



The Malaise of the Century

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The Islamic tradition speaks about the Ninety-Nine utterable Names of God. Ninety-Nine is The Unique (*al-Wāhidiyah*) manifestation of the Non-Manifested One, of The One Hundredth Name (*al-Ahadiyah*), of The Infinite One.

The indefinite of the manifestation reflects symbolically in the Ninety Nine attributes of God, each of the Ninety-Nine Names representing an indefinite world – or state of being – perfect within its indefinite limitations, null in comparison with The Infinite Mysterious One (*al-Ahadiyah*).

The indefinite springs from the *dual* (skr. *dvaita*) perception of Reality, thus basically, from the understanding of reality as a duality symbolized by the Ninety-Nine Holy Names.¹ The Islamic tradition synthetically designates the God of Attributes, *al-Wāhidiyah*, which means *the Unique*, as qualitatively distinct² from *the One*, *al-Ahadiyah*, the Mysterious beyond all determinations. The distinction suggests the level break that exists between the indefinite and the Infinite. This should be envisaged as Ninety-Nine Rays of Light giving reality³ to ninety-nine manifested worlds, or in other words, to ninety-nine states of consciousness.⁴ The Hidden Dragon, The One Hundredth Name, is the Unutterable One, the Spiritual super-luminous Midnight Sun. This is the One Hundredth.

¹ This is why the complete realization of one divine attribute, that is, the realization of the centre of a horizontal plane, should not be confused with the Supreme Identity. Even more, if all the Ninety-Nine were realized, this would still not be the Supreme Identity.

² The Islamic tradition makes a distinction between *Essence* (*Dhāt*) and *quality* (*ṣifāh*) in the sense that the former designates the One Hundredth, *al-Ahadiyah*, beyond any *ṣifāh*. However, every *ṣifāh* represents a unique distinctive manifested aspect of *Dhāt*. In this way, we can say that the Unique (*al-Wāhidiyah*) is qualitatively distinct from the One, that is, lying within the possibility of distinctiveness, and being this very possibility in act. In other words, *al-Wāhidiyah* is the Principle of any duality and It gathers just like a bouquet the indefinite *ṣifāt* (qualities), being Itself the Unique Root of all manifestation in Its manifested informal aspect. Its Essence (*Dhāt*) being beyond any distinction, lies not in distinction from *al-Wāhidiyah*: only the latter is qualitatively distinct, while the former is essentially *One* beyond two.

³ Giving reality means Order, Peace and Presence. There is no world - therefore no level of Universal consciousness (Sans. *Chit*) - lacking These Three.

⁴ Obviously, the number ninety-nine shouldn't be taken literally, because it is a *symbol* for the indefinite, for the manifested. The consciousness we refer here is that which the Hindu tradition designates as Chit, therefore, the Universal Consciousness, and which must not be confused with the individual consciousness, which is its conditioned reflection on this level of manifestation.

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The modern English word *century*, comes from the Latin *centum*, which means *hundred*. The same English word translates the Latin *saeculum*, which means *age*, and from which the English word *secular* derives. The relation existing between these two meanings of the word is quite significant, because it reveals the One Hundredth of one hundred, the Transcendental within the age.

If we symbolically limit to one hundred units of time the length of an age (or, in other words, its quantity), the one hundredth of these units would represent *al-Ahadiyah* (the essence, *Dhāt*) in relation with the ninety-nine *unique* (*al-wāhidiyah*) specular units, or with the ninety-nine distinct traditions of the Same. Seeing *the century* in this light, there is no need to limit it to a period calculated in years (or in any other specific unit of time), and so the real meaning of the century is not historical but aeonic, which is properly the *indefinite*. In this light, *the century* represents the super-formal domain of the distinctive Ninety-Nine Holy Names.

But if we are to consider this in more detail, we envisage to perspectives. One concerns the relation between the aeon, understood as *a world* or as a complete state of being, and *the century* understood as a particular modality or age belonging to that world. The second perspective sees *the aeon* as the unique (*al-wāhidiyah*) universal manifestation, which contains all the Ninety-Nine Holy Names, and *the century* as the manifestation of a specific Holy Name that gives reality to that particular state of being. The distinctions we have made translate two different, but nonetheless complementary points of view: the former perspective sees *the aeon* as a horizontal level of existence, and *the century* as a particular modality of that plane; the latter point of view sees *the aeon* as the whole Cosmos, and *the century* as a complete horizontal plane or state of being. Now, to facilitate the discourse we will name *the aeon* from the former perspective *the lesser aeon* and the one from the latter, *the greater aeon*. We will do the same in what regards *the century*. Thus, in the former perspective we have *the lesser century* and in the latter one, we have *the greater century*. As one can see, *the lesser aeon* identifies with *the greater century*, both representing the horizontal plane of reflection. Now, the *greater aeon* represents the Holy Veil, or the Ninety-Nine Holy Names of Allah revealingly hiding the Mysterious One Hundredth. *The lesser century* represents the development of an individual being or of its related humanity.

So if the One Hundredth is the Infinite Hidden One, from the perspective of a particular state of being, the One Hundredth stands no more for *al-Ahadiyah*, but for *al-Wāhidiyah* (the Root of *ṣīfāt*), and the manifestation of *al-Wāhidiyah* on that horizontal plane is represented by the indefinite modalities contained therein. Therefore, we could understand *al-Wāhidiyah* of a horizontal plane as the *centum* (the One Hundredth) of the *saeculum* (age). The malaise of the *saeculum*, the illness of the age, comes from ignoring the *centum*.