

## Sustainable Spiritual Development and Education through Wisdom

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### **Abstract:**

Our research aims to activate spiritual education and teaching based on the principle of wisdom, in order to restore humanity's primordial state in which the worldly environment is sacred and where the material and the spiritual are balanced. This entails moving from the truncated human being (disconnected from the Truth), as described by the philosopher Taha Abderrahmane, toward what Islamic Sufism calls the "Perfect Human" (*al-insān al-kāmil*), who preserves the cosmic and human equilibrium by means of a sustainable temporality of spiritual education, transmitted across generations through the perennial wisdom inherited from the ancients and still preserved in the hearts of the friends of the Merciful and the people of remembrance firmly grounded in divine knowledge. The motivation behind this topic stems from the ossification of modern educational curricula, which cultivate only archival memory and repetitive reasoning without either a definitive divine sign or a creative wisdom. Thus, education has lost not only its ascensional function (connection with higher spiritual stations) but also, almost entirely, its cognitive and formative function—especially today, in the face of the wave of artificial intelligence. If not guided by wisdom, AI may generate what could be called a "delegated mind" or "proxy intellect."

**Keywords:** Wisdom, Spiritual Education, Teaching, Perfect Human, Cosmic Reading, Intellectual Accountability (*hisbah fikriyyah*).

### **1. Introduction**

Education is a means toward an end, which may be noble or base. The danger lies in its separation from wisdom and the spiritual meaning of knowledge, regardless of its content. This makes education through wisdom and the spiritual development of the young not just one option among many, but rather the most upright path to correct the deviations of modern schooling, which has reached an unprecedented level of trivialization due to its turning away from the higher system of divine guidance.

Hence, the quest for the "Perfect Human" becomes an urgent necessity in our age. This human being is the righteous heir and the mediator between heaven and earth, as envisioned by sound traditional doctrines. Within him are deposited all virtues, and his image is reflected in all religions and spiritual traditions. No single nation, culture, or civilization can claim him exclusively, since both virtues and vices are shared among all peoples of the earth.

The recovery of the "Perfect Human" as an alternative to the humanistic-secular model can only be achieved through systematic and sustainable spiritual education—especially after the failure of modern human development programs, which emphasized egocentrism and individualism, neglecting the transcendent dimension of the self until it fell into the lower prison of desire.

Our article, therefore, seeks—alongside many other efforts—to contribute to opening pathways for reforming modern education, as it constitutes the key entry point to wider social

reform in all other domains. Its goal is to enable the formation of the Perfect Human: spiritually cultivated, embodying the image of faith, piety, and the purified soul, guided by the teachings of the sacred scriptures, the messages of the prophets, and the wisdom of the gnostics.

To frame our intervention, we begin with the following questions:

- What is the concept of wisdom and the Perfect Human?
- What is the meaning of sustainable spiritual development and education through wisdom?
- How can the identity schism be overcome in favor of a unifying and peaceful identity?
- What educational paths can build the contemplative mind (*fikr waqqāf*) and the just critical spirit?

## 1. Concepts from the Perspective of the Spiritual Heritage

### 1.1 The Concept of the Perfect Human

The “Perfect Human” should not be understood as absolute, flawless perfection. Rather, it symbolizes the human being who contains within himself the total potentiality deposited in the treasury of eternal divine knowledge. Everything manifested in the cosmic realm, the earthly domain, or the world of the lower planes is but a symbol of what exists in the higher realities.

In Platonic terms, these are copies of the eternal and immutable essences. Thus, when we speak of human perfection, it is in a relative sense—not absolute. The earthly human realm is the realm of limitation, the axis of conditioned existence. Hence, the intended perfection is not infinite potentiality but finite actualizations appropriate to the finite human being within the world of finitude.

Human perfection, therefore, is bounded by the conditions of possible manifestation—whether the journey is oriented toward the metaphysical, celestial realm (*malakūt*), or toward the terrestrial domain (*mulk*), i.e., the macrocosm and microcosm. Language itself is symbolic and cannot fully capture transcendent realities. Therefore, the term *kamāl* (perfection) does not imply absolute totality, nor does its negation mean deficiency in a pejorative sense. Rather, it points to what is expressed in the divine verse: “*You have been given of knowledge only a little*” (Qur’an, al-Isrā’ 17:85).

The esoteric meaning of this applies to the entire realm of creation. Thus, the realized Perfect Human is nothing but a representation—at varying degrees—of the higher archetype of the Perfect Human throughout the ages and cosmic cycles. “The degree of perfection differs according to particular circumstances and according to the scope of the intellectual capacity of each human being” (‘Abd al-Wāḥid Yaḥyā [René Guénon], *Introduction générale à l’étude des doctrines hindoues*, p.167).

According to al-Jurjānī, the divine itself remains the realized Perfect Human within the divine presence (*Mu‘jam al-ta’rīfāt*, p.121). For the traditionalist thinker Titus Burckhardt: “*The Universal Man is not truly distinct from God; he is like the Face of God in creatures.*” (Burckhardt, *Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī: De l’homme universel*, p.22).

From this perspective, Idries Shah sees the essence of man as divine or sacred, the light or illumination that can elevate humanity to a higher stage. The separation of man from his essence is the cause of his inner disharmony and failure of self-realization (*The Sufis*, p.322). For Ibn ‘Arabī, the Perfect Human is a being in whom God has deposited the realities of the macrocosm, so that he emerged as a small-scale image of the entire cosmos. Just as the

cosmos reflects the divine, man reflects the divine image (‘*Abd al-Wāḥid Yahyā, Les symboles de la science sacrée, p.68*).

The correspondence between the divine archetype and the human archetype is always one of analogy between the higher and lower planes: the former is the absolute abstract essence, the latter a conditioned essence. The human being, at his own level, embodies both receptivity and activity, capacity to act and to be acted upon.

The Perfect Man is the isthmus and the connecting pillar between heaven (the Absolute Truth) and earth (the restricted creation). His earthly determinations are nothing but symbols of his eternal essence, and his various historical appearances are avatars that preserved humanity, for divine mercies continued to descend despite its errors. With his absence, mercy is withdrawn, so we should not be surprised at the subtle graces of the Truth (Glory be to Him) which still pour upon human manvantaras even in their most extreme present darkness. Despite the decline of the spiritual elite who safeguard the heritage, the chain of sainthood of the Perfect Man has never ceased its higher connections at every level of existence; “The Perfect Man is simultaneous in presence” (Titus Burckhardt, *Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī, De l’homme universel, p. 35*); for he is the righteous heir of the earth as the Islamic heritage informed, and his origins extend to the first paradisaal covenant, for the sound primordial nature is still effective in his spirit, simultaneous and continuous across times. The Muslim Sufi René Guénon indicates that “the ‘ancient man’ in Islamic Sufism is the ‘first primordial man,’ which are the attributes of the ‘Perfect Man,’ called in Hebrew *Adam Qadmon*” (Abd al-Wahid Yahya, *Traditional Forms and Cosmic Cycles, p. 242*), in the purity of his primordial nature, or the *Atma* in Hinduism, the spirit in its purest essence.

Each specific human cycle, expressed in Islamic terms, has modes of creation that stamp it with traits distinguishing it from others. Based on these, the paths of response or actions of the beings of that cycle are determined, whether on the macrocosmic or microcosmic level. They respond to the changes of the occurring world according to their capacities and the capacities of the cosmic milieu in which they exist. Considering each cosmic human cycle, a set of imbalances is observed that affect the degrees of existence, causing a kind of inversion of the sound order in the relations between the macrocosm and the microcosm. On the human level specifically, this has a deeper effect in all fields, from the individual to the social, because the microcosm, in the mystical perspective, is the sum of the macrocosm, hence the sum of the changes of the cosmic milieu. On the other hand, these imbalances are the result of human action transgressing the cosmic law, as a manifestation of the divine universal Will. Those charged with this corrective function are the elite inheritors of eternal wisdom, whether prophets and messengers or their successors who renew religion in each cosmic cycle. They are the just successors who reject the distortions of extremists, the false claims of the wrongdoers, and the misinterpretations of the ignorant.

The Perfect Man shares with heaven the administration of the earth, and he is always being formed on the path, preserving cosmic order and restoring the sound hierarchy. No cosmic and human cycle has ever been devoid of this divinely chosen model (divine election in its broader sense, not restricted to prophetic election) throughout its four stages, as defined by the Hindu theory of cosmic cycles, which constitute the whole cycle of existence or the manifestation of cosmic appearance. The Perfect Man may also appear in the form of the “wali” (saint), the successor of the prophet, with the term *wali* taken in its broader sense, within what is called in Islamic mysticism “divine sainthood,” meaning realization of the supreme unity. Thus every prophet is a saint, but not every saint is a prophet. This higher sainthood applies to the human degree in its individual, social, civilizational, cultural, and

scientific scope, and in every age it has its inheritors. Accordingly, the “Perfect Man” should not necessarily be imagined as a hero in the style of Homeric epics, nor as imagined in the form of Nietzschean superman. The Perfect Man appears and participates with heaven in the administration of the earth, guiding, inspiring, and leading, without his spiritual identity necessarily being known during his life, nor that he is among the elite heirs who preserve eternal wisdom. The determinations of the “Perfect Man” take multiple forms at the levels of existence in both the macrocosm and microcosm: “When Lao Tzu met Confucius, he asked him: Have you found the Tao? Confucius replied: I searched for it for twenty-seven years and did not find it. Then Lao Tzu limited himself to giving him these counsels: The sage loves concealment; he does not reveal himself to everyone who comes. He considers times and circumstances; if he sees the time suitable, he speaks; otherwise, he is silent. And he who possesses a treasure does not display it to everyone, likewise the true sage does not reveal wisdom to everyone” (Abd al-Wahid Yahya, *Taoism and Confucianism*, p. 208). It should not be understood that the Perfect Man is cloistered in a closed sanctuary, but rather, according to Taoism, “the sage outwardly merges with the people; this is what allows him, from the best position, not only to influence the entire people by the effect of his ‘presence,’ but also to preserve completely without being touched that which makes him inwardly superior to others of the common people, and this is what constitutes true unique transcendence” (Abd al-Wahid Yahya, *Taoism and Confucianism*, p. 159), and not the false one under the name of earthly “fame,” which is led by the desires of the self and thus inferior.

The Perfect Man may seem a vague concept, because it is viewed as a utopia. But for Burckhardt, “vague” does not mean uncertain or obscure in its manifestations. On the contrary, it is active as one of the strict cosmic laws in the human system. Rather, the “vagueness” dominates reason and compels its pursuit for true knowledge, like an inverted projection (Titus Burckhardt, *Abd al-Karîm al-Jîlî, De l’homme universel*, p. 21). Thus, the Perfect Man is not restricted in his earthly determinations to a particular heritage. All spiritual heritages have included efforts to achieve human—relative—perfection, to return to the eras of the primordial nature. The Perfect Man is always journeying on the path, seeking perfection, never ceasing, and even if he achieves some of his possibilities, he remains journeying, otherwise he goes astray if he assumes he has arrived. He is a goal that no human manvantara ceases to long for, yearning to see the perfections of this luminous avatar that encompasses all divine subtleties, spiritual refinements, and divine sciences concerning the levels of existence and manifestations of cosmic appearance in the macrocosm and microcosm. Ibrahim Ezzedine describes him via Titus Burckhardt: “He is the beauty that the universal man possesses; he is the symbol of the universe and the sign of expectation” (*ibid.*, p. 22). He is transcendent above all restrictive conditioning of divisive lower identities, for he represents the manifestation of the higher identity expressed by Ibn Arabi in one of his supplications (Muhyi al-Din Ibn Arabi, *Divine Knowledge and Spiritual Subtleties*, p. 321), saying:

Indeed, the Perfected has no anchors to hold him,

No station in existence can contain him.

His ship sails, and the wind propels him,

And God, in every state, carries him.

## 2. Paths of Sustainable Spiritual Development for Building Balanced Reflective Thought

### 2.1. The Sustainable Timing of the Principle of Beneficent Intellectual Dialectic

Conflictual and merciless intellectual enthusiasms dominate most patterns of thought (philosophical, religious, political, scientific, cultural, civilizational...), feeding on the lexicon of divisive and schismatic language through the technique of collective suggestion for clientelist polarization. Hence, the resumption and rooting of the principles of the Islamic intellectual *ḥisbah* becomes an urgent necessity to repel the denials of intellectual fanaticisms that proliferate without true multiplicity, toward openness to the variables of life and the novelties of reality, in accordance with a dialectical method that thinks and perceives with a bounded and responsible *ijtihādī* mind. This is far removed from coercive methods of subjugation, exclusionary protection of concepts, or epistemic violence, which may save us from falling into the traps of extreme skepticism or closed system-based bias. Thus ideas are granted the ability of patient critical confrontation, distinguishing between critique as a right and critique as a duty, away from hermeneutical imprisonments within the eye of the needle, and from crushing criticisms of rightful selves.

From this perspective, the aim of our article is to contribute to opening some paths and avenues of rightful intellectual dialectic, in order to build the balanced *waqqāf* man (a *waqqāf* man: deliberate, not hasty. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, pp. 749–750), who struggles to sustain the humanity that inhabits his inner being, following the Mosaic logic with al-Khiḍr (peace be upon them). As for the hasty man, he is a human without nobility—the contentious dissipator, the argumentative disputant—he struggles always to be “right.” In addition, we seek to highlight the concept of *ijtihādī uṣūliyya* (principled jurisprudential methodology), and to distinguish it from coercive extremism and its consequences in strengthening and thickening rigid religious thought, and to show how to overcome it through the act of critical *ḥisbah* reading (repelling intellectual wrong and enjoining intellectual good) according to the beneficent and merciful path.

Intellectual extremism, as historical experiences have taught us, does not remain confined to mere abstractions independent of reality, but becomes reactive actions manifested in floods of blood. Humanity scarcely catches its breath before the bells of violence sound, casting their sparks, each time warning of an impending, indiscriminate eschaton that imprisons all behind the bars of fear—fear of death, terror of what Aldous Huxley described as eternal existence. Especially since the humanity of our age has no kinship with wisdom; it has turned away from it, driven by the licentious soul, until it drowned in the lower prison, deluding itself that it has risen above its forefathers. It claims intellectual progress that uprooted the myths of the ancients and spared the blood of Abel, proud of a rationalism said to be “enlightenment,” which would end the ages of intellectual strangulation. Yet the reality, and the words of pens belonging to those classified as scholars, reveal ever more rigid intellectual extremism descending into unrestrained violence, enacted practically and legitimized by coercive force. Thus the corrupt idea transforms into a bullet that pierces bodies, not content with opposing and disciplining contrary thought theoretically, but even uprooting bodies so that they are buried.

The outcome is a world surging with violence, as in all eras that break with the order of divine guidance. Humanity has not inclined to peace for even the blink of an eye, for it is the product of schismatic ideologies that tear apart transcendent spiritual value bonds, those that would raise man from the narrowness of darkened, lower thought into the expanse of divine wisdom, where there is the ease of merciful life. Faced with the emptiness of values and intellectual extremism in all its forms—religious, identitarian, cultural—the secure paths for the return of a culture of peace are blocked. This storms the divine mosaic of creation, the wisdom of the



diversity of natures and temperaments, civilizations and cultures. Thus the road is opened before the hasty thought, spiritually hollow, prisoner of calculative rationalism, producing shells of knowledge devoid of the least truths, then entering the crucible of homogenizing fusion by iron and fire, even if it requires replacing the merciful word with the Cainite bullet. There are, however, many safe paths to living in the Abelian society of peace. These may be arranged hierarchically: some cumulative and gradual, others synchronous. Intellectual evils cannot be uprooted with one blow, for the wheel of time ripened them slowly. The matter is detailed, and our article cannot encompass all its aspects.

## 2.2. The Sustainable Timing of the Principle of Intellectual *Ḥisbah* for Developing a Just Critical Spirit

Commanding the good and forbidding the wrong are the sum of the Islamic religion, or what is called *ḥisbah*. It is the basis of responsibility, and the gateway to empowerment. The Muslim is not accountable beyond his capacity: *“God does not burden a soul beyond its capacity”* (al-Baqara 2:286). Rather, he is responsible for injustices and evils within his power to remove, but from which he abstained, preferring the salvation of his own soul, retreating into a voluntary personal isolation, cursing the world, awaiting a terrestrial paradise to descend from heaven that would admit him safe and secure, without the toil of striving for arrival.

Therefore, *ḥisbah* was imposed as an individual obligation upon those able, by hand (governmental *ḥisbah*) or by tongue (intellectual *ḥisbah*), and as a collective obligation upon those incapable (the *ḥisbah* of the heart). Islamic *ḥisbah* is a concept broad in its applications, not confined to practical morality—warding off vices and attaining virtues—but extending to all fields of life: individual, social, political, intellectual. It can only be carried out according to conditions and purposes determined by divine law.

In Islamic heritage, *ḥisbah* relies on principles as governing criteria over reality, while considering what novel events require in terms of *ijtihād* at the level of means within the possible and attainable, distinguishing between necessities and exceptions, constants and variables. This requires knowledge that comprehends the jurisprudence of reality. Every individual is called to establish the right within his sphere of authority, without transgression or coercive overreach. Otherwise, enjoining good shifts from a mutual counsel in truth, justice, and beneficence into an enslaving guardianship. Especially since human nature recoils from harshness and finds affinity with every path of gentleness: *“Repel [evil] with that which is better; then the one between you and him is enmity will be as though he were an intimate friend”* (Fuṣṣilat 41:34).

Repelling with that which is better is one of the gentle paths for treating intellectual extremism. If it does not eliminate it entirely, it bridges some of it. The beneficent intellectual repulsion is founded upon the Qur’anic rule: *“So remind; you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller”* (al-Ghāshiyah 88:21–22). There is no compulsion upon truth; it suffices to present it and demonstrate it. This is the intellectual *ma’rūf ḥisbah*, whose source should be the infinite ink of wisdom, in accordance with the prophetic rule: *“Wisdom is the lost property of the believer; wherever he finds it, he is most entitled to it.”* This is the clear path of the rightful thinker, liberated from the bonds of closed system-based biases, absolute sectarianisms, and sanctimonious racialisms, toward the vastness of vision with the eye of the kingdom of the heavens and the earth.

Among the urgent and necessary tasks of schooling today through sustainable spiritual development is the repelling of denials of extremist worldly visions, and enlightening the contemporary Muslim on the necessity of not belittling or being indifferent to the danger of worldview upon the formation of consciousness, its representation of selfhood, or its representations of otherness. This comes after the weakening of the Islamic unitive worldview, and the presentation of the Islamic Other according to the binary of “the West and the rest,” as an unseen group except in the mirror of the West, a silent mass and pliable fabric, its referents reduced to inferiority.

What deepens this danger is the invasion of modern Western philosophical imports into Muslim societies, through the group called Enlightenment or modernist Arab-Muslim philosophers, who voluntarily confine themselves within the noose of Westernism, chasing philosophical trends and conceptual gradations hollowed of any uplifting truth. All this is under the pretext of universality of Western civilizational concepts as theorized by their philosophers—enemies of wisdom—such as “mutual understanding,” “religious tolerance,” “coexistence,” “world peace,” “civilization,” “rationality,” “civilizational dialogue,” etc. They bring religious justifications to ground them and legitimize them procedurally, producing a syncretic system that subjugates scriptural contents in the revealed Book (the Qur’an). They justify and argue on the basis of philosophical openness on the one hand, and the enrichment of meaning on the other. There is no harm in that, but when the rooting of meaning falls short of sound purposes, it devolves into a corrupt linguistic game, where neither the literal meaning clarifies nor the figurative amplifies. If openness becomes a devouring that blinds the mind, it turns into pliant subservience, imprisoned by terminology, concept, and Western philosophical theorization—not by right or necessity of philosophy as love of wisdom wherever found, but because the dominant philosophical authority today is Western, and its theories have become a functional tool advancing the most “sacred” civilizational expansion to represent and embody the strongest civilizational domination. In this way, the corruptions and denials of exclusionary Western thought are consecrated and reinforced.

### **2.3. Teaching Inexperienced Youth the Art of Spiritual, Horizon-Expansive Reading**

For schooling to rise to a level enabling the building of youth whose compass is always directed toward heaven—so that their earthly orientations remain balanced, constantly connected to truth with and through it at every moment, never disconnected from it—education must be freed from training learners in echoic repetition, and directed instead toward revelatory contemplation and ascensional meditation. This means excavating neglected corners unseen by the outward eye, and problematizing daily lived reality: going forth to it by transporting it from familiar obviousness into the field of thoughtful contemplation, and returning from it by reconstructing it, moving from the narrowness of theorization and abstraction to the breadth of direct, witnessed transformation of what exists.

This will only be possible by training youth to think with the desert-oceanic mind, which gazes with the vastness of Him who created the heavens and the earth and all between them. Such a mind does not cling to a single angle, but opens like the sun to multiple perspectives. The wider the vision, the clearer the landmarks and the direction of travel, and the more the learner safeguards himself from being suspended between guidance and bewilderment. He must view the world around him by casting the Abrahamic light upon modern idols that multiply without guiding law, until he reaches *certainty*.

Philosophical education is the safe path for combating the mummification of knowledge upon which holders of scientific “banners,” as described by Malik Bennabi, have insisted. Their educational aim is to cultivate imitative function rather than creativity, mechanism rather than awareness. Functional, directed education has contributed to reinforcing haughty historical myths that exalt the self and demean or despise the Other, through the technique of accumulation rather than participatory cultivation. Education is a message, not merely a profession or a trade. Here lies the role of sustainable development of the spirit of critical sense, piercing awareness, and penetrating insight into the concerns and problems of reality.

This helps to liberate the mind from the domestication and subjugation practiced by formal, functional schooling in its dominant form, through colonization of the learner’s mind and the elimination of all his critical and reflective faculties of awareness and examination of reality. Developing the critical faculty among youth fortifies their minds against this domestication and subjugation practiced by functional, official schooling, which cancels their faculties of critical thought, reflection, and examination of reality, history, and the religious, cultural, and civilizational heritage.

For education to be a fruitful means guiding individuals to the path of uplifting wisdom, and distancing them from all forms of intellectual extremism—from externalized prejudices, to exclusionary pre-judgments, to cultural or civilizational self-superiorities—there must be change in rote curricula and accumulative programs. These produce complacent minds, resigned thought, selves charged with divisive emotions, and memories crammed with scattered fragments of knowledge having no kinship with wisdom.

Since education is founded upon the act of reading, youth must be trained in spiritual, horizon-expansive reading of all that is inscribed in the “unfolded scroll”: to think for themselves in the Abrahamic way, so as not to be pliant cloth for systems of intellectual blindness. When the mind thinks of itself by itself, in accordance with the Delphic maxim “Know thyself by thyself,” it tests and examines life itself, so that it becomes worthy of being lived in accordance with noble meanings and transcendent values, participating, within the capacity given, in humanity’s project of realizing the future of mankind according to the standards of the divine revelation and its guiding law.

School education contributes, to varying degrees, more or less, in sowing divisive intellectual preconceptions. This is because the crystallization of stereotypes in any field always requires continuous processes of programming so that they may settle into the unconscious, inattentive zone. The value does not lie in the quantity of knowledge imparted to the learner, but rather in its quality. As related in the Prophetic tradition: “*Knowledge is but a decisive verse, a sound practice, or a just obligation*”, and also: “*A little providence is better than much knowledge*” (Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, *Ihya’ ‘Ulum al-Din*, pp. 32–33).

Education grounded in wisdom teaches the young how to bring their selves together, liberated from mechanical, measured time, through reading the eternal scriptures of wisdom—not as though signifying a narrowly individual identity, but as universal thought addressed to all. The more this reading is detached from coercive biases, the younger people can discover through its vast horizons of alternative visions that enrich their reservoir of perspectives without uprooting them from their origins, once they can distinguish the sound from the corrupt. This reading elevates the learner from the level of superficial intellect to that of intuitive intellect, which perceives the world through the light of wisdom, not through heaps of books and memorized materials.

And since education is based on the act of reading, young people must be trained in *horizontal, spiritual reading* of all that is inscribed in the “unfolded scroll” [cf. Qur’an 52:3], so that they



may think for themselves, in the Abrahamic way—so as not to become pliable fabric for systems of intellectual blindness. For when the mind reflects upon itself by itself, it tests life by itself, and experiences it to determine whether it is worthy of being lived in accordance with noble meanings and transcendent values, thereby participating—according to the capacity given—in humanity’s project of fulfilling the future of humankind according to the standards of the divine order of revelation and its guiding law.

#### **2.4. Activating the Foundational Corpora of the Gnostics for Contemplative Educational Reflection**

By teaching the ways of attaining wisdom, a person, regardless of affiliation, opens to the spiritual experiences that fill the history of cultural faith, discerning the authentic from the counterfeit, the permanent in the present from the transient, recognizing the cultural human commonality, the shared grounds among people, and being guided to the model of the noble, spiritually refined complete human.

First, it acquaints him with the wisdom of the prophets; for “*the prophet is always a man of a particular moment in history. He grasps the cries coming from the world of the ‘wretched of the earth,’ and denounces injustice with sacred indignation. Yet he proclaims the creative dreams of meaning, and opens history to a future that carries hope*” (Roger Garaudy, *Vers une guerre de religion? Debate of the Age*, p. 7). The Akbarian mystical system presented the loftiest divine knowledges and spiritual subtleties of what represents the “Perfect Human,” through the spiritual educational corpus *Fusus al-Hikam (Bezels of Wisdom)*, with its fine sciences and delicate knowledges conveyed by each prophet as a model of the “Perfect Human.”

Second, it acquaints him with the wisdom of the mystics and Sufis; for the human soul has been inspired with both piety and depravity, and requires a *guru* (a spiritual guide) merely as a signpost for lost souls, not—as superficial minds imagine—a controller of their selves or usurper of their will. Rather, he is a guide for whoever seeks guidance. Modern contemporaries feel no embarrassment in seeking help from a psychoanalyst or psychiatrist, indeed they revere them with closed eyes, without disparaging psychological counseling institutions or what is now called modern “human development” and its banalities, which have come to professionalize the manufacture and growth of narcissistic illusions until narcissists multiplied. Modern development focuses on constructing self-centered egos, whereas spiritual development seeks to cultivate the altruistic self—or, in Sufi Islamic terminology, the *Ihsanic self*, liberated from egocentrism, which represents the highest rank in the degrees of religion.

Third, it acquaints him with the intellect of the scholars, who are the heirs of the prophets.

#### **Conclusion**

From the foregoing, we conclude with the most important result: the urgent and pressing need, more than ever before, to resume the *ascensional* function of sustainable spiritual development, in order to build the human being purified and spiritually refined through the systems of divine guidance—the holistic human, not preoccupied with his individual salvation alone, but one who partners with heaven in managing the earth, and contributes to sustaining the balance between the material and the spiritual, between the human world and that of other creatures, as a responsibility of stewardship.

As recommendations, we propose the activation of the results of academic research that studies, debates, and critiques formal educational curricula and programs at all levels, by bringing research outcomes into practical reality to contribute to educational reform—so as to take academia out of its internal enclosure and open it to the problems of pedagogy and education in lived reality. Theorizations or critiques do not bear fruit nor can their effectiveness be tested without direct or mediated applications. This requires cooperation and participation between academic, societal, civil, and institutional state spheres.

The central recommendation in our study is to resume wisdom-based education and spiritual upbringing as sustainable development to address the imbalances of intellectual reasoning, which today is dominated by reductive mediations—especially in light of the rise of artificial intelligence, which threatens even the minimal faculties of acquisition in the field of education and learning, let alone wisdom, which cannot be attained even through rote instruction. Artificial intelligence cannot be a substitute for natural intelligence: the machine does not replace the faculty. If the meaning of improving and refining life according to its purposes of stewardship and civilization, in line with the divine system of guidance, is not understood, artificial intelligence will become a tool of domination and control rather than of facilitation or educational service.

Hence, we call for linking education with wisdom—especially in curricula, which are only means. And wisdom lies in knowing the methods, limits, and contexts of use, so that they do not become confused with ultimate purposes. This requires aligning usage with ethical and religious value-norms, alongside knowledge of the exigencies of reality, the demands of the age, and emerging contingencies.

The absence of wisdom from means and tools—whether they are needs, necessities, or enhancements—leads to a regressive outcome, whereby crafts (technologies) are transformed into ends that displace the original ends for which they were created. Education today, more than ever, requires combined efforts to restore the methodology of education through wisdom. This is not new; rather, it is a traditional methodology upon which the education of the ancients relied.

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