiritual training.

Truth is the “action” of the heart (secret), that is, truth is found through the eye of the heart, “radiance”, spiritual reflection and the heart becomes the main instrument of cognition. The arif “revives dead hearts with their wise words” [14.75.]. This emphasizes the transformative power of spiritual guidance and the ability of the arif to awaken others to the truth.

Consequently, the heart determines the boundary between unity (spirit) and multiplicity (nafs – ego). If the nafs is the “I”, the source of all evil, then the heart is a substance in the form of light between the spirit and the nafs and it turns into a heart in the state of “nafs-i kamila” i.e., “perfected nafs” In the heart are embodied all the concepts and perfections of the spirit and knowledge about the heart is known by the heart. This knowledge is not sought, but, on the contrary, is bestowed from the highest threshold. This highlights the Sufi belief that true knowledge is not something that can be acquired through human effort alone but is a gift from God that is bestowed upon those who have purified their hearts and surrendered to His will.

It is logically incorrect to associate knowledge attained by the heart with prediction, secrecy, practical or telepathic power. Connection with the Divine world requires sublime spiritual maturity from the arif. This cautions against reducing spiritual experience to mere psychic abilities or supernatural phenomena. True connection with the divine requires a profound transformation of the self and a commitment to living in accordance with God’s will.

However, a person who has not reached spiritual maturity, no matter how hard they try, will not be able to enjoy Divine truth. This underscores the importance of spiritual preparation and the need for a sustained commitment to the path of self-transformation. The source of Divine power is a “permanent” flow of love and devotion to Allah, which implies a higher degree of consciousness, not related to intellectual experience, as well as a non-standard way of achieving truth, that is, understanding, dhikr (remembrance of God), hal (spiritual state), sama (spiritual listening), chilla (spiritual retreat). This highlights the importance of both internal and external practices in the pursuit of spiritual realization.

The first stage of understanding truth manifests as enlightenment, radiance. Gnostic knowledge (irfan) is a natural and real Divine impulse for the arif. This suggests that true knowledge is not something that can be acquired through human effort alone but is a gift from God that is bestowed upon those who have purified their hearts and surrendered to His will.

The arif can look at the essence of things through the eyes of others, that is, provide intersubjectivity of knowledge, understand the hidden essence of things, form universal and transcendental knowledge, such as seeing multiplicity in unity, “juz” (“part”) in “kull” (“whole”). This emphasizes the ability of the arif to transcend the limitations of individual perspective and to perceive the interconnectedness of all things.

Truth is the inner meaning and essence of Sharia, therefore, in the hadith it is said: “Sharia is my word, tariqa is my deed, truth is my state” [15.148.]. This highlights the relationship between the exoteric and esoteric dimensions of Islam. Sharia provides the framework for righteous living, tariqa is the path of spiritual practice and truth is the ultimate goal of union with the divine. This hadith emphasizes that all three dimensions are necessary for a complete understanding of Islam.

For Sufis, Sharia is the cornerstone of spiritual perfection [16.54.]. This emphasizes the importance of adhering to the external laws and practices of Islam as a foundation for inner spiritual growth. Sheikh Najm al-Din Kubra likened Sharia to a ship, Tariqa to the sea and Truth to a pearl in the sea [17.254.]. This analogy illustrates the interconnectedness of the three dimensions of Islam. Sharia provides the vessel for the spiritual journey, Tariqa is the path of practice and experience and Truth is the ultimate goal of union with the divine.

From this, it follows that Sharia and Truth are interconnected, Sharia is the external side of truth and truth is the internal side of Sharia. In this position, there is unity, that is, Wahdat (oneness), there is no duality. This state of truth is worthy of saints (wali), who have passed the stages of the nafs, brought their heart into a state of salim (healthy from doubts heart), built their lives on the basis of God-fearingness, did not reveal their secrets and put on the crown of “karramna” [18.21-22.]. This highlights the ethical and spiritual qualities of those who have attained a high level of spiritual realization.

The possessor of a healthy heart becomes the possessor of “basirat” (discernment), because they received azimat (divine resolve) from Allah and divine feelings are amplified. This greatness cannot be described by any greatness in being. The superiority of the possessor of such a heart is explained by the spontaneous arrival of goodness, grace and Divine mercy. This state of truth, associated with the omniscience of Allah, is available only to the chosen “saints” (wali) who have reached an excellent level of spiritual development.

Arifs and saints have passed the difficult stages of working on their nafs (ego), curbing their passions and desires. They purified their heart, bringing it into a state of “salim” – healthy from doubts, vices and attachments to the worldly. Their lives are built on the basis of God-fearingness, constant awareness of the presence of Allah and striving for His pleasure. They live in accordance with His commandments, avoiding everything that may cause His anger. Arifs are distinguished by humility and restraint. They do not reveal their secrets and spiritual experiences, protecting them from prying eyes and worldly vanity. They wear an invisible crown of “we have honored”, symbolizing their closeness to Allah and His blessing. This detailed description of the qualities and characteristics of the arifs and saints provides a glimpse into the transformative potential of the Sufi path and the ultimate goal of union with the divine.

Thus, achieving this level of truth requires not only intellectual understanding but also substantial spiritual work, purification of the heart and living in accordance with divine precepts. This is a path accessible only to those who sincerely seek closeness with Allah and are willing to dedicate their lives to serving Him. This underscores the transformative potential of the Sufi path and the ultimate goal of union with the divine.

Conclusion. The search for truth is difficult, as no one can achieve it in its fullness. This pursuit is fraught with challenges due to the limitations of the human mind, the subjectivity of perception and the infinite complexity of the universe. However, abandoning the pursuit of truth would mean abandoning progress and development. It is important to remember that each person contributes to its understanding and as a result of these contributions, a magnificent picture emerges, a mosaic of knowledge and experience that is constantly enriched with new discoveries and perspectives. This mosaic includes not only scientific discoveries and philosophical reflections but also personal experiences, intuitive insights and even artistic expression. This highlights the multifaceted nature of truth and the importance of integrating different sources of knowledge in its pursuit.

This process requires not only intellectual effort but also a certain inner disposition. Reflection, critical analysis, a willingness to revise one’s own beliefs, as well as openness to new ideas and perspectives – all these are necessary elements on the path to truth. This emphasizes the importance of cultivating intellectual humility and a willingness to challenge one’s own assumptions.

Truth, unattainable in absolute form, still manifests in various aspects of human life, prompting them to knowledge, to search for answers to fundamental questions of being, to explore the depths of human consciousness and the mysteries of the Universe. This underscores the inherent human desire to understand the world around us and our place within it. The pursuit of truth is not merely an intellectual exercise but a fundamental aspect of the human experience.

The Sufi understanding of truth, with its emphasis on inner experience and intuition, complements the rational approach, showing that cognition can occur on various levels, going beyond logical thinking. This highlights the importance of integrating different modes of knowing in the pursuit of truth.

The awareness of the difficulty of cognition, as the Sufis say, is itself knowledge, a recognition of the limitations of the rational and the need to turn to the inner world, to the source of wisdom that is beyond words and concepts. This idea is reflected in the well-known Sufi saying: “The one who knows does not speak, the one who speaks does not know”, emphasizing that true knowledge often goes beyond words and rational expression, requiring silence, contemplation and endless inner experience. This underscores the ineffable nature of transcendental experience and the limitations of language in capturing its essence.

Truth encourages a person to seek new knowledge, critical thinking and constant self-improvement. Consequently, the search for truth is not only an intellectual exercise but also a spiritual path, requiring humility, openness, a willingness to self-knowledge and recognition of the limits of one’s own understanding. This highlights the ethical and spiritual dimensions of the pursuit of truth.

The pursuit of truth, whether through rational cognition, empirical research, artistic creativity, or inner experience, remains a powerful engine of spiritual and intellectual development of humanity, shaping that very “magnificent picture” that is constantly enriched, reflecting a common desire to understand the world and oneself in it. This means that truth is not static and complete knowledge but a dynamic and constantly evolving image. This search may never end, but it is in the process itself, in the constant striving for greater understanding, for a deeper penetration into the ultimate reality of Being. This is precisely where the meaning of human existence lies, its highest purpose. This emphasizes the ongoing and dynamic nature of the pursuit of truth, which is not a destination but a continuous journey of learning, growth and self-discovery.

Uniting the strengths of Eastern and Western approaches to cognition is one of the most important and pressing tasks of our time. If Western thinking is more based on reason, logic and empirical data, then Eastern thinking is based on intuition, the heart and spiritual experience. Both approaches have their advantages and by combining them, a person can understand the world more fully and deeply. This integration requires a shift in perspective, recognizing that both reason and intuition are valuable tools for understanding reality.

To achieve this, first of all, it is necessary to recognize the value of both approaches and strive for their complementarity. It is necessary to test intuitive concepts with rational analysis, use intuition to promote new ideas, create interdisciplinary research centers, unite scientists from different fields for joint study of complex problems, create educational programs that develop critical thinking and strengthen intercultural dialogue. This also requires a willingness to challenge existing paradigms and to embrace new ways of thinking that transcend the limitations of both Eastern and Western traditions.

It is also necessary to respect the peculiarities of each approach and not to oppose them to each other. It is important to value the clarity and systematic nature of Western thinking and the depth and spirituality of Eastern thinking. Such an approach serves not only a more intense understanding of the world but also the preservation of spiritual values, the strengthening of tolerance and mutual respect in society and the building of a just and sustainable society. This holistic approach to knowledge can lead to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the human condition and the challenges facing our world. It can also foster greater empathy and compassion, as we learn to appreciate the diverse perspectives and experiences of others.

Recommendations.

1. Establish interdisciplinary research centers that bring together scientists from different fields (e.g., neurobiology, philosophy, religion, sociology, artificial intelligence) to jointly study complex problems such as the nature of consciousness, the problem of truth, the ethics of technology and the social consequences of globalization. This collaborative approach can foster new insights and breakthroughs that would not be possible within the confines of a single discipline. By bringing together diverse perspectives and methodologies, these centers can address complex challenges in a more holistic and comprehensive way.

2. Based on the peculiarities of the era of globalization and the social needs of civil society, organize special courses on “Philosophy of Truth” in Islamic universities and promote perfect moral ideals in educational institutions, institutions, communities and the media. This can help to cultivate a more informed and ethical citizenry that is committed to the pursuit of truth and justice. By integrating philosophical inquiry with moral education, these courses can empower individuals to make informed decisions and to contribute to the betterment of society.

3. It is necessary to develop and implement educational programs aimed at developing critical thinking and analytical skills among young people and the general public, with an emphasis on recognizing disinformation, fake news and manipulative techniques in the modern information space, as well as teaching the principles of the search for truth and commitment. This is essential for navigating the complex and often misleading information landscape of the XXI century. By equipping individuals with the skills to critically evaluate information, we can empower them to make informed decisions and to resist manipulation. These programs should also emphasize the importance of intellectual honesty and the willingness to revise one's own beliefs in light of new evidence.

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