

The Explaining look and critique of Eckankar's Cosmology According to the Islamic Teaching

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ABSTRACT

In Eckankar cosmology, the immediate creation of the universe is rejected, instead, the creation has relied on some factors called "ECK" or the other names. In creation process (gradually or suddenly), the Eckankar school believes in gradual creation, and sometimes express some terms which indicate the eternal essence of the creatures, unlike the opinions of the Islamic philosophers who believe in temporal occurrence or essential occurrence of the creatures. In goals of creation, it believes in some goals such as growth and perfection of the soul and evaluation and examine of the human, which are relatively in accordance with Islamic teaching. In finitude or infiniteness of the universe, the Eckankar believes in infiniteness of the universe contrary to the Islamic viewpoint. In order of the world and creation of the universe, the concepts of this school resemble the creation's myth. For instance, the Hesiod's myth looks like the PaulTwitchell's words, which are criticized in this study. In administration and management of the world, this school believes in full utilization of God from some intermediates and takes advantage of Hindu trinity. Accordingly, in this study authors tries to review the Eckankar's view point about cosmology, then it criticized according to Islamic philosophers and theologians. Methods: The study's method is descriptive - explaining, along with critical view that has reintegrated in six parts. Results: Finally, it is pointed that most of the Eckankar school's words in creation were based on the mythical concepts and have no capability or similarity with the religious texts specially Islamic ones, Because according to Islamic ones. Because according to Islamic teaching the world creation is meaningful and purposive.

KEYWORDS

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Introduction

Cosmology is one of the ancient intellectual and doctrinal issues that all of the thinkers such as the theologians and divine or non-divine philosophers discussed about it and presented special cosmology according to their intellectual grounds and foundations.

Some question such as the: the quality of creation by the Almighty Creator, the creation process (gradually or suddenly), the God's purpose for creation, created or eternal nature of the creation and universe, the creation range (finitude or infiniteness) and etc. are the fundamental questions which are expected from different religions, schools, and philosophical, intellectual and mystical thoughts to answer them logically and reasonably to show the power and greatness of those schools. Accordingly, in this study authors tries to review the Eckankar's view point about cosmology, then it criticized according to Islamic philosophers and theologians.

Materials and methods

The study's method is descriptive – explaining, along with critical view that has reintegrated in six parts.

The Quality of the creation of the world

In Eckankar School, the immediate creation of the world by the God is rejected obviously. Instead, the creations of the universe are relied on some factors sometimes called "ECK" and sometime are mentioned through other names.

The argue of this school's thinkers are that, as Sugmad is unlimited and infinite and its quality is not the same as the creature, it cannot create anything immediately. It means, in Eckankar viewpoint, Sugmad cannot creates directly, Because of its unlimited nature and infiniteness, it does not have any will, decision, thought and action. The last qualities allocated to the existents who are its creatures and are limited.

Paul Twitchell stated regarding that: "In other words the SUGMAD didn't make man in ITS image as religions teach, especially the Christian religion. So the SUGMAD was compelled to create the world in an indirect manner through the ECK, the infinite light and sound which IT is and in which IT dwells.

In these references, sometime the irony, expressions about the creation are mentioned: "Among the many images of God is the Ham-Sa, the divine bird, which lays the world in the form of an egg. It is also the syllable "HAM" that God breathes out, scattering all galaxies in the sky. With the syllable "SA" it breathes in, withdrawing all things to their original unity. The syllables "HAM-SA" may also be heard as "SA-HAM," or "SA-AHAM," which is to say, "I AM THAT," or "THAT Soul" what each and every being IS. Breathing out, God is called in the lower worlds by the Indian name of Brahma, the Creator. Holding the breath out, God is called Vishnu, the Preserver of all these lower worlds. Breathing in, God is called Shiva, the Destroyer of Maya, or illusion.

In the last sentences there is a clear contrast. For example, although in last sentences Sugmad is the origin of the creation, in other sentences introduces "ECK" as a creator, erector and the reason of durability of the universe. Moreover, it says ECK is the result of personality of Sugmad.

"The ECK is rooted and grounded in all life—he, she, it, I, thee and thou. It is here, there, and everywhere; permeating all directions, East, West, South and North; above and below; everywhere, in all seasons. All personalities and impersonal things have their existence in the ECK. The ECK is the symbol of individuality, the sound and the light. It is the music of the spheres, the light of lights. It is the theories and practices of all things. The creator, creation and creatures are only the ECK.

All are represented by the ECK. It is explicable. It is inexplicable. It is the personification of the SUGMAD. It is the essential whole and the essential part of the SUGMAD speaking and giving life to all life. It is divisible and indivisible, limited and unlimited, thought and no-thought, vision-the physical, and in the mental and thought faculties as the very heart of each, and their existing life. It is the cause of all actions and deeds, and is the effect of all causes. Thus, the ECK is the creative-principle proceeding by agitation of motion in the polarized throne of the SUGMAD throughout the worlds and universes. It pervades everything, for nothing can exist without the ECK. As threads in cloth are woven and interwoven, as the particles of water fabricate the sea, all things in the spiritual worlds and all things in the material worlds are woven and fashioned of the ECK. All in existence whether entire or in parts, is the ECK only.

ECK is the embodiment of all attributes of life, of spiritual enlightenment, of vitality and vibrancy.It creates the sound, the music of life; within the psychic worlds It creates light, and in the worlds of matter It creates intelligence.

"The SUGMAD established a certain focus of action from its center of all the universes down to the bottom of the negative pole. Each of these are actually a manifestation of Himself, beginning at what we know as the AgamLok plane, where the ruler is only a light, invisible manifestation, and its lord the Agam SUGMAD, was brought into being at the same time as the first individual manifestation of the Supreme One. All the creation flowing out of God was carried on through this first manifestation. This supreme fluid, or creative energy working through the Agam SUGMAD, brought into existence the next region below, AlakhLok, and its ruler Alakh SUGMAD. Following this, what we know as the fifth plane, SachKhand, and its ruler, Sat Nam, were established.

These planes were established downward through this manner, and at the same time, the head of each was created and given charge of that world. This process went on until the last plane, the Astral world or what we call the Anda was established. Throughout each plane a series of sub planes and ruler, with sub planes under them, have been created.

The lord of this last region, KalNiranjan, was brought into manifestation, and through him was established the entire physical universe over which Elam, the overlord, rules. This is the completion of the creative process of building universes.

Results

Analysis and critique: That Almighty God is unlimited and infinite and his quality is different from the possible being, are logical and accepted as the necessary being by the Islamic philosophers. The additional criticisms on these contrasts are the following:

1) There is a debate about Sugmad's school, in that, this school did not accept the religion's claim, specially Christianity which did not believe that Sugmad created the man similar to himself. To clarify this thought, this concept is checked in Judaism, Christianity and Islam as the last and perfect religion.

In old Testament is mentioned that, God created Adam in his own image: "God said I create Adam in my own image and similar to myself to over the fishes in the sea, the birds in the sky, the cattle, the insects and all over the world. So, God created man the same as himself".

But this does not mean the embodiment or materialization of God. However, it means that, as God has attributes of perfection and bestowed these attributes to man. Consequently, there is a similarity between the donor (God) and the receiver (man). Such as capture and ruling over the earth by themanthe same as God who rules over the universe.

IbnMeimoon, the Jewish philosopher, wrote in this regard: "As the human has the intellectual perception, he is the creature in the image of God. Because the image and face of God mean the intellectual recognition which the human has it and it is the divine perfection and face".

In New Testament the last concept is not mentioned, Divinity of Jesus was mentioned in that. Such as: "The whole of Divinity is in Jesus".

In Islam, there are two kinds of verses in the holy Quran: clear verses and unclear verses.

The unclear versus are defined through clear versus (3:7) or the traditions of the infallible leaders (A.S.). Although Islamic tradition collections the like tradition is mentioned, according to clear verses which indicate the immateriality of the Almighty God.

For instance, Imam Khomeini states: "the perfect man is the comprehensive symbol and the appearance of the Greatest Name of God, as it mentioned in the Quran and traditions repeatedly. In Nodba prayer it is recited: "where is the God's face and appearance the patrons are looking at".

Or in JameaaKabira prayer:" The supreme symbol", or in a tradition: "The Almighty Allah has created man in his own image". These means that: Adam and man is the supreme symbol and prefect appearance of the God's attributes and is God's face, God's hand and God's eyes. Specially, the perfect man, and Adam (p. b. u. h) as its example, is the greatest symbol and appearance of God's attributes and signs. The Almighty Allah is purified from the same and similar being, but the Almighty is not purified from the signs and symbol.

Consequently, Paul Twitchell could not find out the real meaning of such traditions in Islam, Christianity and Judaism, though, according to what was mentioned, one of the methods of understanding the man's status is such traditions. However, these traditions do not mean the man created the same as God and the Almighty God is purified from the creature's and material's shape, image and attributes.

2) some problems and defects in creation of the world are as follows:

Attributes such as creativity, will and power are among the creatures but the higher levels and their origins of them are in the Almighty God. Some attributes such as: thinking, wish and more which need some thing or change, are not the attributes of God. As a result, the Eckankar word is wrong, because not only the negative attributes are not assigned to God, but also the creatures attributes which are imperfect.

The other attributes such as: knowledge, power, beauty, will, creativity and mercy which are the attributes of perfection are in the Almighty God undoubtedly, as it was mentioned in the Muslim philosophers as a definite rule. *basit – al-Haghighah koll-ol-ashiavalaisa be shaien menha.*

In other words, most of the Shia theologians and scholars believe in similar attributes of God and man. For example, Sadr al-Moteallehin believes that: "Because knowing the reality of the Almighty God is impossible, no word is legislated for the holy nature of God. Consequently, the term "Allah" is legislated to show the mental image of God and contains all the attributes of God. Since, name contain all the aspects and status of the named and the Almighty Allah has some innate and unseen status which show through a name or a real or additional adjective.

3) one of the division for acts of God is: direct acts and indirect one. The direct causality according to rules of philosophy is just the immediate creation by Allah. The number of indirect causality of God is the number of all creatures.

Contrary to what is considered in Eckankarschool, the Almighty God has will in both direct and indirect causality and is not forced or obliged in creation. As the Almighty God relates some action to Jesus and in the same time to himself: "and how, by my permission, you fashioned from clay the likeness of a bird, and breathed into it so that, by my permission, it became a living bird. how, by my permission, you healed the blind man and the leper, and by my permission you brought the dead forth..."(5:110)

Mirdamad said in this regard: "all the creatures are affected by Allah and his mercy bestowed the creatures immediately, and the indirect effects are affected by the immediate affairs."

4) Never the act of creation could be divested from the God and be related to the intermediate completely. So, there is no justification to introduce the creator as an intermedia or of ECK.

Sadr al-Moteaallehin in explaining the relationship of God with the creatures said: "The world is the collection of things which have special size and space, such as materials which are occurrence innately and their existence are gradual and are after the knowledge and power of God. So, the Almighty God has been the agent and the creator and he is the eternal, the commander and the everlasting, but his command is eternal and his creation is temporal.

5) The intermediator of creation is also the creature of God and is not the personality of God and the Almighty God is the Essential character. Because the personalization needs having nature and having nature is the feature of possible being.

The theory of creating the creatures by the first creature is accepted through tradition and logic in Islamic philosophy. But this intermediator or the first creature is the supreme being and has high attributes which are discussed among the Islamic philosophers and theologians.

Mollasadra in explanation of *Osul al-kafi* said: "Intelligence is the first creature and the most similar being to Allah and is the greatest, most perfect and the

second being in the world... Its meaning is the traditions of the holy prophet (p. b. u. h): The first creature which are created by Allah, is the pen, in other tradition the first creature is Archangel and in other tradition, the intelligence is the first one. These are the explanation of one thing with different names and attributes.

Then Mollasadra explained the reason of names of this first creature: "This creature is the reality of the exalted spirit which is mentioned in the holy Quran by the Almighty God: "...say: 'the spirit is from the command of my lord..."(17:85).

He is called the pen (Qalam) because he is the God's intermediary to write the science and realities, he is called the light because he is pure from the dirt and darkness and destruction. As the light is the being and darkness is the lack of light and it lightens the other beings and is the origin of lives of the being is called Rookh (spirit) and is the sign of Muhammad's reality in the view of Sufis scholars.

In this regard Molla Mohsen Kashani in "Ilmol- Yaqin fi Osul al-Din" and QaziSaeedQumi in "SharhTouhidSadoogh" stated novel and valuable explanations.

6) There are many claims about a kind of bird "Ham-Sam"- the Divine bird- that the world is created from its egg, in Eckankar texts. The purpose of PaulTwitchell from these ambiguities is not clear, though, the book of key Sugmad is the guidance and holy book of this school's follower and should be clear.

It is not accepted that, the last concept is the same as the explanation of term "Arsh" (throne) in religious teaching and they have apparent differences. As it is mentioned, in Islamic view point this kind of word is called "Moteshabeh" (unclear) and is defined through the clear words and verses or traditions. For instance, the traditions and clear verses define the term "Arsh" as follows: "In the world of generation there are different levels, one of that levels is where all of the reasons and results and their sequences and orders are designed where is called "Arsh" (throne). As it is mentioned in the holy Quran: "Then Allah willed to the throne"(25:59), is the irony of overcoming and dominance of God over his property and possession and his will to rule the world completely and precisely and gives the request of all the need.

7) Finally, the following quotation is criticized: "Sugmad create and shared his creation power to his creatures and lost most of his divine power, but when he wants he could get his power from every soul and return it to himself".

According to this claim, the creativity of God may be shared or decreased or destroyed, though the attributes of the Almighty God may not be tired or decreased in creation process, as he is the Necessary being in Islamic theology.

Discussion

Creation Process (Gradual or Sudden):One of the important issues in theological discussion is the quality of creation of the world (from the smallest particles to the largest galaxies).

In the view of Islamic philosophers and theologians, all the creatures are temporal (temporal occurrence or essential occurrence), and none of the creatures is in the same degree and status of the Almighty God and it is proved through logic and traditions.

Consequently, everything except God were non- existence and then entered the existence. The only creator and Donor of life in the world is Allah and all the creatures and their essence are dependent to the Almighty Allah. The following are the creation process in the view of Eckankarschool:

- 1) Before the creation, God was a sleep and after dreams and new dreams created the world.
- 2) In sleep and before creation he ruled over the great existence and universe.
- 3) Proving the decision of God in creation.
- 4) Accepting the descending incarnation in creation process.
- 5) Confirming and sending the souls to other planets such as Venus, Jupiter and Saturn
- 6) Doubt in human turn in creation (once before creation of the sun and the moon and once after that).
- 7) Explaining the creation process according to Darvin theory. (The evolution of species and beginning of creation from the single existing in the sea)
- 8) Introducing the first house and home of man on the trees.
- 9) The creation process is gradually.

Now, the last topics are explained precisely.

In the holy book of Sugmad school, speaking about the God's status while creation, he speaks about the gradual process of creation of the universe.

All existing life sprangout of the ECK, and exists only by the presence of the ECK. In the beginning there was nothing but the ECK, the Word of the SUGMAD; manifested It was, and from thence It arose into manifestation. The power within the ECK was polarized, and from It the vibrations of the ECK proceeded gradually, and innumerable worlds rushed forth into life and shape, as do bubbles rising from the bottom of a deep spring in globular forms.

In the beginning there was only the mighty SUGMAD, the Lord of Lords, the Absolute of all Absolutes, the All Holy of Holies, the All Merciful of Mercies and the Omnipotent Omni-presence and Omniscient of all universes and worlds. in the beginning, IT slept; stirring not in the Ocean of Love and Mercy in that sphere where man has never tread nor any angel dwelled. IT is not a land, nor place or abode, but a mighty ocean of splendor and love. IT is the reality of all realities, the dwelling place of the SUGMAD, the Ancient

One whom all creatures, beings and men have worshipped through the ages. in the beginning IT was the Alpha that slept, but IT ruled in ITS slumbers over the mighty beings, elements, and creatures in the universes. Peace and happiness were every-where, and little was there for the SUGMAD to concern ITSELF with over life and ITS offspring. The sacred garden of esoteric wisdom in the AlayaLok was delightful for those beings who amused themselves there, while the Almighty slumbered and dreamed new worlds.

Also in the book "flute of God" in addition to explaining the creation process, he considers divine spirit as a positive factor in the creation: "Now we discuss the creation process. What is the positive factor in the creation? It is divine spirit- the unseen power who pours the first Ether in different move of the planets to voluntary movement of man. So, the first positive factor and the universal thought and feeling is "Hue". This is the pure essence of life and its thought and feeling flow increasingly and continuously in life.

Then in other word, he explained the various universes and world:

"The Mahanta is prepared to take the chela into the heavenly worlds of the SUGMAD. These worlds are the AtmaLok, AlakhLok, AlayaLok, HukikatLok,

AgamLok and the AnamiLok. It is above the AnamiLok where dwells the Lord of Lords. This is also the true home of the Atma, that particle of God which has been sent down into the lower worlds to receive purification. These are the pure worlds of the SUGMAD. It is the universe of the ECK, where there is neither time, space, matter nor motion. It is where all karma and reincarnation have ended, and the Atma is a part of the whole, but individual in Itself. It is here that the Atma receives, by choice, its mission in the lower worlds to become a co-worker with God.

The bodies of man within the lower worlds assume the embodiment of sex, either male or female. Thereby, reproduction in the lower worlds, especially in the material universes, is accomplished through sex. But within the heavenly world of the AnamiLok, Souls are reproduced by the Lord of Lords reacting upon ITSELF. Therefore, every Soul is a article of the divine Source which is known as the Supreme.

The Atma—Soul—is a neuter atom of the Divine Source of life. It is neither male nor female, masculine nor feminine, man nor woman. It is both within the worlds of God. It does not assume a body until reaching the worlds below the Atma plane, the fifth plane.

Thereupon It takes a body of either sex in the beginning, usually that of the male during Its first incarnation. Following this, it will take the body of the female, thereafter, during Its millions of incarnations in the physical worlds, Soul will alternate between male and female bodies, each time learning some lessons while gathering karma and working off karma.... He begins his true spiritual life in the Atma plane which is known to all as the Soul world. The classical name for this plane is the Sat Nam, who also is the ruler of this world.

This is the first realm of the SUGMAD the pure Being, where Soul finds Self-Realization. It is the dividing plane between the worlds of pure spirit and those of the negative worlds. The sound here is the single note of a flute. The chant one gives is the name of the Divine Being, the SUGMAD! The next plane is the AlakhLok, known as the invisible plane. Its classical name is the same and the chanting here is "Shanti." In the Hindu language it means "peace." This is the second world of the SUGMAD. It is ruled by the great being AlakhPurusha, who at times seems harsh and without if consideration although the chanting in this world does not the nature of its ruler. The sound of the ECK here is the wind, sometimes roaring and sometimes very gently sighing, like a breeze in the treetops.

The AlayaLok is the third pure spiritual plane above the Atma region. It is the true shining world often known as the SachKhand. The chanting here is a sort of hum, like that done with the lips closed tightly and humming a worldly tune. The description here is of endless worlds for it is so vast, so far beyond any conception of man's intelligence. The ruler of this plane is the AlayaPurusha, a mighty being whose very presence fills every Soul with awe as he passes through this world.

The HukikatLok is the fourth world which Soul must travel through on its way to the SUGMAD, the center of all universes. This is the highest state that Soul usually reaches. It is the plane of God-Realization where Soul learns the God-knowledge. The sound is like the music of a thousand violins. The chanting is the word "Aluk." The great being here is the HukiPurusha, the Lord of the fourth world of pure spirit.

The Again Lok is the Fifth Plane, the inaccessible plane. Few Souls go past the HukikatLok into this world. It is a world of immense space, so much greater than any which the mind could ever conceive. The sound here is delicate music, something that cannot be described. It is like the music of woodwinds—faint, sweet and beautiful. A melody that give great ecstasy. The word here is "Huka," and it is pronounced HU-KA. The Lord of this world is the AgamPurushaand he is the guardian of the AnamiLok, the nameless plane.

The AnamiLok is the world of the Supreme Being, the SUGMAD. This is the Lord of Lords, the highest of all Beings, and ITS home is the Ocean of Love and Mercy. IT does not live in a palace nor dwell on a throne, as many believe. ITS home is the mighty center of the universes, the very heart and core of all life and existence. IT dwells in

1-the center of this mammoth ocean where all is like a whirl pool, sending out ITS Word to the worlds upon worlds. The Word, the Voice of the SUGMAD, goes forth like a wave from the center of a pond and sings ITS way through all the planes in many different songs and melodies. Each is the living Word, creating and giving life to everything in each world. By ITS very life—this ECK, the essence of the SUGMAD, the Spirit of all things—life exists.

When It reaches the end of the worlds It returns like the wave, gathering up all Souls that are ready to do God's work. They are returned to the true home and become coworkers with God , having completed their mission in life”.

Analysis and critique

1- Most of the school, thoughts, sects and religions speak about the quality of world creation as an important issue for the human thought. But some of them narrate this subject as a creation hero. For example, Hesiod the Greek poet of eighth century BC, named Pope Caius, who is the bound less darkness as the first chaos. The first creatures and phenomenon after this chaos called Gaya (Deep Earth) and Eros (Love). or a group of creation heroes consider the creation of world and human as a piece of the first God's essence. Or according to Pan-Gu myth, the first man suffering 18000 years, created the universe from his being. Created the wind and cloud from his breath, the thunder from his song, the rivers from his vessel, the earth from his ears, the trees and grasses from his hair, the metals from his bones, the rain from his sweat, and from the insects which were sitting on his body he created the man.

As it mentioned, the Eckankarschool locates some of his opinions to this point and there is a meaningful similarity among this school's text and the creation heroes. For instance, there is high similarity between the Hesiod myth and the word of PaulTwitchell:

"The physical world is a world of turmoil and strife. Never shall there be any peace in it. This is the way of the SUGMAD. It is so designed that the Pinda worlds shall have nothing but strife, for the good of each Soul that must dwell therein.

For these worlds are the testing ground of Soul; the place it must spend Its long periods of existence, creating perfection and spiritual maturity."

Perhaps it is supposed that the Eckankartexts are ironic, but this idea is rejected. Because in irony the writer wants to proof and opinion but does not

utilize the simple words and use and ironical words which have close meaning to that and through this, he shows the meaning.

Accordingly, some interpretations such as: asleep Sugi in the love ocean, waking up and call himself, the desire to create new worlds, splitting the paradise and falling sown the spirits, some go to planets such as Venus, Jupiter and Saturn and the etc. Most of spirits came to the earth. Some of them came in to human body, some become as stone, rock, minerals, birds, animals, fishes and etc. These are just the resume of the ancient fictional heroes which are not real.

Utilizing irony instead of direct word has different reasons, such as: politeness, avoiding use of obscene words, proving the greatness and power, exaggeration, brevity, beautification of words, pointing to the future, expressing difficult subject through simple words and trust in the audience consciousness. So, the words of Eckankar are not ironic.

Actually, the best example of ironic words is the holy Quran, as the Quran scholars point to some examples of the holy Quran, such as: " and do not keep your hand chained to your neck (when spending)," (17:29) which indicates the stinginess and is the exaggeration. Or in " and when he had covered her, she conceived, and for a time her burden was light. she carried it with ease," (7:189) which points to the intercourse as a cover and doing something alone. Or in "nor look at them, nor purify them on the day of resurrection." (3:77) The Almighty God does not look at some people at the dooms day indicates the God's anger to them.

Moreover, Paul Twitchell believes in incarnation and says:

"The mighty SUGMAD spoke to ITS spirits and angels. "Lo, all those who have played in the fields of Heaven shall descend to Earth and take the body form. Each will be given an adi-karma by the Lords of Karma, to carry during his earthly lives. Each shall go through body upon body, reincarnation after reincarnation, until the day comes when he shall meet with me again in the body form in which I shall be known as the Mahanta."

2- The other problem is that, in creation quality Mahanta is introduced as a Sugi's son. These kinds of words even real or ironical are wrong. Tabatabaee, the scholar, about the theory of "son of God" stated: "having the real child needs having the wife and this is not logical for the Almighty God! Besides, the Almighty Allah is the creator of everything and the father of a child is not his creator because the child is a part of father's body which transferred to the mother's body. So it is not logical the part of God become the creature of himself- as it is mention in the holy Quran as the creator of all parts of the heaven and the earth: so, nothing else remain to be the God's wife to have the same sons and daughters".

If it is said that the concept of "child of God" is a metaphor and used to find approach to God, it will be rejected, too. As Tabatabaee, the Islamic scholar, stated some people who, believe in "child of God", they are not intend the real case, but they consider the politeness and called somebody the son of God to show their nearness to God. For instance, the Jewish regard Ezra as a "son of God" or said: "we are sons of God and Friends of God". Or in some of ancient Jewish texts it is written that they called the first creatures as "son of God". Not only Tabatabaee reject the real son of God but also, he does not consider it as a politeness symbol or a metaphor and believes that: "Regarding the "son of God" as a metaphor or politeness factor is wrong, because makes the people to be

astray and think that it is a reality and leads to everlasting misery and wretchedness”.

The Creation Goals

In the view of Eckankar the following are the goals of creation:

A) Growth and perfection of the soul

One of the creation goals is the edification and growth of the soul, as Twitchell writes:

"I mean that anything more. So many think Soul is hardly anything more than a static piece of atomic mechanism. This isn't true. The manner in which Soul exists as an entity is through the vibratory rates of Its light body, and It can live throughout eternity in this manner for It is self-perpetuating. It is like the self-winding clock which can never run down, and since Soul is a miniature of the SUGMAD, you can get an idea of what this great Being is."

"IT is filling up ITS world with these spinning tops, so it seems. Not at all, for the higher Soul goes up the path toward the World of the SUGMAD, the finer becomes Its vibrations and the less it will be found that It spins, that is the vibratory rate of the Soul body. In this world It is almost a viewpoint—hardly anything more.

"The spiritual traveler who will accept and listen to the creative sound current, the ECK, will find himself renewed in the spiritual worlds. It takes possession of you, it re-creates you, and then you find yourself a citizen of a new world. The attractions of sense disappear, and you are exalted. You are purified and your mind renewed. You will live anew, and never shall the shadow of death ever cross your path. You have definitely become immortal."

He also wrote that: "He must, in mind, fast continuously from all Kal thoughts which could infect his mental state and consciousness. Through this he learns the powerful awareness of the presence of the living ECK Master, who is with him constantly. He learns not to be deceived, or dismayed by the conflicting world around him. He knows that all universes, regardless of whether or not they are under the ruler ship of the KalNiranjan, are really worlds of perfection, harmony and good."

Then he explains the spiritual perfection of soul: "Soul travel is known by various names, e.g., soul projection, separation of spirit from the body, out-of-the-body experience, and spiritual traveling, to name a few. Its purpose is mainly to enable the soul to leave the physical body, travel through the higher spiritual worlds, and eventually arrive at its ultimate destination the AnamiLok, the word for the nameless region, or true heaven, wherein dwells the SUGMAD, God."

One of the important ways of reaching the spiritual perfection is transmogrification.

"Eventually, after many incarnations, Soul is purified by Its experiences and returns to heaven. There It is ready to serve God as a Co-worker in some spiritual mission. Soul has by then gained experience in the spiritual sense and can choose what It wishes to do in either the spiritual or spirit-materialistic worlds. It may become a planetary spirit, an angel, a cherub, or an agent of God; or It may take any spiritual position as a Co-worker with God as desired."

B) Examination

The other goal of creation in Eckankarschool is testing the soul.

"The physical world is a world of turmoil and strife. Never shall there be any peace in it. This is the way of the SUGMAD. It is so designed that the Pinda worlds shall have nothing but strife, for the good of each Soul that must dwell therein. For these worlds are the testing ground of Soul; the place it must spend Its long periods of existence, creating perfection and spiritual maturity."

Analysis and critique

1- The Eckankar school introduces soul perfection and growth as a ultimate goal of world creation, but it needs some prerequisites.

First, what is the perfection and accomplishment and how it will be reached? Second, what is the meaning of the test and what is its purpose?

Undoubtedly, all humans have some similarities with each other, though they have some differences, "All the essences have some talents and abilities in potency which may actualize according to their inner nature".

All human realizes this capacity in themselves, but they should understand "what is the human perfection?"

Farabi considers satiety and no need of material and body as accomplishment and perfection. [24]. Also, IbnSinaconsiders approach to God as human perfection and believes that the accomplishment of human is becoming the universal intellectual being as the whole of world and the intellectual organization of everything manifest in him. The same as Sadr al-MoteallehinShirazi who regard actualization of human abilities as man perfection.

Hafez Shirazi stated that: "we are the passer- by of the house of love and from the nothing we pass this long way to reach the essence world.

As in Eckankar school Sugmad is a God who has the absolute attributes of perfection- as it was mentioned in attributes of Sugmad.It is necessary to attain the attributes of Sugmad. Because the reality of every attribute is the absolute, prevailed and perpetual one:

As a result, it is found that the Almighty God is the reality of every perfection and perfection and beauty. And every creature should be real to attain his ultimate goal.

Despite of some names such as SugmadPurusha and Sat Nam which shows the passivity and shape of Sugmad, or participate God in attributes called Mahanta, how the attributes of perfection can be imagined for Sugmad and regard the perfection of the soul as a creation goal?!

2- Testing is the other creation goal in Eckankarschool. All of the religions and schools which consider a creator for themselves, accept and observe the methodical rules and criteria to rule the world.

Regarding the divine attributes of perfection, testing never be given to discover the unknown motives but according to holy book of Sugmad the goal of divine test is to achieve the perfection and spiritual perfection. Such attainment depends on the reality of that perfection, which should be perpetual, prevailed and absolute, and achieving to such perfection requires destruction; though, Sugmad could not be the reality of that perfection as it was mentioned.

The scope and levels of universe

Although, in Eckankar texts some attributes such as temporal, eternal, eternal-by- itself and eternal- by- time is not mentioned, some attributes such as the creature's eternal by itself can be deducted. Forexample , is said:

"The World of SUGMAD is beyond explanation. None can tell you of its beauty and wonders, only the results upon the Soul which enters into it and the qualities which are gained. This is a world of pure spirit and the Tuza, that gains a place here, becomes pure spirit only. IT, the SUGMAD, is the sovereign lord with whom the saints have to collaborate in carrying out their sacred missions of giving the right instructions to Tuza who wish to enter into this world.

The philosophy and theology prove the finiteness of the universe. Everything it is not Necessary being is limited and the need so its scope and boundary is also limited. However, Eckankar believes that:

"The AlayaLok is the third pure spiritual plane above the Atma region. It is the true shining world often known as the SachKhand. The chanting here is a sort of hum, like that done with the lips closed tightly and humming a worldly tune. The description here is of endless worlds for it is so vast, so far beyond any conception of man's intelligence. The ruler of this plane is the AlayaPurusha, a mighty being"

"Fourth, IT formed the AlayaLok, where dwell the endless worlds of no-thing. These came to be called the SachKhand planes. Because the SUGMAD was not pleased with this creation, IT dreamed again."

On the other hand, the expressions and named used in Eckankar school in the last part are sovarious and very diverse, though they are unclear. It is not mentioned how the Eckankar discovers these amount of diverse and strange names and expressions. Perhaps this is a result of Eckankar claim: "The Eck world are mysterious for whom does not know them, but when they be with Mahanta in trip to the different levels of that worlds and discovered them as AtmaSaroop, they will be very simple and clear". Anyway, after hestating a lot in this complex texts, the Eck world's levels are as following respectively:

1. The Physical plane is the first plane, when counting toward the Ocean of Love and Mercy where dwells the SUGMAD (God). This is the plane where Soul is trapped by the five passions: vanity, greed, anger, attachment and lust. It is a plane of illusion, time, space and matter. It is that regionofReality, (maya), science, day to day events in life. The sound one hears on this plane is that of thunder. The word or chant is Alayi; the classical name is Elam. in th3 Hindu language it is known as Pinda.

2. The second plane is the Astral or the emotional world. It is the highest plane by astral projection and most occult sciences, ghosts, flying saucers, spirits, etc. The sound is that of the roaring sea. Its word or chant is Kala; the classical name is Sat Kanwal-Anda, described as Tirkya Pad by the Hindus.

3. Next is the Causal or third plane. The word is Mana. The ruler here isMahaKalBrahm(KalNiranjan), who rules over negative reality and affects all below. It is that plane where memories, karmic patterns and Akashic records are stored. Here is where those who can do Akashicreadingslook for the source of trouble in past lives and embodiments. On this plane one can hear the tinkling of the bells.

4. The fourthor mental plane has the word Aum for chanting, and the sound of running water is heard. This plane is that of the Universal Mind power, and this is where the ruler of the three worlds of Vedanta, Buddhism and Hinduism dwells. He is the Brahm, the Great Brahman, spoken of in the Hindu sacred writings, and is the source of all moral teachings, ethics, philosophy, aesthetics, conventional God and religions.

The top of the Mental plane or Etheric plane is known as the unconscious, because it is a clearer channel for those seeking to become the instrument of God. Psychologists call it the subconscious. It is the source of the primitive thought and is a very thin line between the mental body and the Soul body (AtmaSarup). It has the word Bajus for chanting, and the sound is that of the buzzing of Bees. The ruler here is SagunaBrahm.

5. We now come to the fifth or Soul plane which is the dividing line between the lower and upper worlds, separating the psychic regions from the spiritual planes. It is the first step of Soul into the worlds of God, or it can be called the Kingdom of Heaven. Within the upper regions we gain freedom and individuality which is self-recognized and allows Soul to re-enter into that state called God-consciousness, or God-Realization. The word here is SUGMAD, spelled out in each individual letter for chanting. The representative is SAT NAM; the sound is the single note of a flute.

6. The sixth plane or AlakhLok (Lok means plane in Hindu language), is the second of the true worlds of God, or the invisible plane where the word is Shanti (shawnti) for chanting, and the sound is that of a heavy wind. It represents the AlakhPurusha (supreme creative energy). Those who reach this plane must have great determination to go beyond it for they experience peace and happiness here.

7. The seventh plane is the AlayaLok, the endless world, for it seems to have no end and is the third of the true worlds of God. It is sometimes called the SachKhand plane, where eternity begins and ends. The word here is HUM, like humming with the lips closed, much like a swarm of bees or a high electrical sound. The classical name is AlayaLok.

8. The eighth plane is the HukikatLok, and is the highest state that Soul can reach. The word here is ALUX, pronounced A-L000k. The sound is that of a thousand violins.

9. AgamLok is known as the inaccessible plane, for few, if any, ever enter into this world. The word here is HUK, with a short barking sound made with the deep part of the throat.

10. The tenth is the AnamiLok or the nameless world. There isn't anything to say about it. It is beyond any vocabulary in the human language. The word is HU, the universal name of God, which is in the language of every living thing. It is everywhere, in everything.

11. The eleventh plane is the SUGMAD World. Here is the beginning of the abode of the SUGMAD. Only those who have become ECK Masters reach this world. Out of this world flows the Word of God, the magnificent music of the Universes. Anyone who has ever heard it will never want to live in the material worlds again.

12. SUGMAD. This is the SUGMAD, Living Reality. It is the Ocean of Love and Mercy. Beyond this plane is the AKSHAR Realization which covers all worlds. This plane can only be experienced—never put into words or even thought. Here the sound is the Music of God.

Analysis and critique

In scope and levels of the universe in the view of Eckankar School there are some criticisms. Some of them are about affirmation and some are about stability.

The criticisms about stability are as following:

This school considers some creatures such as Touza, eternal by Itself. Perhaps Eckankar think that as the Sugmad's grace is eternal The world will be continued along with him. Likewise, it believes that the worlds boundless and the man is boundless and infinite as The world part. “

It is noteworthy that the origin of any grace is not equal to that grace, because the source of light is earlier than the light ray as sheikh Sohrawardi stated in this regard: “Be aware that, the Almighty God is the creator and is higher than all creatures and does not rely on anything else except His power, He is perpetual and eternal, and His creatures should be also perpetual, unless they should rely on something else. As the light ray is from the sun but not the sun is from the ray, thought, the ray is continued as the sun is continued. Likewise, the grace of God is continual. And the sun will not lose anything when the light ray continues through that. “

He indicated the responsibilities of the intermediators:

“Everything should achieve its deserved perfection, and the Almighty God completes His works through intermediators. However, the absolute agent and the absolute creator is the Almighty Allah and the other things are not creators but the intermediators which are depend on Him. “

If the Eckankar's intention is the eternal by itself, the logical and traditional reasons will reject that and prove that nothing but Allah is eternal by itself according to opinions of Islamic philosophers.

Moreover, the names, expressions and places which are mentioned in Eckankar texts are the same as the mythical places which there is not any documents to prove them.

The connection of Sugmad with the universe

The connection of Sugmad with the universe in Eckankar texts it is written that the Sugmad connect to universe through and intermediary, also his appearance and help to the world and human through intermediary. As it was mentioned in “world creation” part, in the view of Eckankar the creation of the world by God was with the help of intermediary's the same as administration and management of the world. As in “far country” after accepting the Hindu trinity in creation, is written that:

"The Hindu religion has a trinity, consisting of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. These represent the three currents flowing out of the BrahmLok world; they are creation, continuity, and destruction. The Hindus gave them worldly names in order to personalize each current, so they would be recognized. They are: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, which are worshipped in India and other parts of the Oriental world as Gods. These are called the sons of KalNiranjan, the negative power, whose other name is Brahm. The female counterpart of Brahm is Shakti, who in fact represents a minor creative current. Out of these two great currents, the three subordinate currents flow into the lower worlds, and to these are attributed the creation of all lower worlds. These three became creators, lords and governors of the lower worlds, under their father, Brahm, and their mother, Shakti. They are said to be under the supervision of their mother. In fact, these three represent creative currents. They carry the creative impulses from the greater powers above, but they have been given these individual names, as persons.

"It is well to remember that all creative currents may become personal; that is, take individual form and assume individual duties, as Krishna, Christ, Buddha

and others. Now these three have generally been accepted as the Hindu trinity of Gods, as commonly known in their literature and religion. Millions worship them in spite of their subordinate position. These powers are the real servants of man. They perform a certain function in carrying on the work of the world, in producing human bodies, and in keeping these bodies going. They are the agents of the SUGMAD in serving mankind, but not gods to be worshipped by the human race. They are almost menials in the grand hierarchy, but each of them have certain powers and prerogatives, and within his own sphere he is all-powerful. He carries on according to definite laws and rules laid down for his government. These again are laws of nature. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva may be regarded as servants of the negative power or his working committee. In all respects, they do his bidding, each in his own department.

"Still lower than these three, there is another current or God, or power, who is also one of the working force, helping to carry on the administration of the physical universe. His name is Ganesh. He stands practically at the foot of the list of subordinates whose business it is to serve mankind and help to carry on the work of the world. In the subtle region close to the earth, there is a great host of beings called devas, devtas, bhuts, pretsto name a few. These are generally called angels in English. They are beings somewhat above ordinary men and they help to serve man in many ways. They have great powers and are quite willing to serve people who live in harmony with them."

"Within this region where dwells the SUGMAD, ITSELF, there are only a few beings who live and serve IT. These are the Mahavakyis, the Silent Travelers—and so mighty are these great ones that you seldom can confront them. Those who have been fortunate to have come face to face with one of these superior beings have thought they were in the presence of the SUGMAD, ITSELF.

These Silent Travelers are well named, for they are practically invisible to all eyes outside the world of the SUGMAD. As they come down from the highest region into that of the ECK, instead of taking form like one would think of them doing, these superior beings remain in their cloaks of anonymity. These are what we know as the Agents of the SUGMAD—"Much as some of the spiritual travelers know about the SUGMAD, little is known about these Silent Ones, who come and go like the winds of the world. The spiritual travelers have their own agents, as well as the Lords and governors of the various regions of the universes; each in turn reports to his own chief and carries out his desire. But the silent travelers are not responsible to anyone but the Supreme SUGMAD. IT alone gives them their commissions to be carried out—and they must work for IT alone, or be cast out of the heavens into the bowels of the earth, as Lucifer was in the beginning of time. These silent ones are in command of the great sound current, in the high heavens, and are to give aid and comfort to the SUGMAD in ITS eternal home. They keep the planes balanced and in order, so that little destruction can come to them, should any of the inhabitants go on rampages and bring about the downfall of planes within planes. They are in charge of time, creativity, space and other mechanical phases if the lower universes. They see that the planets in this world are properly hung in space so there will be no collision of them, by being out of their assigned positions. They have immense powers, and great wisdom to carry out their missions, and of course unlimited freedom. Outside the SUGMAD, these Silent Travelers are the most powerful beings in all the worlds, and next to them are the Spiritual Travelers. The Lords and Governors of all the planes can be powerful within

their own domain, but they are subject to the laws which govern them, and even the Brahman, as I have said before, will someday have to be reincarnated again. They are all limited, in power, wisdom and freedom. The ECK Masters know when the Silent Ones are around, and they cooperate with them at the level upon which they are working at the time. The ECK travelers are subject to the Silent Ones; they do not have to obey, yet they will because it's realized always that the Silent are direct from the SUGMAD—out of love and respect, they will give their best cooperation, even though at times they wouldn't like to do so. So you have three levels of independent workers in eternity, who cooperate in the running of the worlds. First, the SUGMAD, the all Supreme Being, second the Silent Travelers, who are ITS messengers or agents, and third, the ECK Travelers who are both the agents of the SUGMAD and the Silent Ones. The three work together, in perfect harmony and understanding. The functions of the Silent Ones are to serve the purpose of the SUGMAD in running the universes, carrying out ITS laws and regulations; the spiritual travelers have the duty of seeing that Souls are returned to the kingdom of the ECKANKAR. These are about the only duties that either of the groups have which are in common, otherwise they go their own way and live with their own without coming in contact with one another. Quite frequently the Silent Ones appear on earth in some form or other; often they are the shining angels, like those who appeared at the tomb of Christ and told Mary that her lord was gone. Jacob wrestled with one on the ladder of heaven. Occasionally, you will read of a Silent Traveler in a similar manner in the ancient scriptures, or somebody will speak of some strange phenomena happening to them. As it stands the Silent Travelers are not concerned with the rulers of planes, Sat Nam, Ramkar, Omkar or Jot Niranjana. These minor gods are only workers within the spiritual hierarchy of the SUGMAD. They are subject to the nature laws of those works within which they are living. The Silent Travelers, as I have said, have no such laws hanging over them, and they are free as the winds of the world. Now this is the interest the Silent Travelers hold for you—someday you may become one, for it is the highest point in all of the universes which you can reach.

"Since this is impossible the SUGMAD takes control of all life through ITS counterparts such as the ECK, the Lords, Rulers, and Governors of each plane, and the ECK Masters of the Vairagi, and those beings who are the co-workers of ITSELF. All these work through and with the Mahanta, the Living ECK Master, whose spiritual body is stationed on every plane within the universe.

Analysis and critique

Undoubtedly, the Almighty God govern the world through intermediators according to His holy and purified status. The sound mind and clear tradition confirm the existence of Divine intermediators and agents in the world management.

But, never those intermediators have independent power or effect. All of their actions and moves depend on and originate from the Almighty God, consequently accepting the intermedicator's role, the unity of Divine acts may be considered.

On the other hand, the Eckankar texts indicate some inconsistencies. The Hindu trinity, which originated the Christian trinity, accounts some forces such as Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva along with God in creation and each side of triplication hold a responsibility bestowed by God in the world. Eckankar states

that these forces are in service of Sugmad and to help him and have the ultimate power all over the world.

Conclusion

Finally, it is pointed that most of the Eckankar school's words in creation were based on the mythical concepts and have no capability or similarity with the religious texts specially Islamic ones, Because according to Islamic ones. Because according to Islamic teaching the world creation is meaningful and purposive, also it some verses some special goals are introduced: "it was not in falsehood that we created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them."(38:27)

The verse indicates that the creation of the world is not aimless. The following verses state definite goals for the creation of world.

-Creation of world for human

"who has made the earth a bed for you and the sky a dome, and has sent down water from the sky to bring forth fruits for your provision. do not knowingly set up rivals to Allah." (2:22)

-Human knowledge and recognition

"it is Allah who has created the seven heavens, and of the earth their like, and the command descends between them so that you know Allah is powerful over all things, and that Allah encompasses everything in knowledge." (65:12)

Divine justice

"Allah created the heavens and the earth in truth and that each soul shall be recompensed for what it earned, they shall not be wronged." (45:22)

Study.

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