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CONTENTS

IS THERE AN ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY?

AN INQUIRY CONCERNING MULTICULTURALISM IN PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

In this paper, we deal with the problem of multiculturalism in philosophy with particular emphasis on the problem of pursuing philosophy in societies of Islamic culture. It is argued that in order to achieve multiculturalism in philosophy it is necessary to reject the Eurocentric view of philosophy in favor of taking the concept of Worldview as a basis for philosophy in different cultures. For the case of Islamic society the 'Islamic Worldview' is related to the specific society, and hence, is essentially different from the Islamic Religion itself. Consequently, the term 'Islamic Philosophy' is legitimate only when it is specified for a specific Worldview of a specific 'Islamic' society.

INTRODUCTION

Modern Western philosophy has been prevailing throughout at least the last three centuries. However, since around the last third of the twentieth century humanity has been passing through a process of transformation from the state of Eurocentric modernism to a state of multicultural modernism. Consequently, new trends in philosophy that reflect such a state of multicultural modernism have been appearing since that time. Despite that, the picture of the philosophical thought that reflects such a new state of multiculturalism is not crystallized yet. Such a state of ambiguity about contemporary

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philosophical thought forces us, in contemporary Islamic societies, to confront basic questions about the way to pursue philosophical thought that acknowledges the advancement made through Western modern philosophy and reflects, at the same time, diversity of contemporary human cultures.

In this paper, we address such a question with respect to contemporary Islamic societies (or societies of majority of Muslims). Hence, the methodology we propose here to confront such a problematic is not limited to Islamic societies, rather, it is presented as a humanistic endeavor that takes Islamic societies as a specific case of study. Consequently, what we present here applies also to other non-Western societies that possess a historical major civilization, such as India, China, or societies that have been able to formulate their own specific Worldview.

a.   ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY

The prevailing view within contemporary Islamic thought, to confront the question raised above, is to pursue 'Islamic philosophy' in accordance to the 'Islamic Worldview', understood as the view of Islam itself as a religion. According to such a view, such philosophy asserts the 'Islamic' culture and hence asserts multiculturalism in philosophy. However, such a view includes basic problems that should be dealt with in order to be a viable alternative to solve the problematic stated above.

Basically, the expression 'Islamic Philosophy' is composed of two terms: 'Islamic' and 'Philosophy'. If we understand these two terms literally, i.e. in accordance to the common understanding of the terms, then such an expression is a contradiction. For we generally understand

the term 'Philosophy' as synonymous to free rational inquiry with no limits to such an inquiry. On the other hand, we generally understand the term 'Islamic' as describing something relative to a specific religion, namely Islam. Islam, as much as every religion, is based on a set of basic beliefs that lie behind the scope of inquiry of its believers.

So, in order to be a Muslim one has to submit to such a set of beliefs and give up his 'natural' tendency of rational inquiry about such beliefs. Therefore, philosophy as an enterprise that puts every human concept or idea under free rational inquiry contradicts the limitations put by Islamic religion on such an inquiry. Hence, it is evident that under such understanding of the two terms, the expression 'Islamic Philosophy' is a contradiction.

People who defend the field of 'Islamic Philosophy' advance different responses that are based on a tacit or embedded assumption, which is redefinition of the composing terms. Philosophy as a term, in their view, can be limited within a specific set of beliefs. Whereas the term Islamic does not refer to Islamic religion as such, but to the basic beliefs of Islamic religion. Hence, there is no contradiction in the term 'Islamic Philosophy'.

Such a view raises two basic questions. The first concerns the concept of the limits of philosophy, is there, in principle, limits to philosophical inquiry? And in what sense such limits are conceived, if it exists at all. The second concerns the possible cultural differences in understanding the term 'Philosophy'. Is such a term necessarily synonymous to the Western conception of the term, i.e., Western Philosophy, or it can bear different meanings relative to the different Cultures/Civilizations.

b. METHODOLOGY AND DIVISION OF THE PAPER

In order to come to an answer to our basic question about the legitimacy of the term 'Islamic Philosophy', we, therefore, have to discuss the basic terms that it is founded upon. Those basic terms are, 'Limits of Philosophy', 'Multiculturalism and diversity of Worldviews, and the relation between these terms and Islam as a Religion.

Therefore, this work is divided into three sections. In the first we discuss the concept of 'Limits of Philosophy'. In the second, we will discuss the concept of multiculturalism and Worldview. Finally, in the last section, we will discuss the concepts of beliefs and religion from the point of view of its relation to both 'Limits of Philosophy' and 'Worldview'. This will be done as a means to reconstruct the relation between Philosophy, Worldview, and Religion. In a way that allows us to introduce a philosophically legitimate answer to the question that we deal with in this paper, namely that about the legitimacy of the field of 'Islamic Philosophy', and consequently present a case in favor of multiculturalism in philosophy.

It should be noted here that the views we present in this paper are based on our comprehensive study of the topic from the point of view of contemporary Arabic philosophy[1]. Therefore, detailed analysis of our views that can't be introduced in this short paper.

1- LIMITS OF PHILOSOPHY

Humans acquire knowledge through three basic faculties: direct belief, logical reasoning, and experimental

induction. These three types of human faculties have lead to the appearance of three distinct fields of inquiry: Religion, Philosophy, and Science.

Religion deals essentially with questions that pertain to the existence of God, the relation between God and the world, creation of the world, human ethics, duties of human beings in the world, etc. Philosophy deals essentially with questions that can be dealt with through logical reasoning. The domain of philosophy, therefore, covers a wide range of subjects that are classically divided into ontological, epistemological, ethical, and aesthetic topics. Finally, Science deals essentially with human and natural subjects that accept experimental methodology in the wide sense of the term.

This general classification does not entail that each faculty is used independently; rather, we use these three faculties in our everyday life as well as in our intellectual life simultaneously. We create new beliefs, deduce results logically, and we rely on experiments continuously in our life. However, intellectuals in different cultures advance different forms of relations between these three fields of inquiry.

In the modern era, gradually, the field of philosophy, understood as the domain of logical reasoning, has become the overarching field of inquiry that dominates these three basic fields. Hence, the domain of philosophy of religion has appeared as that which discusses religious issues logically through the faculty of reason. In science, logical reasoning of scientific methodology has dominated until the appearance of the theory of Quantum Mechanics by the first third of the twentieth century.

Philosophy in the modern Western sense means essentially that reason is capable, in principle, of answering any question about nature and human life including questions of basic beliefs of human beings. One of the basic principles of modern thought is that through reason alone human differences would converge with continuous advancement toward truth of the world.

By the final decades of the twentieth century, it became clear that the Western modern belief in the principle of advancement toward truth has failed. Such a state has appeared in every domain of inquiry, in many philosophical topics, in the nature of human cooperation and ways of life as well as in understanding the natural world.

In this respect there is a wide range of writings that address limitations of the modernist concept of reason and hence limitations of logical reasoning in understanding human life as well as natural world. Richard Routley describes such a picture as follows[2],

> The classical preoccupation [with the notion of limits] was "replaced by a modern preoccupation with freedom as a progressive liberation of man from all traditional and natural limits", and a modern view of unrestricted progress, of unlimited opportunities for humans, and of unimpeded domination of nature. Impressive advances in science and technology encouraged the (erroneous) idea that limits could be removed, an idea reinforced by theoretical presumptions as to the solvability of every problem, and the availability of a method—

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"the" scientific method—by which everything could be known. Recently these modern assumptions have been challenged, and subjected to serious criticism. Several limitations have become very conspicuous, especially a range of ecological constraints upon "progress", but also theoretical limitations upon technological advance and upon problem resolution. A further limitation of theoretical importance is that upon knowledge and upon scientific method. (Routley: 108)

The concept of limit of knowledge[3] (both philosophically and scientifically) evokes a couple of questions. First, whether such limits are due to the capabilities of human mind or to inherent complexity of reality. Second, if there are limits to human knowledge then what would be the basis of human knowledge. The well-known philosopher Colin McGinn has addressed these questions in details in his paper titled "The Problem of Philosophy"[4]. McGinn states the problem as follows,

The suspicion is that, in trying to do philosophy, we run up against the limits of our understanding in some deep way. Ignorance seems the natural condition of philosophical endeavour, contributing both to the charm and the frustration of the discipline (if that is the right word). Thus a tenacious tradition, cutting across the usual division between empiricists and rationalists, accepts (i) that there are nontrivial limits to our epistemic capacities

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and (ii) that these limits stem, at least in part, from the internal organization of the knowing mind- its constitutive structure- as distinct from limits that result from our contingent position in the world. (McGinn : 133)

Thus, McGinn reduces such limits to the capacity of the human mind; he elaborates and expresses such an idea as follows,

The human mind conforms to certain principles in forming concepts and beliefs and theories, originally given, and these constrain the range of knowledge to which we have access. We cannot get beyond the specific kinds of data and modes of inference that characterize our knowledge-acquiring systems- however paltry these may be. The question has been, not whether this is correct as a general thesis, but rather what the operative principles are, and where their limits fall. How limited are we, and what explains the extent and quality of our limits? (McGinn:133)

McGinn concludes that "large parts of what is called 'philosophy' fall outside the limits of our knowledge capacity, and that "the search for philosophical knowledge would be an attempt to do with our epistemic capacities what cannot be done with them. Our minds would be to philosophical truth what our bodies are to flying: wrongly designed and structured for the task in question" (McGinn:142).5

According to such a view, philosophical topics are divided into those that fall within the limits of human reasoning, and hence, can be dealt with through logical and experimental reasoning, and those that fall outside such limits, and hence, can only be dealt with through subjective beliefs. In other words, we as human beings construct our 'philosophical' views about the world through logical reasoning that is based on a set of basic beliefs about the world. Such a set of basic beliefs constructs in the final analysis, as we shall see in the next section, what we call our Worldview.

2- MULTICULTURALISM AND THE CONCEPT OF WORLDVIEW

In the previous section we have come to a conclusion that humans cannot construct their philosophical views about reality in a complete rational way, for there are limits for rational and logical reasoning. Instead, they are forced to base such a logical reasoning on some set of final or end beliefs about the world.

This set of final or end beliefs is usually termed 'Worldview'. However, such a concept has been and is being used in connection with many other terms too[5]. In a comprehensive study, Mark Koltko-Rivera[6] has reviewed the concept of Worldview since its appearance in the German philosophy till the present time. He defines such a concept as follows,

> A worldview is a way of describing the universe and life within it, both in terms of what is and what ought to be. A given worldview is a set of beliefs that includes limiting statements and assumptions regarding what exists and what does not

(either in actuality, or in principle), what objects or experiences are good or bad, and what objectives, behaviors, and relationships are desirable or undesirable. A worldview defines what can be known or done in the world, and how it can be known or done. In addition to defining what goals can be sought in life, a worldview defines what goals should be pursued. Worldviews include assumptions that may be unproven, and even improvable, but these assumptions are super ordinate, in that they provide the epistemic and ontological foundations for other beliefs within a belief system. (Koltko-Rivera: 4)

Accordingly, rational thought, and consequently philosophical thought, works within such a set of beliefs, i.e., within its Worldview. Hence, the difference between any specific form of rational thinking and any other lies in the nature and level of abstractness of its set of final belief in its Worldview. For example, the question of the origin of the universe is more abstract than the question of how it works and what are the laws that govern it. Some Worldviews may introduce basic beliefs about the first question but not the second, leaving it for rational thinking, whereas others may include basic beliefs about both of them. In such a case, we may say that the first Worldview relies more on rational thought than the second one.

This means that the classical classification of human thought, which divides it into two basic categories: those that are based on belief and those that are based on

rationality, is incorrect. The correct classification is that which presents a picture of a spectrum of different degrees of rationality and belief. Such a spectrum expresses at one end the maximum possible degree of rationality that can be attained by humans and the least degree of beliefs, and at the other end the least degree of rationality and the maximum degree of beliefs.

Here it should be pointed out that the modern Western philosophy presents itself as a fully rational human thought that doesn't rely on any prior set of believes. However this is, according to our aforementioned analysis, not true, albeit that such a philosophy can be situated at the maximum rational end of the spectrum. This has been proved in the real world during the twentieth century through the appearance of postmodernism that challenged the basic beliefs of the modern philosophical thought, as well as the transformations through which scientific thought has been passing throughout the same period. Basic beliefs of the modern Western philosophical thought are usually epitomized in the following themes: rationalism (absolute capability of reason), scientific method (scientism), endless advancement of humanity, materialism about reality, determinism, exploitation of nature for the benefit of man[7].

Accordingly, works that put the modern Western philosophy as one among other Worldviews is increasingly introduced. These works typically challenge one or more of the basic beliefs of the Western philosophical Worldview.

Sperry and Henninger, in their "Consciousness and the cognitive revolution: a true Worldview paradigm shift"[8], cite the appearance of 'the new paradigms, theories

of consciousness, perceptions of reality, new sciences, new philosophies, epistemologies, etc'. They conclude that 'these new approaches all share one key feature in common, namely, they all depend, directly or indirectly, upon a refutation and successful overthrow of the long dominant materialist paradigm' (Sperry and Henninger: 3).

From a different perspective, in his "Knowledge, Wisdom, and the Philosopher"[9], Daniel Kaufman criticizes the Western belief in scientism. He makes a contrast between two views of philosophy: one is directed toward 'knowledge', the other is directed toward 'wisdom and moderateness'. The first represents the main stream of Western philosophy that started with Descartes and continues till the present time (Kaufman: 129).

He defines wisdom as follows,

> The term 'wisdom' suggests a synthesis of intelligence and sound judgment. The wise person is one whose intelligence is prudentially applied to life, in all of its many, varying dimensions. 'Prudence', which means 'good sense', in addition to sound judgment, implies good habits, the development of which requires extensive, varied experience, and because wisdom is so intimately connected with experience, it cannot be understood in isolation from the common beliefs and practices, which constitute the framework within which one's experience is interpreted (Kaufman: 130).

In contrast, Kaufman describes the current state of the mainline 'Western' philosophy as follows;

> As for contemporary mainline philosophy, considered more generally, still felt today is the powerful presence of Logical Positivism, with its ambitions to 'correct' or otherwise systematize ordinary language, and omnipresent is the philosophy of Willard van Orman Quine, according to whom natural science is First Philosophy and in whose thought intentionality and all of the distinctively human complexities, ambiguities, and contradictions that come with it are eliminated in favor of a logically pure extensionalism in language and a rigorous behaviorism in psychology, the main advertisement for which would appear to be its evidential transparency and experimental efficiency (Kaufman: 135).

Therefore, according to Kaufman, Western philosophy in its mainline is in short for excluding the value of pursuing wisdom in favor of being directed toward knowledge, a position that misses a crucial side of human philosophy.

From a comparative point of view, Harry Oldmeadow in his "The Comparative Study of Eastern and Western Metaphysics"[10], presents a clear comparison and elucidates the sharp contrast between the Western modern philosophical view and the Eastern philosophical views in general. He first points out to the central problem which is the definition of the term philosophy that is based on Eurocentrism,

> The comparative study of Eastern and Western philosophy has been hindered

and/or distorted by Eurocentric assumptions about "philosophy", especially the overvaluation of rationality as an instrument of knowledge. The widespread discounting of Eastern thought derives, in large measure, from the modern Western failure to understand the nature of the traditional metaphysics of both the Occident and the East (Oldmeadow: 49).

He adds,

Many books purporting to give us a history of philosophical thought or some kind of conspectus of philosophical trends within a given period still assume that "philosophy" and "Western philosophy" are synonymous. Eastern philosophical thought is all too often ignored, marginalized, or treated as kind of fumbling proto-philosophy, hopelessly mired in religious superstition (Oldmeadow: 49).

Oldmeadow expresses the basic difference between the two conceptions as follows,

Thus, there is little common measure between the sapiential doctrines of the East which form part of a total spiritual economy and which draw on the wellsprings of revelation, tradition, and direct experience, and those mental constructions of Western thinkers which are usually circumscribed by the various alliances of rationalism, materialism, empiricism, and humanism

which so dominate the philosophical thinking of the modern West (Oldmeadow: 52).

In this view, Oldmeadow subscribes to the view presented above, which is that the correct meaning of the term philosophy includes inevitably final or end beliefs about the world. The field in philosophy which deals with such final beliefs, in his view, is metaphysics (Oldmeadow: 55-56). Here, Oldmeadow agrees with the view of Colin McGinn above which stresses on the limitations of rational reasoning in the domain of metaphysics.

These random examples of contemporary literature in Western periodicals show clearly that the dominant concept of philosophy as synonymous to the Eurocentric Western philosophy is deeply questioned. The alternative concept that is increasingly gaining support from within Western philosophy itself is multicultural in nature. Here, philosophy is relative to the Worldview of the specific society. The Western view of philosophy is but a specific view that is based on the 'modern Western Worldview'.

In such a multicultural view of philosophy, the different views that are based on different Worldviews are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, these different views share what is common in humanity, which is human reason, but at the same time, they differ in their final beliefs about the world. Hence, they share what is common and objective that is based on human reason, such as knowledge, human interaction in the society, and practical aspects of morality, etc. At the same time, they exclude each other with respect to subjective aspects of life, such as religious belief and rituals, justification of ethics, personal life, and so on.

Within this general picture, we can discuss the status and meaning of philosophy in Islamic communities. Here, society has a specific and distinct Worldview, which is based on Islamic religion, and consequently philosophy in such societies would be based on such a Worldview. In the following section, we will discuss the relation between Islamic religion, Worldview and philosophy.

3- RECONSTRUCTION OF THE BASICS OF 'ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY'

On the basis of the multicultural view of philosophy given above, it becomes easy to conclude that the field of 'Islamic Philosophy' in contemporary literature, both as a terminology and as a methodology, is in need of reconstruction. This becomes quite clear when we review the different definitions and methodologies implemented in the discipline.

a. THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE FIELD OF ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY

It can be said that the current state of the field of 'Islamic Philosophy' is ambiguous. Such a field is sometimes termed as 'Islamic Philosophy' and at some other times referred to as 'Arabic Philosophy'. In addition, another source of ambiguity is the conflation between the modern and contemporary period of the field and its ancient period. For some people the term 'Islamic Philosophy' refers only to the ancient period of the Islamic civilization, but not today. For others, the activities of the modern period of 'Islamic philosophy' have started around the end of the nineteenth century and the beginnings of the twentieth.

The source of such ambiguity is twofold. First, in a general way we lack an intact and clear concept of multiculturalism in philosophy. Consequently, we lack a sufficient theoretical basis for any non-Western philosophical tradition, including the modern endeavors of philosophical inquiry in the Islamic world. Second, we lack a normative concept for the relation between Islam as a Religion, Islamic civilization and its Worldview and the philosophical practice.

Such a wide ambiguity of the term is reflected in the writings of contemporary writers who are specialized in the field.

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas[11], in the inaugural paper of the new Journal of Islamic Philosophy doesn't make any distinction between Islam as a Religion and the 'Islamic Worldview', as follows,

> From the perspective of Islam, a 'worldview' is not merely the mind's view of the physical world and of man's historical, social, political and cultural involvement in it,.. the worldview of Islam encompasses both *al-dunyā* and *al-ākhirah*, in which the *dunyā*-aspect must be related in a profound and inseparable way to the *ākhirah*-aspect, and in which the *ākhirah*-aspect has ultimate and final significance. The *dunyā*-aspect is seen as a preparation for the *ākhirah*-aspect (al-Attas: 11)

On the other hand Peter Groff and Oliver Leaman[12] in their introduction to their dictionary of "Islamic philosophy" maintain the opposite,

> At the same time it would be a mistake to see Islamic philosophy as identical with, or somehow reducible to, Islam as a religion. Islamic philosophy has no uniquely 'Islamic' essence. It might simply be described as philosophy that emerges within a context predominantly informed by the religious, social, political and cultural dimensions of Islam. As such, its presuppositions and conclusions may or may not be Muslim. Even when philosophy begins by reflecting upon the revealed truths of Islam, it can move in decidedly different directions. Sometimes it preserves and clarifies and defends these insights, sometimes it appropriates but radically reinterprets them, and sometimes it rejects them altogether (Groff and Leaman: x).

Rejecting both views, Peter Adamson and Richard Taylor[13] in their introduction to their Cambridge companion refer to the field as 'Arabic Philosophy'. They justify their view as follows,

> It is *Arabic* philosophy because it is philosophy that begins with the rendering of Greek thought, in all its complexity, into the Arabic language. ..Related to this are two more reasons why it is sensible to call the tradition "Arabic" and not "Islamic" philosophy. First, many of those involved were in fact Christians or Jews. .. Second, certain philosophers of the formative period, like al-Kindī, al-Fārābī, and Averroes, were

interested primarily in coming to grips with the texts made available in the translation movement, rather than with putting forward a properly "Islamic" philosophy (Adamson and Taylor: 3).

These views oscillate between two positions. The first equates the Worldview of the 'Islamic society' with Islam itself as a religion. The second dissociates Islamic religion completely from the practice we call 'Islamic philosophy'. This wide difference about the basic terms of the field forces us to try to establish the correct form of multiculturalism in philosophy, in general, and the relation between philosophy and Islamic Worldview in particular.

b. RECONSTRUCTION OF THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE FIELD

Both of these two different views on which the field of Islamic philosophy is based are essentially problematic. The first position, in which Islamic Religion is equated with the 'Islamic Worldview' as well as 'Islamic philosophy', separates away philosophical thought in Islamic societies from the wider arena of human philosophical thought in general. Whereas the second position in which Islamic (or Arabic) thought is dissociated from the Worldview of the Islamic societies, and hence from Islamic Religion on which such a Worldview is based, represents a Eurocentric view to the field.

Consequently, both positions contradict contemporary trends of multiculturalism. The first renders the philosophical thought in Islamic society to the status of the dogmatic thought that excludes permanently every other thought. The second contradicts multiculturalism

through making the basic beliefs of the Western philosophical thought, i.e. its Worldview, a basis for the field of 'Islamic Philosophy'.

In this paper, we present an alternative to both views. Such an alternative is capable of preserving the right of the Islamic culture to express itself in its philosophical thought without separating itself away from the human philosophical thought in general. In this third view, Instead of equating the Worldview of the society with Islam as a Religion or dissociating it, we present a third alternative, which separates it and connects it, at the same time, with human philosophical thought in general as well as Islamic Religion. This view is based on our recently advanced methodology, which we termed in our previous works 'the separation/connection methodology'[14].

In order to achieve such a result we have to establish the theoretical relation between the concepts of Worldview and Religion, from one side, and between the Worldview and philosophy, from the other side. The connecting element between these concepts, in the real world, is the 'society'. The Worldview is that of a specific society, Religion is that of a specific society, and philosophy is that of a specific society.

Worldview as an abstract concept points out to a specific view about the world acquired by a specific person, community, or a civilization. For, the word 'view' implies a subject who performs the act of viewing. On the other hand, Religion is an abstract 'ideal' concept that is not relative to a specific subject. So, despite that some religions include a basic outline of a specific Worldview, it is futile to conflate between the two. The correct relation

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between the two concepts is that we (as a specific community) can have a specific Worldview that is based on a specific religion.

Accordingly, despite that Islam as a religion includes the basic elements and outline of a specific Worldview we have to ascribe such a Worldview to Muslim communities rather than to Islamic religion itself. Islam in such a case represents the 'origin' of such a Worldview. So, when we use the expression 'the Islamic Worldview' we mean the 'Worldview of Muslim communities' that is based on the Islamic Religion, not the Worldview of Islam itself as a religion. This proves legitimate when we see that the process of extracting the Worldview that is included in the Islamic Religion is a human activity that can't be equated with basic texts of the Islamic Religion, which is received through Revelation (Qur'an) and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Hence, the Islamic Worldview includes the basic elements of the Islamic beliefs that outline the basics of the 'Islamic' rationality. For example, Karim Douglas Crow[15] describes the basic feature of the 'Islamic Philosophy', which is based on the Islamic Worldview, as follows,

> Islamic thinkers and exponents always sought equilibrium between the logico-cognitive processes of rational argumentation, proof and systematic thought, and the faith-based components bearing on sacred authority, moral intention and responsibility, and the operation of conscience and perfection of perceptive insight. Reason was fixed within proper

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bounds in order to properly fulfill its role in human cognition, where the Heart Mind is the true center of perceptive meaning and action. Unfettered reason alienated from the deeper aspects of the autonomous human being results in dis-equilibrium - with severe consequences for humanity and society now being experienced today. (Crow: 13)

In this passage Crow presents the basic feature of the Islamic Worldview through which Islamic thought/philosophy is pursued. However, a sufficient description of such a Worldview would include other basic elements that characterize Islamic thought/philosophy[16].

On the other hand, philosophy is an activity that is to be pursued by a specific subject (person, community, society, etc). Therefore, philosophy as a cognitive activity should be referred to the subject of inquiry, i.e., the person or the society within which philosophical inquiry is pursued. According to our previous analysis[17], philosophy is limited by a set of beliefs that are termed generally as 'Worldview'. Worldview in turn, as much as philosophy, represents a specific view of a specific subject (person, community or a society, or a civilization).

Consequently, a specific philosophical view that is based on a specific Worldview should be referred to a specific subject (the person or the society) who pursues such a philosophical inquiry. In some cases, one and the same society represents a major civilization (example, Chinese civilization). Hence, the Worldview of such a society becomes identical to the Worldview of the civilization. In other cases, one and the same civilization includes different societies (examples, the Islamic

civilization, and the modern Western civilization). In such a case, we get a situation in which the general view of the specific civilization can be further sub-divided into sub-Worldviews that maintain the basic elements of the general Worldview but differ in some minor elements of such a Worldview.

Given the above analysis, both positions in contemporary literature of the field of 'Islamic philosophy' are incorrect. In the first case which makes no distinction between Islam as a Religion and 'Islamic Worldview', as we mentioned before, the Worldview of the society, albeit it is essentially based on Islamic Religion, is distinct from it and can be differentiated in several respects from it. In the second case, where Islam as a Religion is dissociated from Islamic philosophy, it is futile to ascribe views that contradict Islamic Religion to an overwhelmingly Islamic society. For the Worldview of the society does not reside in the works of the thinkers, rather, it resides in the sub-consciousness of the society, which is essentially Islamic.

The correct position, then, is that philosophy is to be referred to the Worldview of the society. Hence, we have the Western philosophy, the Chinese philosophy, Indian philosophy, etc. In the case of the Islamic society, such society has, since the wide propagation of the Islamic state, spread on a wide area of the globe. Consequently, such society is inevitably subdivided into sub-societies. Therefore, we can say that Islamic societies possess a general 'Islamic' Worldview as well as particular Worldviews of its sub-societies. These sub-societies possess the same general Worldview but they differ in some minor respects of such a general one.

When we delineate such a picture on the case of contemporary Islamic societies, we will find that we can speak about general features of the philosophy of the current Islamic societies that share the basic elements of its general 'Islamic' Worldview. But at the same time they possess sub-Worldviews that differ in some minor elements from such a general one, and hence, they possess its specific philosophies that differ in some minor respects from its main philosophy.

Applying such a principle on the current 'Islamic' societies/countries we can say that we have (or should have) an Arab/Islamic philosophy, Iranian/Islamic philosophy, Turkish/Islamic philosophy, Pakistan-indo/Islamic philosophy, and so on.

If we put the above mentioned analysis into concrete methodological steps in order to generate a method that applies to every culture, Islamic or not, we will have the following steps:

1-   Separate the view given in the religious text from the view given by the society, i.e., its Worldview.

2-   Extract the Worldview of the society, either from its religious text (as in the case of Islamic societies), from basic philosophical texts (as in the case of Western modernism), or from real world activities and beliefs.

3-   In the case of Islamic societies, the Worldview, at least, shouldn't contradict the basics of Islamic Religion, i.e., it should be consistent with it.

4-   Pursue philosophy on the basis of such a Worldview. Philosophical practice that is not

consistent, i.e., contradicts; such a Worldview cannot be referred to as that of such a society.

According to such a methodological dictum, we should refer philosophy that is pursued in a specific society or community to two basic references, society itself and the Worldview of the society. Hence, philosophy in the Western societies is termed 'modern Western philosophy', referring to the 'modernist' Worldview and to the 'Western' societies. Similarly philosophy in the Arabic societies should be termed 'the Arabic Islamic philosophy', and philosophy in Pakistan is 'the Pakistani Islamic' philosophy', and so on.

Conversely, philosophy in the West that is based on the Islamic philosophy cannot be viewed as Western philosophy even though it is pursued in the West. Whereas philosophy that is pursued in any Islamic society based on the modernist Worldview cannot be viewed as representing philosophy of such an Islamic society, despite that it is pursued in it.

Therefore, the final answer to the question raised in this paper is that there is no 'Islamic philosophy' as such in contemporary Islamic societies. Nevertheless, there is specific 'Islamic philosophy' in each contemporary Islamic society (or country) that is related to both such a society and to its specific 'Islamic' Worldview at the same time.

CONCLUSION

In this paper we addressed the problem of multiculturalism in philosophy with emphasis on the case of 'Islamic philosophy'. Throughout the coarse of the paper we dealt with the basic concepts upon which multiculturalism in philosophy is based, which are 'limits

of philosophy', 'Worldview', and Religion. Taking into consideration that modern Western philosophy is still prevailing, therefore, a central issue through which multiculturalism can be established is that of uncovering the limitations of the modern Western philosophy as well as its Eurocentric orientation.

In the final section of the paper we reviewed the current state of the field of 'Islamic philosophy'. In such a short review, we found that such a field, with respect to both its basic terms as well as methodology, is in need of reconstruction. Two basic traditions compose contemporary literature of the field, an Islamic view and a Eurocentric view. Both views prove to be in contradiction of contemporary trends of multiculturalism. Consequently, we introduced our own third alternative that is capable of fulfilling the two basic requirements, which are preserving society's Worldview and culture, and at the same time acknowledging what is in common between humanity which is logical reasoning.

These requirements have been fulfilled through applying our separation/connection methodology on the problem. The final result was that philosophy in different cultures should be based on the Worldview of the society, not on its Religion or the views of the intellectual elite. In the case of Islamic societies, the Worldview is not identical with Islamic Religion, albeit it is based on it. This led us to conclude that there are different 'Islamic Philosophies' in the different 'Islamic' societies that share the basic elements of the 'Islamic' Worldview but differ in minor elements of such a Worldview. Such a result represent the answer to the basic question raised in this paper, which refutes the

term 'Islamic philosophy' as such and accepts the existence of specific philosophies in the different 'Islamic' societies.

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9. Terms such as "philosophy of life", "world hypotheses", "world outlook", "assumptive worlds", "visions of reality", "self-and-world construct system", "cultural orientations", "value

orientations", "unconscious systems of meaning,", "unconscious canons of choice," "configurations", "culture themes," and "core culture", have been used in different disciplines in order to express the same meaning given by the term Worldview. For full details of the concept see our "Science and the Arabic Worldview', 2009, Pp. 73 – 106.

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11. For detailed analysis of the modern Western Worldview, see our "Science and the Arabic Worldview", 2009, Pp. 98 – 102.

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13. Daniel Kaufman, "Knowledge, Wisdom, and the Philosopher", *Philosophy*, V. 81, 2006, Pp. 129 – 151.

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17.   Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor, "Introduction", in Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor (eds.) *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, 2005, P. 109. Note that Adamson and Taylor speak essentially about the ancient period of the tradition not the modern and contemporary period.

18.   We introduced such a new methodology previously in several papers (in Arabic) as well as our aforementioned book "Science and the Arabic Worldview" (P. 343 – 345). The central point behind such a methodology is challenging the central theme of the modernist thought, which is the subject/object divide, and replacing it by our new method/principle, which is the 'separation/connection'. In this paper, such a principle is applied by replacing the separation between the two sides (Islamic Religion and Philosophy), as well as equating the two sides, by our separation/connection relation through the concept of Worldview.

19.   Karim Douglas Crow, "The Intellect in Islamic Thought: Mind and Heart", KATHA – The *Official Journal of the Centre for Civilisational Dialogue*, Vol 2, 2006, Pp. 1-16.

20.   Detailed analysis of the 'Islamic Worldview' is beyond the limited space of this paper. In addition, we stress in this paper on constructing the correct relation of 'Islamic Worldview' to both philosophy and Islamic Religion in a general way, leaving the details to other works.

21. See our analysis of this point in section 1 above.