



A Fire without Light

(Pseudo Religion)

- 8. And of mankind are some who say: We believe in Allah and the Last Day, when they believe not.*
- 9. They think to beguile Allah and those who believe, and they beguile none save themselves; but they perceive not.*
- 10. In their hearts is a disease, and Allah increaseth their disease. A painful doom is theirs because they lie.*
- 11. And when it is said unto them: Make not mischief in the earth, they say: We are peacemakers only.*
- 12. Are not they indeed the mischief-makers? But they perceive not*
- 13. And when it is said unto them: believe as the people believe, they say: shall we believe as the foolish believe? are not they indeed the foolish? But they know not*
- 14. And when they fall in with those who believe, they say: We believe; but when they go apart to their devils they declare: Lo! we are with you; verily we did but mock..*
- 15. Allah (Himself) doth mock them, leaving them to wander blindly on in their contumacy.*
- 16. These are they who purchase error at the price of guidance, so their commerce doth not prosper, neither are they guided.*
- 17. Their likeness is as the likeness of one who kindleth fire, and when it sheddeth its light around him Allah taketh away their light and leaveth them in darkness, where they cannot see,*
- 18. Deaf, dumb and blind; and they return not*

(Qur'an 2: 8 - 18)

All revelations are manifestation of Divine Mercy. The array of forms that these revelations descend are only unambiguous dialects of the Word (logos) and different crystallizations, which at once reveal and veil the essence of one and only Tradition of nonhuman origin.

“O Children of Adam! If messengers of your own come unto you who narrate unto you My revelations, then whosoever refraineth from evil and amendeth there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve”
 (Qur'an 7:35)

A Fire without Light

“Then Adam received from his Lord words (of revelation), and He relented toward him. Lo! He is the Relenting the Merciful.(Qur’an 2:37)

As an institution religion was inaugurated with the fall of Adam and loss of Paradise, as a mercy for the human collectivity as raiment to protect and beautify their soul to achieve salvation.

“O Children of Adam! We have revealed unto you raiment to conceal your shame, and splendid vesture, but the raiment of restraint from evil, that is best. This is of the revelations of Allah that they may remember”(Qur’an 7:26)

No religion fails to perform its destined role for the human collectivity to which it is addressed. Yet, there have been occasions when men at collective and individual level have not honored their religions and have failed to take their religion in the true spirit.

Religion, like fire, which gives light and warmth, perform two very important though unsymmetrical functions. Firstly, it is the origin of metaphysical doctrine and spiritual wisdom related to Intellect (*light*) and secondly, by way of signs and symbols a source of zeal and devotion, which by their warmth can mould the human will and sentiments into precise configuration of virtues in conformity with the metaphysical doctrine.

However, due to implications of end of times (Dark Age), which have rigorous consequences in the microcosm and macrocosm, a diabolic possibility exists, in that these two functions, which as a norm should remain integrated, are estranged from each other. Metaphorically speaking, and taking the analogy of fire it is a wrathful possibility to have *“a fire without light”*.

As a rule, in the matrix of traditional societies, religion was appropriated in the collective and individual lives with integrity in its entirety. It not only provided doctrinal configuration and metaphysical wisdom, but also through devotion and enthusiasm enabled all human sentiments to focus on one point of Absolute Truth.

However, in the absence of traditional civilization like the modern contemporary world, in the west and now also in the east, religion, at the collective and the individual level, is assimilated and propagated in a profane and fragmented manner such that the element of light is withheld and what reaches the recipient is only heat, mere sentimental

A Fire without Light

warmth. The warmth (zeal) related to devotional aspects is segregated from the doctrinal configuration. This floating devotional zeal and warmth of religion then seeks aim-inhabited objects as its goals, which are not always in harmony with the doctrinal Truth and spiritual wisdom. The reason for such a diabolic situation can be traced to some obvious interior and some not very obvious exterior (suggestion of the adversary) conditions as given in the Qur'anic verses quoted above.

It is also not difficult to observe the superficiality and lack of doctrinal and metaphysical perspective that generally marks the popular and as such vulgar religious discourse. All too often, while presenting the intellectual and esoteric aspects contained in various religious forms into contemporary idiom, their profound depth is flattened out, their rigour diluted and their potential for liberation of human soul killed. How this occurs often seems to be subtle, since the words of the teachings are often the same. Yet through an apparent sleight of hand involving, perhaps, their context and therefore ultimately their meaning, the message of the great religious teachings often lose their virility and effectiveness and all essential initiatic teachings are thoroughly marginalized.

Those who apparently have a reasonable interest in religion or even some well known religious scholars do not appear to be interested in the Truth more than allegiance to their personal religious sectarian faith. Their love of their own believes, born out of a vague and sentimental religiosity, is generally individualistic and sectarian. This may serve their socio-political agenda and sectarian patriotism but that is of little value for assimilation of the doctrine of truth of the One Absolute and Infinite Reality. This kind of sentimental and unintelligible attachment with religious signs and symbols cannot transcend the limits of ordinary secular and profane aspirations. Invariably a strong but hidden and unarticulated sentimental base camp of 'exclusivity' is present around the summit of visible religious zeal and devotion.

In the case of individuals, the amorphous ego that is yet to become transparent takes the dominant position in the inward psychic domain. In this type of assimilation, religion is reduced to a structure of sentimental morality providing consolation to the individual ego to endure the cold and otherwise meaningless existence. The 'myths', doctrine and rituals are degraded and acquire the status of 'superstitions'. This devotional aspect of religious practice does not necessarily change the level of consciousness; nor does it render the light, which can lead to certainty. It also does not illuminate the

A Fire without Light

consciousness or helps eliminating an eccentric ego. If it does not openly fortify tyrannical ego it inevitably supports, defends, and in a round about way promotes the ego by providing a pseudo guarantee that it will be saved not only here but even in the hereafter. It gives a superficial religious meaning to life at the cost of varied illusions, making living a marathon of pedantic moral achievements, which only serve the purpose of the Adversary. A strange kind of obedientialism is equated with true submission to the Will of God.

The other aspect of religion, pertaining to the light and universal meaning, leading to eradication of darkness through Truth remains withdrawn. The darkness of ignorance clouds the faculty of intellectual vision, which remains inoperative, and in its consequences can be equated to a tragic blindness. This light could provide the means to turn the opaque and amorphous substance of the gross ego into transparent and crystalline gem. The ultimate function of this light (wisdom) is initiatic but takes the ego as a starting point; it does not fortify the separated ego, but utterly dissolve it. This light creates emptiness not entrenchment, liberation not consolation, transcendence not self-satisfaction, purification not comfort, not a conventional strengthening of consciousness but a radical transformation at the deepest/highest level of being itself.

The devotional aspects of religion, its warmth and zeal, is a kind of *horizontal* member of the cross, a feminine and yin aspect of the religion; the light and the wisdom is a *vertical* member (higher or deeper, depending on the metaphor) a masculine and yang aspect of revelation. A cross without the vertical member is no more then a broken profane horizontal dilation.

With only the devotional approach, devoid of illumination and intelligibility, the ego is given a new belief, definitely holistic instead of atomistic, certainly forgiveness instead of blame, generally relational instead of analytic but contained within the narrow scope of a moralism. However, with illuminating approach to religion, the very concept of a separate ego itself is challenged, witnessed, undermined, and eventually dismantled the source of darkness is grabbed by its throat and literally throttled to death by the Light of Absolute Truth.

With the devotional and horizontal approach which is by far the most prevalent and widely shared usage of religion the man walks blindly into the world, given a map in Braille, relaying only on moral sentiments he stumbles into the darkness of terrestrial

A Fire without Light

existence. This indeed, is the common condition of a religious humanity, precisely the condition that the illuminating approach challenges and finally undo.

For authentic spiritual life, it is not a matter of belief but of vision, which is only possible in light of revelation. It is not a matter of adjusting to the everyday secular life but of transformation, not a matter of finding solace but a journey of ego-sacrifice and finding the Absolute Being on the other end.

Although there is an apparent belittling of the devotional approach, the fact is that, overall, both of these functions notwithstanding their unsymmetrical affects are important and altogether indispensable. Individuals are not, for the most part, born enlightened. They are born in this world, devoid of traditional matrix, full of irregularity at all levels and in all sectors. They are born in an environment where the being is fractured and fragmented into multiplicity of ego. Due to the inadequacy of the educational curriculum we all learn various incorrect and indigenous ways to translate this world to make sense of it, give meaning to it and deploy various defense mechanism to protect the separate ego against the terror and torture of meaninglessness, which is always lurking not far beneath the happy surface.

Even when it is desired to transcend the mere devotional aspect of religion to find an authentic illuminating approach; a devotional translation itself would be a necessary crucial function. Those who cannot translate adequately with a fair amount of integrity and accuracy with the help of the devotional warmth of the religion, would find the vertical ascend incomprehensible and devastating. The world would *ceases to make sense* and boundaries between the egos and the world if not transcended appropriately would begin to crumble. This is not breakthrough but breakdown, not transcendence, but disaster, not illumination, but low tone insanity.

When for some individuals in the process of maturation, this devotional approach regardless of its claims to popularity and adequacy ceases to console and appease, even then it would be necessary to keep the devotional element of religion intact although thoroughly dependent on the doctrine and spiritual wisdom.

For most people, any sort of renewal of religious belief would fall instead into the category of consolation, a new horizontal translation that fashions some sort of better meaning in the midst of the monstrous world. Therefore, it would be appropriate to use of the word "legitimacy" to describe this function. It can easily be admitted that a large

A Fire without Light

collectivity have always used religion to provide *legitimacy* to the individual ego, its beliefs, no matter how temporary, relative, nontransformative, or illusory.

It is this devotional function of religion, which gathers all the sentimental attachment to its symbols and acts as glue to hold the communities together. Because more often than not, when that glue along with sentiments dissolves the result is not breakthrough but breakdown, not liberation from collective narcissism but a psychological chaos. Whereas devotional approach to religion offers legitimacy and not total elimination of doubt, the illuminating way to religion renders *authenticity and certainty*.

The illuminating approach to religion does not seek to bolster or legitimize any present worldview at all, but instead provide true authenticity by shattering what the world takes as legitimate. Legitimate consciousness is sanctioned by the consensus, adopted by the power of conformism, promoted by the separate ego. However, authentic consciousness quickly shakes all of that off its back, and settles instead into a vision that sees only a radiant Infinity in all hearts.

The most important function that can be performed in the service of authentic illuminating religion is to actually *align devotion with truth and its doctrine*. Those who are concerned with authentic illuminating religion would find it necessary to provide an adequate way to eliminate and eradicate many layers of misconceptions and provide a stable and strong fulcrum, which can upset the vulgar and popular religious sentimentality.

The very desire to *seek* illumination with sentimental and moral aptitude is in fact nothing but the grasping tendency of the ego itself, and thus the very search for enlightenment prevents it. The "perfect practice" is therefore not to search, but to inquire into the motives for seeking itself. We always already are enlightened, and therefore to *seek* is simply to deny the nearness of Allah. We can no more attain the Divine than can attain our physical body. The seven stages of Imam Ghazali lead to the point where seeking altogether is dispensed with. To seek *Al-Haq* in the *zahir* only and not in both *zahir* and *batin* prevents realization.