

what

Bahá'u'lláh I suppose meant.

Everything which is written in the Tractatus has been covered in depth by a published or unpublished research papers. I think that all the principles of the Tractatus can be trace back either directly or indirectly to the Bahá'í writings and can be supported by quotes or comments of quotes. However, all the material I have written come close to two thousand pages and the reader will understand that it is not possible to give references and comments in such a short presentation.

Of course, the Tractatus reflects the very limited understanding of an individual with all the subjectivity involved in any interpretative work. Although everything I have written seems to me to stem from the heart of the writing, maybe it is better to consider the Tractatus as a sort of philosophical manifesto personal to his author. — Jean-Marc

TRACTATUS

The nature of man is spiritual.

Man has no direct access to his nature which is revealed to him progressively during the process of his own inner development.

The understanding of spiritual values is what reveals to man his own nature.

The world of spiritual values is a transcendent world which exists of his own right independently of individuals.

The progressive discovery of the spiritual values is the aim of civilization and human progress.

The nature of man is made of potentialities which are eternal and universal. However, the inscription of man in a specific nature (naturalization process) is "historical", i.-e. dependent on a specific paradigm which is contingent on a period of the human history of humanity.

Each divine Revelation defines a paradigm, i.-e. a new "tradition", which gives man access to a new understanding of the transcendent world of spiritual values. This new understanding allows man to inscribe himself in a new nature (process of renaturalisation) which gives him access to a new dimension of his interiority.

The purpose of civilization is the progressive development of spiritual, intellectual and social potentialities of each individuals.

The spiritual evolution of man is contained in a global process which can be called "the spiritualizations process". The finality of the individual life, as well as the finality of social life and civilization, is the spiritualization of the individual and of the whole human race.

The spiritualization process of man implies his individuation, i.-e. the conquest of his autonomy. The formation of the identity, the acquisition of an

independent will, of a sense of individual responsibility, of inner discipline, of psychological self-sufficiency, the exercise of free will, the taking on of one's own social life and future, the expression of a free consciousness of oneself by the recognition of one's own characteristics and the sovereignty exercised over one's life and body are not only the requisites of the individuation process, but also must be fully recognized as the aim and purpose of the spiritual life, and therefore are an integral part of the spiritualization process of the individual and of the entire human race.

The unification of the inner being is conducive to the development of a unified vision which allows the individual to see the underlying unity of the reality of things. Then he can see the unity of the inside and of the outside, of the exoteric and the esoteric, of the form and the content, of the means and the ends. It is through this inner unification that the universal teleology and the meaning of the universe become perceivable.

The inner unification of the human being cannot be achieved without the participation of the self in the transcendence of things through which the self is linked to the physical and spiritual cosmos. For this reason, the development of "the spiritual vision" reveals to man a hidden order of the universe. However, this hidden order is relative to the individual and his spiritual understanding and should not be regarded as existing per se.

The Bahá'í Faith, through the spiritualization process, represents the emergence of a new subjectivity. The subject is the social being involved in the transformation of the world. The process of spiritualization embraces the social being as well as the inner being and must crown the spiritualization of the subject to which the human being cannot be reduced.

The transformation of the subject and the advent of a new subjectivity are conditioned by the transformation of the inner being of man and its unification.

The process of subjectivisation is an absolutely necessary step toward the spiritualization of mankind. Subjectivisation represents for man a new way to understand himself socially and to understand his relationship with society. In the Bahá'í Faith, the spiritualization of the individual goes along with a social and collective dimension which represents a commitment toward humanity to make of every human being a servant of the human race.

Spiritualization of man and transformation of the inner being is one process which makes the interiority of man to communicate with the world of the transcendental values in order to enable him to discover his own nature.

Spirituality includes the knowledge and understanding of the mechanisms and practices which rules the transformation of the inner being of man.

The spiritual development of man is through stages. To each stage his associated a "state" and a "rank", i.-e. a new understanding of himself and of the spiritual order of things and of his relationship with it. However, all states and ranks pertain to the individual and himself alone and not to any

external reality.

Rationality, being one of the means that the individual must use in the conquest of his autonomy, must be regarded as one of the major elements of spiritual life as well as an essential quality of the human soul. True rationality should be distinguished from the reduction process (processus reducteur) that man uses in logical thinking, for true rationality also embraces the understanding of the world of spiritual values.

Man cannot understand himself in his totality because he is a creature who has been endowed with an infinite potential of evolution. Total understanding of man by himself would be tantamount to the understanding God ("He has known God him who has known himself").

God has put in man a "Divine Deposit" which is the medium by which man can communicate with the world of spiritual values. But in the depth of its inner being, which exists well beyond the "divine deposit", God has also put his "Sign" which is an unfathomable mystery. The "Sign of God" in man is the part of the human essence which will remain for ever out of reach of man. It is because of this "Sign of God" in him that man has an infinite potential of evolution and that he can infinitely come closer to God. However, in many regards, the spiritual evolution which brings man closer to God is nothing but an evolution toward the "Sign of God" which is in him, for it is only by this "Sign" which is in him that man can know God.

Because man cannot fully and totally understand himself there is no foundation to knowledge. The quest for a foundation of knowledge is tantamount to the quest of a global understanding of the universe.

The ultimate foundation of all knowledge is God himself.

God is beyond the range of human rational understanding. Man can have access to God only through an intuitive experience, the character of which is only partial and limited.

Man cannot know the creation in its entirety, but he can have an intuitive perception of it. It is on this intuition of the world that lay the ultimate foundation of all knowledge. The essence of this intuition is spiritual and has its origin in the spiritual nature of man.

A total knowledge of the universe in its entirety would have a meaning only if man could know himself in his totality. This total knowledge represents an ideal for which man should strive to make constant progress but which is ultimately inaccessible and will remain so for ever.

Man can only acquire a limited intelligibility of the universe. This intelligibility is linked and depends on rationality and on the ontological situs of man which limits his horizon of understanding.

The First Philosophy (metaphysics) is not a philosophy of the Being but a philosophy of the values which are progressively revealed to man. Its object springs from the study of the human nature and constitutes the only means by

which man can apprehend these values.

What philosophers call "Being" is in reality only a modality of intelligibility. To each modality of being corresponds a modality of understanding of the universe. The being of man is what comes to define and to limit his understanding of himself and of the world in which he is living.

The "world of existence" which embraces everything besides God constitutes only one unique world.

In the Bahá'í philosophy there is no antinomy between the spiritual world and the material world. The material world is totally contained in the spiritual world. Materiality and spirituality are just two special modalities of the same world.

The physical world is made of objects or entities having their own individuality (nominalism) and which all have an independent existence (realism). However, the physical reality in its globality is the manifestation of a more fundamental reality, the nature of which is purely spiritual. The realism and nominalism of the Bahá'í philosophy is both transcendent and limited as it does not exclude certain aspects of creation which are idealist.

whatever exists is contingent. Man does not know any form of existence which is not contingent as contingency is the characteristic of existence itself. God, not being contingent, is beyond existence. He "is" without being the Being in a manner which is absolutely inaccessible to human understanding.

Innate ideas do not exist. The only innate idea which can be said to exist is the intuitive knowledge that man has of his own existence. However man by the knowledge of himself and the knowledge of his nature can have access to a world of knowledge in which knowledge is not based on sense data and empirical evidences depending on sensorial verification or scientific validation. It is by entering his own interiority that man can have access to the spiritual reality of the things and of the world.

What man sees and understands of the world depends on his interiority and not on the independent reality of the world. This can be called the phenomenological principle of Bahá'u'lláh. The differences that man perceive between the different ontological levels of the phenomenological experience come from man himself and not from the reality of such ontological levels.

The meaning of the world is found in man himself, not in the world. The existence of man is more fundamental to himself than the existence of the universe. The existence of man is more fundamental to the creation than the physical reality of the universe.

The human consciousness is both consciousness of one's self and consciousness of the world, because a consciousness without object cannot exist. However, man understanding of himself can be developed only through the understanding of the world both in its physical and spiritual aspects. The world perceived by consciousness is not only an empirical reality, but also a world of values. The

experience by man of the world as a world of spiritual values contributes to the development of rationality. This explains why the immanent aspects of the world cannot be separated from its transcendent aspects.

It is not possible to define man through his relation to the world, i.-e. on the basis of a philosophy of conscience staging the subject (une philosophie de la conscience mettant en scene le sujet). Man is defined only by his relationship to himself and to the "divine deposit" in him. The relation to God and to the world must be understood from the vantage point of his relationship to himself and not from the point of a conscience problematic.

The finality of human existence is to know and to love God. By this knowledge and this love, man learns to know himself and to know the world. This knowledge and this love have the power to bring man to the realization of his spiritual potentialities.

Knowledge and love represent two aspects of an inseparable reality. Although in empiric experience they appear as two different things, they are each dependent of the other and should be ultimately reunified to allow man to understand the hidden order in the reality of things. The balance between knowledge and love, thinking and feeling, reason and emotion is essential to the social, psychological and spiritual development of man.

The purpose of all human society is to carry on an ever progressing civilization. The purpose of civilization is to help man in developing his psychological, social and spiritual potentialities, according to the time requirements.

Rational understanding is part of a much larger noetic process and is completely included in spiritual understanding.

Truth is defined in a period of history by the way man apprehends the world of spiritual values. Hence truth is an historial concept.

True liberty is for man to achieve his own spiritual nature.

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