

visible and the unseen worlds, the creation, the fall, the Creator-created relationship, the hierarchy of existence and existents, and the Intellect attempts to fathom the mysteries of existence through a systematic process. The result is a systematic body of knowledge, placing humanity within a hierarchy of existent things. These and related topics form the core of *Existence and the Fall*, which presents a rich flavor of Islamic intellectual tradition. The book is a valuable addition to the scant resources available to English-speaking readers on traditional Islamic cosmology.

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William C. Chittick: *Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul: The Pertinence of Islamic Cosmology in the Modern World*

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In the short introduction to this work, William Chittick states that after almost forty years of sitting back and letting sages such as Rūmī, Ibn ‘Arabī, Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, Afḡlal al-Dīn Kāshānī, Shams-i Tabrīzī, and Mullā Ṣadrā speak through his translations, he has finally felt at ease in applying their wisdom to the complex problems of the contemporary world. At the heart of this book consisting of seven chapters, all but one of which were originally written as lectures for conferences, is the question: “how do we know what we know?”

Religious traditions clearly distinction two modes of knowing and hence the two kinds of knowledge: transmitted (*naqlī*) and intellectual (*‘aqlī*). The former is passed from generation to generation, the latter is learned by training the mind and polishing the heart. Transmitted knowledge is revealed knowledge. God wants the believers to fast during the month of Ramaḍān; He reveals this to the Prophet who transmits it to the believers and those who hear him say so, pass it on those who are not present—and so on down the generations. Intellectual knowledge, on the other hand, is acquired by the knowing subject. Even though it may require teachers, it does not ultimately depend on the authority of the teacher for its verification and existence; it resides in the heart and mind of the knower. That two plus two equals four does not rely on an authority once it has been comprehended.

The first three chapters consist of lectures delivered to Muslim audience, and therein one finds ample evidence of Chittick's command over the material he has studied and translated for over forty years. It is also in these three chapters that one finds the sharpest and most clear diagnosis of contemporary Muslim dilemmas as seen from the perspective of a deeply concerned but objective scholar, who can stand aloof from the moribund tradition and look back at the times when it produced great thinkers and sages. He can thus wonder: what has gone wrong? Intellectual tradition is essential for the survival of religion, for one cannot think of Islam without simultaneously comprehending the Qur'ānic commands demanding Muslims to think, reflect, and ponder.

Muslims have stopped thinking, Chittick states boldly, knowing that his observation would be contested by many. Thus he explains what he means by "thinking". By "thinking", he means the kind of thinking that produced the intellectual tradition of Islam which is now rapidly disappearing. It was a training of the mind, a discipline of the heart which was rooted in the message of the Qur'ān. Modern intellectuals, trained in modern modes of thought, inhabit a mental schizophrenia where faith and practice are not harmonious, mind and heart are at war with each other, and the gods of modernity reign supreme in the lives of those who claim to worship only one God. "A god is what gives meaning and orientation to life, and the modern world derives meaning from many, many gods. Through an ever-intensifying process of *takthīr*, the gods have been multiplied beyond count, and people worship whatever gods appeal to them. (13)

Containing clear but frightening prognoses of the modern world, *Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul* leads one to think about the contemporary state of the world from an uncommon perspective and debunks modern ideology, rooted as it is in humanism, scientism, and many other "isms" which have emerged in the Western thought since the European Enlightenment. Without being "too Islamic", the book draws upon a variety of traditional sources to articulate its main concern: fallen into a path of self-destruction, humanity needs to wake up before it is too late. It is the role of intellectual tradition to help humanity in this effort.

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