

Summary of the CASIS Saturday Night Lecture by Prof. Dr. Syed Muhammad  
Naquib Al-Attas on 22<sup>th</sup> Sept 2012

Psychology and Governing the soul

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*At one time, somewhere in India, there was a successful merchant who kept a parrot that was smart. When its master planned to travel out of town, the bird told him to greet any parrot that he found in the city. Its master immediately agreed. Upon arrival at the destination, the master found a parrot and send his pet's message. Suddenly, the first parrot fell dead. Of course the merchant were shocked. But then he thought, maybe it's just a coincidence. By the time he met the second, third, and fourth parrot, the merchant still conveyed the message and all of the parrots eventually fell dead. Finally, with a heavy heart he went back home and told the story about the death of the parrots to his pet bird. And just as suddenly, it too died. The merchant was devastated and issuing this bird from its cage. And huup, suddenly the bird spread its wings and fly! The bird finally got the message from his colleagues, that to be free, he must die first.*

The 6<sup>th</sup> lecture deals with man as a form a state to be governed by his self. He said that *“Man is like a Kingdom i.e a state. He governs his soul, heart and his intellect acts as an agent. The senses are their departments. But if the soul is perverse, the government is corrupt”*. Same goes to the turmoils and chaos in life happens due to our perverseness towards our ‘selves’. He relates these turmoils to the political chaos caused by the desacralization of politics from human affairs. But this doesn't mean that we should create revolutions towards our corrupted government. In this regard *Syeikhul Islam*, Al-Ghazzali stated that it is better to live in inequality from the power of this tyrant than to take over power and then imitate his actions. This is because no one could guarantee that the new power will not do harm equally as the tyrant before. Socrates has even claimed that *‘it is better to live in justice than to do justice’*. Most of the problems that arose in human life caused by men's unconsciousness towards his origins, where he comes from, where he is now and where he's heading. In spite of this, our Prophet Muhammad once said that we should treat this world as a nomad stopping over for a moment and then went on his way.

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