PROPHET AS LOGOS: A Perennial Philosophy Perspective on the Metaphysical Roots of Prophethood

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Abstract

The article studies the metaphysical roots of prophethood from the perspective of perennial philosophy. The main problem discussed here is what is meant by "prophet as logos". The discussion is around the principles of metaphysic which is typical of perennial philosophy. Employing library research included in qualitative methodology, the study delves into the key texts of perennial philosophers about prophethood. The primary data were taken and interpreted from the masterpieces of the renowned perennial philosophers: Frithjof Schuon, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, and William Stoddart. The secondary data were from relevant literature from books and articles. The study reveals that prophet is a reflection of the Absolute which is the seed of the universe (cosmological function), the saver (prophetic function), and the guide (initiative function) of humans. In Islam system, the "prophet as logos" is represented by Muhammad. Physically, he is just a man delegated by Allah, meanwhile spiritually, Muhammad is the "logos".

Artikel ini mempelajari akar metafisik kenabian dari perspektif filsafat perennial. Isu utama yang dibahas ialah apa yang dimaksud dengan "nabi sebagai logos". Pembahasannya seputar prinsip-prinsip metafisis khas filsafat perennial. Dengan mengimplementasikan studi kepustakaan yang merupakan metodologi kualitatif, artikel ini

menggali teks-teks kunci dari filsuf perennial tentang kenabian. Data primer diambil dan diinterpretasikan dari karya agung filsuf perennial termasyhur, yakni Frithjof Schuon, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, and William Stoddart. Data sekunder diambil dari buku dan artikel dengan pembahasan seputar nabi, logos, dan filsafat perennial. Studi menunjukkan bahwa nabi adalah cerminan dari Yang Mutlak yang merupakan benih alam semesta (fungsi kosmologis), penyelamat (fungsi kenabian) serta pembimbing (fungsi inisiasi) manusia. Dalam sistem agama Islam, "nabi sebagai logos" diwakili oleh Muhammad. Secara lahir, ia adalah manusia biasa yang diutus Allah, sedangkan secara batin, ia adalah logos itu sendiri.

Introduction

Prophethood is one of the central concepts in religious systems, particularly in the Abrahamic religions. Religions such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are based on revelations from God received by their prophets. Based on a comparison of the concept of prophethood in sacred Scriptures, such as the Quran, Tanakh, Bibles, and Vedas, the figure of the Prophet is not only a recipient of revelation but also seen as a superior human being among humans with a variety of tasks, roles, and messengers (Makmur et al. 2022, 104). Therefore, discussion to religious studies can certainly always address the issue of prophethood. Prophethood can be highlighted from various perspectives that produce a variety of interpretations, including those that consider the Prophet as logos.

Very few studies have highlighted the identification of the Prophet as logos. The discourse of the Prophet as logos is explored in the discourse of comparative religion and Sufism, especially those based on perennial philosophy analysis. Several studies or writings exploring this theme include writings by Komaruddin Hidayat and Muhamad Wahyuni Nafis: Future Religion from the Perspective of Perennial Philosophy. According to Komaruddin Hidayat and Muhamad Wahyuni Nafis, there is a *logos* in

each religion. Logos is defined as the incarnation of His word, whether referred to as Prophet, scripture, or incarnation, which is communicated in the form of a human and natural medium. In Islam, the "body" of the Arabic Quran, or the "body" of Christ in Christianity, is the logos, the authentic incarnation of the Absolute. The "body" is considered absolute even though its form is relative. Therefore, the "body" of the logos is called relatively-absolute (Hidayat & Nafis 2003, 55). Hidayat and Nafis' writings have limits because they only briefly mention logos in the context of religion and still refer to logos in the modern sense, namely the capacity of ratio or reasoning. This means that Hidayat and Nafis need to be more consistent in placing logos in the perspective of perennial philosophy, which views logos as the incarnation of the Divine.

If Hidayat and Nafis discuss logos in a religious context, we will briefly encounter the study of logos in Sufism. In Sufism, logos is associated with the doctrine of *insân kâmil*. However, it should be noted that not all scholars of *insân kâmil* reflect on *insân kâmil* as logos. Only researchers familiar with comparative religious studies and perennial philosophy have uncovered it. William C. Chittick's article, the Absent Man, explains the phenomenon of *insân kâmil* as the absent man or supernatural man understood in the sense of the incarnation of the names of God with a cosmic role. Chittick's presentation has mentioned the role of *insân kâmil* as logos, but has yet to explore the metaphysical basis behind it (Chittick 2007).

One work by Fazlur Rahman that should be noticed on prophethood is Prophecy in Islam: Philosophy and Orthodoxy. Rahman explains the prophecy controversy by presenting contrasting views between philosophers and orthodox Muslim thinkers. Rahman reads that orthodox thinkers have concerns about philosophers' views, such as al-Farâbî and Ibn Sinâ, who argue that prophethood is something natural. Humans have an intellectual capacity in which their intellect can relate to the active mind or Gabriel, the angel of God's revelation. For orthodox thinkers such as Ibn Hazm, al-Ghazâli, Ibn Khaldûn, and Ibn Taimîyah, ordinary humans could not connect with Gabriel. Then, they also see the possibility of new prophets emerging if revelation is natural. Then, the imperative nature of revelation would be ineffective. In his work, Rahman provides a map of the controversial discourse of prophethood and does not explicitly discuss the Prophet as logos (Rahman 2003).

There is a unique article by Cristiane Gruber, Between Logos (Kalima) and Light (Nur): Representations of the Prophet Muhammad in Islamic Painting, which examines paintings of the Prophet Muhammad based on the concept of the Prophet as logos and light. Gruber focuses on illustrations of the Prophet Muhammad in Persian paintings of the Ilkhanid (1256-1353), Timurid (1370-1506), and Safavid (1501-1722) periods. As an aesthetic study, what Gruber writes does not elaborate on the Prophet as logos in detail. Gruber only mentions that the illustrations of Prophet Muhammad cover two aspects at once, namely the inner and outer aspects of the Prophet, which are represented by luminous effects in the paintings (Gruber 2009).

Agus Himmawan Utomo's dissertation, entitled The Concept of Prophethood in the Perspective of Frithjof Schuon's Perennialism: Its Relevance to Religious Life in Indonesia, explains Schuon's concept of prophethood in which each Prophet has the same divine authority. Utomo explained that Schuon views prophethood as having two aspects: exoteric and esoteric. Utama's description emphasizes the esoteric aspect, which views the equilibrium between the human and divine roles of the Prophet as a perfect human being. Utomo also describes what Schuon calls the Prophet's main esoteric qualities, such as nobility of heart, honesty, and tranquility. Indeed, Utomo's work discusses the Prophet as logos. However, it does not explicitly relate it to the Islamic context because Schuon, the focus of Utomo's research, mainly compares Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism (Utomo 2016).

Amin and Ungaran's article, The Concept of Logos, Prototokos and Nur Muhamad in Christianity and Islamic Traditions, describes that there is no literal explanation of logos in the scriptures, either in Christianity or Islam. According to Amin and Rashid, the concept of logos is a form of influence of Neoplatonism's interpretation of religions. According to Amin and Rashid, the concept of logos influences the formation of faith in religions, including Islam. Although addressing the concept of logos, Amin and Rashid did not study it by applying a philosophical approach (Amin & Ungaran 2023, 5-29). The unique study of the Prophet as logos by revealing metaphysical explanations from the perspective of perennial philosophy will contribute to the discourse of religious studies, Sufism, and the development of perennial philosophy. In the study of religions, it provides insight that there is a common point that connects all religions,

not only at the esoteric level as Schuon's thesis but also at the exoteric level, namely the formal form of the logos created (holy book or founder of the religion). In Sufism, its contribution is further developing the concept of *insân kâmil* with a more philosophical explanation. In perennial philosophy, the contribution of the study of the Prophet as logos provides evidence that perennial philosophy can be operational as an analytical tool as well as providing an anchor for discourse in the context of religious studies and mysticism, especially in the context of Islam (Sufism).

Furthermore, this article will not explain the what, why, and how of the emergence of a prophet as explained in theology, nor discuss whether prophethood is supra-natural (direct appointment by God) or natural (can be achieved by anyone) as in philosophical discourse (for example the views of al-Farâbî and Ibn Shinâ), nor elaborate on empirical data on individuals who claim to be prophets. This article aims to explain "The Prophet as Logos: The Metaphysical Roots of Prophethood in the Perspective of Perennial Philosophy." Therefore, the issue of prophethood will be highlighted from the frame of metaphysical principles typical of perennial philosophy. The main problem to be answered is What "Prophet as Logos" means in perennial philosophy.

Research Method

To answer the abovementioned problems, the author conducted qualitative research. Data was obtained through literature research. Primary data refers to some works by contemporary perennial philosophers, namely Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Frithjof Schuon, and William Stoddart. Secondary data as a complement and reinforcement of the discussion is taken from various scientific works, for example, in the form of books, scientific articles, and other sources relevant to the discussion around the concepts of the Prophet, logos, and perennial philosophy. The approach taken in this research is perennial philosophy. This means that perennial philosophy becomes the formal object. Perennial philosophy always includes the framework of truth and presence, doctrine, and practice. Therefore, as a formal object, this article will answer the existing problems with this framework.

Methodically, the presentation of answers to the above problems begins with researchers presenting an explanation of perennial philosophy, which is a theoretical clarification as a definitive foothold of perennial

philosophy, which is sometimes still misunderstood. The explanation continues about prophets and prophethood, prophets and salvation, logos, which is the axis of analysis, logos and universal man (*insân kâmil*), and the description of a typical perennial analysis of shahadatain (two sentences of shahâdah), which shows the centrality of the Prophet as logos in Islam.

Results and Discussion
Perennial Philosophy

Before entering into the core of the discussion, the author first explains perennial philosophy, which is a distinctive feature in this paper. The author needs to explain what perennial philosophy means because the author finds that many people misunderstand the term. This happens because of the understanding of Western philosophy, especially modern philosophy, which only views philosophy as theoretical and separate from spirituality.

There are many opinions about the definition of perennial philosophy. Aldous Huxley defines perennial philosophy as metaphysics that reveals the nature of things, psychology that sees the Divine in man, and ethics that places man's ultimate goal in the knowledge of all beings. According to Huxley, this definition of perennial philosophy does not mention Eternal Wisdom (Sophia Perennis) (Huxley 2001, 1). Therefore, perennialists, such as Stoddart, do not accept Huxley's view. In the tradition of perennial philosophy, the widely referenced definition is Frithjof Schuon's version. The term Schuon uses is sophia perennis which he sees as the essence of religions (religio perennis) and all manifestations of wisdom. When the concept of sophia perennis is condensed, there are several main points, namely: First, pure intellect or metaphysical discernment, which is the distinction between the Real and the illusory; second, concentration, awareness, and unity with the absolute (Lings & Minnaar 2007, 243).

According to Schuon's view, Minnaar systematically explains perennial philosophy. For Minnaar, perennial philosophy is absolute Truth and infinite Presence. Using the same starting point, Frithjof Schuon also explains, "The saving form of the Absolute is Truth or Presence and never one of them stands alone. Presence always accompanies truth, and Presence by Truth" (Schuon 1998, 15). Therefore, perennial philosophy has two dimensions: transcendent (Truth or Wisdom) and immanent

(infinite Presence or Unity). Following Schuon and Minnaar, the author argues that the core of perennial philosophy is discernment and concentration. Concerning religion, perennial philosophy treats religion from two points of view: the exoteric and the esoteric. Based on the exoteric point of view, religion is seen as something related to the culture, traditions, customs, history, and tribes of particular societies. Meanwhile, from an esoteric point of view, religion is seen as a historical growth of religion (Amalia 2019).

To understand perennial philosophy in an Islamic context, we need to refer to the writings of Schuon's student, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Hanna Widayani summarizes that, in Nasr's view, perennial philosophy is traditional wisdom in Islam (Widayani 2017, 57). Therefore, the keyword of Nasr's thought is tradition. Tradition is everything related to knowledge, practices, techniques, laws, and others, written orally or in writing (Nasr 1989, 64). Tradition has two dimensions, namely the vertical and horizontal dimensions. The vertical dimension is the reception of knowledge (truth) from the meta-historical Transcendent Reality. The horizontal dimension is the chain of reception, maintenance, and transmission of eternal truths from one generation to another. Therefore, in the Islamic context, Nasr calls the equivalent of perennial philosophy tradition, namely *al-dîn*, *al-sunnah*, and *al-silsilah* (Nasr 1989, 13). In Nasr's thinking, tradition has two main elements: truth and presence. Nasr's view is in line with Schuon's ideas. The element of truth is related to knowledge, while the element of presence is related to being. Knowledge as the shaper of tradition is eternal wisdom, referred to by various terms: *Sophia perennis*, *al-hikmah al-khalîdîyah*, *jawidan khirad*, or *sanatana dharma*. Eternal wisdom takes the form of recognition of sapientia or sacred knowledge (scientia sacra). Scientia sacra is the highest knowledge (*al-'ilm al-a'lâ*) known in the Islamic tradition as "*irfân* (gnosis) (Nasr 2007, 133).

Referring to the mainstream of perennial scholars, such as Schuon and Nasr, perennial philosophy can be defined as a package of eternal wisdom that comes from the Transcendent containing sacred knowledge about actual reality and the practice of its realization that is passed down from one generation to another within the framework of religious traditions. Furthermore, how does perennial philosophy see prophets and prophethood? Why is the Prophet understood as logos? How does perennial philosophy view the Prophet as logos in the context of Islam?

Prophet and Prophethood

Ibn Hazm, as explained by Fazlur Rahman, defined prophethood as "the act of God sending a group of people (to mankind) who favor Him by conferring on them virtues - for no reason other than His own will - and knowledge without having to pursue the stages of learning it or seeking it" (Rahman 2003, 93). There are two main duties of the prophets: duty to God and duty to humankind. The Prophet's duty is both vertical and horizontal. The second duty is to liberate humanity from all mythologies by character building through the path of *taqwâ* and *tazkîyah* (Zulaiha 2016, 161).

The Prophet is a human being who is just like humans in general. Prophets need to eat, sleep, marry, have children, and eventually die. Like other human beings, they are obliged to fulfill religious duties, subject to the religious laws conveyed through them. What distinguishes them from the average person (non-prophet) is revelation. However, the fact that they received revelation does not exclude their human nature. In fact, this fact makes them role models of "perfect human beings" (Muṭahharî 2002, 123). As human beings chosen by God, prophets are obligated to convey revelation to their people with a social commitment to guide them to achieve happiness in this world and the hereafter (Hasyim 2019). In short, prophets are a receiving device in human form. In Muṭahharî's view, they are the chosen ones who can receive guidance and knowledge from the unseen. God alone can judge who the right person to be a prophet is. The Holy Quran says, "God knows better where to place the apostolic task" (Q.S. al-An'am [6]:124) (Muṭahharî 2002, 116).

Fazlur Rahman argues that the Prophet is a person who is endowed with extraordinary intellectual talent, and with this talent, he is capable of knowing all things by himself without the assistance of teaching by external sources (Rahman 2003, 49). Al-Makin, as cited by M. Ryan Hidayat et al., mentions two significant elements in the Prophet: charisma and divine command. For al-Makin, the Prophet is the founder and the highest source of knowledge and authority in a particular religious tradition (Hidayat et al. 2021, 200).

According to al-Farâbî, as Fazlur Rahman quoted, three things distinguish prophets from ordinary humans. First, prophets are gifted with vast intellectual talents, so they are different from humans in general. Second, the Prophet's intellect does not need an external teacher but

develops by itself with the help of divine power, including in its actualization. Third, at the end of this development, the Prophet's intellect has contact with the active intellect (the angel Gabriel), from whom he receives the specific faculty of prophethood (Rahman 2003, 50). Al-Farâbî's view is typical of philosophers, namely that prophethood is natural. With the creative potential of his intellect, an individual can derive the truth about God, good and evil, and happiness and suffering. Therefore, anyone can achieve prophetic status (Hasyim 2019, 261).

According to Sayed Hosein Nasr, prophethood is a state-granted by God to the chosen people because of their perfection in them, and thus, they become the instruments used by God to convey His guidance to all creatures (Nasr 2000, 53). The inspiration they receive comes directly from God. A prophet owes nothing to anyone. He is not a learned man who learns the truth from books nor one who learns from others and then passes it on. His knowledge signifies the impulse of a Supreme Power in the human order, which, according to the Islamic view, is not incarnation but theophany (*tajallî*) (Nasr 2000, 53). In short, Nasr considers that a prophet is someone chosen to convey God's guidance. The Prophet must be pure, possess human perfections (such as goodness of heart and greatness of soul) that are gifts from God, have practical and theoretical abilities, a perfect imagination, a mind attuned to excellent knowledge, and a body and soul that enable him to lead humanity (Nasr 2000, 54).

According to Ibn Sinâ, prophethood is a holy power that produces active intellect without effort (Adabiyah 2017, 76). Ibn Sinâ agreed with al-Farâbî's thought that prophethood is the result of the emanation of active reason. Meanwhile, according to al-Ghazâli, the acknowledgment of prophethood is done according to narration, while its acceptance is done based on considering the mind (Adabiyah 2017). Ibn Arabî views that prophethood (*nubuwwah*) can be classified into al-*nubuwwah al-khâṣṣah* (carrying Allah's sharia) and *al-nubuwwah al-'âmmah* (uninterrupted prophethood and not carrying *risâlah* from Allah) (Hajam 2014, 259-260).

It is interesting to look at the writings of Nurcholis Madjid, compiled by Budhy Munawar-Rachman, on comparing the Prophet with philosophers. According to Madjid, quoting the thoughts of Muslim philosophers (Ibn Sinâ, Ibn Rushd, al-Farâbî), the Prophet, like Muhammad, was a philosopher. This assumption is because the Prophet also taught sophos, sophia, or wisdom. Madjid cites the verse "to teach

them scripture and wisdom" (Q.S. al-Jumu'a [62]: 2; Q.S. al-Imran [3]: 164) as his basis. However, according to him, philosophers say that prophets are higher than philosophers because although philosophers prioritize truth, they always use abstract-rationalistic formulations. At the same time, the prophets prioritized truth through symbols and metaphors. Prophets or Messenger always have a more significant influence than philosophers because many people more easily capture metaphorical truth and produce movements. This shows a common point between philosophers and prophets, namely wisdom. That is why Muslim philosophers, such as Ibn Sinâ, Ibn Rushd, and al- Farâbî, took many elements of Greek philosophy to understand religion (Rachman 2006, 2141).

Prophets and Salvation

Why is prophethood significant in Islam? In general, there are two arguments underlying the significance of prophethood. First, the argument regarding human weakness and God's gracious nature. Admittedly or not, the soul must feel God's existence. However, this feeling can be strong or weak. In addition, humans are also aware of the fact of death, and this leads to the question, what will happen after death? How can humans find happiness in the unknown world? The existence of God and the realization of death are two things that drive humans to build a relationship with God and establish the truth about Him. However, among humans, only a handful of people can do so. Therefore, God, with His attributes of *Rahmân* and *Rahîm*, the Most Gracious, selected specific individuals to disseminate the Divine message. They are sent at specific periods and in specific places, as well as those sent to all of humankind. They are named Prophet and Rasul (messenger) (Shihab 1996, 41).

Ayatullâh Alî Khamenei argues that the mind and instincts, even the knowledge that man possesses, are not enough to lead him to salvation. Therefore, man needs something superior to his intellectual power: guidance through revelation. This revelation comes from God, the Creator, who knows humankind's imperfections, needs, sufferings, and services (Khamenei 1997, 50). In short, as Muṭahharî states, the purpose of the Prophet is to guide, save, and prosper mankind.

Second, the argument of the primordial covenant affirmation. According to Nurcholish Madjid, in addition to the reason for man's inability to find the ultimate meaning of his life. God sent His messenger

equipped with his guidance to emphasize man's primordial covenant with God. The covenant contains an agreement that binds man with God before his birth on earth. The covenant is human recognition that God is the only Rabb, the Sustainer, and Protector (Madjid 2003, 179).

In this concept of salvation, Islam believes that there is no nation, but there is a prophet who speaks to them (Q.S. Yunus [10]: 48), even though God speaks in a different language. (Q.S. al-Nahl [16]: 4). According to Nasr, this is the meaning of the universality of prophethood, or it can also mean that all orthodox religions are derived from "heaven" and are not human creations. Thus, for Nasr, God's revelation is present not only in the Abrahamic tradition but also in all nations (Nasr 2000, 55).

Overview of Logos

Furthermore, how does perennial philosophy elaborate on logos? In perennial philosophy, prophets, avatara, Buddha (or other technical terms) are considered logos. What is logos? "Typical" theology addresses God and human beings. Whereas, mystical theology or universal metaphysics-as exemplified, for example, by Shankara in Hinduism, Eckhart in Christianity, and Ibn 'Arabî in Islam-makes a distinction, within God itself, with "God" and "divinity," between "Creator" and "Divine Essence," between "Personal God" and "Impersonal God," between "Being" and "Beyond-Being". Divinity is absolute, and creation is relative. However, in the Absolute (Divine Essence), there is a relative image, and this is the Personal or Creator God. The image of creation in the Uncreated is the "Uncreated Logos" (Stoddart 2008, 45-50).
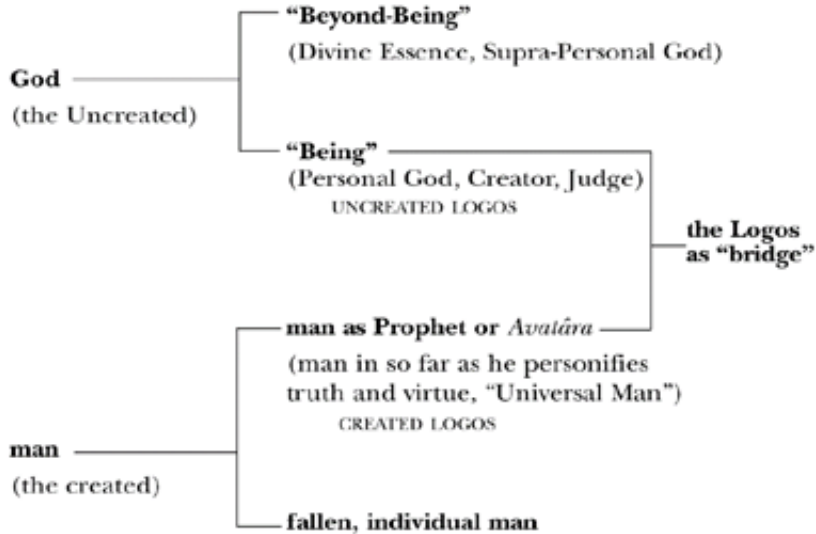
Furthermore, within the relative creation, there is a reflection of the Absolute, namely the Spirit or Intellect. This reflection of the Absolute in the relative (or the Uncreated in the created) shows itself as Truth, Beauty, Virtue, Symbol, and Sacrament. It also manifests in Prophet, Redeemer, *Tathagatha*, and *Avatara*. This reflection of the Absolute in the relative constitutes the "created logos." The full picture of reality is summarized by Stoddart in Figure 1.

Figure 1
The Five Levels of Reality

The Divine			(1) BEYOND-BEING (the Divine Essence, the Supra-Personal God)	A B S O L U T E	Ā T M Ā	D I V I N E	H E A V E N	I M M O R T A L.
The Unmanifest The Uncreated The Metacosmic			(2) BEING (the Personal God, Creator, Judge; Divine Qualities)	U N C R E A T E D	R E L.	M Ā		
				C R E A T E D	R A T E D			
EXISTENCE	Universal or Supra-formal Manifestation		(3) Spirit, Intellect (Spiritual, Intellectual, or Angelic realm)	L O G O S	A Y	Y Ā	H U M A N	A L.
The Manifest The Created The Cosmic	indi- vidual or formal mani- festa- tion	subtle	(4) soul (animic or psychic realm)	I V E			E A R T H	M O R T A L
		gross	(5) body (corporeal realm)					

Consequently, without the Logos (with its two "faces," created-uncreated), there is no contact between man and God. This seems to be the position of the Deists. Without the Logos, that would be a fundamental dualism and not "non-dualism" (*Advaita*) as the *Vedantists* call it. The doctrine and role of the Logos can be represented in the form of Figure 2.

Figure 2
Doctrine and role of logos

God
(the Uncreated)

"Beyond-Being"
(Divine Essence, Supra-Personal God)

"Being"
(Personal God, Creator, Judge)
UNCREATED LOGOS

the Logos as "bridge"

man as Prophet or *Avatâra*
(man in so far as he personifies
truth and virtue, "Universal Man")
CREATED LOGOS

man
(the created)

fallen, individual man

The spirituality or mysticism of all major religions teaches that by uniting oneself (in prayer and sacrament) with "the created Logos," man can become one with God.

Logos and Universal Man

Following Nasr's opinion, logos is closely related to the concept of *insân kâmil* or universal man. The technical term introduced is pontifex, which is seen as a bridge between heaven and earth. In traditional thought, pontifex corresponds to the concept of Anthropos. The concept of pontifex man is the opposite of the concept of Promethean man, which is a man who rebels against God and abuses the role of divinity for his own benefit (Nasr 1989, 145).

Nasr describes the characteristics of a pontifical man as follows: First, life has a center and is conscious. Pontifical humans are traditional humans who remain mindful and conscious of the Origin and the Center in their lives. Pontifical human beings are aware of their Origin and primordial past and continuously strive to transcend and fulfill their primordial nature (Nasr 1989, 145-146).

Second, the mirror of the Origin and its representative. The pontifical man reflects the Center on the periphery and echoes the Origin in the cycle of time and history. He is God's representative (Khalîfah Allah) on earth, who is accountable to God for all his behavior and actions. The pontifical man's dominance in the world is grounded in his belief in himself as the central terrestrial figure created in the "form of God," a theomorphic living being on earth but created for eternity. Then, pontifical humans are also understood as humans who are always aware of their role as intermediaries between heaven and earth, realize it, and are aware of their impermanence. Pontifical human beings also believe in living in constant awareness of the spiritual reality that transcends themselves and which they believe to be their own inner nature. Despite the appearance of greatness, pontifical human beings still have the potential to degenerate into dangerous human beings and rebel against God (Nasr 1989, 145-146).

In the major religious traditions, the depiction of the pontifical man is highly diverse, varying from tradition to tradition. These differences emerge because of the different emphases associated with their eschatological views. Nevertheless, there is a common similarity among the various depictions of the pontifical man, namely the basis of the image of the pontifical man as a human being who has the dominance of the Origin and the Center and their goal of Returning to Him (Nasr 1989, 145). The Islamic intellectual tradition, as already discussed, addresses pontifical man or universal man as *insân kâmil*.

In the Sufism tradition, the doctrine of *insân kâmil*, or universal man, is the second central doctrine after the doctrine of unity of being (*wahdah al-wujûd*). The doctrine of unity, which represents tawhid, is the axis that connects with God, the Names of God, and the divine attributes. Meanwhile, the doctrine of *insân kâmil* is related to the axes of man and nature. The doctrine of unity relates to the Origin and source of creation. The doctrine of universal man is related to Manifestation and Return to the Origin. If associated with the creed of testimony, two sentences of the shahada, then the doctrine of unity corresponds to the first testimony, *Lâ ilâha illâ Allâh*, there is no god truly worthy of worship except Allah. The doctrine of universal humanity corresponds to the second testimony: Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. In this context, Muhammad is seen as the complete man or universal man par excellence who is the seed of His

creations and encompasses all the positive things of the universe (Nasr 2007, 65).

The terminology *insân kâmil* has conceptual equivalents, including *Adam Kadmon*, *purusa*, *jen*, primordial man, and universal man (Nasr 1989, 149). Nasr consistently uses the terminology universal man to translate *insân kâmil* (Nasr 2001, 348). The term and doctrine of *insân kâmil* were initially introduced by Sufis, notably by Muhyi al-Dîn Ibn 'Arabî (1165-1240). He was born in Murcia, Andalusia, on 17 Ramadan 560 AH/28 July 1165 AD and died in Damascus on 22 Rabi' al-Tsani 638 AH/10 November 1240 AD. Ibn 'Arabî has been called *muhy al-Dîn* "the living religion," and al-Syaikh al-Akbar or "the great teacher" (hence, Ibn 'Arabî's school is called Akbarian) (Nasr 1991, 49-79). Second, Abd al-Karîm al-Jillî (d. around 832H/1336 CE) was one of the most prominent followers of Ibn 'Arabî's thought who independently reinterpreted and enriched the concept of *insân kâmil*, which is also the title of his masterpiece, which has been carefully analyzed by Reynold A. Nicholson (Schimmel 2000, 356-357).

Ibn 'Arabî, as explained by Nasr, understands the universal man as the complete image of the divine names and the universe in one big frame of essential unity. Universal man is seen as the prototype of the grand cosmos, and the human being (microcosm) that contains it, the universe of possibilities in the universe. Microcosm and macrocosm face each other like two mirrors that reflect what is in front of them, and the "echo" of both is in themselves. Furthermore, the universal human being is also interpreted as the spirit, or the First Intellect, which "contains" all Platonic "ideas" within itself. This view is in line with Philo's doctrine of logos. The logos or spirit was believed to be "the firstborn of God" and in the logos were stored all "ideas" (Nasr 1997, 110).

Ibn 'Arabî's doctrine of universal man, which was then outlined by Nasr, has three aspects: cosmological, prophetic, and initiative. First, Cosmological Aspect. The cosmological and cosmogonic perspective sees the universal man as the prototype of creation in which all the archetypes of universal existence are stored. Universal humanity is envisioned as the seed of a tree that then grows large. The branches of the tree spread to all corners of the universe. Therefore, Chittick says that universal man is the totality of all levels of reality in one eternal synthesis (Chittick 2005, 49-50).

Second, Prophetic Aspect. From the point of view of revelation and prophethood, the universal man is seen as the Word (*Kalam*), the eternal act of God, which is specifically identified with the figure of the Prophet. Ibn 'Arabî's work, *Fuṣûs al-Hikam*, is a writing that describes aspects of the universal man that carry a specific message of Divine Wisdom manifesting in the inner dimension of the prophets. In this prophetic context, the universal man is identical to the essence of Muhammad (*al-ḥaqîqah al-muhammadîyah*). His earthly embodiment is the Prophet Mohammed. Like the parable of a seed that contains all the potentiality of a tree, which then grows, develops into roots, trunk, leaves, and bears fruit. Everything comes from the seed. The universal man, as the logos or first creation called *ḥaqîqah* Muhammad, was inwardly present at the beginning of the universe's creation and at the end of the prophetic cycle (Nasr 1997, 111).

Third, Initiatic Aspect. From the perspective of spiritual realization, universal humanity is positioned and functions as a model of true spiritual life. Universal human beings are believed to have actualized all their spiritual potential and holistically become actual human beings. In other words, the universal human being is the actual human being (Nasr 1997, 111). Therefore, anyone who wants to become an actual human must emulate and follow in the footsteps of the universal human being. If there is a question about what it means to be human, the answer lies in the doctrine of the universal man (Nasr 2007, 20).

Following Nasr, the logos or universal man manifests historically in the following categories: First, the prophets, especially Muhammad; Second, the wali, especially Qutb (poles). Qutb is the apex of the Sufi cosmological hierarchy. Sufi leaders are sometimes identified as an epoch's axis, pivot, peg, or pole, indicating the cosmic hierarchy. Qutb is described as the pegs of the house (*awtad*) (Renard 2009, 185). However, Ibn 'Arabî saw that every individual has the potential to become a universal human being, although it is actually limited to prophets. Nevertheless, according to Ibn 'Arabî, as explained by Nasr, every human being is potentially a universal human being. However, in actuality, it is only exclusively actualized in the prophets and saints who serve as role models, examples that, if followed, will also manifest as universal human beings (Nasr 1997, 111).

According to Nasr, the idea of the perfect human being can be traced to the Greek idea of *anthropos teleios*. Nonetheless, the Sufis' reality does

not derive from Greek texts. The universal man is an independent reality from previous philosophical descriptions. For Nasr, the Sufis "experienced" the universal man through the guidance of the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet, which were later formulated doctrinally by Ibn Arabi and other Sufis (Nasr 2007, 21).

Briefly, like Ibn Arabi, Nasr mentions three fundamental aspects of universal humanity, namely, the archetypal reality of the cosmos (cosmological), the instrument of revelation (prophetic), and the perfect model of spiritual life (inisatis) (Nasr 1989, 192). According to the Sufis, as Nasr points out, the basic notion of universal man is as follows:

> "...the Universal man as the reality containing all the levels of existence other than God. It includes all the latent possibilities in each of those levels–a reality that, in those who have actualized it within themselves whether they be male or female, has become fully realized." (Nasr 2007, 21).

Meaning of "all levels of existence other than God," in the universal man means all hierarchical manifestations of God. In Ibn Arabi's terminology, as noted by Chittick, the universal man is an all-pervading existence (*al-kaun al-jâmi'*) (Nasr 1991, 88). In my opinion, this is the reason why Nasr chose the term universal man to translate the expression of the meaning of *insân kâmil*. In other words, the universal man is the androgynous prototype of the human condition, both male and female and also the prototype of the cosmos (Nasr 2007, 21). Therefore, there is a correspondence between the microcosm and the macrocosm. The universal man is like a mirror before God, reflecting all His Names and Attributes and also contemplating God through eyes enlightened by God's light. He perceives God's creation through God's eyes (Nasr 2007, 21).

Avicenna thinks that *insân kâmil* is a human being who has the power as a potential from God in the form of a rational soul. *Insân kâmil* is a human being who has reached the level of acquired intellect and, in Sufism, has reached the degree of an 'arif human being. The position of acquired intellect and the degree of 'arif are two positions that can only be achieved by a prophet, Sufi, and philosopher. In this case, the Prophet has a revelation intellect that no one can own, so the Prophet is said to be the supreme person (Yusuf & Tajab 2022). According to Ibn 'Arabî, the

meaning of *insân kâmil* refers to humans as the locus of God's perfect self-appearance because the names and attributes of God can only be accepted by perfect humans. Ibn Arabi mentioned that nature is a mirror of God, but nature without humans is like an opaque mirror that cannot reflect the image properly. So that with the presence of humans, the mirror will be realized and be able to reflect the image of God clearly (Afifah 2022). In this case, Ibn Arabi still views God and nature as two distinct things because God's form is absolute (Adenan & Nasution 2020, 120).

In the context of man as a reflection of the Divine Names and Attributes, Nasr speaks of man as logos, which is one of the aspects of universal man. Universal man is the total theophany (*tajallî*) of the Names of God. He is the entirety of the Universe in its unity as "seen" by God's Essence and the prototype of the universe and humanity. Therefore, man is called a microcosm. As stated above, man as a microcosm means that man contains all the possibilities in the universe. Masataka Takeshita explains that the relationship between microcosm and macrocosm is metaphorical and figurative (*isti'ârah wa al-majâz*). Ibn 'Arabî used the method of analogy as implied in *al-Futûḥat al-Makkîyah*. Therefore, what is meant by "containing all possibilities in the universe" in Ibn Arabi's view is that human beings *as nuskha jamî'ah* (comprehensive duplicates) means that in certain aspects of human beings, there are elements of the universe: heaven, earth, and all things, but not in all aspects (Takeshita 2005, 143-144).

The microcosm and the macrocosm face each other like two mirrors, each reflecting the image of the other's face, while both "echo" the typical prototype, the universal man. The universal man is the Spirit or First Intellect that contains all Platonic "ideas" within him, just as the Logos in the doctrines of *Philos* is the "firstborn of God" and contains all ideas (Nasr 1997, 110). The concept of man as a microcosm and logos is closely related to the *Akbarian* cosmological paradigm. Nasr explains it in Science and Civilization in Islam. Nasr mentions five levels of reality: first, *hahût* (divine substance); second, *lahût* (the name and nature of God); third, *jabarût* (the world of intellect and archetypes); fourth, *malakût* (psychological and imaginal), *nasut* or *mulk* (the material). All hierarchies of being, levels of reality, are seen as the presence of the Divine, in the sense that all levels of being are the presence (*ḥuḍûr*), the self-disclosure of the

singular Divine Reality (Nasr 2007, 50) The five levels form a cosmological scheme. Nasr describes the cosmological structure with five sets of concentric circles. The concentric circles can be seen from the Manifested and the Hidden sides of Reality (Allah). When viewed from the visible side, physical Manifestation as the innermost circle is followed by other states of being, and the outermost circle symbolizes the Divine Essence. However, it is the opposite when viewed from the hidden side: physical manifestation is the outer circle, and the divine essence is the innermost circle. This is the microcosmic circle (Nasr 2001, 93-94). Nasr calls human beings a microcosm in the sense that human beings have a structure of existence with these five levels of reality.

This cosmological framework became the paradigm for Muslim scientists in studying nature. For example, for Muslim scientists, fossils and ancient life forms are data related to gradations and vertical relationships, even though modern scientists see them only as temporal and horizontal evolution (Nasr 2001, 93-94).

Thus, a universal human historical figure, such as the Prophet Muhammad, has a revealing and initiatory function (Nasr 2007, 21). Being truly human means realizing, with the help of those who have attained perfection, the reality of the universal human, which potentially exists in every individual. The attainment in question is the realization of the state of universal humanity. In other words, becoming universal human is the same as returning to the primordial state (*fitrah*) and the reality of the self in God with the guidance of those who have realized universal humanity. Nasr also adds that realizing universal humanity is the same as becoming a faithful servant of God, realizing oneself as God's representative (*khalifah*), knowing death, and finally by eliminating the ego, using the intellect within, to reach the Divine (Nasr 2007, 21-22).

In this sense, the universal human is understood by Nasr as anyone who can perfectly actualize their humanity's divine potential perfectly. In essence, for Nasr, the universal human is essentially the pontifex human (holy man) who lives at the center of the circle of existence, aware of his original perfection as a God-shaped (theomorphic) being (Nasr 1989, 144-145).

The Islamic Context

To gain a deeper understanding of the Prophet as logos in the Islamic context, Schuon wrote an analysis of the metaphysical structure of the shahada that addresses the issue of logos. According to Schuon, the creed of Islamic testimony, namely "there is no god truly worthy of worship except Allah," has two meanings: First, the objective meaning, namely the separation between the Real and the illusory, between the Absolute, and the relative. Second, the subjective meaning, i.e., the spiritual distinction between the outer, worldly, and the inner, divine, in which the transcendent God presents Himself as immanent (subjective). Note that the subject in question is not the human ego but pure intellect, which must be the sacred ego as the entry point. In Sufism, the ego is a barrier to human cognition and union with God (Thohir 2012, 204).

Then, Schuon argues, as a whole, that the first testimony is complemented by the second, "Muhammad is the messenger of Allah." For Schuon, the second testimony is the dimension of unification. Paradoxically, Sxhuon says that if the relative embodies the Absolute, its essence is none other than the Absolute itself. In Hinduism's terminology, *Maya* is atma, meaning that Maya must be seen as "not real." Therefore, in the subjective dimension, the outer (world) is the inner, the self.

From a metaphysical perspective, Schuon atomizes the shahada to show what logos is, its position, and its role. The first testimony has two parts, *lâ ilâha*, 'there is no god truly worthy of worship,' and *illâ Allâh*, 'except Allah.' The first part is the aspect of negation (*nafy*), which is related to the universal Manifestation, which is all that He created: the creatures. These universal manifestations are illusory when associated with the Creator. Furthermore, the other part of the first shahadah is the confirmation (*itsbat*), which is none other than He, the Divine Himself. The principle is reality to manifestation. The principle is fundamental in itself (Schuon 2000, 156).

Substantially, Manifestation is pure nothingness if it is excluded or without relation to the principle. Therefore, the principle contains elements of relativity. That is, there is a reciprocal relationship between principle and manifestation. Principle cannot be called principle without a relationship with manifestation and vice versa. The depiction of the reciprocal relationship of principle and manifestation is clearly seen in the Taoist symbol, yin-yang (Schuon 2000, 156).

Then, Schuon sees logos represented by the word *illâ* (except). Meanwhile, the principle is represented by the word Allah. *Illâ* Allah refers to both the logos and the principle. The reflection of the principle (manifested logos) is represented by the word *ilâha* (god, divinity). The word la (nothing or not) refers to all manifestation. La or manifestation is illusory with the principle. Thus, la (manifestation) is impossible without relation even outside or separate from the principle (Schuon 2000, 157).

The second testimony, Muhammad *rasulullâh*, is associated by Schuon with oneness. Unlike the first testimony, this second testimony is inclusive or open. In a sense, what is emphasized is similarity, not difference, not discernment, but unity; not transcendence, but immanence; not the objective and macrocosmic continuity of levels of reality, but the subjective and microcosmic continuity of consciousness. Schuon asserts that the second testimony is dynamic and unitive in contrast to the first testimony, which is static and separated (Schuon 2000, 157).

In the second creed, there are three hypostatic aspects of the principle, namely Muhammad (the manifested principle), Rasul (the manifesting principle), and Allah (the Principle itself). The second testimony emphasizes Mohammed as the Messenger as the central element that becomes a link between the manifested principle and the Principle itself. The Messenger is the logos, which is seen as the spirit connected to the principle rather than to the manifestation. The relation is illustrated in the sentence: Muhammad-Rasul-Allah (Schuon 2000, 157).

The word Rasul, defined as messenger, is a symbol of God's "descent" into the world (*lâ ilâh al-qadr*), while at the same time, implicitly man's "ascent" towards God (*lailah al-mi'râj*). Schuon uses the term descent with the term inspiration and ascension with the term aspiration. For Schuon, the descent is related to divine love, while the ascension is related to human endeavor. The metaphysical structure of Muhamad-Rasul-Allah parallels the structure of *dhikrullâh*, one of the names attributed to the Prophet as well. The structure of dhikr is *dzakir*, *dzikr*, and *madzkûr*, parallel to Muhammad, Rasul, and Allah. The details are as follows: Muhammad is the supplicant, Rasul is the supplication, and Allah is the supplicant. In prayer, the supplicant and the supplicated meet, just as Muhammad and Allah meet in the Rasul, or the message or revelation (Schuon 2000, 158).

Schuon also relates the metaphysical structure of the second testimony to the aesthetic meaning of salawat and salam to the Prophet.

The salawat is related to the vertical blessing, which represents His love, while the salam is the horizontal aspect, which is related to peace, stabilization, and tranquility.

Returning to the analysis of the shahada's metaphysical structure, the first sentence of shahadah is closely related to transcendence which is coherent with the inner aspect (immanence). The word illa implies all positive qualities, namely perfection and beauty belong to Allah. The second sentence of shahada is related to immanence, which corresponds to transcendence. Schuon interprets the word Rasul in the sense of Manifestation. Meanwhile, the word Muhammad is seen as a trace, a symbol of the Divine itself (Principle). Therefore, Manifestation should not be equated with principle. There is a reciprocal, yin-yang relationship between principle and manifestation. Manifestation is not identical to principle, but it is the principle participating in the goodness of existence. Therefore, manifestation is the principle manifested even though it is powerless to be the principle. Then, the second truth is indeed inseparable from the first testimony. However, the truth that is separate from the first can be separated from the second (Schuon 2000, 159).

The pinnacle of the *shahâdah* is the word Allah, the absolute, the infinite, the all-inclusive, and the transcendent. When Allah is referred to as the Absolute, it means that Allah is the Infinite, the Unbounded. Consequently, He manifests Himself in all manifestations. That Manifestation is in the form of Goodness, Beauty, and Grace that constantly glows and radiates. The Absolute projects possibility and existence. The Manifestation, so to speak, of that projection gives rise to the universe, the world with all that exists in it. As logos, the name Muhammad is placed between Principle (God) and manifestation (the world). In the first shahada, the logos is represented by the word illâ. On the other hand, the logos manifests itself (Manifestation), which is represented by the word ilaha. Meanwhile, the name Muhammad indicates a complete emphasis on which all the emphasis and all the power of light are centered, constrained by two syllables: the initial and the final (Schuon 2000, 160). Based on the above explanation, the author summarizes the metaphysical structure of the shahada in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1
Metaphysical Structure of Shahada
First Shahâdah (Transcendence)

Lâ	Ilâha	Illâ	Allâh
Manifestation	The manifested logos	Logos	Principle
Nafî, manifestation, relative		*Itsbât*, principle, absolute	

Table 2
Second Shahâdah (Immanence)

Muhammad	Rasul	Allah
Manifested principle	Manifestation of Principle (logos)	Principle
Dzakir	*Dzikr*	*Madzkûr*

Seyyed Hossein Nasr strengthened Schuon's view above. For Nasr, the founders or messengers in religions are equated with logos with various meanings. In Islam, all prophets are an aspect of the universal logos known as the essence of Muhammad (*al-haqîqat al-muḥammadîyah*), who is believed to be God's first being. God sees everything through the essence of Muhammad. As the essence, Muhammad's existence precedes all the prophets in the early stages of the prophetic circle. In other words, inwardly, Muhammad is the logos. Nasr cites a hadith that declares the inner nature of the Prophet, namely, "he (Muhammad) was already a prophet when Adam was still water and soil." The prophetic cycle begins with Muhammad's entity and ends with his human Manifestation. Innerly, he was the beginning of the prophetic cycle; outwardly, he was the end of the prophetic cycle. Outwardly, he is an ordinary human being; innerly, he is the universal human being (logos) who is the norm of all perfection. The inner aspect of the Prophet is illustrated in the Prophetic tradition cited by Nasr as follows: "I am Ahmad without mim (i.e., ahad, the singular), and an Arab without *'ain* (rabb, God). He who has seen me has seen the Truth" (Nasr 2000, 57).

Conclusion

Perennial philosophy sees the Prophet as the logos. The Logos has two faces, the Absolute and the relative or the Logos and the manifested Logos. The historical prophets are the manifested Logos. They act as a link

between humanity and God. Anyone who wants to merge with the Divine can do so by uniting with the Prophet as the manifested Logos. As a link, the Prophet plays an initiatic function. There are two other functions: the cosmological function as the prototype or seed of the universe and the prophetic function as a means of receiving revelation. In the context of Islam, the Prophet as the logos is Muhammad. Innerly, Muhammad is Divine, but outwardly, he is a prophet. Muhammad is the logos that is situated between the Creator and the rest of creation. He acts outwardly as a human being and an *insân kâmil* (universal human being) who plays an initiatic function as a norm of perfection that must be followed. In other words, in Islam, without Muhammad, humans cannot attain perfection or union with the Divine.

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