
Poverty, Wealth, and the Doctrine of *Al-Fana'* in the *Qur'an*

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INTRODUCTION

Globalization was supposed to bring humanity together, to unite the world, to elevate those at the bottom of society, to open borders, and destroy boundaries between nations and social classes and to make the many one. However, globalization has become a dividing and destructive force because of our failure to establish balance and moderation in society. All humans, with all their diversity, belong to the same reality, and enslaving one person is equal to enslaving all of us. From an Islamic perspective, based on the teaching of the *Qur'an*, we can bring this balance into reality by experiencing *fana'*, or the purification of the self from all the activities of the ego. In the *Qur'an*, the doctrine of *fana'* is alluded to in 55:26–27: “All who are on it [the earth] will pass away [*fanin*], but the face of our Lord remains” and 28:88: “Everything (that exists) will perish (*halikum*) except His own Face.”

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In the age of globalization, constructing a theology based on the mystical doctrine of *fana'* is necessary for dismantling the boundaries between the wealthy and the poor and for creating “an *ummah* [community] justly balanced” (*Qur'an* 2:143).¹

Although the doctrine of *fana'* regards the whole universe as a unity and all aspects of life as governed by a single principle, this unity of being does not mean uniformity; rather, it is a multiplicity of things. This unity of multiplicity represents a system of Islamic social and economic justice where extremes, such as extreme wealth and extreme poverty, are avoided and a middle path is pursued. When social and economic justice is implemented in society, the Islamic *tawhid* (oneness of God) is extended to all, and our unity with one another becomes a reality. The Islamic doctrine of *tawhid* establishes a formal ethical system with moral injunctions. Morality in Islam not only is derived from the belief in the oneness of God but is also linked to it. For instance, *Qur'anic* injunctions on right measure (11:85), balance (17:35), moderation (3:147), avoidance of extremes (25:67), sharing wealth (2:215), feeding the needy (2:184), sheltering strangers (4:36), and caring for others link unity and morality with the aim of achieving social and economic justice. Thus, a theology rooted in the doctrine of *fana' al-'ana* (the annihilation of egotism) is necessary today as it makes the *Qur'anic* concept of *tawhid* (unity or oneness of God) a reality through the union of one person to another or the other with the self. Such a theology may help humanity establish a balanced society, which is essential for narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor as well as for promoting social and economic justice in the age of globalization.

In this chapter, I seek to demonstrate how the *Qur'anic* concept of *fana'* makes brotherhood and social unity a paramount ideal in Islam and affirms our ontological connection to God and His justice. This affirmation is central to promoting harmony, peace, justice, and equality among peoples and cultures in the age of globalization. In the first section, I demonstrate how the *Qur'an* responded to wealth and poverty in seventh century Arabia and argue that *Qur'anic* pietism (i.e., religious duties) was only a means for a higher end—economic and social justice. In the second part, I argue that *fana'* is a central doctrine in the *Qur'anic* message situated at the top of a hierarchical order that aims to attain a higher end, one that preserves the ideals of economic and social justice in society. I will conclude with a discussion of how the

concept of *fana'* can be used as a means to establishing economic justice.

PIETISM, POVERTY AND WEALTH, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE *QUR'AN*

Private Ownership and Accumulation of Wealth

Our understanding of the Arabian culture prior to the rise of Islam is hindered by the scarcity of sources since the pre-Islamic Arabs produced an oral rather than a written culture. One of the richest sources in the world before Islam, in general and on the economic inequality in particular, is the *Qur'an* itself. Omid Safi writes: "In examining the tensions between Muhammad and his community as recorded in the *Qur'an*, we can learn a great deal about the fabric of Muhammad's society."² Thus, based on the *Qur'an* and the oral culture that was preserved by Muslims, Muslim as well as Western scholars describe pre-Islamic Arabia as a society plagued with economic inequalities. Some *Qur'anic* verses (3:10; 3:116), which condemn the wealthy for not sharing their wealth with the rest of the society, are a clear indication that, in the words of Karen Armstrong, Islam "... was received by the Arabs of Mecca in an atmosphere of cut-throat capitalism and high finance [and] the new prosperity drew people's attention to the disparity between the rich and the poor."³ Safi tells us that "rich and powerful merchants were zealously devoted to the polytheist beliefs ... of their society, which had them in a privileged position at the top"⁴ and that "Muhammad's mission was to construct an egalitarian society in which faith and piety would be the only marker of social mobility."⁵ W. Montgomery Watt adds that, "The successful merchant thought only of increasing his own power and influence ... and was no longer prepared to carry out the chief's traditional duty of looking after the poor members of the clan."⁶ One could posit that the few, who accumulated most of the wealth in and around Mecca, exploited the majority of the people who suffered from extreme poverty and starvation. Against this societal background, the *Qur'an* was revealed. The *Qur'an* came with a message aimed at bridging the gap between extreme wealth and extreme poverty, ending starvation, abolishing slavery, and establishing a just system. In the words of Michael Bonner, "Poverty was clearly of considerable, even central, importance for early Islam ... [and] the poor—however defined—are the objects of urgent and repeated concern in the *Qur'an*."⁷ The *Qur'an* strongly con-

demned extreme wealth and the abuse of wealth, which prevented people from pursuing higher values (Q 3:14, 185, 197; 4:77; 9:38; 10:23, 70; 13:36; 16:117; 28:60; 40:39; 42:36; 43:35; 47:20), as well as introduced teachings and laws that elevated those at the bottom of the society.

It is important to note that the *Qur'an* is not against private ownership of property or the accumulation of wealth; on the contrary, the text “sets a high value”⁸ on earning wealth, given that a portion of it is distributed justly, especially among the poor (Q 62:10; 73:20; 5:20; 24:22; 27:16; 30:23; 2:18, 215, 272–73; 11:84; 22:11; 38:32; 50:25; 68:12; 70:21). Muhammad also legitimized property ownership and the accumulation of wealth by telling Muslims: “Your capital ... is yours to keep” as long as “you will neither inflict nor suffer inequity.”⁹ Although the *Qur'an* regards “prosperity among the highest blessings of God”¹⁰ (Q 106:1–4); wealth is, however, an illusory and brief enjoyment (Q 3:185, 197). The absence of concern for the poor is strongly condemned in the *Qur'an* and economic disequilibrium is repeatedly denounced (Q 107:1–7; 104:1–6). The *Qur'an* repeatedly urges believers, especially the wealthy, to feed the poor. For instance, the *Qur'an* lists the recipients “for several kinds of distribution and benefaction,” and some of these recipients, according to Bonner, “appear only once, and others—such as orphans, parents, and beggars—reappear constantly.”¹¹ Caring for the poor is “an identifying trait”¹² of the “Companions of the Right Hand” (Q 90:13–20), and the absence of concerns for the poor is equivalent to denying the Day of Judgment (Q 107:3). He will abide in Hell whoever denies God “and does not urge the feeding of the poor” (Q 69:34). The *Qur'an* holds that one major cause for the decay of societies is neglect of the poor (Q 89:15–20). Such neglect of the poor therefore caused an unbalanced society where extremes prevailed. For this reason, the wealthy “are expected to share their wealth with those who are in need”¹³ so the poor would be able to “use (it) rightfully” (Q 4:6).

Spending in the Path of God

The *Qur'an* condemned the amassing of wealth that widened the gap between the wealthy and the poor and exhorted the people to spend in the cause of God and establish credit with the Almighty so that God may repay them manifold, rather than to invest money in usury and suck the blood of poor people (Q 30:39; 2:245; 5:12, 18; 57:11, 18; 64:7; 73:20). The *Qur'an* also urged the wealthy to distribute their wealth justly and in balanced ways (Q 59:7). In Madina, for instance, the *zakat*, or charity tax,¹⁴ was imposed so the wealth would be distributed justly among the

poor (Q 9:60). The message of the *Qur'an* may seem ambiguous in regard to its condemnations of wealth. Does the *Qur'an* condemn wealth or the unfair economic system of pre-Islamic Arabia? As I have argued elsewhere,¹⁵ although the *Qur'an* tolerated a capitalist-style economy, it strongly discouraged such a system. The *Qur'an* was revealed “as a guide for people” (Q 2:185): to be inspired by its teachings and to draw lessons from its wisdom. The lesson that people should take from the above verses is that the gap between the wealthy and the poor should be narrowed rather than destroyed.¹⁶ For example, the *Qur'an* encourages Halal (permitted) income and discourages Haram (not permitted) income and asks people to pay Zakat out of *Halal* savings and give *Sadaqat*, voluntary tax. For instance, verse 30:39 reminds the believers that “whatever you give in usury [*riba*],¹⁷ may increase the wealth of those who lend, but it does not increase their relation with God, but what they give in alms [*zakat*], desiring the face of God, gains double with God.” The *Qur'an* also commands believers to make charity through voluntary almsgiving or *sadaqa*¹⁸—“If you make freewill offerings [*sadaqat*, plural of *sadaqa*] publicly, that is excellent, but if you hide it and give it to the poor, that is better for you, and will absolve you of some of your evil deeds.” (Q 2:271)

In the *Qur'an*, the term “*riba*” occurs several times and is contrasted with “*zakat*.” The *Qur'an* prohibits the increase of wealth through *riba*; while it rewards those who share their wealth through *zakat*. Michael Bonner writes that verse 30:39 “contrasts some kind of bad circulation (*riba*) with some kind of good circulation (*zakat*).”¹⁹ Verse 59:7 provides guidelines pertaining to the circulation of goods: “What God has given to His messenger (as spoils) ... (belongs) to God and to the messenger, and to family, and (to) orphans and the poor, and (to) the traveler.” This verse is a clear statement relating to the proper circulation of goods. Thus, the *Qur'an* established rules differentiating between permitted and not permitted income as well as defining a new system for the circulation of goods.

Piety and Social and Economic Justice

Changing society's attitudes when the *Qur'an* was written, especially in regards to how the rich related to their wealth and how they treated the poor, required the use of persuasion using both reason and fear. In both cases, piety became the trump card to convince people to change. Although the *Qur'an* emphasized piety (i.e., adhering to certain religious beliefs and practices), pietism (or the demand for pietism) was secondary in creating a path for the implementation of economic justice. In other words, pietism in

the *Qur'an* is only a means for a nobler end: social justice. On the Last Day, God will measure people by how they dealt with their wealth, how they treated the poor, the orphans, and strangers in addition to measuring their pietism (Q 107:4–7). Of course, piety requires caring for others; however, in the *Qur'an*, piety is also a method used to exhort believers into committing acts of charity as a way to promote economic justice in society. The *Qur'an* is far from advocating a system devoid of economic classes; rather, the scripture introduces some ideas to improve the status of the poor. And to achieve this goal, feeding the poor becomes a religious duty that is equally important to praying and fasting. For instance, Verse 2:177 states:

Piety [*al-birr*] is not turning your faces toward East and West, but (true) piety (belongs to) the one who believes in God and the Last Day, the angels, and the Book, and the Prophets, (who) gives his wealth, despite his love for it, to family, and orphans, and the poor, and the traveler, and beggars, and for the (freeing of) slaves, and (who) observes the prayer and gives the alms ... those are the ones who are truthful.

If we look closely at this verse, it is clear that actions such as praying and giving alms are either impious or less important than the actions mandated to help the poor. For example the beginning of the verse, “turning your faces toward the East and the West” is in reference to the *qibla* (direction of prayer). This phrase “stresses that mere compliance with outward forms does not fulfill the requirements of piety.”²⁰ Thus, it is suggested that the prayer duties are dismissed as being pious actions since it is not “piety to turn your faces” toward the *qibla* while performing the prayers. “In the absence of concern for the welfare of the poor,” Rahman writes, “even prayers became hypocritical.”²¹ This view can be demonstrated in verse 107:1–7:

Have you seen the one who calls the Judgment a lie? That is the one who shoves away the orphan, and does not urge (people) to the feeding of the poor. Woe to the ones who pray, who are heedless of their prayers, who (only) make a show, but withhold assistance.

Moreover, true piety belongs to the one who *believes* in God and the Last Day, who *gives* his wealth, and who *observes* prayers and gives alms. Based on the order given in verse 2:177 above, it seems that feeding the poor is considered a form of piety that comes above some religious duties like observing prayers and giving alms. Religious duty is a “false

piety”²² if it is not coupled with assisting the poor. This ordering of pietism suggests that actions resulting in social and economic justice are more pious and more important than religious duties such as prayer and *almsgiving*.

Zakat and Social and Economic Justice

When the *Qur'an* warned the *Quraysh* (Muhammad's tribe) that on the Last Day their wealth will not help and that “neither their possessions nor their children will be any use to the disbelievers against God” (Q 3:10, 116), the *Qur'anic* concern here was not to compel people to accept God so they will be saved on Judgment Day. Rather, the text was sympathetic to the poor and showed concerns about the unjust distribution of wealth in this world. Judgment Day is used in this context to instill fear in the hearts of the wealthy as a method to exhort them to distribute their wealth justly among the poor. Thus, salvation on Judgment Day is preconditioned and contingent on how the poor are treated, not on how or whether religious duties were fulfilled.

Moreover, some actions, which the *Qur'an* requires of believers and which are generally referred to as religious duties, are what W. Montgomery Watt calls, personal moralities. Watt contends that *zakat* “is a personal morality that transcends personal piety to show a concern for social welfare.”²³ Thus, *zakat* “... is more connected to social justice and to the sustenance of others than to being only an act of personal piety.”²⁴ Also, my argument that the core message of the *Qur'an* is concerned more with the plight of the poor than with personal piety is supported by the fact that when Muhammad returned to Mecca, his main concern was not so much to convert people to Islam as it was to save the poor and eradicate injustices.²⁵ In Mecca, Muhammad neither retaliated against nor forced Islam on the Meccans; rather, he demanded from everyone, believers and non-believers alike, that they “preserve the ideals of justice.”²⁶ In the last speech he delivered before his death, Muhammad instructed Muslims to preserve the ideals of social justice, and had nothing or little to say about maintaining religious duties or increasing in piety. Turning to people, he said:

Whoever of you is keeping a trust of someone else shall return that trust to its rightful owner Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim which belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly. Do not, therefore, do injustice to your own selves. O God, have I conveyed Your message?²⁷

This message is concerned entirely with economic issues. Thus, based on this speech and the message of the *Qur'an* as a whole, one may argue that economic and social justice and the fair distribution of wealth is a priority in the *Qur'an* rather than the overwhelming concern with religious piety or converting societies and peoples to the religion of Islam. As divine justice prevails in the *Qur'an*, the doctrine of *fana'* becomes essential for the implementation of *Qur'anic* justice.

FANA' AL-'ANA (ANNIHILATION OF EGOTISM)

The doctrine of *al-fana'*²⁸—popular among the Sufis²⁹ (Muslim mystics)—is, found in the *Qur'an* when it urges people to annihilate or purify their egos as the only way to establish divine justice on earth. For instance, God warns the people that He shall turn away from His “signs those who are arrogant on the earth without any right” (7:146) and urges them not to “walk on the earth in jubilation” (31:18). The *Qur'anic* doctrine of *fana'* also requires the annihilation of extremes in both society and the individual when it speaks against the transgression of the scale of justice, and advocates moderation, balance, and the importance of staying within the measures that God laid down in the *Qur'an*. The *Qur'an* states: “The Sky—He raised it, and He laid down the scale—do not transgress insolently concerning the scale, but establish the weight in justice, and do not cheat concerning the scale” (Q. 55:7–9). The *Qur'an* calls for the establishment of “a community (in the) middle” (Q 2:143) and “right between,” (Q 25:67) weighing “with the even scale,” not depriving people of what is theirs or spreading “corruption on earth,” (Q 26:181–183) and acting “fairly” (Q 5:8). “Whether he be rich or poor, God (stands) closer to both of them ... if you turn aside or turn away—surely God is aware of what you do” (Q 4:135). “And the earth ... We ... caused everything (that is) weighed to sprout in it” (Q 15:19). These verses mandate moderation and balance that can be achieved through the experience of *fana'*.

The *Qur'an* thus gave humanity “a balance [wherewith to weigh right and wrong], so that men might behave with equity” (Q 42:17; 57:25) and commanded people to give full measure whenever they measure, and weigh with a true balance because “that is true: this will be [for your own] good, and best in the end” (Q 17:35; 26:182). “And true will be the weighing on that Day; and those whose weight [of good deeds] is heavy in the balance--it is they, they who shall attain to a happy state” (Q 7:8; 23:102; 101:6, 7), whereas those whose weight is light in the balance -- it

is they who will have squandered their own selves by their willful rejection of Our messages” (Q 7:9; 23:103; 101:8). Thus, the *Qur'an* requires self-discipline in regards to achieving these teachings, and the doctrine of *fana'* facilitates achieving self-discipline.

Fana' is a self-discipline, a freedom from the “removal of desire, from the results of environment ... from pride and prejudice, preferences and distaste: from selfhood in every form.”³⁰ *Fana'* annihilates the very being of people to the point that they become devoid of worldly desires as if they are asleep: “And you (would) think them awake, even though they were asleep” (Q 18:18). According to ninth-century Muslim theologian and mystic al-Kharraz (d. 890 or 899),³¹ this verse alludes to both *al-fana'* and *al-baqa'* (the stage of permanence). He explains the transformation from *fana'* to *baqa'* by stating that, “the people are annihilated in righteousness and piety but remaining permanent in it. They are neither asleep nor awake, their attributes are annihilated (*faniya*) in their beings and the attributes of righteousness and piety appear on them.”³²

The annihilation of the ego (*fana' al-'ana*) leads directly to *al-baqa'*. This movement from *fana'* to *baqa'* is “the emptying of the self,” according to Michael R. Levenson et al., “so that true reality may enter.”³³ The “true reality” that results from *fana'* to *baqa'* can be translated to mean that people come to realize their true sense and purpose in this life, and that in the age of globalization, we have to look for new realities that make us acknowledge the other, see ourselves in the other, and treat the other as we treat ourselves. A just and peaceful world cannot be achieved without making this “true reality” real. This emptying of the self or the “emptiness of all things” or *sunyata*, as the concept is referred to in Mahayana Buddhism, is an action that, according to the thirteen-century Sufi master Mahmud Shabistari, “itself is of less importance than the intentionality of the action.”³⁴ Thus, the intention of the *Qur'anic* doctrine of *fana'* is to arrive at “true reality,” that is, social justice, by the emptying of the self through the performance of religious duties.

The annihilation of the ego or the emptying of the self is a process of purification, the polishing of the self. According to Sufi teacher al-Qushayri (d. 1072), *al-fana'* “is the effacement of evil attributes (*sifat madhmuma*) and the establishment of praised attributes (*sifat mahmuda*).”³⁵ *Al-fana'*, he adds, is the annihilation of human attributes and the predominance of divine attributes. Divine attributes prevail when human attributes are completely effaced.³⁶ In the *Qur'an*, God promotes His attributes, which are manifested in moderation, balance, and justice and

condemns human attributes of extremes, imbalance, and injustices. *Fana'* helps us conquer the self. For "the self", according to the *Qur'an*, "is indeed, an instigator of evil [*al-nafs la ammara bil su'*]" (Q 12:53). The human soul or self is prone to greed, arrogance, boastfulness, envy, oblivion, evil, and anger,³⁷ and *fana' al-'ana* can return the evil-self back to its "Lord, approving (and) approved!" (Q 89:28). *Al-fana'*, therefore, is, according to A. Geels, "submission of personal will, of the self to the group ... [which means] inhibiting the representation of the 'I' [the '*ana*'] as an acting agent."³⁸ The *Qur'anic* doctrine of *fana' al-'ana* does exactly what Geels has described above: it advocates personal transformation, a transformation from idolizing the self and boosting the ego to the emptying of the self or the annihilation of the ego, that is, the submission of personal will of the self, a transformation that is very much needed in the age of globalization.

Al-fana' is the complete annihilation of the arrogance or the ego as well as a total detachment from the self. *Al-fana'* is an upward movement. It is the realization of truth and righteousness, and whoever realizes the truth will see it in everything.³⁹ According to Jamal al-Din Muhammad Abi al-Mawahib al-Shadhili (d. 1477 or 1478), *al-fana'* is the purification of the self as well as the effacement of intentionality. It is the union of the lover with the act of loving, and together, after they become one, they merge with the beloved.⁴⁰ The duty of the seeker of *al-fana'* is to remove the vices that prevent the manifestation of humility. "In order to gain the virtue of humility," Seyyed Hossein Nasr writes, "we must overcome the vice of pride, and in order to be embellished with the virtue of truthfulness we must stop being hypocrites and remove ourselves the vice of deceitfulness."⁴¹ The seeker of *al-fana'*, thus, is "the one whose scales [of good deeds] are heavy [in the balance], he will be in a pleasing life [a happy state] (*'ishatin radiyatin*)" (Q 101:6, 7). Nasr refers to the *Qur'anic* "pleasing-life" as a place in "the Center ... being in a blessed state,"⁴² which can be reached by traveling the road of *Shari'a*. "The journey on this road," he maintains, "is limited to the plane of action, the performance of good acts, and faith in the reality of God."⁴³ The *Qur'anic* "pleasing-life" or "happy state" is achieved through harmony with God, unity in multiplicity, and desertion "of outwardness, forgetfulness, selfishness, and falsehood"⁴⁴ to the true reality of who we are. And this "satisfactory state" is none other than the mystical notion of "remaining in God after annihilating in Him" (*al-baqa' ba'da al-fana'*).⁴⁵

In *Qur'anic* terms, *al-baqa' ba'da al-fana'* is person's ascension to a higher state of being, that is, attuning to God after gravitating "down to the earth" and turning "away from Him."⁴⁶ *Al-fana'*, al-Kilani tells us, is itself a form of worship, for never in the Islamic history have the terms *fana'* and *kufr* appeared together, such as *fana' al-kafirin*, or the annihilation of the unbelievers. The outwardness of *fana'*, he adds, is worship and *tawhid* (proclaiming the oneness of God) and its inwardness is sincerity and Godliness.⁴⁷ Fazlur Rahman writes that "When man 'gravitates down to the earth,' his conscience becomes dull and he cannot effectively listen to the voice of his true, higher nature."⁴⁸ Thus, *fana' al-ana* is the rise of a human above the ego, back to the *Qur'anic* "happy state."

Al-fana' is the ascension back to God; it is the process of making "man whole again as he was in the Edenic state"⁴⁹ by constantly remembering God and acknowledging His presence. The *Qur'an* states: "Do not be like those who forgot God, and He caused them to forget their own selves. 'Those'—they are the wicked" (Q 59:19). In Rahman's words: "God's 'remembrance' ensures the cementing of personality where all details of life and particulars of human activity are properly integrated and synthesized."⁵⁰ The "cementing of personality" is the annihilation of the ego when human activity becomes meaningful and purposeful. "Forgetting" God, Rahman writes, "means fragmented existence ... an unintegrated and eventually disintegrated personality, and enmeshment in the details at the cost of the whole."⁵¹ In mystical terms, the *Qur'anic* statement "do not forget God" meant to keep man at the center, away from the peripheries that cause imbalance due to pride, arrogance, and false honor. In Sayyed Hossein Nasr's words:

... going back to the origin of the *Qur'anic* revelation itself that all of the dispersed elements in man can be brought together. Ordinary man is forever moving away from the centre of his being towards the periphery, dispersing himself in the multiplicity of this world.... This outward-going tendency must be checked and reversed so that man may live inwardly ... moving towards the centre rather than towards the rim; for at the centre ... is the source of all beatitude and goodness....⁵²

According to Nasr's interpretation, the *Qur'anic* statement "do not forget God" means the transformation of the soul from ownership by us to ownership by God, hence, *al-baqa' ba'ada al-fana'*. The latter denotes "a positive transformation of the soul ... [a] return to a new existence (in the

state of *baqa'*) which perfectly reflects the divine unity."⁵³ For Ibn al-'Arabi (d. 1240), one of the greatest Sufi masters of all time, the transformation of the soul is the "fleeing to God" from all that might distract from the divine. It is the "flight from ignorance to knowledge."⁵⁴ "The state of our soul," in Nasr's words, "determines what kind of action we perform," and if our soul makes the transformation by rejecting egotism and entering into "intimacy with God," that is, *al-fana'*, then our soul will be able to create actions that are full of "knowledge and love."⁵⁵ This transformation of the soul is what the theology of *al-fana'* aims to achieve in an age of greed, selfishness, cut-throat capitalism, and injustices. Our world needs the transformation of the soul because

Human intelligence has become too deeply hidden in the hearts of almost all of us to be able to discern by itself between truth and falsehood, beauty and ugliness, and good and evil. It needs the help of the objective manifestation of the Divine Intellect or Logos/Word. This manifestation we call revelation, including its formal dimension concerned with religious rites and ethics.⁵⁶

Nasr's manifestation of the Divine Intellect is similar to my call for the transformation of the soul, that is, transforming the self to become the other, seeing the world through the eyes of the other, being at the center. However, I would contend that the manifestation of the Divine Intellect requires the transformation of the soul, when the soul returns to its "Lord, approving (and) approved" (Q 89:28). Nasr refers to the manifestation of the Divine Intellect as the revelation, including religious rites and ethics. Nasr's manifestation, I would argue, cannot be achieved without the transformation of the soul, purifying the soul through the annihilation of the ego. This very act is what the theology of *al-fana'* is calling for.

Al-fana', in the words of Islamic philosopher Hasan Hanafi, is the "effacement of the human being in the essence of truth, so nothing exists except truthfulness. It is the path to servitude."⁵⁷ The meaning of servitude for Hanafi is the abandonment of evil deeds and the adoption of virtuous ones. *Al-Fana'*, he adds, is the effacement of seeing through multiple eyes; true effacement is seeing through the multiplicity of a single eye.⁵⁸ Furthermore, *al-fana'* is the acknowledgement of the other, the offering of sincere respect to the other, and, more importantly, the dealing with the other. Hanafi writes that *al-fana'* paves the way for fair dealings with the other, for having good intentions toward the other. The annihila-

tion of the ego “restricts us from inflicting injustices on the other, realizing that the other can be a person from the laity or the elite, the religious scholars, the commanders of the faithful, the readers of the *Qur'an*, or simply those who are cautious of the ruler (sultan).”⁵⁹ *Al-fana'*, continues Hanafi, is the antidote of praising the self, which is a calamity that leads to selfishness, arrogance, and boastfulness. The doctrine of *al-Fana'* corresponds with the *Qur'anic* exhortation for keeping the scale (i.e., the eradication of extreme wealth, extreme poverty, and other extremes) as the best way to attain a happy state (i.e., social justice).

In the age of globalization, emphasizing the Qur'anic doctrine of *fana' al-ana* becomes essential for it speaks to all religions and communities, since every community suffers from poverty, inequality, and oppression. As Abdulaziz Sachedina rightly claims, “Globalization of any form of militancy, whether religious or secular, is in need of ethical, universal criteria to prevent it from becoming a source of further destruction to the sanctity of human life and dignity.”⁶⁰ Thus, in the age of globalization, faith-traditions and communities, as diverse as they are, must work in unity to fix the world. We have to acknowledge our weaknesses, learn from our differences, and form a unity out of our diversity in order to live in harmony with ourselves and with our Creator.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have discussed poverty and wealth in the *Qur'an* and have argued that religious piety, which the *Qur'an* demands from believers, is not an end in itself but rather a vehicle or road to a higher, nobler end, which is social and economic justice. Pietism without works, that is, elevating the poor in the society, is a false piety. In other words, as I have attempted to demonstrate, faith (*iman*) is realized not by praying but by feeding the orphans and the poor (2:177). Because the *Qur'an* puts more emphasis on horizontal (human to human) relationships in a society than on vertical (human-to-God) relationships, I have argued, that *iman* is measured in how we treat our fellow human beings rather than in what and how we think of God. This *Qur'anic* emphasis on social and economic justice is an indication that God was mainly concerned with the economic and social inequalities in the society. Pietism, as a tool to transform a society, therefore, cannot be a form of worship or an end in itself if it does not lead to social and economic transformation.

Since the *Qur'an* demands moderation and balance in everything we do in this life, this state of moderation or the happy state, as referred to in the *Qur'an*, can be achieved by the transformation of the soul, by the annihilation of our ego when the other becomes the self. It is the unity in diversity. An Islamic theology of *fana' al-ana* (the annihilation of egotism and arrogance) is a form of worship since it helps us think of the other as the self and think of the world as a unit. The integration of man and society is key to establishing economic and social justice in a divided and dis-integrated world.

NOTES

1. A.J. Droge's *The Qur'an: A New Annotated Translation* (Sheffield, UK: Equinox, 2013) is used throughout the chapter for the English translation of the *Qur'anic* verses.
2. Omid Safi, *Memories of Muhammad: Why the Prophet Matters* (New York: HarperOne, 2009), 51.
3. Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 68.
4. Safi, *Memories of Muhammad*, 47.
5. *Ibid.*, 59.
6. W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 49.
7. Michael Bonner, "Poverty and Economics in the *Qur'an*," in *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, xxxv: 3 (Winter, 2005), 392–393.
8. Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 39.
9. Muhammad Husayn Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad*, 8th edn. Isma'il Ragi a. al-Faruqi (trans.) (Oakbrook, IL: North American Trust Publications, 1976), 486.
10. Rahman, *Major Themes*, 39.
11. Bonner, "Poverty," 400–401.
12. *Ibid.*, 396.
13. Hussam S. Timani, "Islam: Historical Setting," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Religion and Social Justice*, edited by Michael D. Palmer and Stanley M. Burgess (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 138.
14. *Zakat*—the third pillar of Islam—is an obligatory tax on property, income, and wealth.
15. See, for example, Timani, "Islam: Historical Setting," 137–152.
16. Bonner, "Poverty and Economics in the *Qur'an*," 392.