

# The metaphysical anthropology of Islamic spirituality

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## ABSTRACT

Man is not an eradicable being which can be easily casted into the terrestrial existence, on the contrary he is a transformer; one who has captivated the undefined state and has embroidered it with rationalization. As a result man has made the world coherent. Thereof one can conclude that with the ending of man's existence the stages of humankind's overall existence also cease to exist. Man ought to be present in the establishing and representing elements of the universe in order to interpret it in existence. If one would delineate in the theosophical Islamic language, one would have said that man is a being with himself and in him has crystallized the unification of the world's thought and shape. Mawlana in an unparalleled manner, in his poetry, has conveyed the longing of man for his origin and his celestial belonging. He has elaborated the idea of man without detaching him from his physiognomy. He speaks of art, science and philosophy which have not abandoned their correspondence with the principles of nature, respectively logos. Even the characterized substances in his poetry are addressed to those who use their sensory. This text seeks to convey and gives effort to elaborate and analyze the spiritual anthropology of the Islamic metaphysics, with clear focus on Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi's work, Masnawi.

**Keywords :** Anthropology, metaphysics, Masnawi, Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi

In order for one to represent himself as a stable coherent unit, in other words to be part of a human's functional network, it is necessary to focus and seek the essential and ontological dimension of it. This can be attained by focusing on a primary source, so as to enable the creation of values both as an individualist and the collective as a whole. Resembling man as a biological being results in portraying him as an undefined substance since he thus loses the will for comprehending the beyond-substance, which he had apperceived and experienced. Hence this mundane perception of man's life minimizes him to a terrestrial existence of an insect, which would blindly urge into all possible holes in order to experience the hours of its brief life.

Man is not an eradicable being which can be easily casted into the terrestrial existence, on the contrary he is a transformer; one who has captivated the undefined state and has embroidered it with rationalization. As a result man has made the world coherent. Thereof we can conclude that with the ending of man's existence the stages of humankind's overall existence also cease to exist. Man ought to be present in the establishing and representing elements of the universe in order to interpret it

in existence. If one would delineate in the theosophical Islamic language, one would have said that man is a being with himself and in him has crystallized the unification of the world's thought and shape [5].

Man and his long-term mundane and latitude history, namely the vertical descend of God in the existential relief, is a portraying of what exists beyond itself. With his presence, man voices the silenced existence of the universe, but simultaneously voices God's existence as well. Therefore the creation of man has as aim the acquaintance and devotion towards the Creating Almighty and the Education of universe within the framework of the benevolence of the abundance given in possession.<sup>1</sup>

The acknowledged Muslim ceramist Imam Maturidi would say that the universe is consisted of elements which oppose and distinguish from one another. Man, who has been claimed as microcosm, unites the spheres which ought to be puzzled onto as one and distinguishes among those particles which

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<sup>1</sup> This scope which takes place in the existential area on behalf of man is a subject and a matter for discussion on the work of the great scholar and the well acknowledged Sufi in the Islamic history of thought Muhjuddin Ibn al-Arabi. Regarding the pearls of wisdom and their comments see: Abdullah Efendija Bosnjak, *Tumacenje Dragulja Poslanicke Mudrosti*, translated from Arabic into Bosnian by: Prof. Dr. Resid Hafizovic, Sarajevo 2008.

ought to be set astray his being. Man, perceived as *elmam* according to Maturidi, is defined as the being which brings forth a coherent world aside the oppositions and the differences. Hence Maturidi has clustered in one place the immense elements of man's equivalence by various acknowledged scholars. Man is the only being capable of thinking and delineating his thoughts through language. Consequently, man has the competence to restrain and hinder himself and this is one element makes one human.

In the history of Islamic mentality the above estimation begins to generate value since the eventuation of man, from that moment when the sacred wisdom grew visible within Adam's personality. It was when he was brought forth the angels and with God's ordering he then denominated, or rather he termed, in other words he brought sense to the presented names. As a result, one can say that since man is aware of the expressions "concepts", he is given the occasion to burden certain matters and rather profound himself in acquiring their reality as *halife* (vicegerent) of God on Earth.

Thereof Islam and the Qur'an synchronously endorse man's royal character with the sound roots which harvest from God's Might, simultaneously this reinforces the recapitulation that man is made the centric reason for acquiring and attaining assured knowledge of concepts and incorporating matter into

existence. The Qur'an elaborates this by its language:

*"And [mention, O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority." They said, "Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we declare Your praise and sanctify You?" Allah said, "Indeed, I know that which you do not know.*

*And He taught Adam the names - all of them. Then He showed them to the angels and said, "Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful*

*They said, "Exalted are You; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, it is You who is the Knowing, the Wise.*

*He said, "O Adam, inform them of their names." And when he had informed them of their names, He said, "Did I not tell you that I know the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth? And I know what you reveal and what you have concealed." (Al-Baqarah, 2:30-33)*

In the above citing God and creation are appointed on a collinear. As a result, knowledge and wisdom (*ilm* and *hikmah*) are the mere paths which man can endorse in order to ambience himself in center of existence and only through them man can acquire the ability of comprehending the meaning of prostrating before the Creating Might. This occurrence

directly derives from Allah's Name and the representation of the Creating Might open doors of assured knowledge and wisdom; hence man is constantly reminded that the source of knowledge and wisdom is in the sacred attribute. Decisively the answer to what is the purpose of creation is devotion towards God. The acceptance of the Eternal Reality, sensibility towards His existence, attachment to Him...

From one stand point such conscience and acceptance enables the self to be close to God, and on the other hand it permits to recognize the relative dimension of man's being. On this dimension the being experiences God far more close than his individualistic existence. Man feels how the Absolute Oneness directly shares a stay in his existence. This is the propinquity without any distance, yet with a clear distinction between the creature and the Creator. Else like expressed by the Qur'anic language: "And We have already created man and know what his soul whispers to him, and We are closer to him than [his] jugular vein." (Qaf, 50:16)

The Almighty Allah, through this verse, determines the mundane reality and its acquaintance with the Absolute Being. Reality as a discussed matter is closely corresponds to the matter of knowing the Being and vice versa, since acknowledging the being automatically incorporates the issue of the being's reality. As Ibn al-Arabi [7] also argues, the reality of the

being cannot be framed without motioning further the point where the reality of the Being enlightens the entire reasoning and each relative being, and unless the conduction of thinking is not attained through threading each portion with the Being.<sup>2</sup>

Ibn al-Arabi on his work *Fusus al-hikam* elaborates on the logos (kelime) of Adam, which simultaneously represents the humankind gender, as Abdullah Bosnevi [4] would also support with his comment of this work: "In the representative logos of Adam's pearl there are two crucial messages: the pearl of the sacred wisdom in Adam's logos aspired in Adam's heart as the place the sacred wisdom is inscribed, since the ideal Man in his spiritual platform is the Seal, whereas his heart is the pearl of this seal. Ibn al-Arabi indicates to the logos in order to recall the heart as the place for inscribing that wisdom. The second message is rather concentrated in the fact that Adam, in other words man, represents the object upon which the sacred pearl of wisdom is inscribed. As a result, Adam in the spiritual dimension is on the position of the pearl, whereas the universe in the spiritual dimension of the Seal, thus the universe is sealed with the essence of the humankind. Adam to the world is alike the pearl to the seal".

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<sup>2</sup> Compare: Lasic, Hrvoje, *Covjek u Svjetlu Transcendencije & Nadnaravno odredjenje ljudskog Bica*, Zagreb, 1994. pp. 45-74.

According to what has been hitherto delineated, man is the only being which, within one context, is the scope of the given reality; he is capable of seeking the continuum of this reality. Albeit, in order for one reality to be accepted and for its existence to be permitted as it really is, one ought to focus on what that truly is, and not to perceive only the portion which one personally wishes to see. Ibn al-Arabi and the overall Qur'anic concepts on reality and its acquaintance on behalf of man, seek to emphasize on the unity of the being and the reality, and rather do not emphasize on separation and the differences in acquaintance. Reality and the being, according to Ibn al-Arabi, motion along, they are indissoluble, there is no reality if there is no being.

The constitutive Islamic tradition of Tasawwuf considers man to be the only representative object and resemblance of the primary Intelligence and the eternal intelligibility. While the other Islamic disciplines are inscribed on the pages of the universe, in other words the macrocosmic and the written perennial tradition either as in the sacred veil or the constitutive religious messages of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the Islamic Tasawwuf is rather focused on man and his somatic and metaphysical built as an acceptor and deliverer of the veiled calling and the universe. Man in the perennial tradition of Tasawwuf is the microcosm and the decoding

of the unknown. Man is the success on the path hither The Creator and the mere genuine Existence.

One of the most acknowledged poets of the Sufi Osman period, Niyazi Misri has well delineated on the meaning of the existential genuine dimension and its approach through the only interpreter of words and stories: man. This is how he professes:

*"I was seeking a cure for my trouble;*

*My trouble became my cure.  
I was seeking a proof of my origin;  
My origin became my proof.*

*I was looking to the right and the left  
So that I could see the face of the Beloved.  
I was searching outside,  
But the Soul was within that very soul [6]."*

*How I thought I was apart, my lover another and I  
another"*

*I thought I was separated, I another and the Lover  
another*

*I learned that all which is seen and heard by myself,  
is the Lover and no other.*

*Thy path arises from thy blood, in blood is thy home*

*An animal is one who does not understand that place  
of arriving and its leave.*

*Listen to Niyazi's words, the substance cannot shield  
the face of Al-Haqq*

*There is no clearer substance than of Reality, while  
for the blind ones remains a secret.*

The genuine acquaintance of man's metaphysics from within the individual threads him to his roots and through them hither God, scilicet it unites man to the eternal and everlasting reality. This particular emitting energy for the aspiration and love of God which motions through the individual metaphysics of man is highly prominent and encompassing, and thereof motioning hither God who stands beyond time and the created universe can only be obtained through this dimension. This existential emotional experience, effervesce of conscience and braiding of the intellect represented in the eternity and the essence of existence through man pervades both time and space. Videlicet, all things on this world are brought to a shape and have attained meaning around man.

If man truly seeks to be the assigner of his self and conscience, he ought to kindle his soul which in the somatic state is endangered to

resulting in glaciating. Therefore man ought to be led from reasoning towards love, from the physical substance towards content, from the enclosed science towards the metaphysical poetry. As a result, man is able to establish the harmony of the encompassed realities of both the physical and spiritual spheres.

In the Prologue of Masnawi, Mawlana Jelal al-Din Rumi speaks of the origin of man and in the dialogue of nay he conveys man's sorrow and his soul longing to be back to his homeland. Mawlana speaks as following:

*"From jungle-bed since me they tore,*

*Men's, women's, eyes have wept right sore*

*My breast I tear and rend in twain,*

*To give, through sighs, vent to my pain*

*Who's from his home snatched far away,*

*Longs to return some future day.*

*I sob and sigh in each retreat,*

*Be't joy or grief for which men meet.*

*They fancy they can read my heart;*

*Grief's secrets I to none impart*

*My throes and moans form but one chain,*

*Men's eyes and ears catch not their train.*

*Though soul and body be as one,*

*Sight of his soul hath no man won [98]."*

Mawlana in an unparalleled manner, in his poetry, has conveyed the longing of man for his origin and his celestial belonging. He has elaborated the idea of man without detaching him from his physiognomy. He speaks of art, science and philosophy which have not abandoned their correspondence with the principles of nature, respectively logos. Even the characterized substances in his poetry are addressed to those who use their sensory. The figurative language in Mawlana's work is interpreted as diverse and as an existential mimic. The image of the ideal man is portrayed as scenery, festivity of colors and shapes; as if they continuously alter and thereof seem as accidentally incorporated yet without the background attaching platform. A great number of characters as well as geographical relief dimensions in Mawlana's work have lost their individual competence of encompassing or the ability for peruse authenticity.<sup>3</sup> Heidegger

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<sup>3</sup> The ability for authentic observation is one of the most complex issues of contemporary man. In complete accuracy Prof. Ismail Bardhi in regards to

considers this position to be a specific status of the artist or of the genuine pragmatism. This encompassment, as Heidegger would suggest, is certainly lost in the contemporary modern civilization. Albert Camya shall come to the same conclusion. The latter would claim that there is no other path but cutting off the roots which only connect man to the terrestrial life and nature, namely the physical substance. It is not a coincidence that the most acknowledged books nowadays, instead of being preoccupied with the shades of the heart and the genuinely of love, are rather engrossed in the lawsuits, accusations and charging procedures and mechanisms. In lieu of exposing one to the metaphysical light before the eyes of the world, they instead furnish sorrow and desolation to man's heart.

The above lines of Mawlana Jelal al-Din Rumi cited from Masnawi have been greatly commented by various scholars both in the west and the east. Behold how the above lines, speaking of the parallelism of the being and of

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this issue in his work "Theological observation of the Absolute" claims: "Whatever acquaintance based on objective aim must take under consider religion as a unique matter of knowing, which itself automatically sets the boundaries of science, philosophy and art. Knowing based on reasoning merely in the domains of the realm, the visible, directs the individual towards that path, the path of religion, and the entire human life ought to be transpassed in order to attain to that path. Yet at times man tends to remain on that overall life, and what is more tragic, in the wrong path, on the one with an ending point."

truthfulness, have been inferred or how they utter the genuine anthropology of the sacred revelation and acquaintance with the physical and the dimension of turning towards Him.

Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi, eventuates the Masnawi with the word "Listen". In first notice one can argue that this is not how the classical Islamic literary works have their openings. Since all the literary books in the Islamic literature begin in the name of God. Some of the centrally important Anatolian works, such as Garib-name by Ashik Pasha, Felekname by Gulshehri and Mevludi by Suleyman Çelebi begin in the name of God. Garib-name would proceed as follows:

*Shall we foremost remember the name of Allah.*

Felek-name is characterized by two verses:

*Let us begin our words with Bismillah*

*Let us say a prayer with Allah.*

Whereas Suleyman Çelebi would precede his Mevludin with the verse:

*Allah we remember Thy name daima.*

Consequently, the opening of Masnawi requires a careful and devotional observation. It might be that the poet may have began his first verse with "Listen" due to self preference and freedom of speech, as it has aspired him from within. Conceivably, Mawlana might have deferred that

on each work which expressed love towards God, there exists sacredness of Bismillah.

As a result many acknowledged scholars of Masnawi regarding the eventuation of his work with the word "bishnev" (listen), instead of bismillah, have sought other utterances. They have concluded that the Masnawi begins with the letter **B**, and this is a replacement for bismillah. Since the letter **B** is one of the sacred Islamic letters. Hazrat Ali would infer with the outmost accuracy, claiming that everything found in the Qur'an is in the Fatiha, what is to be found in the Fatiha is found in the Bismillah, what is found in the Bismillah is within the letter **B**. In addition to this, Hazrat Ali would comment that the wisdoms of the letter **B** are found in the mark behind the letter itself. I am the mark behind the letter **B**. By the above elaborated sayings Hazrat Ali has adorned the sacredness of the letter **B** with hither profound meanings.

According to this viewpoint Mawlana has forenamed Bismillah before bishnev (listen). The beginning of Masnawi with the word bishnev has other utterances as well. Anew, according to *Masnawi's* scholars, God in the Revelation has proclaimed being able to hear / listen to behold more value than sight; in fact the Qur'an speaks of the virtue of listening. On the other hand none of the messengers of God have been deaf and this also bolsters the argument that hearing



is of more importance than sight. The eventuation of Mawlana's Masnawi by "listen" reflects on his sensitivity on grasping his own words.

The second most important word in the first verse is the word "nay". Nay is both the writing pen and a sacred tool. Furthermore, nay is the symbol of the eminent ones (evliya). The Evliya, in reality, have been met with God. Yet before their ultimate meeting they have undergone myriad longings as result of the distance and far more sufferings for being parted from Him. The evliya as well as the nay experience great mourning in scalded voice for being separated, and by this they reprimand the neglected ones. Precisely to this nay has grown to be a familiar plaintive melody of the dhikr rituals in the Mevledi (Mawlawi) Tariqah and has served as the instrument for the proclamation of the sacred love.

To be entangled in this earthly life and breathed onto a body means to be in a preventive state; unable to meet with God. For those who behold the veiled calling to becoming one with God, and who have perceived the everlasting highness of this state, such a prevention becomes the reason for longing and profound sorrow.

Therefore when nay claims that ever since the day you cropped me from the reeds, many

women and men have grieved from my sorrow, confirms that initially he was a reed. This is a confession on our unification with God in the Sacred world, and this characterizes the state of being a pearl in the Creator's arc who says: "I was a hidden arc and sought to be acknowledged", in other words, being one substance with Him.

Beings are revealed into existence with their own initiative for those eyes which will perceive and the hearts which shall love the beauty of God. Before the visible juncture at the being there was no "you, I". There was only Him. Everything was consisted of Him. Even the ones, who nowadays long for Him, like the nay, were found in Him. To each soul asked whether: "Aren't I thy God?" an answer was received with *beli- yes You are*. This expression was the first step to present the soul as fire, air, water and plants animals and the beginning of the adventures of the humankind. Once the "Elestit" occurred, souls went walking separated ways as man and women; they walked the surface on Earth. From one hand they became both eyes and hearts able to perceive and love the beauty of God, and on the other hand they grow to experience the sorrow for being apart from God and astray from Him.

The nay would comment by saying, you who alike the nay are imprisoned in thy bodies! You who are afar from the versed reed and the

united essence! I seek a heart which shall hear my words. A heart found in a breast asunder from the burning of being apart, for me to confess my longing for God. These are the words of the nay descended from God's province onto this mundane world, which in the body of man experienced sorrow, and thus has transmitted to others the outmost longing and anguish.

The longer man shall be astray and away from his origin and his calling land, the longer he shall experience an ache for return and the protracted longing and endearment for meeting with Him.

Once man has accomplished the semi circled journey of the descend of the sacred substance and once the stages of fire, air, ground, plants and animals have been completed, then only man can begin its semi circle directed hither God, and in the first step towards this integration man experiences essence. Henceforth man becomes the reflection of the sacred matter.

Once he progresses onto this stage and in order to motion hither the origin there are two paths to pursue: One dying without being renewed. By having led such a lifestyle man does not attain anything. In this mundane life he did not know who he was, thus in the hereafter he shall also be befuddled.

Whereas if man meets an eminent figure on this earthly world, one who shall direct his spirituality under guidance, he then is able to comprehend towards where and for whom is his longing within him. Initially he finds God within himself and afterwards he recognizes Him in the outer world. Experiencing God in one's inner is acknowledged as "*teyeli*" (reflection). The one who has experienced the sacred reflection perceives the universe through the ken of God and becomes the owner of the veiled secret with which he sees God in each place. This state is a renewal of the assured knowledge with God. Yet is it not the ultimate meeting with God. Even at the point where man pervades the quintessential stage, he shall be in endeared longing for his origin.

Nay, or the ideal man (al-insan al-kamil), Pir or even the Murshid (the mystical guide) speak of reed's secret. He is kind to all the people, both the good and the ill mannered ones and certainly behaves in good demeanor towards each of them. Since man in each circumstance is being introduced to the path towards the Ultimate Truth, precisely to this, people in their knowledgably and emotional frames converge towards these leaders and seek to experience their state.

I have disclosed the secrets of reality to people from various backgrounds, yet they approached me on the basis of their own subjective opinions.

They did not seek the path leading to the acquaintance of my inner aims and secrets. Since for one to be able to grasp the path of the eminent, one ought to absent himself from doubt. Briefly said, the sacred truth is not revealed if doubted. One is only able to penetrate to the sacred truth through obedient awareness (*yakin*), leaving aside all choices for prejudice and doubt.

Only in the vicinity of this path can one recognize the light within the spiritual arcs and the meanings appraised in the words of *evliya*.

Nay would say that: I was once in a reed. My roots were in water and soil. There I undulated as being spoiled and was a follower of the passing wind. Yet the day when I was cut from the reed had arrived. They dried my body and stabbed me with the flames of love. How did they open wounds in my body! How I was delivered onto the hands of a man of a glorious breath. His familiar loving breadth motioned from within me. This breath harvested and extinguished everything within me, but the love. I was put forth a position face to face with the lover. I began to mourn, and longing I experienced. The longing and sorrow arising from within simultaneously revealed my veiled secret, preferentially they sang of the bliss and the actuality I apperceived within.

In summary, my secrets have been preserved in the form of sounds. Yet those of you who have beclouded eyes and whose ears do not hear, do not poses the light to see and thus have not penetrated onto the state of grasping the reality of which I speak.

Man has two states: soul and body. The body represents the physical dimension, respectively the visible state of man. What can be identified is dense and physical substance.

Yet anew man is in possession of two souls, however they differ. One is the soul able to maintain the body alive, categorized as the bodily soul. The other one is the *apostafat* soul, which is reflected only within humans and is a sacred substance. This soul is not temporary as the other. This is the celestial soul. A synthesis of light and strength impenetrable to every eye, this soul is. This substance can be characterized as the Sacred breath reflected in man. The soul which Yunus Emre would identify by saying that there is one self found within me.

The soul is present in each organ, in each portion of the human body and is prudent and equally mesmerizing in beauty. The sacred soul is devoted to the bodily soul with great love for its grasping beauty and prudence. Intermittently, the sacred beauty of the soul emerges on the surface of the body.

To this reason, the Gnostics (arif) recognize the ones who portray the sacred beauty in their bodies and behavior.

When Hazrati Mawlana [9] says that the body from the soul and the soul from the body are not hidden, yet not everyone is granted permission to perceive it, he means to say that in order for one to reach this reality, in other words perceive the sacred soul like the nay, one ought to detach himself from the terrestrial ground and water in order for his breast to divorce from the growing love hither The Greatest.<sup>4</sup>

Man is the most conferred matter in the Islamic Tasawwuf. Mawlana speaks of his love towards the genuine Existence regarding man and longing in many other poems apart from Masnawi such as the Rubaiyyat.

*"This drunkenness of mine*

*Is of no crimson wine;*

*My wine doth not pass*

*Except in passion's glass.*

*O friend, was it thy will*

*With me this wine to spill?*

*The wine that moves my mirth*

*Was never seen on earth [56]"*

*This glass pour thee in my mouth, do not give it in  
my hand*

*For I being drunk have my mouth abstained.*

*If I am to go in the land which awaits*

*A confrontation would the nothingness face*

*The nothingness overwhelmed would claim that In  
both worlds*

*A storm has conquered.*

*"The fire of Thy passion*

*In my soul glowed,*

*the waters of Thy sweetness*

*In my heart flowed.*

*The waters proved a mirage,*

*The flames were snow;*

*Perchance I then was dreaming,*

*And waking now [84]"*

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<sup>4</sup> In relation to the comments made regarding the Masnawi for more see: Rifai, Kenan, *Serhli Mesnevi-i Serif, Istanbul 2000.*

*I spoke to the outsiders all the time*

*But the exchange without thee had no point*

*When the sun sets, man seeks light*

*And for the slightest light he kindles a lantern.*

*"Wouldst thou have revealed to thee*

*All the being of the Friend?*

*Go, into the pith descend;*

*From the rind superior flee.*

*Veiled His essence is, and dim,*

*Fold on fold enwrapped around;*

*In His being He is drowned,*

*And the world is drowned in Him [42]."*

"I am an adherent in manner of believing according to Ibrahim "Mawlana Jelal al-Din Rumi claims," But when it sets, he said, "I like not those that disappear (Al-An'Am, 6:76). His personality and centric philosophy were driven towards eternity. To him, life on this earth, the benevolences of this life, and everything evoked in it were temporary, whereas his soul and surrounding were eternal and of authentic equivalence. Precisely to this man ought not to lead a mundane life pursuing the caprice desires, according to Mawlana, but rather he

ought to focus on the soul and the eternal values.

Mawlana in his practical teaching and literary work manifests the path towards eternal love and leaves the doors of his altruist heart opened to all humankind by saying that *If you love thyself, you should also love thy Creator, since you shall love thy Creator, you shall love his creating beings as well.* Thus hitherto this is what the final sacred encompassment wished onto the universe. If our assured knowledge and faith direct us towards this reality, then we shall be conscience of this and with dignity shall deity God.

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