



## **Secular vs. Sacred Paradigms in Science, Technology, and Economics: Crises of the Enlightenment and Search for an Alternative Paradigm**

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### **Abstract**

This paper is a polemic directed against the European Enlightenment and its secular paradigm. It argues that by replacing the sacredness with the secular, the Enlightenment project has put civilisation in a state of crisis. By claiming that human beings are self-sufficient, it has turned the self to an “inner god” with a desire to take over the control of the universe. By failing to recognize that a full understanding of the outer universe depends on an understanding of the inner one, it has succeeded in revealing the outer universe to some degree, but at the expense of darkening the inner universe. By substituting the Christian Trinity with the “Secular Trinity” of nature, cause-effect, and chance, it has, despite its achievements in the fields of science, technology and economics, succeeded only in producing a capitalist paradise kept going by “soulless humans, secular science, destructive technology, and an unsustainable consumer culture. The aim of this polemical paper is to propose the Tawhidi paradigm as an alternative: an alternative based on a sacred ontological, epistemological, anthropological, and teleological worldview, and capable of producing human-centered science and technology as well as an economic system that will bring peace and prosperity through moral, intellectual, spiritual and material well-being.

**Keywords:** *secularism, science, technology, enlightenment, human nature, sacredness*

### **Abstrak**

Makrifat sebagai satu projek sekular telah berjaya mendedahkan alam semesta lahiriah pada tahap tertentu tetapi mengakibatkan kejahilan pada alam batiniah. Golongan ini gagal mengenali bahawa pemahaman sepenuhnya alam semesta luaran bergantung kepada pemahaman dalaman atau batiniah. Jadi, beberapa kesilapan yang serius berlaku apabila menggantikan sifat sekular dengan kesucian. Pertamanya, dengan mendakwa bahawa manusia adalah serba mencukupi. Keduanya adalah dengan menolak konsep Tritunggal Kristian dan menggantikannya dengan ‘Tritunggal Sekular’ iaitu alamiah, sebab-akibat dan nasib. Ketiga ialah tindakan mendewakan ego diri. Keempat pula dengan melagakan keegoan diri dengan tuhan-tuhan sekular bagi menguasai alam sejagat. Akibat daripada tindak-tanduk ini telah melahirkan “manusia tidak beroh”, “sains sekular”, “teknologi membinasa”, “budaya kepenggunaan” yang tidak mampan dan banyak krisis lain. Kajian ini menyarankan bahawa kita perlu membangunkan paradigma alternatif yang mempunyai ontologi keramat, epistemologi, antropologi dan pandangan teleologi bagi menghasilkan sains dan teknologi yang berpusatkan manusia di samping satu sistem ekonomi alternatif yang akan membawa keamanan dan kemakmuran melalui kesejahteraan moral, intelektual, spiritual dan material.

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**Kata kunci:** *sekularisme, sains, teknologi, makrifat, sifat semula jadi manusia, kesucian*

## **Introduction**

The Enlightenment project emerged in the Western Europe in the seventeenth century as a reaction to the dominance of Churches. Eventhough some consider the project being ended in nineteenth century, in reality, many argue that the project is still in progress. “Two centuries after its apogee, not only the West but also in some respects the whole world still lives under the influence of the philosophical and political movement we call the Enlightenment” (Sprages, 2001, p.49) Indeed, Habermas<sup>i</sup> calls the Enlightenment project an “unfinished project” (Passerin d'Entrèves and Seyla Benhabib, 1996).

The project was led by prominent French philosophers such as René Descartes, Voltaire, Diderot, D'Alembert, Montesquieu, Francis Bacon; Scottish scholars such as Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, Adam Smith, and Thomas Reid; and German thinkers such as Christian Wolff, Moses Mendelssohn, G.E. Lessing, Leibniz and Immanuel Kant (Bristow, 2011). In England, John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, and Isaac Newton emerged as key Enlightenment figures. Despite the difference in their expertise, the Enlightenment thinkers were united to replace the power of Churches with that of reason. As described by Reader (1997), the essence of the Enlightenment project was as follows: “An emphasis on the primacy of reason as the correct way of organizing knowledge, a concentration on empirical data accessible to all and a belief that human progress was to be achieved by the application of science and reason (1997:4). This ambitious project was not limited to science. “It also incorporated ambitious moral purposes and political aspirations.” (Sprages, 2001, p.49) It was morality without God as suggested by Kant, Bentham and others.<sup>ii</sup> It was a secular paradigm countering the dominant sacred paradigm of the Churches and Aristotelian cosmology with its secular ontology, epistemology, anthropology and teleology.

This paper discusses secular paradigm of the Enlightenment in comparison to a sacred (Tawheedi) paradigm in terms of their axioms, worldviews, and promised paradises. First, the paper presents the secular paradigm of the Enlightenment with its dark sides. Second, it deliberates on an alternative paradigm from an Islamic perspective to enlighten the dark sides of the “Enlightenment”. Third, it compares secular and sacred science in terms of their approaches in understanding the universe. Fourth, it examines the role of technology in secular and sacred paradigm. Fifth, it analyzes economic systems of secular and sacred paradigms in fulfilling their promised paradise.

## **Secular Paradigm of the Enlightenment and its Dark Sides**

The Enlightenment project was successful to remove the darkness of the Churches. However, it went to other extreme while taking revenge. For that matter, the Enlightenment project was a rejection (or denial) of the infinite Divine light,<sup>iii</sup> in favor of the finite light of the human mind. It is like relying on the light of a firefly instead of the Sun light. However, even if we combine the light of all fireflies, we would not be able to produce the amount of light the sun produces in a flashing second. As it is impossible to enlighten the earth with the light of a firefly, it is also impossible to enlighten the universe with light of the human mind. We need the Divine light as much as the earth needs the Sun light. Even though the Enlightenment has helped man to escape the darkness of what is known in the West as the ‘Middle Ages’, it is not sufficient to give a relief to man’s mind in order to resolve the deep darkness faced by modern man.

The Enlightenment project brought a sort of freedom for the minds of men from the oppression of Churches in the Dark Ages of the West; however, this is not a freedom for the minds to see with the Divine light, it is a freedom to avoid the Divine light. It is a freedom like a child rebels against his parents for not having any guidance. Such a child could be dangerous to himself and to others if he is left with some potentially destructive tools.

The “Enlightenment” is an “alienation<sup>iv</sup> project” for humankind; this is because, even though we have reached the Moon, and learned about the far edges of the universe, we have forgotten who we are, and why we are here. We take everything and everyone as rivals or enemies in hiding rather than seeing them as our siblings. Similarly, the “Enlightenment” is an “animalization project” for humankind; it focuses upon the animal side of human beings and ignores our spiritual side. It offers a life style not much different from animal’s life. For that matter, even the evolution theory is a scientific declaration of this animalization project.

The “Enlightenment” is a “secular trinity” project, rejecting the Trinitarian theology in favor of the three gods of secular trinity. This is mainly based on the reality that we cannot live without god(s); if we do not have one, we must invent one. The Enlightenment finds it to be irrational to embrace the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. However, it replaces them with the gods of nature (the Mother), cause-effect (the Son), and chance (the Holy Spirit). It ascribes all objects and

events in the universe to these three gods; the mechanistic worldview is the natural byproduct of this “secular trinity”.<sup>v</sup>

The “Enlightenment” is a “reductionist project” compartmentalizing the universe in order to divide it among the three gods of secular science. It tries to explain each compartment as the product of causes, nature, or chance, based on its reductionist reasoning. It attempts to reduce everything to small fragments and ascribe them to a simple material causes. “Fundamental to that revolution was the vehement rejection of the forms and essences where were the basic components of the classical cosmos. These were replaced in the new natural philosophy by what were presumed to be the discrete and simple parts or building blocks out of which all complex wholes in the world were composed by a process of combination or aggregation.” (Spragens, 2001, p.51). The enlightenment project ignores the indivisible unity and interdependency of everything in the universe. It removes teleology from natural events and attributes everything, even human behavior, to simple material causes and natural forces: “Natural events occurred, on this account, as the causal products of basic natural forces; and human behavior was properly understood as a subset of these natural events.” (Spragens, 2001, p.51). As argued by D’Holbach (1970), in such a deterministic universe, human is “nothing more than a passive instrument in the hands of necessity.”

While the Enlightenment turned the self to an “inner god”, it also made him the slave of his desires/animal soul. He does everything to serve his desires. He sacrifices everything, even his own life, for the desires of his animal soul.<sup>vi</sup> Indeed, a capitalist consumer views the ultimate goal in life to be the fulfillment of his/her desires. The common saying “life is fun” in the capitalist American society reflects this philosophy of life for many people. The overwhelming majority who embrace this philosophy work very hard during the week in order to have fun over the weekend.<sup>vii</sup>

The “Enlightenment” project is designed to make people believe in themselves instead of believing in theistic god(s). It turns the human “self” to a kind of “inner god.” It promotes “self-belief”, “self-help”, “self-actualization”, “self-motivation”, “self-confidence”, and “self-sufficiency.” It boosts the self by ascribing its accomplishments to the self. It transforms the self to the “inner god.”<sup>viii</sup> It sets the goal of conquering and mastering the universe for the inner god

by defeating, controlling, or stealing from nature.<sup>ix</sup> However, it does not understand that the life of the “inner god” depends on the life of nature.<sup>x</sup> In Horkheimer and Adorno’s (1976, p.83) terms, “the system the Enlightenment has in mind is the form of knowledge which copes more proficiently with the facts and supports the individual most effectively in the mastery of nature.”

The “Enlightenment” is a project of discovering the “outer universe” while denying or dismissing the “inner universe.” In fact, it has enlightened the outer universe while darkening the inner universe. However, it does not know that the comprehension of the outer universe is only possible through an enlightened inner universe. In Schuurman (2008, p.75)’s terms, “the Enlightenment represents the religion of the closed material world that is blind to the non-material dimensions of reality”.

The Enlightenment project relies on capitalist ideology to replace supernatural gods with a man-made god, namely the money. Capitalism pursues this goal through market mechanism. However, capitalism is not the market mechanism; it is a worldview that relies on the market mechanism. Capitalism is much more than a free market system; it is an ideology that makes money (capital) the central purpose of life for all individuals. In Karl Marx’s terms, “money degrades all the gods of man and turns them into commodities. Money is the universal self-established value of all things. It has, therefore, robbed the whole world...both the world of men and nature...of its specific value. Money is the estranged essence of man’s work and man’s existence, and this alien essence dominates him, and he worships it.” (Marx, Lederer 1958). In this sense, the main goal of a capitalist person is to accumulate/gain money. For such a person, money is considered as a god that can open any door. In Marxist terms, capitalism is an ideology, which has turned money into the god of the world. It is a secular ideology, which promises to build a “technological paradise” in this life, not in the next life as promised by many religions; capitalism relies on the magical power of the free market mechanism to fulfill its promise of paradise only on earth. Thus capitalism could be characterized as a secular religion in this context.

No doubt that capitalism, the economic hand of the Enlightenment project, has been successful in production and consumption; nevertheless, it failed to bring the promised paradise. Both the success and failure of capitalism could be explained through its

understanding of human nature. Indeed, as the success of capitalism comes from its partial understanding of human nature, its failure comes from its partial misunderstanding or exploitation of human nature. On the one hand, the system has been very successful in production and consumption by igniting certain elements of human nature. On the other hand, the system has failed to bring happiness to people by ignoring or denying other elements of human nature. The success of Western science and technology is like building a spaceship and sending it to the space, but then losing its connection with the earth while leaving the crews in the darkness of the space with miserable fate. The dream for paradise has turned to nightmare for many people as evidenced by increasing suicide, stress, depression, substance addiction, etc. Indeed, social, psychological, moral, environmental, and even economic crises of modern time can be linked to the dark sides of the Enlightenment (Aydin 2011, 2013a). As famously said by Einstein, "problems cannot be solved with the same mindset that created them." Thus, we need to look the problems with a different mindset.

Since current crises of the Enlightenment could not be solved within its secular paradigm, we need to develop an alternative paradigm (Aydin, 2013b, 2013c). Indeed, according to Kuhn, "In both political and scientific development the sense of malfunction that can lead to crisis is prerequisite to revolution" (Kuhn 1970, p.92). Particularly after the 2008 financial crisis, the search for an alternative paradigm has been intensified. In April 2012, the British Royal Society released a report<sup>xi</sup> warning that "Rapid and widespread changes in the world's human population, coupled with unprecedented levels of consumption present profound challenges to human health and wellbeing, and the natural environment." The prominent scientists who contributed to the report predict "social, economic and environmental failures and catastrophes on a scale never imagined" within 30-40 years. They explicitly called for developing new socio-economic systems and institutions that are not dependent on continued material consumption growth.

### **3. The Need for Genuine Enlightenment through an Sacred Paradigm**

True knowledge is the light that helps man to overcome the dark sides of the "Enlightenment" and to know who we are and how we should behave inwardly and outwardly. However, human knowledge is always limited. We could not claim absolute truth given our limitation. We can only claim certain truth (subjective

truth) which are true until it is falsified as argued by Karl Popper. Objective and absolute truth can only come from the One who is All-Knowing. Thus, we can gain true enlightenment once we rely on the truth from the All-Knowing. Indeed, this is exactly what God wants us to practise from an Islamic perspective.

That is why the very first message from God to the Prophet Muhammed (*s. a. w.*) (and humanity) was not "believe!" or "worship!". It was "*iqra* (read!)". It is reported that the Archangel Gabriel came to the Prophet when he was in isolation in a cave. The angel commanded him to 'read'('recite'). The Prophet replied 'I cannot read.' At this time the Archangel took Muhammad (*s. a. w.*) in his arms and pressed him until it was almost too much to bear. He then released him and said again 'read'('recite'). 'I cannot', replied the Prophet, at which the Archangel embraced him again. For the third time the Archangel commanded Muhammad (*s. a. w.*) "read", but still he said he could not. He was embraced one more time. The Prophet was saying that he does not know how to read.

The repetition of the command was indeed an instruction of how and what to read (recite). The first "read" refers to the necessity of the Divine light; the second "read" refers to necessity of the Divine instruction; and the third "read" refers to the book of the universe. In other words, the angel was implicitly saying to the Prophet, you could read (recite) the book of the universe with the Divine light of the Qur'an under the Divine instruction. On releasing him the third time, however, the Archangel Gabriel said explicitly what and how to read: "Read in and with the Name of your Lord, Who has created – Created human from a clot clinging (to the wall of the womb). Read and your Lord is the All-Munificent, Who has taught (human) by the pen – Taught human what he did not know." (The Qur'an, 96:1-5)

By referring to the creation of human, the message was clear on where to start reading the vast book of the universe. In other words, following the Divine guidance, we should start reading ourselves first. Thus, we can read the universe. However, we can read ourselves only in the name of God, meaning with His infinite light and guidance. In this regard, the Qur'an is a "study guide" which shows how to read the book of the universe. However, the Qur'an is not in delusion regarding the human response. It accurately predicts how people will respond to this Divine call: "No indeed, but (despite all His favors to him), human is unruly and rebels. In that he sees himself as self-sufficient, independent (of his Lord). But to your Lord,

surely is the return (when everyone will account for their life)." (The Qur'an, 96:6-8) In other words, seeing himself as self-sufficient is the primary cause of the human denial of God. This is also the primary source of the Western dialectic as suggested by Dooyeweerd.

As shown in chart 1, the oneness of God (Tawheed)<sup>xii</sup> becomes the source of ontological-epistemological knowledge. In other words, the Tawheedi paradigm (a sacred paradigm) provides the unity between ontological and epistemological level of reality. Therefore, there is no dichotomy between the revealed knowledge and reasoned knowledge.<sup>xiii</sup> While the former comes from the Divine Words (*Al-Kalaam*), the latter comes from the Divine Power (*Al-Kudrah*). They are just the different expressions of the same reality which comes from the One (*Al-Ahad* and *Al-Waheed*). Therefore, there should be no contradiction between scientific and religious truth. There should be NO duality of secular and sacred. Indeed, everything becomes sacred once perceived through the Tawheedi paradigm.

From an Islamic point of view, as seen in Chart 1, it can be said that God makes Himself known to humanity through His words and works. If we listen to the Divine Revelations and read His works in the universe, we will know His attributes. According to Nursi, self or "I" is the key to the understanding of universe as well as God: "The key to the world is in the hand of man and is attached to his self. For while being apparently open, the doors of the universe are in fact closed. God Almighty has given to man by way of a Trust, such a key, called the 'I', that it opens all the doors of the world; He has given him an enigmatic 'I' with which he may discover the hidden treasures of the Creator of the universe" (Nursi 1996d, p.558). Therefore, we should begin our reading from ourselves because the knowledge of the self will help us to know God. However, this is not an easy job, says Nursi, because "the 'I' is also an extremely complicated riddle and a talisman that is difficult to solve. When its true nature and the purpose of its creation are known, as it is itself solved, so will be the universe." The danger is due to perception of "I" as real entity rather than being a unit of measurement or mirror to the Divine acts. In other words, "I" is not the active doer, but rather passive receiver of good deeds. Therefore, "I" cannot claim credits for anything good. Indeed, the Qur'an clearly states that "I" could take credit for evil only: "Whatever good, (O man!) happens to thee, is from Allah. but

whatever evil happens to thee, is from thy (own) soul." (The Qur'an, 4:79) Thus, through self-experience of God's works, we are supposed to understand His names and attributes. If we imagine "self" being real and source of actions, we will be committing partnership with God.

In Nursi's view, human is created with nature of absolute impotence and absolutely neediness. His power is imaginary, not real. He assumes the ownership of the Divine power working within. In reality, he could not even feed himself. However, he desires infinite things which are beyond his power. Therefore, no matter how much he has in this world, he is still endlessly needy. Everything in his possession is fleeting. They could not help him to fulfil his endless desires which reach to the eternity. Therefore, he needs the One who is All-Powerful, All-Knowing, Most-Merciful, and Most-Kind. Nursi calls to human being to understand his impotent and needy nature and submit the All-Powerful: "O man, if you are the slave of Him alone, you will earn a place superior to all creatures. But if you hold back from this servitude to Him, you will become an abased slave to impotent creatures. If you rely on your ego and own power and abandoning reliance on God and supplication, deviate into pride and boasting, then you will fall lower than an ant or bee in regard to goodness and creation, and become weaker than a spider or a fly" (Nursi 1996d, p.329)

Once we understand that we are absolutely impotent and needy, we will realize that nature could not produce anything on her own. Everything from an atom to galactic systems is the works of God and under His control at every moment. He is not the god of gaps. He is the God of everything at every moment according to the Quran. Therefore, becoming a believer is nothing more than the recognition of and participation to the universal submission. In this regard, belief is not a blind acceptance; it is an affirmation and bearing witness (*shahadah*) to the manifestation of God.

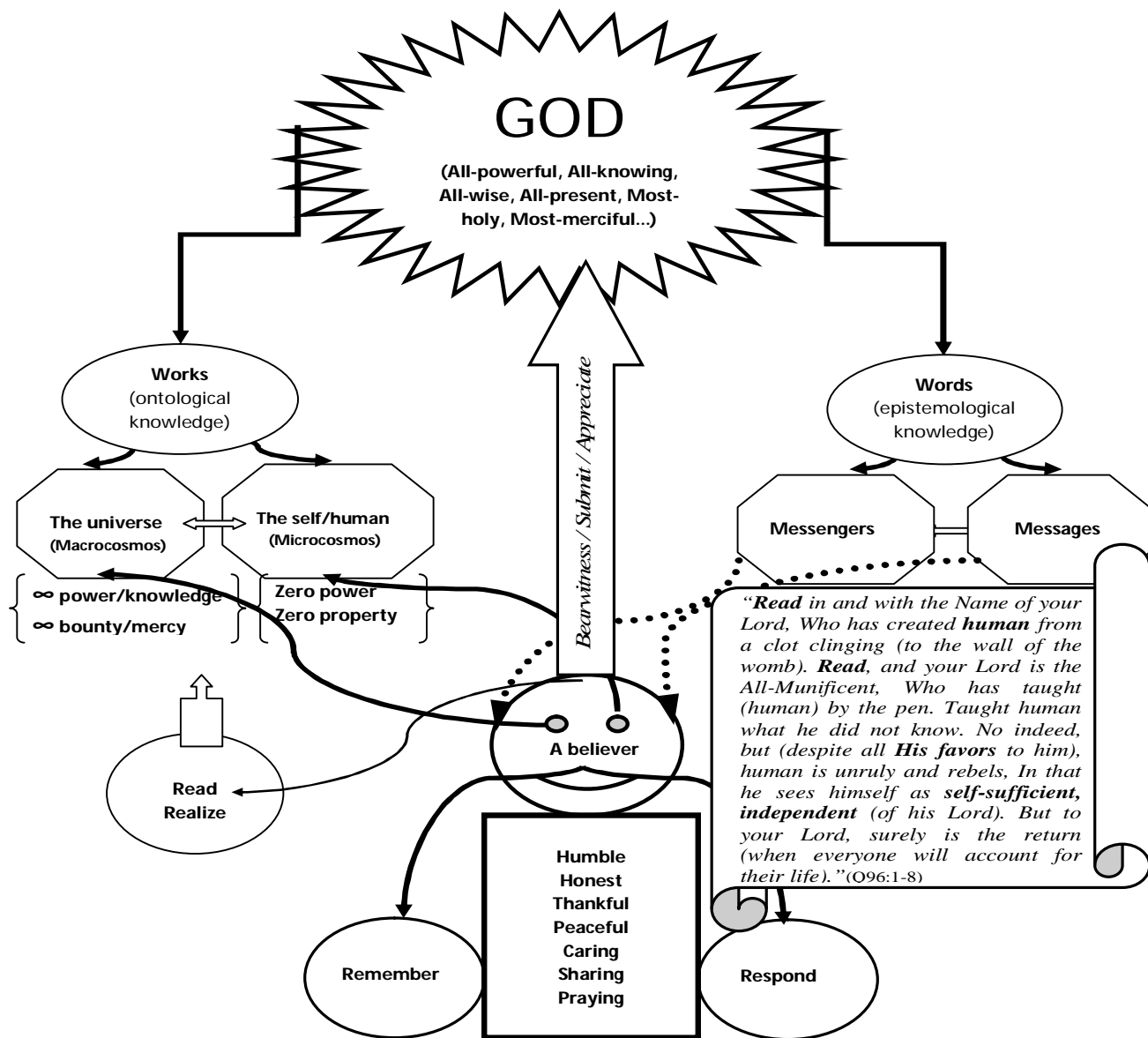


Figure 1: Tawheedi Paradigm and Ontological-Epistemological Unity of Knowledge

As shown in Figure 1, the oneness of God, becomes the source of ontological-epistemological knowledge in the Tawheedi paradigm. Thus, it leaves no room for duality and dichotomy. Due to the unity of knowledge in the Islamic worldview, no contradiction is expected between genuine scientific and religious truth. Likewise, there is no need for division of secular and sacred. Everything becomes sacred.<sup>xiv</sup>

According to the Qur'an, as everything in the universe is created for a certain purpose, human beings are also

created for certain purposes. The main purpose of humans is not to boost the ego and turning him to a god. The purpose is also not to serve the animal soul (nafs) by becoming its slave. Rather, the purpose is to understand our nature embedded with infinite impotence and poverty, and act accordingly. It is to disclose our almost infinite potential by relying on the Divine power and mercy through understanding our true nature. In other words, the purpose is to become a

perfect human, “*insan-i kamil*”, by disclosing our human potentiality as much as we can.<sup>xv</sup>

For that matter, life is not fun even though there is room for fun in life. Rather, life is a test. “We have surely made whatever is on the earth as an ornament for it (appealing to humanity), so that We may try them (by demonstrating it to themselves) which of them is best in conduct. Yet, We surely reduce whatever is on it to a barren dust-heap (and will do so when the term of trial ends). ” (The Qur’an, 18:7-8) Therefore, material possessions cannot be the goal in life; they can only be a means of accomplishing the ultimate goal of disclosing our potential. For a believer “the present, worldly life is nothing but a play and pastime, and better is the abode of the Hereafter for those who keep from disobedience to God in reverence for Him and piety...” (the Qur’an, 6:32)

As depicted in Chart 2, from an Islamic point of view, a person who understands his innate weaknesses would not make the claim of being the master over other beings. Rather, he will be humble and will live in harmony with everything. He would not claim ownership over anything. He will understand that nothing, including his body, is his own. Everything

belongs to the Master of the universe. He is a trustee over what he possesses. In other words, he will sell everything to God as outlined in the Qur’an: “Verily God has purchased from the believers their persons and their property that Paradise might be theirs” (the Qur’an, 9:11). While capitalism encourages people to buy and consume, meaning to own and use what they like, the Qur’an asks believers to sell what they have to the Owner of everything. Indeed, in Nursi’s view, belief is a sales contract between a believer and God (Nursi 1996d, p.23). Thus, a believer could not use what he has as he wants. He could only use them with the permission of the real Owner. He has to use them responsibly. His acts are being recorded and he will be held accountable on the Judgment Day. “And so, whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it; and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.” (the Qur’an, 98:7-8) In short, while the secular worldview creates human god and gives him power to claim mastery over the universe, the Tawheedi worldview weakens the ego and turns human to the servant of God (abdullah) who becomes aware of his role as trustee and offer thanks (shukr) to the Owner rather claiming partnership (shirk).

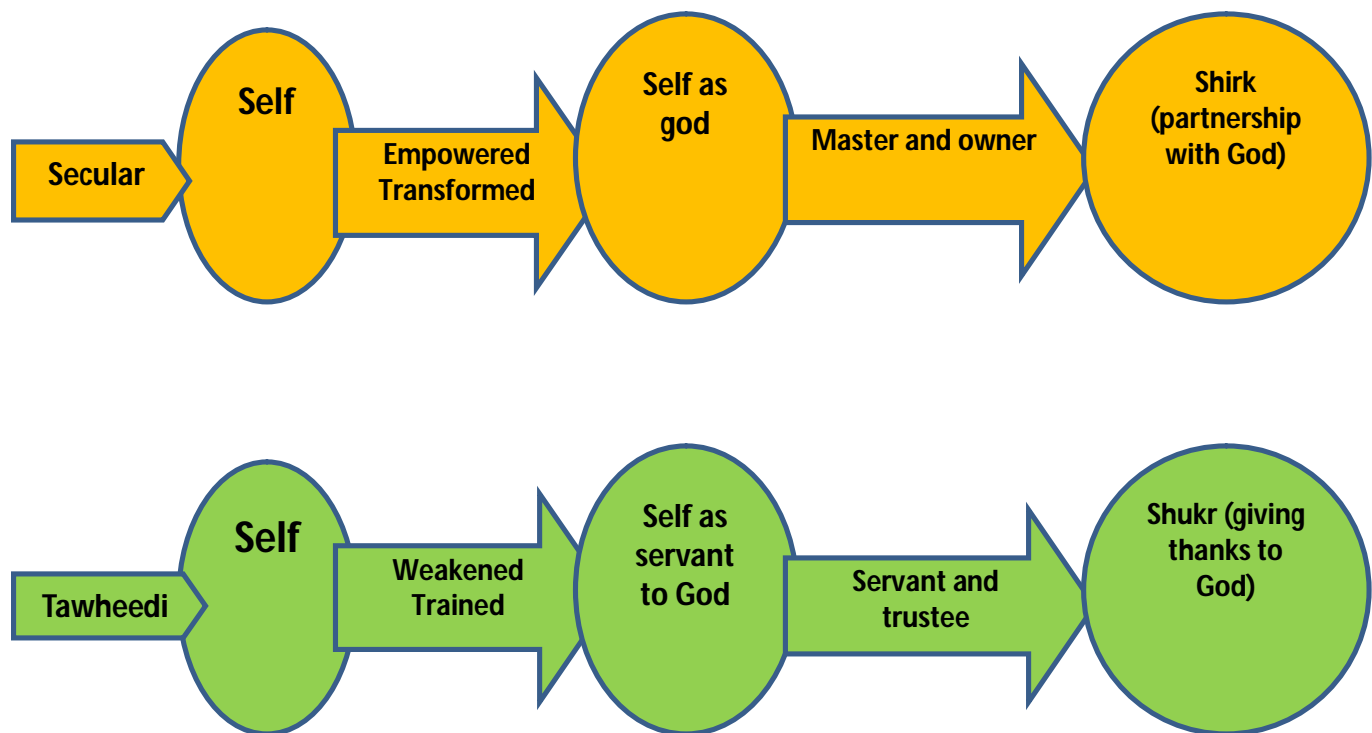


Figure 2: Secular vs. Tawheedi paradigms

## **I. Secular vs. Sacred Science**

The Enlightenment project removes sacred epistemology by successfully eliminating teleology from science reducing knowledge to epistemological positivism and anthropological naturalism. It divides knowledge about universe as scientific (secular) and mystical (sacred). In my view, there cannot be dichotomy between true science and authentic revelation. Indeed, we are created with a nature in order to examine the universe. We cannot live like animals. We try to understand how everything works and what their meanings are. Modern science reveals the mysteries of the universe and explains how they work. Even though atheist scientists deny the existence of God, their real scientific works reveal evidence for the existence of God. As it is eloquently said by a Muslim scholar, “the universe is not the property of materialistic science, which has used the universe in a destructive way precisely because it has been unable to discover its meaning.” (Mermer 2007, p.85)

Said Nursi, a well-known Muslim scholar of twentieth century, wrote extensively on science and religion. In his view, the universe is made in the form of a comprehensible book which makes its Author known. For that matter, while authentic revelation is the words of God, true science is nothing but a description of the works of God. There should not be any dichotomy between the words and works of God. Therefore, Divine books such as the Qur’an come from the infinite knowledge of God while the book of the universe comes from the infinite power of God. They both have a similar message confirming each other. According to Nursi, secular scientists make the invisible chapters of the book of the universe visible, but claim them to be meaningless script because they do not know how to read it. As Richard Feynman (1963-1965, p.7) says, scientists “cannot make the mystery go away by explaining how it works.” They “will just tell you how it works.”<sup>xvi</sup> In Nursi’s view, the Divine revelation solves the mystery. In other words, under the light of authentic revelation and through the instruction of the prophets, we could read those scripts and learn more about the names and attributes of its Author. For that matter, the first Divine command to Prophet Muhammed (*s. a. w.*) is valid for all believers. Reading the book of the universe under light of the Qur’an helps us know “the mind of God.”

Indeed, the Qur’an encourages the human mind to study the book of the universe in several hundred verses. It calls our attention to the Divine acts in His creatures such as cows, honeybees, sheep, ants, gnats,

spiders, stars, the sun, the moon, etc.<sup>xvii</sup> It asks us reflect on natural events such as alteration of day and night, the movements of the sun, the moon, and the stars. However, the Qur’an presents everything in the universe as purposeful acts of God. It explicitly negates the secular trinity. It presents God as the real and only cause behind everything. In other words, in a Qur’anic perspective, as our inner self cannot be god, the nature, cause-effect, and chance also cannot be god. They are just a veil covering the Divine power. As Nursi says, powerless, contingent, and ignorant causes could not be responsible for any result. For instance, an apple tree is not the cause of an apple. It cannot produce even a single apple because it does not have the knowledge, power, and wisdom to do so. Even if all scientists work together they cannot produce an apple. So, how can ignorant, blind, deaf, and unconscious molecules in an apple tree do it? In Nursi’s view, an apple tree and an apple are created together. They are always associated with each other. However, one is not the cause for the other. We are confusing the association with causation. This is like seeing the association between the light switch and bulb light and claiming that the light switch is the cause of the light that the bulb produces.

According to Nursi, cause-effect, nature and randomness are the veils to the direct Divine acts which are the manifestations of God’s names. He offers reason for the use of causes as follows: “Causes are a veil; for Divine dignity and grandeur require them to be thus... Their purpose is to make known the dignity of power and majesty of dominicality, so that power should not be seen to be associated with base and lowly matters. Not like a human king, tainted by impotence and indigence, who therefore takes officials as partners. That is to say, causes have been placed so that the dignity of power may be preserved in the superficial view of the mind. ...causes are purely apparent and in the inner face of things and in reality have no true effect” (Nursi 1996d, p.300).

Likewise, Nursi rejects any real role of nature in the God’s actions. God does not act through means. He creates everything directly. He is the only Cause of everything. Apparent cause-effect chain is just a veil. He is the Doer of everything. He does not grant certain abilities/nature to creature to do what they do. Rather, He himself does through them. Nursi even disputes the reality of nature: “The imaginary and insubstantial thing that Naturalists call Nature, if it has an external reality, can at the very most be work of art; it cannot be the Artist. It is an embroidery, and cannot be the



Embroiderer. It is a set of decrees; it cannot be the Issuer of the decrees. It is a body of the laws of creation, and cannot be the Lawgiver. It is but a created screen to the dignity of God, and cannot be the Creator. It is passive and created, and cannot be a Creative Maker. It is a law, not a power, and cannot possess power. It is the recipient, and cannot be the source.” (Nursi 1996a, p.244)

We need to unveil the reality by using our mind under the guidance of the Divine light. Then, we will see that everything is directly created and maintained by the Divine power. In other words, God is not the first cause. He is the only cause. He is the real cause. He does not need to use any means including the cause-effect chain or nature. He directly runs everything in the universe. “All that are in the heavens and on the earth entreat Him (in their needs). Every (moment of every) day, He is in a new manifestation (with all His Attributes and Names as the Divine Being).” (The Qur’an, 55:29) “So, All-Glorified is He in Whose Hand is the absolute dominion of all things...” (The Qur’an, 36:83) His wisdom requires apparent causes as a veil to His power. He is not the god of gaps. He is the god of everything. Indeed, there is no gap for anything else. Thus, the mechanistic worldview based on cause-effect chains is not description of reality. Perhaps, the quantum

worldview, which nullifies the deterministic worldview, is much closer to reality.

As seen in Chart 3, there are three arguments regarding the relationship between Creator and creature. The first one is Deistic view which argues that God created the universe and left it alone after setting the system. The second one is a weak Theistic perspective which argues that God sets the system in the universe, however, occasionally makes intervention as He sees needed. In this perspective, everything in the universe is ordinary except exceptional intervention of God. The third one is a strong Theistic perspective which argues that God is directly involved in everything every moment. He is the only one who is self-sufficient. Through His continuous creation, everything sustains their existence. In other words, creation is a continuous thing happening from moment to moment. It is God's active will that causes Creation to exist. Without God's continuous action, we would cease to exist. "The Glorious Creator of the universe is Self-Subsistent, that is, He subsists, continues, endures of Himself. All things subsist and continue through Him, they remain in existence and have permanence. If that relationship of Self-Subsistence was cut off from the universe for even the fraction of a second, the universe would be annihilated" (Nursi 1996a, p.441).

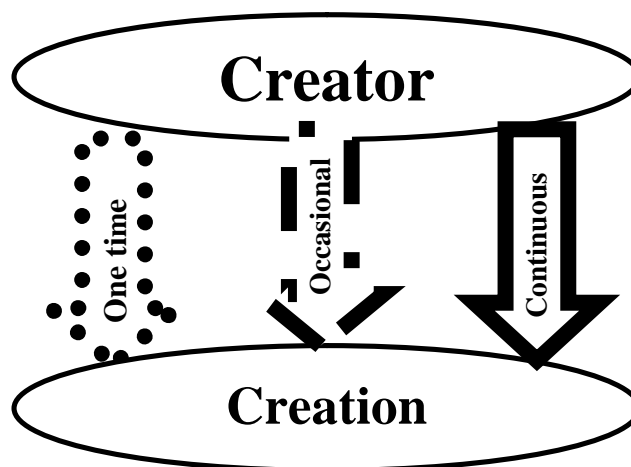


Figure 3: Creator and Creation Relationship in Tawheedi Paradigm

The universe is like live broadcasting of God’s actions, constantly being renewed. In Nursi’s view, this is due to God's unlimited power: "It is plain to see that every age within this world an All-Powerful One of Glory creates a new, travelling, orderly universe. Indeed, He makes a new, well-ordered world each day. He perpetually creates and changes with perfect wisdom transient

worlds and universes one after the other on the face of the heavens and the earth. He hangs on the string of time regular worlds to the number of the centuries, years, indeed, days, and through them demonstrates the tremendousness of His power." (Nursi 1996d, p.545) In other place, Nursi refers to constant creation at subatomic level: "He (God) has made the world of

minute particles, the largest sphere, into a field. With His power and with His wisdom, He unceasingly sows crops in it to the extent of the universe, and reaps and harvests them. He despatches them from the Manifest World to the World of the Unseen; from the sphere of power to the sphere of knowledge." (Nursi 1996b, p.276)

## **II. Destructive vs. Humane Technology**

There is no doubt that we owe gratitude to the "Enlightenment" for modern technological devices such as computers, TV, phones, etc. Those are products of the mind, which were released from the oppression of the Churches by the "Enlightenment" project. However, we cannot deny the fact that the children of the "Enlightenment" are on the verge of destroying nature and its inhabitants, including human beings. It is not just weapons of mass destruction; it is also the products of mass consumption that are threatening the future of all living beings on this planet. Indeed, while the former threatens the outer universe, the latter threatens the inner universe. In other words, we have invented technological devices to please the elephant and boost the self at the expense of the other residents of human nature. In Schuurman's terms, because of the destructive technology, "we are standing on the edge of a volcano that is about to erupt" (Schuurman 2008, p.77). In reality, technology should be a means for us to disclose our potential, but not to destroy. It should help us to fulfill our mission as described by our Owner. It should provide us more time to meet our human needs by relieving us from manual and routine labor which generally serves to our animal needs. It should not make us the slave of our desires. It should not destroy our human spirit while serving our animal spirit. This is what I call the "humane technology."

The Qur'an is not against humane technology. Rather, it encourages human beings support of such a technology. In Nursi's view, the miracles of the Prophets mentioned in the Qur'an provide vision and set the highest targets for scientific and technological advancements. For that matter, the prophets lead humanity in the areas of scientific and spiritual advancement. Even though the Qur'an is not a science book, it still encourages human beings toward scientific and technological discoveries by calling our attention to living creatures and natural phenomena. While the secular paradigm of the Enlightenment perceives technology as a means to gain more pleasure and acquire more power, the Tawheedi paradigm consider technology as a means to advance toward moral,

intellectual, and spiritual excellence. The story of Prophet Solomon in the Qur'an is a clear lesson on Islamic perspective of wealth and technology. Granting knowledge and many world favors to a prophet indicate that Islam is not against wealth and technology as long as they are used to be a better servant to Allah: "We granted David and Solomon (special) knowledge. Both used to thank and praise God, saying: "All praise and gratitude are for God, Who has favored us more than many of His believing servants." (27:15) The Prophet Solomon describes the favor given to him as follows: "O people! We have been taught the language of birds, and we have been granted (some portion) of everything (which God provides for His servants). Surely this is a conspicuous favor." (27:16) He asks Allah to guide him using those favors in good way: "My Lord! Inspire and guide me so that I may thank You for Your favor which You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and so that I may act righteously in a manner that will please You; and include me (out of Your mercy) among Your righteous servants." (27:16)

## **III. Secular vs. Sacred Paradise**

Many leading figures of the Enlightenment project established their ideas based on their abstract assumptions on human nature. For instance, Thomas Hobbes and John Locke began with the assumption that human has "nasty, poor, solitary, brutish" nature. Adam Smith came up with free market capitalism based on his understanding of self-interest. Jeremy Bentham argues that human nature is driven by pain and pleasure. He defines utility (the positive balance of pain and pleasure) as ultimate goal function for individual. The utilitarian view of the Enlightenment made into the US Declaration of Independence as the right "to pursuit of happiness". Indeed, the Enlightenment project came with its own "paradise promise" through capitalist free market system. It was offered as ultimate substitute to Paradise in the hereafter. It was a call to humanity to build their paradise on earth rather than waiting for ambiguous one in the hereafter. The hope was that "the application to politics of the powers of human reason—as best exemplified in the practice and achievements of modern science – can bring civilization into a new area of peace, prosperity, and liberation" (Spragens, 2007, p.50).

The promise of paradise on earth still resonates in the mind of people. In relatively recent book, *Hedonic Imperative*, David Pearce argues that we are near to "engineer paradise" through a "transhuman" generation. Using the subtitle of "heaven on earth?" he makes the

following bold prediction for heaven on earth through science and technology: “nanotechnology and genetic engineering will eliminate aversive experience from the living world. Over the next thousand years or so, the biological substrates of suffering will be eradicated completely. “Physical” and “mental” pain alike are destined to disappear into evolutionary history. The biochemistry of everyday discontents will be genetically phased out too. Malaise will be replaced by the biochemistry of bliss. Matter and energy will be sculpted into life-loving super-beings animated by gradients of well-being. The states of mind of our descendants are likely to be incomprehensibly diverse by comparison with today. Yet all will share at least one common feature: a sublime and all-pervasive happiness.”<sup>xviii</sup>

The capitalist paradise project relies on three Ps: Pleasure, Power, and Praise. The Enlightenment thinkers knew that we are built to pursue pleasure, power, and praise. While the animal soul (nafs) desires pleasure, the power of anger (qowat al-ghadab) wills to power, and the ego (ananiyah) wants to be praised. For that matter, the ultimate goal in science is not find truth; it is to gain instrumental knowledge to build earthly paradise. Indeed, modern science does not accept absolute truth. Everything is subjective. It can be true until it is falsified as put by Karl Popper. Likewise, technology is a means to experience more pleasure and gain more power to control nature and others. The Enlightenment thinkers got half right in their understanding of human nature. Therefore, its capitalist economic system has been very successful in terms of efficient use of resources for more output. However, ironically, more has become less. The more we produce and consume, the less happier we become. This paradox is due to the denial of other key elements of human nature. We are not only made of animal soul, anger, and ego. We have other dimensions. For that matter, the capitalist paradise in reality has made human beings to be prisoners of their will to pleasure, power, and praise by reducing human nature to ego, anger, and animal soul.

Indeed, instead of creating paradise, the Enlightenment project results in many paradoxes; this is what some called the “progress paradox”(Easterbrook 2003) or “American paradox”(Myers 2000). Perhaps, it is much better to call it the “capitalist paradox” or “enlightenment paradox;” since the Enlightenment, we have produced and consumed more paradoxes, but enjoyed less. We have multiplied our material possessions, but lost our spiritual dimensions.<sup>xix</sup> We

have learned how to make a great living, but forgotten how to live a great life. We have built bigger houses, but destroyed bigger families. We have gained more knowledge, but are left with less truth. We have discovered the far edges of the outer universe, but dismissed the inner universe. We have found our way to the moon, but lost our way to our neighbors. We have invented better communication tools, but forgotten how to communicate with others. We have written better laws to protect our freedom from outer intruders, but forgotten how to protect our freedom from inner desires. In their foreword to the book on the Enlightenment, Adorno and Horkheimer define the Enlightenment as a self-destructive project which rather than helping mankind “entering into a truly human condition”, it is making humanity to “sink into a new kind of barbarism.” (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1976)

As discussed by Marcuse in the *One-Dimensional Man*, the capitalist free market system, the economic hand of the Enlightenment, makes individuals to lose their free and creative subjectivity and become an object of consumer culture which enslaves people through false needs. He argues that the satisfaction of false needs can only create “euphoria in unhappiness. Most of the prevailing needs to relax, to have fun, to behave and consume in accordance with the advertisements, to love and hate what others love and hate, belong to this category of false needs.” (Marcuse 2002, p.7) He likens the freedom to choose in so-called “free market” system to the freedom of choosing masters for slaves. “Free election of masters does not abolish the masters or the slaves. Free choice among a wide variety of goods and services does not signify freedom if these goods and services sustain social controls over a life of toil and fear- that is, if they sustain alienation.” (Marcuse 2002, p.10) In a recent book, economist Tim Jackson describes consumer culture created by the Enlightenment project as the “iron cage”. He argues that consumer society locks us firmly into the iron cage of consumerism.” (Johnson 2011, p.102)

The Enlightenment fails to recognize human nature in comprehensive manner because of its emphasis on the external (physical) world at a cost to the internal (spiritual) world. While it helps humanity to learn a lot about the external universe, it makes them to be ignorant of their inner universe. Indeed, each human being is like a “miniature universe.” Therefore, studying the universe within is as important as studying the outer universe. Furthermore, the inward journey to discover the “inner universe” is more challenging than

the outward journey to discover the “outer universe.” Thus, it is impossible to make true sense of outer universe, without truly knowing the inner universe. It is also impossible to bring authentic, pure, and lasting happiness to a human being without understanding his/her nature. The way to pure and authentic happiness passes through understanding the “inner universe.” It is not possible for any person to reach authentic happiness without being aware of the key elements of his inner world and knowing how to use (employ) them.

If we compare the human body to a palace, the elements of his nature will be like the residents of the palace. Indeed, there are many “residents” (selves) competing with each other in this palace. In this sense, “I” takes the plural form. We could not start with “I” to express our view or desires. Since there are many residents, we could not speak in a singular form anymore. For that matter, all kinds of crises including financial, happiness, and moral ones stem from the lack of comprehensive understanding of human nature. Indeed, if we could come up a comprehensive theory of human nature we could better predict, or even prevent, all kinds of crises originating from human nature.

Inspired largely by the writings of Al-Ghazali (2007), and a prominent Turkish scholar, Said Nursi (1996b, 1996c, 1996a), I recently developed a new theory of human nature: “A Grand Theory of Human Nature (GTHN)”, using the vehicle and resident metaphors that follow (Aydin 2012). Comparing the human body to a luxury recreational vehicle (RV), the following elements of human nature would be the companions on this vehicle: *King, Judge, Elephant, Wazir, Showman, Driver, Dog, and Advisors*. The *King* is the spiritual heart that is the source of love and inspirational knowledge. The *Judge* is the conscience that is the source of positive feelings after performing “good things” and negative feelings experienced after doing “bad things”. The *Wazir* is the reasoning mind. The *Elephant* is the animal spirit, which is the source of animalistic desires. The *Showman* is the self-centric ego that pursues power and possession to show its importance to others. The *Driver* is the observing self that drives that the vehicle under the influence of the residents. The *Dog* is an inner drive (anger) for protection of personal belongings with potential to oppress others for their possessions. The *Advisors* are Satan and Angels.

#### **a. The King: The Spiritual Heart**

Metaphorically speaking, the spiritual heart is like a king in a human palace. The king has an almost infinite

capability to love. He needs a lover with beauty, perfection, and generosity. This is because of the nature of love, which is satisfied with beauty, perfection, and benefit (gifts). The king uses his capital of love to make attachments in his search for the true lover. Indeed, in one way, our life is just a journey of making attachments to satisfy the king. The spiritual heart resembles the king because, without his satisfaction, life would become torture. Indeed, without any meaningful attachment, it would be hard to justify life over death. Therefore, the king should be given a high priority. Indeed, all other residents should ultimately serve the king. First and foremost, we should take care of the needs and desires of our inner king. We should know what he desires. We should also protect him from any danger.

In Nursi’s view, the only way to satisfy the king is to find God who is *Al-Wadud* as being the source of all love and the one worthy of infinite love (Nursi, 1996d). In other words, as the Qur’an says, “...it is in the remembrance of, and whole-hearted devotion to, God that hearts find rest and contentment” (13:28) In other words, the human heart will find the essential qualities of love in God. He will love everything in the name of God or as the mirror of the beauty and perfection of God. Thus, his love for everything will be part of the love of God. As the contrary, the “Enlightenment” detaches the heart from *Al-Wadud*, instead, offers alternative objects of love which possess limited beauty and perfection. It also fails to prevent pains from inevitable detachments from these lovers. Therefore, it fails to satisfy the human heart. On the other hand, a person who loves everything through God also experiences detachments. However, these will be temporary in nature considering the eternal attachment in the hereafter.

Nursi also considers the spiritual heart as an inner phone to communicate with the King of the universe. Thus, the heart will seek help for the needs of all the residents of the palace directly from God. The heart will also receive guidance and knowledge from the All-Knowing (*Al-Aleem*) and The Guide (*Al-hadi*). Therefore, for a Muslim scholar, gaining knowledge through the heart is as important as gaining knowledge through the mind.

#### **b. The Judge: The Conscience**

Conscience, which is defined as the ability to distinguish right from wrong, is like an inner judge in a human palace. He makes judgments about the decisions we make in our life. If we treat someone unfairly, the

inner judge makes us aware of it. He makes us feel guilty for being unfair to others. This is known as “disutility of guilt” in modern economics. Furthermore, the inner judge is affected by unfairness in society as well. He is bothered to live in a corrupt society. He wants to feel safe from dangers (or unfairness) coming from other people. He wants to trust others in order to feel true peace. The inner judge makes us feel inner peace and pleasure if we treat others fairly and live with trustworthy people. In this regard, in order to make the inner judge happy, we should consider the fairness in our actions. We should avoid the feeling of guilt by acting fairly to others. Also, we should create a fair and trustworthy society which makes the inner judge feel better.

The inner judge also longs for eternity. Indeed, nothing other than eternal life could satisfy him. In other words, we are created with a nature, which searches for eternity. The desire for longer life, and efforts towards longevity, are clear evidence of our desire for eternity. For that matter, in Nursi’s view, the inner judge could only be satisfied through God. If a person “does not rely on the Omnipotent One of Glory, place his trust in Him and confidently submit to Him, his conscience will always be troubled” (Nursi 1996d, p.10).

#### **c. The Wazir: The Mind**

The mind is a *wazir* to the ruler of the human palace. If the elephant is in power, the *wazir* will serve him by providing guidance on the available choices for pleasure. The mind also advises the king (the heart) and the judge (the conscience). However, if he is too busy helping the elephant, he might not find time to serve the king and the judge. The *wazir* is capable of exploring the outer and inner universes if requested. Indeed, he is thirsty for knowledge and meaning. He asks some enduring questions and enjoys learning their answers. He is capable of making rational decisions for other senior residents such as the king, the elephant, and the judge. However, he has no power to endorse his decisions. He might be silenced if the elephant is too strong.

In Nursi’s view, the mind could only find satisfactory answers to its enduring questions through the belief in God and the hereafter. Without such beliefs, the mind will become a means of torture for its owner. Such a mind will see life on this planet as an inevitable death row for all its residents. However, a mind, which is illuminated by the Divine light, will be a precious key that unlocks the mystery of creation. It will help its

owner understand the names and attributes of God. It will be a source of great intellectual pleasure by providing opportunity to read the book of the inner and outer universes. It will understand that the real and eternal life is coming.

#### **d. The Elephant: The Animal Spirit**

The Elephant is an animal spirit in the human palace. In Islamic literature, it is known as *nafs*. I prefer to call it the elephant because of its similarities to what is described by Jonathan Haidt. In his book titled the Happiness Hypothesis, Haidt argues that we have a divided self, which consists of a rider and an elephant. The rider is the reasoning part of mind and the elephant is the part of self-capable of receiving pleasure and pain. In Haidt terms, “the rider is an advisor, or servant, not a king, president, or charioteer with a firm grip on the reins” (Haidt 2005, p. 17). He defines life as a constant struggle between the elephant and the rider in the human palace. However, according to Haidt, it is the elephant that is in control of the palace, not the rider: “It is really the elephant holding the reins, guiding the rider. The rider becomes a lawyer fighting in the court of public opinion to persuade others of the elephant’s point of view (Haidt 2005, pp.21-22)

Nursi (1996a, 1996b, 1996d) wrote extensively on what the elephant desires and how to train/control him. In his view, the elephant is addicted to pleasure. He pursues instant gratification. Therefore, he prefers a little present pleasure to much greater pleasure, which will come later. He is blind to the future. He wants to gain pleasure and avoid pain now. He has no means to conduct long-term cost and benefit analysis. He is never satisfied with what he has. He has a greedy nature and always asks for more. Indeed, there is no way to fully satisfy the elephant. Due to the “adaptation principle”, he always looks for new and different gratifications. He does not want to be restricted in any way. If left alone, he goes completely mad and consumes anything, which provides his instant gratification. In Nursi’s view, the elephant should seek pleasure within the Divine limit. In other words, he can seek his pleasure if it is not destructive to the residents of the inner and outer universes. He needs to be restrained. Indeed, this is one of the key purposes behind the Divine revelation.

#### **e. The Showman: The Self-centric Ego**

The self-centric ego is like a showman in the human vehicle. He enjoys working for the Elephant because of recognition he receives from the latter’s activities. He is motivated by acts that acquire recognition, identity,

fame, etc. and frequently compares his own possessions with those of others. However, if the Showman gains too much power in the vehicle, he will act like a dictator trying to control other people and nature. Indeed, he might even claim to be a sort of God. Relying on his assumed power, he will attempt to oppress others for his interests. He will not accept his imperfection and impotence. He will become a selfish creature as defined by Haidt: "We are shaped by individual selection to be selfish creatures who struggle for resources, pleasure, and prestige, and we were shaped by group selection to be hive creatures who long to lose ourselves in something larger" (Haidt 2005, p.21-22).

#### **f. The Driver: The Observing/Deciding Self**

The observing/deciding self is like a driver in the human vehicle. He is the source of self-awareness and serves as a conduit for relationships with other human beings and the external environment. He is the reference point to know everything including other beings and God (Al-Ghazali 2007, Nursi 1996d). He is in charge of the vehicle. He is aware of his possessions and protects them from intruders. The self determines our relationship with the inner and outer universes. There are four types of relationships developed by the commander. First, the self tries to know himself/herself. This is the "subject-subject" relationship. He thinks about himself. He loves himself. He thinks of himself. He becomes proud of himself. Second, he tries to know about the universe by making himself a reference point. This is a "subject-object" relationship. Third, he tries to know other selves. Fourth, he tries to know God if he believes in Him.

#### **g. The Dog: The Oppressive Ego**

The Dog is an inner drive for protection of personal belongings with potential to oppress others for their possessions. If unchecked by moral and religious values, he will act like a dictator trying to control other people and nature. Indeed, he might even claim to be a sort of God. Relying on his assumed power, he will attempt to oppress others for his interests. He will not accept the innate impotence and neediness. According to Ghazali, the power of anger (Quvate Ghazab) is "like a hunting dog". It is given "to suppress the devil in man" in two ways: 1) By remaining in the confines of the code of conduct of the Shariat. 2) By overcoming the savage, the sensual and self aggrandizing urges." (Ghazali 2001, p.733) Ghazali elaborates on the outcome of being overtaken by the dog as follow: "then

the damaging traits that will develop in you will be those of being rash and unmindful of consequences, impurity, bragging, arrogance, wanton flaunting of your faults, taunting and torturing others, picking up fights and squabbles with others." On the other hand, "if you prevail over this dog of destruction, you will acquire the added qualities of patience, suavity, forgiveness, stability, bravery, tranquility and saintliness." (Ghazali 2001, p.15)

#### **h. The Good and Bad Advisors: The Angel and Satan**

In Nursi's view, the human palace hosts both good and bad advisors. The good advisor is an angel. She is like a good friend always advising good things. The bad advisor is Satan always advising bad things (Nursi 1996b, 13th Letter). However, neither of them have any power to control the palace directly. They can only advise other key residents. They are the source of inner voices giving good or bad advice. For that matter, we are neither an angel nor Satan. We have great potential to be like angels doing good things. However, we can also follow our bad advisors and do bad things. If we listen to the good advisor, we can be as good as angels. If we listen to the bad advisor, we can be the most dangerous creatures on earth. Nursi argues that the elephant is quite vulnerable to any suggestions from the bad advisor. We need the Divine guidance to increase our awareness of tricky suggestions from the bad advisor. We have to be alert towards such inner voices and know how to keep them under control.

#### **Conclusion**

The Enlightenment project relying on a secular paradigm has been successful in economics, science and technology, however failed to bring its "promised paradise". This is because of its secular ontological, epistemological and anthropological perspectives which replaced Christian doctrines and Aristotelian cosmology. Its prominent thinkers rejected the Christian trinity, but created "secular trinity" of cause and effect, nature, and chance. They attributed everything in the universe to these secular gods. They created duality in science rejecting sacred teleological interpretation of natural events and phenomena. As a result, the Enlightenment project has produced "soul-less human", "secular science", "destructive technology", an unsustainable "consumer culture", and so many crises.

The mindset which created the problems could not offer real solution. Therefore, we need to develop an alternative paradigm with different mindset to produce

human-centered science and technology along with an alternative economic system which will bring peace and prosperity through moral, intellectual, spiritual, and material well-being. The paper offers Tawheedi paradigm with its ontological, epistemological, anthropological, and theological perspectives to rectify the fallacies of the “Enlightenment project” and overcome its crises. The Tawheedi paradigm starts with an axiom that ontological reality of everything is contingent (shadow like) upon the Necessarily Existent Creator who makes Himself known through His words (revealed messages) and works (creation). It argues that, epistemologically speaking, we should start to know ourselves first in order to know everything else. When we have a journey to our inner universe (human nature), anthropologically speaking, we will realize that we are not self-sufficient or god-like creature as argued by the secular paradigm. Rather, we will understand our infinite innate impotence and poverty. Thus, we will recognize our need for the Infinite Power every moment.

During this journey, teleologically speaking, we will understand that as everything in the universe is created for certain purpose, we are also created for certain reason. Our main purpose is not to boost the self, turning him to an “inner god” or serve the animal soul, becoming his slave. Rather, it is to disclose our almost infinite potential by relying on the Divine power and mercy. We will also appreciate the mission of other creatures. We will treat them as trustee rather than as a master. We will be humble and live in harmony with everyone and everything. We will eliminate duality in science and religion by understanding the fact that there cannot be dichotomy between works and words of God. We will unite the scientific and revealed knowledge to understand truth and wisdom behind everything. We will see technology as means to enhance our moral, intellectual, spiritual, and material well-being.

Finally, Islam is neither against science nor against technology. However, Islam is against atheistic presentation of scientific facts. Islam is against the embedded secular ethos coming with technology. Islam is against the use of science and technology to destroy the inner (human nature) and outer universes (physical nature) because they all serve to the transcendental purpose. Islam is against science and technology as means to conquer and control the physical nature to pursue pleasure, power, and praise. Islam provides a “moral compass” compatible with human nature. Islam supports science and technology that help human beings to disclose their potential and fulfill their Divine

mission side by side with other creatures in a “harmonized home”.

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#### Footnotes

- <sup>i</sup> Even though Habermas acknowledges the dark of this project, unlike key figures of the Frankfurt School, he argues that it can be corrected rather than discarded. (Craig J. Calhoun, 2002)
- <sup>ii</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre (2007), a moral philosopher, argues that the Enlightenment moral philosophers were "doomed to fail" due to their approach "to find a rational basis for their moral beliefs in a particular understanding of human nature".
- <sup>iii</sup> "God is the Light of the heavens and the earth..." (The Qur'an, 24:35) "...For whomever God has appointed no light, no light has he." (The Qur'an, 24:40)
- <sup>iv</sup> Karl Marx is the one who first argued that capitalism brings alienation. He argues that we are alienated both from ourselves and from the world in which we live. "For Marx, alienation involved man's experience of himself as the passive object of external forces, not as a self-activating agent" (Martin, 1962; 32)
- <sup>v</sup> Indeed, the so-called neutral scientific language is full of expressions referring to secular trinity. Ironically, even those who try to provide religious education are not aware of secular language. For instance, textbooks which are used in Islamic schools are full of expressions implicitly attributing the works of God to the secular trinity. For that matter, even International Islamic University of Malaysia has not succeeded, so far, to completely filter secular expressions in education.
- <sup>vi</sup> "With the help of the new science the only role left to man was to conquer and dominate nature and serve his needs as an animal endowed somehow with analytical reason and thought." (Nasr 1997, p.72)
- <sup>vii</sup> The well-known movie, *The Matrix*, is a good description of the world created by capitalism. *The Matrix* is defined as follows by Morpheus, a key actor in that movie,: "It is an illusionary world. ...It is all around us. Even now in this room. You can see it when you look out of your window, or when you turn on your TV. You can feel it when you go to work, when you go to church, when you pay your taxes. It is the world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth.... That you are a slave.... Like everyone else, you were born into bondage, born into a prison that you cannot smell or taste or touch. A prison for your mind."
- <sup>viii</sup> "Man's likeness to God consists in sovereignty over existence, in the countenance of the lord and master, and in command. Myth turns into enlightenment, and nature into



mere objectivity. Men pay for the increase of their power with alienation from that over which they exercise their power. Enlightenment behaves toward things as a dictator toward men. He knows them in so far as he can manipulate them. The man of science knows things in so far as he can manipulate them.” (Horkheimer, Adorno 1976)

<sup>ix</sup> The following excerpt from Francis Bacon reflects the mindset of the Enlightenment thinkers on the power and purpose of gaining knowledge: “no doubt the sovereignty of man lieth hid in knowledge; wherein many things are reserved, which kings with their treasure cannot buy, nor with their force command; their spials and intelligencers can give no news of them, their seamen and discoverers cannot sail where they grow. Now we govern nature in opinions, but we are thrall unto her in necessity; but if we would be led by her in invention, we should command her in action.” (Bacon 2008)

<sup>x</sup> For the comparison Islam and the Enlightenment in terms of their understanding of human nature, science, and technology, please refer to my following article: “Human Nature vs. the Nature of Science and Technology,” (Aydin 2010).

<sup>xi</sup> People and the planet, *The Royal Society Science Policy Centre report* 01/12, Issued: April 2012 DES2470

<sup>xii</sup> Tawhid is the epistemology of the Oneness of God which becomes the foundation of the unity of knowledge. God is the source and beginning of all knowledge. In other words, “this is to accept the divine roots of knowledge as the primal foundation of all knowledge, hence of all configurations of world-systems.” (Choudhury 2007, p.24).

<sup>xiii</sup> “...while from the point of view of the One, the Absolute, there is no ‘otherness’ or ‘separation’. All things are one, not materially and substantially but inwardly and essentially. Again it is a question of realizing the levels of reality and the hierarchy of the different domains of being.” (Nasr 1997, p.30)

<sup>xiv</sup> Indeed, the division of secular and sacred is absolute from the Tawheedi perspective. If one lives within the Divine boundary, all of his actions would be sacred bearing fruit for the eternal life.

<sup>xv</sup> “The purpose of man’s appearance in this world is, according to Islam, in order to gain total knowledge of things, to become the Universal Man (al-insan al-kamil), the mirror reflecting all the Divine Names and Qualities.” (Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Man and Nature* p.96)

<sup>xvi</sup> Secular scientists play this game of hiding the Divine miracles through naming them or explaining how they happen. For instance, if we see a bicycle which could turn to airplane, we will be amazed with science and technology behind this transformation. Even if we explain the process of how bicycle would turn to airplane step by step, this will mean such transformation is an ordinary event. Likewise, the transformation of butterfly from caterpillar is a

miraculous act of God. By naming this amazing transformation as “metamorphosis” and explaining the descriptive process, secular science reduce this miraculous act to an ordinary work of nature.

<sup>xvii</sup> There are many verses in the Qur’an inviting us to reflect on the works of Allah in the universe. Here are just few examples: “And it is He Who has spread the earth wide and set therein firm mountains and rivers, and of fruit of every kind He has made mated pairs. He covers the day with the night. Surely in that are signs (manifesting the truth) for people who reflect.” (13:3) “He sends down water from the sky, and the valleys flow (in abundance), each according to its measure, and the flood carries a swelling foam (on its surface). And out of what they smelt in the fire in order to make ornaments or utensils, there rises a scum like it. Thus, does God strike a parable to illustrate truth and falsehood.” (13:17) “He it is Who sends down from the sky water; you drink thereof, and thereof (drink) the shrubs on which you pasture your cattle. With it, He causes to grow for you the crops, the olives, the date-palms, the grapes, and all (other) kinds of fruit. Surely in this is a sign (manifesting the truth) for people who reflect.” (16:10-11)

<sup>xviii</sup> The hedonistic imperative by David Pearce, <http://www.hedweb.com/hedethic/hedonist.htm>, accessed on April 12, 2013.

<sup>xix</sup> Indeed, Marx Weber foresaw this progress in his well-known book on capitalism. He claims that this economic/cultural development will produce the arrogance of the “last men” who imagine themselves to be at the peak of human progress might actually be “Specialist without spirit, sensualist without heart” (Weber, 1992; p.125)

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