



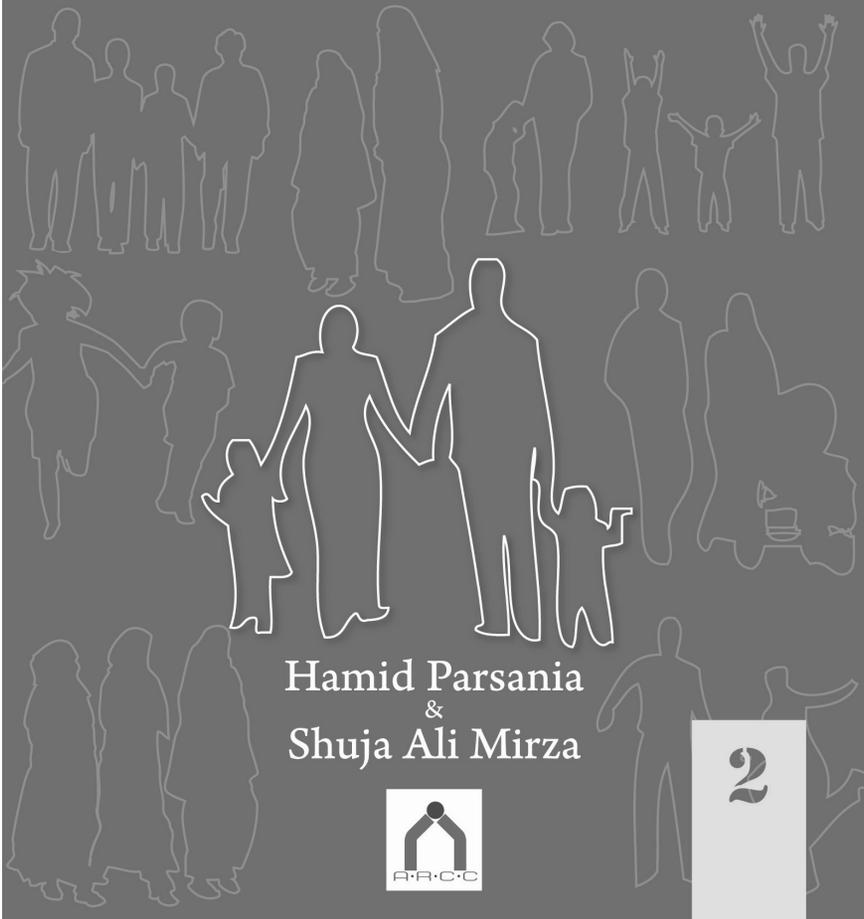
Anthropology for Muslim Students



ANTHROPOLOGY

FOR

MUSLIM STUDENTS



Hamid Parsania
&
Shuja Ali Mirza



2

© Amin Research and Cultural Centre (ARCC)

<http://www.arcc.com.my>

Title: Anthropology for Muslim Students

Translated and Compiled by : Hamid Parsania and Shuja Ali Mirza

Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia

Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Hamid Parsania

Anthropology for muslim students. Book 2 / Hamid Parsania & Shuja Ali Mirza.

ISBN 978-967-10379-7-3

1. Anthropology--Study and teaching. I. Shuja Ali Mirza. II. Title. 301.07

First published 2012

Amin Research and Cultural Centre (ARCC)

5th Floor, Unit C, Excella Business Park, Jalan Ampang Putra

Taman Ampang Hilir, 55100 Kuala Lumpur

Tel: +603 4270 1090 / +603 4217 7590 Fax: +603 4270 1421

Printed by

Atlas Cetak(M) Sdn Bhd Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of the Amin Research and Cultural Centre (ARCC), or as expressly permitted by law, or under terms agreed with the appropriate reprographics rights organisation. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside the scope of the foregoing should be addressed to the Amin Research and Cultural Centre (ARCC).

Contents

Preface	IX
Chapter 1 - Introductory	1
I. Different types of Anthropology	1
II. The Fall of Man.....	7
III. Ascent and Rise.....	11
IV. History of the Fall.....	12
Biography Notes	13
Chapter 2 - Unseen and Visible	15
I. Different Ways of Seeing Reality.....	15
II. The Unitive or Tawḥīdī Worldview	20
III. The Stages of the World	24
IV. Two Movements.....	30
In Depth	32
Biography Notes	33
Chapter 3 - Descent and Manifestation	35
I. Manifestation (tajallī) versus Displacement (tajāfi)	35
II. Perpetual Presence	41
III. Manifestation of Greatness	43
IV. Absolute Unity.....	49

Chapter 4 - Ascent and Felicity	54
I. One-way Distance	54
II. A Journey of Enlightenment.....	58
III. Understanding Unity	64
IV. Awareness of Reality	69
Biography Notes	72
Chapter 5 - Knowledge and Action	73
I. Seeing the Face of God.....	73
II. Direct Knowledge	76
III. Effort and Action.....	82
IV. Social Action	87
Biography Notes	93
Chapter 6 - Love and Passion	95
I. Man's Beloved.....	95
II. Modern Man.....	98
III. True Beloved.....	104
IV. Mirage of Love	106
Did you know	107
In Depth... ..	108
Chapter 7 - Myth and Gods	110
I. The First Veil	110
II. Myth and Polytheism	112
III. The Death of Myth.....	116
IV. The New Paradigm and the Islamic Response	117
In Depth	120
Biography Notes	121
Chapter 8 - Modernity and Isms.....	123
I. Renaissance and Rebirth	123

II. Rationalism and the Enlightenment.....	125
III. From Myth to Ideology	128
IV. Empiricism and Scepticism	131
In Depth	135
Biography Notes	135
Chapter 9 - Post-modernity and Alienation.....	137
I. Humanism and Pharaohism	137
II. Liberalism and Freedom.....	141
III. Democracy and Anarchy	145
IV. Alienation and Dissolution.....	149
Biography Notes	153



Preface

In growing up we go from being a curious child to an exploring adolescent and then a thinking young adult. At some point we reach a stage where we want to know as much as is possible about ourselves. We ask ourselves many questions and we search for their answers. We know that we are human beings but don't know exactly what that means. We ask ourselves: What is man? Where did man come from? Where is he now? Where is he going? During moments of even deeper reflection we might pose the following questions to ourselves: What does it mean to be a human being? Does human life have any meaning?

These questions are natural and as old as man himself. The search for their answers and the ways to express them has been the inspiration for the greatest works of art and literature in human history. This search has also given rise to many related sciences and disciplines. In general these sciences have been grouped under a term called *humanities*. It is the humanities that are responsible for giving us answers to these questions. One of the humanities is the science or discipline of *anthropology*, or the study of man and the human state.

There are two types of anthropology which are based on two fundamentally different ways of understanding man. One is sacred while the other profane. According to the sacred or religious perspective, man is a material entity and form that has a

soul as its substance and a spirit as its essence. Not having created himself, man is not his own cause and is the effect of a Cause external to himself. Not being without purpose, man has a reason for his existence and a destination towards which he travels. Both this cause and this reason lie beyond his material form and are to be sought in the realm of his immaterial essence. In this sacred view, it is the Creator who blows something of His spirit into man and thus infuses him with his immaterial essence and spirit – and hence it is the Creator who is the Alpha and Omega of man.

In the religious perspective and on the level of the macrocosm, all things are seen to have emanated from an Absolute Origin and towards It will they all return. In monotheistic religions, this Origin is none but God, the One, the ultimate Creator and Sustainer of the whole of creation, who presides over its origin, unfolding, and end result. All things essentially refer to Him, and all matters carry meaning only in so far as they are in reference to Him. Man is not outside of creation, and being the microcosm, he falls under this overarching principle. Consequently, the realization of man's essential nature prefigures the goal and final end of his purpose and existence.

“An understanding of the humanistic disciplines presupposes knowledge of the human being. The microcosm and the macrocosm, as two interconnected realities, derive their existence from a Source beyond themselves. As such, to come to a true understanding of man is impossible without first understanding the Origin – whose Essence is identical with its Existence, and Who bestows existence on the microcosm and the macrocosm and puts them in a harmonious arrangement.”

Āyatullāh Jawādī Āmulī
Islam and the Environment, p. 39.

But when man Creator and purpose, or his Origin and End, is not taken into account then he becomes just a material object among other material objects. In this profane estimation, these objects have neither a common origin, nor a common end by which they could be related; rather, they are scattered and unconnected entities, having come about for no intelligible reason. In fact, in such a world there can be no order and hence no “cosmos”. In such a chaotic universe man is unconnected to his surroundings, alienated, an island to himself. He is his own “state” at conflict and at war with all “other” states. Morally he is a rebel without a cause and can do no good, there being no “good” or “evil” at this stage.

Hence the knowledge of God, the Origin, is quintessential to humanity and the human state. Without it nothing can be right. With it, however, everything falls into place and is related to everything else in the right manner, resulting in a resounding harmony by which God is further praised and further known. This dependence of anthropology on theology – where the ultimate reality and being is God and the source of knowledge is His word – was something that was well known in the traditional world and provided a stable point of reference for humanity to identify and realize itself. The modern world on the other hand lacks this certainty and with its profane outlook and emphasis on the relative, has been witness to a crisis of identity and meaning.

This crisis of the modern world is hardly a matter for dispute. It is abundantly clear that mankind is at a critical juncture – a point of extreme danger and difficulty – similar to the transition point in the progress of a disease where it is not known whether the outcome will be recovery or death. Modern man’s ignorance of the problem does not resolve it; rather it exacerbates and compounds both the causes and symptoms of

the crisis, accelerating its progress to a deadly velocity. For while on the one hand, the profound lack of awareness that today's man exhibits with respect to his predicament gives evidence to the extent and magnitude of the problem. On the other, it points to the root causes which have resulted in such an unstable and hazardous human condition, and consequently – and somewhat paradoxically – to a possible solution.

If modern man no longer asks himself, other than in a materialistic way, about his origin, his present situation, and his future destination – as a countless number of his predecessors did – he misunderstands the human situation and even, in a manner, forfeits an essential part of his humanity. To be truly human requires him to think, apply his intellect, and understand his own self in an essential, substantive manner. Understanding himself fully means apprehending his origin, life and destination – or to say the same thing – to come to know reality as such. A lack of understanding then, results in a loosening of his grip over reality and, in its extreme form, this ignorance ushers him into a world which is relative, irrelevant and ultimately meaningless. He finds himself disoriented, alienated from anything and everything, and in a disabling ambivalence with regards to reality. This ambivalence began with forgetfulness and oblivion of the self and ends in profound delusion, nihilism and utter oblivion itself. Hence in our time, more than in any previous age, the Socratic imperative “Know thyself”, itself the echo of the perennial message of all religions, becomes indispensable as an antidote and as the beginning of a cure.

This present work takes as its point of departure the origin of man and traces, in a “historical” fashion, his movement away from that origin. It concludes with the arrival of man on the material plane of existence and his accelerating descent into the

modern world. By lucidly describing this journey and the symptoms and underlying causes of the present quagmire, it suggests a solution and a general course of action to be taken. This resolution of the current crisis and discord corresponds to man's return to his origin and the ascent towards his final destination and goal. On the individual level, it means to embark upon the spiritual journey towards God, a journey that includes self-knowledge and self-purification. On the social plane, it means to cultivate a society that accords with Divine Guidance and conforms to Divine Law and which provides an environment that attracts, nourishes and sustains its inhabitants on a path of spiritual wayfaring.

The text in hand is a modified and abbreviated version of the book *Existence and the Fall: Spiritual Anthropology of Islam* by Hamid Parsania and is intended to be used as a final year high-school textbook in Islamic schools that teach humanities.

Shujā' 'Ali Mīrzā
Qum, 23 Ramaḍān 1433/ August 12, 2012



Chapter 1



Introductory

I. Different types of Anthropology

The word “anthropology” comes from *anthrop-* + *-logia*, meaning the science of human beings. The word *anthropo* in Latin, and *anthrop* or *anthropo* in Greek and French means “human being,” while the suffix *logia*, signifies the meaning, “science of.” The most common meaning for the term that is found in modern dictionaries and the one that primarily comes to mind when the term is used in academic circles today is:

“The science of human beings; especially: the study of human beings and their ancestors through time and space and in relation to physical character, environmental and social relations, and culture.”

Merriam-Webster Dictionary
 (“Anthropology” – first meaning)

In attempting to understand the physical roots of man, scientists such as Jean Baptiste Lamarck and Charles Darwin theorized the emergence of *Homo sapiens* (modern man) as a distinct species of hominids (or “great apes”). They linked humans with earlier apes by descent. They argued that the ancestor ape went through transformations by the process of

natural selection and gradual evolution and was eventually able to stand erect. They claimed that this two-legged animal further evolved and eventually came to make tools with his hands and communicate with his larynx.

This “scientific” or “physical” anthropology, often tended to use such theories as have been mentioned to reduce human civilization and culture to the two modalities referred to above – namely, tool-making or technology and communication or linguistics. Chimerical hypotheses of the monkey who became a titan were introduced as bona fide scientific facts and helped to entrench and propagate this new paradigm. These superstitions in reality helped to displace the idea of the spiritual decline of man – something that is common to all world religions – with the theory of his material evolution and worldly progress.

The theories that were put forward by this movement were based upon numerous speculations and many missing links that science could never conclusively prove. The idea of “progress” in conjunction with the theory of evolution covered up this innate weakness by playing upon modern man’s newfound attachment and fascination with nature and his oblivious disregard for the other dimensions and states of being. The result was a purely terrestrial portrait depicting man and human life as wholly scientific. Other pictures – like those revealed by the prophets and sages in the past – were painted in less glamorous colours, and were termed imaginary, non-scientific and invalid. Hence in this scientific anthropological perspective, man became a purely natural being – like other creatures of the natural world – with this particularity that he was able to make tools and communicate using symbols and language.

This “scientific” or “physical” anthropology went unchallenged until the twentieth century. At that time

philosophical discussions on the theory of knowledge revealed a great deal about the reality of experimental knowledge and science, leading to a crisis in scientific circles. This in turn led to the advent of a branch of anthropology – under the name “philosophical anthropology” – which was based on different and alternative currents of philosophical thought.

Philosophical anthropology was rooted in philosophies such as the phenomenology of Kant¹ and Husserl², or the existentialism of Kierkegaard³ and Nietzsche⁴. The common element between these philosophies was their awareness of the limitations of modern science, especially the inability of modern science to address and resolve the fundamental questions of life (some of which were mentioned above in the Preface).

To further explain the difference between scientific anthropology and philosophical anthropology we can say that empiricists and scientists were captivated with the natural world and in many instances were only concerned with the domination and control of what they studied. These proponents of scientific anthropology lined man up alongside other natural phenomena and made him the object of a study that was characterized primarily by his physical and biological dimension. The existentialists and phenomenologists on the other hand focused on issues of human life and culture. The conceptual and theoretical approach of these latter two to the subject of man, under the name of philosophical anthropology, was similar to that of classical philosophy and pre-modern anthropologies in that it did not limit itself to experimental science. This said, philosophical anthropology has a special characteristic that distinguishes it from pre-modern anthropologies.

This type of anthropology, in spite of its awareness of the epistemological quandary of modern science and the fact that

experimental knowledge cannot give absolute certainty, itself fell victim to a type of uncertainty and ambiguity. Philosophical anthropology accepted ideas such as the “relativity of knowledge”, subjectivism, “relativity of truth” or scepticism, all of which undermine the goal of certainty. It was soon realized that to follow this path is to end up in a sophism that denies concrete reality and which presents an anthropology or science of man that is ultimately nihilistic, or one that culminates in a humanism that sees man as a *homo faber* – an animal that creates his own culture and makes his own terms and meanings.

To explain, in a world that is devoid of truth and reality or, to say much the same thing, finds no standard or measure for it, man becomes the reality and measure of all things. Contemporary philosophical anthropology sees truth and reality to be a human contrivance which is “produced” within the context of culture and society – expressed through art and literature – and is changed and re-changed there, and even destroyed. This type of anthropology emphasizes that aspect of *homo faber*, or the “making animal”, which deals more with the creation of meaning and symbols, whereas its scientific counterpart stresses technique and the making of tools.

The finding and discovery of truth, or the seeking of it and arriving at it, is a common factor of traditional anthropologies. Even scientific anthropology, at least on the physical and biological level, chased the fleeting shadows of truth that compose the material world and claimed to have reached it. Contemporary philosophical anthropology on the other hand, especially when it enters the post-modern period and when it does not outright deny concrete reality, paints truth and reality in phenomenological colours, putting them in “brackets” or in limbo and labelling them as unattainable.

Aside from contemporary philosophical anthropology there is another type of philosophical anthropology that can be called “classical” philosophical anthropology. To explain the difference between contemporary and classical philosophical anthropology it can be pointed out that classical philosophical anthropology, which actually predates scientific anthropology, is given neither to scepticism nor to a negating nihilism. Moreover, it does not limit itself to experience and the empirical and does not follow the dictates of nineteenth century materialism. This type of anthropology is related to intellectualist philosophies that go beyond particulars and conceptual rationality and deal with universal concepts and intellects. The definition of man as the “rational animal”, or *homo sapiens*, pertains to this level of classical-philosophical anthropology. For what is meant by “rational” here is the ability to perceive universals and rational meanings.

To introduce the final type of anthropology, which is the proper subject of this text, we can take recourse to the secondary meaning of “anthropology” that appears in most modern dictionaries. In this meaning anthropology is defined as:

“The theology dealing with the origin, nature, and destiny of human beings.”

Merriam-Webster Dictionary
 (“Anthropology”—second meaning)

This is referring to the traditional and religious understanding of the science of man and stands in stark contrast to any understanding that is limited to the physical or biological roots of man – especially those that see him to be a descendant from apes. As this latter understanding is the prevalent one and calls to mind the biological term for a great ape, “anthropoid,” a

clarification relating to the etymology of the word “anthropology” is in order.

The word “anthropology” is not based on “anthropoid” or any other derivative meaning implying “ape”, “monkey” or animal. The word “anthropoid” comes from the Greek *anthropoeides*, meaning “resembling a human”. The “-id” in this word is a patronymic suffix which means “one belonging to a (specified) dynastic line,” e.g. Abbasid. So “anthropoid” here means “the being belonging to the human line”, or “human like”.

Tawhīd is the fundamental principle and forte of the Islamic tradition. It includes the idea of the unicity of the Godhead as well as the principial unity of all Being in both its transcendental and immanent modalities. There is no exact equivalent for this term in English.

From one perspective, this “theological” or “religious” anthropology can be seen to be the higher understanding of classical philosophical anthropology, for on its highest level, philosophical anthropology surpasses intellectual realities and enters the world of the Spirit – the

deepest and most original level of being. When things are understood from the spiritual point of view of the Principle and the Origin, the world and all that is in it is a nothing but a manifestation of It. All things are interrelated and all things are theophanies of the Origin that is One. This is nothing but *tawhīd* and when man comes to know himself from this essential and intrinsic perspective he embarks upon a true “anthropology” that is religious in nature. This “anthropology”, which will be called “*tawhīdī*” anthropology in this work, envisions man in such a way that he is the greatest creation and epiphany of the Origin, which in monotheistic religions is identified with “God”. As such he is referred to as the “vicegerent of God” (*khalīfat Allah*).

Tawhīdī anthropology becomes possible when intellectual knowledge is raised to its transcendental limits, presiding at the higher reaches of being. At such levels, this anthropology is animated by nothing short of inspirational knowledge and Revelation. But if, on the other hand, intellectual knowledge is limited to the level of concepts and discursive thought, it forfeits its religious capacities and ends up in a kind of dry idealism.

II. *The Fall of Man*

The concept of the Fall is a universal concept found in all true religions and orthodoxies. As a universal idea it is a single concept, but one that is expressed in different ways depending on the context and people for whom it is meant. Hence, though in certain traditions the emphasis might be on specific facets of the idea, this does not, at least in principle, exclude the other aspects. In the Christian tradition – the one which is usually more familiar to English readers – the emphasis is more on the moral dimension of the Fall than on the metaphysical or ontological dimension. This means that the word “Fall” or “fall of man” is usually accompanied by such expressions as “fall from grace”, “loss of innocence” and “original sin”. In the Islamic tradition, on the other hand, the moral dimension plays a secondary role and the fall is seen either as simply a departure from heaven or as a descent from the divine realm to this mundane one. Where the moral dimension is mentioned, in keeping with the genius of Islam and its doctrine of *tawhīd*, it is always with reference to and as a consequence of the greater ontological or *wujūdī* picture of reality.

How does the idea of the Fall derive from this ontological picture of reality? It has to do with creation and the Origin being the cause of existence. The word “existence” comes from the

Latin *existere* or *existere*, which is itself composed of the prefix *ex* meaning “out of” and the verb *sistere* or *stare* meaning “to cause to stand, to stand”. Hence *existere* literally means to “to stand out, emerge”. As a variant of *esse* it often has the nuance (suggested by *ex-*) of “coming into being” or “coming out of being”. In this latter sense *existere* can be explained as the “production of relative being” and as a “falling out of” independent, self-standing and self-subsisting absolute Being. “Existence” then seems to imply the act of creation and origination and in consequence, existents, the created beings, are seen to stand out and apart from absolute Being – because they are relative – and to stand out from one another in otherness and distinction – because they are limited. The quintessential point to remember – one which resolves the multiplicity of existents by referring it to its originating principle and the One – is that existents do not stand out from being as being, but rather they constitute (“stand together” etymologically) it. This dual nature of existents, where they are both other than their origin of descent and also identified with it, will be explained in the chapters to come.

As man “stands out”, seeking independence, he actually falls towards nothingness and away from his origin and principle – distancing himself and becoming more relative and limited. Hence existence includes and prefigures the idea of the fall. Man’s return is to “sit in”, as it were, and to go towards his origin, root, and aspect of being *qua* being. This inward or esoteric tendency is to know, in a direct fashion, the reality of man and the world; to envision with the “eye of the heart” the created nature of things; to see that any-thing is no-thing in itself and that it is something only by virtue of its bond and connection with its origin; and finally, to see in created things the infinite faces, names and attributes of the Creator.

On the moral plane, this wish of man to “stand out” is to be rebellious – to try to be a god in his own “right”. On this same plane, to accept the created nature of man and to accept to be a servant and slave of God is to try to give God something of what is His right and due and to become saintly and God-like. It is for this very reason that one of the greatest and most prestigious titles of the Prophet Muḥammad, upon him and his Progeny be Peace, is *‘abd Allāh* or “slave of God”. For the greater the awareness of man’s essential servitude, the nearer he comes to the Divine Presence. Hence Islam, as the final religion, while esoterically recognizing and assenting to the theomorphic nature of man, with just as much force, asserts his servanthood and his absolute need for exoteric rites and rituals to express and realize this servanthood. To accept one without the other is to do great disservice to God’s wish to be known in actuality. For it is the servant of God who – in realizing the Divine Names manifesting in himself and his essential poverty with regards to them – is able to love, desire, know and worship God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength.

This textbook, in expanding upon the ontological and epistemological dimensions of the Fall, speaks of the worlds and heavens from which and in which the Fall takes place. By taking into consideration the pivotal role of sin and rebellion against heaven, the work surveys the historical facets of the Fall. It traces its various stages – starting from the divine heavens to the entry into the mythical and imaginal realms, until its final terrestrial station and the appearance of the modern world. The study continues by expounding the various interpretations of man and the universe in the stages of the Fall and culminates by addressing the plight of contemporary man and the difficulties of the modern anthropological perspective.

Contemporary philosophical anthropology does not have the capacity to speak of a “fall” because it does not accept any reality beyond man himself – so there can be no talk of a fall from, or ascent to, that reality.

Scientific anthropology also cannot speak of a “fall”. This is because it reduces all reality to the natural and material level. The idea of the Fall can only be spoken of where there is attention paid to existence in its totality and to the multiple states of being. Such a point of view has its roots in religion.

Now in classical philosophy, where there is talk of the totality of existence and the laws of metaphysics, a certain type of “fall” is envisioned. For instance, Plato saw man’s appearance in this world to be the result of his falling from the intelligible world of the forms. In Peripatetic Islamic philosophy there are similar references to a type of fall for man. Avicenna, in the first verse of his poem *‘Ayniyah*, writes of the fall of the soul of man.

Classical philosophy, at least in its lower levels, came to disregard the ontological and metaphysical dimension and in consequence lost access to the faculty of intuition and had to suffice itself with the conceptual dimension. Hence the source of change and transformation in existence was sought for on the “horizontal” plane of ideas, events and phenomena that are purely terrestrial and historical, instead of being traced to the “vertical” hierarchy of existence that is metaphysical.

The modern world received its first impetus from the lowest levels of classical philosophy. This philosophy, which in the 17th and 18th centuries went by the names of rationalism and intellectualism, was devoid of a transcendental element. The classical philosophers from Descartes onwards were oblivious to the totality of existence and their discussions increasingly

revolved around mental and rational concepts. It is for this same reason that there is no trace of the idea of the Fall in their works. Even Hegel who paid special attention to the forces of historical change in humanity, instead of searching for the causes of these changes amongst the multiple states of being, traced them all back to phenomena existing within the temporal plane and within time.

III. Ascent and Rise

The Fall is by no means tantamount to a denial of human ascent and evolution. Instead it puts evolution into a proper perspective. It is only with reference to the Fall that many significant human ideas gain meaning – ideas such as: anxiety, depression, alienation, effort, hope, promise, responsibility, and their like. The idea of the rise and ascent of man, in any school of thought, only becomes meaningful in light of the idea of his fall and descent. Those schools of thought which see the starting point of the Fall to be the Divine Presence, see man's ascent as ending in sainthood and the vicegerency of God. Those others which suppose that man fell from the intelligible world of the ideas, see his return as a homecoming to that same world.

Because scientific anthropology speaks of man's progress and evolution without reference to his fall, it fails to correctly understand where man's perfection lies and is unable to speak with any real authority on deeper human ideas.

Contemporary philosophical anthropology's awareness of the difficulties faced by modern science in substantiating the theory of evolution led it to doubt all that the moderns – in their oblivion of the Fall – had described as progress or as a historical imperative. This prepared the ground for post-modern thought. Post-modern ideas are rooted in contemporary philosophical

anthropology and accept the idea of cultural relativity. As a result, they not only do not see the issue of the fall or ascent of man as substantive, but they also deny the story of man's historical evolution. They see these concepts to be humanly created and to be figments of the cultural imagination of man – having been conjured up by man at some point, they believe that these concepts can be just as easily destroyed.

IV. History of the Fall

The first chapter, which this section constitutes the last part of, presented some introductory points. The second chapter, entitled “Unseen and Visible”, covers the general topography and stages of the Fall.

The two following chapters, called “Descent and Manifestation” and “Ascent and Felicity” explain the reality of the descent and ascent of man – delineating the two arcs through which the fall of man and his return take place. Chapter five, called “Knowledge and Action” describes the role of these two ideas in the ascent of man. The next chapter, “Love and Passion”, speaks of man's true home and abode and of what he truly loves. In this chapter various interpretations of “love” are put forward and discussed.

The seventh chapter traces the fall of man from his existential origin and details the path that he has followed. It explains how, after man was created from dust, he was inspired by God's Spirit and became the holder of the Divine Names. At this point he would hear God's words and would converse with the angels. Sin and rebellion then caused his fall to a world which “appeared” out of his false sense of self. Man's return to the realm from which he has been expelled is only possible by way of a “self” annihilation and the destruction of his false self. In this

seventh chapter entitled, “Myth and Gods”, greater attention is paid to the very first step of the Fall and its accompanying myths and the polytheistic apparitions of gods and goddesses.

While the Fall has a spiritual and metaphysical reality, it nonetheless takes place through time and space and hence takes on historical and geographical aspects, and is correspondingly seen by men in the same way. During these various historical phases of the Fall, the picture that man has of himself and the world is in accord with his historical and social situation. Over the course of time this picture goes through a decline and passes from higher stages to lower ones. The eighth chapter, called “Modernity and Isms”, applies itself to the world that modern man has constructed for himself and its ideologies. The final chapter, called “Post-modernity and Alienation” traces the entry of man into the post-modern age and his ultimate alienation from his Origin. It goes on to comment on the social implications of this alienation and finally alludes to the Only solution that man has.

The initial chapters of this book set out the fundamentals of the Fall. The last three chapters, that is chapters seven, eight, and nine, cover the historical manifestations of the spiritual and heavenly fall and explain its terrestrial topography – from the time of the myths to the current period which has no myths and in which the only narrative is that there is no narrative.

Biography Notes

1. **Immanuel Kant** (1724-1804), German idealist philosopher who argued that discursive reason is the means by which the phenomena of experience are translated into understanding. Kant was the foremost thinker of the

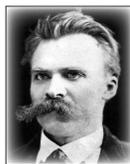
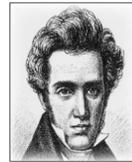


Enlightenment. In him were subsumed new trends that had begun with the Rationalism of René Descartes and the Empiricism of Francis Bacon. He thus inaugurated a new era in the development of philosophical thought. His classic works include *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) and *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788).



2. **Edmund Husserl** (1859-1938), Austrian-born German philosopher. Considered the founder of phenomenology, he had a major influence on the existentialists.

3. **Søren Aaby Kierkegaard** (1813-1855), Danish philosopher and critic of rationalism, regarded as the founder of existentialism. He is famous for his critique of systematic rational philosophy, particularly Hegelianism, on the grounds that actual life cannot be contained within an abstract conceptual system.



4. **Friedrich Nietzsche** (1844-1900), German philosopher and critic of culture, who became one of the most influential of all modern thinkers. His attempts to unmask the motives that underlie conventional Western religion, morality, and philosophy deeply affected generations of philosophers, psychologists, poets, novelists, and playwrights. He thought through the consequences of the triumph of the Enlightenment's secularism, expressed in his observation that "God is dead," in a way that determined the agenda for many of Europe's most celebrated intellectuals after his death.