

# How to unite the Heavens?

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## SUMMARY

The reality of Bosnia and Herzegovina reopens the problem of the role of religious differences in starting and waging wars. The title suggests the necessity of finding what is common in all religions, that is, the necessity of rethinking the relationship between faith and the Mind. The war that took tens of thousands of lives in Bosnia and Herzegovina displaced hundreds of thousands of people—showed that faith can still be instrumentalized and used against man and the idea of humanity. The text was created as an interpretation of the Western oblivion of the traditional value system and, as such is a call to re-examine our relationship to religion.

**Keywords:** Bosnia and Herzegovina, God, Religions, War, West.

## SAŽETAK

Bosanskohercegovačka stvarnost ponovno otvara problem uloge vjerskih i religijskih razlika u pokretanju i vođenju ratova. Naslov sugerira nužnost pronalaženja onog što je zajedničko u svim vjerama, odnosno nužnost ponovnog promišljanja odnosa vjere i Uma. Rat koji je u Bosni i Hercegovini odnio na desetine tisuća života, raselio stotine tisuća ljudi—pokazao je da se vjera i danas može instrumentalizirati i iskoristiti protiv čovjeka i ideje humanosti. Tekst je nastao kao interpretacija zapadnog zaborava tradicionalnog sustava vrijednosti i kao takav je poziv za ponovno propitivanje našeg odnosa prema vjerskom odnosno religijskome.

**Ključne riječi:** Bosna i Hercegovina, Bog, Religije, Rat, Zapad

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## DEDICATED TO SEAD MUHAMEDAGIĆ

“My heart has become capable of every form: It is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks, and a temple for idols and the pilgrim’s Ka’ba and the tables of the Tora and the book of the Koran. I follow the religion of Love: whatever way Love’s camels take, that is my religion and my faith.”

*Mohyiddin Ibn Arabi*

## 1.

Wisdom does not need devotees. It chooses the souls who can see the whole and the parts at the same time. Wisdom does not provide answers to particular questions. It offers a whole in which the particularities are recognized. The ancient Greeks called the love of human wisdom philosophy. There is, however, that other, higher, transcendent wisdom, which does not allow us to drown in the first whirlpool of human passions that we encounter.<sup>1</sup>

If we are too far away, we will not see the river whirl; if we are too close, it will drag us into its vortex. Choosing the right distance is the wisdom of spiritual optics.

In the whirls of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, peoples (or rather people) were drawn into the vortex which had for centuries shared the same or similar sufferings and joys, the same poverty, and the same or very similar customs. They were (unfortunately) too close to each other not to fall

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under the influence that came from the global centers of abandoning the traditional values.

Wartime clashes taking place somewhere else in the world do not seem “interesting” until they come into our backyard. But when they arrive, when they sow the earth with blood—then we cannot understand why we did not do everything that might have been in our power to prevent them.

To understand the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we would have to look at this country of brotherhood and fraternal hatred, of fraternal assistance and fratricide, in several dimensions: to analyze the historical context, trace the sequence of conquests, wars, subjugations, revolts, and liberations, and place that into a religious-national-civic context as the dimension that will judge the future of this triangle, which threatens to become the site of yet another world war.

But a broader context should also be acknowledged—the intentions of modern Western civilization: industrialization of science, materialist orientation of the society, abandonment of the traditional value systems, the transformation of human communities into consumer communities, emphasizing the quantitative at the expense of quality, and the like.<sup>2</sup>

If I look at the surface of the moon through a telescope, I will probably as a member of the human species—be proud to be able to reach so far with my gaze. I could also enjoy the thought that we humans have beaten time (because with the most powerful telescopes, we break through towards the very “beginning of time”). So we have discovered everything except what might explain it to us: how all that exists came into being, whether it was created by someone, and what the role of man is in something so immeasurable and so unimaginably great. By looking into space, we will not discover the reasons for the collapse of moral values and the reduction of the human quantitative relations. Or perhaps we will?

It is important to ask why we want to launch our gaze as far away from us as possible. One answer might be that we use optical devices to observe everything around us and thus also everything that is available within ourselves. Telescopes and micro-cameras travel through the body of the universe and the universe of the human body. This would be roughly the position of Western science, which believes that it will extract answers to the key questions of human survival from a huge amount of data.<sup>3</sup> This would be roughly a position of thought that, after recording all the facts of war, explains to us that war is fatal for a man (especially in terms of regress in the economy).

The goal is not to understand war but to understand the context that leads to it. The goal of wisdom is to be far enough and close enough. Abdul al-Wahid Yahya offers us a way of looking that explains the reasons for departure and provides a horizon of return.

Wisdom is not a result of collected facts. It is not a statistical method. It is not empirical science. We open up to wisdom, aware that it may never visit us. But perhaps at this crossroads of worlds, religions, cultures, and in part, even civilizations—it makes sense to seek approaches within ourselves that can give the world the only dimension in which it can survive.

There is something contradictory in our current attempts to discover the meaning of human life by allowing the richest human specimens to travel to space. The colonizers of surplus-value, human fear, the third world, our psyche, give us the meaning of our existence by traveling to space. In their competition over the heads of billions of hungry people. There is something profoundly wrong in the value system of Western civilization that has dangerously stretched its tentacles towards the East.

Man has become a naïve being shaped by the propaganda machinery. Illusion-producing machines have turned us into machines that crave illusions. We may have been told that in our wanderings through space, we seek answers to questions

about the meaning of our own existence, but what if we are actually seeking refuge for the few who will survive the “war of civilizations” on that same Earth from which we send expensive spacecraft?

The production of war inevitably leads to war. Science in the function of the weapon industry, artificial intelligence to be used in warfare, research on the means of biological warfare—all this will turn the Earth into a global battlefield. On that battlefield, people produce war machines, and the production of war machines turns people into war machines.

The line of understanding is shown to us in plain light. Science is the function of corporations that manage the masses, shape them by the mass media, prepare them for wars, and bury them properly. Corporation owners are looking for a quieter place in space. Training man to kill necessarily leads to “final solutions” for entire nations. Bosnia and Herzegovina is proof of that. And we used to say: never again, Auschwitz!

On the surface of the moon, we see the surface of the moon. When we place a mirror on it, we can measure the distance between the earth and the moon by using sound more accurately than ever before. We can even hear the echo of our own voice directed towards the moon. If we ask the surface of the moon about the immorality of the modern world—the mirror will answer us by returning to our own question.

Therefore, wondering about the causes of the horrors that befell Bosnia and Herzegovina, we shall ask about the forgetting of the value system in that West to which Bosnia and Herzegovina happened. But the goal is not just to understand the calamity of a fratricidal war, a genocidal attempt, or an attempt to conquer territory through backstage games of global politics and global law. The goal is to understand the decline of the West and its consequences. The goal is to show once again the universality of wisdom and its patience. That man is bound to return to spiritual values.

## 2.

In texts that tell us about the “disintegration of Yugoslavia,” “Serbian-Chetnik aggression,” “civil war,” “fratricidal war,” “joint criminal enterprise,” etc., the focus is mostly on the number of victims, the number of camps, the places where the crimes were carried out, and the number of killed civilians, especially children. This is not surprising because there was almost no day in which something terrible did not happen. There is almost no date on which we do not remember something that happened to one of the peoples of former Yugoslavia. Life has turned into remembering innocent victims, commemorations, quarrels about the nature of this or that crime, the number of killed, the number of raped, and the number of primary or some other pits where the bodies of those killed were hidden.

Undoubtedly, it hurts to think of Srebrenica, Foča, Višegrad, Prijedor, Bratunac, Bileća, Nevesinje, Biljana . . . and it also hurts to think of Vukovar, Ovčara, Dalj, Tovarnik, Briševo, Petrinja, Škabrnja, Voćin . . . There were also many

missing and killed in Mrkonjić Grad, Bihać, Petrovac, Pakrac, Okučani, Medari, Plavno, Grubori, Varivode . . . Only a list of all places where the crimes took place would require more space than provided for this text. At the same time, it would be impossible to make a list with which everyone would agree, emphasize the specifics of individual crimes appropriately, use the right words, and explain.

Commemorative democracy<sup>4</sup> (democracy of memorial policies and commemorative ceremonies) is gaining momentum. We survivors are becoming victims of our own inability to find the right attitude towards the victims of war/aggression. We collect bones, mark the places of suffering, and slowly turn the annual calendar into a reminder of the crime schedule. There is still a war going on inside us. A war of proving that we were greater victims than the others.<sup>5</sup>

Without doubting for a moment that every crime scene, every burial site, all camps, and all places where crimes took place need to be remembered and marked, and all criminals prosecuted, we cannot help but question the impact of our “new habits” of reading the calendar—on our souls and on living together with our neighbors.

Numbers appeal to us. Honorary places among us are occupied by people hiding behind the aura of the unfortunate who were killed. People who draw the public’s attention to the committed crimes over and over again (as a rule in front of the invited cameras) become morally correct. They offer us crime statistics, defending “their” criminals and attacking those of the “others.”

Unlike commemorative texts, texts of condemnation and attack, this text will focus on the collapse of values in the Western civilization as a whole, which, by turning everything into numbers and quantities, have brought the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina to a dead end of counting bones, pits, convicted and non-convicted criminals.

The problem is obviously deeper than it is mostly presented, and it is in the areas on the margins of Europe, i.e., in Bosnia and Herzegovina, that it is perhaps best outlined.

The counting of victims in the “post-war” period has been replaced by a “democratic” counting of the masses following particular Bosnian nationalism. The number of victims has been replaced by the number of voters. Democracy has shown itself in all its nakedness. The tradition that adorned Bosnia for centuries and the messages of Bosnia’s religions are no longer important: the crucial principle has become a smaller or greater number of persons of this or that nationalism.<sup>6</sup> It is understandable that the Bosnian man, materialistically oriented, is joining the mass, expecting salvation from it. One should know, however, that the Bosnian man could be saved only by a principle that is above nationalism, materiality, and quantitative comparisons, above counting the victims in one’s own ranks or referring to genocide.

Unfortunately, Bosnia has fallen into the trap of “rescue attacks” from its neighbors and got lost in the game of counting the votes of people who, as a rule, do not know what they are voting for. The psychology of the masses is

at work, which, as in all other cases, takes place through the mass-media means of seduction and manipulation.

### 3.

Who participates in a conversation between two people? A seemingly senseless question. The simplest answer would be that only two people can be involved in the conversation. But however self-evident it may be, it is still wrong.

First of all, our personality is the result of our upbringing, the influence of the social context within which we try to grow to the level of an independent and free individual. Our personalities are the result of constant struggles between our levels (sensory, emotional, rational; Freud would call them Id, Ego, and Superego). We are undergoing various tests and are always on the path from consciousness to awareness and conscience. In each of us, patterns of communication and stereotypes are taken over from the immediate environment or acquired through the media. There are various defense mechanisms in us, both useful ones that enable us to survive in the world as it is and those misused that will prevent any possibility of confronting ourselves in order to maintain the illusion of a whole, successful, characterful, and loveable person. We are followers of this or that religion, atheists, agnostics, or maybe pagan polytheists.

If we imagine facing a person with so many possible identities, then it suddenly turns out that a multitude of identities communicates with another multitude and that the conversation must necessarily take place on multiple levels. Sharing information that we tend to think of as a key dimension of dialogue is just the level of mapping the communication system that develops between people in dialogue. It is then all the more important to give the spoken word its richness of connotations. This, in turn, means the need for such a subtlety of spirit that, while uttering words, enables all dimensions of being to come to light. It is important, as the followers of perennial philosophy would say, to understand the symbols that reveal to us the higher levels and depth of possible thinking.

All arts are grounded in the inadequacy of verbal communication, one-dimensional speech, and turning words into information. We need art because (to paraphrase Nietzsche) truth is reduced to the edifices of words, or rather to databases, worldviews, and ideologies. And even deeper: works of art are idols that we worship because we have not yet discovered (or accepted) our beings’ need for layered communication. Living in ideology (especially the materialist ideology of blood, soil, and the “faith” based thereon—we live on the other pole of the fullness of life. Incapable of art, artistic living, but also understanding the other.

Like art (an art that has risen with the audience to the level of communicating with beauty idols), religion has offered its answer to the impossibility of layered communication between people. After pagan beliefs in the symbolism of individual phenomena/objects/idols/totems, religions have offered the idea of God as an omnipresent, all-pervasive,

and all-promising force woven into all nature and offered to every human being. The transcendent and immanent God has been present from the Indian Vedas to modern monotheistic religions. But the modern rationalist-materialist world of abolishing everything that might be reminiscent of traditional science and spirituality, of the metaphysical heights that yield complete answers, has instrumentalized and politicized religion, replaced faith with a casual sense of religiosity, and completely emptied the idea of transcendence.

In this context, it is difficult to discern which believer still keeps alive the effort of the *anthropos* to ascend to metaphysical heights.

If we are talking about a believer who truly develops the idea of God in himself, then every communication is, above all, the communication of one's own identity with God. Every dimension of our personality will first weigh every spoken word in an intimate (short or long) questioning of our own understanding of the divine in us. This divine in us is given as sincere conscience that prevents us from reducing conversations to exchanges of databases and thus turning them into trading with words. The loss of an immanent God is a presupposition of being unprepared for the transcendent one. The immanent God, in turn, is lost in the world of oblivion of traditional values.

For a man of true faith, God is always present in every conversation. The other person in human form is only an agreement with the divine in ourselves, turned into words. A man of faith has no problem with people and with communication. He talks always and exclusively with God. All dialogues between people are merely echoes of that communication. A person who is not even on the path to finding God within will use the idea of God (emptied and as such defiled) for goals of material nature (regardless of how they present themselves).

A person who does not nurture a constant conversation with God within falls into bare commercial talking doomed to misunderstanding, verbal, and all other wars.

A person who cultivates the idea of the divine in man does not need the idols of artistic or religious hierarchies<sup>7</sup> for peace and a sense of self-sufficiency. Confirmation of the meaningfulness of existence will never come from outside. The beauty of the works produced, the beauty of words, thoughts, and even music, is just a reminder of the oblivion of the potential richness of communication in which we, as humans, will not talk by the power of idols or in bare constructions of thought (called arguments).

The terrible misfortune of a man who has renounced God in himself is the misfortune of people who have unhappily replaced the God of religious hierarchies (who is basically an idol and a means of trade) with a self-perception of the divine, necessary to human beings as a light in our interior that allows for a potential beauty of our souls.

In a dialogue in which the divine mediates between the persons who communicate, the wealth of the moral, aesthetic, and critical dimensions of our beings occurs. This is

the level at which the divine in us confirms its existence and the power of its own self-knowledge (said in human words).

#### 4.

What has long been announced is currently realized: man has become a number, a quantitative element of the political regime that hides behind the resounding name of democracy. The idea of equality has contributed to the fact that humanity has given up its essential determinants—man has been reduced to the right to choose the politics that will govern him. More precisely man has been reduced to an object of mass-media manipulation in the system of elections that gives man as a voter the illusion of importance.

We have become objects of political industry. It is a mass-media, industrial production of consciousness. Avatar posts have been replaced by posts of the owners of a new (electronic/digital) script, i.e., new stone slabs for networking the “believers” of the new era and the new intermediaries to the universal.

Political leaders offer new types of contracts to those nations that will follow them. The secular form of establishing the chosen peoples and their loyalty is today based on a form of communication that is immeasurably more powerful than oral tradition and leather scrolls. Industrial production of consciousness is at work as one of the final stages in exposing the mechanisms of seduction and manipulation by the political centers of power.

For divisions among men, it was necessary to divide the heavens. In order to divide the heavens, it was necessary to insist on differences. Political elites claimed for themselves the right to make contracts with tribes on behalf of their piece of heaven, which they “represented.”

What was the premise of reducing the human dimension to the political? Why has man agreed to the political-theatrical role in the tragedy of elections as a new temple of catharsis? What global tendencies have plunged the man of faith, morality, art, honor, and tradition into the abysses of facelessness?

Global media have allowed the tendencies to be universalized. Processes that are valid for the whole world (or pretend to be) are also visible in smaller social and political communities. In any case, an analysis that tries to say something relevant about a political community must consider the global tendencies, just as the theorists of “sick society” must be able to recognize the symptoms of the same disease in an individual, smaller social, and political communities. From what distance (or closeness) should it be observed?

If we get too close to the canvas, we will only see brushstrokes and layers of paint. Too much closeness destroys beauty as well as meaning. Only from a certain distance can we see and understand the interplay of color and light, and we can sense and feel, perhaps even understand (in any case be able to interpret) the artist's intention. From some greater distance, we may see the wall of the gallery in which

the work of art is exhibited. It is easy to imagine the distance from which we can “observe” the works of age and rethink an entire epoch.

This analogy also applies to attempts to understand speech about phenomena that need not have anything to do with art. For some people, talking about reality means talking about specific persons, their flaws and virtues, their acceptable or unacceptable statements, and the like. If we stay at that level, we only see stains on the canvas. Caught up in too much closeness, we are unable to see the whole picture in front of us. We remain captivated by the passion of statements, by colors that we like or dislike. Then we act like a person trapped in the passion of brush strokes.

Interpreting reality is often nothing but the speech of people trapped in the passion of statements given by politicians and other “artists.” Life turned into gossip is the life of modern citizens of the world, who fail to resist the mass-media attacks of colorful, animated, montaged, edited, and photoshopped information. The man of mass-media modernity has become a follower of gossip as a form of “meaningful” existence.

The way we look at things speaks in part about the object of our observation, but it also reveals our (in)ability to set the right distance from which it could be seen in most of its dimensions. It is all the more important, by merging the seemingly incompatible, to move towards those places that allow us to understand the deeper dimensions of a phenomenon. In this text, we will try to observe the problems of a state in which terrible crimes have occurred in the recent past (where one nation intended to literally exterminate or expel another) from the perspective of a tendency recognized in the contemporary Western world by Abdul al-Wahid Yahya, one of the key figures in modern perennial philosophy.<sup>8</sup>

Fortunately, Abdul al-Wahid Yahya did not live to see the evil of the attempt to exterminate one religion and one people in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the very end of the twentieth century. He could not hear or read the formulations in which people, trucks full of people taken to be shot, were called “packages” (so as to conceal the criminal intent). He could not compare it to the hatred with which those same people were called Turks at the moments when their unarmed, helpless bodies were being shot at. But Abdul al-Wahid Yahya warned in time that all of us together, under the baton of the West, were falling into the abyss of impersonal reduction of man to number, of human qualities to a single (distinctive) quality, in short, that we were passing from the world of qualitative into the world of quantitative relations: “Among the features characteristic of the modern mentality, the tendency to bring everything down to an exclusively quantitative point of view will be taken from now on as the central theme of this study.”<sup>9</sup>

What was done to the Muslims/Bosniaks in Bosnia during the latest fratricidal war (and similar, minor or major evils have happened—at different times—to each of the peoples of

Bosnia and Herzegovina) was the astonishing godlessness of people who invoke God and claim to be faithful to the principles of God’s revelations. The greatest evils have been done in the name of God. God has been used as an alibi for awakening the beastly in man. The question that naturally arises, and which is fundamental, is the question of the origin of the very renunciation of the divine in man (by declared believers and even members of religious hierarchies).

Abdul al-Wahid Yahya offers a starting point for a possible answer: “. . . from a theological point of view, is not quality in some way brought into relation with God himself when his attributes are spoken of, whereas it would be manifestly inconceivable to pretend to assign to him any sort of corresponding quantitative determination.”<sup>10</sup>

In his critique of misreading and misunderstanding Pythagorean (Orphic) numbers and the basic intention that entered the world stage with Rene Descartes, Abdul al-Wahid Yahya recognizes the line of renouncing the human in the light of renouncing the divine in humanity. Measurability has given us a world that is measurable, but that world is far from being a world of traditional values, morals, truth, goodness, and beauty. Again, quantity is the line of demarcation: “Quantity, considered by itself, is only a necessary ‘presupposition’, but it explains nothing; it is indeed a base, but nothing else, and it must not be forgotten that the base is by definition that which is situated at the lowest level, so that the reduction of quality to quantity is intrinsically nothing but a ‘reduction from the higher to the lower,’ and some have very rightly attributed this very character to materialism: to claim to derive the ‘greater’ from the ‘lesser’ is indeed one of the most typical of modern aberrations.”<sup>11</sup>

As a rule, two poles of the same are at work. Globalist intentions to level all differences and make the world citizenry uniform has provoked the response of nationalism that rely on religious hierarchies and misunderstood faith. Instrumentalized and secularized faith has emerged as a common denominator for the lowest forms of recognition among the community members. The connection between blood, god, and soil has reawakened the human capacity to kill. And while globalist corporations unite the world to obtain a larger market and extra profits, nationalist ideologies again divide the heavens, count blood cells, and wage wars for territory. Both tendencies have resulted from the same process of reducing human qualities to a numerically rendered affiliation with the typographic mind: “A mere glance at things as they are is enough to make it clear that the aim is everywhere to reduce everything to uniformity, whether it be human beings themselves or the things among which they live, and it is obvious that such a result can only be obtained by suppressing as far as possible every qualitative distinction; but it is particularly to be noted that some people, through a strange delusion, are all too willing to mistake this ‘uniformization’ for a ‘unification’, whereas it is really exactly the opposite, as must appear evident in the light of the ever more marked accentuation of ‘separativity’ implied.”<sup>12</sup>



Man is increasingly taking on the characteristics of the means he is using to conquer the world. By using machines, he is increasingly becoming a machine. By pursuing exploitation, he becomes exploited. By searching for knowledge that he can use to conquer the world, he becomes the master of knowledge about measuring.

Sheikh underlines the difference between a tool and a machine. While the tool was a kind of "extension of man," the machine is established as a means of degrading the human to the level of subordination to that very machine: "Servant of the machine, the man must become a machine himself, and thenceforth his work has nothing really human in it, for it no longer implies the putting to work of any of the qualities that really constitute human nature."<sup>13</sup>

The belief that he has found knowledge and devices that make him greater and more powerful than the idea of God has led man into spaces of his own spiritual emptiness. The exiled God has been replaced by the folklore god, the one whom man invokes as he kills, slaughters, exploits, or becomes a follower of patriotic values.

## 5.

The decline of the West that many have announced is actually the decline of spirituality, which creates room for the instrumentalized mind to shape the human soul. The critique of heaven that was to be replaced by a critique of the earth has turned into an earthly and worldly play with the worldly forms of holiness. We have become hypocrites ready to kill. Our abilities now include the ability to massively throw the bodies of murdered (un)believers in pits and collective graves, to dig up those graves with bulldozers, and then hide those bodies in secondary graves to glorify the ideologues of such crimes.

The decline of the West is the decline of the European spirit. Intellectuals hypnotically staring at masterpieces of art, philosophy, and science from the Enlightenment onwards did not want to see the colonizing dimension of that spirit; they did not want to see in the *Essay on Human Understanding* a person who ran a slave business; they did not see all the dimensions of what they called spirit.

Industrialist politicians have become the new "knights" of the new "corporate feudal lords." They get rich thanks to their mediation in the relationship between the corporations and the people. They dress in the armor of democratic elections and fly the flags of freedom, equality, and brotherhood. By meditating for corporations, they are slowly taking on the role of destroying the human substance in their populations. They are modern day Judases who send followers of the goodness of Jesus on the way of the cross without return. Every bearer of the cross is unhappy in his own way, and the only happiness offered to him is the happiness of possessing objects he does not need.

The folklore-political character of modern religion produces hypocrites ready to kill and commit crimes in order to cover up their own emptiness. The souls of murderers cover up the deserts of their souls with murders and crimes.

Gasoline, oil, and gas circulate in their bodies. Their eyes are attached to mass-media hypnotics. God's commandments have become outdated marketing slogans.

People who are thrown out of their traditional forms of living and acting, and who are shaped by the instruments of political industry, are not difficult to bring into a state of hatred. After all, hatred is just a form of love expressed in a negative way. With it, we affirm that someone is so important to us that we must destroy him in order to establish "peace and balance."

The crimes committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina have faced Europe with the consequences of political industry, where the bureaucratic corporate games of waging war with the help of nations turned against each other are leading the way.

At the root of such tendencies, Abdul al-Wahid Yahya sees the abandonment of religious values and the adherence to secular science, economic value systems, profanely established morality, and commercially defined happiness as the possession of material objects.

"To see what is meant by the 'sacred' character of the whole of human activity, even only from an exterior or, if preferred, exoteric point of view, it is only necessary to consider a civilization like the Islamic, or the Christian civilization of the middle ages; it is easy to see that in them the most ordinary actions of life have something 'religious' in them. In such civilizations religion is not something restricted, narrowly bounded and occupying a place apart, without effective influence on anything else, as it is for modern Westerners (at least for those who still consent to admit religion at all); on the contrary it penetrates the whole existence of the human being, or better, it embraces within its domain everything which constitutes that existence, and particularly social life properly so called, so much so that there is really nothing left that is 'profane', except in the case of those who for one reason or another are outside the tradition, but any such case then represents no more than a mere anomaly."<sup>14</sup>

We used to live close to God, to put it simply. It could also be said that we were part of the universe that we called God. Faith in human reason led us to question the possibilities and power of that reason. One noble idea soon resulted in many wars between the European states and then in two great world wars. And what about the gods? After we gave them up, we reintroduced them as our fans. The gods performed under our flags. In the modern world of fast communications and global manipulation, they have become an outdated idea that could only still be interesting to artists and religious hierarchies. These hierarchies have often, in order to survive, adopted the working methods of political industrialists. Their language has become political. The promises refer to this life, and their "intercession" with God is charged in the form of prescribed dues to which every newborn is condemned at birth.

Faith has begun to quantify. Going to a place of worship means as many as ten or a hundred prayers at home.

Pronouncing certain parts of the holy books means grace for a certain period of time. Before and after Ramadan, it is good to repeat some prayers because Allah the Almighty is then particularly merciful to the offering persons. The idea of a factory belt has appeared in places of worship. Everyone is replaceable, and only those who are loyal to the corporations are important. They have become forerunners of the hypocritically established void. These are the profane bearers of “working tasks”: “... according to the traditional conception, it is the essential qualities of beings that determine their activity; according to the profane conception on the other hand, these qualities are no longer taken into account, and individuals are regarded as no more than interchangeable and purely numerical ‘units’. The latter conception can only logically lead to the exercise of a wholly ‘mechanical’ activity, in which there remains nothing truly human, and that is exactly what we can see happening today.”<sup>15</sup>

## 6.

Monotheistic religions should, by definition, be religions of one God. They should complement and assist each other in finding the most efficient ways that lead to acquiring the world in human souls and discovering God in the worlds thus acquired. But in a world that is materialized in a Cartesian way, Marxist, and shaped by liberal capitalism, there is no place for religion. Abdul al-Wahid Yahya says that there is only room for a “feeling of religiosity.” The problem, of course, is that a feeling can grow into something hostile, which can interpret the other and the different as danger. Lack of true faith (which always speaks about the same thing regardless of the name of the religion) can lead to the instrumentalization of faith, to wars, crimes, and genocidal attempts to exterminate the monotheistic brothers.

When invoking reality, we tend to live in an illusion. By relying on the senses, we reduce our soul to the visible, auditory, tangible, tasty, or olfactory. Since our senses are the top of what most corporations need today, we largely live in a world that nurtures this very attitude of man towards life. Everything else can degenerate. Many languages will become extinct. We will forget the songs of many peoples. The wisdom of the natives of this or that continent will disappear unrecorded. Not to mention the spiritual worlds in which man once lived.

In that sense, Bosnia has degenerated. The solidarity of places of worship that had grown and lived side by side has disappeared. Gone is the beauty of socializing with people of different faiths. Celebrations of holidays of different religions have been suspended. Neighbors have become the raw material for the conquest of political power and the financial enrichment of a minority. Bosnian man has been reduced to a number. Those who invoked a tradition born and bred in Bosnia and Herzegovina were crammed into trucks, led to execution, and then re-crammed into trucks to end up in hidden pits. From them, they now call on the conscience of people who have lost God in themselves somewhere.

## 7.

We see everything we observe only in the reflection of the piece of heaven we call our own. Divided heavens divide us, humans, as well. The human in us is resorting to fan behavior. This fan behavior finds strong support in the materialism of (especially) the Western world, and due to the onslaught of its global interests, the East has long started to wear materialistic fan clothes.

The heavens have a problem because they are divided. Man has a problem because he is looking only through the optics of his “part of heaven.” Any attempt to unite the heavens will face the label of betraying the views of one’s own religion.

Abdul al-Wahid Yahya had no problem seeing and saying that the basic problem in the world was the crisis of the West and the collapse of traditional values resulting from embracing the materialistic worldview of the Western man. He offered the help of the East because he considered it still preserved from the perniciousness of Descartes’ rationalism and the resulting civilizations directed towards a quantitatively determined world.

The territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the faiths of its people, the tradition of cooperation developed over the centuries, the coexistence of places of worship of different religions, all the common sufferings of the people divided along religious and political lines—all these elements speak of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s ability to become an intellectual temple of the perennial philosophy, to unite the fragmented heavens, and to reconnect people.

The wars in and around us have been caused by the real (material) interests of the people around us. Only a deep understanding of the unity of heaven and respect for the other will bring peace. Abdul al-Wahid Yahya placed hope in the Catholic Church as a spiritual force of the West that still carried the power of tradition on which a world could be built that would be more spiritual than material. He may have referred to and had to refer to the Catholic Church, but he mostly meant the areas of Europe and the United States.

If nowhere else, then in Bosnia, there are preconditions for something like that to happen. Despite the war, crimes, camps, rapes, robberies, seizures of territories, persecutions of people of different faiths, despite the genocidal intent to exterminate an entire nation—Bosnia, and Herzegovina has the kind of spirituality that can even reconcile the heavens.

And finally, a little clarification on the dramaturgy of this text. Although I intentionally referred to the quoted author as Abdul al-Wahid Yahya, it was immediately clear to most readers that it was René Guénon, a French theorist who took the name Abdul al-Wahid Yahya after converting to Islam. This dramaturgy was meant to arouse (sometimes even unnecessary) feelings of wonder, especially in younger readers. Namely, it is interesting (although it should be “normal”) to read that a person of such a name



criticizes the West and yet praises the spirituality of the Catholic Church.

We may or may not agree with Guénon, but as for his desire and intention to unite the heavens and to unite heavenly and earthly thought—that we will surely appreciate.

## REFERENCES

1. In his work *East and West*, Abdul al-Wahid Yahya tried to warn the West of the consequences of abandoning traditional values and adhering to the rationalist, Cartesian concept of reality—and he drew, among other things, a parallel with distinguishing between wisdom and “profane wisdom.” Profane wisdom is a negation of wisdom as such and represents a fallacy of thinking that believes that all answers can be found at the level of rational human analysis of the world: “People have sought to define philosophy as ‘human wisdom’; indeed it is, but with the strong reserve that it is nothing more than that, a wisdom purely human, in the most limited sense of this word, derived from no element of a higher order than reason; to avoid all uncertainty we would call it also ‘profane wisdom’, but that amounts to saying that it is not really a wisdom at all, but only the illusory appearance of one.” Abdul al-Wahid Yahya, *East and West*, trans. Martin Lings (Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2001), p. 42.
2. This is the reason why here I have reached for the thoughts and deeds of Abdul al-Wahid Yahya, because in a series of books that inspired the modern version of perennial philosophy, he considered the Western context of losing spirituality and turning to materiality and rationality, propaganda, popularization, false morality, and sentimentality as the reverse of rationality, seeing in it the threatening collapse of the West: “It is one of the forms taken by this strange need for propaganda which animates the Western mind, and which can only be explained by the predominant influence of sentiment. No intellectual consideration justifies proselytism, in which the Easterners see nothing but a proof of ignorance and incomprehension; there is a complete difference between simply expounding the truth as one has understood it, with the one care not to disfigure it, and wishing at any price to make others share one’s own conviction. Propaganda and popularization are not even possible except to the detriment of the truth . . .” *Ibid.*, p. 19.
3. The science that is mostly reflected in the idea of industry is a part of the world that can provide particular answers but also lead to divisions. It is a phenomenon that wants to take the position of the highest authority and respond only to the demands of productivity: “Western science, even when not purely and simply confused with industry, even when considered apart from all practical applications, is still, in the eyes of the Easterners, nothing but this ‘ignorant knowledge’ that we have spoken of, because it is not attached to any principle of a higher order.” *Ibid.*, p. 43.
4. Enzo Traverso has brilliantly described where all this leads in his book *The New Faces of Fascism: Populism and the Far Right*: “The rhetoric of Muslim invasion, on the Islamicized republic, is a scarecrow for preserving a particular understanding of French identity—one finds it in Alain Finkielkraut, Eric Zemmour, Renaud Camus, and so on. And it closely resembles the German campaigns of the late 19th century against the ‘Jewish invasion.’ This propaganda should be compared to the whole campaign that, from the 1890s until the Great War, denounced the immigration of eastern, especially Polish Jews arriving in Germany or France, described as an ‘invasion’ . . . Islamophobia today structures the European nationalisms, as was the case with anti-Semitism in the first half of the 20th century.” Translated from Croatian and quoted from: Enzo Traverso, *Nova lica fašizma* (Zagreb: Tim Press, 2018), pp. 83–84 (title of the original: *Les nouveaux visages du facisme*, Paris, Editions Textuel, 2017).
5. It is never obsolete to draw attention to the fact that the European Jews, with the help of the Zionist regime, have become oppressors of the Palestinians. Bosnia and Herzegovina’s future also has the potential to turn victims into some future executioners. That is why it is necessary to talk, to confess to crimes, to find mass graves . . . It is necessary to warn that the victim must be greater than the crime in order to ensure a minimum of normal life. Needless to say, that is very difficult.
6. In his book *The Crisis of the Modern World*, Sheikh Abdul al-Wahid Yahya has warned that a world that turns to pragmatic goals, political promises, materialistically understood progress, and promises given by politicians who have been brought to power by the will of the mindless masses is doomed. This kind of progress necessarily leads to wars because ‘the majority arrogates to itself the right to crush minorities.’ Underlying the fall into the profane is the science’s abandonment of mental intuition, of the principles of perennial philosophy, and the result is modern science as a handmaid of industry, the “armed countries,” armed individuals, people turned into machines to kill other people turned into the same kind of machines. Sheikh Abdul al Wahid Yahya, *The Crisis of the Modern World*, trans. Marco Pallis, Arthur Osborne, and Richard C. Nicholson (Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2001), p. 91.
7. Unlike the teachers of *philosophia perennis*, I think it is necessary to treat the idea of hierarchy differently (especially when it comes to religious hierarchy). It is the renunciation of the representatives of religious hierarchies at the traditional values of searching for transcendent values that is a key to the decay of the most valuable human traits in human communities. Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of the confirmations of this way of thinking.
8. Let us leave for some other occasion the overall contributions of perennial philosophy to the understanding of everyday life in the 20th and 21st centuries. The purpose of this text is to lay bare the degrading of spirituality to the level of quantity and to show its destructive effectiveness in an otherwise traditional society, which in a way used to live perennial philosophy (in its essential determinants).
9. Abdul al-Wahid Yahya, *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, trans. Lord Northbourne (Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2001), p. 3.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 56–57.
15. *Ibid.*, 58.