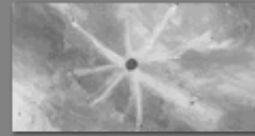


Ma'rifat in Islam



by **Sabdono Surohadikusumo**

translated by Muslim Siregar
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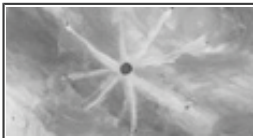
Ma'rifat means God-knowledge, but is
actually more than just knowledge.

Knowledge is limited to thought, but
ma'rifat is more something like intuition at
the highest levels of human consciousness
and refers to the total being of man.

Thus ma'rifat rather means God-consciousness
or a God-centered mode of living.

Jakarta 1994

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REVELATION CONTAINS CLEAR GUIDANCE

Can man receive a revelation from God?

Ordinary man, however pure in his devotion, however clear in his heart, however sharp in his intelligence, however keen in his knowledge, however master in all scriptures, however obedient to religious laws and diligent in his prayers, if he has not received an inspiration from a prophet or a religious teacher, is not in the position to say that he has witnessed the light of God.

See the following texts:

Yaa Siin (Q 36:1 to 5):

1. Yaa siin
2. By the wise Koran
3. Thou art of those sent
4. On a straight path
5. A revelation of the Mighty, the Merciful.

Abraham (Q 14:4): And we never send a messenger save with the language of his folk, that he might make clear for them. Then Allah sendeth whom He will astray, and guideth whom He will. He is All-mighty, All-wise.

Translator's note: Divine language is not always easy to understand. If the meaning is hidden (belonging to the *mutasyabihat*), the meaning can only be detected with God's guidance.

An Nahl (Q 16:43-113):

103 And we sent not a messenger before thee other than men whom we inspired, ask the owners of knowledge if ye know not.

113 And verily there had come unto them a messenger from among them, but they had denied Him, and so the torment seized them while they were wrong doers.

Al Kahfi (Q 18-110): Say: I am only a mortal like you. My Lord inspireth in me that your God is only one God. And whoever hopeth for the meeting with his Lord, let him do righteous work, and make none sharer of the worship due unto his Lord.

Translator's note: By doing righteous work – love, peace, justice, honesty, compassion etc. - the mind is brought to a state in which contact with the Indwelling Spirit is achieved. This contact is equal to meeting God.

Al A'raaf (Q 7:178): He who Allah guideth, he indeed is led aright while he whom Allah sendeth astray – they indeed are the losers.

Translator's note: Allah will give us guidance if we bring our self to a state conducive to obtain contact with the Indwelling Spirit. That is by doing good and by good behavior.

As Syura (Q 42: 51-52):

51 And it was not vouchsafed to any mortal that Allah should speak to him unless by revelation or from behind a veil, or that He sendeth a messenger to reveal what He will by His leave. He is exalted, All-wise.

52 And thus have we inspired in thee a spirit of our command. Thou knewest not what the Scripture was, nor what the faith. But we have made it a light where by we guide whom we will of our bondmen. And thou verily dost guide

unto a right path.

Translator's note: Allah belongs to the invisible realm. Communication between the invisible and the visible can only be achieved through revelation. Revelation is fraught with hidden meanings as the thoughts of God are different from the thoughts of mortal men.



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HOW IS MA'RIFAT PERFORMED?

We learn from those who know

We ask those who are expert

We walk till we see the limit

We sail up to find the island

We study the Koran to completion

How can we find and meet God? As a good example we should study the experiences of the prophet Muhammad when he made the journey of the IRS' and Mi'raj.

It has been explained earlier that God is spirit and worship of God is in spirit. In other words, if we want to see God, we have to be also in spirit, not in our physical body.

In the earlier pages (Motto), it has been said that we have to die during life (mati sakjroning urip), that only then can we see God. To meet God, we must first die and then find God in our spiritual form. What is meant with dying in the body? This means that we have to inactivate all our senses, to liberate us from the nafsu and ego which are attached to our physical existence.

In the earlier days of mysticism, experts on ma'rifat did not disclose by what method they arrived at ma'rifat, except to their students or to people who have proven to be sincere in the quest.

How do we die physically?

This question can only be answered satisfactorily by a ma'rifat expert. The experience of ma'rifat belong to the invisible and hence is beyond the grasp of the concrete mind. Certain practices and training are required, but there are dangers to the mind and body if you are not expertly guided.

With God's grace, if you are successful in your quest, God will show Himself as light, not the light of the physical worlds, but spiritual light. This is how in the following verses.

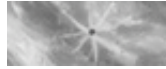
Al Israa (Q 17:1): Glorified be He Who carried His servant by night from the Inviolable Place of Worship the neighborhood whereof We have blessed, that We might show him of Our tokens! Lo, only He is the All-hearing, the All-seeing.

Translator's note: This verse supports the explanation given in Al Baqarah 2:55 that God used some kind of vehicle to carry the prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Jerusalem. This vehicle had been called bouraq, depicted as a horse with wings (for flight) and a woman's face (for its beauty and perfection).

An Naml (Q 27:40): One with whom was knowledge of the scripture said: "I will bring it thee in a wink of the eye. And when he saw it set in his presence, said (Solomon): This is of the bounty of my Lord, that he may try me whether I give thanks or am ungrateful. Whosoever giveth thanks he only giveth thanks for the growth of his soul; and whosoever is ungrateful it is only to hurt the growth of his soul. My Lord is indeed absolute in independence and in bounty.

Translator's note: "Nafs" can stand for "self, soul". When translated into self, the line "whosoever giveth thanks he only giveth thanks to himself" (as the translation is usually done) will have no meaning. But if translated as in the above "he giveth thanks for the growth of his soul", the sentence has a most important meaning.

Al Israa (Q 17:72): Whoso is blind here will be blind in the hereafter and yet further from the road.



REQUIREMENTS TO ATTAIN MA'RIFAT

If one seeks to attain ma'rifat, he should fulfil certain requirements:

1. He must have strong desire and persistence to meet God
2. He must have freedom of thought and use it in his efforts to meet God
3. He must have freedom of will and seek God being neither forced by someone nor having the intention to just follow others
4. He must base his efforts on existing scriptural texts as reference material
5. He must find a teacher who is truly a master in ma'rifat as explained in the following texts

Al Ankabut (Q 29:5-23):

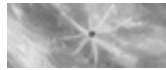
05 Whoso is looking for the meeting with Allah, His promise is truly nigh, and He is All-hearing and All-knowing

23 Those who disbelieve in the promise of Allah and in meeting with Him, such have no hope of His mercy and for them is a painful doom.

Al Mujjaadilah (Q 58:12-13):

12 O ye who believe! When ye hold conference with the messenger, often an alms before your conference. This is better and purer for you. But if ye cannot, Allah is forgiving, merciful.

13 Fear ye to offer alms before your conference? Then, when ye do it not and Allah hath forgiven you, establish worship and pay the zakat, obey Allah and His messenger. Allah is aware if what ye do.



SAYINGS OF THE PROPHET ON MA'RIFAT

Ma'rifatullah is my wealth
Mind the pillar of my faith
Love the source of my life
Deep longing is my vehicle
Dzikirullah is my companion
Steadfastness is my treasure
Knowledge is my implement
Patience my good protector
And sincerity is my is my object
Destitute is my real pride
Self-restraints is my duty
And believe my substance
Honesty my firm mediator
Obedience is my dimension
Jihad is my second nature
And worship my refreshment



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MA'RIFAT TO MEET AND KNOW GOD

Can we find and meet God?

Many people maintain that only prophets can find and meet God. This privilege is not for the common man. These people base their opinion on the fact that human eyes cannot see God. But one should remember that man has two kind of eyes: physical eyes and inner eyes. The inner eyes belong to the soul, which are able to function once the soul has developed the appropriate level for functioning.

By doing the will of God, by doing good, by maintaining peace, justice, righteousness and many more required for the growth of the soul, man will be able to attain the level of ma'rifat. At this level, contact with the Indwelling Spirit will be obtained and this contact is accompanied by sensations of happiness and joy that are totally God-centered.

It is in this condition of totally God-centered being that we say we find God or we meet Him. This condition gives us a knowledge of God that is totally different from our observation of the outside world as God's creation. This observation will also give us a knowledge of God's omnipotence but which is purely at the level of mind. This is different from ma'rifat which is at the level of soul.

In support of the above, let us have a look at the following texts:

Al Azhab (Q 33:21): Verily the messenger of Allah is a good example for people who are looking for Allah and the Last Day, and remembereth Allah much.

Translator's note: One can do every day work in a state of mind that is God-centered, although at sub-conscious levels. This is what is meant by the words "remembereth Allah much". In this kind of mind-condition, we will perform even the lowest task in a state of maximum sense of responsibility, maximum thoughtfulness (close to full concentration). If we do this in office-work or whatever kind of work we are doing, we will obtain maximum results. This is ma'rifat applied to every day's work. We will obtain satisfaction – and happiness.

Al Ankabut(Q29:5): Whoso is looking for meeting Allah, His promise is surely nigh. He is All-knowing and All-hearing.

Al Baqarah (Q 2:55): And when ye said: O Moses we will not believe in thee till we see Allah plainly; the lightning seized you while ye gazed (at the mountain).

Translator's note: Without intent to be in contradiction, what this text tries to convey is the stubbornness of the Jews. Allah came down to the Jews in some kind of vehicle that had the form of a half-sphere, hence called mountain. This vehicle was electrostatically charged to high potentials for its locomotion.

The Jews had been warned not to come too close. When the Jews under the outer parts of the vehicle, an electric discharge happened, stunning the Jews to unconsciousness, even to death.

A'raaf (Q 7:143): And when Moses came to our appointed tryst and His Lord hath spoken unto him, he (Moses) said: "My Lord, show me Thyself that I may gaze upon Thee". He (God) said: "Thou wilt not see me, but gaze upon the mountain. If it stands still in its place, then thou wilt see Me". And when His Lord revealeth His glory in the mountain, He sent it down causing Moses to fall down senseless. And when he woke, he said: Glory unto Thee, I turn unto Thee

repentant and I am the first to believe.

Translator's note: This verse supports what has been said earlier in Al Baqarah Q 2:55. It seems that what is called mountain is something that has been moving before, but it now stands still. When the mountain was too close to Moses, he was hit by the electric charge which caused him to fall and become unconscious.

Qaaf (Q 50:22): Thou wast in heedlessness of this. Now we have removed from thee thy covering and piercing is thy sight today.

John 4:22-23-24:

22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

23 But the hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the father seeketh such to worship Him.


24 God is spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.


Translator's note: The words in John 4:22 and following were given by Jesus on the occasion when he was asking for water from the woman of Samaria. Jesus was speaking of the gift of God which was given to every human being regardless his/her religion. This is the living water that can be tapped if one knows how to do it, namely complete surrender to the Indwelling Spirit in full sincerity, which means with a pure and humble heart.

2 Chronicles 7:14: If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins.

Translator's note:

This is a commitment to look for God's countenance.

 Isra-el, Isma-el and words ending with el are names called after God (Isra-el= the way of God, Isma-el = the name of God, bab-el = the city of God etc.

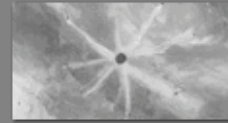
 Humbleness is required to see God's countenance. This is also made clear in the Islamic salt which begins with the commitment: "Inni wajjahtu wajhiya lilladzi..etc" which means: "In truth I have turned my face toward Him...etc".

Numbers 6:26: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

Translator's note: God lifts up His countenance can also be understood as making contact between the Indwelling Spirit and the being (soul) of man which will indeed result in a peaceful condition of mind.

After studying these texts, we will arrive at the conclusion that it is indeed necessary to make attempts to meet God – to have contact with god's love and power and be a witness of the truthfulness of His existence. But this can only happen with God's consent. This is beautifully expressed in the Kalimah Syahadat which says: "I bear witness that there is no god except Allah".

The syahadah says that we can witness God with His consent and His approval. This is also true for the words spoken silently in the salat.



DO WE NEED TO MEET GOD?

Many people are of the opinion that what is required to have faith in God is only to accept Him by believing that He truly exists. For Muslims it will be enough if they need the Pillars of Islam and the Pillars of Faith. There is no further need to make attempts to meet Him. Is this true?

Let us look closer into the following texts to find an answer.

Al Kahfi (Q 18:03-104-105):

103 Say: Shall we inform you who will be the greatest losers by their work?

104 Those whose effort got astray in the life of the world, and yet they reckon that they do good work.

105 Those are they who disbelieve in the revelation of their Lord and in the meeting with Him. Therefore their works are vain, and on the day of resurrection we assign no weight to them.

Yonah (QQ 10:7-8):

6 Lo, those who expect not the meeting with Us but desire the life of the world and feel secure therein, and those who are neglectful of our revelations,

8 Their home will be the fire because of the works they used to do.

Matthew 7:7-8-21-22-23:

7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it will be opened unto you.

8 For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? In thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Translator's note:

- There is much confusion on the meaning of the kingdom of God. One source of information says that the kingdom of God refers to a kind of life that belongs to the spirit and the soul. The life of the soul is marked by peace, love, kindness, justice, righteousness and more of the same kind.
- So when we pray, it should not come from the nafs or ego (the seat of selfishness, jealousy etc), but it should come from the soul which is free from the dominance of the nafs and the ego.
- When Jesus said "I never knew you, depart from me!", his words were directed to the nafs and ego in man.



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THE NATURE OF GOD

Actually the infinity of God is beyond the grasp of the finite human mind. God is absolutely perfect in all aspects. Islam describes the absolutely perfect nature of God in forty-one qualities. We should give efforts to understand what is beyond understanding because we are using words having an earthly origin while God is beyond the earth. It is only an approach of the finite toward the infinite. The forty-one qualities include:

- Twenty which are an obligation to accept
- Twenty which are impossible
- One that belongs to the jaiz

The twenty qualities which we are obliged to accept are:

1. Wujud
-belongs to the nafsiah or His essence
2. *Qidam
-He exists before anything else
3. *Baqo'
-He is eternal, He exists in eternity
4. *Mucholafah lil chawadis
-He is not of the earth
5. *Qiamu bi nafsih-
He is self-inaugurated in His Throne
6. *Wahdaniah
-He is One
7. **Qodrat
-He is omnipotent
8. **Iradat
-Everything exists because He wants it to be
9. **Ilmu
-He is the source of knowledge
10. **Hayyat
-He is the origin of life
11. **Sama'
-He is All-hearing without ears
12. **Basor
-He is All-knowing without tools
13. **Kalam
-He speaks without a mouth
14. ***Qodiran-He has self-obtained power
15. ***Muridan
-He is self-willed, has will of His own
16. ***Aliman
-He is All-knowing, owner of all knowledge
17. ***Chajjan
-He is the living, source of all life
18. ***Sami'an
-He is the Hearer of things heard or unheard
19. ***Basiran
-He is All-knowing of the visible and the invisible
20. ***Mutakallimun
-He that speaks without words but is heard by one who receives His words

***(2) to (6) belong to the salbiah**

- impossible to be contrary)

****7) to 13) belong to the ma'ani**

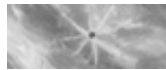
- the contents of nafsiyah
- ***14) to 20) belong to maknawiyah
- seat of the ma'ani.

The twenty impossible qualities are the opposite of the twenty before-mentioned.

The quality of jaiz means that God is free from any imitations. He can do whatever He wants. There is nothing that can limit His personal will. Whatever exists in the universe is subject to His will, to His decree and to His control.

God can withhold the rewards due to an obedient servant if He deems it necessary to do so or on the other hand, He can withhold punishment due to a misbehaving human if He thinks it a better remedy. He can do what He wills. He is absolutely right in His judgment when to give and when to withhold rewards. (The law of angger-angger langgeng).

But even so, He is not whimsical. He acts according to the law of angger-angger langgeng, that He created according to certain laws. He always acts in ways to improve His creation, even at the human level. He acts as an educator to teach man towards higher levels of understanding and higher levels of living.



THE MEANING OF MA'RIFAT

Ma'rifat as a phrase is derived from the root "arafa" which means to know, to recognize, to be acquainted with. According to Iman Al Ghozali, to know Allah God of the Universe is based on musyahadah (witness, evidence). Acquaintance of God is based on evidential proof obtained through direct witness or direct experience. One is called "arif" if one is acquainted at four levels:

- dzat (essence)
-the essence of God as spiritual light
- sifat (nature)
-the nature of God in His omnipotence
- asma (name)
-the name of God-Allah in Islam, the father in Christianity
- af'al (works)
-the works of God in creating the whole universe

On the other hand, man can know God based on studies. Such is called "alim" which means knowledgeable. This knowledge is not based on musyahadah. There is no direct evidence that can be taken as proof of truthfulness, there is no direct experience of the power of God, of His love etc.

One can also know God purely based on emotional belief, without any detailed information to support the belief. Such is the state of a beginner in religion, the general layman.

One who is "arif", who is on the highest level of ma'rifat, has a clear picture of God's power, of His All-mightiness. His knowledge of God is not only very detailed but also accompanied with a change in attitude, not only toward God but also toward His creation, especially toward mankind. This attitude is that of reverence and of love toward His creation.

This differs with a beginner in religion, whose belief is still weak and whose knowledge is rudimentary. To the layman, God is something vague, impossible to comprehend because of His remoteness and His invisibility.

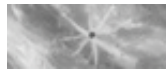
An expert on this topic called "Hallaj" tries to express ma'rifat in the following words:

- No one will know Him unless He makes you to know Him
- No one will know Him unless you are inspired by Him

- No one will be loyal to Him unless you are brought near to Him
- No one will believe in Him unless it is given to you by Him
- No one will worship Him unless you are selected by Him

The believe in God by one who has attained ma'rifat and his taqwa (his devotion) are as strong as rock. Such a faith is called "isbatulyaqin" in Islam, which means faith based on direct experience. Faith in God can be found in diverse stages. For a layman who is a beginner in religion it is weakest and in one who has attained the level of ma'rifat, it is strongest. There are four levels known, starting from ma'rifat down to syariat (at the lowest level):

1. Ma'rifat
-isbatulyaqin
2. Hakikat
-haqqulyaqin
3. Tarekat
-ainulyaqin
4. Syariat
-wajibulyaqin



THE FOUR STAGES OF FAITH IN ISLAM

Ma'rifat

The highest level of man's knowledge of God. Faith here is strongest, because its seat is in the super-mind which in turn is in the soul.

Faith still has the qualities of feeling, but the higher feelings of an evolved soul, a soul which is pure and devoid of the base elements like fear, jealousy, hate etc. Worship here is at the level of sembah sukma.

Hakikat

Here faith also has its seat in an evolving soul (in the first beginnings of evolvment). Faith is somewhat weaker than in ma'rifat, but stronger than in the tarekat. Worship here is at the level of sembah jiwa.

Tarekat

Here faith is based on studied knowledge, based on learning and study. Knowledge can be very steep as obtained from the study of books and accompanied by emotional beliefs which can be fanatic if not restrained by rational thinking. Worship here is at the level of sembah cipta.

Syariat

Here faith has the quality of emotional belief. Religion is mostly understood as a body of laws for the control human behavior. The base elements in the human mind like hate, jealousy, fear, suspicion, arrogance etc. are still strong, hence the need to teach the laws of religion, to spur to have faith and taqwa (devotion). Worship here is at the level of sembah raga.

Translator's note: The human being can be compared to a TV set and the Indwelling Spirit to a TV transmitter. We say that the TV set is locked to the transmitter by attuning the TV set to the wavelength sent out by the transmitter. If the transmitter works at the wavelength say of five cm, the TV set has to be adjusted to this figure of five cm. If so, the TV set will produce sound and pictures as sent out by the transmitter. If not rightly adjusted, the pictures and the sound will be distorted.

In the same way we can adjust our mind to the wavelengths sent out by the Indwelling Spirit. These wavelengths belong to the spiritual and moral values of goodness, truth and beauty as in love, peace, friendliness, devotion, honesty etc.

In short they belong to a set of values we call God-consciousness, morality etc. If so, energy of a spiritual nature will flow from Indwelling Spirit to our being.

This spiritual energy contains the qualities of spirit which are love, peace,

devotion, honesty etc, in short what we call goodness as depicted earlier. The flow of this energy into our soul and being can be felt as a sensation containing joy, happiness, thankfulness, love of God etc. This sensation of joy is known as ecstasy.

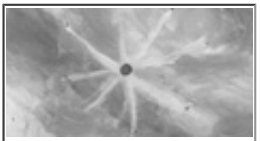
Ma'rifat is experience.
God's love can be experienced.

The above is not theory but based on actual experiences. In these experiences our mind is totally filled with thoughts toward God, so intense that we forget where we are. Our eyes are filled with tears. The God-centered thoughts are so strong that we have the feeling of being in the presence of God, naturally not at visible levels but at levels of the mind, at the level of consciousness.

This experience is so strong that it has the capability to impact on one's view of life and of God so profoundly that it changes our way of life. It makes true the Koranic saying that one experience is worth a life in devotion and worship to God during 83 years (1000 months) as happens in the lailatul kadar.

One final note

This experience is wholly subjective and difficult to explain to others who do not have the same experience. It is like trying to explain the exquisite beauty of a landscape to a blind.



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WHAT IS MEANT WHEN ONE SAYS "GOD"

Light upon light.

An Nur (Q 24:35): Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of his light is as a niche wherein there is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as it was a shining star, kindled from a blessed tree, an olive neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow of itself though no fire touched it. Light upon light, Allah guideth unto his light whom He will. And Allah speaketh to mankind in allegories for Allah is knower of all things.

Translator's note: In this verse, the deepest part of the human being is linked to a niche, hidden because it is so deep. Therein is a lamp, the Indwelling Spirit. This niche also contains a soul – seed (with a soul-germ). This lamp sends out light towards the soul-seed to induce conception and growth. If successful, the seed will grow into an embryo and subsequently into a living creature – a spiritual entity. The light sent out by the lamp is guidance from God to man and is the source of the suara hati nurani (nur = light, hati nurani = a soul receiving light).

At Taghabun (Q 64:8): So believe in Allah and his messenger and the light which we have revealed.

An Nisa (Q 4:174): O mankind, now hath a proof from your Lord come unto you, and we have sent down unto you a clear light.

John 12:46: I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

John 5:35: He was a burning and a shining light, and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

Bhagawad Ghita: Give the food that brings forth light. It is hoped that you receive grace and from this road will come the highest salvation. For reason of the light and the food offered, the joys hoped for will be received.

Buddhism: It is taught that "Sanghyang Adi Budha" as the origin of light brings forth light for the creation of five Dhyani Budhas:

1. Vairocana
-the source of light
2. Aksobya
-the source of peace
3. Ratna Sambhawa
-the jewel of the universe
4. Amithaba
-unlimited light
5. Amosidhi
-omniscience that knows no darkness

Pengestu: In the teachings of the religious movement Pengestu, it is said that God is one in three qualifications:

1. Sukma Kawekas
Sukma = the life force and kawekas, the highest.
Sukma kawekas is the origin of whatever exists – God.
2. Sukma Sejati
-a true messenger of God, in Islam: Muhammad.
3. Rokh Suci
-light springing forth from God, nuurul insan.

God is also called The Great Light to distinguish it from the Rokh Suci.

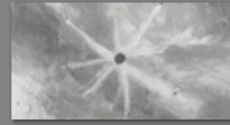
Lato Tseu: In the teachings of Lao Tseu Tsing promulgated long before other religions were spread out over the world, the teacher and originator Tao Kiauw taught four levels of creation:

1. Tao (God)
-exists before anything else
2. Tao (First Essence)
-the first essence gave birth to the second essence and the third essence
3. Three essences
-the three essences were the seed for humanity
4. The universe
-Tao creates the whole universe and gives life to the human creations

Iman Ghozali in his book Huddayatul Islam taught of three essences:

1. Essence 1
-called Nuurul Illahi meaning the Light of God
2. Essence 2
-called Nuurul Muhammad, a messenger of God
3. Essence 3
-called Nuurul Insani, humanity

Conclusion: We have seen from our studies of the teachings of religion and religious movements that there is agreement concerning the nature of God as light, light upon light, the source of light, the origin of life and the origin of all that exists.



SELF-KNOWLEDGE

The prophet Muhammad said: "Who knows himself, will also know God."
To find the deeper meaning of the prophet's saying, let us study the following texts:

Al Mu'minun (Q 23:12 to 16):

12 Verily We created man from a product of wet earth
13 Then placed him as a drop in a safe lodging
14 Then fashioned We the drop a clot, then fashioned We the clot a little lump, then fashioned We the little lump bones, then clothed the bones with flesh, then produceth it as another creation. So blessed be Allah, the best of Creators.
15 Then after that, ye surely die.
16 Then on the Day of Resurrection, ye are raised.

Nuh (Q 71:17): And Allah hath made you to grow as a growth from the earth.

Yaa Siin (Q 15:29): So when I have made him and have breathed into him of MY Spirit, do ye fall down prostrate.

Translator's note: The spirit breathed into man is also called the Indwelling Spirit and can be approached and contacted by true worship. This contact is also called meeting Allah, the two are equal to each other.

Qaaf (Q 50:16): We verily created man and We know what his soul whispereth to him and We are nearer to him than his jugular vein.

Translator's note:

- The soul whispereth to him – this relates to what is called the small inner voice (suara hati nurani), an inner guidance that tries to bring man to the way of God (jalan yang Tuhan ridhoi).
- God is nearer to man than his jugular veins – this refers to the Indwelling Spirit. This spirit has all the qualities of God like a spark has all the qualities of fire from which it is derived.

Although within our being, most of us are not aware of this Indwelling Spirit because the noises from the external world are too loud and suppress the small inner voice. Only when in an acute state of prihatin, when a breakthrough happens, will we be able to hear the suara hati nurani.

When we study the texts mentioned above, we will be able to understand the double nature of man. This double nature consists of:

1. A physical body
2. A spirit body (translator's note: actually a soul body – the spirit as mentioned in Q 15:29 is something else)

The physical body is composed of the 4 aspects (elements): air, fire, water and earth. This physical body is endowed with five senses:

1. Eyes for sight : making contact through electromagnetic waves
2. Ears to hearing : making contact through waves in the air
3. Taste buds in the mouth : sweet, bitter, sour, salty, hot, cold, spicy
4. Smell in the nose : perfume and bad smell
5. General sensations: hot and cold air.

There are four levels of desires (nafsu – passions)

Level One (Nafsu lauwamah)

Desires having their origin in the earth aspect, the physical body, like the desire to eat, to have rest, to sleep, to work, etc.

The lower desires of the heart have their origin in the lower parts of the feeling mind (the earth aspect) like:

- Ignorance: bad behavior from ignorance
- Greed: excessive desires resulting in bad actions

☒ Laziness: not willing to work hard, etc.

Level Two (Nafsu amarah)

Desires having their origin in the fire aspect (the blood) like:

- ☒ Anger: easy to excite and to burst into anger
- ☒ Cruelty, wildness, viciousness: does not know love or mercy
- ☒ Agitation, confusion: has no fixed opinion, easy to sway

Level Three (Nafsu sufiah)

Desires having their origin in the fire aspect (the blood) like:

- ☒ Wishes: the finer aspects of desires
- ☒ Love: love for self, biologic love, paternal love, love for country

Level Four (Nafsu mutmainah)

Desires having their origin in the air aspect like:

- ☒ Peace of mind
- ☒ Purity of heart
- ☒ Piety, devotion
- ☒ Love for mankind, love for God
- ☒ Compassion

Translator's note: Some of the nafsu have their seat in the lower part of mind (mortal mind), for instance love for country. But love for God has its seat in the soul. The two loves must have different seats because the qualities are different. Love for country comes from familiarity with the country in which one has grown up, but love for God is inducted by the Indwelling Spirit.

Al Israa (Q 17:85): They will ask thee concerning the spirit. Say: the spirit is by command of my Lord, and of knowledge ye have been vouchsafed but little.

The spirit is indeed straight from God, it is the source of light, in the Koran called nur, the source of life. If the spirit makes an exit from the body, we will die. But the spirit continues to live and will return to its source, hence the Koran says: "Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi rojiun – from God and back to God".

It is this spirit that enables man to see, hear, feel, think, understand and have consciousness. Because the spirit is from God, only God can know the true nature of the spirit. This is made clear in the following lines:

John 4:24: God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Translator's note: This line says exactly what true worship is, that is: our worship must not be just a formality, but we must worship him with all our mind and all our soul – our mind must follow the meaning of the words we speak silently and coming from the bottom of our heart – from the lubuk hati.

Corinthians 2:10-14:

10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit, for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can we know them, because they are spiritually discerned.



Ma'rifat in Islam

by Sabdono
Surohadikusumo.

MOTTO

You have to see without eyes,
You have to hear without ears,
You have to walk without legs,
You have to work and speak without
the use of hands and tongue,
You have to die while still living.
Only then will you be able to hear!
Such are God's decrees to meet Him.

Translator's note:

You have to see with spiritual eyes,
not with physical eyes in the head.
You have to hear with spiritual ears,
not with physical ears in the body.

You have to walk with spiritual legs,
not with physical legs of your body.
You have to work and speak with your
spiritual hands and spiritual tongue,
not with your bodily hands & tongue.

You have to die to the desires coming
from life in your physical body while
you are living in the external world.
Only then will you be able to hear.

Such are God's decrees if you really
want to meet Him and feel his love.

FOREWORD

With the grace of God, the Beneficent and the Merciful, this small book is presented to those who are seeking to meet God, and as a gift to promote peace among religious humanity. God has created man to worship Him. And every religion teaches man to devote himself to God Almighty by faith and piety to obtain happiness in this world and in the hereafter.

The problem is how to have faith and piety. To answer this question, let us have a closer look into the following passages from the Holy Scriptures.

Jonah (Q 10:99-100): "And if thy Lord willed, all who are in the earth would have faith together. Would thou compel men to have faith? It is not for any soul to have faith save by the permission of Allah. He has put contempt upon those who have not used their mind."

Translator's note: These two verses say in effect that faith comes from God. Faith here is not to be understood as belief at the emotional level which is easily swayed by misfortune. Faith that comes from God belongs to the soul which is much stronger and can withstand every assault from the external world.

Az Zumar (Q 39:18): Who hear advice and follow the best thereof. Such are those whom Allah guideth, and such are then men who use their mind.

Translator's note: Both Jonah 100 and Az Zumar 18 stress the importance of using the mind. What is meant here is mind at higher levels than mind as we understand it in every day life. Mind in every day life is conditioned by the external and visible world and hence belongs to what can be called "concrete mind". This mind can only understand the things of the visible world.

Mind at higher levels is more "abstract thinking" which has the quality of "spiritual wisdom and moral insight". Spiritual wisdom and moral insight have their seat in the soul and are beyond the grasp of the concrete mind. The soul has a mind of its own called *super-mind*. The soul has consciousness of its own called *super-consciousness* which is at higher levels than concrete mind.

True religion is based upon two pillars:

1. Freedom of thought : man can think whatever he wants to
2. Freedom of will : man has a freedom to choose whatever he wants to

Upon those two pillars rests human existence. In the sayings of prophet Muhammad we find:

- Religion is mind, those who have no mind, have no religion.
- Seek wisdom even if you have to travel China.

Mind is akal in Arabic which is derived from "Al Aqlu" and contains three factors: thoughts, feelings, and will. The laws of the mind can be divided into

1. Wajib (obligatory): absolutely certain
2. Mustahil : absolutely impossible
3. Mungkin : possible

The three laws of the mind each contains two elements:

1. Daruri : instincts which are in the mind without prior active thinking
2. Nadori : thought as the results of activity in the mind.

Generally, a man attached to a religion based on taklid, just follows the religion of his parents, as an inheritance from his ancestors and his environment, as something traditional, without giving much thought to this inheritance. He does not devote much study to his religion, or accepts it just as something natural. As a consequence, his attachment to religion is loaded with ignorance and fanaticism.

The mind will reject what it does not recognize or what is beyond its reach while mind is not sure what is true in its search for truth. Consequently there are two groups of people:

1. Those having a religion but not supported by the thinking mind
2. Those who use their mind but have no faith and no religion

To bridge the gap between the two groups, we have to apply the power of mind combined with faith. We have to use our freedom to think and to expand our thinking beyond the limits of traditional thought. The scientific certainties in religion can only be attained through personal experiences accompanied by intuitions at the level of the soul. We will be free from confusion that will weigh heavily on the mind when we have found what we are looking for in religion.

The prophet Muhammad said that religion is mind so we are obliged to use mind and not just believe without contemplating what religion says. That is the way to know God, which is ma'rifat. We are obliged to be sure that we know whom we are worshipping.

In our search for truth, we should start from existing texts in Holy Books. In both the Koran and the Bible, we will find texts that remind people to search for God as in the following:

Al Baqarah (Q 2:256): There is no compulsion in religion. The right direction is henceforth distinct from error. And he who rejected false deities and believeth in Allah hath grasped a firm handhold which will never break. Allah is Hearer and Knower.

Translator's note: Man is free to choose good over evil. He who chooses good does so for the growth of his soul. This is the firm handhold because we will enter life in the hereafter in a soul-body.

Al Haj (Q 22:78): And strive for Allah with strong endeavor. He hath chosen you and hath not laid upon you in religion any hardship, the religion of your father Abraham. He hath named you Muslim of old in this, that the messenger may be a witness for you and that ye may be a witness for mankind. So establish worship, pay the poor due and hold fast to Allah. He is your protector, the best of protectors and the best helper.

Translator's note: This verse says that the religion of Abraham is Islam and Abraham is a Muslim. Islam means a religion based on God-consciousness, a mode of living that is totally God-centered as shown in worship and other acts of life, paying the zakat, helping the poor etc. Witness for mankind means: be an example to mankind in God-consciousness, by doing good deeds, by surrendering to God's will (aslama) etc.

Ali Imran (Q 3:3): He hath revealed unto thee (Muhammad) the Scripture with truth, confirming that which was before it even as He revealed the Torah and the Gospel.

Translator's note: The Torah and the Gospel were originally from Allah except those lines that were included by writers who were ignorant of God's purposes. Diligent reading will expose which were original and which were from men.

Ali Imran (Q 3:48): And He (Allah) will teach him (Jesus) the Scripture and Wisdom, and the Torah and the Gospel.

Thahaa (Q 20:114): Exalted be Allah, the true King, and hasten not with the Koran ere its revelation hath been perfected unto thee, and say: My Lord, increase me in knowledge.

Translator's note: This verse can be read in two ways:

1. Directed to Muhammad himself, in which case the message is clear.
2. Directed to the common reader. In this case, one should read the Koran carefully. This verse contains a time-factor in the words: "There its revelation hath been perfected". There are verses belonging to the mutasyabihat of which the meaning will only be understood after what has been predicted in the verses to happen, has happened.

Al Maaidah (Q 5:10): And they who disbelieve and deny our revelations, they will be in hell.

Translator's note: The traditional rendering of hell is in its literal meaning a burning fire where people will be roasted for deeds they have done in ignorance, in a state of mind which is not able to grasp the meaning of religious teachings. These teachings are sometimes indeed beyond human understanding.

Careful reading should reveal that hell can also be understood as a torture in the mind and not in the physical body. In fact, the latter meaning would be contrary to a God of mercy. Hell in a literal meaning may, however, refer to a natural condition on earth where the temperature rises to levels higher than 100% C. This will happen if the axis of rotation shifts to an extreme of 90% with one of the poles facing directly toward the sun for six consecutive months.

Al Insyiqaaq (Q 84:6): Verify o man, thou must work toward thy Lord with diligence till thou wilt meet Him.

Translator's note: Working toward the Lord obviously means to live in a God-centered mode, doing everything with God's pleasure in mind. Meeting God will happen if, by living in God-consciousness, contact is made with the Indwelling Spirit.

This contact is accompanied by sensations of spiritual joy called ecstasy. This contact is called ma'rifat in Islam, knowing God because God's mercy is contained in the Indwelling Spirit.

Al Baqarah (Q 2:45-46): Seek help in patience and prayer, and truly it is hard

save for the submissions. Who know that they will meet their Lord and to Him they are returning.

Translator' note: Prayer can be done at four levels:

1. At the level of the lips and tongue, like prayer done by a child of about four years. The child does not know the meaning of the words s/he speaks.
2. At the level of the emotions of the intuitive mind: a child of about seven years will know the meaning of love, for instance his or her love for the parents. S/he may put the same emotions in his/her prayer.
3. At the level of the thinking mind. Here the words come from the mental part of man: s/he knows the meaning usually accompanied by emotional feeling.
4. At the level of an evolved soul. Here the prayer comes from the bottom of the heart (from the lubuk hati, were the soul dwells) and most likely includes the thinking and the intuitive minds as well. This is the deepest prayer that we can think of.

Only when prayer comes from the soul will there be a contact made with the Indwelling Spirit and hence with God. If contact is made, we say that our prayers are heard by God. It is said that we pray in a state of submission, in Indonesian called "khusuk", that is if contact has been attained. This contact is accompanied by the spiritual joys called ecstasy (peace and joy).

Isaiah 55:6: Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.

Translator's note: God can be found when we enter the lubuk hati, which is also the seat of the Indwelling Spirit. God is indeed near, because we have only to enter the lubuk hati to find Him, although what we find is the Indwelling Spirit.

Matthew 5:8: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Translator's note: The pure in heart are those who have been able to purify their inner being from impurities like hate or insincerity. In the normal state when nothing disturbs our peace of mind, we feel pure in heart. But actually we still have much impurities in our being, however concealed. These concealed impurities can be brought to the surface and removed through certain spiritual exercises.

The true worship of God is worship which will enable us to find God (in other words, by making contact with the Indwelling Spirit).