

Mysticism in the Light of Phenomenology-A Novel Approach by Hassan Hanafi

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Abstract

Renowned Egyptian Philosopher Hassan Hanafi (b.1935) spent his entire life in reinterpreting the Islamic Texts to bring them at par with the demands of the contemporary era. He is one of the great upholders of Phenomenological tradition in the Muslim World. He is of the view that the Phenomenological interpretation may convert the Islamic disciplines into "rigorous Sciences" with strong and vigorous methods and terminologies of their own. Hanafi identifies four such rational disciplines for the application of his Phenomenological method, that is, a- Philosophy (Ḥikmat), b- 'Ilm Uṣūl al-fiqh (Foundations of the Religion), c- 'Ilm Uṣūl al-fiqh (Foundations of the Jurisprudence) and d- Mysticism (taṣawwuf). He, however, chose the third and fourth in the above mentioned to apply his method.

This paper intends to study in depth the application of Phenomenological method in the understanding and interpretation of Mysticism by Hanafi. His case study for the same is al-Ḥikma al-muta'āliya fī al-asfār al-'aqliya al-arba'a by the legendary Muslim scholar Ṣadr Ad-dīn Ash-shīrāzī, better known as Mullā Ṣadrā¹. The paper will discuss, Hanafi's method, its scope, application, legitimacy and subsequent results. Phenomenology and its method will be explained during the course of discussion in the most comprehensible and simple way for the convenience of the readers.

Hanafi has concluded that the theoretical and practical dimensions of the Self are communicative, interchangeable and transferable from a person to another and a generation to another to bridge solitude and generation gap for the sake of mutual and inter-generational response and responsibility. The paper would show either they claims of Hanafi are justified or not.

Keywords: Mysticism, Phenomenology, Method, Mullā Ṣadrā,

Introduction and Discussion

Professor Dr. Hassan Hanafi was born on 13th February, 1935 in Cairo, Egypt. Hanafi enjoys a prestigious and distinguished academic and intellectual position amongst the contemporary Muslim Philosophers. During his illustrious career he remained the Chairperson of the Department of Philosophy at Cairo University for a sufficiently long time. He also served as the Vice-president of the Arab Philosophical Society. One of his worthy contributions is to act as a bridge between the Western and the Arab World in the field of Philosophy. He always found himself attracted towards the both traditions simultaneously; it is interesting to note that he derived inspiration at the same time from Hassan-al-Banna, Syed Qutb and Mohammad Iqbal along with Kant, Hegel, Bergson, Husserl and Heidegger.

Hanafi had strong intellectual leaning towards Phenomenology since his early youth. He followed Osman Amin, who was a prominent Phenomenologist of the Arab World. Hanafi wrote a trilogy during 1965-67 as his PhD theses using the Husserl's method which will be explained soon.²

During his stay at Paris while doing his PhD in Sorbonne, he got the excellent opportunity to interact with a number of contemporary luminaries. Among the names he has mentioned are Robert Brunschvig, Henri Corbin, Gustav von Grünebaum, Jean Guilton, Henri Laoust, Louis Massignon, and Paul Ricoeur.³

He acutely felt the need to rebuild the Islamic culture to keep it abreast with modern times. The three constructing pillars or in his own words the "three horizons" of human experience are: i- Spiritual Values, ii- Science and iii- Technology. For a firm and lasting structure the synthesis of the three is imperative. At a place he asserts if Science affirms man as cognition, Technology links him to Nature and Spiritual Values incite him to face eternity.

Hanafi employs Phenomenology and Hermeneutics as his philosophical methods. He has successfully applied the both on Islam to prove it a live system and not merely a collection of rigid rites and rituals. His method being the combination of the above named traditions lays great emphasis on consciousness and history. Islam is not only a religion but a well defined ideology which joins the concrete with the universal and the temporal with the sacred. Hence, "the outward (social and practical) and the inner (related to conscience) dimensions of human reality are but two aspects of the same phenomenon.

Hanafi's oeuvre betrays a similar constant reworking of his abiding interest in designing an Islamic method for philosophical investigation, which he had first attempted in his doctoral theses. The exposure to phenomenological philosophy had helped him to

reformulate the work plan from his principal dissertation into an Islamic variant of Husserl's 'rigorous science'. Commencing with a study of revelation in the Islamic context, he intended to extrapolate from those findings a general contribution to religious studies which was then to be tested in the case study of the New Testament. By stepping out of his own religious heritage (*turāth dīni*), he intended to show how revelation, reason and reality in effect form a unity.⁴

This was the time when a great and landmark work on hermeneutics was published by Gadamer under the title of *Truth and Method*. Interestingly enough, Gadamer and Hanafi shared many concepts and ideas regarding the role and relevance of hermeneutics in other human sciences. Gadamer also agreed that philological, theological and philosophical hermeneutics stem from the same root and they are closely associated with each other. He declared that the task of the hermeneutist is to "redefine the hermeneutics of the human sciences in terms of legal and theological hermeneutics"⁵. Thus Hanafi made a major decisions after being facilitated by all these authorities in their respective fields to:

Select Phenomenology and Hermeneutics as "methods" of philosophical investigation in order to overcome "methodological crisis in Islamic Studies" and to found a rigorous science;

This is the high time to define Phenomenology before moving further. Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) is the founder of this branch of Philosophy which was indeed a revolt against the dry rationalism prevailing in Europe that time. Phenomenology may be called in easiest possible world- a philosophy of life which considers the word and its immediate experience by human conscious of primary importance. The same Phenomenology paved the way for Existentialism later. In short Phenomenology may be called 'living experience' of man or more precisely of human consciousness.

Edmund Husserl criticized Rene Descartes, the father of modern philosophy on his mode of inquiry which was deprived of flesh and blood and affirmed a thinking self only denying the entire world of phenomena and plurality. The main position of Husserl which distinguishes him from that of Descartes' is his insistence on inseparableness of the real world from transcendental consciousness and subjectivity. Only as uncovering of the horizon of experience ultimately clarifies the "actuality" and the "transcendancy" of the world, at the same time showing the world to be inseparable from transcendental subjectivity, which constitutes actuality of being and sense"⁶.

Subjectivity, for Husserl, remained a life-long occupation, interest and enigma. What is subjectivity? What is its relation with objectivity? How far is this reliable? What is the status of the "other souls" residing around? How can one's subjectivity have the knowledge of the "other subjectivity"? These questions have given birth to the ideas of Life-World and Inter-subjectivity,

which are the hall-mark terms of Husserlian philosophy. It would be quite pertinent to explain these terms before moving further. Husserl has devoted the entire Part V of *Cartesian Meditation* to this issue. The notion of subjectivity has influenced Hanafi, perhaps most amongst the all phenomenological concepts. The explanation of the terms employed above is as under:

Life-World:

The life- world (German: *Lebenswelt*) is the "world" each one of us *lives* in. One could call it the "background" or "horizon" of all experience, and it is that on which each object stands out as itself (as different) and with the meaning it can only hold for us. The life-world is both personal and Inter-subjective.

Inter-subjectivity:

In phenomenology, the experience of my own body is my subjectivity, and when I apply the similar experience on another body or the bodies of the other subjects, this brings Inter-subjectivity into being. Similarly I stand as a subject for the "Other" one's empathic experience. Inter-subjectivity enables us to constitute ourselves as objectively existing subjects, the being of the others, and the objective spatio-temporal world.

Intentionality:

This is perhaps the most important and pivotal term of phenomenology, around which the entire system revolves. It means that *consciousness is always consciousness of something*. This something needs not be a physical object existing really; it may be a dream, hallucination or a fantasy. Even then the consciousness would be considered real and will fall within the realm of intentionality.

Transcendence:

In phenomenology, the transcendent is that which surpasses our own consciousness: that which is objective rather than only a phenomenon of consciousness.

Hanafi's comparison of Qur'an/Islam with Phenomenology is amazing and makes an interesting and illuminating reading. This passage is especially note-worthy,

The Qur'an, the first source of Islam analyses human and social phenomena as *Lebenswelt* (Life-World). The existence of God, the creation of the world and the immortality of the soul, the three major articles of faith in Abrahamic religions are described as living experiences, as motivation for human praxis and foundations of the good deeds. They are not dogmatic formal creed or material facts. God is in the self of Socrates, The world is felt as significance, as an eschatological sign as described in *Der Ursprung der welt* (Origin of the World). History of the prophets is a lesson of piety and victory, an analysis of the past as a

lesson for the present in preparation of the future, from retention to tension to pretension, the analysis of internal feeling of time. Essences are universal but at the same time they are real, implemented in human praxis. In Jurisprudence Reason can understand reality. The Qur'an uses sometimes a language written by Husserl himself. When Moses' mother put her son in the box in water her consciousness *Fu'ad* became empty, a distinction between empty and filled. When Abraham came down to Mekka finding no sustenance he prayed to God to make people incline to his posterity certain kind of social intentionality. Invocation is Intentionality towards God. Revelation itself is a Divine Intentionality towards man as well as a historical Intentionality towards perfection as Lessing described in *Der Erziehung des Menschlechen Geschlechts* (The Education of the Human Race). Certainty and doubt in faith, hope and despair in action, success and failure in endeavours are living experiences described in Qur'an in a figurative speech to impress and to incite imagination.⁷

Hanafi narrates the history of link between phenomenology and Islam in a very effective and interesting way. It is pertinent to note that he has mentioned here Iqbal, and as per his statement he finds great similarities between Iqbal's views and phenomenology. "In contemporary Islamic philosophy the first Islamic reading of Transcendental Philosophy was done by Osman Amin in his famous work *al-Juwaniya* which means literally interiority⁸. There is no difference between Islamic classical philosophy by al-Farabi and al-Ghazali and Islamic reformers such as Iqbal, al-Afghani, M. Abdou, al-Kawakibi, M. Abd-Razik, al-Aqqad from one side and Cartesian and transcendental philosophy from other side. *Al- Jiwānīya* is an Arabic translation of "Transcendental" by Kant. The opposition between *Juwani* and *Baranī* is similar to the opposition between Transcendental and Transcendent by Kant. Osman Amin did not go further from Kant and Fichte to Husserl and his disciples. His knowledge was limited to modern philosophy without being extended to contemporary philosophy. He was fond of the clarity and simplicity of the French style more than the German obscure and complex one. He read Kant through Goublot's "The Philosophy of Kant", which he translated into Arabic. He was Cartesian more than Kantian"⁹.

The second such effort, that is, of bringing Islam and phenomenology closer was made by Hanafi himself which was far more forceful and effective than the first one. In his own words, he describes, "The second effort to make an Islamic reading of Phenomenology and phenomenological reading of Islam is his disciple Hassan Hanafi's in his French youth trilogy,

"Les methods d'exeges", essai de reconstruction de la science des fondements de la comprehension "Ilm Uşūl al-fiqh"; "L'exegese de la phenomenology", l'etat actuel de la method phenomenologigne et son application au phenomena religieux; " La phenomenology de l'Exeges", essai d'une hermeneatigne existentielle a partir du Nouvean

Testament".¹⁰

This, project, however, proved a land-mark and gradually became a life-long aim and objective for Hanafi who devoted himself for the reformulation, re-description and reinterpretation of the Islamic thought and disciplines. According to Hanafi, this trilogy has become a whole project at **three** fronts:

First: The reconstruction of classical Islamic disciplines including i- Theology, ii- Philosophy, iii- Mysticism and iv- Scriptural Subjects (*Qur'ān, Ḥadīth, Tafṣīr, Sīra, Fiqh*) by using the phenomenological method of Husserl which he implied in the *Crisis of European Sciences*.

Second: The phenomenological description of the development and the structure of European consciousness and analyzing its sources, that is, the Greco-Roman, the Judeo-Christian and the Pagan-Popular along with its development from the classical to the medieval to the modern phase. Parallel to it the corresponding phases of Islamic consciousness were also identified as: i-Classical Period, ii- Medieval Scholasticism and iii- Ottoman Period; whereas Post-modernistic trends in the Western philosophy correlate with the Islamic upsurge in the Muslim World.

Third: The practical application of the Islamic reading of phenomenology and phenomenological reading of Islam; the discourse was not confined to the academic and theoretical levels but was applied to the socio-political issues in the manner of Max Scheler.¹¹

Another important work of Hanafi, *Contemporary Issues*, deals with the practical issues like vocation of thinking, the role of thinker in the developed countries, authenticity, tradition and modernity, culture and cultural dialogue, national character, liberation theology, dogma and revolution, socialism and capitalism, peoples and institutions, popular proverbs and mass culture, socio-political changes, disgust, indifference, dialogue, ideologies, fundamentalism and secularism, violence and non-violence and conservatism and liberalism etcetera. These and other allied topics paved the way for social phenomenology applied on the current situation of the Muslim World.¹²

Why did Hanafi feel the need of reconstructing the classical disciplines at all? It would be beneficial to listen from him directly. Hanafi has named this process as, "Alternative Thinking in Cultural Cycles". (The very phrase *reconstruction* reveals a strong influence of Iqbal). The reasons enumerated by him are as under:

As per Hanafi, the Tradition includes Scriptural Sciences which solely depend on scripture(s) as data and as methods of understanding. They are five: i- *Qur'ān*, ii-*Ḥadīth*, iii-*Tafṣīr*, iv-*Sīra*, and v- *Fiqh*. Unfortunately these were left as these were in the past without any use of reason. Even relevant topics useful to modern times are not seen such as reality or space in *Asbāb al-Nuzūl*, time and progress in *al-Nāsikh wa-al-Mansūkh*. Classical *Ḥadīth* was more oriented towards the critique of narratives (*Sanad*) rather than on the critique of the text (*matn*). *Tafṣīr* is still piecemeal and longitudinal rather than

thematically and in width. *Sira* personifies the Message (of the Prophet) to the point of falling into the personality cult with huge amplification of the image by extreme veneration and glorification. *Fiqh* is still giving absolute priority to rituals (*ibādāt*) as compared to the practical realities of life. Hanafi has suggested following steps to overcome the above mentioned shortcomings in the study and interpretation of the Scriptural Sciences:

1. Traditional parlance has to be exchanged with the contemporary lexicon. Theological, dogmatic, historical, legal and abstract terms are to be replaced with the human, open, natural and concrete terms.
2. It is a must now to switch over from the Theocentrism to Anthropocentrism, from Historicism to Humanism, from Dogmatism to Criticism and from Literalism to Hermeneutics. This can be done in four Classical Scriptural Sciences, that is, i- Theology, ii-Philosophy, iii- Jurisprudence and iv- Mysticism, opines Hanafi.¹³

For the scarcity of space at our disposal, we may not cover all the four above mentioned Scriptural Sciences; thus, this paper will confine itself to the detailed description of Mysticism only. It is interesting to note that Hanafi himself has also chosen only two for the application of phenomenology, “Of these four rational Islamic disciplines, *‘Ilm Uṣūl al-fiqh* and Sufism hold the greatest potential for being turned into this exact science because they represent methods not theories, as in the case of other two disciplines, theology and philosophy”¹⁴. Sufism is dear to Hanafi, since it is a discipline wherein consciousness finds its most articulate practical manifestations.

In the pages to follow we would see how Hanafi has applied phenomenological method on Mysticism and how has he tried to reconstruct it in the light of Husserlian principles.

Application of Phenomenological Method on Mysticism(*Tasawwuf*)

Hanafi has very meticulously and methodically traced similarities between Phenomenology, Mysticism and Islam. As a case study, he has selected eminent Iranian Sufi-Scholar Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Yaḥyā Qawwāmī Shīrāzī, (1571-1636) better known as Mulla Sadra. His comparison of Sadra with Husserl makes a very interesting read. Sadra was given the title *Ṣadr al-Muta’allichīn* (Master of Theories) because of his multidimensional interests and skills in Philosophy, Theology and Mysticism. His works are a beautiful blend of all the three, however; finally he concentrated more on Theosophy. He also wrote the spiritual exegesis of Qur’an. Being a noted representative of the famous, “School of Isfahan”, he made valuable contribution to the promotion and revitalization of rationalism in Iran and particularly Shiraz. He was an expert and authority on Illuminist Thought of Suhrawardī.

In 1602, he retreated to a small village outside the holy city of Qom, of

which the name was Kahak. Here he lived for five years in seclusion (*Khalwat*) and composed his major philosophical, theological and mystical works. These included his masterpiece *al-Hikma al-muta'aliya fi al-asfār al-'aqliya al-arba'a*, which means *Transcendental Wisdom of the Four Journeys of the Reason/Intellect*. This work is popularly known as *al-Asfār al-Arba'a* (*Four Journeys*). Hanafi has compared Husserl and Sadra and used the *Four Journeys* as a specimen. This may also be treated as a Theosophical work.

Before moving to Sadra particularly, let us have a brief glance, how does Hanafi find Mysticism in line with phenomenology generally. As we know in Mysticism, heart and feelings bear a special significance. The mystic relies more on the testimony of heart as compared to reason. Iqbal has also mentioned the same in the first lecture of the *Reconstruction, "Knowledge and Religious Experience"* in the following words, "The 'heart' is a kind of inner intuition or insight which, in the beautiful words of Rumi, feeds on the rays of the sun and brings us into contact with aspects of Reality other than those open to sense-perception. It is according to Qur'an, something which 'sees' and its reports, if properly interpreted, are never false."¹⁵

Hanafi asserts the same and in his semantic analysis of some terms, as he writes,

The self *Nafs* is a prominent theme in the Qur'an. It has several synonyms such as soul, *Rūh*, heart, *Qalb*, consciousness *Fou'ad* and chest *Ṣadr*. All terms share the same semantic field, the internal world versus external world, the world of perception, knowledge, motivations, desire, hope, the intercession between the external world and the superior world..... *Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafā'* made the self a special and independent fourth part in their system called *al-Nafsaniyat wa al-'Aqliyyat* putting together self and Reason. In contemporary Islamic thought, the self is a central topic in modern poetry such as that of Mohammad Iqbal's, the secret of the self, *Asrār Khudī*. In Urdu, God *Khudā* and the self *Khudī* are from the same root. Western philosophy from Descartes' Cogito to Husserl's Cogitatum through Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Max Scheler, E. Mounier, Bergson and J. Royce crystallized in transcendental philosophy which is simply a reconfirmation of the Islamic view on the self.¹⁶

He further elaborates this similarity between words, phrases and philosophical traditions in the same vein, "*Fou'ad* which means consciousness is linked to senses such as audition and sight as an internal intention. Sometimes it is by itself an organ of sight, external and internal like a vision. It means also moral consciousness. When a mother loses her child her consciousness becomes empty like Moses' mother leaving Moses in the Nile. *Qalb*, which means heart, refers to the internal world as awareness, awakening and the condition of external perception. *Ṣadr* means chest, the place of the heart, a spatial metaphor. *Rūh*, soul is the principle of life in relation to the body, a secret and a challenge to human knowledge."¹⁷

Hanafi compares these words and their meanings in the framework of various languages and finds amazing similarities in them. For instance, “The Hebrew and Greek terms belong to the same semantic field, *Nefesh, Ruah* in Hebrew and *Psyche, Pneumena* in Greek. Also in French and German, the two terms, *Seele* and *Geist, Ame* and *Esprit* belong to the same semantic field. *Nafs* in Arabic and *Nephesh* (or *Nefesh*) in Hebrew refer to acquiring knowledge from the verb *Naqash* in Hebrew which means print or scribe, while the Arabic term *Rooh* or the Hebrew *Ruah* are derived from the same root *Rūh* as wind”¹⁸.

What does Hanafi want to show or prove by this semantic analysis and why are we focusing on these instead of moving directly to Sadra and phenomenology? Indeed Hanafi is emphasizing on the commonness among philosophy, language and the mystic tendencies of man. For him all these are universal human assets and bear a strong link with phenomenological approach. He has explained it himself as,

“The relevance of this grammatical analysis is the communication in the internal world between individuals and groups, the Intersubjective experience...the theoretical and practical dimensions of the self are communicative, interchangeable, transferable from a person to another and a generation to another to bridge solitude and generation gap for the sake of mutual and inter-generational response and responsibility”.¹⁹

Hanafi discovers the same *Intersubjective, interchangeable and transferable relation* between Husserl and Şadrā or between phenomenology and Mysticism/Theosophy.

In the prelude he remarks, “The comparison is based mostly on the major works of Husserl while in the case of Mulla Sadra is based only on “Transcendental Wisdom” the most systematic work on theosophy. His other works are details or application of his systematic philosophy. Only primary sources are used and not the secondary literature. Only Husserl’s works are mentioned in general and as motivation and only *al-Asfār*.”²⁰

Asfār is the most celebrated work of Mullā Şadrā, which is astonishingly comprehensible and consistent. Four Journeys or *Asfār* have covered each and every issue of Tradition Wisdom (Philosophy) in the light of Transcendental Wisdom(Mysticism). *Asfār* is the travelogue of an eager soul describing its entire journey with minutest details in the way of spiritual actualization. The description of Şadrā has made these journeys immortal.

The First Journey:

It is from the world of creation to the Truth and/or Creator (*min al-khalq ilā’l-ḥaqq*). In this journey Mullā Şadrā has treated the problems of metaphysics and ontology which are called “general principles” (*al-umūr al-‘āmmah*) . These have been named as “divine knowledge in common or ordinary meaning” (*al-‘ilm al-ilāhī bi’l-ma’nā al-‘āmm*). In first journey of *Asfār* Mullā Şadrā has explained thoroughly metaphysical base of his system

including such questions such as as the meaning of philosophy, existence (*wujūd*) and its superiority (*aṣālah*) over quiddity (*māhiyyah*), grades of being (*tashkīk al- wujūd*), menta /intellectuall existence (*al-wujūd al-dhihnī*), the Forms of Plato, (*al-muthul al-aflātūniyyah*), time,space, motion, rest , extraction of the universe in time and the nature of intellect and the intelligibles. This is a worth-reading treatise which has addressed very subtle and profound points of Being

The Second Journey:

This journey is from the Truth to the Truth by the Truth (*min al- ḥaqq ilā 'l-ḥaqq bi 'l-ḥaqq*). In this journey Mullā Ṣadrā has propounded his Physics or Natural Philosophy he has discussed in detail the following:

- Substance;
- Accidents;
- Categories;
- Origin and continuity of being;
- Categories

Mullā Ṣadrā is a staunch critic of Aristotelian categories. He has also highlighted the nature of *hylé* (primal matter). It is a very significant topic since this primal matter then gave rise to all material things in the hierarchy of being. The journey also discusses matter and form (hylomorphism) and subsequent tiers of natural order . A highly consistent System of nature or physical world is built in this journey.

The Third Journey:

This journey is from the Truth to the world of creation with the Truth (*min al- ḥaqq ilā 'l- khalq bi 'l-ḥaqq*). In this journey,Ṣadrā has presented his Theology very comprehensively and meticulously.He has described it under the title of “metaphysics” or ‘divine knowledge in its specific meaning” (*al- 'ilm al-ilāhī bi 'l-ma' nā 'l-akhaṣṣ*). In this journey Ṣadrā has paid attention to the theological aspects of divine science and has criticized theologians (*mutakallimūn*) in very strong words. Ṣadrā has especially shed light on the concept of Unity and Existence of God besides judging the proofs provided by the traditional *kalām* . The topics covered in-depth include: the Simplicity and Oneness of the Necessary Existence, Divine Attributes, Divine Omnipotence, Divine Knowledge of the Particulars, Divine Speech (*Kalām*) , Good and Evil (theodicy), Origin of Plurality from Unity, Oneness of Philosophy (*ḥikmah*) and the Law of God (*sharī'ah*).²¹

The Fourth and Final Journey:

The last journey is from the world of creation to the world of creation with the Truth (*min al-khalq ilā 'l- khalq bi 'l-ḥaqq*) where the great chain of being is completed with psychology, resurrection, and eschatology.

The concept of “journey” (*safar*) has two intimately affiliated meanings

in Ṣadrā's System.

1. The traveler (*sālik*) completes his journey and rests. This journey continues not only in the physical form but also when the material body sleeps in the dust.
2. The physical and spiritual journey of the order of existence, which starts with the creation of material existence, completes its glorious as well as turbulent journey and ultimately is absorbed in its fountainhead, that is, God.

This section of the *Asfār* also deals competently traditional psychology. Its main body is constructed with the assistance of Aristotelian and Ibn Sina's psychology. Ibn al-'Arab's mystical and gnostic concepts may also be seen in the psychological framework of Ṣadrā. The main topics of his psychology cover the soul and its states, different faculties of the soul, its interaction with the physical and intelligible world, sense perception, imagination (*takhayyul*) and the imaginal world (*'ālam al-khayāl*), his celebrated doctrine that the soul is bodily or material in its origination and spiritual in its subsistence' (*jismāniyyat al-ḥudūth ruḥāniyyat al-baqā'*), impossibility of the transmigration of souls (*tanāsukh*), spiritual and bodily resurrection, and the reality of heaven and hell²².

After this introductory sketch of Four Journeys and Transcendental Wisdom, this paper is in a better position to present Hanafi's comparison of it with phenomenology clearly and unambiguously.

Hanafi says that there are three basic rules in phenomenological method, that is, i- Reduction, ii- Constitution and iii-Clarification; while the journeys of transcendental wisdom are four as described above. We have to examine which rule is applicable to which journey. Let us start from Reduction.

1. **Reduction:** In *Ideen I*, Husserl has identified reduction as the first rule in phenomenology. It is, according to Hanafi, is applicable on the second journey of transcendental wisdom, that is, from Reality to Truth. Reduction means interpreting the material anew without any preconceived belief, bias or prejudice "in order to free cognition from positivism and the material world and the horizontal passage from Reality to Reality in favor of a vertical passage from Reality to Truth".²³ The reduction of the fact maintains that the essence and the material reality are put outside the attention of the consciousness. However, in transcendental wisdom, reason is capable enough to appreciate reality. The subject can apprehend the object, but this apprehension is not static rather dynamic. Reason becomes one with the object in a process of ideation as has been described by Max Scheler. The object is lived by the subject and hence the Being becomes extensive as well as intensive.

2. **Constitution:** As per *Ideen II*, the second most important rule in phenomenology is *Konstitution*. Constitution according to Husserl is correlation of the objects with the consciousness. Constitution corresponds with the second ascendant passage of transcendental wisdom from Reality to Truth. In phenomenology time is a pure quality as conceived by Augustine and Bergson. The world is created in the moment of being felt in the consciousness. Husserl has described it in *Ursprung der welt* (Origin of the World) . In transcendental wisdom, time is linked to cosmological time as it appears in the problems of eternity and contingency. God is eternal while the world is created in time.
3. **Clarification:** It is the third rule of phenomenology. Clarification is step by step distinction between confused essences. Distinctions are also made to discover different levels of Being, its structure and unity. It corresponds to the third passage of transcendental wisdom from Truth to Truth to be sure of clarity and simplicity of the meaning, free from confusion and complexity²⁴.

Hanafi finds another similarity between phenomenology and transcendental wisdom, as for him both are cultural as well as religious visions. Following is the brief narration of the both:

Phenomenology and Transcendental Wisdom as Cultural Visions:

Hanafi declares phenomenology as the accomplishment of transcendental philosophy since Descartes and Kant, from *Cogito* to *Cogitatum*, from *Ich denke* (I think) to *Sachen selbst* (Things themselves). The subject and object are two poles of the same consciousness, called Intentionality. Intersubjective experience is not only a cognitive experience between two individual consciousnesses but also an accumulative, cultural and historical consciousness the description of its structure and development is as given below. Following scheme shows the gradual progress of the same process in the synoptic intellectual journey of mankind.

I-The Origin (It has three main fountainheads)

- a. Greco-Roman;
- b. Judeo-Christian;
- c. European popular culture.

II- Point of Departure: Cartesian Cogito

- a. Ascendant line: Le rationalism;
- b. Descendant line, Empiricism;
- c. Juxtapositional Synthesis: Critical Idealism;
- d. Absolute Idealism.

III- Final Point: Phenomenology.

The similar cultural trajectory and combination of intellectual traditions may be observed in transcendental wisdom. For instance, the synthesis of Islamic Logic of al-Farabi with the illumination blend of Ibn Sina is the same assimilation of traditions as we have observed in the case of European philosophy above. Transcendental wisdom is also a reformation of *Hikmat al-ishrāq* of Suhrawardī and of *al- Mabāḥith al- Mashriqiyya* of al-Razi. It is an accomplished merger of mystical tradition of Ibn ‘Arabi and al-Ghazali with the philosophical tradition of al-Farabi²⁵.

Phenomenology and Transcendental Wisdom as Religious Visions:

“Phenomenology is also a direct, indirect and virtual religious vision. In the direct religious vision “God” appears as a formal or an objective Being. The object is put between brackets in order to retain “God” as a living experience, a direction of human consciousness in relation to the world, to culture and in history”.²⁶

The transcendental wisdom is already a religious vision of the world. The highest cognitive power is a holy power *Quwwa Qudsiya*. A whole journey, “from truth to truth” is already on a theory on the Necessary Being *Wājib al-Wūjūd*.....In phenomenology, indirect religious vision appears in the reflections on certain philosophical and mathematical themes which are religious themes conceived on the level of consciousness and expressed on human, open and universal language such as: The Absolute, The Universal, The Essence, The Ideal and The Pure. Transcendental Idealism is an indirect religious vision. *There is no difference between Fichte and Jesus*²⁷. [Italics added].

In Hanafi’s opinion the transcendental wisdom is also a certain kind of indirect religious worldview, from nature through reason to God, and from God back to nature through a soul. Finality in the soul and in the world is an indirect demonstration of the existence of God as final cause. There is no room for absurdity.²⁸

Conclusion:

Hassan Hanafi has presented his case with so much lucidity and clarity that we do not need to opt for excessive repetition in the conclusion. However, we shall definitely judge the claim presented in the Abstract; either Hanafi has proved it with substantial evidence or not.

As far as Hanafi’s method of Phenomenological interpretation of Mysticism, its scope, application, legitimacy and subsequent results are concerned, we may say without reasonable doubt that he has a thorough grasp on Phenomenology as well as on Mysticism and his application of the former on the latter is amazing and scholarly mesmerizing. While comparing the both and he has given us highly academic and logically viable examples which are, nevertheless convincing and compelling.

Hanafi asserts firmly that theoretical and practical dimensions of the Self are communicative, interchangeable and transferable. Moreover, these may bridge loneliness and generation gap of mankind besides enhancing shared and inter-generational response and responsibility. Phenomenology and Mysticism both are based on the recognition and respect of this intersubjectivity and acknowledgment of common experience. This gives rise to peace, fellow feeling, love, brotherhood, unity and co-existence of not only mankind but also of all the creatures and things of the world. This true on human, intellectual and academic levels.

This is a great contribution of Hanafi that he has declared Phenomenology and Transcendental Wisdom as “Cultural and Religious Visions”. This approach, if adopted may patch up the chasms and gulfs between peoples of different faiths, schools of thought, creeds and colours. It may be a very good tool for achieving the goal of interfaith as well as sectarian harmony which is the need of the hour in a terror-stricken world and bleeding humanity.



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- ¹² Hanafi, *Theosophy and Phenomenology*,431-432.
- ¹³ Hanafi, *Theosophy and Phenomenology*, 470-73
- ¹⁴ Hassan Hanafi, *Al-Turāth wa al-Tajdīd: Mawaqifunā min al-Turāth al- Qadīm*, (Cairo: al- Markaz al-'Arabi li'l-Bahthwa'INashr, 1980), P.186.
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- ¹⁷ Hanafi, *Cultures and Civilizations*, 416.
- ¹⁸ Hanafi, *Cultures and Civilizations*, 416.
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- ²⁵ Hanafi, *Cultures and Civilizations*, 492.
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- ²⁸ Hanafi, *Cultures and Civilizations*,494.